

The covenant has been signed.  
The New World Order is a reality.  
The Chairman presides over one of  
the first eras of organized global  
peace in all history.

But all his cunning is not enough to hold  
back the force of ancient prophecies  
that are yet to be fulfilled. Nor is his new  
empire equipped to deal with those who  
are destined and empowered, from the  
beginning of this world, to stand against  
him in the final fray.



# WARRIORS IN THE FINAL FRAY



**WARRIORS**  
**IN THE**  
**FINAL FRAY**



**AS TOLD BY**  
**JOHN STEINBECK**

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Not recommended for children under 14 years of age.  
Portions of this book may be disturbing to sensitive readers.

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## FOREWORD BY JESUS

“Seek ye out the book of the Lord and read. No one of these shall fail. None shall want her mate” *(Isaiah 34:16)*.

The days that are to come will come, and the prophecies that are to be fulfilled will be fulfilled. Exactly how and when and in what manner is not yet for you to know. But this story provides a glimpse of things that will come, of ways they could happen. It contains elements of truth and elements of fiction. And yet the story is a true one, in that it is a true picture of how I will call on you, My children, to stand up for My Name and proclaim My Word and perform miracles in the name of the keys during the cloudy and dark days that are to come.

*“The End is near! It’s going to happen to you! You’re going to be living through these very days of the Endtime! For you are the Last Generation! You are that chosen Remnant of the Children of God who have been created to witness these final mighty events, and to witness to the world in its last dying days!” – Father David<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> ML#156:36

## THE STORY SO FAR

In *Warriors: At the Edge of Time* we are introduced to Lenny, Gypsy, and Don—three young friends caught up in the counterculture hippie scene of the late sixties and early seventies.

Lenny, rooming with Gypsy in a commune the two share with a wannabe band, is haunted by a vision of tanks invading the town of Denton, Texas, where he attends college, and a sword that is given him to stand up against them.

Through a series of events, Lenny discovers a revolutionary and active fledgling Christian movement known as *The Children of God*, which he soon joins—a decision that greatly stuns his unreligious friends.

In time, however, Gypsy and Don are also introduced to the group, and discover what the Jesus Revolution is all about. This leads to a showdown between the three and Marduke—a confirmed witch who has taken it upon herself to bring fame and fortune to the wannabe band Lenny and Gypsy once lived with.

In the confrontation that follows, the band fractures, thwarting Marduke's aspirations to rise to fame with them, and bringing Lenny, Gypsy, and Don prominently and permanently to the top of her hate list.

A good thirty-some years later, Marduke has secured a place for herself on the lower rungs of the behind-the-scenes Antichrist hierarchy, and is ready to exact her revenge on the hippies and their current worldwide missionary outreach group known as The Family.

With the help of Will, the former band's drummer who is now working for her, Marduke obtains the addresses to several key Family Homes where her targets are located, and begins plotting to attack them.

However, Marduke does not anticipate the change of heart and attitude that begins to come over Will when he is put back in contact with his old friends and comes into contact with an abundance of Family material on their Web site. Nor does she anticipate that Judy—an ex-groupie and loyal fan of Will, who met him the night the band broke up, and stayed with him ever since—had been led to the Lord by Lenny that same night.

And so the prayers of Don and Gypsy, now married with five kids—John, Simeon, Marina, James, and Carolyn—are able to turn the Lord's hand to move in Judy's life. Through her pleading, Will's heart is turned to the Lord, and together they decide to warn Don and Gypsy of the impending trouble to their Home, and of global changes that will soon take place—an act that ends up costing Will his life.

Yet even Will's death works against Marduke, as he is recruited in the spirit to join a team of powerful helpers under the command of Wally (a former Wicca priest who was converted and then killed at Marduke's command) who protect Don, Gypsy, and their Home in Africa—as well as Don and Gypsy's oldest son, John, who has left the Family—from Marduke's attempts to get at them.

In the meantime, even more sinister forces are working behind the scenes to prepare the world for the human savior they are about to introduce: the powerful and mysterious Chairman and his one-world government—who the Family will recognize and know as the long-foretold Antichrist.

**PART I**  
**INDIGNATION AGAINST THE HOLY**



## **SHATTERED PEACE**

Eighteen-year-old Muhammad rose from his prayers on the carpet in the Dome of the Rock with a feeling of peace and well-being. He had come from far to pray here at the amazing Holy Mount, where at last peace had been made between the two religions, Judaism and Islam; between the two peoples, Jews and Arabs; where two imposing structures standing in seeming peace side by side on the Haram al Sharif—or the Temple Mount to the Jews—were a silent testimony to the Chairman's success at ending the long struggle that had claimed countless lives and disrupted so many more in a period that spanned half of one century and into the next.

Muhammad was a Palestinian born in a refugee camp in Southern Lebanon, but who now called New York home—a home where his family had made good in the garment business. From here he planned to journey on to Medina and finally Mecca, but first he wanted to say his prayers at this wonder of the modern world.

He felt compelled to linger after his afternoon prayers, to take in the grandeur of the beautiful Dome of the Rock, the intricate and ornate designs of the stained-glass windows and the dome of this beautiful shrine, the third most revered structure in

all Islam. The other worshippers filed out and went about their business.

The sun was about to sink in the west by the time Muhammad emerged from the hushed interior of the shrine onto the huge terraced exterior surrounding it. Still unable to pull himself away, he sat down on the steps facing the Jewish tabernacle—a large, but temporary structure where the Jews had been allowed to resume their rituals of sacrifice and worship.

Muhammad was practically alone now, with only an occasional attendant going about his duties. Even the UN soldiers who had taken over as Temple Mount guards after the signing of the agreement over three years ago were strangely absent.

Muhammad gulped a giant breath of the fresh, warm air and praised Allah that all was good and getting better. Though things were many times better than they had ever been, there were still scattered incidents involving the remaining Jewish settlements scattered throughout the West Bank and Gaza, but the Chairman, with his usual skill and aplomb, was in the very process of negotiating the dismantling of some of the major problem-causing settlements. Now there remained only a few final steps before Muhammad's people would be completely free with a true government and true freedom and their very own homeland. Lasting peace would finally reign.

It was then that he noticed that there was a great deal of activity in and around the tabernacle, uncharacteristic for this time of day. There seemed to be a churning sea of activity just inside the walled tabernacle area, which at further scrutiny turned out to be hundreds of armed Jews, milling about and talking excitedly.

*What is happening there?* he wondered, but not for long, for just then the Jews, wearing their yarmulkes

and armed with Uzis and other automatic weapons, burst from the gates and flooded the grounds of the entire Temple Mount.

Muhammad, in a sudden panic, jumped from his perch and ran toward the Dome, shouting for help and barking out a warning. There was a mere handful of people now in the shrine and none armed, so he knew there was little they could do but run. Just as Muhammad reached the side entrance to the huge, blue-tiled edifice, a shot rang out and he felt a searing pain course through his shoulder from the back, and all went black.

That fateful moment when the Chairman's Covenant had been signed, the world had begun to change overnight. All around the globe there were ever-increasing signs of prosperity and peace in a controlled economy with the great world government increasing daily in stature and influence. Every day more and more people were giving up more and more freedoms and more of their privacy to be able to enjoy the seemingly unending and benevolent benefits of the New World Order. The face of the Chairman was everywhere—on billboards, on movie and TV screens, in magazines and newspapers—and no one could deny that he had done something that no one else had been able to do and, what's more, he had done things no one else even thought possible.

Wars had ceased worldwide with brilliant settlements in every case; economic problems had been solved in virtually every nation, with the glaring exception of those who refused to follow; diseases hitherto considered incurable were now being treated with great success, including the dreaded AIDS; and the fears of worldwide computer viruses, worms, and even more pernicious forms of cyber-warfare that had

threatened to disrupt the increasingly cyber-dependant global economy, had been sent into oblivion with the introduction of the brilliant new unified and practically virus-proof computer system that brought the civilized world together in a new and better way than ever before. No one could deny that the great Chairman of this New World Order had been victorious and had delivered well on his promises, and for that his subjects worldwide adored him.

The tabloids—though fewer now, as many of them had been closed for resistance to the new rules that had been put in place to control the press for the “good of mankind”—were full of stories theorizing who the Chairman really was, establishing an other-worldly mystique about him. He was Russian and a Jew, that was known, but his early years were unclear. There was something to do with growing up in Egypt or getting his education there or some early but very significant assignment there, but not much more. The stories of his parentage and his rise to power behind the scenes were often conflicting. The Chairman himself never spoke of his past, constantly reminding everyone that he was a mere servant of the wishes and aspirations of the people, that he himself was unimportant, that the past was irrelevant except as a guidepost to the future, the forward direction he was headed while encouraging all mankind to follow.

And what of the Family? Had the rise of their long-foretold nemesis signaled their downfall and their subsequent fearful fleeing for cover in the dens and mountains of the earth? On the contrary, on every continent members of the Family were some of the chief people chosen by the New World Order to organize the reconstruction of the world after the terrors of war and destruction and ethnic cleansing had devastated nation after nation from the fall of the Soviet Union till

the signing of the Covenant. A seemingly inexhaustible flow of funds was now flooding in to help them in their efforts, fulfilling the prophecy given to David in the early nineties that God would make the Family a financial power. As they were chauffeured up in limousines to the five-star hotels from where they based their relief and humanitarian efforts, many first-generation Family members couldn't help but remember “Dreams of Jeremiah 40” and other such Letters that had once been so hard to relate to.

What made the Family most popular and in demand with those they worked with was their ability to adapt—to live in the lap of luxury one day, hobnobbing with ambassadors, presidents, and kings, and the next day to be just as content and at home in the humblest and least comfortable accommodations while eating the simplest of foods and rubbing elbows with the least fortunate people on the face of the earth—all without a single word of complaint. There was no denying the powerful sample that this outstanding and common attribute among Family members of all ages from sixteen to sixty was to all that beheld it.

What made them yet more special was their human touch. They did not just organize from a distance; they were a constant presence in every project they found themselves involved in, giving love and encouragement, while continually witnessing to the people they ministered to that God was the One Who inspired them, offering them the opportunity to receive the same love, the same hope, the same Jesus. It was a thrilling time of quietly reaping a harvest of new souls for the Kingdom on every continent.

And to those they met who grew and began to understand the deep things of the spirit, they were able to secretly reveal the facts of who the Chairman was and what the future truly held. These converts were then

themselves taught how to quietly and unobtrusively share their faith with others, and the message went out more than ever before. Some were so well placed in the Chairman's hierarchy that they were advised to be secret believers, that their presence right in the government of the future Antichrist, for the time being, would do more good than exposing themselves and thereby ensuring their own immediate elimination once the days of Tribulation began.

The most ardent followers of the Chairman, as well as the Chairman himself, like King Saul and the Benjamites of old, eyed their extremely successful little "Davids" with envy and suspicion. Both the Chairman and the Family knew this uneasy alliance was bound to come to a point of opposition in the near future, and both were preparing for that inevitable day.

Three years after the Chairman had engineered an almost impossible peace and equilibrium within Jerusalem, imagine the shock when a group of Jewish settlers, armed with the latest weaponry, in a desperate attempt to save their settlements from dismantlement, took over the whole of the Temple Mount, effectively besieging the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque. Rumor had it they were secretly backed by the Israeli government, though this had been neither confirmed nor denied.

The invaders had driven the Palestinians and other Muslims from the grounds except for a handful of wounded that they held as hostages to give substance to their claim to the entire mount and to bargain for the continued existence of their settlements in Palestine—actions and demands that threatened to rekindle not only the full flames of intifada once more, but to spark international war between the Arab nations of the world and Israel and her ever-present allies.

Calls to proceed cautiously came from all corners of the globe. Nevertheless United Nations troops were put on full alert in the Mediterranean area with Russian and European ships and aircraft carriers being redirected there as the tension mounted. Britain and the United States—"Tarshish and the young lions thereof"—were reluctant to commit any ground troops for the moment. In the meantime, the Chairman was tending to countless negotiations with the governments and factions involved in a frantic attempt to keep the region from erupting into full-scale war.

The Israeli government, at the same time, used the events to vent some of their own frustrations and complaints over how the Covenant was being implemented, stating that there was little they could do against the armed fanatics that had taken over the Temple Mount unless certain concessions were made—but it was sometimes difficult to tell where the demands of the fanatics ended, and those of the Israeli government began.

World opinion, however, was clearly on the side of the Chairman and the Covenant. He had provided the first and only workable solution to the Mideast problem by orchestrating the historic seven-year agreement between the Israelis and the Muslim world that allowed the Jews to place a tabernacle on the Temple Mount to resume their ritual animal sacrifices in exchange for the return of certain occupied territories, the dismantling of some of the most troublesome Israeli settlements, and the recognition of the newly defined Palestinian state and government. Once—and *only* once—that had been accomplished, discussions could begin for rebuilding the ancient Jewish Temple on the site where the Tabernacle now stood. It was a feat and arrangement so vast in its scope that few understood the many facets and intricacies behind

it, and the countless hours spent in deliberation with governments, heads of state, and respected and revered leaders of the Jewish and Muslim communities.

Now the Jews had their place of worship, a restored priesthood, and the reinstatement of animal sacrifices, and their brazen demand for more—for control of the entire Temple Mount *and* the preservation of all their settlements—was a dangerous slap in the face of the entire Arab and Muslim world. The Muslim leaders had already made a great sacrifice for this peace by allowing Jewish worship on the grounds of their Noble Sanctuary, and had shown themselves willing to negotiate further once all the current conditions had been met. Why could the Israelis not accept and live up to their covenanted part of the bargain?

The patience of the world after decades of empty promises from the Israelis, after decades of Israeli defiance of UN resolutions, had worn paper thin, and the Chairman felt and knew from surveys that whatever course of action he chose to take would receive overwhelming popular backing from the vast majority of the world community.

Around the world no one missed the news of this most major of crises the World Government had faced. What would come of it? How would the Chairman react to this challenge to his authority? Would this great man of peace and prosperity be left any choice but to resort to force?

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## THE SHOCKWAVE BEGINS

Gypsy, frantically trying to get ready for the gala dinner in the hotel ballroom, was interrupted by the banging on her suite's door. She grabbed a robe to cover her scant attire, and emerged from the bathroom. Looking through the peephole, she saw Marina standing before the door, bouncing nervously back and forth. Oddly, she was alone. Gypsy removed the chain and swung the door open only enough that she could still hide behind it as Marina raced through, flung herself across the bed while scooping up the TV's remote and flicking the set on. "Get a load of this, Mom!" she said with a definite tremble in her voice.

The cameras were not able to get close enough to show much, but the commentary made it clear that the Dome of the Rock, the Al Aqsa Mosque, and the entire area of the Temple Mount had been taken over by militant Jewish settlers; that there had been some casualties, and that world government forces had cordoned off the entire area, including the Western Wall. With what Gypsy and her family and greater Family knew of these events predicted so long ago in the Bible, this would have been a shock, a thrill, and a cause for excitement and concern anywhere they might have been. However, the fact that Don, Gypsy,

Marina and her brother John were now staying in Jerusalem in a hotel located less than one mile from where this was all happening made the impact that much greater.

When they had been invited to the Mideast and Africa Water Conference in Jerusalem, they had desperately prayed for the Lord's guidance as to whether or not to go. It would have been a real setback to have to say no, since their team members were the major spearhead in Tanzania for the project to supply clean drinking water to all the villages throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Their not attending this conference would have been tantamount to resigning their post. But still, knowing that the breaking of the Covenant had to be coming soon, they sought the Lord time and again about His will and timing regarding this conference, and still had received confirmation after confirmation that they should attend, and that Jesus would hallow them about, that it was indeed His will for them to go. He had told them that they were going for a greater purpose than they realized at this time, but all would be revealed step by step as events unfolded before them. That had struck an ominous chord to all of them—"as events unfold." And now, oh, how the events were unfolding!

Once Gypsy could catch her breath, she gasped to Marina, "Where's your dad?"

"He's at the front desk, trying to make some travel arrangements to get us back home."

"Good idea. And John?"

"Kinda freaked, Mom. He's in our suite packing. He said he's gonna walk home if there aren't any planes."

"Did you explain the small problem he might have crossing the Negev, Sinai, and not to mention Sahara deserts?" Gypsy laughed.

Marina chuckled, looked at her mom and burst into raucous laughter.

"Marina! You're busting your sides at a time like this?!"

Between laughs and while rolling over the bed, Marina managed to spout out, "I don't know. I just can't help it. Maybe it's just one of those good laughs to save a serious situation." And with that, she grabbed her mom's ankle and pulled her off balance.

Gypsy fell on the bed with Marina, and began to tickle her in retaliation. But Marina, being bigger and stronger, soon had her mother pinned down unceremoniously with her knees on her shoulders. "Now I have you!" she chortled wickedly, brandishing ten long fingernails like lethal weapons.

"No! Marina! No! No inhumane torture! Remember the Geneva Convention!"

Just then a key clicked in the lock and the door swung open. Marina ceased from her attacks on her mom and looked up into Don's bewildered face. He stood in stunned silence, mouth agape, while Marina slid off her mom and sat demurely on the edge of the bed, followed by Gypsy, who tried to straighten her robe and her hair as best as she could.

"Did ... did Marina tell you the news, Gypsy?"

"Uh, yes ... yes, she did, as a matter of fact. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, no reason really. I just kind of ... uh ... expected your reaction to be ... I don't know ... a little different."

There was silence. Then Gypsy and Marina looked at each other for the first time since Don had come in. The laughs they had been stifling escaped again uncontrollably. "She started it," Marina laughed, pointing at her mom as she fell on the floor. "She tickled me."

“No,” Gypsy laughed, “she did. She pulled my ankle and threw me to the bed—got me all messed up when I was trying to get ready!”

Don smiled and sat down with his two ladies pointing the finger at each other. “Well, I guess it’s better than panic.”

“You know what?” Marina said, running her hand through her hair. “I don’t feel afraid at all. Praise God. That laugh really did kind of help. How about you, Mom?”

“I love you, hon,” she said, hugging Marina. “May we never lose our love, our laughter, or our unity through all that’s coming now.” She tousled Marina’s hair playfully. Then to Don, “So what’s the news, big daddy?”

“Flights are all booked for the next few days. Wednesday we can get out.”

“Wow!” Marina whistled. “That’s three days away. A lot can happen in that time. How about Tel Aviv or any of the other airports?”

“That is through Tel Aviv. We’ll just have to wait and pray while we wait.”

“And tonight?” Gypsy queried.

“Oh, the closing dinner’s still on. Things in Jerusalem have a way of carrying on despite bombs, demonstrations, massacres, and religious upheavals. So we’d best get ready.”

- 3 -

## LENNY ON THE BRINK

Though the nights were still somewhat cool, today the temperature had hit 36 degrees centigrade at noon. The best place to be in the middle of a hot family day was in the pool at the five-star hotel near the Family’s main downtown estate in this moderate Middle Eastern capital not far from Israel. A group of kids were romping and playing in the pool, while Lenny watched them, at the same time trying to sort through the thoughts that were plaguing him—that had been plaguing him off and on now for two years, but were intensifying lately to where they were so heated they threatened to consume him.

Reason told him things were going great, God’s work had never been better, that he just needed to snap out of it, forget himself and get on with the business of serving God, for God’s sake. But that was easier said than done in the midst of a life-and-death struggle between spiritual forces for his spiritual life. He smiled to see his two youngest frolic in the pool, 14-year-old Juliana and 12-year-old Samuel, playing with a few of their friends. The rest of his ten kids—besides these and his 24-year-old son Gideon—were in different Homes or different countries, all still serving God, for which he was thankful.

Here Lenny stood on the verge of the greatest days the world had ever known, and he felt like life had

passed him by. All Family members were fully aware of the significance of the Temple Mount invasion that had happened the day before and what was soon to follow: the breaking of the Covenant, the abomination, the mark—in short, the Great Tribulation. The final stand was now upon them and Lenny, of all things, was despondent.

The promised greatness, the tremendous promise he had shown in his early days, had never really materialized. What had he accomplished? He had just plugged along for years after those initial dynamic days of inspired witnessing. He had just raised ten kids with his beloved Frizzy, taught them the best he could, witnessed on three continents and won a few disciples here and there, had a good marriage that had hung on till the end in spite of having its share of battles and trials, and now his wife and all but three of his children were gone, leaving him practically alone. Gideon was on the teamwork of this central Service Home, while he himself was not, having taken leave of his duties as a VS after Frizzy's death. It was quite a blow to his pride to see that things seemed to go just fine without him in the driver's seat. At the same time he had chosen to move from his field in Southeast Asia to the Middle East, but the battles continued hot and heavy.

So now he witnessed, fed the sheep, taught classes, conducted CTPs, and raised his youngest two children. Oh, sure, he was happy that each of his children had gone on to serve the Lord, some of them in positions of major responsibility. He was thankful for his precious grandchildren, six in all, all beautiful samples of godly kids. That was a definite comfort, but he felt like what the Bible said of Joseph, "the Word of God tried him."

Hadn't God called him over thirty years ago and promised that he and his friends would be a great

threat to the Devil's kingdom? Hadn't he answered, "How can my friends be a threat to anyone? They're too busy damaging themselves with drugs!" Now he could answer, "How can my friends and I be a threat to anyone? We're all too old and crotchety and just plain worn out." It was those very promises that were trying him. He wondered how they could ever come to pass. It looked like God had not been able to fulfill His Word in *him* for one—maybe for others, but not for him. *Well, God's promises are conditional, conditional on our obedience, on our humility, he would reason. And, God knows, I haven't been all that obedient, and for sure not humble. And I was always short on the most necessary ingredient, love, and full of the root of all sin, pride.*

O God, how he had loved his dear sexy Jewess, voluptuous Frizzy who could never get enough! How he wished he could have returned her passionate love! Suddenly he saw her in his mind's eye as if it were yesterday, over twenty years ago, lying there in curvaceous naked beauty in his arms after love-making, gazing deep into his eyes, stroking his face, her copious smile flickering on and off like the candlelight in the corner of the room, mustering up the courage to broach a subject he could tell she had thought of long and hard before bringing up.

*"Lenny, that was beautiful. I love to love you, hon, to melt into you, to be one with you, baby. You're all I ever wanted besides Jesus." There was a long thoughtful pause, and then she had looked deep into his eyes. "But, Lenny, can I tell you something? Ask you something? I'm not sure which."*

*"Sure, sure, of course."*

*"How can I reach you, hon? How can I measure up so I can get into your heart?"*

*"What ... what do you mean?"*



*"I know how much you love Jesus, I know how much you love souls, I know there's nothing you wouldn't do for Jesus. Everyone knows that. That's what I love about you. I see the potential for a fiery love that lights up the world, and I know that that same love must have the potential to light up my heart, body, and soul. But just when I feel it about to burst out of you into me, I could almost swear I feel you pull it back. Lenny, sweetie, how do I find that man that I know is in there? I always feel I'm just not measuring up to the level of, I don't know, spirituality, that you require."*

*"No, no, that's not it at all. Friz, I ... I..." He had hesitated, long and in deafening silence, on the verge of opening the floodgates of his heart and mind to this, the closest person on earth to him, but then drew back. Instead he had said, "I don't get it, Friz. What do you mean? Is there something I'm not doing right? Is there something I'm doing wrong? I..." He remembered how he had almost done that humble thing that the Lord and Mama were going to promote so much in the days to come, but instead his pride threw its hardened mantle over his heart. "I don't really know what you mean." But he had known and his whole being had really cried out for her to get through, to break down the walls of pride and set him free.*

*"It's not anything you're doing wrong, babe, it's what you could do but aren't. I've got no complaints. You're a good man, you love the kids, you take care of me, you love Jesus. But there's more. I want someone who knows everything about me and still loves me unconditionally. I want someone who has nothing to hide from me but lets me see everything he is and wants to be and lets me help him get there. I want that person I see inside of you. How can I get in? Huh, baby?"*

*He hadn't answered. He couldn't answer. He knew what he should have said, how different it would have*

*been if he had said, "Friz, I want you in there too. I want to be set free. I know I'm bound by pride and fear of what you and others will think. I know I'm bound by the worst pride there is, spiritual pride, religious pride, a horrible bondage. I want you to keep working at me and not give up. I know the two great loves of my life—first Gypsy, and then you—were sent along to set me free from this bondage, and deep down my whole being cries out for what you have to give—real freedom, real love, real total abandon to the breath of the Wild Wind. I'm so scared of what will happen if you give up before I've been set free."*

This scene played back to him several times every week, and he had perfected exactly what he should have said in that golden opportunity, but he hadn't said it. She had finally just rolled over with a sigh and pretended to sleep. And she had finally just given up and found her passion in the children, while they maintained their marriage. It wasn't all sorrow, that wasn't the point. It just wasn't what it could have been if he had done the right thing, the humble thing. That was the point. That was the painful realization that plagued him every day.

"Guys," Lenny called out to the kids, "you're getting sunburned, you'd better get out. Let's go home for lunch."

*"Would you cut it out right now?" Frizzy's eyes flashed. "What are you doing, Lenny? Weeping that there are no more worlds to conquer? Lamenting the loss of your days of former glory? Don't we have enough to do teaching our kids, reaching Asia with the message? Don't you ever get as sick as I do of hearing about your glorious victories of yore, of invading the Devil's territory at the Armadillo Club, of witnessing to and winning*

*freaks in Texas and Florida, of pioneering Europe? Why do you have to be anything but faithful? Why do you have to know you're someone great?"*

*Lenny looked up in amazement, the tears still streaming down his face. He had just shared with Frizzy how he needed prayer for some battles he was going through. He only now realized how many times he had done this and how tired she was of hearing the same thing.*

*"Frizzy, it's just the vision, the sword, the promise..."*

*"Sometimes I wish God hadn't given you that vision!" Frizzy wasn't a cruel woman and the flicker of pain that crossed his face hurt her as much as it did him. "I'm sorry, baby, I should never have said that." She knelt by the chair and desk where he was sitting. "Honey, I just mean, if it was from God—and I know it was—then He'll bring it to pass and you just need to trust. But that vision has caused you more anguish than anything I think I've ever seen. No, that's not right, it's not the vision, it's you basing everything on it and not letting the Lord bring things to pass His way. Don't you see?"*

*"Kids, I said get out. It's time for lunch."*

*"Aw, Dad, just five more minutes ... please."*

*"It's already been five minutes. Get out. You're gonna get sunburned." A giant frog caught in his throat and he sat back down on the deck chair by the pool.*

*It was just over two years ago. He had been sitting in the darkened air-conditioned room watching Frizzy sleep for two hours. She was so peaceful he knew she could just slip away and be gone. How beautiful that would be, that the destroying cancer was denied its*

*victory and she just peacefully slipped away in her sleep. "O death, where is thy sting?" But he prayed that she would wake up one more time at least, so he could say the words that had echoed around in his head while he had been watching her, echoed so long and loud that he had finally written them down. He didn't know if he would be able to read what he had written as the tears had been flowing ceaselessly for at least an hour, but try he must. There might not be another chance.*

*Finally her eyes flickered and opened. She smiled as she saw him by her bedside. It was a weak little smile, but he didn't think he had ever seen a more beautiful sight than her waking up then. Now, he knew, was the time to read her the things that needed to be said, that he couldn't live without saying. She reached out her hand and he took it, drawing it to his lips and kissing it. A questioning look shadowed her face as she felt three tears drop on the back of her hand. "You okay, baby?" she asked.*

*"I'm okay, sweetheart, how about you?" he managed to choke out.*

*"I'm feeling better after sleeping. The pain isn't so much right now. I'm glad you're here."*

*"I'm gonna be here right up..."*

*"Till the end?"*

*He couldn't answer.*

*"That's nice."*

*Lenny knelt by the bed, holding her hand in both of his. "Darling, I love you. I have always loved you. You are the best thing that ever happened to me outside of the Lord and the Family and I'm gonna miss you so much. I know I failed you so often..."*

*"You didn't fail me..."*

*"I gotta say this, Friz, let me."*

*"kay."*

*He picked up the paper from where it lay by the chair and began to read, "My darling Friz, I could never get all I need to say said aloud. I'd choke up too much, and it's going to be hard to say all I want to say in the beautiful way I feel it in my heart, because it's too grand, too poetic, too wonderful to ever be able to express in my limited human tongue all you have meant to me. After all is said and done, after all the heartache and pain—mostly inflicted by me on you—"*

*Frizzy stroked his hair and said, "There's nothing to forgive, baby. I wouldn't have changed a thing."*

*"...after all the joys and lessons, after all the children and their lessons and our lessons through them, after all the misunderstandings and the times we really connected in His Spirit, isn't it past understanding how when everything else fades into irrelevance, there is one unfading, indelible Presence that only gets bigger and clearer and better—Jesus, holding you, holding me, in a threefold cord that is not quickly broken?"*

*"As I watch you sleeping so peacefully, I know you would like to just go on now, if not sooner, because you know full well your Lover, your true Lover Who has never failed, is waiting to take you in His arms, kiss away the hurt and wipe away the tears. But I want you to stay a little while longer, long enough for me to tell you that I will always love you, to tell you I have always loved you even when I didn't know it myself, to tell you I am sorry for not being the Lord's love to you like I should have been, to tell you ... to tell you ... oh, so many things that don't find words or just stick in my throat and don't come out so easily.*

*"Honey, I do appreciate you and all I have learned from you, especially through your time of affliction. I will never forget you, not even for a day. I know you will be with me and the kids, and I promise I will be listening. I want you to come and speak to me and to us once in*

*a while. I want to hear from you. Promise? I want you to show yourself, especially to the little ones, in their dreams, whispering in their ears, giving them visions of the great God we have lived our lives and given our lives for together, my dear. Show them Heaven, show them your happy, liberated, free-at-last smiling countenance. Somehow let them know that there is no better life than one lived for Jesus, and that the rewards are so great, and that it will be worth it all. They'll believe you, because they saw you suffer, and they think if anyone had cause to complain, you could have. (I know that thought never crossed your mind. You were the picture of patience and faith in the midst of adversity, but I want them to know that all your faith, patience, and trust was rewarded beyond even your wildest imagination.) Connect with the kids, honey.*

*"Honey, many times I have thought that if I could have started all over again with you, there would have been many things that would have been different and that I would have changed. Somehow on earth it was always a little hard to start all over again with a clean slate, but I have realized recently that we haven't lost the chance. We have eternity, so when we meet again, there where He makes all things new, our love will be all it could have been. We'll have some fun then, won't we, and make up for all the lost time here on earth?"*

*"Bon voyage, my darling, it won't be long till we'll be there with you and all our trials and troubles will be over forever, and His Kingdom will come on earth as it is in Heaven. Thank you for giving your life for Jesus, for me, for the kids, for the lost. We would not have been the same without you. You've left your mark and it was a good one. I love you, my sweet and faithful and loyal wife. Truly your husband has trusted in you and your children rise up and call you blessed. A woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised, and I praise you."*

*When he looked up, there was a broad grin on Frizzy's face and tears streaming down her cheeks. "I love you, baby, I always loved you and always will," she whispered, and they kissed.*

"Dad, aren't we gonna go home for lunch?" Julie asked. As he looked up, she said, "Been thinkin' about Mom again?"

Lenny nodded.

Julie sat next to him and gently touched his arm. "Oh, Dad, if it's not lamenting how you just don't do enough for the Lord, it's lamenting how you never loved Mom enough and how you failed her. I don't think she feels that way. She's all happy in Heaven and understands everything. She forgives everything too, don't you think?"

Lenny nodded as he stroked Julie's hand. "Thanks, sweetheart. You sure are the lifter up of your daddy's head. I'm sorry I'm such a mess sometimes. Let's go have lunch."

"You know, Dad," Julie said later as they walked up the driveway to their house, "I think you need a new love. I mean *we're* doin' okay without a mom, but I think *you* need someone. Why don't you pray for someone?"

"Aw, Julie, I've got Jesus, and I've got you kids. That's enough for me."

"Okay, then, I will."

"Will what?"

"Pray for a new love for you."

"Ha! You little rascal!" And Lenny began to tickle her, so she dashed for the house with him in hot pursuit.

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## SHAUL AND MUHAMMAD

Nineteen-year-old Shaul crouched in the room where he had been assigned to wait with the young wounded Arab. He busied himself with studying his captive's face. He had remained unconscious while they had done what little they could to tend his wound, and now he looked almost peaceful. His features ... it was funny. They could have been Jewish, with his olive skin, his curly black hair, his deep-set eyes and slightly hooked nose. *Put a yarmulke on his head and he could be one of us*, Shaul thought. *How strange!*

Shaul was from the Delancey section of New York City. His parents had clearly seen that he had been getting more and more disillusioned with all the things he had been taught all his life and was starting to doubt the importance of his Jewishness. So, in a desperate attempt to reclaim their son for their religion and race, they had agreed to his taking a year off after high school to live with his uncle, a rabbi named Mordecai, in a Jewish settlement in Samaria, near Nablus in the semi-state of Palestine still under Israeli jurisdiction. Little had he known what he was getting into, and he suspected if his parents had known, they would never have allowed him to come. Uncle Mordecai had begun

to work on him from the first day he arrived to convince him to take part in “the greatest event in modern Jewish history.” He had just gotten caught up in the excitement of it all, and it was quite an adventure, learning to use high-powered automatic weapons, getting intensive commando training, and then the many months of preparation finally culminating in their being bussed quietly into Jerusalem in groups over a period of three nights, reassembling in the labyrinth of caves beneath the Old City, and finally emerging from underground into the tabernacle and taking the entire Temple Mount by force. It was certainly *one* of the greatest events in modern history, if not *the* greatest.

But now that it had happened, the reality of it was dawning on him. The doubts now flooded back in like before, but with much greater force and persuasion than ever. This young Arab had been wounded along with several others who had “resisted” the invasion. Shaul had been shocked to hear the elders discussing the stories they would release about how the Palestinians fired on them first, and how they were known terrorists. It seemed like the truth didn’t matter, only the victory of the Jewish people.

And now he wondered where it would all end. How would it all end? Was he to be martyred here or would it be like his uncle and some other rabbis had said, a glorious victory and a final triumph for the Jewish state, people, and religion? Shaul had never felt so uncertain of anything before. It had all been so simple. It had all sounded so right, so righteous, so justified—that is, until the enemy took on a human face, until here before him lay a wounded Arab of his own age who, with a few simple changes, could have been mistaken for one of his friends or even a relative.

Just at that moment the Arab youth stirred. With great difficulty his eyes opened, and he stared into the air, struggling to remember what had happened, struggling to know if he was waking up from a nightmare or if something unreal and macabre had really happened to him. As if in answer to his unasked question, his eyes fell on Shaul. Seeing the Uzi resting in his hands, he suddenly jerked up to a sitting position, wincing in pain as his wounded shoulder struck against the wall.

Shaul, in a sudden rush of fear, pointed the gun at his captive, shouting, “Stay still!” in English.

Muhammad answered also in English, “Who are you?” And there was a moment of silence as their eyes searched each others’. It was broken when Muhammad asked quietly, a bewildered look on his face, “What’s happening?”

Shaul could scarcely believe that his enemy who looked like him was speaking to him in American English. “Why do you speak English?” he asked.

“I’m from New York City,” was the answer.

“What’re you doing *here*?”

“I came here to say my prayers. I’m on a pilgrimage. What are *you* doing here seems a more appropriate question, wouldn’t you say?”

Shaul stiffened and held his head up in pride as he quoted the lines he had learned so well. “We’re taking back what is rightfully ours. We’re taking back the original site of Solomon’s temple, chosen by the great Jewish king, David.”

Muhammad, in bewildered disbelief at what he was now experiencing, at the nightmare that he now found himself living, remained silent. From time to time he glanced at his captor’s face and saw there an uncertainty he had not expected of a Jewish militant. He knew what the Jew was talking about. There had

been a great deal of contention among the Jewish leaders about where the original site of Solomon's temple had been. Many had been content with the site chosen by the religious and archeological delegation appointed by the Chairman—the place where the tabernacle now stood. Others would not be dissuaded that the Dome of the Rock stood over the place where the *real* temple should be built.

After some five or ten minutes of confirming that this young man was less dangerous than his rifle would seem to indicate, Muhammad ventured to say, "But this mosque and shrine have been here for more than a thousand years. They've been here longer than the total time of the temples your people built. How can you say *we* have no right to be here?"

There it was again—the plaguing doubt about the righteousness of what they were doing. The young Israeli faltered just a bit before he answered, "Because God gave this land to us."

Muhammad nodded, hearing the answer he had expected, and that his people had always heard—the answer that ignored that the Palestinians had been here for two thousand years before the Jews came back from Europe; the answer that ignored the fact that the Arabs and the remaining Jews had lived in peace side by side in Palestine all that time, and that there had been no need to drive the Palestinians out. Looking down and speaking just louder than a whisper, Muhammad said, "God also scattered you for your sins, and someone had to take care of the land, and we were the people."

"Ha! Take care of the land?!" Shaul retorted. "It was a desert when we came, and we've caused it to blossom like the rose as was predicted in the Scriptures."

"It's true. The Ottoman Empire did largely neglect

Palestine, and it was in a sad state when you got it. There isn't an Arab who wouldn't admit that you've transformed the land. But how? By taking the Jordan River for your own, by irrigating with its water and the help of American and European money. If we had had that kind of money, we could have done the same. We were poor, but we lived peacefully here, good simple lives. You know, my great grandfather took Jews into his own house when they came after World War II. He took them in, gave them a home, treated them with typical Arab hospitality, and helped them get started. Do you know what my grandfather dreamed of as peace?"

"I can just imagine a Palestinian terrorist's idea of peace. Death to the Jews—abolishment of the Jewish state?"

"No. He dreamed of it being like it was before 1948, when in one community Christians, Jews, and Muslims all lived together peacefully. Their children played together. They went to their own places of worship, but they understood and tolerated one another. That was his idea, his dream of peace, like that of many Palestinians, until the day he and my grandmother were killed by Israeli terrorists in Deir Yassin."

Shaul was silent. He had heard of the attack on Deir Yassin, but it had always been touted as a great military victory over the enemy, not an act of terrorism. Jews did not commit terrorism—or did they?

"But now ... at last ... we had peace," Muhammad said. The hopelessness of generations welled up in Muhammad's heart and tears began to flow down his cheek as he spoke. "At last we had a solution, our two great faiths worshipping side by side in harmony, in unity that was supposed to last. And now what have you done? How will this all end, my friend?"

“Why do you call me ‘friend?’”

“I don’t know. It came out like that. I don’t know why I said it. Where are you from? You don’t speak like an Israeli.”

Shaul uttered slowly and grimly, “I live on Delancey Street.”

“So ... you and I have more in common than you and your commanders—and yet we are enemies.”

Shaul’s glance fell guiltily to the floor. His grip on his rifle loosened. He wondered how much of what he had been taught was true, and how much had simply been propaganda to incite him into being part of what was now happening. He knew there had been no need for anyone to be shot when they took the Temple Mount. No one had shot at or resisted them. None of the Israelis confessed to being the first to shoot, but Shaul knew this young man had not resisted them. Just someone in the fire and fervor of the moment had felt they were doing God service by shooting this Arab boy who had come here to worship his God.

“What is your name?” Shaul finally asked.

“Muhammad. And yours, my fellow New Yorker?”

“Shaul. Do you know in the ancient Scriptures there is a promise of the Messiah?”

“Yes, I know. Jesus, the Messiah,” Muhammad answered.

“No, not Jesus. We thought ... well, we once believed it was the Chairman.”

“Well, isn’t he like a Messiah, not only for you, but the whole world?”

“So we thought, Muhammad, but my uncle showed me how this man who is called the World Chairman fulfills other prophecies in our ancient texts. We have begun to see that our people have been deceived, though many of them do not yet see it. We have begun to see it, and that’s why we have risen up to fight

him. These prophecies speak of a beast, a man of fierce countenance, a vile person who will pollute the sanctuary. You see, Muhammad, it is written in the ancient texts that our temple will be built.”

“And I, for one, Shaul, have no problem with your temple. But why do you have a problem with our mosque?”

“I ... I’m not sure. Our rabbis teach that we must take over the Temple Mount—all of it—and that it is *our* holy place given us by *our* God. And if we didn’t make our move now, the Chairman would take it all away from us. Otherwise his plan to dismantle some settlements would only be the beginning. For all his great words, he does not respect God, and he will not respect our temple or yours. We must show him that God is to be respected, and that God will protect us as we rise to protect the heritage that He has once again entrusted to us.”

Muhammad smirked. “And you think the Chairman is simply going to let you have it, let you destroy the work of his covenant?”

They both sat in a moment of pensive, pregnant silence, Shaul pondering the unthinkable possibility that the Palestinian people had been victims of Jewish-inflicted atrocities, and Muhammad for the first time considering the possibility that the Chairman might not be as benevolently minded towards the Muslims as he appeared to be. There were plenty of Arabs and Muslims who distrusted the Chairman’s program. He had always thought they would eventually come around, but now he wondered if they knew something he didn’t.

Just then Shaul jerked to a standing position and pointed his rifle at Muhammad, saying, “Don’t go getting any ideas that your propaganda has weakened me. You try to escape and I’ll shoot!”

Shaul and Muhammad's eyes met, Shaul trying to harden himself once more, trying to be the tough soldier he came to be, but it was too late. The human face of the enemy, the wrong enemy, could not be removed now. Muhammad smiled a small smile and relaxed.

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## THE LAKE REVISITED

In the afternoon while the kids quietly read some Word and reviewed their key promises in the room next to his, Lenny took the opportunity to pour out his heart once more to the One Who had kept him through his recent trials, reaffirming his commitment of love and marriage to Jesus, his eternal Husband, the Master Lover of all lovers. "Jesus, I only ask to be made useful once more. I only ask once more, for this short moment of the End, to feel the sacred flame burn irresistibly in my heart and drive me as never before, by all the power of the keys of Your kingdom, toward whatever You have called me to be and do.

"I despair, but I know this is not of You. I know Satan is trying to sift me as wheat. Pray for me, dear Jesus, that my faith fail not in this hour of greatest trial. Is this the end for me, or is it the crucifixion to be followed by a resurrection? I seem to have come to the end, but I think I can hold on a little while longer, while You show me the way of escape. ..." As he continued praying, his eyelids grew heavier and heavier and his words became more and more slurred. He tried to resist what he was certain was another attack of the Enemy to make him fall asleep, but all resistance was in vain and he sank into sleep on the deep pillow his head was lying on.



He found himself standing on the shore of the lake of so long ago, where he had first met his great Love, the marvelous Jesus. The scene was unchanged. There lay the little boat behind the outstretched arms of Jesus. In it were the wineskin, the bread, the oars, and it was obvious it was time to launch.

“Once more,” Jesus said softly, “My darling bride, we meet on the shores of the future. We stand on the beach of a great tomorrow. Once you said yes to Me here and I fulfilled every promise.” Jesus pointed to the left and there was Gypsy clad in radiant armor, and Don ready for battle, then to the right and there stood Roy with his ever-present guitar, and Stan and others he had brought or helped to bring in to the Lord’s fold. “And I multiplied you and I multiplied them. See?” And behind each person stood their children and children’s children and their fruit from their years of service, multitudes accoutered for battle, the Final Great Battle.

Lenny seemed to make out Collin and others he vaguely recognized and many he had never seen but that the Lord was saying were directly or indirectly the fruit of his spiritual loins.

“And why then do you doubt that I can finish what I began? Can you not be as Abraham who looked not on his own body now as good as dead but was strong in faith, giving glory to God and reckoning that what He had promised He was able also to perform?”

Of course! Abraham felt the same, he didn’t look at himself, he looked at the Lord!

“You have been faithful, My son, to be My servant, to be My soldier, to be My friend, to be My bride, and to claim and use the keys and gifts of My Spirit that I have given you and trained you in. Will I be any less faithful to one I have invested so much into? O ye of little faith, why do you doubt and make your

soul impoverished through lack of faith? Cease from this day to look unto the flesh, cease from this day to see things carnally, cease from your pride and your desire to be anything. Now is the hour to lose sight of the shore, to launch your ships.”

As Lenny watched, the little boat was transformed into a mighty fleet of three-masted warships bristling with banners and guns. Trumpets were sounding the battle call, and gangplanks rolled out from each like golden carpets over the water. A mighty cheer rose up from those on the shore as they clambered to board and engage in the final conflict with the foe. Finally only Jesus and Lenny stood on the shore.

“They are waiting for you. Their numbers are not complete without you, My son. Something will be missing if you don’t go, and if you should say no to Me now, there will be losses that would be gain if you held on till the end. Having run well, will it all now be in vain? One more campaign, My beloved soldier of the faith. Will you say yes? Will you go once more into the fray and give no quarter and ask none? Will you now die the great and notable death to yourself? The strife will not be long. Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown. Will you?” And the strong, loving arms of Jesus wrapped round him in an embrace that filled his arms and his chest and his very soul with that strength he had first felt while lying on the floor of a Denton hippie commune, but that now was so much greater than that day so many years ago, for the vessel filled now by this sudden surge of power was emptier even than in those days.

Lenny felt the sobs convulse his body and the tender hands of Jesus stroke his hair as he gasped out the only word that needed to be said, “Yes!” He looked up into dear Jesus’ face and saw his own tears reflected on the cheeks of his compassionate Savior

Who was in all points tempted as he was, Who now wept for him as He took his infirmities and caused them to vanish into the misty air by the lakeside. “Yes, Jesus, my Love, I will fight for You, die for You. I will not take back that which I have committed to You. Here am I, Your servant. Send me where You will!”

Jesus stepped back and motioned to the flagship and said, “Then go, My beloved, and I will be with you until the very end. As you have now committed yourself, I can reveal yet one more marvel unto you, one more marvel shall be revealed, yet one more. ...”

Juliana stood over him, smiling down at him.

“Wake up, sleepyhead,” she chided, then added with surprise, “Dad, you’ve been crying.”

He sat up and pulled her into his arms, saying, “For joy, darling, for joy. Jesus is so so good, don’t ever forget that.”

“I did it, Dad,” she whispered into his ear. “I prayed for you to have a new love.”

“I do have a new love, sweetheart. I love Jesus all new as if I just met Him. He’s the only Love that will never fail. I’m happy to be just His, and I don’t need more than that. Jesus is enough, more than enough, and always has been.”

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## A DREAM OF AFRICA

Tuesday evening came slowly for Don, Gypsy, and family, but finally arrived. Only one night was left before they would be taking a taxi down to Tel Aviv and then a flight out of Israel and back to Africa. Things seemed to be moving rather slowly with the Temple Mount situation as well, and they were thankful for that. They’d just watched the latest news and turned off the TV, prayed for the night, and Marina and John were about to go back to their room and to bed when Don began to muse, “Thank You Jesus. So far it looks like we’re going to get out of here and back to dear old Africa in time for the Tribulation. Of all the places I never planned to begin the last three and a half years of earth’s history, this is it. What’s that verse? ‘When ye shall see the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet ... ye which are *in Judea* flee.’ The passage goes on to say you shouldn’t go back to your house if you’re in the fields, don’t bother to take anything out of your house, but vamoose, high-tail it outta there, git, scram, like beat it, man. So we should really praise the Lord that He held things off this long.”

“Yeah, for sure,” John sighed. He was fully back on board after those two years out of the Family, but he didn’t feel ready for being in the very city where

the Antichrist was going to set himself up as god. He had been invited to the conference because he had become something of an expert on the technicalities of supplying remote villages with water, things like pipeline construction through difficult terrain and so forth. But he knew he was still behind most of the others in spiritual gifts.

“Yeah, me too. I miss John Paul,” Marina said with a faraway look. She and John Paul were more than serious now and were planning to marry soon after she got back.

Don smiled, looked over at Gypsy and squeezed her hand. Her eyes were focused on nothing, or something so far away it wasn't in this world. “Penny for your thoughts, honey.”

“Oh,” Gypsy whispered as she returned to terra firma. “Oh, nothing, just a funny thought.”

“What might that be?”

“Well, you remember how the Lord said we were coming here for a greater purpose than we even realized, but it would be revealed to us as events unfolded?”

“Yeah?”

“Well, what's the *greater purpose*? To take a taxi to Tel Aviv and escape in the nick of time? That's a tale to tell, but is it a greater purpose? I mean, events have certainly unfolded, that's for sure, but do you think we might be in danger of missing the Lord's *greater purpose* by fleeing right now?”

“Mom,” John said, “the Bible says to flee, clear as day. What's wrong with fleeing a little early if you know the Abomination is coming?”

“I don't know. Maybe nothing. I just think we should ask. We've been asking the Lord to show us *how* to escape, *what* to do while we are waiting to escape, pleading He leaves open the *way* of escape. But do you think we should ask Him if we *should* escape or if He

has some greater purpose in our being here?”

“Mom,” Marina said emotionally, “that's easy for you to say! You have Dad here and your kids are all grown up, but are you asking me just to *forsake* John Paul? I love him, Mom. I know it's not gonna be much of a honeymoon what with the Tribulation and all, but whatever we go through, I ... I ... wanna be...” and in tears barely managed to choke out “..with him!” Marina began to run for the bathroom, only to be stopped by Gypsy's arms wrapping her in that warm, motherly embrace that had seen her through so many battles, big and little. Torrents of tears flowed freely onto Gypsy's shoulder as Gypsy stroked her hair.

“Baby,” Gypsy cooed, “I want you and John Paul to be together. And you know Jesus knows your heart and would never ask anything of you more than you could bear. So I just think we should ask Him, knowing He has never given us anything more than we can bear and He won't start now. Don't worry, baby, I don't have anything in mind, no hidden agenda or preconceived idea. Let's just go to Jesus tonight with our blank sheets and then compare notes in the morning. Huh, what do you say?” She looked over at Don. “What do you say, hon?”

“I think you're right, Gypsy.”

Gypsy took Marina's tear-stained face between the palms of her hands and smiled into her eyes. “Okay, sweetie?”

“Okay, Mom,” Marina said, nodding.

It was the only time they had ordered room service for breakfast, but they knew they needed privacy as they went over what they had received from the Lord. Marina looked all aglow and fresh, as if she had had the time of her life with a wonderful lover the night before. John was sober but peaceful. Don and Gypsy's

faces, though, were unreadable, cool and nonchalant almost. But John and Marina recognized that that had to be a cover-up for something earth-shaking; they could not guess what.

After prayer for the food Don quietly asked, “Well, who wants to start?”

“I do!” Marina’s hand shot up. “I can hardly wait to tell you the beautiful things Jesus showed me. And I mean *showed* me, Mom, Dad, John—He took me right out of my bed and right through the wall and into the air. It was like Wendy with Peter Pan, remember in the old cartoon?”

“That wasn’t an approved movie, was it, Don?” Gypsy asked.

“Oops,” Marina said. “I think I saw it one time when we were visiting Grandma. But anyway, Jesus is a lot more of a babe than Peter Pan. He wafted me away over Jerusalem and off to *Africa*, praise God! And then, holding my hand the whole time, He showed me these different glimpses of the future—witnessing with John Paul, teaching and leading scads of people through the Tribulation and all. I saw John helping villagers, and then I saw Simeon and his little family going strong for the Lord. Carolyn and James had grown up so much and had their own ministries and were doing fine too. I can’t remember all the scenes He showed me, but it looked like Africa was our future for sure, and I was so relieved. Jesus is just so good. Then He ... well, I can’t tell you everything that happened, it was just so beautiful and intimate, but that was the gist of it.” She sat back with a happy, contented smile, not even noticing the tear Gypsy brushed away from her eye.

“How about you, John?” Don asked.

“Well,” John said, “the Lord gave me this neat little prophecy that goes right along with what Marina saw.”

And he read a prophecy calling him to carry on the work he had begun among the villages, saying that Jesus would use the work he had begun with the world government-funded project they were doing as a springboard for a fruitful Endtime ministry.

“Marina,” Gypsy said with a catch in her voice when John had finished his prophecy, “what did you see your dad and me doing?”

Marina stopped with a piece of toast halfway to her mouth. She slowly placed it back on her plate and said, “I didn’t see anything about you ... nothing at all. Mom, Dad ... what does that mean?”

Don and Gypsy looked at each other and Gypsy continued, “It means ... that we’ve done our best for you and ... we are so proud of the way you’ve turned out.” It was getting harder for her to get the words out. “It ... it also means that those ... who love God ... will never meet for the last time.”

“Mom, no! I don’t want to be apart from you! Dad, what is this?”

It was Gypsy’s turn to cry. Don took a deep breath and continued, “Marina, John, the Lord gave your mom and me the exact same prophecy, word for word, when we asked for something before sleeping last night. We wrote it down, and it knocked us off our feet as we read it to each other.”

“Word for word?!” John exclaimed.

“Yes, word for word.”

“Awesome!”

“And then your Mom dreamed a beautiful dream. Tell them, Gypsy.”

“I dreamed that Jesus took me right out of the hotel room,” Gypsy continued, “and I saw all of our children—you with John Paul, John, Simeon, James, and Carolyn doing all the things you saw in your dream, and I knew you would be all right. I knew you

were in the best Hands there could be. I had peace to do what Jesus was asking of your dad and me.”

Gypsy and Don then handed their two children the two prophecies. John and Marina each took one copy and read them in silence, glancing from time to time at the other’s copy in awe. The method God had used to confirm His will was as astounding as the message was clear.

“I have brought you through much and trained you for such a time and such a place as this. This was no accident that you should be here at this time, for there are many who have need of you here in these final days. The experiences you have had in your field have prepared you for the work that lies ahead. I now ask you once more to forsake all. All the other forsakings have been preparing you for this, the big one, and I am confident that the habit you have built of saying yes to Me will serve you well once more.

“You are saying yes to a truly blank sheet that will only be filled in one line at a time. On the first line is written, ‘Take your children to the airport in Tel Aviv and send them off with your blessings.’ They shall go from strength to strength and shall emerge victorious from Great Tribulation, and you shall rejoice in that day that you have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. Your children shall rise up and call you blessed, and you shall have the great joy of knowing that your children walk in truth, even through the valley of the shadow of death.

“Come to Me for the next instructions after you have seen beloved John and Marina off, for I have other plans for them and more to reveal to you.”

It was evening when they bade a tearful “till we meet again” to John and Marina at the Tel Aviv Airport. The hugs lingered long as they all memorized

the touches, the smiles, the voices, even the smells of those they loved so dearly. At last the parting could be delayed no longer. With smiles hiding oceans of tears, the four warriors of the faith waved to one another till they were out of sight. Only then was the storm of tears released. Don and Gypsy allowed themselves the momentary luxury of sitting in the departure lounge, holding each other and silently crying.

When their fountains depleted, they asked Jesus the simple question, “Okay, Lord, it’s done. What now?” and quietly waited for the answer. To their surprise they both heard the same general instructions. “Take a much-deserved vacation, a second honeymoon. Go to Eilat. Relax on the beach and wait for My next instructions. Tank up on the Word. Rest, sleep, pray and spend time loving each other and Me. You’ll need it in the days to come.” After an additional short prayer they decided to take a room for the night and get a bus to Eilat in the morning.

On the way out of the airport Gypsy mused, slipping her hand into Don’s, “Jesus’ greater purposes aren’t always what you expect, are they? Second honeymoon?”

“I’ll say,” Don answered, “but don’t forget, it’s just one line at a time.”

“Yeah, so let’s live each line as if it were our last.” She was silent for a moment and then, standing on her tiptoes to reach Don’s ear, cooed, “Are you ready to be ravished, my love?”

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## **TAKING STOCK**

The clock of time ticked slowly as the Temple Mount standoff continued. The entire population of the world understood the danger, and even understood some of the significance of what was happening, though only the chosen few who knew their God, only those who understood among the people, really comprehended the full meaning of these events and what this was leading to. Nevertheless, everyone everywhere knew things of this nature happening in that region could never be taken lightly—and thank God for that, because this attitude itself urged everyone to proceed cautiously.

The demands from the invaders were concise and clear—the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque must be dismantled and moved to Saudi Arabia or another location of the Muslim council's choice, and the remaining Jewish settlements must all be allowed to remain intact and under Israeli control. Concise and clear, yes, but totally unacceptable to every one of a billion Muslims around the world, who cried out as if with one voice, saying, “Please do not turn our Noble Sanctuary into a scene of carnage. Please proceed cautiously. Please do not desecrate the holy site of both religions.”

On the other hand, the Israelis with their crack teams, their elite troops who had been trained so well to execute incredible deliveries, were inactive and deliberately withheld from engaging the Temple Mount fighters, the excuse being that the military did not want to initiate more bloodshed on the holy mount, but rather wait for the government to reach a diplomatic solution.

The Knesset and the prime minister were stalling, having talks with highly placed rabbis, settlement leaders, and the Palestinian leaders of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The patience of the United Nations negotiators, and the patience of the Chairman himself, was getting thinner by the day, and still there was no end in sight.

A joint U.S.-British fleet consisting of aircraft carriers, destroyers, and other warships of all sorts was massing in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf in anticipation of Muslim retaliation. One-World troops were massing on the Turkish border. Several Arab nations were mobilizing troops in great numbers for the very real possibility that all diplomatic means would fail.

Meanwhile, what few Family members there were in the immediate endangered area had moved to higher ground, to cities like the Middle Eastern metropolis where Lenny and his family lived—cities which for the time being were deemed safe, or as safe as any place could be in the Middle East in these last few weeks before the onset of the Great Tribulation.

Muhammad hungrily ate the pita bread, dipping it in a bowl of humus as the six hostages—who together with him had been herded into this small and bare room in the Al Aqsa mosque—sat around the circle. As their wounds had begun healing, they had been

herded together with older guards. Now he could only make occasional eye contact with Shaul as he passed by. They were no longer able to talk. However, those few days that they had been together had made an impression on both of them.

Muhammad knew full well that the way the Jews were going about trying to get their way was wrong. It could only lead to disaster and the thwarting of their own plans. It had not been said, but he sensed these Jews, many of whom were settlers, were confident they would be backed by the Israeli government as they always had been in the past—and that subsequently the great power of the American superstate with all of its money and all of its armaments would use its formidable military muscle to force an agreement supporting their terms. This Shaul had never spoken, but through insinuations Muhammad knew it was what these attackers were counting on and hoping for. But he also knew that there was a limit to what America could do, and that this time the Jews may have pushed too far. He looked in pity on his Jewish captors, for he knew that many would die.

And what of himself? Was he soon to die? He had no fear, for did he not know that he had come here to say his prayers, to honor the great God of his people, the great God of all the world? Did he not come here on a pilgrimage? What better way could there be to die than that, while performing his religious duties, while attempting to make the once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca? Would he not join a long line of honored martyrs who had given their lives for the Palestinian cause? It would be an honor so to die. He had no fear. He had feared earlier, but now he had no fear. He did have concern, however; concern about the true nature of the Chairman, and about how all this would end—not just for the Muslims, but for the

Jews as well—concerns that had been placed there by the young Jew from New York whom Muhammad could now not help but consider a friend.

Shaul stood quietly outside the room where the captives were kept—one of the many rooms situated on the perimeter of the wide stone terrace surrounding the mosque. The older men now guarded the Palestinians and the Muslims, making an extra effort to keep them apart from the younger and more impressionable soldiers. But already Shaul felt a kindred spirit with this young Arab, and every day he passed by to see how he fared. Every day their eyes met, however briefly, and the bond of friendship was strengthened. Undoubtedly something had happened those days they had talked and shared their aspirations. So many things felt the same—not only their humanity, but even in their religions. They had so much in common. Why had no one ever told him?

Yet conversely Shaul agonized, knowing that the elders would never espouse his thoughts of this infidel, this Goy, this Palestinian, as being his friend!

He wondered where it would end, and he thought of death, and unlike Muhammad, he feared. Would he be dying for the right cause? Was it any use what they had done here, or had they, as Muhammad seemed to indicate, only succeeded to plunge Jerusalem—and the whole world—back into the volatile state that had existed before the covenant? Had he gotten so taken-away with his religious fervor, the religious zeal of the mob, that he had forgotten his duties to mankind—duties that even the Torah spoke of? Certainly their first duty was to their own kind, that was clear, but where in the Great Books, the most ancient books, were they taught to disregard the welfare of other peoples? Had not Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and even the great King David, been kind to the strangers

within their gates, because they had known what it was like to be strangers in a strange land, and to be treated poorly? And above them all, the nagging question for which he found no satisfactory answer: Had they made a great crusading step forward for the Jewish people by taking the Temple Mount by force, or had they made a grave error that would have dire international consequences?

Yakob touched his shoulder right at that moment and motioned him to continue making their rounds. Once they were out of earshot of the elders, Yakob whispered, “I overheard your uncle Mordecai tell some of the other elders that British and American ships have touched at Cyprus and are headed this way—a very large fleet, the entire American sixth fleet, I think.” His eyes searched Shaul’s for some kind of reaction, but there was none. “Don’t you see? They are coming to our aid. The bulk of the UN troops have not arrived yet, so the Americans will get here first, and, together with our own armies, we shall be well able to destroy the infidels! This evil Chairman, this betrayer of all people, shall have to back down.”

Shaul recognized that blind zeal in Yakob’s eyes that had been in his only a few weeks ago. He swallowed hard, then clenched his fist and grinned. “Yes! Yes! This could be it!”

As they continued their rounds, circling the perimeter of the grounds, surveying the action or lack of it outside through the intermittent gates, Yakob continued whispering with great animation of all that most certainly would soon happen and the glorious victory that would be won. Shaul nodded, but scarcely listened as he wondered if it was truly possible that the mighty Chairman would back down to this show of force. Would this not force his hand and give him cause for aggression? Could this not give him the



excuse to attack with all his might? Could this not be the very thing he was waiting for to justify his invasion of Israel?

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## THE CHAIRMAN CHALLENGED

“Damn! Damn! Damn! Damn!” the Chairman shouted as he pounded the oaken table repeatedly with his big fist. “How *dare* they challenge me and rattle their sabers in my face? I will *not* be intimidated or have my hand forced to go against my better judgment by these proud Americans who still think they have the right to rule the world!”

The Chairman’s chief minister, a slight, dark man with a wild tousel of nearly black hair crowning his narrow face, excitedly jumped to his feet. “But ... but, Your Excellency, don’t you see, that this ... this works in our favor?” The Minister was practically the Chairman’s alter ego. His total loyalty was unquestioned, and, except for the fact that his public presence was weak and lacking in the charisma needed to rule the world, he could have carried out all the duties of the Chairman and no one would notice any difference.

“You know I hate my authority challenged! I will *not* countenance rebellion after all I have done that no one else was able to do.”

“You already know ... I mean ... you are well aware that the Americans are too proud to bow their knee completely to you, and, well ... the British are ... they are foolish enough to believe that they, with

their Yankee cohorts, are still a world power. So ... uh ... so this is no ... or comes as no surprise. But it does give you ... uh ... just cause to send the rallying cry for our troops and allies to seize total power in Jerusalem. This is your reason ... or cause, to subjugate the Zionists once and for all, and to begin all that we know would, could, and should follow this decisive and long-overdue action.” The Minister raised his eyebrows in a gesture of significance to the Chairman, hoping he would get the message but no others would.

Abner Golden, one of the chief advisers in the room, appeared visibly disturbed by this exchange and ran his stubby fingers over his bald head, a nervous action he had begun in the days when he still had hair to run his fingers through, and had never stopped doing since. In timid and halting syllables he questioned, “Are ... are ... we talking of actually invading ... I mean, invading Israel because of a handful of armed settlers ... the invaders of the Temple Mount?”

The Chairman’s eyes flashed as he sensed the misplaced loyalty of this adviser. Golden was brilliant and could be ruthless in carrying out his duties when he needed to be, but, being an apostate but formerly “warm Jew,” Golden had never been able to gain the Chairman’s full trust. He had become one of his chief advisers during some earlier problems with the Israelis and the Covenant, and his excellent advice at that time had caused the Minister to insist he be brought in closer. There was silence as the Chairman sized him up. No one looked at the Chairman or at Abner. All present studied the plush carpet of the planning room, afraid to breathe until such a time as the Chairman would break the silence. A challenge, direct or indirect, of the Chairman’s wisdom by anyone but the Minister, was unheard of.

“Yes, Mr. Golden, if necessary. We will do *whatever* is necessary to stop this atrocity and contravention of the Covenant, even to the point of invading! And world opinion shall be on our side! It is high time these Zionists are put in their place! It is high time for these religions that have caused us trouble in nation after nation with their wars and bloodshed in the name of their superstition, to get the message of the 21st century—the message that a new day has dawned and such things will no longer be tolerated.” The Chairman’s eyes met the Minister’s, and they exchanged slight, knowing smiles. The Minister heaved a sigh of relief that the Chairman had not further clarified what that proper place was to be.

Mr. Golden continued. “I would like to bring to your attention a disturbing passage in the Bible about the ships of Chittim which is the ancient name for...”

The Chairman’s teeth clenched, his jaw trembled, and his face flushed. Golden stopped mid-sentence, his jaw hanging open as the Chairman’s massive fist raised high over his head and came down on the thick oaken table. The sound of splintering wood was deafening as his hand passed through the table unharmed. “That book shall *never* be mentioned nor quoted in my presence! And, Mr. Golden, until such a time as you are willing to grovel before me in destitute repentance, you shall not pass through my doorway! OUT!!”

Mr. Golden’s stout little form scurried to gather his papers and exit without further comment. Those present were getting accustomed to such scenes and accepted them as the price one had to pay to work with the greatest genius of modern times. After a few minutes of silence, they knew they would be able to continue in earnest planning the next move, one they now all knew would include an invasion of Israel.

## **GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP**

Lenny had prepared all morning for the Bible class, but no amount of preparation could have made him feel ready for the crowd of people who had come this Sunday afternoon—so many that the huge living room of the main building of the Family estate was packed with people eager to hear the meaning of what was happening in the world. The attendance to these Bible studies had been slowly and quietly increasing up till the Holy Mount takeover, but then every week the numbers seemed to double. And now, the fourth week of the standoff, every inch of space on the floor of the living room was taken up with yet more people sitting all along the spiral staircase going up to the next floor.

They had considered opening the big doors to the large veranda, but they had to be careful in this city and these times that they did not make it obvious that there was any kind of large gathering of people, and especially not listening to what could be considered controversial teachings. So, rather than opening up the doors to the veranda, the overflow of people were seated in the dining room where they could hear the class on speakers hooked up to the sound system in the living room. Most were Christians, but quite a few were Muslim friends of the Family who had come to

know over these last few years that the Family had a spirit and understanding that could not be found among their own religious hierarchy. Now, as the peace of their region was being threatened once more and the Family was teaching that all this was predicted in detail in the Bible, the walls of religious differences were crumbling, and their friends and contacts flocked to hear the Word.

Lenny sipped from the glass of water on the table before him, yet somehow it did not moisten his parched throat nearly enough. As the strains of the last song died down, he cast his eyes heavenward and silently prayed, by the power of the keys and the gift of heavenly thought power, to be supernaturally given the very words to speak in order to satisfy the hungry souls before him. He also prayed for his translator, Iyyad, that he would catch the words as well as the deeper meanings of all the Lord would inspire Lenny to say.

Then, like a slowly moving mist behind his closed eyelids, there began to form the outline of a man's helmeted head, the features coming in clearer until he could see it was an older, bearded man in some pre-Renaissance garb with one of those pointed Spanish helmets they wore back then. He smiled benevolently on Lenny as if to say, "Here I am, the answer to your prayer."

As Lenny studied his face, the man turned his back to him as if to look out over the crowd of people and then, stepping backward, melted into Lenny's body! Goose bumps rose up from the crown of his head to his toes, and it was as if his tongue was set on fire and couldn't keep silent. His eyes sprang open! He felt that he was another man! He stood as if thrown to his feet, and a strength of voice he had never known, in a tone he himself had never heard, emanated from his throat in Arabic far more fluent than he had ever spoken! A

gasp went over those gathered there, for most of them knew Lenny, but recognized something special had suddenly come over him. Iyyad immediately sensed his services would not be needed today.

"All this that you now see happening in Jerusalem is what the prophets of all ages have foretold, the beginning of the final conflict between God and the Devil. This is the day of reckoning, for it was foretold in the Holy Book, the Bible, that the ships of Chittim or Cyprus would push at the king of the north and he would be grieved and have indignation against the holy Covenant. This man, the man who shall soon declare himself god above all gods and demand worship of all mankind, abolishing the practice of all faiths, shall descend upon the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem with a great and mighty army, and many shall fall down broken. This may seem to many or most of you like good news, for we all know well the recalcitrant attitude of the Zionist state, but this man, the Chairman, is ultimately not what he seems to be. He is not the savior of mankind nor the liberator of the oppressed that he has made himself out to be.

"You and I have been chosen from before the foundation of the earth to witness the death throes of the rule of wicked man over the world. This is not a thing to dread or to fear, this is a thing to bow the knee to our God for, to thank Him in humble adoration for. This is a thing to rejoice in, for the Holy Scriptures say, 'Blessed are they who die in the Lord from henceforth. Their works do follow them.'"

The notes for the class lay on the table for the next two hours, untouched, as Lenny spoke, walking among the audience, Bible in hand. When he would open his Bible to a passage, there was no need to read it, for miraculously he knew each verse word for word, even verses he had never taken the time to memorize.

Lenny knew the words were not his, the delivery was not his, that he was being guided and controlled by a powerful, ancient heavenly spirit who had taken him over. Unbeknownst to him, as he walked among the people and touched their hands or shoulder or looked into their eyes or sat beside this or that one, putting his arm around their shoulders, many were suddenly aware that the headache they had had was gone, their sore throat was washed away, or their fear of these times had vanished. Finally, having finished his stirring message about what was soon to happen in the world as well as what to do about it, with the reassurance that God's children had nothing to fear, Lenny stopped to close in prayer.

He was now standing by the wheelchair of a spastic young lady, Lani, as she gazed with her beautiful eyes into his face. She was strapped into her chair, having no control of any part of her body except those big, limpid brown eyes that had for years taken in God's love and Word with voracious hunger as they in turn inspired her teachers with her simple, childlike faith. Their eyes met, and involuntarily Lenny's hand touched her cheek as his voice whispered with a softness that could amazingly be heard by all present, "Lani, Lani, Jesus makes you whole. His keys of healing and renewal have power to raise you up."

Her large eyes expanded to twice their normal size, then closed tightly as a shudder shook her body from head to toe and she slumped into unconsciousness. A loud gasp from the room and then silence! Was she breathing? No. Was she dead? Suddenly she drew a huge gulp of air, throwing her body back into a sitting position as her eyes opened. She sighed, relaxed, and turned her head smoothly and effortlessly with a faraway but peaceful look as she took in the entire room.

"Lenny," she said with no slur in her voice for the first time in her life, "can you unbuckle my hands and feet?"

Not a sound was heard from those in the room as Lenny slowly unbuckled each strap on her arms, on her waist, on her legs. All watched, afraid to breathe as she slowly stood, shakily at first, and then took one, two, three steps to throw herself into Lenny's arms with a joyous embrace. The room erupted with a glorious mixture of Muslim and Christian praises in languages of men and of angels. Lani lifted her arms in praise as she danced round and round, hugging everyone she could reach. The crowd made no effort to hide their amazement, their excitement, their exuberant joy at the power they had just witnessed. The air was peppered with enthusiastic shouts of "Praise God!" "*Alhamdulillah!*" "Thank You Jesus!" "*Allah akhbar!*" and "*Allah kareem!*"

It was midnight before the last of the visitors had gone home and Lenny and the Family members were left alone. No sooner had the door closed behind the final visitor when all began bursting out with testimonies of what had happened. Many had been healed. Those who had needed healing but could not reach Lenny turned to the nearest Family member, asking for prayer, and were blessed with instant healing. Many proclaimed their faith in Jesus and pledged to do all they could to fight the evils in the world with the weapons of the Spirit.

The testimony that impressed Lenny the most was that of Mary, a lovely blonde Family member who had recently fled here from a hostile part of the Middle East. She, who had only been there a few months and knew only the most basic Arabic, testified that some of the people who could not speak English had asked her

to explain more about what was happening to them. She had looked around for someone to translate when she was suddenly made aware of a shadowy figure standing beside her. She felt the spirit of a lady enter her body and take over her tongue. As she answered the people's questions in flowing Arabic, she realized in amazement that she could understand every word she was saying and hearing. It wasn't long before an Arab man explained to the one that she was talking to that she actually had not been able to speak much Arabic as of two days before, when she had visited his office, and a crowd gathered round to witness yet another miracle! Miracle after miracle had happened throughout the evening, the final one being how the food prepared for the Home of thirty-three people was more than enough to feed the two hundred who had gathered that afternoon.

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## **LENNY AND RODRIGO**

It was two in the morning when Lenny finally retired to his room, wondering if he would ever feel the need to sleep again. He was wide awake, his mind racing, his heart rejoicing as if he had just been reborn. As he lay in bed staring at the ceiling, he directed a prayer to Heaven with the question he wanted an answer to above all . "Who was that man, Lord? He looked European, Spanish, but he spoke perfect Arabic. Who possessed me?"

Before his closed eyes appeared the man once again, with a gentle smile playing on the corner of his lips. "I am Rodrigo, 'the Cid.' I fought many battles against the Muslims, I killed so many, yet I came to know even while I was on earth that many, if not most, were fine, believing people. I came to respect their religion and even learned much of their language. Now the Lord has allowed me and my darling Jemain to make up for the damage we did while on earth. We have learned the beautiful, expressive Arabian tongue fluently and have come back to fight for the Muslims and their salvation in this final war, a war for love rather than for hatred, ignorance, and mistrust. He has assigned me to help you, Lenny. Would you have me? I would be honored if you would say yes."

Yes, *yes, of course*, Lenny only needed to think and Rodrigo smiled.

“Then I have something to deliver to you from an old friend.” Rodrigo looked over his shoulder and there, hanging in the air, was the sword Lenny had seen so many years ago while under the influence of drugs in the commune in Denton, when the Lord first called him. “Take it, Lenny. It is yours. You shall fight and win many battles with this sword, and it shall be in your hands even in your last moments on earth. Go on, take it.”

Lenny saw himself reach up and grasp the sword, and a power far exceeding any drug trip or spiritual experience he had ever had swept over him. Rodrigo slowly faded away and the eyes of the Beloved Master, the Eternal Husband, met Lenny’s, and they truly became one to where he could make no difference between his thoughts and his Master’s. They embraced and whispered words of love, words of promise and pledge, words of commission and loyalty to one another for what seemed like an eternity. How long or how short mattered not, but with a few final words promising unparalleled power and anointing in these last three and a half years, and a joy in life, in death, in peace, in war that had been reserved from the beginning of time for this last generation, Jesus withdrew, leaving Lenny breathless on his bed. Yet he had no sensation of there being a bed. Instead it was as if he were floating in a warm void of power and tenderness, of love and passion. There was a beat of drums in the distance that seemed to approach closer and closer, louder and louder, until Lenny sat up to the insistent knocking on his door.

“Come in,” he called out, oddly enough in Arabic. The door swung open. An apparition in white stood in the doorway, silhouetted like a heavenly aura by a

dim light down the hall. Lenny stared dumbly at the female form in a white flimsy gown. Her long, blonde hair tumbled over her shoulders and curled around her left breast. Somehow he knew, though he could not see her face clearly, that she stood with a bewildered, hesitant look, lips parted, wondering herself why she was there. “Come in,” he said again in Arabic.

As she moved into the glow of the nightlight in his room, he could see it was Mary. “Lenny, I’m sorry...” and she stopped with a startled gasp as the words that came from her mouth were Arabic as well. Then she continued, more comfortable now with her newly and miraculously acquired language. “I couldn’t sleep and saw the light.”

Lenny was no longer surprised that neither of them could speak anything but Arabic as he answered, “You could see *this* light outside?” pointing to the dim nightlight in the far corner.

“No, it was a very bright light, a heavenly light, the light of my Beloved, and I knew He bid me come.” A look of marvel flashed across her face for a split second and then vanished. She said in dreamy, almost unfamiliar English with a touch of a Spanish accent, “I don’t know what I’m saying, but I had to see you, Lenny. We’ve hardly talked, but I had to come to you. I don’t really know why.” She sat down beside him on the bed, took his hand and shyly stroked the back of it. When she lifted her gaze, Lenny felt himself melt into the powerful love reflected in her clear blue eyes.

Now she said, again in Arabic, “I want you. I need you to love me as I have never been loved, and I know you can and I know you will. I long for your arms, for they are Jesus’ arms, and I know you are ready to be Jesus to me, and I long to be Jesus for you.” She blushed in amazement at the words that were coming from her lips to one who she hardly knew but felt she

had known for centuries. “I don’t know if this is for tonight or for always, but tonight...”

“Tonight, Mary,” he said in English but then continued in Arabic, “I long to know your kisses, your caresses, to feel you next to me.”

Their lips met ever so slowly, tenderly at first, searchingly, inquiringly until as if in a moment of definite surrender, Mary pressed her body against his in a passionate embrace. They felt it was more than two hearts could contain, this ecstasy, this total union, this sensation that was much more than human love, more than anything earthly. And in fact, it *was* more than their two hearts could contain, for that night their ecstasy bridged two worlds. Jesus was ravishing His wild, insatiable Bride; Lenny and Mary were being made one as a team for the days of Tribulation; and Rodrigo Diaz and his beloved Jemain were loving one another through their new assignments.

The two loved again and again until breathlessly they lay entwined, whispering words they each had thought they would never say again to another earthly being till the Marriage Supper of the Lamb or later. With words of praise and thankfulness, passion and tenderness, they drifted off into a deep sleep.

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## HOUSE ARREST!

According to the arrangements already made secretly with nations that had to be crossed to reach Israel, the hundreds of world government tanks that had been hidden along the various borders were on the move, into Turkey, into Iraq. On down they raced through Syria and Lebanon, while forces of their allies moved from the south and the east toward Israel. As dawn broke on the capitals of the Middle East, One World fighter jets buzzed the Holy City and especially the Temple Mount, sending the populace of Jerusalem and its environs scurrying for cover.

Message after message was sent to the joint American-British fleet, asking them to pull back, saying that the One World forces were in control of the situation, and that the presence of American independent troops could only serve to further exacerbate the situation. But the calls went unheeded, and American jets were launched to closely monitor the situation from the air.

They soon learned that a large fleet of One World forces was coming up the Suez Canal towards the Mediterranean. Word went out to the American fleet that One World troops would be hosting military exercises in the region, and that any buildups or maneuvers the Americans might witness should not be



regarded as threats. In the meantime, satellites were clearly showing that every border to Israel was bristling with tanks and infantry ready to move in.

Sure enough, squadron after squadron of One World fighter jets soon appeared in formation in the skies over the Mediterranean, and various dummy targets in the water were blown up by their torpedoes and missiles with pinpoint accuracy—in a clear if unspoken display of their capabilities to the American and British fleet, which were on high alert, waiting and watching.

The Israeli government, meanwhile, growing nervous about the military buildup around their country, and emboldened by the strong military presence of their long-time allies, the United States, readied their own troops, and shot off messages to all embassies within their borders, the United Nations, and the Chairman's immediate cabinet, that any threat of force against the nation of Israel would be met with equal force.

The president of the United States, at the same time, in an urgent, pre-dawn conference from Washington, issued an official statement urging restraint from all parties, stating that “the sovereignty of the nation of Israel to resolve the disputes within its own borders is to be respected” and promising that the U.S.-British fleet would remain in the Mediterranean to monitor the situation and ensure a peaceful resolution. It ended with a cautious warning. “We trust that the One World forces under the command of the Chairman will remain neutral and not be used to further the agenda of such nations and powers as would seek to subdue and occupy the nation of Israel for their own ends.”

As if to display their intention to make good their claim, Israeli F-15 jets were soon launched, and screamed their way into formation alongside

the Chairman's new-generation MiG jets. Restraint was exercised, but the situation threatened to get out of hand very easily, and multiple emergency teleconference sessions were called between the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Britain, the Israeli Prime Minister, the Palestinian Authority, Arab and Muslim leaders, and the Chairman and his cabinet of senior advisors—all trying to stave off the inevitable.

Then it happened. An Israeli F-15 maneuvered dangerously close to a One World MiG. They clipped wings in midair, and both planes burst into balls of fire and debris that rained down over the Mediterranean. The aerial battle that ensued between the remaining jets, with both sides thinking the other had fired first, lasted only a few minutes, and ended with five Israeli jets destroyed and the others racing back to land, knowing they didn't stand a chance against the unexpectedly advanced planes and superior weaponry of the One World military.

But the war had already begun, with Israeli mortars, missiles, and tanks firing the first shots on the Golan Heights, which had recently been given back to Syria. No sooner had this occurred than the horizon seemed to be alive with gigantic crawling insects, as the largest tank force ever assembled crossed every border simultaneously into Israel.

The U.S.-British fleet, caught between their desire to help what they saw as their child-nation on one side, and world-opinion and all the One World forces on the other, could do little more than stand by and protest, as the Bible predicted, “Have you come to take a prey?” But with the invasion being lauded by the popular media as a last-resort peacekeeping solution by the New World Order to assume direct control over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount from

those who had violated the international covenant, there was no question as to who would emerge from this conflict victorious.

Lenny leapt from his bed, followed by Mary, to the sound of screaming jets overhead and distant explosions. It seemed the entire region was being subjected to either attack or counter attack. There were sirens heard in the distance and now there was one set of sirens that was coming unmistakably closer. As Lenny threw on his clothes and Mary hurried back to her room, planting one last kiss on his lips as she went, he was certain that that last siren was turning off the main road into their neighborhood. He could now make out two or three separate sirens and the sound of heavy military vehicles at the top of their very street.

By the time he was in the large living room, he could see through the big glass doors to the veranda, that trucks carrying heavily armed troops were unloading outside their wall. There was only time for the teamwork that was gathered there with a few others to shoot up a desperate prayer for guidance before insistent ringing on the bell began. The Lord was faithful to speak to each heart individually to be winsome, to cooperate, to be understanding of these precious Arabs' fears about them. After all, couldn't the sermon Lenny had preached and the warnings they had given lately against the Chairman be interpreted as Zionist propaganda? It was likely that now they were seen as dangerous, as possible enemies, considering the present state of war that existed with Israel.

Gideon and David opened the door and the room flooded with armed commandos and middle-ranking military and police officers. They were met with smiles and words of welcome, and as the officers were invited

to seat themselves, smiling, though sleepy, slightly disheveled girls laid trays of grapes and figs along with glasses of water on the coffee tables before them while promising that coffee would be forthcoming. David motioned to Lenny, indicating that he should join him and his wife, Shari, and Gideon to greet the officers.

As Lenny sat, he could see that the entire perimeter of their property was being surrounded by armed soldiers, and that the people of their neighborhood were peering out of their windows onto the street to see what was happening.

The leading officer, who introduced himself as Colonel Assid, was obviously taken aback by the friendly smiles and almost Arab hospitality they had been met with. He motioned to the soldiers around the room to be "at ease" rather than continuing to hold the aggressive poses they had entered with. "I beg your pardon for entering your home in such a manner, but no chances can be taken with things the way they are now."

"We understand perfectly, Colonel," David said in impressive Arabic. Lenny prayed for his helper to be there, knowing his own Arabic was nowhere near as good as it needed to be. He knew he had been asked to join those hosting their guests because of his suddenly improved language skills. *So, Rodrigo, where are you?* In his mind's eye he saw the shadow of his helper to his right and felt a reassuring pat on his shoulder.

"We must ask you a few questions, as word of some of the things you have been teaching to our people has reached our ears and we find them, shall we say, controversial." He let these words sink in before continuing. "As you know, our Zionist neighbors have had a hard time submitting themselves to the Chairman, which is for us not at all surprising, as

they have had a hard time submitting to any authority for more than half a century, if not centuries, if not millennia. We understand that you have been teaching that the Chairman is wrong in his policy toward Israel. Is this correct?"

"Well," David replied, "we understand how it might look like that, but actually this is not what we teach. Perhaps one of our main teachers, Leonard Sands, can explain what it is we say exactly."

"Ah, yes, we have heard of you, and especially since your meeting yesterday we have heard of almost nothing else from one of our agents who was here yesterday." He paused as he let that sink in, studying the eyes of each person sitting before him. Just then small cups of steaming spiced Arabic coffee were brought in and served all around. The colonel could not resist exchanging a few niceties with the demure young ladies who were serving, and all could see he was visibly softened by their presence. For a moment he seemed to have forgotten his mission, while he asked the girls what they did and got a thorough rundown of their impressive works among the poor of his nation as well as a taste of their unmistakable love for his people. Finally he said, "You must excuse me, ladies. As much as I would love to continue our conversation, duty demands that I continue my discussion with your ... uh ... leadership? *Are you the leadership?*"

Shari answered, "You might say so. We are some of what we call the elected teamwork of this center. We are also some of those who speak the language the best in order to try to make your job as easy as possible. We do know your work is not easy and often quite thankless."

The colonel smiled, almost responded, and then chose not to, turning to Lenny instead. "Well, Leonard, you were going to explain your teachings."

Lenny drew a deep breath before launching into a detailed explanation in Arabic of what the Bible predicted would happen. He was careful to emphasize that it was not that Israel was right and the Chairman wrong, but that the Chairman's successes would soon go to his head so much that he would come to believe that he was God and demand worship of himself, abolishing all religions. He explained that the Family also believed in obeying and supporting him as long as what he was doing was good and right, and that that was why they had till now worked side by side with him. The colonel peppered the conversation with comments and questions that showed that he too knew a great deal about the future of the Jewish people and of the region. Finally, after over an hour had passed and much territory had been covered, he relaxed totally and sat back deep into the soft cushions of the sofa.

"My dear friends," he sighed, "I am sorry to have to inform you that, in spite of your excellent and satisfying explanation of your beliefs and teachings, I am under orders to put you under house arrest as long as the situation in the region remains so volatile. My subordinate, Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Saman, will remain here with a small force. They will keep me informed of how things are going and will see to your needs. You may carry on your activities, but none of you may leave the grounds without permission or escort. I regret that I do not now know how long this condition will prevail, but I trust that it will not be long. Before I go, I have only two questions. May I?"

"Yes, of course," David said.

"What will you do if the Chairman does not do as you say, does not abolish religions and declare himself a god?"

"We shall continue to obey and submit to his government as we have till now."

“Good, good.”

“We believe in obeying the powers that be and that governments are ordained by God to bring order to man’s world.”

“Yes, I too believe that. And one more question, Leonard...”

“Yes,” Lenny said.

“Where did you learn your Arabic?”

“Why, right here. Why do you ask?”

“No reason. It’s just that I once had a Spanish friend who lived many years in our country and spoke beautiful Arabic, but with exactly the same accent you have. I would have sworn you were Spanish if I had not seen your American passport.”

“Well,” Lenny chuckled, “as a matter of fact, the man who is helping me learn *is* Spanish.”

Shari, David, and Gideon gave Lenny a startled look. The colonel seemed delighted and said, “Oh, I would like to *meet* him. I speak a little Spanish myself.”

No one breathed while Lenny stammered a little for the answer. “Uh ... oh ... I’m sorry, but I’m afraid that ... won’t be possible. He has ... uh ... died.”

“But you said that he *is* teaching you.”

“Did I? Oh, well, I guess that just goes to show I still have a lot to learn about your language and proper verb conjugation, doesn’t it? I meant the man who *had been* teaching me until ... when he ... uh ... died.”

There was silence again while everyone looked toward the colonel.

A smile spread across his face. “Our language is very difficult, I must admit, especially verb conjugation, but you do remarkably well. Thank you for your time, and pardon us for any inconvenience.” And with a warm round of hand-shakes, Colonel Assid was on his way with all but one small van of soldiers.

Lieutenant Colonel Saman, who insisted on being called Mustafa, obviously relished the service and attention of the ladies and the hearty conversations he had with the men as the day wore on. Soon he agreed it would be fine to have the news on most of the time to follow what was happening. In the days that were to follow, he and Lenny spent many hours by the TV, discussing all that was being said and relating it to prophesied events. He showed himself a man of voracious mental appetite, keen interest in the future, and surprisingly extensive knowledge of what was going on behind the scenes worldwide. He was only amazed that these simple volunteers understood so much as well.

## **RESCUE IN THE SANCTUARY!**

The death toll mounted as the Israeli regular army, reservists, and settlers put up a gallant but futile fight against the One World troops entering Israel and advancing towards Jerusalem. The excellent training and bravery of their soldiers was no match for the sheer numbers and omnipresence of their enemies. A pincer movement had cut off the northern Israeli forces from the southern part of the country. On all fronts they were being pushed back as the world forces loomed ever closer to Jerusalem. The invaders of the Temple Mount were preparing for battle even to the death while still speaking confidently of deliverance, some suggesting that this might be the moment the Messiah would choose to appear on the scene, landing on the Mount of Olives and restoring the full Kingdom to Israel from the Euphrates to the Nile once and for all.

The roads and desert areas between Amman and Jerusalem were being tenaciously held by the best forces in the Israeli army and fanatical settler forces, as well as being effectively defended by the vast mine fields in the Judean Desert, but the forces between Haifa and Jerusalem through the Megiddo valley had been decimated and the way was now open.

On every front, all units were too engaged locally with the massive international force invading Israel to

allow any of their forces to be pulled out. Consequently, mere hours remained till the forces from the northwest would enter the holy city of Jerusalem.

The Muslim captives in the mosque nervously watched their captors, who were engaged in several heated discussions, while others armed themselves and left to take up defensive positions around the Temple Mount grounds. Several Israeli guards could be seen down the hall, silhouetted against bright floodlights that lit up the interior of the building, wildly gesticulating and loudly discussing their predicament and options, several speaking at the same time. One thing was obvious: They were quite distracted, and the hostages or prisoners, whichever they were seen as, were not high on their list of priorities at the moment.

Muhammad leaned back against the far wall, a good thirty feet from the nearest Israeli. Inching slowly into the shadows in the corner of the room, Muhammad managed to work open the door between this room and the next one, and crawl down the three or four stairs into a deserted and unused room, out of sight of his captors. There he remained for another fifteen minutes to see if he was missed at all. When he found he was not, he stealthily crept to the next room and then the next and another and yet another until he could tell by the sounds coming from outside the room that he was only a few doors away from an outside exit. Here he stopped his progress, knowing the entrance would likely be heavily guarded by the Israeli occupiers. To his relief, his disappearance so far still seemed to be unnoticed.

He rested and waited now against the wall while pondering his predicament and planning his next move. He had no idea how one prayed for God's guidance of his every move, but he found, as he thought deeply,

that it was as if an audible Voice began to speak in his heart or mind, telling him where to go and what to do. He somehow knew he should go two doors back in the direction of the room he had been kept in. Though night was beginning to fall outside by now and it was pitch black inside, yet, guided by this new and strange Voice, he managed to scuffle with his hands along the floor of the room he had been directed to until he found an old-fashioned iron handle and a wooden trapdoor. Lifting it as slowly and as silently as he could manage, he found that below the trapdoor was a descending stairway.

Slipping down through the trapdoor and closing it behind him, he felt with his fingers until he found a light switch at the base of the stairs. Flicking the switch, he was greeted by a dim but sufficient light that revealed a basement filled with supplies—food, clothing, lanterns, fuel, everything that was needed to survive. He noticed there were no weapons, and he was not disappointed. There was going to be enough death here without his adding to it. He could hold out here till the government forces took over and it was safe for him to emerge.

With obvious relief to be somewhat free, he lay down on a big sack of grain. He was more than likely going to make it and survive! With a sudden thought he scrounged through the equipment and, just as he had suspected, found several large boxes of Qurans. In the dim light he managed to read and chant and felt truly happy for the first time in weeks. Then, with praises to Allah in his heart and on his lips, he found water, washed his face, and knelt on a carpet he found to say his prayers of thanksgiving.

It was while he was praying that his thoughts wandered to Shaul. He, Muhammad, was now safe, it seemed, but what about Shaul? Well, he thought,

Shaul had chosen his own path, and it was not his responsibility to change that. Yet Muhammad could find no satisfaction with this train of thought. He couldn't just let him die! He couldn't save himself and just let Shaul be slaughtered! He must find a way to reach him and show him this place of refuge! Between praying and reading, he attempted to hatch a plan of how to find him. Yet all that came to him was to further explore this basement.

Following the Voice that had kept him safe and brought him this far, he was not surprised to find, first, a powerful flashlight and, next, a door that opened on a long corridor, stretching off further than the beam of light could reach. To his great joy it seemed to lead in the direction of the Dome of the Rock! In a few short moments he found himself climbing the stairs into the main building, right into the rotunda, which was now empty, all the armed men being needed on the perimeter of the compound. How strange to be back here where he had experienced such inspiration just four weeks ago. Though now his visit here was under the worst of circumstances, Muhammad was deeply inspired by the sense of a powerful spiritual presence here.

He took a moment to approach the enormous rock in the center of the rotunda, the rock where Abraham had prepared to offer up his son. In his musings he found it oddly significant that at this place where the paths of the two peoples, the Jews and the Arabs, began to separate, he was being called in a small way to break down the wall that divided them. The thought crossed his mind that his action now was to have greater significance than he could yet imagine, but he dismissed it with a shake of his head. He was only doing what he had always been taught to do, to look out for his friend—even if it meant giving his life.

As he returned to the here and now of his situation, he pondered his options. It was now the dead of night, and an ominous silence hung heavy on the air. He crept as close as he could to the nearest doorway without leaving the safe shadows within. His Voice told him to wait, just to wait. Within a period that he estimated to be ten minutes, there appeared silhouettes of two Israeli guards in the doorway. Muhammad's position allowed him to observe their movements without being seen himself. They stood a few minutes, talking in hushed tones, and then with a soft pat on each other's shoulders, they separated and began their walk in opposite directions around the outside of the shrine. The one who headed to the right was Shaul! Muhammad could tell by the peculiar way he walked with his head leaning to the left. Muhammad quietly scurried to the next entrance and waited till Shaul passed by.

"Psst!" Muhammad hissed. Shaul looked the other way, trying to pinpoint the noise. "Here, my friend." Shaul's head turned toward him and stared for a moment into the shadows. Muhammad moved out of the shadows until the tiniest bit of dim starlight enlightened him slightly. He motioned Shaul to step into the entranceway where he had just been standing. He did so.

"Muhammad, everyone thinks you managed to escape. They missed you when it was time to eat. What are you doing here?" Shaul whispered.

"If I had tried to escape, I was sure I'd be killed with a bullet. I've found a hiding place."

"Then why aren't you hiding?"

"I feared for your life. I ... I came to find you, to tell you where to come when the fighting breaks out. You're doomed, my friend, but I want to help you."

"How can you help me? You're a prisoner."

“The positions shall soon be reversed. I’ve found a safe place in some tunnels beneath this building.” He pointed into the darkness of the rotunda behind him and said, “Straight back there, the stairway column nearest to this door, there’s a slab of mosaic under the stairs that’s slid back. It leads to an underground corridor. At the end of the corridor there’s a basement storeroom. There you will find me, and we’ll be safe, at least for the time being, when the One World forces take over the mount.”

“I’m sorry, Muhammad, I can’t ... I don’t understand why you’ve risked your life to find me. I won’t betray you, but I can’t desert my people now. You understand, don’t you?”

“Just remember where I am. Come if you change your mind. Remember, I’m a Palestinian, but I’m also your friend.”

“Thank you, Muhammad, I won’t forget.” Shaul almost turned away and then on an impulse, turned back to Muhammad and hugged him with a strong embrace. Quickly he continued his rounds.

For a few minutes Muhammad followed his direction from inside the building, and then made his way back to the hidden passageway under the stairs. His attention was suddenly drawn to another entrance way. He quickly withdrew himself into the shadows just in time to see Shaul’s companion scurry into sight in front of the entrance, and look in. Then, at the same time, Muhammad noticed a rope being dropped down behind him, and fully armed SWAT-type commandos silently climbing down!

Without hesitation, the nearest commando fired one single, silenced shot from his rifle that sent the Israeli guard flying ten feet through the air and landing with a thud on the stone floor inside the mosque. Then the commandos swarmed out.

As Muhammad wondered where they were all coming from, he suddenly became aware of a very, very soft sound of a helicopter. He had heard of helicopters that could scarcely be heard, and now he knew a One World strike force was assaulting the mount at this very moment and in minutes, if not seconds, Shaul would be killed or wounded!

Muhammad dashed back across the shrine to another entrance and emerged into the starlight just in time to see Shaul about to round the building to where the commandos were. With a silent prayer, “Allah, give me strength,” he jumped Shaul from behind, covering his mouth with his hand to silence him, then pulled him inside and, with a power he had never felt before, dragged him to the hidden doorway, down to the corridor, and the full length of it to the storeroom. He threw Shaul on a bag of grain, disarming him of his Uzi as he did so.

“Muhammad, what are you doing? I told you...”

Muhammad put his finger to his lip. Shaul grew quiet. “Your friend’s already dead. I saw One World commandos kill him. The takeover has begun and commando teams are landing from silent helicopters all over the place. It’s only minutes until all your people will be dead or captured, and you were only seconds away from sharing that fate.”

“You saved my life?”

“Maybe. I don’t know.”

“But what are we to do now? Sooner or later they’ll find us. Maybe they’ll let you go free, but me, I’m one of the Jews who invaded the mosque, remember?”

“How will they even know when you put on one of these?” And Muhammad reached onto the shelf, pulling out Arab robes and a *hata*\* he had chosen that should fit Shaul perfectly. “Really, how will they



know, Shaul, or should I say, ‘Abdullah’? I don’t know how well you can act, my friend, but you could pose as my retarded brother who has been traumatized by this and has not spoken since the day they took over. That way you never have to speak and they won’t know you can’t speak Arabic. They might not know anyway since they are most likely international commando teams, but we’d better not take any chances.”

“You’ve certainly thought of everything, haven’t you?” Shaul said, admiringly.

“Let’s hope and pray to Allah that I have. No time to lose, change those clothes now and stuff them deep into the corner over there.”

As they silently and frantically worked to change Shaul’s appearance, they could hear the unmistakable sounds of battle above them. There were a few shots from unsilenced rifles, and they could only imagine the answering shots and what effect they were having. After five long minutes there was silence as Shaul pretended to scuffle in fear against the wall. If he had been perfectly honest, he would have admitted that it was not at all difficult to act out the fear, for his heart was pounding as if his rib cage could not contain it. He marveled at the coolness and courage of the young Arab as they waited.

Several anxious minutes passed before the door finally opened and two commandos speaking what sounded like Russian or some other Slavic language descended the stairs. Their lights fell on the two “Arabs” who raised their hands in surrender. “Please don’t shoot,” Muhammad said, “we are Arabs, hostages who managed to escape and hide before you attacked.”

It was daylight by the time they were released to go home. Shaul played his part well, so all the soldiers were thoroughly convinced of his imbecility. As they

walked through the narrow streets of old Jerusalem, Muhammad’s mind raced as to where he could take this young Jew. Who would receive him? Where could he be safe? He was now caught between two worlds.

Muhammad looked over at Shaul who now was not silent from feigned idiocy but from shock at the twenty-some bodies of his comrades he had seen on the pavilion outside the mosque as they were released. They had been dragged there and laid in a neat little row, trails of blood, like arrows on the ground, pointing out where they had been dragged from. Time stood still as they walked past them. Some of them stared into space with glassy eyes, mouths wide open. Others couldn’t stare, for they no longer had faces. There was Yakob and Uncle Mordecai and many others that Shaul had spoken with just hours before. On their faces there was no sign of the fulfillment and peace of dying for a just cause. There was only shock that it all ended so differently than they had anticipated. There was fear. There was emptiness. There was ... nothingness.

Muhammad’s thoughts were on the immediate need, and before long his Voice reminded him of his great uncle, Assadam, in nearby Bethlehem. If they could only make it there. He lived alone. That was a distinct advantage. Another hopeful fact was that Assadam, despite the bitter years that had passed, still remembered with fondness the days of living side by side in peace with the Jews. But best of all the reasons for choosing him, he lived alone, so no hothead would kill Shaul in a rage before he had managed to explain all that had happened.

“Allah, go with us,” he prayed as he put his hand on Shaul’s shoulder and nodded with a reassuring half smile into his questioning eyes. As they warily made their way through the winding streets to the southernmost gate, the sounds of battle could be heard

but further and further away. The entire area beyond the outskirts of Jerusalem was now Arab territory, so as they headed further south, there was no fighting going on around them, at least not yet. They had a little time. But how much time did they have? There was no real way for this unlikely pair to know how short the days were, but they sensed that to delay would be unwise and possibly fatal.

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## **ASSADAM**

At last the onslaught was complete. The peace that so many had thought would last forever had now been broken. The illusion of worldwide peace and harmony had been irrevocably shattered now that the line had been crossed. Much of Israel lay in ruins, even some of the ancient and holy sites of Jerusalem were damaged. The Temple Mount with its grand edifices and the bullet-riddled tabernacle walls stood silent and desolate, cordoned off by barricades and heavily armed World Government troops. Every day Jews, Arabs, and some Christians filed past the barricades to stare in glum disbelief at the dream that had turned into a nightmare. What would happen now? There were rumors that the Chairman himself was on his way to Jerusalem to personally take over the present situation. All over the northern half of Israel sporadic gun fights could be heard throughout each day, as the Chairman's troops squelched all remaining resistance.

Assadam smiled benevolently at his young Jewish guest as they sipped their tiny cups of coffee and nibbled on succulent dates on a tray on the low table before them. Having this young Jew in his home and eating at his table, he recalled the days

of the distant past when his father had received a penniless Jewish family from Poland into their own house for five months. He then, like his young nephew Muhammad now, had befriended the teenaged son of the Jewish family and grown very fond of him. How his heart had ached upon hearing of the trials and tribulations their family had gone through when they had to flee their homeland, narrowly escaping the scourge of the Nazis.

Assadam held no hatred for the Jews themselves, knowing full well that the real enemies behind the atrocities to his people were the lofty, shadowy controllers high above the Jewish masses—those who had plotted the Zionist takeover for centuries, and prepared the collective Jewish psyche to pride themselves on being the chosen people who were destined, like Joshua of old, to carve out a homeland for themselves in Palestine.

Now, it seemed that, by the vast and inescapable wisdom of Allah, the thing that every Palestinian had patiently waited for had come—the day when the Zionists had been brought to their knees before the whole world. The Israelis' plan to take over the Temple Mount in its entirety had backfired. And now the wheels of justice ground slowly but ever so finely against the Zionist dream and aspiration, against those who had ignored the outcries of the persecuted, the protests of the world forum, and courted the indignation of the entire Muslim world. All seemed to be happening in answer to the millions of prayers that had been prayed in mosques worldwide for over half a century.

Yet, if the young Jew could be believed, the man who had delivered the fatal blow to the Zionist aspirations was destined to turn against the faithful of *all* religions—and that in only a few days' time. Assadam

wanted to know if this was just more Zionist propaganda, or was it the truth? Though he willingly housed and fed and cared for this young man, he could not accept his theories at face value.

"My young friend," Assadam asked softly in Arabic, "what do you expect will happen if the Chairman comes to Jerusalem?" Muhammad translated every word back and forth exactly as they were spoken from Arabic into English and back again.

"The Scriptures say he will ban all worship and declare himself a god above God," Shaul answered.

"Then he is a fool."

"Perhaps, but he will do this nonetheless," Shaul said respectfully. Shaul, these past days, had grown to love and respect the wise old Arab patriarch who had received him without question, who had hidden him at great danger to himself and his reputation, who had fed him and listened to him with an open mind and deep understanding.

"Does he not know that the religious of the world will reject him, will even fight against him? Every Muslim shall be turned to fight him, not to speak of the Jews and Christians! Why would such a genius make this foolhardy move?"

"I don't really know, sir."

There was silence for a moment. Assadam bit into a date with a faraway look. Shaul and Muhammad looked at each other and shrugged while they waited for their elder to break the silence that had fallen over them. Then Assadam, with a half smile on his bearded face, said, "Now I understand. If what you say is true, and I don't say I believe it yet, then his motivation is pride, the pride of Satan, and yet it is also a trick of Allah to snare the devil-man in his own devices. The Chairman and Satan himself have come to believe that, because so many have been willing to sell their

souls, their private lives, and their freedoms to gain the security and the prosperity that has been offered, that therefore the whole world will be willing to relinquish the most important thing of all—their faith. It is the very same pride that brought about the downfall of Lucifer. He thought the angels would all follow him. Many did, but not all, not even a majority. By telling me of this foolhardy plan which shall be his finish, you have convinced me, my dear Shaul, that if the Chairman does go this far, he is indeed the Man of Sin you have spoken of. He is the one-eyed one, *Dajjal* spoken of in the *Hadith* who shall throw the world into chaos just before the return of *Masih*.”

“The one-eyed one?” Shaul questioned.

“Yes, yes, indeed, so named because he lacks depth of vision and therefore misreads the depth of spirituality of the faithful.”

“And who is *Masih*?” Shaul asked again.

“Why, the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, who will come again and set things right.”

So many long-held beliefs were being overthrown for Shaul that he, like Mary in this same village two thousand years before him, simply remained silent and pondered all he was hearing in his heart.

Assadam continued, “And so begins the long-awaited *jihad* for final control of the world. Ah, this is a great moment for the faithful, a truly *great* moment. We are privileged to live in these days.”

Muhammad now spoke for himself for the first time. “Uncle, how can this be a great moment? We were never able to even throw off the yoke of the small state of Israel. How shall we be able to defeat the might of the Chairman?”

“Did you not study your history and your Quran closely, Muhammad, or have your parents only emphasized the study of economics and business

in your education? Do you not know the workings of Allah? He allows the wicked to play their game until the time comes that they are exposed and all can see clearly that they are evil and what side they are truly on. Then it is His time to cut them down like a rotten and decrepit tree.

“When people choose the Chairman after he abolishes religion, they will be making a clear-cut choice for evil. Until now choosing this political figure or that has been a purely political choice, but then it will become a choice of conscience, of morals, of faith. There are people who will give up almost anything for safety and security, but there are millions and millions who value their faith above all the world. It is this faith that has kept us through invasion, occupation, intifadas, and decades of oppression. We will never give it up, for we would dishonor thousands of lives given for this faith. When the lines are drawn so clearly, *for* Allah and *against* Allah, for God and against God, then all the faithful of the Muslims, Christians, and Jews will realize their true enemy, and perhaps then be persuaded to make peace one with another, that together they might stand up against the common enemy of our one God, and standing together, welcome in the new world and era of peace that shall follow the *Masih*’s return.”

“This is what we thought would happen with the Temple Mount takeover,” Shaul said. “We expected our Messiah to return and set up His long-awaited kingdom in Jerusalem, thus restoring the full kingdom to Israel. And we were disappointed. Why do you think *you* shall not also be disappointed?”

“Perhaps, Shaul,” Assadam said with a teasing smile, “because the Messiah has something bigger in mind than only restoring a Jewish kingdom. Hmm?”

Shaul froze with a tasty morsel halfway to his mouth. These and many of the words he had heard this evening were challenging words, fighting words—or would have been a few weeks before. Now though, the words slipped into his heart as if they were old friends, and the truth of what he heard felt strangely right and good. For the first time in his entire life he allowed himself to consider a deliverance of more than just his own people. In his mind's eye he glimpsed a picture, very quick, very short, but indelible nonetheless, of people of *all* races, of *all* nations, of *all* faiths, embracing, weeping tears of joy, lifting their hands to Heaven, and rejoicing together over some great future victory. Could it be? He shook his head and saw Assadam's kindly eyes still glued to his.

Shaul smiled and whispered, "Yes, perhaps He does."

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## LIBERTY GRANTED

The house arrest had proceeded amicably. Restrictions had been lifted one by one, so that at times the inhabitants of Lenny's Home could go to the nearby shops and markets without guards. Lenny had even been able to take a walk one day with Mary. For him the hardest part of this time was not the confinement, but that he could not pursue what had begun between him and Mary that night before the raid. A week later, he was now certain that he had, in fact, fallen in love. The yearning he felt to hold her again, to sleep with her warm comfort beside him was almost unbearable, yet wait they must. It would not do for their guards to find any of them in any kind of questionable relationship.

So they had loved each other with their eyes and in words when they were able to talk together. They wooed each other through notes they passed on to each other, or left for the other to find in unexpected places. It was through these notes—which they had an abundance of time to write—that they began to know each other better, as they shared their hopes, their dreams, their aspirations, their deepest desires and their mutual deep love for Jesus, as well as their burning desire to win the world for Him. They faithfully shared with each other the messages they

were receiving from Jesus, from David, and from their new spirit helpers, Rodrigo and Jemain. So, despite not being able to pursue this relationship physically, Lenny reminded himself daily how much he had to be thankful for. His new lover was to him a continuing revelation of beauty, of grace, of yieldedness to the will of God. At a point of despair in each of their lives, the Lord had brought them together, and to top it off, they both had new spirit friends and helpers who were becoming more real to them by the day. They had both come to wonder how they had ever managed without the comfort of these now-constant companions.

It was the seventh day of the house arrest, late afternoon, when Colonel Assid's van rolled up once more outside the main house of the estate. Colonel Assid stepped out with a large entourage of ranking officers and quickly swept into the house. A few minutes later, at his command, every adult member of the Home had gathered in the living room for the announcement Colonel Assid was to make. He looked rather serious and made no indication of what was happening until everyone was gathered, except the handful that was needed to look after the children.

Once everyone was seated, he cleared his throat and began, "I hope that my trusted colleague, Colonel Saman, has taken good care of you?"

Everyone nodded and assured the colonel that they had been well cared for.

"Good, good. I am come today to offer my apologies for the inconvenience you have had to undergo during your house arrest. We have spent the time investigating your group and your activities, and we must say we are impressed with the work you have been doing in our country. Your work shows a great deal of love and respect for our people, for our rulers, and for our way

of life. We are also impressed with how many people love you dearly and wish to see you set free so you can continue to be a blessing to them and to those they are trying to help. We have received countless phone calls begging for your liberty. Some of these people are, shall we say, very well placed, and we have now received orders to lift all restrictions." He paused to let the words sink in and to enjoy the happy sighs, the thankful looks on every face, and the softly breathed praises of the Family members gathered there.

He then continued, "And, I might add, we are happy and more than willing to comply with these requests. Besides our investigations outside your walls, Colonel Saman has been reporting to me about all you believe and teach." He paused again. "Therefore there is but one stipulation we will place on you, and that is that, until such a time as the words you have spoken of the Chairman are proven true or false, that you will keep them quiet and private. Please understand that we must consider national security in these troubled times. What you say in private and what you personally think is your own business, but there must be no large meetings where this kind of information is given out indiscriminately. Is this agreeable to all of you?"

Lenny looked at the different members of the teamwork. They all nodded their agreement. After all, according to the Bible, there were only a few days left till all would be revealed and the lines would be clearly drawn up.

"Good, good! Then your period of house arrest is now officially over, and you may resume all your activities. You may even hold meetings of the sort that brought this upon you, but you must be more careful about the subjects you choose to speak of. With that, I take my leave of you and thank you for the respectful

and cooperative way you have conducted yourselves during this time of bonds.”

Amid requests from some of the ladies that he stay for coffee and refreshments, he politely pulled out and drove away, leaving Mustafa Saman to oversee the final release.

Mustafa was more than happy to accept the offer of refreshments so that he could enjoy his last moments with the Family that he had come to love and admire. Over coffee he confided in David and Lenny, “I believe that things will happen just as you say. I believe we will need your help in the days to come to know which way we should go. I hope that our friendship will not end, but that it will grow and prosper. Please pray for that. And please can you ask for your Heaven’s messages for our nation? I know you believe in what you call ‘prophecy’. I would like you to use this gift to help our nation find its way through the darkness that must surely come. Though I am a Muslim, and you are Christians, I believe with all my heart that Allah has a plan for us all together in resisting evil.”

Lenny started as he suddenly saw Mustafa and himself clad in bright shining armor prepared for battle. Out of the corner of his eye he could just make out Rodrigo standing at his right hand. So there truly *was* a plan for Mustafa and the Family to fight together in the days of Tribulation soon to be upon them.

Dinner was a happy, though slightly boisterous affair, with everyone telling testimonies of the soldiers they had witnessed to, and those who had quietly and discreetly received Jesus and said they wanted to come back and learn more. There was a great deal of laughter and praise. Spirits were high. Lenny sat beside Mary who squeezed his hand or his leg more than once during the meal. There was something about

her touch. It was almost as if there was an elixir in her fingertips, and by meal’s end when Lenny walked away with Julie and Samuel, he was fairly floating in a state of intoxication.

Lenny and his two children chatted a while together, had prayer, and then retired with sweet praises to Jesus for His marvelous deliverance. Backing into his room next to theirs, Lenny quietly closed the door. For a moment he rested his head against the door, just thanking Jesus for all He had done for them these last days. He was startled by the soft hand he felt on his back. Spinning around, he saw Mary smiling up at him, her lips parted expectantly, her head cocked a little to the side.

She only managed to whisper, “I hope I’m not being presumpt...” before Lenny’s hungry lips met hers and his aching arms wrapped round her warm, desirous body. The past week of furtive glances, of eye signals, of notes, of whispered words in moments of privacy, now drove them until they lay breathless in each other’s arms across the width of Lenny’s bed.

Alternately panting and praising, Lenny managed to gasp out, “What was that?”

“Heaven, I think, Lenny my love,” Mary whispered as she stroked his hair and smiled into his face.

“Yeah, yeah, it musta been,” Lenny sighed as he lay back with his eyes closed blissfully. Suddenly he saw, as clear as daylight, a picture of small teams of people, all from their present center, bidding farewell to one another with hugs, kisses, and tears as they stood in their driveway with their bags packed, ready to go. He saw himself with Mary and his two kids and two others, Stephen and Annie, both young people whose parents weren’t there in the center, climbing into a big, chauffeur-driven Mercedes limousine, and pulling away with everyone waving as they went. Where, he

could not tell, nor why. Urgently he told Mary what he had seen. Having quickly showered, they armed themselves with their digital recorders and tuned into the Voice that had guided them so faithfully these last years through prophecy.

Mary spoke first. “Indeed night and confusion shall fall on the world and upon this nation as well. With this confusion, among other things, will come an end to the days of being able to live as you now do, in large centers with many like-minded people. For did I not tell you that the main focus of the era of action was an outward look? Very soon this outward look that you have lived these last years will take yet another great leap forward into living among those people you will soon be leading and guiding in a very real way.

“You shall soon be scattered and your large visible centers shall cease to exist in most countries of the world. Even those nations that will hate and resist the Beast shall at first try to appease him in some way, knowing how great his power and influence are. Therefore they shall be reluctant to openly defy him and receive you. Some of your sponsors and donors, those who have not been prepared, those who know not My Words or who have not fully accepted them, who see not as I see but see carnally, shall grow cold and turn their backs on you. But I have prepared a place for you and for all My children. Therefore fear not, for you have, time and again, chosen to leave your lives in My hands, and those Hands you have trusted shall not fail, but shall care for you more now than ever before.”

And Lenny received, “Proclaim the news that scatteration shall soon fall upon My Endtime army, a scatteration that is ordained of Me and shall bring forth innumerable benefits. Prepare now for this next

great wave that shall conceal most of you from the eyes and reach of the Beast for the time being, while it will also strengthen and multiply your ranks as never before. The seeds you each carry in your hearts shall take root and bring forth an hundred-fold in these days, days when I no longer deal with thirty- or sixty-fold.

“In closing, My beloved Lenny, I tell you that here beside you is the final surprise I promised you that day so recent and yet seemingly so long ago. Therefore fear not to take unto you Mary for your wife. I say unto you, refrain from all appearance of evil and fulfill all righteousness that those you live, work, and walk among from this day forth shall find nothing in your life which they can gainsay. Sleep now and take your rest, for you shall need the strength of this night’s sleep. In the days to come, you will no longer proceed in the strength that comes from the bed, but the strength that comes from Me alone.”

With a prayer of praise and thanksgiving, Lenny and Mary did their best to sleep the rest of the night, but the excitement of knowing Jesus was already revealing their every move in advance, as well as the thrill of this new phase they were soon to enter, made sleep elusive.



## THE BRIDE REJOICES

At first light Samuel crept into their room, and, only mildly surprised to find Mary in his dad's bed, excitedly told them, "Dad, I dreamed we were moving and we had lots of new friends. There were lots of kids that I played with, Arab kids, and they were asking me all about the Bible and the Antichrist and everything and I knew a whole lot and they were all listening to me—to me, Dad! It was fun and real exciting."

Julie stumbled half asleep through the open door from her room, and sleepily yawned as she said, "Dad, I had a funny dream, that everything had changed. We were living with Lani, and you and Mary were married and then..." Her eyes came into focus just as she reached the foot of Lenny's bed. There was silence as she took in the sight before her with her jaw agape. Then, as if she had just been infused with a heavy dose of caffeine, she leaped up on the bed, bouncing up and down, alternately hugging Lenny and Mary, then pulling back and looking at them both. "Dad? Mary? I can't believe it ... I mean, yeah, what more can I say? So does this mean...?"

Lenny stared back at her blankly.

"Congratulations, you two!" she finally said, leaning forward to give them both another hug. Then, with a wry smile, she added, "About time, Dad!"

The door swung open and in walked Gideon, scratching his head momentarily at the scene before him. “Uh ... everyone is talking about strange dreams and prophecies they had in the night, and we’re all gathering to compare notes and make plans. I for one got that we were to liquidate all our assets that we can’t carry on our backs or drive out of here with.”

There was an awed silence as each one realized that the Lord was moving in a new and more powerful way. They had often received prophecies that were in agreement before, but nothing on such a scale as this.

They were soon to find out, as they gathered in the living room, that there was not one person in their midst, down to the youngest speaking child, who had not received some form of message that night, some piece of the puzzle. And incredibly enough, each piece of the puzzle had at least one other confirming piece, so there was perfect faith in the hearts of all those at the pre-breakfast meeting that morning—the perfect faith needed to proceed quickly and resolutely to enact what the Lord had shown them to do next. There was no time to lose. By all indications it was only a matter of days before all religious worship would be banned, and the abomination of desolation in the holy place revealed. All knew that very soon their lives would be set on the final course of their earthly existence, and nothing would ever be the same again. This was the home stretch of the ultimate, final race, and soon they would find themselves fighting in the final great battle—the one they had trained for for decades.

As the last words of the closing prayer were uttered, there was a Voice. No one knew for sure if it was a Voice audible to the physical ear or if it was a Voice that everyone heard simultaneously in their hearts, but all received the same two simple

messages—*Let all the earth keep silence before Me, and, There was silence in Heaven for the space of half an hour.* Without a word being said, a hush that could be felt as tangibly as a soft refreshing spray of cool mist on a scorching day fell on everyone in the living room. Each individual there, behind his or her closed eyes, was counseled, strengthened, taught, and prepared by ghostly counselors over the space of the next half hour. Words unutterable were spoken to each heart, power immeasurable was entrusted to each hand, love unquenchable was poured into each soul, courage unshakable filled each breast, and links unbreakable were made between each of them and their heavenly Husband and Father. The reward of years of trusting and believing, of obeying by faith, was doled out without measure into the spirits of those who had run and not fainted.

They had believed without sight, or while only seeing through a glass darkly, but now as they opened their eyes after exactly one half hour of silence, they gasped at the sight before them. The room was filled with heavenly helpers of every shape and size, each of them standing by the ones they had been assigned to, and all the earthly persons present were able to see them as clear as they could see each other. The ghostly visitors hovered in the air or stood at attention, fully armed and empowered with all the force of the keys of Heaven, ready and eager to do battle, and clearly more than a match for anything the Devil or his minions could throw at them. The heavenly helpers beamed with joy that the end of all things was at hand, that now was the hour they too had dreamed of and prepared for for millennia.

Those in the room who were still earthly blinked, half expecting the apparitions to fade, but they remained, enjoying being thoroughly examined by their

astonished viewers. Everyone was able to slowly study the face and form of each helper, and as they looked them over, the name of the one they were looking at came to mind. *El Cid ... Jemain ... Omar Mukhtar ... Jacob ... Rachel ... Samson ... Ishmael ... Esau ... Father Abraham*, and many more.

Lenny noticed Mary was turned in her seat, craning her neck and staring questioningly at someone in a back corner of the room. Lenny turned to find himself staring into Frizzy's big shining eyes. Their eyes locked and, as if by telepathy, he knew. He knew she was not staying, that she had another assignment, but that she had been there through all that happened with Mary the last week, that she was happy with the changes that had taken place in his life and the new life that he had now found, and that she would never stop loving him and longing for him. Then with their eyes alone they embraced in spiritual intercourse far surpassing anything either of them had ever known together on earth. Breathless, Lenny drank in her gorgeous form as she slowly disappeared with a mischievous wink. In a daze he turned back to Mary.

As their eyes met, he heard Mary say, *I know, sweetheart, and I'm so happy for you. I know she set you free.* The realization suddenly struck him that Mary's lips had not moved at all, that not a sound had issued from her mouth.

*How did you know?* he thought, not at all surprised that she could hear his every word in her heart as well.

*She told me why she came. She told me she helped choose me for you.*

The heavenly host in the room signaled the end of the revelation with mighty, stupendous, musical praises and shouts of victory, which were echoed

by the Home members in loud praises, their arms lifted heavenward. The heavenly host began to sing triumphantly in melodic, harmonic tongues of angels until one by one the earth-bound Family members also began to receive the same words of battle and victory, but in English.

*The Dragon and the Beast have roared a fearsome roar.  
Tremble not, but know, your might is greater still.  
In Heaven and in earth, the keys have power o'er,  
Each hand, each heart, each plan that stands against My will.*

*Rejoice, rejoice, My bride!  
Your victory is certain!  
Rejoice, rejoice, My bride!  
Now parts the Endtime curtain!  
Rejoice, rejoice, My dove,  
Receive My mighty mantle!  
Rejoice, rejoice, My love,  
Receive anointing ample!*

*March forth in armor prepared from earth's foundation.  
Brandish your keys as swords in this day of triumph great,  
For homage shall be paid you by every tribe and nation,  
For a mighty, fearsome shaking possesses Satan's state.*

*Rejoice, rejoice, My bride!  
No power can withstand you!*

*Rejoice, rejoice, My bride,  
Adorned with heavenly grandeur!  
Rejoice, rejoice, My dove,  
For days of open reward!  
Rejoice, rejoice, My love,  
My unblemished, My unmarred!*

*Satan quakes to see My army never  
fearing,  
To know the Kingdom's keys give you  
power to bravely stand,  
To hear My drums of war ever nearing,  
ever nearing,  
To the fateful day's arrival when he's  
broken without hand.*

*Rejoice, rejoice, My bride!  
Dance and shout and sing!  
Rejoice, rejoice, My bride!  
Inherit everything!  
Rejoice, rejoice, My dove,  
For walls before you fall!  
Rejoice, rejoice, My love,  
Claim now My all in all!*

As the praises died down, the helpers had slipped quietly behind the veil once more, but there was no mistaking the change that had come over all there that day. Their helpers were no longer visible, but the words, the power, the courage, the love, the links that had been bequeathed through them, were indelibly printed in their hearts and minds. Others had had telepathic experiences similar to Mary and Lenny's, as well as visitations from departed loved ones who had come to give the kind of encouragement, comfort, and reassurance that only they could give. There were

testimonies of other new gifts being handed out for the days ahead, of how the power of the keys of the Kingdom had been more specifically defined in each life. These meek and broken, weak vessels wept tears of joy as they saw the wisdom of God that had led them step by step over the last years and had brought them to this moment when divine power could be poured into their empty vessels without measure.

## **A HEAVENLY SUMMIT**

The streets of Eilat were quiet. Some hotels managed to stay open, but most were closed. Traffic in the streets was sparse, the beauty of the emerald waters and the golden sun hid the fear and nervousness that gripped every heart. Though the service personnel of the hotels that were still open made a weak attempt at keeping up airs for the handful of tourists who were more or less stranded there, the grim atmosphere that pervaded everything was tangible. Rates had been lowered to the lowest in decades so Don and Gypsy had been able to afford their stay in an economy hotel. They still had a smart card that they had been given for the conference, and that they could now use for this “vacation.” But as always, they lived as frugally as they could.

The four weeks they were here had been spent in drinking deep of the Word that they had kept with them and in listening to Heaven. Jesus and their spirit helpers had encouraged them to truly revel in this time, both spiritually and romantically, and they had readily taken full advantage of that counsel. Besides the time they spent loving the Lord, His Word, and each other, opportunities were plentiful to witness and minister to those they met, including the hotel personnel, especially a small group of hungry Israeli

Arabs who hovered about them at every meal, bursting with questions. The second week they were there, they began to discreetly teach off-duty personnel and other sheep in the quiet of their room. A growing little church of believers as well as sympathetic Muslims gathered about them.

As of yet there was no sign of the world government forces here, probably because they had been so preoccupied with Jerusalem and the north and central parts of the country that they had figured the playground called Eilat could be handled later. The world government no doubt knew there were large forces in the southern part of the country, in the Negev and near the border of Egypt that had not yet been neutralized, but with substantial government and sympathetic forces in Egypt just across the border, they were not expecting the Israeli forces to launch any kind of offensive. In the meantime, satellites and spy planes were monitoring every move or sign of movement by the remaining southern forces.

Now, after hearing the news that the Temple Mount invaders had been defeated, Don and Gypsy were spending time in prayer and the Word in the quiet of their room, only stopping to monitor the news every hour on the TV. The entire Temple Mount and its surroundings had been cordoned off with military blockades. Not a soul was being allowed in or out along the passageways. Military personnel came and left the scene exclusively by helicopter.

As Don and Gypsy cried out to Jesus fervently and confessed their utter helplessness and inability to know or do anything without His divine guidance, a hush fell on the room and on their spirits. Lying across the bed with their eyes closed, both Don and Gypsy felt an indescribable and wonderful sensation of lightness come over them. Then it was as if they were

being gently lifted, and turned upward, as if they were standing on their feet on their bed, yet not standing, but rather floating. They now could see that they had been separated from their bodies. They hovered in the air above their oddly familiar yet detached bodies, still there holding hands on the bed, eyes squinted closed, waiting for guidance. Gypsy turned in the air to look at Don, only to see him flung with unfathomable speed away from her, from the hotel, from Eilat and from Earth. Gazing upward, she was startled as she too was launched upward.

Now they were racing through a bright tunnel of stars, approaching a great light before and above them. Everything was moving with such supernatural speed, there was the tendency to fear, but instantly there was the realization that there was nothing to fear, that they were not in control, that this was God's Own hand drawing them upward to they knew not where.

Gypsy caught up with Don. They looked toward each other, smiled, and grasped each other's hand as they flew. A second or two passed after they began to hold hands (if one could speak of time in a place and situation as this) before they burst without slowing down into the very center of the light. Now they felt themselves being slowed, their bodies being turned till they hung suspended in air with their feet pointed in the direction that seemed to be down. Their toes touched gently on a solid floor. Now they stood hand in hand though they could still see nothing. Gradually their eyes adjusted to reveal they were standing in a huge royal hall surrounded by glorious heavenly and earthly beings of every size, glory, and description.

At the far end of the hall sat their Lover, Jesus, on a great throne. With thousands, no, millions in the room, it would be presumptuous to expect that He would personally acknowledge the two who had just

arrived, but unmistakably His eyes, His luminous, loving eyes, were on them. The two felt the warmth of love flowing into and filling their bodies, felt His golden seeds instantly washing away everything vile, everything insignificant, in fact everything but His grand and glorious person. Gypsy thought, *My heart sinks, my soul still cries in its unworthiness to stand in the presence of My Master, My Lover, My God, the great I AM!*

And as clear as her own thoughts, as she stood transfixed by the most beautiful eyes she had ever seen or would ever see, as she stood drinking in the personality of the most loving presence she had ever known or would ever know, she heard that Voice so sweet that birds hushed their singing speaking to her, to her alone, to her personally, words that swelled and became alive in her bosom and filled her with sensations that made the feelings of being in love drab by comparison. The words became part of her and told her that she had a special and very high calling that she would begin to fulfill from this moment on, that she was being endowed with power and weapons hitherto never dreamed of, that Jesus and many great powers would be with her every moment from now till the end of time.

She was told that, though now the great war to end all wars was beginning, the key to winning the war was still love—love that saw through the sin, love that forgave the hurt and the injury, that this love would be the key to the victories of the future. She was told she had powers that could destroy her enemies and all opposition, but these powers must be used with discernment, with prophecy, with wisdom, with love, for there was no other way to know who she was to destroy and who she was to give another chance to. She was assured that from this day forth, nothing

could happen to either of them except by the will of God. Nothing would be accidental.

These who had practiced yielding for decades would now be propelled forward by a force greater than all the forces of the earth and the enemy. Fear was to be forgotten from now till eternity. She was assured that she would live from this moment forth in two worlds, and the world of the spirit would increasingly become the more real world to her. She would have constant communications with heavenly beings and her own personal spirit guide, a new one she would receive who would from this day forth go with her. Jesus' eyes glanced almost imperceptibly to her right side and smiled.

Gypsy turned to find herself gazing into an oddly familiar face. The female being standing there was clad in bright, shining armor that was part of her person and yet more than her person. Her head was crowned with a brilliant helmet covering her hair. Gypsy stared, questioning who this could be, and the person before her seemed to be enjoying her inability to place her so much that she dragged it out a while longer, and then finally reached up and removed her helmet to reveal gorgeous strands of frizzy, gleaming red hair. Gypsy exclaimed, "Frizzy! Frizzy, it's you!" and threw herself into Frizzy's mighty arms.

"Yes, baby, it's me! I asked to be with you, and Jesus said yes, that among other powerful spirits I was to be your constant and closest companion. And, honey, let me tell you, we have some exciting work ahead."

Gypsy turned to Don to show him who was there, but she could no longer see him. In fact, as she looked around she could not make out anyone except herself, Frizzy, and Jesus—who was beginning to fade as well. So odd, because there was still the feeling that they

were in an enormous hall with multitudes. She looked back at Frizzy questioningly.

“They’re all still here, but what is happening now to you and to thousands of other chosen children from earth who have been called to this moment of preparation before the real war begins is intensely personal and it is better that each one be privately instructed. It’s a little like how a hotel ballroom can be sectioned off so there are several groups partying or meeting at the same time, yet they’re all still there, but separate. You know what I mean?”

“Yeah, kinda, I guess.”

“So Don’s receiving his special helper too and getting his special instructions. There are millions of spirits being assigned to earth today, and power like you have never known being poured out. Hey, wait a minute, let’s go somewhere comfortable to chat and I’ll fill you in on what’s happening, shall we?”

“Whatever you think, Friz. You know best.”

Frizzy blinked and they were standing under a pecan tree by a babbling brook in a forest.

Gypsy gasped.

“I thought you’d appreciate the end beginning where the beginning began,” Frizzy explained.

“My forest! My tree! My brook!”

“And your panties!” Frizzy laughed.

Gypsy looked down to see she was dressed in only a pair of sexy panties. *How funny Jesus is*, she thought, *to bring me back here where everything is the same except one glaring difference—He didn’t put me in those big ugly, nylon sixties panties.*

*Yeah, He’s really something*, Frizzy thought back.

Gypsy gasped yet again to realize Frizzy had heard her thoughts and she could hear Frizzy’s.

*We don’t have to talk at all if you don’t want to*, Frizzy continued thinking. *It goes a lot faster this way*

*and we can include pictures—a bit like multimedia, I guess. What do you say?*

*Whatever you think, Frizzy. You know best*, Gypsy repeated jokingly. The last time she had said that, the results were more than agreeable so she tried it again.

*Gypsy, look how beautiful you are!*

She looked down and marveled at her two breasts, full and firm as they had been when she was eighteen. Her hands caressed her firm stomach without any sag, without stretch marks. Frizzy held up a mirror from out of nowhere and Gypsy gasped again to see her face free of wrinkles, her hair a shining golden brown with no gray, and a glow in her eyes that reflected Heaven and eternity in the ageless love emanating from them. Two golden, perfect tears formed in their corners and tumbled down her cheek to the corners of her smile. *I ... I’m desirable. I’m so different!*

*Now that’s where you’re wrong. This is you. This is what Jesus has seen every day of your life. Now do you see why He gets so turned on when you love Him?*

*Yes. Yes, now I see.*

*You are that, Gypsy—sexy, desirable, irresistible, smashingly gorgeous, full of love. It’s just that the things of the flesh get in the way and cloud your vision, so you can’t see it that way. Honey, He is so so in love with you. You have nothing to fear, ever, ’cause the One who holds all power in Heaven and in earth is hopelessly in love with you. He can’t stop thinking and talking about you. I know. He talks to me about you all the time. He brags to me about you and all you’ve done and do and are going to do. They’re the same to Him, you know, the past, the present, and the future. That’s why He’s so merciful on your sins and failures and shortcomings, because He sees your future and your destiny as if it’s today, right now. When He saw*



*you from the first day He designed you, that is what He saw, all you were going to be and do. And I am so proud to be called to help you. I feel I have so much to thank you for and we have so much in common. We're gonna have a blast. Let's walk.*

Frizzy took Gypsy's hand and began to walk her over the brook and through the woods. Hours passed as Frizzy briefed Gypsy on the aspects of their assignment that she could know about in advance. There were words, there were pictures, there were sounds and visions of not only what was to happen on earth but what would be happening in the heavenlies. It truly was a heavenly multimedia program. There was a veil over certain things in the future, and for that Gypsy was thankful, because what she was told and shown was so big, so grand, so frightening, she would have been tempted to doubt or to fear if she had been anywhere else.

All too soon Frizzy let her know it was almost time to return to earth and that she would have to leave her view for a while. She assured Gypsy she would be there, but that there were times that she must not be visible or clearly audible as it was, after all, still the era of faith. She told Gypsy she would soon understand why now was one of those times. No sooner had she uttered those words than she was gone and Gypsy found herself in a white void.

Slowly and dreamily she turned full circle. She found Don turning to her as well. She was now dressed only in a thin nightshirt and Don in pajama pants. Their eyes met, and they smiled, each marveling at the gorgeous young person whose eyes they were staring into. Without a word said but with one picture after another of all their most romantic and sexy moments flashing in rapid succession through their minds and minds' eyes, they drew together in impassioned

embrace, clinging to one another with touches that washed away any and all pain and hurt from their years of marriage and learning, often through trial and error, to love and care for the other.

With a sigh of joy and desire Don lifted her by her arms high into the air, and to both of their amazement they found themselves flying up into the starry night that now surrounded them. Spinning in flight, they had no anxiety whatever, they were so engrossed in touching, caressing, and searching the beauty, the softness and the firmness of their lover's body, and they became one in an embrace and an ecstasy that surpassed anything they had ever experienced.

After moments that seemed like untold eternities, they once again opened their eyes and found themselves back on the hotel bed, breathless, spent, and satisfied beyond description. Over Don's shoulder Gypsy saw Frizzy smile and wink at her and fade from view. In her heart she heard a voice: *Ain't ya glad I left ya alone f'r a while?*

## **AN UNSETTLING SETTLEMENT**

Assadam calmly drove his little Fiat station wagon through the night, past Hebron and further south, while Shaul and Muhammad conversed in whispered English in the back seat. There was an eerie quietness about the road. Even the formerly ubiquitous Israeli checkpoints were deserted, every soldier either moved north to defend Jerusalem or south to join the remaining forces.

“I don’t understand, Muhammad,” Shaul whispered, “why you and your uncle feel it’s best for me to go to this settlement.”

“In our town you’re too close to Jerusalem where the Chairman’s forces are especially strong. And, besides that, we can’t guarantee your safety among our fellow Palestinians. Many still feel that you Jews have spoiled everything yet again. The best idea is for you to join your own people in one of the bigger and more isolated settlements. As much as I’ve hated their presence, I’m thankful for you that they’re there now. Who knows? Maybe Allah in His wisdom has even a greater plan for them.”

“How so?”

“Well, the settlers are armed, aren’t they? I would expect that at least those soldiers who were assigned to guard the settlements are still there, and everyone

has a sizeable arms cache in case of trouble. If what you say about the Chairman is true and is going to happen, perhaps some of your settlements will become pockets of resistance against the Chairman. What do you think?”

“It’s hard to say. As a people we are quite dis-united, varied in our opinions and beliefs. The secular ones will likely go right along with the Chairman and his policies, even embrace them. So I’m just hoping that this settlement you picked for me is made up of mostly believing Jews, or I might be back in big trouble.”

“No kidding,” Muhammad answered. “Now listen, Shaul, tell your story to those you meet there but only to those you are certain you can trust. That way, perhaps you can find out if there is hope in the future for some kind of cooperation between our peoples. My uncle and I will do the same among my people and we’ll see where this all leads. I, for one, am prepared to fight and even to die for my faith. If the Chairman demands our worship, as you say he will, many will refuse to follow. Many will be willing to take up arms.”

The car slowed and turned off the highway onto a small dirt road. Once the car had disappeared from the view of the road behind a rocky knoll, Assadam stopped and turned to the two young men in the back seat. “Go with him, Muhammad, to the edge of the settlement, until you are sure our friend is received in peace. Don’t let yourself be seen.”

“Yes, Uncle, I will do as you say. And, Uncle, if I am not back within a half hour, leave me.” He stared deep into his uncle’s eyes, but was not sure if he would do as requested. There was nothing to do but hope, trust, and pray.

In the moonless night the two climbed the side of

the hill to the settlement over one rock-walled terrace of olive trees after another. Finally, just out of sight of the guard post, they broke the silence and embraced in farewell before Shaul would climb the last terrace and ascend to the guard post.

Shaul whispered, “Thank you, Muhammad. I owe you my life. You can count on me if you ever need my help. I will never forget you. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.” Shaul embraced his friend, checked quickly that Uncle Assadam’s cellphone number was in his pocket and slipped into the inky black of the night.

Muhammad watched as the shadowy figure ascended the last little incline to the road and the guard post near the entrance to the large settlement just above him. No sooner had Shaul’s feet touched the pavement of the road than a row of floodlights clicked on, illuminating him. Muhammad ducked below the rock wall to avoid being seen himself.

There were some barked, yet panicky-sounding questions in Hebrew, a few words of which Muhammad could understand but not much. From what he could decipher, they were demanding Shaul stop and identify himself and his purpose. Shaul was answering in Hebrew that he was a Jew fleeing from the trouble. The last words were some kind of question from him or plea from the tone of it. Now Muhammad heard the sound of footsteps and automatic weapons being readied. Flashlight beams swept the area. He heard muffled voices as some of the armed guards had seemingly approached Shaul to look him over and search his person. This was followed by another barked order and the sound of footsteps—footsteps heading off in every direction, including Muhammad’s!

Muhammad lay as silently as possible on his back below the wall, pressed as closely as he could against its shelter and cold comfort. *Insha Allah, I shall not be seen*, he half prayed and half tried to assure himself. At first he wished he had not come so close, and then the thought came to him that the ways of Allah are always higher than those of man's, as he had so vividly seen these last weeks, and with that thought he resigned himself to the will of Allah. And none too early, for just then the blinding beam of a flashlight pierced his eyes.

He lay still, squinting into the beam but making no sudden moves that would cause these young men, obviously as nervous as he was, to pull their triggers. Rough hands pulled him to his feet and forced him to the road beside Shaul. Angry questions were being shot at Shaul who was answering with a transcendent kind of calm. From what Muhammad could understand he was simply telling the truth, and from what he could understand he was mentioning neither Uncle Assadam nor his car. As that thought comfotringly crossed Muhammad's mind, there were shouts from down below, more orders shouted out in a frantic tone, and the sound of a car door being opened. The two friends knew Assadam had been found. They looked at each other for the first time, and Muhammad said in English, "Perhaps, my friend, this is the will of God..." only to be silenced by something big and heavy slamming into the back of his head. The earth reeled. Muhammad tumbled to the rocky ground. All went black and quiet as his head struck a boulder by the roadside.

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## HE SITTETH IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD

The streets were deserted as the Chairman's cavalcade breezed in from the Jerusalem airport, deserted save for the intermittent world government forces forcibly keeping them that way. This was no parade, and the Chairman desired to see no one nor to be seen by anyone.

He felt a wrath that surprised even him welling up in his breast. He had enjoyed the adulation of the masses so far, and the powerful feeling of being loved, adored, and followed, but this fierce hatred he now felt carried with it a new power that he enjoyed still more. He knew that now was his hour of greatest power. Now he was to crush the power of all his enemies, both active and potential, and deep inside, he felt it would be a joy to do so. There had been a definite moment of decision before making this trip, a moment when he had been given the final choice to receive total darkness and with it all the power it could offer him, and he had gladly made that choice. Now was his hour, the hour of darkness, and he would fulfill his destiny and rise to the full stature of the Superman.

The Minister sat facing him in the limousine, and their eyes met. They both knew. They both rejoiced in the hatred, the anger, and the power they felt coursing

through their very bodies. Their eyes caressed and encouraged one another as the car sped through the empty streets to the Kidron Valley that lay between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives. How ironic! How fitting that here, where the Nazarene spent so much time during His last days on earth, here where He was purported to have ascended, the Chairman in the power of his lord was usurping not only the power but the very holy place of the Christ and the Most High.

Here the final war was to be declared; the moment they had waited and prepared for had now come. The two friends and comrades were confident of ultimate victory, for had they not created the temporal kingdom that the Nazarene's religion had failed to do? Had they not managed to finally give the people what they really wanted? Would they not now reap as a result the worship of all mankind in return as they delivered, not a pitiful pie-in-the-sky religion, but a religion that delivered to its adherents the power and the pleasure they desired as well as blessings they could see and feel now, without having to wait for some unseen future Heaven?

Surely this was what mankind truly desired and deserved, and the Chairman was now in a position to fulfill it. Surely that Great Oppressor in the Heavens had misread the hearts of His creation. But Lucifer knew, and had chosen him to deliver to the world their hearts' desires. The Chairman's heart surged with power and pride as the car turned the corner and ascended to the Dung Gate leading to the Western Wall, the famous Wailing Wall, now clear of the usual praying crowds of Jews. Though they now had a place of worship, many had continued to visit the wall to pray for the eventual restoration of Solomon's temple, but no longer would that be the case.

Helicopters buzzed overhead and a line of armed men, two soldiers thick on each side, greeted the Chairman and his Minister as they stepped from the car. The line led up the walkway to the Temple Mount. Without hesitation, the two and their entourage swept into the grounds to the tabernacle, and soon had disappeared behind the sacred outer curtain. Only then were the media—for the first time since the Temple Mount standoff had begun—allowed onto the Temple Mount, and into the Tabernacle grounds, along with a carefully selected and screened crowd who would be allowed to witness firsthand the statement the Chairman would soon make.

All the walls of the Temple Mount bristled with armed soldiers, while hundreds of barrel-chested men in suits, men with little earplugs with wires disappearing into their suit coats, mingled everywhere in the crowd. Nothing was being left to chance.

The sun beat down mercilessly, yet the crowd waited without complaint for an hour and finally two before the curtain showed movement and the Chairman stepped out and onto a raised podium that was erected in front of the curtain. His hands gripped the banister and a haughty smile spread across his face. In silence and without warning he flung his hands toward the skies in triumph and the crowd burst into a cued roar of victory. The cameras began to roll on cue, filming the Chairman in his conqueror's pose as well as the crowd's rapt looks of adoration at their great leader. Shouts, whistles, and applause echoed through the air until, with a motion, the Chairman urged them to be silent while he delivered his message. An obedient hush fell over the square.

"To you, my faithful and loyal followers, who have held fast to your dedication to the vision we all embraced just three and a half years ago, I give my thanks

and pledge my continued and untiring efforts to forge ahead to complete the building of a new world that has begun so well and so successfully. To you who are watching or listening via the air waves and to all who will read the transcript of today's message, I say unto you, our plan is not foiled, our brave new world is not thwarted, our bold and miraculous achievements have not been brought to naught. No, not today, nor ever. Rather this challenge to our authority has worked in our favor and has shown clearly to all who have eyes in their heads who the real enemies are.

"Throughout the last two centuries of man's history there has been a growing conviction by great visionaries that more evil and more trouble has been brought to our weary world through religions than the good they claim to offer us. And what good do they offer us? Empty promises of a better world? When? Where? Far off in the future in some dreamed-of fairyland called Heaven or Paradise or many other things. And for whom? For their chosen and elite few, for those who pronounce their particular dogmas, follow their exclusive doctrine, perform their exclusively enlightened rituals, leaving all others to eternal damnation!

"I say unto you, is it not time that such superstition be put away from the enlightened man of the twenty-first century?"

Shouts and cheers of affirmation erupted from the crowd below.

"Is it not time that we, who stand on the threshold of a new day of scientific salvation and technological enlightenment, cast off the chains of the modern dark ages and march bravely into a new renaissance without the fairy tales and pipe dreams of our infantile past?"

His words were met with more and louder cheers.

"Is it not time that the gods who have failed to deliver

those who trusted in them be laid to rest and that we, who have risen far, far above our lowly beginnings, assume the role of becoming our own gods?"

Again there were cheers, but this time fewer, and a distinct rumble of confusion and questioning could be heard along with it.

"I see that there are those of you who question how you can achieve the status of god. As your humble servant who has delivered mighty changes to you these past years, who has given to you untold power and prosperity and even pleasure, who has begun to transform this hellish earth of ours into a Utopia, I who have done this am willing to lead you as the sheep of my fold and my very own children into this new world if you will first give me your trust, yea, your loyalty, yea, your adoration, and finally, yes, your worship! The gods of all religions are dead and have failed us, but I in all humility am willing to replace them and be to you as a father, as a deliverer, as your god. *Will you have me?*"

The square erupted into reverberating shouts of affirmation for the next few minutes, drowning out even the voice of the Chairman. The hope inspired by the signing of the Covenant three and a half years before was small compared to the euphoria that enveloped those on the Temple Mount today. To all but the most discerning eye it seemed there was total unity of heart among those gathered there, but in the midst of the crowd there were those shouting out, not *for* the Chairman's words, but *against* them, yet their words were lost in the wild cheers of the vast majority who gave their assent to the Chairman's proposal of being proclaimed god.

A full fifteen minutes had passed before the din of the mass had died down sufficiently for anyone to speak. Then it was that the Minister stepped up to the

microphone and asked if there were any who wanted to react to this news. Throughout the square there were mikes set up that the speakers could use as they were called upon. Person after person gave their assent to this monumental change in direction and to the worship of the Chairman, each time followed by enthusiastic applause and cheers.

Finally a short, plump lady wearing a simple cotton dress and a straw sun hat stepped up to one mike at the same time as a tall, imposing Arab gentleman took another on the far side of the square. They both began to speak at the same time, stopped, offered each other the chance and then started again simultaneously. With an embarrassed chuckle, the Arab man loudly insisted that the little English lady speak first. Her shrill little voice trembled as she cleared her throat and began again.

"I am Emmeline White, and I was here as a tourist to the holy sites when the trouble began and I have not been able to leave till now. I am very thankful that I could be here today to witness this monumental event. I am not a public speaker, just a mere housewife, and it is not in my nature to speak even to the WI back home in my little English village, much less on worldwide television, yet I felt compelled to add my comments to this great event. First of all, I must express my admiration for the great achievements of our Chairman who has delivered what he promised, peace and prosperity to our poor world. I have always considered myself a law-abiding person and have given full support to the present world government. I had planned to continue to do so the rest of my life, for no one can deny the good that has been done."

A long pause followed, with a few attempts to continue. Shouts rang out, urging her to give up the microphone or say what she had to say quickly.

"Yes, I will b-be brief. I am no learned scholar or student of history, so I can't say, like so many do, that most of the world's wars were caused by religion. But I can say, with firmly held conviction, that my religion has been the greatest source in my life of strength and comfort and peace for more than four decades, and no one can ever replace that—not the Chairman or any earthly being!"

"These are precisely the sentiments that I wished to express!" the Arab man cried out.

Emboldened by his encouragement, Emmeline, her voice now imbued with supernatural strength, shouted, "As my dear Lord Jesus said, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.' I say unto all who hear me—that this man must be the long-predicted Antichrist of whom we are warned in the Word of God. Do not be deceived by his soothing words of deception, for he shall come to travail and shall be broken by the Sword that proceeds out of the mouth of the conquering Lord Jesus who shall come in the skies..."

"Yes, she speaks the truth," shouted the Arab. "My Muslim brethren, before you now stands the *Dajjal*. Refuse him, rise up against him, overthrow him, declare him anathema, declare jihad against him, for he has blasphemed the name of Allah and His holy prophets. He is worthy of death. I cry out to you to KILL HIM!! Rise up in a renewed intifada against him and his forces."

As he continued to speak, the crowd pulled back from him, leaving him alone in the center of a circle. Hidden on overlooking walls, two sharpshooters positioned for just such an eventuality sighted him in their telescopic sights and riddled his body with bullets, splattering blood on the gasping crowd round about. Silence reigned.

Emmeline turned to the crowd and saw in their eyes no support, no sympathy. A shudder of fear shook her body. A tiny cry escaped her lips as she clutched her handbag to her breast and tried to squeeze her way out of the square, only to be met by an impenetrable wall of humanity with hate-filled faces.

The Minister's voice broke the silence. "Who ... who fired that shot? Was it right ... was it right ... or wrong what this man, this Arab ... has said? And we might ask as ... as well ... was it right ... right or wrong what was done to him? We leave ... we leave to you, the loyal adherents ... the followers of our great Chairman, the fate of people like ... people such as these."

With a quick turn, the Chairman returned to the inner sanctum of the tabernacle, followed by the Minister. The guards on the wall marched away.

Silence again. Emmeline searched the crowd round her full circle and trembled yet more at the faces she saw. She looked around for a guard who might protect her and help her make her way out. There was none. A single shout rang out, "KILL HER!" followed by shouts of agreement, building and building into a chant. "KILL HER! KILL HER! KILL HER!"

"JESUS!" Emmeline shrilly cried, looking up to the clear blue Jerusalem skies above her. Her eyes closed as she prepared herself for what surely must come next.

But she heard only, "Well done, Ebbie. Your Lord is well pleased with you." When she opened her eyes, she found herself staring into the clear blue eyes of a handsome man with long blonde hair.

"How ... how do you know me?"

"I've always known you, Ebbie," he said, using the nickname her parents had given her as a baby. Now she heard the distant sounds of angry shouts and tumult. She looked away from her comforter and saw a sight far

below that struck her strange by the very detachment with which she viewed it. There was a square teeming with an angry mob beating someone she could not see as they screamed for this person to be silent and say no more. As the crowd parted, satisfied that they had finished their dirty work, there was a soft glow from the center of the crowd. As Emmeline's eyes focused on the center of the brightness, she could make out a little form in a cotton dress, a torn straw hat by her side, a plump little face, bruised and bleeding, lifeless but unmistakably at peace. She could see the flicker of doubt in the eyes of those standing around, who saw the peace reflected on the face of the little English lady they had beaten to death.

"Are you ready to go, Ebbie?"

She stared dreamily into the eyes of the angel and knew everything would be all right, that God was still on His throne in spite of the evil Beast that had now claimed the world and its people as his own. "Yes." She smiled. "Yes, I am ready."

Inside, having witnessed the murder of Emmeline with neither active participation nor protection, the Chairman and the Minister smiled at each other. The Minister flung his arms around his friend and colleague in a congratulatory embrace. "You have won! The world is yours."

"Ours," the Chairman whispered into the Minister's ear, who blushed happily. Then aloud as he held the Minister at arm's length he said, "Thank you, but I could not have made it without you," then looking round the room, "all of you, my faithful friends. This day marks the beginning of the first year of the new calendar of the age of enlightenment, and you all have helped bring this to pass." Glasses of champagne were served round and all arms were lifted in a hearty toast.



At that moment, a side entrance to the large chamber opened and Abner Golden shuffled in with a flushed face. A guard came hurriedly behind him, protesting, "Your Excellence, I am most sorry for this interruption. He insisted he owed you an apology and must see you now." With that, the guard grabbed Abner by the collar, saying, "Come with me. You cannot disturb our Chairman in this hour of triumph."

"Leave him," the Chairman said. "I myself told him he could not return to me until he was willing to offer his abject apologies. I feel magnanimous toward those who see the error of their ways. They are welcome back to the fold. It is good to see you, Abner."

Abner knelt on the floor some ten feet from the Chairman and said with a sob, "I am truly sorry, Your Excellence, for what I have done and wish you to be the first to know of my repentance ... I'm sorry that I ever served *you* and helped you *betray* my *God* and my *people*." With swift determination the bulky pistol in Abner's coat was out and firing wildly in the direction of the Chairman. So rapid was the fire that five shots had been fired, killing a security guard, and piercing the Chairman's forehead, before automatic fire riddled Abner's body.

The Minister screamed out, "Who let him in here?! How did he get past the other guards, and with a ... a *gun* of all things?!" His eyes fell on the guard who had followed him in, the guard with the hooked nose and close-set Jewish eyes darting about and looking for a way out, and he knew.

The sound of gunfire had brought other guards rushing in, their weapons at the ready, who stopped and gazed in awe at the sight of the dead Chairman before them. The gaze of the Minister quickly confirmed their target, and the guards raised their weapons towards the traitor. A trapped animal, the guard

cast one look upward before the burst from powerful automatic weapons threw his body against some tables before it slumped down in a bloody heap on the carpet.

There was silence, broken by the quiet sobs of the Minister as he whispered, "My god! Come back to me! Don't die! You can't be dead! You cannot die! You must not die!" He held the lifeless body of the Chairman in his arms, the blood from the gaping head wound flowing down onto his lap. As his sobs subsided, he looked up and despite his blood-splattered face, strength and power could be seen by all in his eyes as he quietly said, "He knew this would happen, but this is not the end. It is not finished. He shall rise again."

**PART II**  
**THE OVERSPREADING**  
**OF ABOMINATIONS**

## **SCATTERATION**

Three trucks, heavy laden with fully armed soldiers, stood outside the Family compound. The Home members had been eating their breakfast in prayer and quietness after having seen and heard the Chairman's announcement the afternoon before. It had been but thirty minutes later that CNN had released the breaking news of the Chairman's assassination by a fanatically religious Jew right in the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle, and the announcement that the Temple Mount was again to be cordoned off, and the tabernacle disassembled. A giant tent-like structure had been erected over the entire site of the tabernacle, effectively shielding the area from any unauthorized and prying eyes or cameras.

It was no surprise that now the military was back at their door. They had not been sure what would happen next, but now there was nothing that could surprise these who had waited for just such events for decades. The trucks stood silent for nearly five minutes after coming to a full stop. Their silence was more than matched by that of the waiting Family members who scarcely dared breathe. Then the door to one truck swung open and Colonel Mustafa Saman stepped out. His face wore a haggard, dejected look as he stepped onto the curb and shouted an order,

which set the human cargo of every truck into motion. The pavement outside flooded with soldiers who took up positions before their house and down the street, their weapons drawn. Then Mustafa turned to the gate and rang the bell. Two of the Home's young men let him and his small entourage of officers into the compound. About twenty soldiers followed them and took up positions on the veranda and before the front door while their commanding officer and his officers entered. He seated himself in the living room while his officers stood nearby.

As always, the guests were treated with courtesy and hospitality, but there was a greater tension in the air now than had been there before. Mustafa could not bring himself to look into Lenny's face. David and Lenny stood before him, waiting to be invited to sit down. Finally, without making eye contact, Mustafa nodded and motioned to them to sit on either side of him. Then, with a deep breath, he looked at them each in turn and began to speak.

"I apologize," he said under his breath so none of his men could hear, "for this intrusion. I don't even understand myself what is happening. I am only following orders, and these orders are extremely difficult for me."

"We know," David said. "These are hard times, confusing times, and we expect trouble and are ready for it. Don't worry about us. Our prayers, as always, are with you and the nation."

Mustafa stared deeply into David's eyes in what could only be described as gratitude. Now louder he continued, "I have come to order you to close down your center here and leave the premises within one week." Then whispered, "The events of the last few days have so destabilized and confused our government and military that you are seen as potentially

dangerous. If you ask me, what is happening is that they don't know what response to make to what is happening and they are trying to appease the powers that be while waiting for the final outcome. I recall how you told me there were passages about the Beast's deadly wound and that you did not know exactly how this would be fulfilled. Now we know, you and I. I have seen him do the things you told me he would do. I have seen him gunned down as you said might happen. I believe we shall also see his resurrection as you predicted, so you can count on my ... my ... friendship."

It was almost telepathic how both Lenny and David knew that Mustafa was promising to be a source of reliable information. Then, louder, he continued, "Those of you who want to leave the region are encouraged to do so, to return to your home countries. There are at the moment no orders of deportation, only orders that as a functioning foundation and a center you must cease to exist within the week." He said once more quietly, "They are trying to make it look as if they have taken measures against you, to appease the Chairman's people who are still very much in control in the region, particularly his Minister who has made it clear to all that he is in charge and the Chairman's policies will continue under him. He seems to be working frantically to secure things in Jerusalem. There is a media blackout around the Haram al Sharif, but word has it that very interesting changes are taking place there. You must know that there are many sympathizers of the Chairman and his government in our own nation as well, obviously due to the fact that finally someone defeated the Zionist state."

He stood up suddenly, at which signal all his officers, who had kept a respectful distance, snapped to attention. Following his final authoritative words,

“I counsel you to obey these orders with all haste, for we shall be observing your movements.” He then gave a crisp handshake to the few who were sitting in his proximity. He exited, climbed into the cab of the lead truck, and gave the signal for two of the trucks to pull away. The third seemed ready to keep a long vigil, making his words “we shall be observing your movements” very clear.

Cautiously, those present began to speak in hushed tones of what a marvel this new development was and how wonderfully the Lord had prepared them for this event. Each departing team knew who they were going with and where they were going. Some had already contacted those they would stay with, some were headed for hotels and hostels, some had been told by the Lord to wait for further word from on High on what to do next. Lenny and Mary, who had been married by a friendly minister two days before, were among those on standby. The phone rang and Lenny was called to the phone.

“Hello?”

“Hello, is this Lenny?”

It was a deep voice, and sounded elderly.

“Yes, yes, it is.”

“I am Isaa.”

“Isaa ... have we met?”

“No, we haven’t, but I am Lani’s father, and I am calling for two reasons. The first is because we have heard there may be problems for you soon and wanted to offer a place for a few of you to stay until the trouble is over.”

There was silence.

“Lenny?”

“Yes, yes, I heard you. I’m just...”

“Please accept. My family also wishes to offer you some token of thanks for what you have done.”

“You must understand, Isaa, that it was not me, it was only the power of God.”

“I know, I know. As you might suspect by my name, I am Christian and know only too well that this is the working of our Lord. I must also apologize for my tardiness in contacting you—it took us some time to come to grips with the complete change in our daughter. ... But will you accept our humble hospitality? You and a few people of your choice?”

“Yes, yes, of course we will. We have actually had a very interesting visit by the military that I will tell you about when I see you. One thing I want to tell you now though is that the Lord told us days back that we would be staying with you.”

It was Isaa’s turn to be silent. Slowly he responded, “I can see we have many things to talk over that my Catholic upbringing did not prepare me for. I will send a vehicle by at your convenience. When might that be?”

“Would Sunday be all right?”

“Sunday then, at around eleven.”

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## **HE COMMANDED THEM TO MAKE AN IMAGE**

Far below the Old City of Jerusalem in the labyrinthine passages and chambers that had been carved out centuries before and excavated over the last century, was the most secret chamber of all. The Minister's men and the most trusted of the Chairman's council and elite soldiers were carrying the Chairman's body through many subterranean halls down, ever downward. They reached the first massive electronic steel door, and half the entourage was left while the other half continued down a damp, cold stairwell to another door, larger than the first. Half of the half remained there. Behind this door lay another long, winding stairway, at the bottom of which a third door was reached. A final team was left behind in the antechamber. As the door closed behind those who crossed the last threshold, a blast of hot air and a wave of eerie reddish light swept over their bodies and faces. The Chairman's body on the stretcher was set gently on the floor of the cave as each of the remaining men except the four porters, without a word said among them, disrobed and donned long, black cloaks covering their full bodies and heads, leaving only their hands and a small part of their

faces exposed. With a nod the Minister signaled them to pick up the body and round the corner to the huge underground chamber, their destination. All but the porters had been here before, but the sight that now faced them was yet more awesome than in visits in the past.

The air was hazy from the hundreds of archaic-looking incense burners throughout the room. Multi-colored lights flashed from strange futuristic machines all along the wall, their harsh electronic brilliance in contrast to the soft orange glow of incense everywhere. The steady lighting was provided by tiny but powerful pin spots on the ceiling some forty feet overhead. Somehow both deep darkness and sufficient light pervaded the gargantuan chamber.

There was a hush over all that was happening in the room and one's first impression was the absence of sound. Yet after a few moments, the unmistakable whirl of electronic machines of immeasurable power could be clearly detected. Yet a few more moments and the soft chants of what sounded like monks could be heard, almost like Gregorian chants. It would be yet a moment or two before the listener would realize that these chants were very dark, very sinister, yet very devout in a Luciferian way.

The feel of the room was that of chilling cold followed by blasts of intense heat—the cold of the great depths to which one had descended coupled with the heat emanating from the censers and the massive electronic equipment. The room was alive with activity, mostly black-robed and hooded figures, kneeling or lying prostrate or standing lifting their arms before what seemed to be electronic altars of some sort. There were other figures in white coats, scientists buzzing about with the equivalent of modern clipboards, tiny computers strapped to their belts with one cable to the

viewing monocles they each had on one of their eyes and one cable to the keypad they each had strapped onto one of their forearms.

In the center of the chamber was a large steel structure some five feet off the ground. Its appearance was that of a doctor's examination bed, yet it was also reminiscent of an ancient altar in a strange way. Above it hung a huge piece of equipment that looked like stadium lights, yet also like an oversized bar code scanner, while also resembling some sci-fi teleportation device. As the Minister entered, everyone in the chamber stopped and bowed reverently while the body of the Chairman was carried to the steel structure. None of the onlookers seemed surprised that the Chairman was dead, and the four porters lifted the stretcher up to lay it gently on the steel structure.

The Minister nodded his dismissal to them. With a bow they turned toward the steel entrance they had come in. Only one or two of those gathered there were aware that in the entrance hall around the corner, the four porters were surrounded by eight black figures armed with automatic weapons who signaled them to be silent. The wall to the side then opened up noiselessly like Behemoth's huge mouth, and the four were ushered quickly and quietly into the cavernous darkness. Just as quietly, the wall closed back up with a silent, satisfied swallow.

Once the body was laid on the steel bed, the Minister turned to the far end of the chamber where stood the greatest of all the structures there, a thirty-foot glowing glass, transparent plastic and metallic statue of a man with its transparent face molded into the unmistakable features of the Chairman. As the Minister traversed the sixty feet to the electronic statue, he was joined by six figures in blood-red robes

that had not been apparent earlier. Three on each side walked him to the pentagram painted on the floor some ten feet from the base of the image. The glow of the image grew more intense. A glow became a glare, a glare became blinding brilliance, and the brilliance erupted into sparks showering from the image on all below.

The transparent circuitry of this massive computerized robot came to life with darts of bright colors in the tubes within its body, with blasts of heat that escalated to hot winds that blew off the hoods of the seven figures standing below it. It could then be seen that each of the six figures with the Minister wore some sort of crown or majestic head covering. Though the seven were facing away from everyone there, the grotesquely gnarled bald heads of the six and the odd shape of their ears told all present that these were something other than human priests from the dark side, that these were actual demonic captains of the Evil One's spiritual armies.

A closer look by a knowledgeable observer would have shown the head coverings to be, viewed from left to right, ancient crowns of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, a helmet of Greece, and the laurel crown of Rome.

The faint whirring sound that had been evident earlier now grew to a deafening crescendo until the cave began to tremble, until ghostly music caused the hearts of all present to tremble, until a nearly subsonic voice began to speak while more sparks and flashes burst from the image and the machines round the walls of the chamber. As if pushed down by an invisible hand, the hundred or more people gathered there fell prostrate before the image, leaving only the Minister and his demonic entourage standing, staring into the face of the image.

All could hear the voice emanating from the image, but none could understand the words—none, that is, but the Minister who drank deep of the words being said as he stared into the image that now lived and spoke and commanded him by a power more than electronic, more than digital, by the very power of the netherworld. After a few minutes the audio-visual pyrotechnics subsided and calm returned to the room. The image stood silent and relatively still though the circuits still moved and pulsed with light.

The Minister turned, his head still uncovered. His six companions pulled their hoods over their heads and, as they turned, seemed to vaporize and then disappear, leaving the Minister alone, facing his audience. Without a word he flung his hands high above his head. A great rumble followed as the ceiling of the chamber directly above the enormous image parted and it began to rise slowly to the unseen grounds of the now disassembled tabernacle above it, to its new lodging under an enormous tarp prepared beforehand, where it would now silently await its soon-coming unveiling.



## **ESTHER**

The golden rays of early morning sun politely crept onto the eastern window sill, paused a moment as if to make certain they were welcome, and then jumped nimbly down onto the floor. Only Muhammad was awake to see it, so the sunlight slowly and tentatively crossed the room to the thin mattress where he lay, deep in thought, observing this slow beginning of yet another day. The air was crisp and the sunlight had not yet warmed the air to its seasonal warm temperature, but it was welcome after the night Muhammad had spent in fretful remorse and vain attempts at sleep.

Why had he gone so close to the settlement's gate? Now they were all captives in a village of terrified, confused people who could easily execute them on the least suspicion of danger. What did the settlers have to lose by doing so? They were already outlaws and enemies of the new international state.

Muhammad could tell by the rising and setting of the sun that this was the third morning since they had been taken into captivity, and that's all he knew. They had been kept in ignorance as to what was happening in the world outside. Every day had been occupied with interrogations. The fact that Shaul was undoubtedly their friend and just as undoubtedly a

Jew had most likely been the reason they had been spared from any physical abuse, besides the initial rifle butt slammed into the back of Muhammad's head that first night. He touched the large, tender knot at the top of his head gingerly and thanked Allah that the pain was beginning to subside. How would it all end? Uncle Assadam, who always seemed to have some word of wisdom that made everything make sense, was now silent most of the time. No doubt he wondered if he had been lured like a dumb sheep into one more Israeli trap.

Shaul argued and harangued with their captors and explained the same story over and over again. Muhammad had gone basically despondent. He wondered where the power had gone that had guided him so faithfully until the moment they had been taken captive. The miraculous Voice that had guided him was now strangely silent. Its absence made him realize how much a part of himself the guidance had become, and try as he might he found no way to bring it back. The sunlight that had by now fully covered him on his place on the floor was of little comfort, but at least it reminded him that Allah was still in control if His sun was still rising and sharing its warmth with His most destitute of subjects.

Now he could hear the shuffle of feet coming up the wooden stairs to their attic room and the ironically friendly tinkle of porcelain dishes. Breakfast time. It would be carried by two of their brawniest young men who would unlock the door and shove the tray onto the floor and take away the used tray if the inmates had remembered to place it there. No word would be exchanged. No time would be wasted. Muhammad saw the tray of used dishes on the little table on the far side of the room and scurried to put it by the door. Just as he slid it in place, the door was opened and

the captor chosen to deliver the food this morning recoiled that someone stood so near the door. In jerky motions he leveled his rifle muzzle at Muhammad and barked an order in Hebrew. Muhammad instinctively, having spent most of the past month in captivity, put his hands on his head and backed off slowly, expecting the door to close as soon as the tray was placed on the floor.

But this morning was different. Instead, another rifle-toting young man entered, followed by an older balding man and a pretty young lady, definitely Jewish, in her early twenties, slim and curvaceous in revealing, casual clothes, one of those sexy Jewesses that Muhammad took pains not to look at, especially since he had begun his pilgrimage. He looked at the floor and wondered what was coming next. Without a word the balding man pointed to Shaul on the floor, who was now struggling to open his eyes. She stared at Shaul, all disheveled and unshaven, for a minute or more and then nodded emphatically 'yes, yes.' Then she spoke in English, "Yes, it's my brother, it's Shaul."

Shaul sat up with a jerk, stared dumbly for a moment or two, shook his head and uttered, "Esther!" He made movements to go to her and she to him, but they were stopped by the guards. The balding man, who was obviously in charge, motioned them to lower their weapons and nodded to Esther. She and Shaul embraced, softly weeping.

It was lunch time but with a major difference from their previous lunches in the settlement. The three "prisoners" were seated before a cornucopia of culinary delights in a well-accommodated dining room at a long table with a crisp white tablecloth. The event was being hosted by Shimon, the balding man whom they had come to know was the mayor of the

settlement, which was, in actual fact, a town of about ten-thousand inhabitants.

The lunch was attended by Esther and several other men and women from the settlement. The atmosphere was awkward for most, but Esther and Shaul were oblivious to everyone else's discomfort, so engrossed were they in conversation with one another, especially Esther talking incessantly, often asking questions that she hardly stopped long enough to hear the answer to. Their intense conversation was peppered with affectionate touches and even hugs and pecks on the cheek, so glad they were to have found one another and Esther to know Shaul had not died in the temple raid as his family believed. The Jewish lady sitting next to Muhammad made an attempt or two at conversation and he had answered politely, but each query seemed to lead nowhere. Finally Shimon broke the awkward ice by inviting everyone to help themselves to the feast.

As everyone was served, Shimon cleared his throat to gain the attention of the ten or so people at the meal. "We wish to offer our apologies and our welcome to our three friends," he said in unaccented English. A running translation was being given in Hebrew, and Muhammad whispered everything into his uncle's ear in Arabic. "We do hope you understand our anxiety at your sudden appearance at such a dangerous and uncertain time. We could take no chances with the lives of our people in the settlement."

Shaul thought how different this was to the attitude Muhammad and Assadam had had, how they, unlike the people of this settlement, had taken great risks for him out of love and hospitality.

Shimon continued, "Esther confirmed that you did indeed leave the U.S. to stay a year with your uncle, who was one of the known leaders of the Temple

Mount operation. As far as she knew, you were involved there and had been presumed dead, until she had been told through the grapevine of information that there was a young man matching your name and description in our settlement. We have agreed that you three may now walk among us as free men. In the days to come, we hope to discuss plans for the future and even how you three see the future, seeing that the Chairman is now dead and his Minister is feverishly working to calm the nerves of the world, while assuring them that the Chairman's plans will go on unhindered."

"*Dead?!*" Shaul gasped. "The Chairman's *dead?*"

"Ah, yes," Shimon nodded. "Of course you could not have known. You were being held incommunicado when it happened. He was assassinated after he announced that all religions except the worship of himself should be banned. Yet the Minister is continuing all his programs in his stead, and we are fully expecting to be attacked any time now. We can only assume there are matters of great importance that have kept the world government forces from attacking already. There is word that there will be a major announcement sometime tomorrow. After that, anything could happen. We want to know from you, our Palestinian friends, what is the reaction among your people to all the events of recent times?"

Muhammad whispered the following news to Assadam along with the question. All quietly waited while the elder Arab paused before speaking. "We did not know of this unexpected turn of events," he said slowly as the translator, who seemed as well-versed in Arabic as English, translated into Hebrew. The slowness of the process was a relief to Assadam as he measured each word, "and we cannot speak for all our people, for there are many different opinions

about the Chairman and his programs. But we know the vast majority of our people will refuse to follow his command to worship only him.”

“But he is *dead*,” Shimon answered. “If the Minister changes that ruling due to this major setback to his claim to being god—for if he is god, he is a dead one”—and all chuckled nervously—“if that changes, will your people then follow the world government?”

“I ... I cannot say. I have always said to Shaul that he could count on our resistance to the Chairman if the things he said of him prove to be true. But now this ... I ... I ... just don’t know what to say. Nevertheless Shaul and any he may call friends may count on our friendship, meaning my nephew and myself, regardless of the outcome of political events. Please allow me time to consider my answer of what I expect my people to do, as you may understand that I am shocked to hear that someone has managed to kill the Chairman. It’s unbelievable. Perhaps, Shaul, you can tell us what your Scriptures say about this.”

Shaul was staring blankly into space and shook his head despondently. Slowly with a faraway voice he said, “I don’t know what to say, for nothing prepared me for this. On the one hand it’s good news, but on the other it leaves us in limbo as to our next move. I wonder if we were wrong and this man doesn’t fulfill the prophecies. I, like Assadam, feel we should wait and see.”

“*Wait and see?*”

“There is no *time* to wait and see!”

“We must *know* where you *stand!*”

The dining room burst into a loud din of overlaid speech as each Israeli there urged the three to state their loyalties should trouble with the world government come. The urgings were punctuated with loud protestations that there was no time, that this put

both the captors and the captives in an awkward situation. Then the punctuation turned to more direct accusations not only against the three as individuals, but against the Palestinians as a whole. Were they potential enemies or were they friends? Were they terrorists who had duped Shaul and were just waiting for the chance to strike as they had so many times in the past? Were they liars and infiltrators or were they what they said they were? Could their word be trusted or would they deceive as they had so many times before?

“*Stop! Stop right now!*” The loudest and shrillest voice of all, a voice seasoned with the tell-tale broken sound of tears welling and threatening to flow, brought the room to silence. All eyes turned to Esther, her slim, trembling form standing, supporting itself against the table. “What kind of hosts are you anyway? Here these two Palestinians, supposedly your enemies, have saved one of our people at tremendous risk to themselves. And because they ask a little time, you attack them and open all the old wounds. Is this the way to bring peace to this land? God help you. If I’m not mistaken, there’ve been atrocities on both sides, broken promises on both sides, and, dare I say it, terrorism on both sides. Aren’t there things each side has done to be ashamed of? Isn’t that what war is all about? Isn’t war hell and injustice? My God, they know time is short as well as you do. And how can they commit not only themselves but their entire people to something when they have only this moment been informed of some very shocking news? Can’t we stop operating in panic mode for once and get a grip? Can’t we stop being paranoid for once and try to understand?”

“You knock Muhammad out and imprison these three for days, and then invite them to a sumptuous meal when you realize you were wrong, and yet within

ten minutes you're at their throat again. They're *people*, you know, not *dogs*." With a bewildered look at this uncharacteristic outburst, Esther sat down. Muhammad, who had just broken his recently established rule not to look directly at her, stared, mouth agape, at the pretty Jewish fireball. Their eyes met and she flashed a small smile and looked down in her lap.

"Well said, I would say," Shimon softly uttered. It was then that Muhammad realized their host had remained silent through the whole tirade against them. "We must, in spite of the seriousness of these times, hold our tempers and control our tongues. We beg your pardon. Assadam, of course you may take time to consider your answers and responses to the situation. You may also take time to watch or listen to the news or read the newspapers we have available to try to understand what is happening. But I must tell you that there is no official medium now operating that does not parrot the Chairman's policies, so you must read between the lines."

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## MARCHING ORDERS

Gypsy had just finished her shower very early Sunday morning and was putting the finishing touches on her makeup when she found herself staring into Frizzy's sober face in the mirror. Startled, Gypsy dropped her mascara into the sink, picked it up again, and turned to face her now-constant companion. Ever since their heavenly experience a few days before, the appearance of both Gypsy and Don's spirit companions had become a regular feature, yet she hadn't quite gotten used to the phenomenon. Now she smiled cheerily, but Frizzy's face remained sober.

"It's time, Gypsy," Frizzy said, "time to go, so pack up and check out as soon as possible."

"Sure ... sure ... uh, where are we going?"

"One step at a time," said Frizzy, and then melted through the wall.

Gypsy quickly threw her clothes on and entered the bedroom, to find Don in conversation with a male spirit helper. Until now they had not seen each other's new helpers, so this came as a shock, and she was yet more shocked at how this being appeared. As she came out of the bathroom he was standing with his back to her and he looked as solid as any mortal human, yet as she approached Don and the helper by the window, he began to fade and then completely disappeared like

a hologram. Don, though, could see him the whole time and was carrying on an in-depth conversation with him. Gypsy sat on the bed, bewildered, and to her surprise, from that angle the helper—George by name, a Palestinian Christian who had been killed in the fifties—reappeared! Gypsy felt a hand on her shoulder and turned to see Frizzy again. Looking over at Don, she knew he could see her too. So here they were at last, their team of four, plainly visible to all.

Don and Gypsy stood speechless while their helpers smiled broadly for the first time that morning, amused by their wards' reaction to this new development. Don said as nonchalantly as he could, "George says we have to get moving."

"Yeah," Gypsy said, "that's what Frizzy said."

"In truth," George said, "I see our young wards are in great amazement at what is now happening. Please, Don, sit down, and we will attempt to explain. This kind of manifestation, where you both can see both of us as clearly as you can see each other, that is, *almost* as clearly, is not something you will always experience, but it is necessary at this point in time for two reasons."

"Yes," Frizzy continued, standing up to allow Don to sit where she had been sitting and crossing to stand beside George. Don and Gypsy took note that at one point she disappeared as she walked to George, like they were seeing them through windows into the fifth dimension with walls sometimes blocking their view for a split second. "You see, this is because today's directions are so crucial to all that will happen during the next three and a half years that it is time to shatter the barriers between earth and Heaven completely for a short while. You must understand our instructions explicitly. There must be no mistake or proceeding simply by blind faith on your part. You must be totally

convinced that you are getting it right. Secondly, this is to increase your faith that we are with you and will always be there.

"Throughout the day we will be telling you some things to look out for in the future that will continue to increase your faith as you see those very things unfolding. This kind of very clear manifestation has happened before in Biblical history. You can read them for yourselves in Ezekiel, Daniel, Revelation, and other places. The incredible vividness of those manifestations was given to older prophets who had proven faithful through years of following by faith alone. They both needed and deserved clear instructions that they might believe beyond a shadow of a doubt the messages that were to follow. You, too, have proven your faith and faithfulness and have now graduated to a new level. Congratulations!"

"There is not much time," George interjected. "You must quickly pack, eat your breakfast, and then get out on the desert highway heading north. From there we will show you where to go and what to do."

"But what about our little flock?" Gypsy queried.

"There are powerful angels assigned to them who will guide them through this time. You shall see them again. The most important thing is that you keep Leila's address, the little waitress in the coffee shop. She is the key figure among all of them. Leave her with more magazines and encourage her over breakfast to keep going for Jesus. She'll follow your instructions explicitly and will shepherd the others."

"And now," Frizzy interjected, "we need to get going."

The world was in chaos, panic, and abysmal division. The assassination of the Chairman had sent waves of weeping and mourning as well as rejoicing

throughout the world. The mourners were by far in the majority. The media decried the event as further proof that religions had to be abolished for the sake of peace in the New World Order. In spite of urgings by the official voice of the World Order to exercise restraint, that a solution to the problems of the religions of the world was being considered, that individuals or vigilante groups should not take matters into their own hands, from every part of the globe came news that angry mobs were destroying homes and places of worship of known adherents to the three great monotheistic religions—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. For the time being Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and the tribal religions were being left alone in the hopes they would come around, and many had. Though the official voice publicly decried the violence, little was done to stop it.

Far above the chaos below, the heavenly hosts were busy sending recruits to earth to maneuver as many as possible of their earthly numbers into strategic positions and to safety. Meanwhile, on earth, tales were heard daily of miraculous deliverances alongside the news that the lives of believers on every continent were being threatened and oftentimes taken. There were deliverances through death into a better world for many, yet there were many others delivered from death by miraculous events. These manifestations caused a mighty surge in the faith of the faithful worldwide.

Yet there were still Christians who held to their cherished belief that they would be rescued before the Tribulation, and around the globe there were bands of them waiting for the Rapture to occur any second, any day—waiting sadly in vain. The God they knew so distantly was instead preparing for greater miracles than rescuing His children from harm. He was going to use them, protect them, and anoint them mightily

while in harm's way if they would just listen to His instructions. Sadly, the false doctrine of the pre-Tribulation Rapture had left many totally unprepared spiritually and physically, virgins without oil, sheep awaiting the slaughter, the elect so easily deceived.

## **A SECRET MEETING**

Lani's father's limousine stood silently, patiently and darkly waiting on the street while Lenny and Mary bade a tearful but joyful farewell to their loved ones on the driveway of their estate. Stephen and Annie were bursting with excitement, as were Julie and Samuel. They were making the rounds hugging and laughing with their peers, while Lenny clung to Gideon's neck, praying and shedding a few tears for him. He broke the hug and looked into Gideon's eyes.

"God bless you, son. I'm so proud of you. Let's stay in touch as much and as long as we can. Things are bound to start moving really fast, so who knows what will happen?"

"Dad"—Gideon blinked back the tears—"I just wanna say ... thanks ... for everything over the years. I'm real happy for how things are looking up for you. I think I admired you more these last couple of years than ever before, how you stayed faithful and fought on when things were such a battle for you. I think that did more to prepare me for the Tribulation than almost anything since watching Mom die so bravely. I'm ... I'm real proud of you too. Take good care of the kids. ..." Julie and Samuel had joined them in the meantime and Gideon tousled their hair as he spoke. "You guys, be a blessing to Dad and Mary and keep the faith, okay?"



“Yeah.”

“Sure.”

There was an awkward silence, broken by Mary’s turning up and giving Gideon a warm hug and kiss on the cheek. “I guess you’d better get going,” Gideon mumbled. He gave his dad one more hug, and then returned silently to the house.

The little family, as well as Stephen and Annie, turned to the street and saw Lani waving to them. How lovely she looked! So free and happy! Grabbing their few bags they climbed the incline to the street and the waiting car amid all the goodbye’s called out to them from those on the driveway.

Lani hugged everyone and then whispered to Lenny, “I have someone in the back seat who is anxious to speak to you, but he needs this meeting to be a secret. That’s why we brought the limo with especially dark windows.” Lenny bent down to climb in and heard Lani whispering to all those climbing in behind him not to call out the name of her mysterious companion.

Lenny stopped for a split second as his eyes met those of Colonel Mustafa Saman’s. He hesitated a short moment before climbing in and sitting quietly beside him in the spacious seat in the very back of the vehicle. The rest of his team sat in the two other seats facing each other behind the driver’s seat.

Mustafa was smiling and happy, so unlike his demeanor when they had seen each other a few days ago. He shook Lenny’s hand warmly and whispered, “I have so much to tell and ask you. I have been waiting for the right time and now it has come.”

Lenny patted his arm and said, “It’s good to see you, Mustafa. What can we do to help you?”

“Much, my friend, I think. Things are very confusing, but this afternoon I and some others expect to witness the first of the Chairman and his Minister’s

miracles. I am sure you have heard of the broadcast from Jerusalem that is expected this afternoon. We need to be prepared when that happens for what will be our next move. I have been thinking very very deeply and have assembled around me a small group of trusted officers and elite soldiers that I have taught the things you taught me. We have become what you Americans call a ‘think tank’—trying to figure out what will happen and what our options are. There are some blanks in our reasoning and logic, I am sure, and that’s where you come in, to fill in those blanks with your gift of prophecy. We also need spiritual guidance in all we plan to do, and that’s where you are especially well equipped.”

Lenny gulped. Mary, who had turned from the seat in front to listen in, smiled and winked at him, knowing that these words would be hard for Lenny to believe. Lenny thought how, less than one month ago, he had been ready to throw the spiritual towel in, and now a man who seemed destined to be an officer of the AAC forces of the End was asking him to be their spiritual guide, to advise them in the jihad that many Muslims were prepared and willing to die for. The awesome responsibility was more than daunting and, had he not caught a glimpse of Rodrigo in his mind’s eye, fully armed for battle, he would have refused the commission. Instead he nodded and remained silent, knowing the battle was not his, but the Lord’s.

“Through our intelligence sources we found out where you were going with your family, and it just so happens Lani’s father is a major supplier and manufacturer of prepared foods for the military, so we know him well. When we get to his house, you and I will go to a private room to talk.”

“Can my wife come?”

“Your wife?”

“Oh, yes, I got married since the house arrest ended.”

“*Mabruk!* Congratulations!” He smiled at Mary. “Of course she can come.” He lowered his voice to a hardly audible whisper and said, “What you will hear must be kept only for people you know beyond the shadow of a doubt are reliable and wise. It could mean the success or failure of our operation. It could even mean our lives or our deaths. So you see, my friend, what trust we are placing in your hands. Your words have already had a great effect and have inspired a faithful few to pledge their all to keep our region free of the influence of this devil-man.”

“They were not my words, Mustafa.”

“Yes, yes, the words Allah inspired you to teach me ... they have begun a great work and we are ready to die for the things you taught us.”

Lenny swallowed hard. The full realization that these lives were being laid in his hands in full faith fell hard on his shoulders. He tried to smile with the kind of pleasure Mustafa obviously expected him to express, but felt only a deep sinking. The whisper in his heart at that moment urged him, *Cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you*. And he sighed, closed his eyes, and smiled.

“I am deeply touched at your trust in the things I told you,” Lenny said when he opened his eyes again. “I pray I will never fail that trust, but you must know that that can only happen by the goodness of Allah. I know nothing but what He shows me.”

“I know, that is why I trust you. And my colleagues will grow to trust you as well. And their numbers will grow as we spread the message. We will talk more when we are in private at Lani’s house. So, how do you feel, Lenny, being appointed guide and chief advisor to a newborn underground resistance movement?”

Lenny swallowed hard once more as Mustafa grinned and patted his hand.

Isaa’s limousine glided in air-conditioned comfort through the noonday sun of the rambling Arab city. The spaciousness of its wide avenues peopled by reckless drivers and endangered pedestrians was broken by ancient, narrow alleys through neighborhoods of stone houses half as old as time, alleys with vendors cluttering the sides and pedestrians filling the remainder of the road—oblivious, if not indignant, to the cars struggling to make their way along. It was as if the people and the ancient houses knew the automobiles didn’t belong here and therefore did not deserve their respect or acknowledgment.

On and on they traveled, creeping through alleyways, racing down avenues, while Mustafa and Lenny continued to speak in hushed tones in the back. Lani was bubbling over with excitement as she related all her latest experiences to Mary, Stephen, Annie, and the two children in the seats in front. The gift of clear speech and control of her tongue and body was so new and marvelous to her and caused in her such joy it made her audience ashamed at what they had taken for granted every day of their lives. Mary, who at first was sitting across from Lani, felt compelled to occupy the space next to her and wrap an arm around her shoulder as she bubbled on.

At last their vehicle left the town proper and drove into the terraced, suburban hills. It turned right toward an ornate gate that opened automatically before them. All were in awe at the grandeur of this estate as the limo slowly drove down the curved, tree-lined driveway and up to the huge mansion before them. But rather than stopping before the long steps leading up to the glassed-in entranceway in the front, it continued around the house to the back. There

an electric garage door opened and the gigantic car descended an inclined drive into a dark cavern of a garage. As the door closed slowly and silently behind them, bright lights clicked on, revealing a mammoth underground car park filled with vehicles of every description except rundown. The automatic locks on the limo popped up and the doors swung open. As they stepped out, a stately, gray-haired gentleman, whom they correctly assumed to be Isaa, greeted them with a warm hug and kisses on their cheeks, Arab style.

“Welcome, welcome to your new home, my friends. You are welcome here as long as you would like to stay. But first there is much for you, Lenny, to talk about with Colonel Mustafa and some others in these rooms to the right.” Oddly enough, he pointed to a blank cement wall. “I must apologize for this lack of traditional hospitality to see you to your rooms and make you comfortable before engaging in any kind of business, but these are extraordinary times. I hope you understand.”

“Of course, of course we do,” Lenny said.

“Then, Lenny and Mustafa, please come with me.”

Mustafa interjected, “Lenny ... and his new wife, if that would be all right.”

Isaa’s eyebrows raised with a slight smile to the pretty blonde lady standing before him.

Mustafa continued, “Allow me to introduce you to Mary.”

Isaa smiled. “Pleased to meet you, Mary. You are welcome and *mabruk*.” Looking at the four younger people, he said, “If you please, Lani will take you to the game room where there are some other young people eager to hear anything you could tell them about these times, what the future holds for all of us,

and the special gifts I have heard you possess.”

The young people looked at each other and to their elders. This was a commission they did not expect so quickly. Annie had spent most of her time in the Home in secretarial work, while Steve had overseen the big kitchen. While they had both participated in plenty of Endtime studies from the time they were children, and knew and understood among the people, still neither of them felt their witnessing skills nor their Arabic were up to par to feed a group of rich Arab kids without the aid of an experienced and veteran Bible teacher like Lenny.

Lenny smiled understandingly and cryptically said quietly to Steve—who was the more distraught-looking of the two, “Matthew 10:19. Don’t worry.”

Steve looked questioningly at Annie when Julie interjected, “You know, it’s the one about ‘take no thought how or what you shall speak for it shall be given you the same hour what you shall speak.’”

Steve looked up at Lenny in surprise.

“Psalm 8:2,” Lenny added with a chuckle.

“I know that one, it’s ... it’s...”

Julie chimed in, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings.”

“Yeah, right. Well, Julie, I think I’m gonna keep you with me.”

Lenny nodded, “Good idea.”

Lani now took Julie and Samuel by the hand and said, “We’d best be running on and leave our elders to their important business. Follow me, everyone.” Once the young people had gone inside, Isaa nodded to Lenny and Mary and led the way to the place he had pointed to earlier. As they approached, the wall parted and opened to reveal a set of stairs going down further.

As they descended, Isaa said, “I had this apartment

built and stocked during the Gulf War due to the fear of attack, stray missiles, or chemical warfare. I have barely used it, but now I think it will come in very handy. These will be your quarters. There are four bedrooms, a lounge, a study with books, a computer, and anything else you might need, a fully stocked kitchen and bar, two baths, and, well, you shall see for yourself. Please let me know if there is anything you require besides.” Another automatic door opened and the four of them entered a plush and spacious luxury apartment with everything imaginable provided. Lenny thought it was highly unlikely anything was missing.

But the most amazing and somehow disconcerting aspect of the apartment was the group of fifteen men awaiting their arrival, ten of them in the uniforms of officers of the various branches of the military. Lenny glanced nervously at Mary who smiled brightly and whispered, “Matthew 10:19, sweetheart,” and squeezed his hand.

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## THE FLOCK IS FED

When Lani and her entourage reached the game room, they were greeted by a smaller group of young people—eight in all—between the ages of eighteen and thirty, seemingly the children of the rich of the country, sitting around several card tables they had shoved together to spread out the various posters, tracts, literature and *Motivated* magazines that Lani had shown them. They stood up respectfully as the Family young people entered, eagerly introduced themselves, allowed the five latest arrivals to be seated, then promptly began to bombard them with one question after another on the Endtime, the Antichrist, and the next events to be expected. It seemed they were all Christians but, like most conventional Christians, almost completely unversed in Endtime events and Scriptures that Steve and Annie had been familiar with from their youth.

Lani raised her arms and spoke above the din, “Please! Please give our guests a moment to catch their breath, to have some lunch and refreshments. They have been through much. Then we can each in turn ask our questions and have them answered.”

A beautiful Arab girl with bewitching eyes, or at least Steve thought so, called out, “But it won’t be long till the broadcast and we can’t miss that. And we need to know before then.”

Lani glanced at her watch and said, "Diala, please, don't be so impatient. It is one o'clock now and that gives us three hours before the broadcast. Can we not wait half an hour before accosting our guests?"

Annie, having the utmost confidence that Steve would be able to handle these questions, said, "You know, Lani, I don't know exactly how Steve, Julie, and Samuel feel, but I think we're all too excited to eat right now anyway."

Steve threw a quick reproving look at Annie as stage fright clutched his heart, and remorse that he had not made as great of an effort to learn Arabic or verse himself in the Arabic translations of the Bible verses he would likely be called to quote and expound on.

Annie, oblivious to his condition, continued, "Maybe just some juice or something and we could dive right in."

Lani looked at the others for their approval. Julie nodded, eagerly clutching a little 3x5 Bible, the one her dad had given her that had served him so well for over thirty years. Samuel, after a few moments of wistfully taking in the many interesting devices of this fabulously accoutered game room, turned his attention back to the moment. "Yeah, I'm okay."

Steve was far less confident, and paused while trying to think of something to be thankful for in this situation. He was sincerely able to silently praise God that it looked like these young people's English was at least as good as his. Then glancing once more at Diala, he thanked God for such an attractive student before saying, "Yes ... um ... I guess that's fine. Something light and ... uh ... we won't have to wait."

With those words successfully thrust out of his mouth, the praise about Diala turned to panic as he imagined himself tongue-tied, blushing, stumbling, fumbling, and stuttering through the question and

answer session with confident little Juliana upstaging and correcting him at every turn and finally, in exasperation at Steve's ineptitude, taking over the whole class while Diala thought what a jerk and loser he was. *Oh, Lord, how did I ever get myself into this?*

He then noticed all eyes were on him, wondering at the blank, slightly fearful look on his face. Bringing himself back to the here-and-now and the real situation at hand rather than the imagined, he nodded with a forced smile, saying, "Yes, a light snack would be just fine, Lani."

A quick buzz up to the kitchen on the intercom and a "light" snack of juice, coffee, tea, bread, humus, moutabel, salad, nuts, kebab and Arabic sweets was brought down, arriving within five minutes. The Family guests heaved a sigh of relief that they had escaped the "full" lunch.

The questions came with an urgency none of the young people had ever experienced from anyone they had witnessed to before. The first few questions were difficult for the three to answer, mainly because, while the students did speak English, many of the biblical terms warranted some further explaining. But with Julie looking up references, and Samuel finding and reading them fluently from the Arabic Bible he pulled from his pocket, and Steve praying desperately for the words to explain and put all these verses together in a cohesive manner, they managed to survive the first few minutes. But Steve felt a little dry ... like he was merely hanging a label on every horn and not really getting across the greater point and picture of what was happening. But he felt helpless as to how he could get across a fuller and more meaningful witness.

Finally, within mere minutes of agreeing to begin the question-and-answer session, Steve began to feel a presence. He personally had never had an experience

where he was cognizant of his closest spirit helper as so many others had these last few years, but he knew somehow that this presence he now felt had been with him for years, if not his whole life. He smiled sheepishly at the group of young people—once more staring at him in slight bewilderment—and said, “Please pardon me just a minute.”

Then, to everyone’s surprise, he closed his eyes and was shocked that there, behind his closed eyelids, was a vision as vivid as anything he had ever seen with his opened eyes. The helper was before him, though his face was obscured. Then it was as if the helper said, “Here, let *me* help you,” and stepped right up and *in* to Steve’s body. Steve gave a shudder and his eyes popped open. The little audience let out a gasp as they recognized that a major change had just come over Steve.

Then, with a confidence and boldness that he had not felt before, Steve continued to expound on the Scriptures and all the things that were starting to come back to his remembrance.

As the recorded facts of Bible prophecy concerning the Antichrist were being covered, a mantle of silence began to fall over the young people in the room one by one, as each one realized that this magnificent Book from antiquity held the secrets of today and the keys of the future and of all powers in Heaven and earth. Class had been in session about forty-five minutes by the time all the students were sitting back in their chairs in pensive meditation. The confidence afforded them by their cellphones, their styled hair, latest clothes, and unlimited wealth melted away and their true, spiritually naked state was clear to be seen.

Steve and Julie looked at each other, wondering what to do now that complete silence ruled in the room. Julie, with wisdom beyond her years, put her index finger to her lips and smiled slightly. She was

right, it was the Spirit’s turn to speak directly to their hearts, their job was to let Her.

Diala thought, *All these things written in the Bible thousands of years ago are about to be fulfilled before my eyes! Hasn’t there been enough shock this week? I was totally unprepared for the shock of seeing my cousin, Lani, healed and as whole as I am. She had a joy and love and enthusiasm that shamed me in her presence. I never hoped to see such total joy as that in anyone, much less ever possess it.*

She recalled how she had been so emboldened to break down the façade that had become the mainstay of her life, and tell Lani in private how her miraculous healing and change had profoundly affected her. She remembered how Lani had responded by excitedly inviting her to come to this session today, promising she could have the same change if she would just listen and follow the instructions that would be given by these remarkable, miracle-working people. At first Diala had been disappointed that the now-famous Lenny had not come to this first session, and instead a bunch of kids were their teachers, but now she thought if Lenny was even more adept than this team of Stephen and his little sidekick, Juliana, he must be quite remarkable. And to top it off, Steve didn’t look like some holy man. In fact, he was quite cool, quite the looker, especially after that strange prayer or whatever it was.

Diala allowed herself to think a few romantic thoughts and imagine the impossible, namely her developing some kind of relationship with a non-Arabic foreigner of whom she knew little and whose family was totally unknown to her very rich, very socially conscious family. As modern and progressive as her crowd was, there were certain boundaries that were never crossed and the area of love and relationships

was still quite conventional and guarded. Nevertheless she had watched *Titanic* eight times in her early teens and had memorized every word and note of *My Heart Will Go On*, so she had ample ammunition to fortify an impossible dream, something she had often done over the lonely, empty years. But now right here before her, she had a live subject to dream about.

But, wait a minute, what was she doing? In two hours or a little more, a world-changing broadcast was to come from the Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem, and here she was dreaming of an impossible and forbidden romantic interlude! She shot up in her chair, raised her hand and broke the silence, asking, “We understand what has generally been predicted, but what do you think will happen *today* in Jerusalem? Will the Chairman be resurrected from the dead? Will the Image now be revealed? Will the Tribulation begin today so we can now start counting 1,260 days?”

Steve stared into those huge, brown eyes for just a moment too long—long enough for both of them to know there was some definite chemistry here and that they’d better be careful—before he said, gulping at the prodding he felt in his heart from the invisible world, “Well, that’s something no one can say except God, and who knows the mind of God?” He paused to let that sink in to the group, while groping for what to say next, his delicate link with the spirit world having been broken by those eyes.

“Fortunately,” Annie interjected, “God, in this day and age, is fulfilling another promise first made in the book of Joel by pouring out His Spirit on all people and giving His sons and daughters the gift of prophecy, visions, dreams and so forth. The only way we could answer that question is if we got quiet for a moment and asked God to speak to us.”

“Speak to us?” several of the students exclaimed.

“Yes, yes,” Steve continued, making a quick, thankful glance in Annie’s direction. “God is still alive and still speaks, even more so than in times past, and all we have to do is tune in and listen to His broadcast, just like tuning in a radio.”

“But ... but”—the voice came from the coolest of the boys present, Hanna—or “Johnny,” as they called him—with his spiky gelled hair, tinted glasses, brand-name clothes and accessories covering every inch of him from head to toe—“we only know about Jesus from church and some Bible stories. We only pray written, memorized prayers, and now you’re suggesting we speak our own words to Him and expect Him to answer?!”

Julie gasped and whispered into Steve’s ear, “Steve, they’re not even saved, except for Lani!”

“You’re right!” Steve exclaimed and almost began to explain salvation to them himself when something stopped him. He looked at Julie, smiled and nodded for her to go ahead. She grinned, happy for the opportunity, and then dove in with obvious enthusiasm. Stephen mused smilingly as Juliana proceeded with great aplomb, thinking how good it was for these proud, confident rich kids to have their self-assurance gently brought down once again by having a junior teen mentor. Yet it seemed none of them were looking on the outward appearance anymore as they drank in every word Julie shared with them. Without hesitation they all joined hands and bowed their heads to receive Jesus and His Holy Spirit, which Julie had explained to them in some detail.

As the prayer ended, they opened their eyes and grinned at their teachers and each other with humble, beautiful, silly, almost tipsy looks on their faces. “Wow,” Johnny breathed, “that was good! Why didn’t anyone ever tell us about that?”

“And...,” Diala queried, “and there’s more?”

“Well,” Julie continued, “when you get saved by receiving Jesus, which you all just did, and then receive the Holy Spirit, which you all just did too, you can receive the gifts of His Spirit, and one of them is the gift of prophecy.” She proceeded to read the passage on the gifts of the Spirit from 1 Corinthians 12 to them. “With this gift you can receive messages from God Himself, from Jesus, and even from saints who have gone before.”

“Like Saint George and Saint Nicholas?” Johnny asked.

Julie knew these two were very special to Arab Christians. “Yes, exactly.”

“But,” Annie interjected, “don’t worry, we understand it might take some practice before you’re really skilled in using the gift of prophecy. We’ve been trained in its use for many years. Just relax, sit back and listen. If anything comes to your mind when you are asking God to speak to you, feel free to either speak it out right then, or tell us about it later in the session. You’ll see how it goes.”

“So, yes,” Steve continued, “as we take a little time to ‘hear from the Lord’, as we say, you may not feel you are getting anything or maybe it’s something small, but that doesn’t matter. Just listen and try to hear what God has to say to us, and if you really want to hear and you are willing to let go of your own ideas, He will speak to you. Do you want to try it? We can specifically ask the Lord what we can expect to happen this afternoon in Jerusalem. Okay?”

Their students looked at each other and nodded at first slowly and then more eagerly. Annie pulled out her digital recorder as all bowed their heads and petitioned Jesus to show them the immediate future. Stephen, Annie, Juliana, and even Samuel let out a

collective gasp as, behind their eyelids, they saw as it were the entire room packed out with angelic beings waiting to manifest themselves in a dramatic way.

As the four Family members, plus Lani, began to softly praise the Lord, Steve realized they hadn’t explained praise to their class and was wondering if he should stop and do so when he began to hear Diala, Johnny, and then the others follow suit and express praising words to the Lord. It seemed they were willing to do whatever they were told or shown. What a joy it was to have the privilege of feeding a hungry group like this!

Annie began to speak. “Close the eyes of your flesh and open the eyes of your spirit to see in My Spirit the things that must shortly come to pass in that city which is called The Holy Place. Behold the Haram al Sharif. Behold the golden dome glistening in the sun. Behold the masses gathered there. Behold the hidden structures standing before them in the holy place of the sanctuary.”

At varying degrees and speeds for each one, they each felt themselves lifted from their places and transported high above the earthly room they were in, to where they could actually see the scene Annie was describing. There were gasps and whispers.

“Wow!”

“Ooh!”

“I see it, I see it!”

“Oh God, it’s so clear I feel like I could touch it!”

Annie continued, “See the two draped figures in the courtyard. ...” As she went on, each person there saw and heard the scenes described acted out before their eyes—music played, speeches that would soon be delivered, the revelation of the Image and all that followed, including the resurrection of the Chairman and the first miracle performed by the



Minister. None gathered in the game room that day could ever deny that their life in the Lord had begun with a mighty explosion of the Holy Ghost. As Annie's narration ended, each one sat breathless, their eyes closed, desiring rather to remain in the spiritual realm than to come down and face the awful days that lay ahead.

As the new babes pondered returning to so-called reality, the Spirit spoke to each heart to assure them that She would be with them and that the spiritual realm they had experienced today—where there was perfect peace in spite of the Hell on earth they were now entering—would be theirs for the asking until that glorious day when Jesus would call them home either at the Rapture or through their death. She assured them they had nothing to fear, but much to learn, and they must stay very close and redeem every moment of time for these next three and a half years. She also affirmed to them that today the countdown began, that they were on the last leg of man's miserable history, and his reign would now come to travail, struggling to give birth to his Satanically inspired, dreamed-of New World Order. She assured them that the devilish kingdom born today would very soon come to naught, barren and worthless, and be blown away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

Slowly, slowly, one by one they dared to open their eyes and dreamily look into the eyes of their new teachers. There was a sense that they had all been together forever, though they had never met these people before this day. There was a deep union in the heart and the spirit that they all knew was forever and could never be broken.

Diala boldly locked eyes with Steve, but this time there was something far deeper than the attraction of two young people for each other. He knew she was

somehow a key and he was to carefully, prayerfully feed this precious soul—and she knew her life was somehow entwined with his, but not romantically, or not romantically yet, or not only romantically—that there was something here she had never known before, and that the movies and songs she had listened to throughout her teen years had never told her about.

As the last pair of eyes dreamily opened, the eight babes spontaneously began to praise the Lord, softly at first, then louder and louder, lifting their hands to Heaven, shouting praises in both English and Arabic and finally in unknown tongues. Steve remembered the story of Cornelius from Acts 10, and how he and his kinsmen and friends had all been filled with the Holy Ghost, and marveled that he was now living in days as miraculous as those days he had read of since as long as he could remember. He attempted to lift his arms to praise and found he could not raise them above his head. Because of the excitement of the entire experience, he only now noticed that his body was sapped of all strength and his head was spinning like a drunken man.

Thinking he would slip out to the bathroom while everyone was praising and splash some water in his face, he pushed away his chair, stood up, and began to walk toward a door he figured would be the toilet. To his amazement his legs began to buckle, the room careened madly around him, and all went white as he fell unconscious with a dull thump on the soft carpet.

## HEAVENLY HITCHING

Had these times been other than they were—that is, extraordinary in every way—Don and Gypsy, in their fifties, hitching on the open desert highway headed north, would have made a spectacle to behold. As it was, they were alone, hitching on these roads that had, till now, always been rife with young Israelis, military personnel, civilians, and orthodox Jews all in black, hitch-hiking hither and yon. Cars today were few and far between, so Frizzy and George suggested they just keep walking, so walk they did till well into the morning. The blistering sun, high in the sky now, had begun its impish play of warping the air ahead and beating down on any traveler foolish enough to be out under its merciless rays. Today, though, its play was in vain, for George and Frizzy were making certain, as was promised thousands of years before, that the sun would not smite their charges by day nor the moon by night. Somehow the air around them retained the refreshing early morning coolness they had begun their trek with.

Though feeling robust and energetic, Don was nevertheless a little anxious at the fact they were moving so slowly, having been given no rides after hours on the road. His carnal mind, in spite of many years of mind-blowing, mind-boggling input, still

refused to completely let go and was now telling him it was bad policy to walk with no end in sight in the middle of the day deep into the Negev Desert.

“George,” Don queried, “wouldn’t it be just as easy for you to wave your hand like some kind of a Jedi knight and make one of these cars pick us up?”

“Oh, you wouldn’t need *me* to do that. *You* could do it just as well,” was George’s reply.

“Well, then, I just might try it.”

“But do you really want to go as slow as these cars?” Frizzy asked as a Volkswagen van whizzed by them.

“Slow!?” Don exclaimed. “That’s not exactly what I call slow.”

George stopped in his tracks just in front of Don and turned to him. “Don, your gift for hearing from Heaven is truly wonderful and has been since the day you got saved. However, you must learn to see things with spiritual eyes at all times, to think with your heavenly mind rather than with a carnal one. Was there anything noteworthy about that car that just passed?”

“Uh, no,” Don said quietly, not knowing what this was leading to.

Suddenly Gypsy grasped Don’s arm and her nails dug in with excitement. “I *thought* I’d seen that car before! It passed us up about an hour ago!”

“Then how’d we get ahead of it?” Don could tell by George and Frizzy’s raised eyebrows that this was the point. “Do you mean, somehow we’re actually moving *faster* than those cars?”

“Okay, kids, I can see it’s time for object lesson number one,” Frizzy said. “Look, the terrain is pretty much all the same everywhere you look, right?”

“Yeah, same sand, same boulders, same hills on our right, same road as far as the eye can see.”

“Right. So let’s just keep walking while you focus your eyes on one point. Just choose a point.”

“Okay, okay, that telephone pole.”

“No, no, something further off.”

“Okay, those two pointy peaks north by northeast from us,” Gypsy interjected.

“Excellent,” George said. “Now shall we continue walking?”

“Don’t take your eyes off those peaks even for an instant,” Frizzy advised.

They continued walking. Five, ten paces, and nothing had happened. Just about the time Don, as impatient as he could sometimes be, was about to ask what the point really was, he blinked and lost sight of the peaks.

“Hey!” exclaimed Gypsy and he simultaneously. “Where are our peaks?”

“Where indeed!” George said, once more stopping and turning to the bewildered couple. “Let’s see,” and he looked back down the road, squinting his eyes. “Could that be them?” And he pointed to two ridges almost to the horizon behind them.

“Lord Jesus!” Gypsy gasped.

“Exactly,” Frizzy whispered. “And look at that speck on the road back there. Could that be our erstwhile VW van?”

“What speck?” Don asked.

George pointed. Don and Gypsy looked, saw nothing, squinted, and suddenly saw the road as if through high-powered binoculars, and, yes, there was a speck there. The speck jumped somehow closer in three steps until there was no doubt it was the very van that had just whizzed past them.

“Wow!” Don breathed.

“Praise You Jesus!” Gypsy sighed. “Pretty awesome.”

“What must the driver think, passing us up twice already?” Don inquired.

“Oh,” George said, “he thinks nothing, nothing at all. He hasn’t seen us.”

“What?! Then why have you been letting us stick out our thumb every time?”

Frizzy laughed. “Do you remember that story from the *Good Thots* about the cake mix so complete you only had to add water?”

“Yeah, right,” Gypsy interjected. “It didn’t sell until they changed it and you had to add an egg as well. Hmm, you mean you thought we wouldn’t buy this if we didn’t have anything to do?”

Frizzy chuckled. “It kept you busy, didn’t it?”

“So nobody’s been able to see us all this time?” Don asked.

“Nope,” Frizzy said with a finality that ended the conversation. The quartet continued their journey now in awed silence, noticing every few minutes how the mountains jerked by them. It seemed that now that they knew what was happening, their angelic helpers were letting things go even faster.

Fifteen or twenty minutes had passed when the phenomenon that Don had mentally nicknamed “binocular syndrome” happened again. The view of the hills on the horizon snapped larger in three steps till he could clearly see a large, modern Israeli settlement on the top of one of the hills. Snap-snap-snap again, and he could make out guard posts bristling with armed men, and the settlement surrounded by battlements, bunkers, and sand bags. When his view returned to normal, he turned to Gypsy and could see by her face she had seen the same thing. Turning to their guides, they recoiled to see they were now accompanied by two young Israeli officers, a man and a woman, fully armed, helmeted, and flak-jacketed.

Frizzy and George were nowhere to be seen. The pretty “Israeli” girl winked at them mysteriously as she flagged down the armored personnel carrier that was now approaching them on the road.

As the truck slowed to a halt, three nervous soldiers piled out. The lead soldier inquired in Hebrew (that Don and Gypsy were amazed they could understand), “What are you doing out here? Are you crazy? Let me see some ID.”

The pretty female soldier winked again, looked significantly at Don, and waved her hand Jedi style at their questioner. “We don’t need ID.”

The lead soldier turned to the others and said, “They don’t need ID,” and they all nodded agreement.

“We found these two young Americans wandering around out here on the verge of sun stroke.” Don and Gypsy then noticed the rolling suitcases they had had were replaced by packs on their backs and that they looked thirty years younger. The cold clamminess of their bodies and the dryness in their mouths made it easy to act the sunstroke part as well. “You’re to take us to that settlement.” And she pointed in the direction where Don and Gypsy had seen the settlement just minutes ago.

“Our intelligence tells us it’s been taken over by One World forces,” one of the other soldiers said.

“No, it hasn’t. It’s still ours. You’re to take us there.”

“Okay then, get in.”

The conversation in the back of the military vehicle was sparse and guarded. But no conversation was necessary to discern that these young soldiers were afraid for their very lives and uncertain of their next move. The head of the Israeli Defense Force up north had been cut off early in the campaign, and the

troops in the south were left with lower officers to guide them. No doubt they were all aware they were preparing for some gallant last stand once the One World forces had completely secured Jerusalem and the north and decided to make a move. No doubt they were aware that their future was likely to be much shorter than their past.

Gypsy searched the faces around her, eight in all, six boys and two girls, and mused, *They're just kids, Jesus. Within a few days, weeks, months, who knows, most of these young lives'll be snuffed out. Lord, some of these have probably been guilty of the kind of atrocities we've heard about in the news, or read about in the END, but now to see them, sit with them, hear them, feel their fears ... I can't help but wonder, what makes them tick, what made them do such horrible things? Are they really monsters? Or are they just misguided kids? Who's really to blame? Are they all hopeless cases?*

Frizzy, or the female Israeli soldier that Gypsy assumed Frizzy had now become, was sitting across from her in the truck. Their eyes met. Gypsy's heart burned in a way reminiscent of the times she got particularly poignant prophecies, but multiplied many times over, and a message sounded in her heart with a clarity so fine that Gypsy looked quickly around the vehicle to make sure her fellow passengers were not hearing it as well. Satisfied they weren't, she relaxed into listening to the message.

*These kids here represent a state whose very existence is based on violence, force, terror, and robbery. But at the same time, even before they could talk, they've been told that they are the victims, they are the oppressed, they are the besieged, and that they are the chosen people of God who, because of this divine election, deserve more than others.*

*They have been taught that the rules that govern the rest of the world don't apply to them, that God has another standard for them. They don't see this as hypocrisy, but as evidence of their being the chosen people. They rejected their Messiah, our beloved Jesus, and His marvelous Gospel of love for all mankind, and instead persisted in clinging to their Jewishness and sense of superiority. They have tithed their mint and anise and cumin and have omitted the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith—all the while convinced of the righteousness of their cause. Pity these, for they are deceived by a great lie that has been foisted on the entire world.*

*Now their cup is full, and God's judgments have begun to fall on those who are responsible for this. The Evil One is God's hired razor to exact judgment, and as the Scriptures have promised of him, he shall bring a great slaughter. It has now begun, and but a remnant of them shall remain. Look for that remnant. Look for those whose hearts are open to the truth, who seek for peace and love, who are the true children of God. We will help you to recognize them.*

*Don't worry. God will judge between the deceivers and the deceived, between the masters of war and the victims of war, between those who call for bloodshed, and those who know not what they do. Jesus doesn't see as man sees, and He knows full well who truly pulls the triggers of the guns that have massacred, and the perpetrators themselves shall pay the ultimate price. They that kill with the sword shall be killed with the sword and they that lead into captivity shall be led into captivity. And the nation that trusts in its arm of flesh and not in the saving power of the living God shall be brought to naught. This nation that has trusted in her own arm and the mighty arm of Babylon shall now fall and never rise again. Weep with Jeremiah*

*for the carnage, but stay true to the heavenly calling and commission.*

*Jesus has given you a heart of great compassion, darling Gypsy, and it has served you well till now. Now though, you must trust the Word in your heart more than the tugs at your heartstrings. You shall weep many tears in the days ahead, and these tears shall soften many hearts and shall come before God in His throne as an eternal remembrance. Your tears shall testify in the courts of Heaven. It is enough to shed the tears. It is enough that your heart breaks. Then do what we and your Beloved tell you to do, and trust that even death is not the end, not for you, nor for these who sit before you, nor for those you shall meet in the years ahead. Shed the tears and let them be your testimony, be your witness.*

The final mysterious words still ringing in her heart, Gypsy noticed that tears were streaming down her face and the eyes of several of the soldiers were on her. She quickly wiped her eyes and cheeks and muttered, "I'm sorry."

"It's all right," the female corporal next to Frizzy said in fluent but accented English. "Who doesn't feel like crying these days? We know how you feel." At this point she looked around and, seeing no sympathetic faces among her comrades-in-arms, leaned forward and whispered to Gypsy, "I do anyway. Oh, we're supposed to be tough, we don't cry, we don't apologize, we don't admit we are wrong. That's the Israeli way. But you're not Israeli. You're not a soldier, so cry." She looked around and saw the disapproval on the faces of some of her colleagues and stopped as abruptly as she had begun. Silence reigned once more in the vehicle, broken only by the squeaks and rattles of the vehicle speeding along the empty road.

Gypsy stared into the corporal's eyes for a moment

and felt, *This must be one of the remnant! The Lord dropped one right in my lap! Wow! He's sure not wasting any time!*

Frizzy's voice broke through into her heart and said, *Move over just a few inches and make a small space between you and Don.*

No sooner had Gypsy obeyed, than the truck hit a large bump that sent the people on the left hurdling to the right. The corporal landed in the small space Gypsy had just made. As the others who had been unseated cursed and picked themselves up and returned to their seats, the corporal chose to remain sitting between Don and Gypsy. There was silence for a few minutes, then just as Gypsy was preparing to speak, the corporal turned to her.

"What is your name?" the corporal asked.

"Jennifer. And yours?"

"Deborah. Where do you come from?"

"Louisiana."

"Ah."

"Have you been there?"

"Just passing through on my way to Texas."

"Oh, my boyfriend here's from Texas," said Gypsy, reaching over to pat Don's leg.

"It must be very hard for you two to be stuck in our mess here when you could be safely at home."

"Yeah, in some ways it is."

Gypsy looked around, noticed no one was watching or listening, then looked at Frizzy who nodded and smiled.

Deborah whispered now, "I feel the same way. I traveled once with my parents across Europe and then to the States, visiting relatives. You see, my mother comes from Poland and my father from America. Almost one year we traveled. It changed the way I look. I mean, the way I see things. Then, after that

trip, the second Palestinian uprising happened. You know, the uprising that began in 2000?”

“The one that started with Sharon’s visit to the Al Aqsa Mosque?”

“Yes. At the time we had Palestinian friends, and what they told us was something totally different from what we heard in Israel—like two different worlds, almost. My father always said it was stupid to be shooting at children who throw only stones. Now it’s my turn, and I have to fight and maybe die and I wonder, for what?” She looked as deep as she could into Gypsy’s eyes, hardened her face to show no emotion and said, “I am frightened too. I have no faith. My parents hate religion and religious fanatics, so I grew up with faith only in what I could see. But now I think sometimes, what happens when I die? And will I die for anything of any value? I have many, many questions.”

Gypsy touched her hand and was shocked at the power that surged from her body into the young corporal’s. Deborah’s eyes widened in surprise but, rather than pulling away, she clung with both hands to Gypsy and then spoke still more quietly.

“I wonder sometimes about...” She looked around. Still no one paid any attention. “...about God. About death. About if there is life after death. And about”—she lowered her voice and whispered with a tinge of fear—“about Jesus. Do you know about Him?”

“Yes, Deborah, yes, I do.”

“Is He, is He ... real?” Gypsy could feel the power surge in greater force from her into Deborah. A single tear formed in Deborah’s eye but clung tenaciously to the rim of her eyelid. “Here we can’t talk about Him, especially not in the army. All our lives we have been taught that He caused us most of our problems, but I’ve seen a few of those movies about Him. It seemed

right. It seemed good. If you know anything, please tell me.”

“Well, He’s real. He’s real, and He’s still alive, and, well, He is the Messiah, and ... He loves you, Deborah,” Gypsy assured her.

In the air between them then formed one picture after another of Jesus, His face, then His life, His miracles, His death, His resurrection. Gypsy could see that Deborah was seeing the same thing by her rapt expression and gaping mouth. As the pictures faded, Deborah breathed softly, “I want to believe. I would like to believe in Him. And you say He loves Me?”

“Yes.”

“Even though I am a Jew and we have done Him so much wrong?”

“Absolutely.” Gypsy looked at Frizzy, wishing she could tell her story, but Frizzy just winked.

“That’s where we got it wrong, isn’t it?”

“What do you mean?”

“We got it wrong by not loving. Wasn’t Jesus’ message always love, love God, love your neighbor, help the poor, the broken, the downtrodden? Isn’t that where we got it wrong and lost our place?”

*Wow!* Gypsy thought, *this girl’s really getting it.* Then she said aloud, “Yes, I would say that’s about right.”

Suddenly Deborah was a corporal again and snapped a question. “Who are you *really?*”

“I’m nothing.”

“How did you make that happen? Those pictures?”

“I didn’t. I was as surprised as you.”

Deborah sat in glum thought for a few seconds, glancing a couple of times skeptically at Gypsy.

Then Gypsy ventured to say with a small smile, “Jesus once said the Jews require a sign, so maybe

that's why it happened, to give you a sign to help you believe."

Deborah, she could see, took it in, but said nothing.

Gypsy paused, heard Frizzy's whisper in her heart, and repeated the words. "We'll meet again. We were meant to meet this time, and we'll meet again."

Gypsy, on an impulse, reached into the side flap of the backpack on her lap and surreptitiously pulled out one of her magazines. A quick glance told her it covered the prophecies Jesus fulfilled, perfect for Deborah. And there was a prayer of salvation at the end. She quietly slipped it into Deborah's hand, who instinctively and immediately buried it under her flak jacket.

"Read it. It will help you."

Deborah stared into space blankly for a minute or two as if nothing had happened and then turned to Gypsy and whispered, "*Toda*. Thank you." Just then the truck sputtered, coughed, jerked and stopped. A few attempts to start proved futile and everyone groaned.

The officer in charge said, "I'll see what's happening," and climbed out of the vehicle.

Frizzy waited a few minutes and said to Don and Gypsy, looking through to the front window, "We're almost there. We could just walk the rest of the way and let them go on their way."

George, Don, and Gypsy all breathed their assent.

"Okay, then," and Frizzy reverted to Hebrew to tell the soldiers who had helped them this far their plan and to express their gratitude.

Once out in the open air they saw it was indeed just a short walk up the hill and around a curve in the road before they would get to the settlement.

Deborah piled out right behind them while the others said their perfunctory farewells and busied themselves with their vehicle, stumped as to why it had broken down for no apparent reason.

"Thank you ... for all you told me," Deborah said.

"I hardly told you anything," Gypsy corrected her. "What you saw and heard was a miracle. The same miracle will keep you till we meet again. God bless you, Deborah."

"And you, Jennifer." It was clear it was awkward for her to form even those words, but a bright smile spread across her face as soon as she had done so.

Gypsy, on an impulse, quickly hugged Deborah, kissed her on the cheek, and just as quickly turned to go with a final wave. As they rounded the bluff ahead and were out of sight of the military vehicle, Don burst out with, "What was that all about? What happened with her? I overheard a word here and there and it sounded pretty heavy, but what happened?"

Frizzy broke in and said, "There'll be time for that later. Right now we need to brief you before you're seen by the settlement. We're about to fade. They won't see us, but you will hear us if you're listening. Let's see, our ride should be starting up about now." And sure enough they heard the unmistakable roar of a powerful engine starting up back down the road where they had come from. Car doors banged and they could hear the APC pulling away. "If we hadn't done that, they would have taken us all the way to the settlement and George and I couldn't have faded back behind the veil. There are some important AACs you're gonna meet here, Jews and Arabs."

"Arabs here?!" Don questioned.

"Precisely," George smiled. "And that's why you need me."



“Now you’d better revert to your older selves and rolling suitcases,” Frizzy said, and no sooner had she said it than the deed was done. Don and Gypsy looked at each other, themselves, and finally the bags that were now no longer on their backs but by their sides. Looking up, they saw they were visibly alone once more as well.

“I miss ’em,” Gypsy sighed.

“Me too. But they’re here, just like Jesus.” Don pulled out the handle on his suitcase and began to roll it up the road toward a guard post some 500 meters ahead, now in plain view. They had taken a mere handful of steps when they could see they had been sighted and several armed guards were headed toward them, shouting and motioning them to stop where they were.

A half hour later the couple was ushered into the lobby of what was some kind of guesthouse. They were seated and asked to wait while two burly guards sat with them in one corner of the lobby. Don felt a tap on his right shoulder and turned. A voice sounded in his heart, *There they are.*

In the far corner of the same lobby was a rather unlikely group engaged in an animated conversation while reading a stack of newspapers and obviously discussing their content. Without seeming to stare, Don tried to take in the group that George had just told them were why they were here. The most notable of the group was the old Palestinian dressed in Western-style clothes but with a hata on his head. Beside him, there was an older balding Israeli with a yarmulke on the back of his head, who seemed to be in charge. Two young men who could be either Jews or Arabs, or one of each, it was hard to tell, sat on either side of the hata’ed Palestinian. It didn’t take long for Don to see that one of the boys was translating for the old

man, so he was probably also Palestinian. Then there were two other dowdy Jewish ladies and a pretty, voluptuous, mini-skirted young lady, as Jewish as she could possibly be.

*We will engineer your meeting them. They are very important, and you and I will be most involved with this one.*

And as if his name had been called, the head of the young Palestinian that had been translating snapped up and looked straight into Don’s eyes. Somehow there was an instant recognition, as if some ancient memory from another life burred up, and they both smiled quizzically at each other before discreetly looking away.

Just at that moment a cellphone could be heard ringing. The balding Jew drew it from his pocket, spoke a terse word or two, listened for no more than five seconds, jerked toward the television in the lobby, and barked out an order in Hebrew as he rose and moved to the chairs right before the set. In the excitement of the moment, all guarding was forgotten and Don and Gypsy were able to approach the TV as well. They overheard the Jew explaining to the Palestinian boy, “The broadcast we were expecting from Jerusalem is coming through now.”

There was a bit of channel flipping that showed that all stations were covering the same thing. CNN was chosen, and the small crowd in the lobby sat breathless, waiting.

## **HIS DEADLY WOUND WAS HEALED**

Meanwhile in Jerusalem, the area the press could occupy on the grounds where the tabernacle had once stood had been cordoned off to prevent access to two unfamiliar structures standing where the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle had been. The biggest was approximately three stories tall, yet completely covered from top to bottom by a thick tarp. In front of this structure there was a white linen cloth over another structure about five feet high, three feet wide and seven feet long. The unmistakable form of a man lying down was visible under the linen cloth. On closer scrutiny of the larger, standing structure, it too seemed to have the shape of a man under the tarp, albeit a standing one, with the shape of its head and shoulders being discernible. The urge by the press to begin filming had been dampened by armed guards everywhere with their guns readied, barking orders that they should wait till the cue was given. Newspaper reporters were frantically whispering into digital recorders or scribbling notes on electronic tablets.

Swelling music filled the air—the Chairman’s favorite theme song, “Thus Spake Zarathustra”—and only then were the cameras allowed to roll and scan the area, focusing on the two enigmatic structures in the middle before sweeping the entire perimeter

and the crowd while the music played out. As the last strains faded, on the balcony where the Chairman had spoken just three days before, the Minister emerged, lifting his arms heavenward as he stepped up to the microphone. A thick silence fell over everyone and everything. The voice that had never been heard in public till the Chairman's death broke the silence.

"My friends and fellow citizens of the New Order, it is with great joy I stand before you now to tell you that the awful event that shattered our hopes and dreams just three days ago is not the end, but a new beginning! As has been said, necessity is the mother of invention, just so the necessity of raising your hope once more, in fact the necessity to raise once more the only hope that this world has known in many a century, has brought us to the point where all of man's most noble, most ambitious, most daring scientific achievements are needed to do the impossible. For where else shall we turn? Shall we turn once more to the vain religions, which have led us into one war after another? Shall we?"

"No!" roared the crowd in unison.

"Shall we turn to the weak leadership and political jockeying that got us nowhere?"

"No!" the crowd again echoed.

"To whom then shall we go? Shall we give up hope and hang our heads in defeat? Is that what you want? Shall we give up and admit defeat?"

"No!"

"But who shall lead us into the brave new world we all caught a glimpse of and dared to dream would become reality? Who is there who can do that? As the great Julius Caesar of ages past, our only hope lies broken before us, victim of those whom he had trusted and opened his arms and heart to. Brought down by the cruel hand of a traitorous snake in the

grass who has, thankfully, paid the full price. Yet his deed is done, and yet one more champion of peace has gone the way of so many great men of our time, the Kennedy's, the Gandhi's, the Rabin's. Is this a pattern that we are willing to accept, that as soon as a bright hope arises on our horizon, it is to be snuffed out by the small-minded and bigoted, by those who wish to hold back progress and preserve the status quo? But what are we to do? For is not death the impassable mountain range, the unforgiving river, the journey of no return?"

The crowd fell into silence as the Minister paused to allow this thought to sink in.

"My friends, our beloved Chairman, visionary that he was, foresaw just such a possibility, and through the wonders of modern science, all the sciences, in fact all the accumulated knowledge of mankind to this point in time, he ordered his very spirit, soul, and mind to be preserved for posterity, that should he die, the hope he embodied would yet live on, that should he perish, the god that he deigned to become for you would never die."

The Minister pointed a strong finger toward the larger structure and the tarp covering it fell. The gasp of the audience could be heard throughout the square and around the world as the gigantic figure of the Chairman was unveiled. Those unmistakable features molded in plastic stared out over the crowd and into the cameras with a look in its eyes that could only be termed intelligence.

"Behold your god, my fellow citizens! Here is the very embodiment of omniscience and omnipotence, the mind and heart of our Chairman, resurrected in this crowning creation of mankind. And now I will step humbly aside and allow my superior to address you himself."

The image whirred and clicked as lights began to flash through its transparent torso. A look of benevolence spread across its face and the unmistakable voice of the Chairman issued from its mouth, which moved in sync with the words. It began to explain in laymen's terms how all the sciences, including those of cloning, computers, and robotics, had cooperated to recreate the Chairman, and that now mankind had a god truly worthy of their worship, a god dedicated to bringing them heaven on earth, a heaven of peace and prosperity such as they had only begun to taste.

The computerized dissertation went on for over half an hour explaining how this would work, and how the computer implant that many had taken over the last decade or so, would now be made available to all men everywhere in the name of world peace, safety, and prosperity. It was so logical how this new cashless society and personal computer chip could stop terrorism, drugs, organized crime, and even loss or theft. The living, talking image explained that it would take a few months for everyone to be registered and the system to be fully functional, but then the entire world would begin to reap the benefits.

Once finished with the explanation about the long-awaited Mark of the Beast, the image, though riveted in place to the square before the temple, demonstrated how mobile and lifelike it really was, by bending down and gently picking up a child in its hand, lifting him up to its eye level. There was a roar of laughter from the crowd as the image's eye became a TV screen and showed the boy some scenes from a Harry Potter movie. With a human-like chuckle, the image quipped, "And I've got millions more like that in my archives. Ted Turner and TCM ain't got nothin' on me." Another roar of laughter followed as the image gently set the boy back down, who ran to his father bubbling with

enthusiasm and talking nonstop about what his ride had been like.

The image then explained that it was equipped to instantly learn every bit of information as it was added to human knowledge, so it would never fall behind in knowledge. Furthermore, its parts were all self-maintaining and replacing, and therefore it was immortal, a true god, but one that could be seen, could be visited, could be heard, could be contacted at any time of the day or night via the Internet and even personally by those who chose to receive the chip in their forehead.

"Finally," the image said, looking down at the smaller structure below it, "if I, an imitation of the greatest mind of all time, have achieved immortality through science, is it fair that I should keep this to myself and let the source of our inspiration vanish from this earth? I say, no, a thousand times no. Let it not be so." The linen cloth fell from the smaller platform, revealing the body of the Chairman with dozens of diodes attached to it, otherwise looking as if he were merely sleeping. There was no sign of the bullet wound in his head, no blood, no discoloration of the body. The image looked up and out over the crowd and said with great significance, "Do you believe that I am able to do this? Do you believe that if I command this man to rise up and live, it shall be?" There was a moment of silence and then a few voices softly said "Yes." The voices gained strength and momentum until the square resounded with chants of "Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!"

Satisfied at last, the counterfeit Christ pointed its finger toward the counterfeit Lazarus and shouted with a mighty roar, "Rise up and live!"

The image began to flash and spark and the wires attached to the body began to pulsate as power entered

the body through the diodes. The first movements seemed to be only an involuntary reaction to the power being pumped in, but as the seconds ticked by, there were obvious signs of real life and voluntary movement, until the Chairman finally leapt up, his eyes wide open and his arms flung high into the sky.

A team of scientists in white robes scurried onto the square and detached the diodes, while draping a magnificent jeweled robe over the Chairman's scantily clad body. The microphone on the robe carried his voice as he shouted, "We live indeed, my people, and you too shall live a life you have only dreamed of as you follow us and believe in us. To those who resist and reject the miracle that you all have seen today, we implore you to taste the wonders of the new world we are offering you before you reject them due to inherited religious beliefs carried over from generation to superstitious generation.

"We are prepared to be patient and magnanimous, yet firm and determined to achieve our goals. Our arms are open to all those who resisted us. We are ready to welcome to the fold all those who see the error of their ways and wish to join hands with us. Yet those who fight against us shall find that they have met more than their match, for we have today truly become the gods we agreed to strive to be just three days ago, for we have conquered death and stand before you, immortal and invincible. From this day forward there shall be no worship but the worship of your humble servant and my image—the Cyber Chairman!"

"Bow before your gods, my people!" the Minister shouted from the balcony, and the square that had seen thousands of years of worshippers fall prostrate to Jehovah and Allah was once more covered in worshippers, but this time before a flesh and blood deity and a cybernetic god. In the back of the square stood

a pocket of some fifty Arabs, stubbornly remaining on their feet, their arms crossed across their chests in stances of defiance.

"Bow and do obeisance, my people!" the Chairman repeated, directing his command pointedly to this small group.

"We shall never bow to a man," the leading sheikh shouted out, "much less a machine, for Allah is above all, invisible, yet all-powerful! We know who you are! We know you are the *Dajjal* predicted in the Holy books, and you shall fall as quickly as you rose. We call on all men to refuse and resist you, to raise the cry of *jihad* against you, to..."

The Minister on the balcony above had only listened to the first words before he seized this golden opportunity to demonstrate his own powers. He lifted his hand to the cloudless sky, clenched his fist for a count of three seconds, and then flung his arm downward toward the small Muslim group, opening his hand as he did so. Simultaneously a tongue of fire fell from the sky directly before the corner where the dissenters stood and gouged out a gaping hole in the pavement at their feet, leaving them speechless and trembling in fear at this demonstration of his power. A stunned hush fell over the square.

The Chairman's voice broke the hush. The cameras zoomed in on his face and flaming eyes. "Abundant mercy and forgiveness! Or irresistible force! Choose which it shall be for you, citizens of earth."

## **STRANGE BEDFELLOWS**

Don and Gypsy held tight to one another's hand as the final televised commentaries were being made about what had just transpired on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. They knew they were here at this moment for a reason, they knew this was no mistake, but George and Frizzy had not imparted to them exactly what they were to do or say. George had revealed to Don that he was here mainly for the young Palestinian who he had overheard addressed as Muhammad during the viewing, and Gypsy was being directed to the young Jewess in the miniskirt, the one named Esther, but what they were to do with them was not clear as yet. All they knew was that they were in a hotbed of action, a place they of themselves would have avoided at all costs in the past. Their instructions till now had been that, when the moment came, they would be instructed what to do and say; that if they yielded, Jesus and their helpers would take over at that moment—and that till that moment they should quietly wait. As the broadcast ended, there was a deafening silence for a minute or more until the room around them suddenly erupted into a cacophony of angry and fearful emotions, everyone speaking at the same time, Don and Gypsy's guards included. The outcries were predominantly in

Hebrew, but Don and Gypsy found they could follow most of what was being said.

“Have you seen that?! Have you seen their new god?”

“They actually raised the Chairman from the dead!”

“*Oi vay!* We are undone. This will ignite a new holocaust, mark my words.”

“Pull yourself together. We will never let that happen. We will fight them before we let that happen.”

“Fight them!?! Our army’s decimated, cut in half or less.”

“Our God will be with us.”

“Oh, yeah, yeah, for sure, just like He’s been with us over the centuries, purifying us through suffering? Ha! This is just one more time. Well, I’ve had enough purifying. I say, let’s take matters into our own hands. Let’s fight and save ourselves.”

“I say we’d better flee and find a safe haven.”

“I say stand and fight or, better yet, attack. Better to fight like the Maccabees, like Masada, than flee like cowards.”

“That’s easy for you to say, with no kids. I gotta think of my kids, you know.”

“Safe haven, you say? Where in this region is a safe haven? We’re surrounded by enemies.”

“He’s right, you know. There’s no choice but to stand and fight or attack.”

“Wait everyone, listen. I’ve heard that the settlements up north that are left, like in Samaria, are amassing to attack Jerusalem.”

“Yeah, I heard that too. If we in the south got it together too and attacked at the same time...”

Suddenly Don and Gypsy shot out of their seats simultaneously as if thrown forward. “Listen to us!” Gypsy’s voice overrode the confused shouting and

broke through like a clear and loud, but calm and confident bell of hope in the din of fear and panic.

“We were sent here to warn you of what these days mean to all of us, you, and the world,” Don continued.

The balding Jew who had been talking to the older Palestinian whispered something in the ear of the man standing next to him, who answered only with a shrug.

“We are sent by God,” Gypsy said. It seemed as if their thoughts, hers and Don’s, were totally intermingled and either one of them could say the next sentence, as they were speaking word for word what the other was thinking. “We were brought here today to your village for a reason, to deliver a message. Very few people know the true meaning of what is happening right now, and even less know the future.”

The balding man stepped forward and asked them, with a certain edge in his voice, “Excuse me, but I don’t think we know you. Who are you and where have you come from?”

Don was about to open his mouth to answer when the guards, who had all but forgotten them till now, realized their error. The older, bigger one spoke some form of explanation in Hebrew and received a stern reprimand from the balding Jew who then turned to them and said, “I beg your pardon. I am told you are Americans and your names are Don and Jennifer Ward. Is that correct?”

“Yes, yes, it is.”

“My name is Shimon Narmann, and these two were to call me so I could discuss your situation with you. Everyone’s understandably avid interest in hearing the broadcast preempted your guards from carrying out their duties, therefore we are left with this awkward moment. But why, in God’s name, did

you come *here*? You understand that everyone must of necessity be suspect in these troubled times. We are expecting to be attacked any time now. You are really Americans?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that will help a little at least. The last people snooping around here were the most unlikely kind of combination. Perhaps I will tell you of that later. But first ... I asked a question, didn't I? What are you doing here?”

“Well,” Gypsy said, “the fact of the matter is...” She reached out and touched Shimon's hand, which prompted him to look into her eyes. She probed his spirit deeply, seeing deep sadness and remorse in his eyes. Sensing his need for love, understanding, and forgiveness for some dark sins of the past, she said quietly enough to make her comments personal, but loudly enough that the others there could hear, “...we are sent here by God, though we don't know exactly what our assignment is.”

“And you expect us to believe that God sends messengers or whatever you are, still, today, in our day and age?”

Don answered and said, “You've read the Bible, haven't you?”

“Of course. I consider myself ... well, religious enough, but the miracles, well, they were long, long ago, and ... and ... and you're not even Jews, are you?”

“No, we're not.”

He gulped and queried, “You're Christians?”

Gypsy smiled and nodded.

Shimon sighed deeply. “I should have known. We've seen so many of your type. On the eve of the year 2000 the government had to deport scores of you who were hanging around the Mount of Olives

and other holy sites, waiting for God knows what. I should have known these latest events would attract more of you.”

“Regardless of what or who you think we are, do you understand what is going to happen with the Chairman now?” Gypsy asked.

“Well, I know we have been occupied and our holy place has been defiled by his forces.”

This conversation had been largely between them and Shimon, with the crowd standing around overhearing what was being said. But now the lobby began to fill up with a steady stream of people from all around the settlement. The speech of the Chairman had been broadcast out over the settlement for those who were unable to get to a television or radio, and, unbeknownst to those in the lobby, the same speaker system had continued to air the ensuing conversations as well, even the quieter discussion between Shimon and Don and Gypsy.

Now Don lifted up his eyes to the gathering crowd and said in full voice, “This was predicted in the book of the prophet Daniel in the Bible thousands of years ago, that a vile person would obtain the kingdom by flatteries and would confirm a seven-year covenant, making peace between the warring factions of the Middle East and the world, and making it possible for you to resume your animal sacrifices. This, as you know, has already happened.”

Someone in the crowd shouted out, “You don't have to explain the prophecies in our Book to us. We know those prophecies. It seems that you are not aware that they were fulfilled by the ancient Greek king of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes.”

“Antiochus Epiphanes was an intermediate fulfillment,” Gypsy now explained, “but he did not completely fulfill the prophecies. The king described in the Bible



would continue till the Ancient of Days would come, and was to have power over all nations and kindreds and tongues, would invade from the land of Magog, which is present-day Russia with her chief cities of Moscow and Tobolsk. Some prophecies Antiochus did fulfill, but not these I have mentioned and many more. Now, however, in our day, the Chairman has begun to fulfill them all.”

There was a small handful that seemed to be receptive to what was being said, but for the most part what could be read in the eyes and faces of the majority was strong skepticism and resistance. And in the eyes of a sizeable group could be seen deep and ancient animosity. This group, Gypsy could see, were collected mainly in the back and were whispering among themselves and in the ears of those who seemed skeptical but unsure. Gypsy questioned in her heart if they were really supposed to be here, saying these things to these people. Frizzy’s voice spoke to her with clarity, *Yes, you are where you belong. Proceed.*

“Yes,” said Don, “and the Chairman shall very soon demand sole worship of himself, and death to those who dare to continue worshipping any other God. He shall very soon make receiving the marvelous new microchip transplant mandatory if one wants to buy or sell anything. Cash shall be done away with. His image which you have just seen has data on every man, woman, or child who has ever registered for anything stored within its circuits. The image will know who has received the chip, or the Mark as it is called in the Scriptures. This image has power to speak, as you have seen, and to pronounce the death sentence on those who refuse to obey.

“Yet I counsel you that you *must not* obey it. You must not worship this false god or receive his mark,

for that shall mean death to more than your mortal body. It means death to your eternal soul. You must stand up against him, even at the risk of your life, in order that your immortal soul may have the chance to be saved. Now is the time for all those who believe in the one true living God to forget their differences and to unite in resisting the Chairman’s control, in fleeing from the grasp of his forces that shall bring evil upon all the world.”

A rumble of rejection could be heard from the back, causing a ripple that moved through the crowd toward them.

“It is time for you and the Palestinians and all your Arab neighbors to forget your animosity, to forget the pain and hatred of the past, and to unite to fight the real foe. It is time for Christians, Muslims, and Jews, and all who believe in one, invisible but all-powerful God to stand side by side against the New World Order, against the global movement that came to us in our distress as a wolf in sheep’s clothing, but now has ripped off its cloak to reveal the demonic, savage beast beneath.”

The rumble was gaining momentum. Shimon and a few others were looking about anxiously. He caught Don’s eye to motion him to cut it short, but a higher power was directing Don.

“This Beast shall continue for three and a half years from today, for that great Jew, Jesus, said two thousand years ago, ‘When you shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, then shall be great tribulation—a tribulation that in many Scriptures we are told will last three and a half years; forty-two months; one thousand two hundred and sixty days; a time, times and half a time. None shall be able to muster up a force strong enough to defeat this Beast in direct war, but there is

still something we can do: We can resist and refuse to obey him. A new pharaoh has arisen that knew not Joseph, and if you do not wish to be enslaved in his new Egypt, you must flee, and trust God to once again care for you in the wilderness as He did in the days of Moses.”

The rumble was louder and more pronounced now. Shimon grasped Don by the arm and urged him not to talk anymore. Don looked in his eyes, took a deep breath and nodded assent, but Gypsy continued in a softer tone, “You have trusted in your own military arm and in American money, but these can no longer save you. Only God can save you and us from the doings of this madman.”

“Who are you to talk to us about God?!” a red-faced lady snarled, shaking her finger in Gypsy’s face. “You’re Goys—both of you! How dare you claim we have the same God?”

A bearded man twice Gypsy’s size, flushed bright red and livid. “And how dare you mix the words of our sacred prophets with the blasphemy of your Jesus? Away with you and your blasphemies! This is our promised land, and we have been driven out too many times to let it happen again!”

Now pandemonium broke out as angry voices and fists were raised against what had been said, with only a tiny few silent ones open to considering the message given them.

Shimon nodded to the two guards and two others who stood nearby. They took both Don and Gypsy by the shoulders and shoved them out the front door. The small party he had been talking to before the broadcast followed. Miraculously the angry mob stayed inside the lobby those first crucial moments, screaming at each other instead of chasing and lynching the intruders.

As they stepped out into the still bright sunlight of the late afternoon, Don and Gypsy saw an Israeli Defense Force armored jeep skid to a stop right before them and two armed soldiers throw open the back doors of the jeep for them. The guards ushered them into the back frantically, shoved in the other group of Muhammad and his friends, climbed in themselves and slammed the doors. The jeep pulled away in a cloud of dust just as a crowd of thirty or more rabid settlers emerged from the building just behind them, shouting at the jeep and shaking their fists.

Straining to look out the front, Don could see they were headed north toward a military outpost on a hill. The driver seemed to be trying to break some records as he sped up the asphalt road to the top of the hill. Don held his breath, wondering if the jeep could stop before it rammed into the gate or if the gate would open in time. The latter happened, with two soldiers pulling it open only enough for the jeep to get in, and swinging it closed directly behind them, securing it with two huge bolted locks.

As they pulled up before some kind of barracks and disembarked, they could see the crowd, bigger now by another thirty or so, coming up the hill toward them. The guards literally pushed them into the barracks. Four armed soldiers could be seen before the door and a flurry of action was evident as more armed soldiers headed for the front wall and the gate they had come in.

As their eyes grew accustomed to the dim light in the barracks, they saw Shimon had already seated himself quietly on one of the beds. He said, obviously straining to control his breath and emotions, “You must not talk like that. You must be careful with your words around here. Those were very dangerous words.”

“We know,” Don said, “but they must be said. Those who wish to survive what is soon to happen must flee into the wilderness according to God’s Word. Attacking Jerusalem is certain death and so is standing to defend this place when the attack comes.”

The others were still standing—Don, Gypsy, Shaul, Muhammad, Esther, Assadam, and the two guards—staring at each other, so Shimon motioned everyone to sit, saying, “Please let us sit and talk about this. I must consider my options. Perhaps they”—he motioned to the mob outside, who could be heard shouting and shaking the chain link fence—“can be detained long enough that I can get a clear picture of where you stand.” All agreed and sat down. “Strangely enough, it seems that we have here a little microcosm of just what you two were speaking of—Jews, Christians, and Muslims. But allow me to introduce everyone.”

With the introductions finished, Don and Gypsy realized how miraculously the Lord had worked to bring them here where there were English-speaking representatives of the main AAC factions of the region. Shimon continued, standing up and beginning to pace up and down before them. “Some of what you related out there is familiar to me from the Bible, but some is not. Is some of what you have said from the ... the New Testament?”

“Yes, and some of it is what God is revealing to us as we follow His voice,” Don answered.

“Hmm, ‘follow His voice’—what does that mean?”

“It means,” Gypsy said, “that God still speaks just like He has down through the ages. The only reason we sometimes can’t hear Him is because we aren’t listening or we have separated ourselves from Him in disobedience.”

Muhammad quietly made note that he must ask these people about this Voice, for he had experienced

just such a thing of late. Now he wondered if these people could explain more.

“If we get quiet and ask Him, truly willing to hear and obey whatever He says, He will tell us what to do. He will lead us to safety, most of us anyway. For the benefit of those who give their lives in these times we are also told, ‘Blessed are they that die in the Lord from henceforth.’ So we have nothing to fear as long as we stay close to God. Nothing will happen to us that is not His plan and will.”

“Is this ‘following His voice’ how you know or think you know that we shouldn’t stay here and defend our houses and we shouldn’t attempt an attack on Jerusalem?”

“Yes, that and the fact that Jesus told us to flee into the wilderness in these Last Days. We know that many will attempt to fight actual wars against the Chairman, this new Pharaoh—or the Antichrist as we prefer to call him. But now no frontal attack against him will meet with any success at all. One day he shall be defeated, but that is later. Now, as Jesus said just before being betrayed, is the hour of darkness. It is Satan’s hour to rule. He has been gaining power for centuries through lying propaganda and the secularization of the world, and the world has put him in power and must now reap the results for a little season.”

“And where might this wilderness be that you speak of?”

“As we follow step by step and find out who is willing to follow, the Lord will show us where to go, but”—Gypsy paused a moment to listen to Frizzy’s whisper—“I do suspect you will do best to flee into the lands of your former enemies, even as your great King David did when Saul, who wished him dead, sat upon the throne.”

Shimon smiled grimly. “You have many strikes against you, as you Americans say. You are asking Jews to follow Goys, for one. Then you ask us to compromise our religion and unite with those who have been our enemies for centuries. Moreover, you advise that we seek refuge in the land of these enemies. And then you ask us to believe the words and teachings of one of the most hated figures in all of Jewdom.”

Don ignored the strong words, and answered, “Shimon, with all due respect, *we* are not asking you to do these things. We are simply passing on the message that God has given us—the one God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob—the Most Gracious and Merciful.” Don’s eyes met with Muhammad’s. “He wants to give you a chance to survive. What you and your people do with the message God has given us to speak is up to you. It is your lives that will depend on your decisions. As for me and my house, we intend to follow the Voice of our God where He leads us, with or without followers.

“And for that matter, your people may very well be spared the difficulty of following Goys, because we are talking about where *you* should go, and that may not be the same as where God is calling *us* to go. As God sent David and his household into the wilderness, but Hushai to Absalom, so must we all follow the plan and course that God would have us follow, to play the part that He is asking each of us to play. We do not presume to be your leaders. We are simply God’s messengers, doing our duty to confront His enemies and to help and comfort His people.”

The crowd outside now seemed much larger and angrier and their shouting—demanding the soldiers to deliver the visitors into their hands—interrupted them now. Shimon, followed by the two big guards,

excused himself and went outside to see what could be done to calm the mob down.

Don quipped to Gypsy quietly, “I feel like Lot’s guests in Sodom.”

They could hear Shimon shouting, “Brothers, sisters, please! I promise that you will have your chance to speak with our guests. Quiet down and listen to me please.” The animated conversation outside could be heard, but Don and Gypsy were more interested in the people they were now left sitting with—Shaul, Esther, Muhammad, and Assadam. And it seemed the feeling was mutual. Muhammad immediately seated himself next to Don, and Esther next to Gypsy, to ask in urgent tones to be told more of what they had been speaking of. As always, Muhammad translated every word back to Assadam.

Muhammad said, “I must tell you, Don, and you, Jennifer, that both Shaul,” he motioned to the young Jew sitting next to him, “and I are only alive today because of something like that Voice you spoke of. I somehow feel in my heart that you are the reason we were led here and then captured. The full story we must tell you later, but for now you must tell me more about this Voice.”

Shaul interjected, “The things you said about the Chairman were the things some Jewish colleagues of mine began to realize, but you have a much clearer picture. I must hear and read the things you were speaking of. Lately my whole world has been turned upside down and, like Muhammad, I feel it is no accident that our paths have crossed.”

Esther lit a cigarette, crossed her shapely legs and sighed. “I don’t know a goddamned thing about all this religious stuff. You know, I used to be so proud to be a Jew, but nowadays, I can’t see what there is to be proud of anymore.”

Gypsy caught a glimpse of Frizzy in the air in front of and just over them and heard her whisper in her heart, *Behold the beginnings of your little flock. Feed the lambs, sweetie.* A smile spread across Gypsy's face but the reverie of the moment was shattered when the door burst open and Shimon reentered with that troubled, pensive look on his face that he bore so much of the time. The two guards followed close behind, locking the door behind them.

Shimon cleared his throat and said, "Things seem to be somewhat calmed down for the moment. In the meantime, I hope you will be able to make yourselves comfortable in this room, and the small one over there for the ladies, while we try to figure out what to do with you all. The thought keeps coming to me to just leave you to the mercy of the crowd. It would serve you right for those stupid words you uttered. But something keeps me from doing it, I don't know what."

"Thank you, Shimon," Gypsy said, crossing to touch his arm. "I'm sure we've stirred things up quite a bit, which isn't so welcome on top of all the other excitement, but don't worry, things will turn out for the best for ... for ... you and those who listen to the voice of moderation and reason. As for the rest, God knows what will become of them."

"I must be off," Shimon said with a tone markedly more sympathetic. Motioning to the bigger guard he said, "Avi will see to your quarters and see you get some food or whatever you need. Until later, goodbye." And he was gone, locking the door from the outside as he went out. The six guests or prisoners—they weren't sure what they were—set about finding where they could rest and collect their thoughts.

## THE ANTICHRIST PLAN

The anti-religious platform of the New World Order assumed the appearance of tolerance and patience at the outset, giving the impression that mercy would be shown, that time would be given for the world to come around, but that force would be used against those who actively resisted the new order, the new god, the new economy.

As yet there was no official mention of the hard-line rulings that were to come, that those who would not worship would be put to death, that those who did not receive the Mark in some form would not be able to buy or sell. These measures were to be reserved for the time when the media and world events had paved the way to make it clear that, for the common good, there was no other option open to those in charge. These rulings were to be reserved for the day when there was no other choice, no other way to enforce law and order.

Therefore the Chairman and his Minister were delighted to see stone throwing beginning again in Palestine as the Temple Mount and all its grounds were summarily closed; to see out their window black-coated orthodox Jews loudly tussling with the guards at the Wailing Wall below them; to hear word that well-armed militias of Jewish settlers were preparing to attack occupied Jerusalem; to be informed that the American

military was preparing for war; to have intelligence reports that Muslim fundamentalist groups and states were beginning to prepare for holy war; to receive reports from around the world of one resistance after another, resistance to the religious stranglehold the New World Order now had over the masses of mankind. Patiently they waited till the time was right.

“Your Excellency,” General Shevardsky asked at the cabinet meeting the following morning around the teakwood teardrop table, “how long do you foresee our holding back and exercising restraint while all around the world resistance movements are gathering their forces to attack us on every front?”

The Chairman smiled as he reminded his military chief of staff, “You are forgetting that many of these resistance movements have, directly or indirectly, been on our payroll for many years. We can, when the time comes, and in one fell swoop, neutralize them, and the remainder are so small and insignificant as to be of no concern to us. Our greatest concern right now is the many pockets of resistance being stirred up right here in Israel by the religiously zealous ultra-Zionists.”

“So what do we do about them?”

“That is obvious,” the Chairman replied. “We are at war with them already. Our armies are here. And, best of all, the Muslims and many Christians believe the day of their slaughter has been foretold in the so-called holy books, so we stand to even have some of them on our side.”

“And the United States?”

“She, of course, will protest, and try to put up a bold military front and speak of war, but after her embarrassing losses over Jerusalem, and thanks to our efforts to turn the public opinion of her people against the thought of casualties in war, they will be

hesitant for the moment to commit their troops or armed forces into the kind of war we have already shown them we are capable of waging. We have at least a good couple of years before the United States becomes a serious concern, and then we’ll have a very simple solution ready for her.”

“And what about the cults?” the Minister ventured. “Our propaganda over the last few decades has isolated them as well. They should be easy prey for instant targeting.”

“Exactly,” the Chairman said. “We can start by rounding up the known adherents to the various fringe religions and detain them, even ostentatiously for their own safety in this time of uncertainty, destabilization, and adjustment. And even leaders of more mainstream groups can, for the moment, be detained for *political* reasons. And that responsibility I leave with you. These raids should happen as soon as possible. They should be swift, orderly, quiet, and with the minimum of fanfare.

“So you see, my dear general, we needn’t sit altogether idly by while our enemies gain strength. Immediately we can begin our operations against the Israelis and the new, unorthodox religions, and will be none the worse for it. We just must be careful that we don’t react so strongly that we make the mistake of uniting all our enemies at once. Let our media concentrate on continuing to divide the religions and sow hate among our potential enemies.”

“Excellent! Sheer genius!” General Shevardsky agreed gleefully.

“Then, my dear friends and colleagues, our meeting is adjourned.”

## WHEN DEEP SLEEP FALLS

Soon after Shimon had left, a simple meal that had obviously come from the military mess hall was served to the hungry group. Only then did Don and Gypsy realize how famished and how exhausted they were. As they ate, sitting on the beds in the main room of the barracks, Esther kept up a continual stream of conversation, some significant, some just to fill the air with sound, peppering her conversation with a wide variety of expletives, bursts of laughter, expressive gesticulations, and wild facial expressions. Shaul was quiet and pensive, Assadam also quiet due to the language barrier. Muhammad, on the other hand, well aware that the latest arrivals were at the point of exhaustion, regularly interjected comments to that effect, hoping Esther would take the hint. However, it soon became obvious Esther was not accustomed to taking hints. Charming she was, funny as well, alive and animated, but sensitive she was not. Gypsy, her mind groggy and barely able to keep herself awake, watched her and listened to Frizzy's running commentary on this Jewess from New York.

*She's never known anything but privilege and plenty. She's spoiled as can be, but groping for something more.*

*She's so much like me when I was younger, you just can't imagine. I turned to the hippie scene to escape the suffocation of my overbearing family, while she turned to the world of high finance and corporate business, Wall Street, the fast life, high living, drugs, alcohol, sex, sex, and more sex. There at the cocktail parties and business lunches, evenings out with clients and potentials, she learned the art of filling the air with mostly senseless and occasionally sensible words without cessation, to impress clients as well as to drown out the voice of her past and the sense of morality instilled in her by her religious upbringing.*

*She rejected all thoughts of responsibility except to herself, thinking they were only the memory of her father's lectures, only a vestige she needed to cast off in order to find herself, and in so doing she silenced the Lord's voice and her own conscience. She's confused now, because here she is in a situation so real with real ramifications, the probability of real suffering, real life-and-death matters, and she wonders how she got herself into this.*

*I know she looks like there isn't a serious bone in her body, that she thinks of nothing but trivia all day, but in her lonely room at night, usually after sex with yet another near stranger, she talks to the Void, her name for the Lord and the world of the Spirit. Only when she's so tired and about to fall asleep does she allow herself to listen, completely alone, the only time the mask comes completely off. Only in the mystical world of sleep and near-sleep does her guard fall for long enough to allow God's reality to squeeze through. And that's where we have to reach her.*

*But how? Gypsy thought. In her sleep when she's all alone, how do we reach her there?*

*Walls, locks, and sleep don't keep me out, baby. You should know after today that, with God, nothing is*

*impossible. Just you say your prayers and go to sleep and watch what happens. Okay?*

*Sure, okay.*

Esther was still talking, unaware that everyone else was getting quieter and quieter. Don was even starting to nod out.

Don rebounded from a nod with a jerk, abruptly stood up and said, "I'm so sorry, but I'm absolutely exhausted and will need to turn in now. I wish I could spend more time getting to know all of you, but it seems my eyes can hardly stay open."

Muhammad took this opportunity to interject, "Of course. You have been through much today and I'm afraid we have been insensitive. Let's decide on the rooms and allow you two to retire."

It was quickly agreed that the small room would be for Don and Gypsy, which they were very thankful for since they had not had a moment alone since they had arrived here. At one end of the large room the three men would sleep, and Muhammad was kind enough to string up a row of blankets as a curtain, thus creating a little room for Esther. Esther, neither modest about her body nor hardly aware that there were cultures in existence that were more conservative than she, didn't understand all the fuss, but—in some amusement at the efforts of this archaic gentleman—accepted the little curtained room at the far end of the barracks anyway.

Having prepared for bed, she thought she would read a while from the thick novel she had brought to occupy the idle hours during her travels, only to find she could hardly concentrate. She didn't know why, but thoughts of two of her fellow prisoner-guests were successfully upstaging her book. She was fascinated by both Don and Gypsy, but she felt irresistibly drawn to Gypsy, of all things. She, who had virtually no lady



friends and only considered them competition in both business and bed, now felt she must get to know this older but very lively lady who had been thrust into her life in such an unusual way today.

Besides thoughts of the American lady who seemed so un-American, her thoughts sometimes strayed to that other un-American American, Muhammad, whose humble, gentlemanly ways, like a throwback to a day long past, held a strange attraction for her, almost as if to entertain him and his ways was to truly escape her past, not by moving forward into the world of tomorrow but by moving ages backwards into the world of chivalry and etiquette and nobility of heart and spirit. She knew no one like him in her circle of friends and acquaintances, mostly acquaintances, so she allowed herself to imagine their becoming somehow closer, even intimate. He wasn't bad looking, quite a bit younger than she, but she was not one to stand on convention where desire was concerned. He had saved her brother's life, and for that he did deserve some kind of reward. Maybe she could be just that reward. While wondering how much experience he had had with women, she was struck by a sudden, almost incredible thought that maybe he had never slept with a woman! Could it be that there were still men in the world who were saving themselves for marriage? What an odd thought! And pondering that shocking premise she fell asleep and gradually drifted into the world of shadows and the voice of God.

*Esther was standing in a shadowy, cement room with bare, unpainted walls and a single light bulb. Looking down at her barely budding body, she could see she stood on the threshold of her teen years. She sparingly dipped a cloth into the half-filled bowl of precious water and dabbed at her face. With a feeling*

*of hopeless and helpless adolescent self-criticism, she bemoaned the limp state of her hair hanging to her shoulders as she stared into the mirror with its long crack down the middle. She spun around as she heard the sound of the door to the outside scraping open. The large silhouette of her father darkened the doorway. He grunted a greeting. The slump of his shoulders told her there had been no work today. The small plastic bag hanging from his fingertips told her that someone had been kind enough to give him a little food for his family for dinner—not much for the six of them, but at least the gnawing pangs of hunger would be slightly appeased.*

*She watched grimly as he performed his usual ritual and tenderly touched the framed glass case on the wall with the single polished brass key set in the middle on red velvet. She strained to imagine the house her parents had grown up in, with its beautiful white stones instead of the gray cement walls they were imprisoned in now; with huge, copious green grapes hanging off the vines on the trellis over the carport where they would drink tea in the afternoon out front instead of the dirty, stinking, narrow yet crowded street where they had to play, drink tea with their family, and chat with their neighbors whose roughly made houses were pressed tight against theirs. She tried to visualize the house with bedrooms for each child, with fine, carved furniture and beautiful carpets everywhere, with proud portrait photographs of their grandparents and great grandparents decorating the walls.*

*She strained to imagine how the hill must have looked back then when it had been adorned with interesting house after house, each one different, each one beautiful and unique, each one marked by the loving hand of its owner and occupant; the lovely, quaint and simple village surrounded by terraces of*

olive trees. She imagined how it had looked before the soldiers had come, before the bulldozers had come, before the settlement had been erected over the rubble, covering the hill with its endless rows of glistening white, sterile houses, all the same, all perfect, all thrown up in a hurry, all surrounded by green grass and trees nurtured by the water pumped from the wells and springs her father and his father and his father before him and others like them had dug, developed, and once enjoyed but now could not approach.

She couldn't imagine it. There was pain in her heart, in her throat, and a sting in her eyes when she tried. Resignation was easier and less painful, easier to see the world the only way she could remember it, a world where fences kept her out because she was not good enough to go there, or there, or there—a world that got smaller and smaller as she grew older. The forest she once played in with her brother was now yet another village that was off limits, with a fancy hotel that she had to show an ID to approach, only to be mockingly turned away. She thought of the road to her grandmother's house that she couldn't travel without a special permit anymore. The holy place they used to go to about once every other month on holy day was now closed to anyone under forty years of age. The rambling town with all its exciting shops and big new buildings that was a thrill to go to to see a movie or to shop a few times a year was unreachable now—all unreachable now.

No, she could not, she dared not imagine the world that once was. The world she knew was just ugly gray walls that moved a little closer every time she blinked or looked away. Now she lived with the ever-present feeling she had to stay awake, she must never look away, she must pray and pray and pray to God the Merciful or those walls would close in and crush her,

or they would make her hate, or they would make her want to kill, or to die—or to do both, like some of the young men she had heard of. Her father, her mother, had told her that, God willing, one day things would be better. She must trust God, that He knew best. It sounded right. Some of her friends said that the time for trusting God and waiting was past, and that they had to fight, to die, to kill, for what they wanted. They sounded right.

Without warning she found herself, standing in the cool, early morning air with her younger brother on the dusty road to school. "They won't let you go, you know, not today," the stooped old man was saying to them.

"But we must go to school," she answered impetuously. Don't they understand? she thought, only education can help us break through the prison walls.

"There was a bomb, or so they say." The old man muttered something under his breath that she was not supposed to hear but she did. "You never know which side is setting the bombs these days."

"They won't stop us, we're only children. We have no bombs. Anyone can see that."

The old man shook his head as they scurried along the dirt road.

One of the shiny hill villages was on the right on the main road they were heading to, but they knew better than to ever go near there. They would turn left at the road down the hill toward their shabby, dusty school. Surely they would let them through. Surely no one would stop them. After all, they needed their education. She glanced back once to see the old man still staring after them, shaking his head before he turned back to the bare, gray camp they lived in.

"I'll race you!" her younger brother shouted and ran ahead. She laughed and ran after him. Breathless, they

*approached the main road. She stopped suddenly at the sight of a van parked on the road at the junction, the dreaded flag waving from its radio antenna, but her brother ran on, childishly oblivious, only aware of the race that had to be won. Her heart pounded frantically against her rib cage. The words caught in her throat. Her brother ran closer and closer to the armed people from the forbidden village. She could see now some of them approaching him, rifles in hand. If she couldn't scream, she could at least run, so she ran with all her might to catch up with her brother. She reached him at the same time as the armed teenagers with their funny caps took hold of his shoulder.*

*Panting, she pointed to their school, which was now in sight, and showed their school bags. Nevertheless the group of boys surrounded them and mockingly poked them with the muzzles of their rifles. Smirks were on some of their faces, but there was no mirth in their eyes, only hate and disdain, as if for a pair of rabid dogs. They spoke a tongue she could not understand, yet somehow she knew what they were saying.*

*"You can't pass. Go home."*

*"School," she said in her own language and pointed to the shabby building down the hill to the left.*

*"Show your ID," one said, winking to the others.*

*She knew their word for ID, who didn't? The teen who was doing the talking took their IDs from her, dropped them on the ground and stepped on them, grinding them with his heel. Then he took their school bags and dumped the contents in the dirt. Each of the boys picked up some of the contents, mocking their simple books, cheap notebooks, and sparse school supplies.*

*Her face flushed red and hot as one of the boys pulled out the package of sanitary napkins she had tucked into the side pocket of her backpack under her worn handkerchief. He held the package aloft for*

*all to see and laughed. Standing in a circle around her, they began to toss the package to each other, making comments she knew could only be lewd and lascivious.*

*She quietly gathered her books and belongings into her backpack and kept her eyes averted from the bully boys. Suddenly she heard a loud and angry shout and looked up to see her little brother attack the one presently holding the package, jumping onto his chest with all his might, grabbing for it and knocking the boy over in the process. As he fell on top of him, his knee pinned the teenager's head down while he grabbed for the sanitary napkins in his outstretched arm.*

*A bellow escaped the throat of the teen. He pushed her brother off and to the ground and stood above him, blood flowing profusely from his nose. He paused but a moment and then kicked her little brother square in the ribs. An evil laugh escaped his lips and the others joined in kicking him.*

*Pictures flashed in the girl's mind of her laughing, playful little brother, happy and harmless, loving and sweet, respectful to Mama and Papa, always so positive, who'd never done anything to hurt these boys or their kind, who'd believed and obeyed Papa when he said killing and hatred would only lead to more, that that was not the way. But now she wanted to kill as she saw her happy, laughing brother writhing in pain between the flurry of legs and boots, his screams heard above the mocking laughter. Now she wanted someone to hurt as badly as she, as badly as he, to hurt forever, to die, to lose loved ones, to lose houses, to lose self-respect, to lose what she had lost, to lose what she had never had. She wanted to see blood.*

*She slowly bent to pick up a big, round, smooth stone. Ironically the one who had started the game with the sanitary napkins stood the closest to her, his back*

to her while he kicked her baby brother. She marveled at the strength she felt, the exhilaration she felt as the stone flew from her hand and smashed into the back of his head. The cracking sound of the stone striking his skull was invigorating. Eagerly she bent down to pick up another stone, but before she could, something hard struck her just under her nose, and as she flew back, something else plowed into her stomach, and then all went black.

She was lying in a void as if on a bed, but there was no bed. Standing beside her was the American lady. She knew she knew her, but she couldn't remember her name.

"Am I dead?"

"No, you're not dead," Gypsy answered.

"My brother?"

"He's happy now. He's with God."

"No! No, he can't be..."

"His troubles are over, sweetheart."

"Is this a dream?"

"Yes, Esther, it's a dream..."

"I'm glad to hear that."

"...and it's not a dream."

"What do you mean?"

"It's real, it's a side of life you've never known or seen, that you've been protected from."

"Yeah, that's for sure. I've heard about this kind of stuff happening. The registration, the ghettos, the brutality, what my ancestors went through in Europe. But I always thought that could never happen again, that the world had made sure it could never happen again. That's why we have the UN, the Jewish Defense League, all the human rights groups."

"Oh, but it has happened again ... repeatedly. It really never stopped happening for some."

"Is this about the future? Is it a warning that this will happen if we don't do something? And what can we do? What can I do to prevent this happening? Or is it inevitable and this is what will happen to us now, just because we're Jews?"

"No, Esther, no." Gypsy took Esther's hand in hers, took a deep breath, and said as gently as she could, "It's what has already happened. It's what has been happening for over half a century. It's what has happened to more than a million Palestinians just because they were in the land the Jews wanted."

Esther sat upright and found herself standing on her feet in the void before Gypsy, clutching Gypsy's hands, breathless. She said nothing, she could say nothing. Her eyes just searched Gypsy's eyes deeply, where suddenly flashed a series of pictures. The shiny white buildings just like the ones in this very settlement! The armed teenagers just like the ones in the settlement! The yarmulkes on the back of their heads like the ones in the settlement! The blue and white flag with its six-pointed star flying defiantly over the van like the ones in the settlement! In just two scenes her entire heritage had been buried, the heritage that had already been a sick and weakly presence in her life, the heritage she had tried to escape. She was overcome with the sensation of both overwhelming grief and complete liberation. She had been ready to believe her heritage had been empty, vain, fruitless, but to believe it had been cruel, heartless, and so so wrong, sapped the last bit of strength she had, strength she had held in reserve for the express purpose of holding back the emotions dammed up in her innermost being.

Horrible, convulsive sobs shook her body as she collapsed into the American lady's arms. Great cries bordering on screams and gasping breaths escaped her throat while Gypsy held her close and whispered

*softly into her ear words of soothing and comfort. She felt warm kisses on her cheek, on her forehead, right on her eyelids, her eyelids squeezed futilely tight to try to stop the torrent of tears that flowed. The warmth of the kisses poured a deep, rich balm over her, but nothing in her life or dreams prepared her for the enormity of the feeling of being loved unconditionally that she felt as she realized there were tears falling from above on her eyelids and cheeks, mingling with her own.*

Her eyes jerked open. She stared into the American lady's face, the one she now remembered was named Jennifer. Behind her she could make out the curtain Muhammad had rigged up. She clung tight to Gypsy and sobbed and wept, comforted by the soft, reassuring whispers. She couldn't hear the words above her own cries, but they soothed nonetheless. At last the fountain ran dry, the tears stopped, and she lay back on her bed.

"I had a dream," Esther whispered.

"I know. I was there."

"Yes, that's true, you were there, but ... what do you mean you were there? You were really there?"

"I was really there. I saw it all."

"How?" Esther sat up on her elbows, suddenly wide awake. "How does that work? I've never heard of such a thing. You saw my dream?"

"Yes. I don't know either how these things work. I've never experienced such a thing before myself. It's a miracle of God."

"I thought we were Jews suffering under this New World Order, and then I understood that what I was seeing was what we did to the Palestinians. And I thought, is this why we're suffering now, is it some kind of judgment?"

Gypsy took her hand and stroked the back of it gently as she looked down, waiting for the words to say, praying for the words to say. In the dream every word she had said had been what Frizzy had told her to say. Now she needed more. Slowly, thoughtfully, tenderly, while stroking her hand, Gypsy said, "There was a concerted effort through every medium available to make your people so afraid that the Holocaust would happen to them again that they would be determined to prevent it at all costs. So they became obsessed with the need for a Jewish homeland, then they became obsessed with safety and security, then they became neurotic and paranoid. They determined they had to have safe borders, they had to have their very own Jewish homeland, where no one could ever again have the upper hand over them, where they would always be the majority. They became so fearful that they ended up doing to others in large part what had been done to them.

"At the same time they expounded the doctrine that they were God's chosen people by birth and others could never be quite as good as they, so the suffering they inflicted on others never counted for much while the suffering, fear, and uncertainty they continued to endure was used to reinforce their need for safety, security, safe borders, and unmatched military might. They became the very thing they fought to free themselves from and made themselves feared, resented, and hated first by their neighbors and the Muslim world, then by Russia, then by most of Europe, and finally the whole world—except the United States.

"You were shown this, because you're very near the truth, but you've filled your days and nights with endless action, sights, sounds, and amusement, to keep yourself from really thinking. So God chose to show you, as He says in the Bible, 'in a dream, in the

night visions, when deep sleep falls on men, when He can remove man from his purpose and hide pride from man.”

“That’s in the Bible?”

“Yes, in the book of Job. And there’s lots more there.”

“But if what you’re saying is true about the Israelis, why doesn’t Muhammad hate us? Why did he save my brother?”

“I don’t know about him saving your brother, but”—she paused and listened—“Muhammad has faith and trust in God and a mature outlook on people. He’s able to separate people from politics. He’s been taught well and has a forgiving heart.”

“Wait a minute! How do you know all that? You probably haven’t exchanged five words with him.”

“Esther, there’s a lot you won’t understand immediately. Now I want to ask you something that I don’t expect you to answer right away. I want you to think real hard about this. Will you stay with Don and me? I think you’re meant to stay with us and learn what we have to teach you. You have a special calling in this time. The path will lead you through the valley of the shadow of death, but you need fear no evil, for the Lord will be with you, His rod and His staff will comfort you.”

“Geez, you know our Book better than I do.”

“It’s our Book too, Esther, and it changed my life and can change yours too if you’ll only receive the truth, bitter as it might sometimes taste. You think about what you want to do, ’cause we’ll be leaving tomorrow and the AC offensive will begin within the next days.”

“AC offensive?”

“The AC, the Antichrist—the man the world calls the Chairman.”

“Oh, yeah, you said that. I ... I’ll think about it, Jennifer.”

“Go back to sleep now, will you?”

“Yeah, yeah, I’ll try.”

Gypsy kissed her forehead and helped Esther lie back down, then slowly stood up and exited through the parted curtain. Shaul, Muhammad, and Assadam stood right outside. She had known they were there, but had not felt she should tell Esther. She put her finger to her lips and motioned them to go back to the other side of the room where their beds were. Once they were sitting, she recounted what they didn’t know in a whisper. As she concluded her story of having been in someone else’s dream, the three men sat silent, just shaking their heads at the odd things that had been happening to them of late.

Gypsy stood and said, “We’d best get back to sleep. We’ll have a little more time to talk in the morning. Good night.”

Shaul stood up saying, “Thanks. Thanks so much for helping my sister. Thanks for helping us all to see things clearer. Is ... is the invitation to go with you open for all of us?”

“Of course. Of course it is.” Gypsy looked at Muhammad and extended her hand to him. “We came here for you, for all of you.”

Muhammad took her hand and stood up.

Gypsy leaned her lips near his ear and whispered, “Take good care of Esther.”

He pulled back and stared into Gypsy’s face. “Oh, no, no, *he’s* her brother,” he said, pointing to Shaul.

“I know. Take good care of her, Muhammad.”

Gypsy then shook Assadam’s hand and withdrew to the room where Don was blissfully sleeping, unaware of all that had happened.

## THE DAWN COMES UP LIKE THUNDER

Steve sat up in bed in a plush, air-conditioned room. Tiny slivers of light were squeezing through the shutters that had been let down to keep the room dark enough. *Then it's still day*, he thought, *I can still see the broadcast.*

He jumped from bed, only to find his knees wobbling and buckling under him. He caught himself before he fell to the floor, steadied himself for a moment and then cautiously walked toward the door of the room. As the door opened, he was met by the smiling faces of his team from their position across the big lounge and in the little breakfast corner where they were eating eggs and toast and sipping coffee and tea or Ovaltine, depending on their age and inclination. *Breakfast in the afternoon?!*

Lenny jumped up and crossed the room to hug him. "Are you okay? Are you hungry?"

Suddenly aware of the deep growling in his belly, Steve said, "Yeah, yeah, as a matter of fact I am. Famished. I think I missed lunch, teaching that class."

"And dinner."

"What? You don't mean..."

“It’s the next day? Yes, I do. Come, have some breakfast and we can fill you in on things. We have a lot to pray and ask the Lord about.”

“I missed the broadcast?!”

Annie chimed in, “Well, yes and no. The vision we had with the young people was exactly what happened. For us it was like watching a rerun.”

“Wow! Really?!” He had reached the table by now and sat down to the abundant feast before him.

Lenny sat down and quipped, “What was that about Daniel was sick certain days and his cogitations changed within him? I think you just experienced something of the sort. You slept from around three in the afternoon till now, eight a.m. What’s that? Seventeen hours?”

Mary said, “Isaa wanted to rush you to the doctor. We said it wouldn’t be necessary. Then he wanted his personal physician to come here, so we heard from the Lord, Who said that would not be a good idea for either his safety and security or ours, and assured us you were fine. You were sleeping very peacefully and breathing fine. You were just exhausted. We’re so proud of you, all of you. We heard how it went. Those kids will never be the same again.”

Julie smiled teasingly and said, “Especially a certain Diala...”

Steve’s head snapped in Julie’s direction.

“Oh, *that* got your attention. She asked and asked how you were and kept calling up last night to find out if you had woken up. I think you’ve had a profoundly *spiritual* effect on her.”

Steve blushed.

“Julie, that will be enough, please,” Lenny said.

“Did I say something wrong?” Julie asked. There was a moment of silence that was broken by the ringing of the phone. “I’ll get it!” and Julie was on her way.

Mary beat her to the phone and said, “Maybe I should, Julie. Thanks.”

Julie turned to Steve and mouthed the words: *Diala ... wanna bet?*

“Hello. May I help you? ... Oh, he’s fine, he just woke up.”

Julie smiled triumphantly and sat back down, grinning from ear to ear.

“Do you want to talk to him?”

Steve motioned frantically “no.”

“Okay, I can just let him know you called. When will we see you again, Diala? ... Oh, that’ll be nice. We’ll see you then. ... Bye, Diala, and God bless you.”

Mary hung up and returned to the breakfast table. “The same young people plus some more are coming this afternoon for another class.” Seeing Steve’s near-panicked face, she added, “But this time they want a class with the famed prophet Leonard. You have time, hon?”

Steve’s face immediately transformed itself from panic to relief, then slowly and almost imperceptibly to a twinge of resentment over Lenny possibly stealing some of his glory.

Steve’s reaction had not gone unnoticed by Lenny who answered, “Well, we’ll have to see how we can fit everything in. Mary and I have to meet up with David and the rest of the Service Center teamwork today somehow. There are some incredible things happening, and Mustafa and others are asking some very difficult questions, and we can only discuss these things with the Lord and the teamwork—Mustafa’s stipulation.”

There was the resentment again on Steve’s face.

Lenny continued, “Let’s finish up and pray about how to proceed.”



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## **A PROCLAMATION, PROUD AND PREMATURE**

The Chairman's orders to round up the adherents to the small marginal religions were carried out immediately, and as the morning dawned in each part of the world, reports flooded in of quiet late-night raids on the houses of known members of the sects, first from Europe and the Middle East. Then as the dawn spread its light ever westward, the Chairman and Minister were delighted to hear how swiftly the world was being cleaned up of these particular ones who still presented a threat to them. To his delight, many had been taken into custody and there had willingly, even enthusiastically declared their allegiance to and worship of the Chairman. Most of these had offered to convert their entire following and employ all methods at their disposal to disseminate the good news that god now dwelt with men. As proof of their loyalty, those who did not yet have the microchip implant had received it and had been released, the authorities knowing that now they would always be able to find them should they prove false in any way.

The Christian groups were proving to be the biggest problem, and it was becoming apparent that they

would have to be dealt with more drastically. As the reports were studied more thoroughly, there was report after report of the known centers of the group called *The Family* being found deserted. It was as if they had been tipped off. In every case they had disappeared without trace. There were no reports that the authorities were hot on their trail, no reports that arrests were expected soon. What leads there had been had been followed up on and led to nothing and nowhere.

And, more disturbing still, were the reports of miraculous escapes by not only Family members but other Christian groups as well. One Family center in Africa had seemed to be full of members of all ages as the authorities pulled up outside in the dead of night, but when the police entered and attempted to arrest them, they found the house empty! Frantically they had searched for the people they had clearly seen through the windows only moments before, until finally one team of two policemen had found a small family in an upper room, quietly sitting round a table, reading some pamphlets—a husband, wife, and three small children. They had looked up and smiled as the policemen entered, but as the officers crossed the room to take them into custody, their hands had passed through the members of the family and found they were some kind of image, nothing more.

There were other similar reports, mostly of the Family but also of some of the more radical, devoted Christian groups. Though the One World military machine stood waiting in central Israel for the go-ahead to begin Operation Zion to root out and destroy the remaining hostile military units within Israel proper, the operation was put on hold until an emergency meeting could be convened to address the problem of these religious groups.

Quietly, but with an intensity signaling he was on the verge of exploding, the Chairman said to the convened Cabinet, “I am pleased to see that we had tremendous success during the night with certain religious groups, but there is one in particular that I am very concerned about. I want to know if there are any reports of these people, the Family, being actually apprehended, or is it nothing but bungled missions and fantastic reports of so-called miracles?”

“Well,” the Interpol representative ventured nervously, “the reports are not at all good, I must admit. But encouragingly, in Tenerife we were able to actually apprehend the man purported to be the leader of the Family for the Canary Islands, along with his wife and children. They are at this moment being interrogated, and I have asked for an immediate report on the findings of the interrogating team.”

“Very good. One thing I would very much like to know,” the Chairman said, still keeping a lid on the fury and frustration that was threatening to boil over at any time, “is who is tipping them off? Where are they getting their information of our moves before we make them? Where is the leak? I suppose that this particular man would not be the one to ask, though, as he seems to have missed out on the information and gotten himself caught. Nevertheless, send word to the team there that that should be part of the line of questioning and that they should report directly to us as soon as there is any breakthrough.”

“Yes, sir.” The Interpol official nodded to his aide, who quietly disappeared out the door. The official then said, “There is one interesting thing about this man and his family.”

“Yes?”

“Well, it was as if they knew our people were coming too, because in the middle of the night they were found

sitting in their living room downstairs, dressed, with a few things packed in bags, ready to go. They even said something to that effect when they opened the door, something to indicate they expected the police.”

The Minister whispered a few words into the Chairman’s ear and he gave him a nod to proceed. The Minister cleared his throat and queried to the gathered ministers and representatives, “Does anyone have any insight on how these people have come up with such advanced technology as this escape mechanism we read of in Africa, the hologram image?”

There was silence for a few ponderous moments with no one daring to venture an answer. “Well?”

“Well,” the minister of science and technology said, “we know they have some fairly accomplished computer experts who have been developing their own programs for a long time, fairly sophisticated stuff, and these last years they have had a tremendous increase in available funds. It’s not out of the question that they actually set up a research fund to develop this kind of technology.”

“Technology *we* don’t even have?!” the Minister said skeptically. “Come now, there must be some other explanation.”

“One thing we need to remember,” said the minister in charge of religious affairs, a man who had once been the world’s leading exit counselor, “is that the Family over the last decade or so has greatly expanded its membership to include thousands of people who don’t live in their communities. Many of them are intensely loyal to their teachings. Many of them are even highly placed and experts in their fields, especially in such places as India and the so-called developing world where, I am sure you are aware, there is a very high degree of technological expertise coupled with childlike naiveté in matters of faith and spiritual things.”

“Please get to the point,” the Minister breathed impatiently. “We don’t have much time.”

“Well, there are a great many scientific geniuses in a place like India who have not been brought completely under our umbrella, so what the learned minister of science and technology is proposing is not only possible but highly likely, that some of these third world scientific geniuses in their misguided allegiance to the Family have given them the technology.”

“Yes,” the Chairman mused, “that could be it. Are there any other theories?”

One timid hand went up. The young man raising his hand was one of the aides.

“Yes?” the Minister enjoined.

“My brother,” he began with a thick Slavic accent, “is a member of this group.”

“Is he? How interesting!”

“And in my early teen years I often visited their center in Budapest. It seemed to be quite a hubbub of activity with people coming and going from many parts of the world. Yet I never saw any indication of highly advanced technology myself.”

“And?”

“One thing that stood out during my visit was that I overheard them more than once speak of ‘new weapons’ and how they would be essential in these times.”

The former exit counselor agreed. “Yes, I have heard of these too. They seem to be some magical powers they ascribe to being trained in, things like foreseeing the future and other things.”

“Yes,” the young man continued. “I did not understand them completely, but it did seem they were somehow spiritual gifts. It sounded like only superstition to me, but I just wonder if this is somehow part of what we are seeing here.”

The Chairman turned and studied the Minister's face questioningly. The Minister nodded as if to say he was aware of these things and said to all, "Yes, some of these groups are highly dangerous and developed in the power of evil and their ability to escape through mystical powers, one of which they call 'prophecy.' It could be that the spiritual power they claim to have is what we are up against here. What I think..." The Minister though stopped mid-sentence upon seeing the Chairman's reaction to all this.

The Chairman's face flushed red and his hands trembled as the one clutched the other on the table. He stood and bellowed, "I AM THE ONLY SPIRITUAL POWER LEFT ON EARTH! I WILL HAVE NO OTHER!" He paced round the room, emitting sounds that were strangely reminiscent of a wild animal's growl. "Those who will not bow and use their power only to my glory must *die*. If you sitting here are unable to bring such puny powers as these ridiculous religions claim to possess under *my* control, then you are not worthy to serve me and I must look for more qualified leadership! From this moment on we *must* declare that worship of my person is *absolutely* mandatory, that worship of *any* other deity or *any* claim to possessing spiritual power or authority outside that which I grant my subjects is *criminal!*"

An uneasy silence followed in the room. There were a few sidelong glances at each other, and the general feeling that such a move was premature.

"Registration must and shall be made *mandatory*—immediately! I will have *none* who escape my eye! We must prepare a speech to that effect. Arrange for the media to film it in the Square as soon as possible. All resistance must be destroyed, all resisters must be crushed like the insects they are. We must let it be known that a new hour has dawned, and that it is

time to rid this world of all those who choose not to enter the brave new world of my kingdom."

The door flew open, and the aide who had so recently gone out, rushed in with a flushed face. He stopped upon seeing the Chairman and made a low bow to him.

"What is it?"

"The Family leader in Tenerife..."

"Yes?"

"He ... he's ... gone—escaped."

"WHAT!?"

"No one knows exactly what happened."

"Were they left alone?"

"No, Your Excellency. There were four interrogators. The second in command seems to have left the interrogation room to report to their superiors that he had a strange feeling that the words of the prisoner were getting through to the chief interrogator and perhaps he should be relieved of this duty until he could recover from the hypnotic effect the prisoners were having on him. While he was reporting this, there was an enormous crashing sound that came from the underground chamber where they were being questioned. The police rushed in to find the entire wall of the room blown out and the leader, his family, and the chief interrogator gone!"

"And the other two!?"

"Dead! Not a scratch on them, but it was as if they had been petrified. They lay on their backs on the floor staring up, stone cold dead. They say it was as if rigor mortis had set in instantly."

All eyes were glued to the Chairman as he trembled with hatred and rage. He was muttering something under his breath that none could hear. The usual flush of great stress and anger that had colored his face from the beginning of the meeting now began to

glow into an ugly destructive flame red. Shadows from no visible source flitted across his face and figure. A shadow far greater than his own figure would have cast fell behind him on the floor, then slinked its way higher and higher up the wall till it reached the ceiling. It then began to change color and take on the form of a three-dimensional, dragon-like figure of gargantuan power and stature. A voice that was clearly not the Chairman's, but deeper, stronger, far more powerful, emanated from his throat as he lifted his arms high into the air and shouted, "I WILL NOT BE DENIED MY VICTORY!! THEY MUST BE FOUND!! THEY MUST DIE!! I WANT TO SEE THEM DESTROYED AND TORN LIMB FROM LIMB!! KILL, KILL, KILL THESE CHRISTIANS AND ALL WHO WOULD DARE TO STAND IN MY WAY!!"

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## **THERE WAS A DIVISION AMONG THEM**

The little bit of hair left on Shimon's head was disheveled. There were bags under his eyes. No one was surprised at the first words that came from his mouth as he spoke to the gathering of "guests" in the barracks. "I didn't sleep well last night."

He almost confided in this group of strangers that the past, present, and future had met in the night and fought a furious battle over his life and soul, but he thought better of it. Instead he confessed, "I cannot remember a harder decision in my life, but I have decided. I know the easiest thing would be to let you, Don and Jennifer, quietly out of here, escort you down the road and try to forget you ever came, but something tells me not to do that. Something tells me that some of my people need to hear what you have to say ... in a controlled setting. ... And the only way I know to find out who those people are is to gather all who wish to hear what you have to say and let them decide.

"There is no doubt we are at a crossroads, if not the end of the road..." His voice trailed off and he muttered some words only he could have heard, yet Don and Gypsy somehow knew what they were. *At least I am ... at a crossroad ... or the end of my road.*

Gathering his thoughts and composure, Shimon continued. "I have called a meeting in the auditorium for nine o'clock, which gives you an hour to finish breakfast, prepare yourselves and what you want to say, before the car will pick you up."

Don and Gypsy nodded agreement.

"As for the rest of you, you are free to decide what you will do. You are free to go, Muhammad and Assadam, if you wish. And you are free to stay, Shaul and Esther, if that is your desire." There was an awkward silence as Shimon once more blankly stared at the ground. In an instant with a forced smile, he stood up and said, "Very well then, I will pick you up to take you to the auditorium before nine." And with that, he was gone.

Breakfast ended in silence except for a few necessary words. Even Esther ate pensively and said to Gypsy as the last bites were eaten, "Why don't you and Don go and gather your notes? We can take care of cleaning up." The others nodded assent.

Gypsy said, "Well, it's not exactly gathering notes, but we do need some time to pray and prepare that way."

"I have a feeling," Don added, "that we won't know what to say till we are standing on the stage. Jesus once promised that we would be given a mouth and wisdom on the spot that none could gainsay nor resist. I think this is going to be one of those moments."

"You both are very brave," Muhammad said softly.

"No, no," Gypsy answered. "I for one am not brave. We just have a very great God who can empower weak and frightened people to do things beyond their own strength."

Esther whispered, "Man, could I use a God like that right now!" All eyes turned to her in surprise at

this uncharacteristic statement that had escaped her lips. Seeing their reaction, she looked into each pair of eyes in turn without shame and repeated, "Yeah, I sure could, I really could."

Shimon hurriedly ushered Don and Gypsy into the dressing rooms behind the plush auditorium in the center of the settlement. The sound of a large audience in front of the big stage curtain could be heard. Shimon asked them to sit and wait while he addressed the audience, leaving them with only Avi guarding them. Shimon seemed especially nervous, saying as he brought them to the auditorium from the barracks that there was no time to lose, that they would not have long to explain things to the people gathered, urging them to choose their words wisely and carefully.

Silently on the way and especially while they waited, Don and Gypsy did the thing that had always worked, had always brought them through every moment of crisis and truth. They prayed desperately for the power of the keys to give them the words to speak. Behind their closed eyelids they could each see their helpers. They were assured that they would be told exactly what to say and that there were those who would listen, though it would be the minority, but that this minority was the reason they had come here, this remnant and the three young people whose lives were now somehow inextricably intertwined with their own.

They had been separated from their three young friends and Assadam soon after their morning repast, and they now prayed that there would be time and opportunity, once their message was delivered, to find and reunite with them. Before they could feel the assurance that this would be so, they heard Shimon

announcing that they would now speak to the gathered audience. There was no applause, nor had they expected any. They both knew they had never stood before a more skeptical audience in their lives. With a squeeze of each other's hand they moved swiftly to the broad stage. It did not take a prophet to discern the storm clouds hovering above the troubled sea of faces before them; these people were in deep consternation, some in near panic. It didn't make things seem any more stable to note that more than half their audience was armed with assault rifles.

Don and Gypsy wondered if there was any sign of faith and peace to be found among their audience, and just then as if in answer to their unspoken prayer, they spied their three young friends, Assadam conspicuously absent, sitting in the second row on the side of the room, signaling them with reassuring looks that almost bordered on smiles. Esther was so bold as to give them a thumbs-up sign as if to assure them she was praying for them, or this is how they would have interpreted it if she had happened to be the praying type.

Don stepped to the podium, cleared his throat, and began to speak into the microphone. "I am Don Ward and this is my wife, Jennifer, and we would like to begin by apologizing for any fear or worry our sudden arrival has brought to any hearts. We assure you that that was never our intent. We ourselves did not know why we came here, but since we have been here, it has become clearer to us. Our message to you is just that, a message—and each of you must choose for yourself what you will do with it. We shall merely state the facts as we know them from study of the Scriptures and from what God has shown us—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the Jews, of the Christians, and of the Muslims." There was a rumble of questioning peppered with some obvious

indignation that he had actually said that these three religions worshipped the same God.

"Though our theologies differ in many ways, whether any of us like it or not, we are now thrown together against a common enemy, a mighty enemy whose forces are greater and mightier than any enemy you have ever faced in your entire history. Today is the day of choice. From this day on, trouble will seek and find this settlement, and many others like it, and it is a trouble that cannot be escaped. This time of trouble has been foretold thousands of years ago, called the Great Tribulation in the Christian's New Testament, or the time of Jacob's trouble by your own prophets. This time of trouble will last three and a half years, after which this Chairman, known in the Bible as the Beast, the little horn, the vile person, the king of fierce countenance, the man of sin, will be destroyed by God Himself without hand, by the rock cut from the Mountain without hand. There is no time for me to go into the details, but many of you, I know, are familiar with these passages. Though we may have differing interpretations of these passages, we are not here to argue doctrine but to ask you, as Jeremiah of old, "Why will you die?"

A voice called out from the back, "Who are you, a Goy, to compare yourself with the great Jewish prophet Jeremiah?" There was a rumble of assent to this comment.

Gypsy stepped up and called out, "We are nothing and are definitely unworthy to be compared with that great Jew, and please, if we choose a word here or there that you find offensive, bear with us, and try to grasp the greater meaning of our message. We have indications from Mr. Narmann and other reliable Sources that today your settlement will come under some kind of attack, so there is no time to lose. We

now will set your choices before you and then you must choose.

“I urge you for your own sakes, for the sake of your precious children and families, for the sake of your elders who you wish to see gathered to their fathers in peace, for the sake of the future and the resistance to this devil-man, choose well, choose in prayer, choose in deep communion with God Almighty, for so much depends on the choices that will be made today.

“One of your choices might be to stand alone and try to defend this settlement, hoping your Messiah will come right now and deliver you, for that would be your only hope. But from our studies of the Scriptures, in both the Old and New Testaments, we have learned that the deliverance of Israel, and of all the world, will not come for three and a half years. No Messiah will come to deliver you before that time.

“Another choice, should you feel that you as Jews must stand alone, is to take an aggressive stance and move to attack the Chairman’s forces in his headquarters in Jerusalem, hoping other scattered settlements and army units will follow suit or be doing the same, hoping that you could descend on Jerusalem from all sides. Again, this plan would be doomed. The Chairman’s forces have been secretly marshalling for many years, and you have seen their technology and skill in battle above the skies of Jerusalem. Even the United States is not ready to resist him. Your only hope is to flee into the wilderness, even into the lands of your enemies who are strong to rise up together with you against the Chairman, and in those lands give your lives and your trust to the same God who delivered your people from the bondage of Egypt. Today is the hour of decision. What will you do?”

A voice from the back cried out antagonistically. “Tell us what you will do! You seem to know so much.

What are *you* going to do?”

Don stepped back up to the microphone, cleared his throat and said, “We will follow God from one day to the next. We, as we told you earlier, are nothing in ourselves, but we started preparing for this day many years ago, and we ourselves are ready, like Abraham, to follow God to a land and destiny we know not—whether into the midst of the Chairman’s den of lions, or to a brook of Zarepath among Israel’s neighbors. We are not asking you to follow us. That would be more than most of you are willing to give, for we go unarmed except with the power of God, with no plan but His day-to-day instructions, and no assurance of anything but the ultimate victory of God over the Devil, of good over evil. If there are those who would like to come with us—if you are ready for that kind of sacrifice, that kind of leap of faith, that kind of servitude to God alone, then we can speak with you personally afterwards.

“But for most of you, God has given us only one message—that you who believe it are to flee, and to head south where there are fewer concentrations of One World Government forces, and from where you will find it easier to make good your escape into the neighboring countries. With that message we close and leave you to make your own decision. We leave you in love and prayer. May God bless you and keep you. May He make His face to shine upon you and give you peace. Shalom.”

There was a stunned silence, and just as a few began to call out questions, pleas, and taunts, Shimon stepped up and took the mike. He called out, “I for one, after much deep thought, am planning to take the advice of our guests and head south and, from there, hopefully to one of our neighbors. Those who wish to join me, please meet in the parking lot to the



left of the front door.” A small group filed out quietly in the direction Shimon had mentioned.

An over-sized man with a bushy beard called out and said, “And those who do not wish to follow goys and who still believe in the Messiah’s rescue of his people, who still believe in Israel and are willing to fight for what we have built here, meet me to the right of the front door where we can plan the defense of our homes as well as attacks on the Chairman’s forces!” The majority of the room reacted positively to this message, loudly proclaiming their intent.

Don and Gypsy looked at each other, smiled grimly, and squeezed each other’s hand. Then they noticed that Esther, Shaul, and Muhammad had climbed the stairs to the stage and stood before them.

Esther quipped, “You made that option sound so enticing, how could we do anything else but follow you?”

Shaul smiled. “Yeah. Still want us?”

Muhammad said, “If you will have us, we want to go with you and learn more of what you have taught us. You are the only people I have met since all this madness began who seem to have any idea what is happening. Where else could we go?”

Don thought of the words of Peter so long ago. *“To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”*

“I guess what Muhammad is saying,” Shaul contributed, “is that everything has been so confusing and so different from all we were brought up to believe, that clarity and knowing the truth seems more important than survival to us. So I for one am willing to try. I think I can speak for Muhammad too. And my sister, well, this is just the kind of thing I think she was always looking for. Right, big sis?”

“You bet. Never could find anything crazy enough,

radical enough to live for, much less to die for. If you guys are for real, you just may be it.”

Muhammad gazed at them with huge, expectant eyes. “Will you have us then?”

Gypsy grinned from ear to ear and said, “Of course we will. You’re the main reason we came here. We’d be sad if you didn’t want to come with us. Now we’d better get going.” The words had no sooner escaped her lips than they heard shouts and cries from outside coupled with feet scurrying hither and yon, then the unmistakable sound of attack helicopters approaching.

Don, without hesitation, dashed for the front door, saying over his shoulder, “Let’s see what’s up.”

The sun was high in the sky by now, and the air blazed hot, so the approaching shapes in the sky seemed to quiver in the air. There were three of them, maybe more behind them, but three that were easily visible. From the military camp where they had spent the night could be seen two helicopters taking off to meet the oncoming enemy aircraft. The soldiers could also be seen arming heavy machine guns and turning the turrets of the two tanks in the compound to meet the oncoming threat.

Shaul muttered, “These are probably just reconnaissance choppers that won’t engage us unless they think this outpost is weaker than it is.”

As the Israeli choppers headed north, it was clear Shaul was right. The oncoming craft turned and headed away at high speed.

Don said, “No doubt they have high powered equipment that has already surveyed the situation here, and attack will come within hours at the most. All the more reason to make haste.”

“Where are we going?” Esther was so bold as to query. “Have you gotten any hints from on High?”

“North. That’s all we know,” Gypsy said. “How far we’ll get is anybody’s guess.” There was a moment of pensive silence as each one took in the full meaning of what had just been said. North meant toward the enemy forces, toward Jerusalem. “It’s not too late to change your minds. No one would blame anyone for taking a safer choice.”

“Boy, you sure need to learn to listen!” Esther said as she stalked off toward the barracks. “We said we’re with you,” she called out over her shoulder, “and that’s what we mean. C’mon, Shaul, Muhammad.”

In the barracks, Assadam had his bags packed and asked Muhammad privately what had happened and what other people were planning to do. All the others of the team, as they threw their things together, tried to remain as nonchalant as possible, but kept making sidelong glances of interest at the quiet but intense conversation going on, noticing Assadam gave his nephew the keys to his car and took a small plastic bag of belongings, heading for the door. He turned and wished everyone peace and God’s blessing and all the good he could think of in the flowery way of old Arabs before he walked out into the late morning sun.

Esther was of course the first to ask, “What was that all about?”

“My uncle said, when he heard about Shimon’s decision, that his group would probably need an Arab to help them, and said he has nothing to return to in Bethlehem, so he is going to offer Shimon his services as a translator and middle man.”

Silence.

“A good man. Your uncle’s a good man,” Shaul breathed.

“Besides, he said we couldn’t all fit in the car and he gave us his Peugeot,” Muhammad said, holding up the car keys.

“That’ll come in handy, I suppose,” Gypsy said. “God bless and keep him.”

“Yes,” Don breathed. Then a related thought struck him. “If you’re going to go with us, then you’ll need to learn the ways of the Spirit. Rule number one, turn every thought into a prayer. As we think all these complimentary thoughts about dear Assadam, it’s as if the thoughts are messenger boys waiting to go to work, but they don’t go and bless and help Assadam until we send them with our prayers. So let’s pray.”

The three new recruits, wondering if Don and Gypsy were going to get out their prayer carpets Muslim fashion or start bobbing back and forth as they stood on their feet with a prayer book in hand like the Jews at the Wailing Wall, were struck by the simple, conversational prayer the two prayed for the friend who was parting ways with them. They could see they had a lot to learn.

## **ALLIANCE WITH THE AACs**

Lenny, Mary, David, and Gideon sat in a secluded corner of the lobby of the simple hotel in the old section of their city, the place the Lord had shown them to stay in as a kind of headquarters. In hushed tones, Lenny had at length told the teamwork of the surprise meeting with Mustafa and his military friends. Now the four of them sat in silence, pondering the sheer gravity of the situation they were faced with.

In short, they had learned that the government's present policy was to try to stay as neutral and as cooperative with the New World Order as they could for as long as they could without compromising the Muslim and Christian faiths that the overwhelming majority of the government and the citizens of the nation embraced. The government was well aware that this would probably be short-lived, but they felt it was definitely worth it to try to buy some time. They could use the reputation their nation had for being a mediator in the Middle East to good effect at this time. Known as a moderate nation, they felt the Chairman would be cautious and try not to offend world opinion early on by attacking them prematurely.

On the other hand, they knew when things began to turn it would be too late to arm and prepare for

battle. Hearing of the dilemma his government was faced with, Mustafa had felt constrained, even called, to volunteer to clandestinely set up a group of elite units to make preparation for the day that would inevitably come. He had been so bold as to do this, knowing he had friends with connections in High, very High places, namely the Family. The president and his cabinet had agreed that he could do this, but without their official approval or seeming knowledge. They had made it very clear to Mustafa and he had made it very clear to Lenny and Mary that if their cover was blown too early, they had no guarantee of government protection. It was likely that the government would disavow any knowledge of either the military or the Family's involvement in such activities. Isaa, at great personal risk, had volunteered his secret quarters as a meeting place and had already begun work on an underground passageway connecting the nearby woods to his basement apartment, so spies and satellites would not see a stream of questionable comings and goings.

The questions now placed before them by Mustafa and his colleagues were few in number but far-reaching in importance. They were the kind of questions that none of these simple missionaries had ever had to be involved in answering before, such questions as: What should the objectives, short and long term, for these new units be? Was a certain ancient and presently unpopulated city a suitable base to work from? Should they conduct guerilla raids now or only prepare for a later date? Should their stance be defensive or aggressive? And could they please pray for an encouraging message to share with the officers and perhaps with the men at a later date? It was obvious to all that no amount of counsel and discussion could answer these questions. It was time

to come before the very throne of God and desperately cry out for answers such as they had never asked for before. They prayed a desperate prayer and then, notebooks in hand, began to write furiously for the next forty-five minutes.

Having read the prophecies together, they could see the Lord had once again made His plan clear, all except for a few gray areas that He promised to illuminate as time went on. The ancient city was indeed the place God had ordained to be their main base, but there needed to be other places. They had received descriptions of places that they did not know, but which they were sure Mustafa and his men would recognize. For the time being, God had made clear that it would not be wise to conduct guerilla raids, that such action should be reserved only when there were incursions into their territory by world government forces. And when they *did* do this, they should make it look like the retaliation was carried out by fanatical Muslim splinter groups and not the regular army. At the same time though, the government should loudly protest the incursions, thereby letting the New World Order know that, though for the most part cooperative, they still valued their national sovereignty. Likewise their training should be aggressive but their present stance only defensive. They should quietly seek to set up liaisons with the other nations in the region and encourage them to take just such secret preparatory action. They should try by all means necessary to acquire as advanced weaponry as they could without causing alarm. Finally, and most sensitive of all, there was an encouragement to be open to working with the remnant of the defeated Israeli army and armed civilians of Israel should such cooperation be sought.

Beside all the revelatory practical counsel given to the military of this AAC nation, a marvelous message was given to encourage these men who in the very face of death, defeat, and destruction were risking their all to fight the final, the true, *jihad*.

As they stood to go, the cellphone Isaa had given Lenny and Mary rang in Mary's bag. She pulled it out and answered, only to hear Isaa's trembling voice.

"Hello! Mary?"

"Yes, it's me."

"We need you at home ... right away. We have something of an emergency."

"An emergency?"

Everyone's eyes widened, hearing that word.

"I'll give you Steve to explain."

After a moment's pause Stephen came on the line. The sound of many voices in the background could be heard. "Mary, we really need you and Lenny home now. Things are getting out of hand."

"Out of hand? But why?"

"There are about a hundred young people here for class. The game room couldn't hold us, so Isaa has moved us to the ballroom and set up a sound system. And ... well ... we just don't know how to handle all these kids. Can you get home right away? And can you put Lenny on? We need some advice what to do."

Mary explained quickly to Lenny what was happening and handed the phone to him.

Lenny breathed deeply and said, "Steve, the four of you pray together with Isaa and Lani and get some message as to what to do. We'll be back as soon as possible. You'll do fine, don't worry."

"Lenny, I'm so sorry. I was jealous and resentful of you, but, boy, now I don't want the heavy responsibility. I'm real thankful for you."

"I'm thankful for you too, Steve, and I don't want the responsibility either. We just need to cast it on Jesus and He's gonna do it. I think this is just the beginning. Fun, huh?"

"Yeah, yeah, real fun," Steve answered with an uncomfortable laugh.

## **THE RAZOR OF THE LORD**

Muhammad had pulled the little Peugeot off the road on the hill not far north of the settlement and parked it under a small grove of trees, hoping it would thereby be hidden from the view of the enemy aircraft overhead. Then the five passengers had disembarked and crouched in a small cluster in front of the car to watch what would transpire at the settlement. Thankfully Shimon and Assadam were well on their way south with a string of cars and fifty or sixty volunteers, the ones who felt they should flee. Among them were those who were willing to work together with their Arab neighbors and those who were uncertain what they would do after they reached the temporary safety of the south. Within the crowd were ten soldiers who had been given reluctant permission by their superiors to follow Shimon who, despite his present dovish leaning, was still highly respected. The rest of the military personnel had been divided into those who would stay to organize the defense of the settlement with its population of mainly mothers, children, the elderly, and those who would lead the able-bodied younger members north to engage the enemy forces. From Don and Gypsy and team's vantage point they could see the long caravan of mainly military vehicles making its way north along the same main road they

had initially taken before they had turned on to the dirt road along which they were now hiding.

Muhammad whispered, “There are many roads to go everywhere, but only the Palestinians really know them. Assadam told me it was a constant challenge to figure out new routes to get around the Israeli closures. The Israelis are so used to riding in protected ease down the main roads they don’t know any other way, so there they are, sitting ducks.”

Shaul had managed to procure a pair of high-powered binoculars from one of the soldiers before leaving, and now they passed it around.

The sky was alive with helicopters and far overhead could be heard the sound of fighter jets, thundering their way through the sky, circling, waiting like birds of prey for the kill. Almost on the southern horizon they could still see the settlement they had just left. It lay quiet, glistening white in the noonday sun, as about twenty helicopters approached. They could faintly make out that some message was being broadcast by powerful speakers from the helicopters to the settlement below. They could imagine what was being said—some kind of call to surrender and yield peacefully to the New World Order—though they could not make out the exact words. A moment of silence ensued. The loudspeakers again. Silence. The loudspeakers once more. Then the illusion of peace and quiet was broken as two rockets were launched from the ground and two One World helicopters exploded in great flashes of black, orange, and yellow, followed by the earth-shaking sound of the explosions. Immediately the settlement erupted with tank and artillery fire, and three Israeli helicopters lifted off the ground to return fire from the air. A fierce battle was immediately engaged with more One World helicopters moving in from the south. The three Israeli helicopters

took out two more One World choppers before they were blown out of the air in huge explosions.

With no air support, the settlement could be seen and felt making its last desperate and futile stand, shooting all its heavy and light weaponry in a gallant attempt to repel the vastly superior One World forces—forces that not only had superior technology and numbers on their side, but that were also ordained by God Himself to judge and control this nation at this time.

Resistance was useless and pitiful, defeat was certain, but the five onlookers were not prepared for the degree of destruction that was to follow. First the helicopters, having silenced the heaviest artillery being used against them, including two or more tanks and a few artillery pieces, hovered ominously above the village. Only small arms from the settlement could now be heard, firing futilely at the One World choppers that remained just out of their range. There was a broadcast message, no doubt a final offer of surrender.

“Surrender only means death, if not now, eventually,” Don said grimly, “or denying God and worshipping the Chairman. What do you think they will choose?”

Shaul chuckled ironically. “They’ll be about as united as they’ve always been, I suspect, which means disunited. I imagine there will be those who will be screaming for surrender for their kids’ sake and there will be those who are willing to die for their homes and religion.”

There was indeed silence from the village for a few minutes, during which time several more broadcasts were made. Through the binoculars could be seen some movement of people in large groups within the village. A final call was made from the hovering One World helicopters, followed by a sudden cacophony of fire from the ground, all coming from the military

outpost at the northern end of the settlement. One or two rocket launchers seemed to be firing along with the small arms and high-powered machine guns, and another helicopter was hit.

To their surprise, the watchers from the southern hill saw the helicopters withdraw as if in surrender, but the reason became clear as One World jets suddenly screamed down from the sky and fired rocket after rocket into the military outpost. Explosion after explosion shook the earth all the way to the watchers' vantage point.

Then, as suddenly as it had begun, the attack was over and the jets had whistled back up to the high reaches of the sky, as if they had now stepped back to allow about half the helicopters once more to descend on the village. Little could be seen through the thick black smoke billowing its way into the bright sky. What could be seen was that the other half of the choppers were turning toward the northbound caravan of military vehicles, now out of sight behind one of the many hills. They couldn't have gotten very far, though, and the watchers could only imagine what fate awaited those who had chosen to live by the sword.

As the five watched the cluster of choppers heading closer towards them, the comparative silence was broken from the south once more by the faint sound of a broadcast from the helicopters hovering above the settlement. Through the smoke that was now thinner than before, they could see a cluster of people, old and young, some male but mostly females with children, with a few white sheets tied to sticks and poles, standing in the center square of the settlement waving frantically. More had joined them in their signal of surrender when, to the horror of the five watchers, heavy machine gun fire erupted from the helicopters

followed by a "whoosh" and the smoke trails of three rockets. With no media to cover the action, it was clear that the humanitarian concerns of the new government and One World forces were a thin veneer. It was clear what could be expected for those who fought and then surrendered to them.

Esther buried her head in Gypsy's shoulder as she wrapped her arms tightly round her. "It's so horrible! It's so horrible!" she cried.

"It is. It is. It's the Great Tribulation," Gypsy whispered. "Man at his worst. There is nothing to do but trust in the living God. The Tribulation is over for them. For us, it is only beginning."

Stunned, Shaul slowly responded, "I can't say that's a very comforting thought."

Don said, "Well, we have God's promises that say 'the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.'"

"Humph, that's easy to say, but in this day and age who really knows God? It sure doesn't look like those poor saps did."

The conversation was stopped short as a number of helicopters broke from the cluster and fanned out over the hills.

"Uh-oh, you know what they're doing, don't you?" Don asked.

Esther, still unnerved, said in near panic, "No, no. What? What are they doing?"

Gypsy held her and stroked her hair. "It's okay, don't worry, sweetheart."

Don continued, "They're looking for anyone who might have escaped to the nearby hills or even anyone who might have seen what was happening. They wouldn't want any witnesses."

"Oh, God!" Esther exclaimed as she looked into Gypsy's eyes. "Are they gonna kill us?!"



Gypsy checked in with Frizzy—knowing death was always a possibility, though not one to be feared—and then said, “No, no, they aren’t. Just stand back and see the hand of the Lord move mightily for us. Don?”

“Yes, yes, I know. Jesus, I claim the power of the keys of strength and faith.” He stood up and waited in quiet prayer at the edge of the grove of trees, just out of sight, as one helicopter approached ever closer and ever lower until it was flying at a height no more than one tall man’s height above their vantage point and coming directly for them.

Esther clung tightly to Gypsy, hardly daring to breathe.

Shaul reasoned that God had delivered him from certain death in Jerusalem and it must be for some purpose greater than to die on this remote hilltop.

Muhammad listened to the Voice that had guided him so faithfully during the Dome of the Rock days and now had returned in greater strength than ever since he had decided to hook up with these strange Americans. The Voice told him there was absolutely nothing to fear. He knew the Voice could be trusted more than his eyes and a good thing that was, because just then Don stepped out from under the grove of trees into plain view of the One World chopper.

Mouths agape, the four others watched as his slight frame seemed to stand strong and mighty on the edge of the hill, staring with fiery eyes into the eyes of the pilot and co-pilot of the helicopter. They could see the two enemy soldiers’ eyes were locked onto his. An eternity of thirty seconds or slightly more passed as Don stood, facing the chopper, until it suddenly lifted and flew away to the next hill. Don breathed a deep sigh and returned to the little flock under the trees, sinking in silence to the ground. No one, not even Esther, spoke as he stared into space blankly.

Slowly it seemed he returned to himself and the present situation and looked at them. “I must say ... wow ... that was amazing,” he whispered.

“What?!” Esther burst out. “What happened?”

“I suddenly could lock into their thoughts and become part of their thoughts. I told them they had seen nothing of any interest here, that they would forget ever having seen what they had seen. You see, they had seen the glint of the sun on the hood of the car and they had already discerned some movement in the trees, but they hadn’t reported it yet. I could see one of them starting to report, but he froze when he saw me. About the time I wondered if they were getting the message, if it was working, I sent them a message that the glint of the sun was just on some metallic trash that had been tossed on this hill. Then I heard them, I could actually hear them in my mind, say, ‘It was just some trash,’ and they flew away. There we were staring at each other and they didn’t see me! I ... I’ve never had anything like that happen ... ever.”

“Wow!” Shaul said. “The people that do know their God ... shall do what, what was that you said?”

“Exploits,” Muhammad said. He crawled over to Don and embraced him. Tears, horror, shock, fear, doubt, all melted away as the five hugged each other in turn, Don and Gypsy saying short prayers with each of their new little flock.

The Great Tribulation had begun in earnest, and the arms of the flood that would destroy many had begun. Yet at this moment they knew they were in the safest place to be, dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. Though a thousand should fall at their side and ten thousand at their right hand, no evil would befall them.

## **A DESERT PLACE APART**

The sky above the southern desert of the West Bank was void of enemy aircraft and silent save for the incessant buzz of flies. Now no adversary threatened except the blazing sun that beat down mercilessly on the little parked Peugeot with its five occupants standing stunned in the scorching heat gazing at the surreal scene of death and destruction stretching before them. The caravan of cars and people that had left the settlement so bravely to engage the enemy formed a charred landscape of twisted metal and burned flesh now. Each of the five took from their bags scarves or articles of clothing to wrap round their heads, covering their noses from the stench of death.

Don suggested, "Let's fan out through all this and see if there are any survivors."

Esther asked, "And what do we do with them if we find them? There's not any more room in the car."

"We'll take it step by step and the Lord will tell us what to do," Gypsy answered with a gentle pat on Esther's shoulder.

The others nodded and, as if in a dream, began to stumble among the wreckage, bending down to peer into and under each vehicle for any sign of life. It was hard enough to find a whole body, and no one really

expected to come across anyone still alive. The One World aircraft had done their job well. From the point on the hill where the little team in the Peugeot had stayed throughout the day yesterday, they had been able to hear attack after attack on the comparatively defenseless military convoy. No doubt the attack orders had included that there should be no survivors left to tell the tale. To this end, the site of the massacre had been chosen well—a straight road on a long, flat stretch of the desert with no cover, no trees, no riverbeds or gullies, no hills where there might have been sheltering rocks or caves. To reach what hills were visible in the distance meant crossing two or more miles of rugged, lunar-like terrain in the open. Some had tried, and their baking bodies a hundred or so meters from the road attested to just how futile their attempt had been.

The five pieced their way north from one car to the next. Gypsy stopped at the second to the last vehicle on the road, reeling from dizziness, the heat, and the horror of it all and prayed, *Jesus, precious Jesus, my Lover and friend, show us what all this is for. Why, Lord, have You allowed such destruction to happen, and right before our eyes, so our brand-new followers, babes still in the womb, not even spiritually born yet, have had to witness such a scene that could only hurt their faith in Your protection? Show us what You would have us do. It's one thing for us to see such a sight, but show us how we should react and what we should say to our little flock to calm their nerves. Do something to encourage them or show us what You would have us do. Please, Jesus, help us not fail You or them.*

That warm and loving, still small Voice sounded in her heart, saying, *Fear not, for nothing happens by accident. You have made no mistake nor taken any wrong turns. I do all things well and I know what I am*

*doing. It is but for you to stand back and see Me fight. There is nothing for you to do right now but look for survivors, and then react as I lead you to react. With this flock, as with the flocks you have led for years, it is good and encouraging that you show yourselves weak. Therefore try not to put on any show of courage that you don't possess, any intimation of wisdom that you don't have, any impression of faith that I have not given you. You shall know exactly what to do when the time comes to do anything. I shall give glorious victory in the middle of this scene of total defeat. I will increase you bit by bit and add to you daily. As the knights of old in David's vision of so long ago, I want you to know that, no matter how overloaded you feel, you are called to take under your wings those who are broken and crying for comfort, the wounded and weary soldiers and knights along the way. You are My good Samaritans; therefore never pass up an opportunity to help those in need, for this is only the beginning. This is just the beginning.*

*Mysterious*, Gypsy thought as she stooped down to confirm what she really already knew, that the four figures inside this little sedan were all dead. She looked up the road to the last vehicle, an APC very like the one that had picked them up on the road two days ago. *Could it be? Could it be the same one? And could it really be just two days ago? It seems like an eternity, yet it was only two days ago.* She squinted at the APC, its left wheels blown off and lying on its right side in twisted stillness. Just at that moment a faint cry reached Gypsy's ears, almost too faint to hear. Muhammad, crouching over a body to Gypsy's left, heard it too. Their eyes met, and they converged on the APC, scarce daring to breathe for fear they would drown out that faintest of sounds, the only human sound they had heard from this scene of total

destruction. Gypsy stood on tiptoes, trying to peer into the upturned cabin. The two dead bodies in the front seat quickly convinced her the sound was not from there. In the meantime Muhammad, grunting and growling, had managed to pry open the back door. They both heard it now distinctly! A gasp and a faint female whisper, saying in Hebrew, "Help me. Please help me."

By this time the others had joined them, and Shaul, Don, and Muhammad began to pull out the first body blocking the door.

Shaul spoke softly in Hebrew, assuring the young soldier that they would get her out, that she would be all right. Three bodies had to be removed before they dared attempt to carry her out, but finally Muhammad and Shaul had reached her and lifted her delicately out into the blazing sun. They lay her in the shadow of the truck and made her as comfortable as possible while Gypsy surveyed the damage done to her body. Her lower body seemed unharmed, as did her trunk and her left arm, but her right arm was nearly severed from her body at her shoulder, where fresh blood mixed with the dry. Gypsy's eyes met her searching look, her mouth opened to tell her that she would be all right, but that her right arm was badly wounded, when a shudder of recognition shot through her body. Deborah! Here lying before her was the soldier from the APC she had witnessed to on the way to the settlement! So it *was* the same vehicle! Since she herself had looked years younger when they had met, she could see Deborah did not recognize her. There would be time to explain later ... if she survived. Now other matters were primary in importance, and Frizzy was faithful to whisper instructions into Gypsy's heart, and she obeyed each order as it came. Don, Esther, Shaul, and Muhammad gazed in awe as Gypsy softly spoke to Deborah and

went to work doing the things her invisible coach was whispering in her heart.

*It's time for a miracle, hon. It ain't gonna be water into wine, but the effect'll be the same. It'll cause your new disciples to believe. Do what I say. That's all it's gonna take. Look into Deborah's eyes. Tell her she's gonna be all right. Go ahead. Do it. That's right. Tell her her arm's badly hurt, but it's gonna be fine. Good. She looked and sees it, knows it's almost cut off. Tell her that what you're gonna do next might hurt just a little, but don't worry. Okay, now take her elbow in your left hand, her wrist in your right and lift it back into place flush with the shoulder joint. Shhh, shhh, baby, it'll all be over in a second. Keep your eyes on her eyes so she'll know that dart of pain is all there's gonna be. Lay the arm gently down. Now ever so gently put both hands on that shoulder wound and pray. Pray these words: "Jesus, precious Jesus, I know You love Deborah. I know You can heal her and make her whole. You created her, You can heal her. Touch this arm, its muscles, its sinews, its nerves, its veins and arteries, its bone, its skin, and graft them back in place. We ask You right now for a miracle. Here where all is death and destruction, darkness and evil, I command by the power of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven that You let Your light shine that these may know that You are still in command, that in the end all shall be restored and peace shall reign, but it will be Your peace, not the fabricated peace of the world's leaders and the Chairman. In the Name of Jesus, heal this child and raise her up! Amen." Good job, sweetheart.*

Heat filled the air around Deborah, a heat that somehow cooled and refreshed those gathered about her. Deborah's eyes had squinted at first in pain as Gypsy had prayed. Now her eyelids relaxed, though still shut. It was as if a mist, half liquid, half gas, like

a gentle, healing ghost had flowed down her arm from her shoulder and over her whole body. It was hot but not the exhausting, debilitating heat of the desert sun, rather a life-giving heat. It fed her, quenched her thirst, replenished her storehouse of strength, poured in hope where there had been only an empty acceptance of imminent death. Her eyes opened and she studied the face of this strangely familiar lady, lips parted in a half smile, her eyes gleaming with expectation. Afraid to move, afraid to try that arm that had throbbed in ceaseless pain for nearly a full day now, afraid to believe that this new feeling meant her arm was whole again, she now moved only her eyes, from face to eager face. Was this death? Were these angels who had come to carry her away? The joy and dreamy delirium, the perfect peace she felt was like she had heard you felt at death. Yet these angels, if they were angels, despite their unmistakable glow, were smudged with red dirt mingled with the sweat that ran down their foreheads and faces. Their clothes were soiled and drenched with sweat. If angels, they were not what she had expected by any means. Her eyes returned to the lady who had prayed.

“Look. Look at your fingers,” Gypsy whispered.

She lifted her head just enough to see the fingers on her right hand move. Slowly, fearfully, her left hand reached across her body to touch first her fingers, then up her arm, and where there had been pain or numbness, her right arm now tingled with the feel of fingertips stroking it. Breathlessly she lifted her right elbow slightly from the hard ground, then her hand slowly, slowly followed. She touched her shoulder, the shoulder that she had accepted would never function again. It turned, pivoted, and lifted as well as it ever had. Her left fingers squeezed the joint, half expecting there to be at least a little pain, but there was none,

none whatever! A disbelieving gasp escaped her lips and she sat up, her fingers slipping inside the bloody tear in her shirt and feeling no wound, no pain, nothing but whole, unscarred flesh joining her arm to her shoulder. Speechless, her mouth agape, she tore away the shirt from her shoulder and, laughing and crying crazily, showed her saviors her arm and shoulder restored whole as the other.

The older lady and man grinned as they whispered emphatically, “Hallelujah! Praise God! Thank You Jesus!” The younger three, Deborah could see, were just as astonished as she. She and they stared almost in fear at each other. Their eyes darted from one to the other, not knowing what to feel, what to think, what to say. Emotion after emotion marched through her heart like a great and grand army on parade, showing all its units and artillery. Which was real? What should she latch onto? Fear? Awe? Joy? Unbelief? Ecstasy? Rejection? Now Gypsy and Don had lifted their hands, lifted their faces to the sky, and were shouting the praises they had at first merely whispered. Whatever it was they were doing, whatever they called it, that seemed the only appropriate reaction, so slowly the four raised their hands and began to whisper praises, awkwardly and hesitantly at first. But slowly, slowly, their voices grew stronger, till they were all shouting, praising, laughing, and weeping. How long none could say, but at last they all slowly lowered their arms and did what seemed the natural thing to do, they wrapped them around each other with broad smiles on their tear-stained faces.

Now a ripple of doubt flitted across Deborah’s face—doubt, wonder, or question. She made several starts before she managed the words, studying Gypsy and Don’s faces, each in turn. “You ... you called me by name ... when you prayed ... you called me by my

name. How did you know? Having seen the miracle that you just did, I would believe that you just knew or got it by ... by ... telepathy, is that what they call it? But there's something else ... I feel like I know you, like I've met you, but it can't be, because you remind me of someone I met just a few days ago who was ... was ... years younger. It's all so strange, like a dream. How can it be?"

Gypsy and Don looked at each other, smiled, nodded, and settled down in the shade on either side of Deborah, their arms around her. Don began, "It would be altogether possible for God to tell us your name by His still, small voice in our hearts, but that's not how it happened. You see, Deborah, we are those people you met a few days ago."

"But how!? I don't understand."

"What I'm going to tell you now will call for more than a leap of faith on your part," Gypsy continued. "We've been serving God for over three decades and what happened that day was greater than anything we had known up till that time. You see, we were headed for the settlement, and the Lord just chose to change us so we would appear a bit more normal-looking than if we had been a middle-aged couple out in the desert. You must admit that would have aroused more suspicion, and it would have been unlikely you would have let us go our own way to the settlement."

Deborah shook her head in amazement. "This is like nothing I have ever heard of before. This is like something out of the Bible."

"Indeed," Don said. "These days, in fact, are all foretold in the Bible thousands of years ago. We have three and a half years of this awful time ahead of us, but God is going to do for those who believe in Him and love Him mightier miracles than any of us have ever heard of and certainly seen. Like Jennifer said,

the things that have happened to us the last couple of days are far more amazing, far more wonderful than anything we've ever seen or known. And from all indications we've been getting from the Other World, it's only gonna get better as things get worse."

Esther broke in and said, "But in your prayer you prayed to Jesus. Does it have to be Him? Does it matter? Can't we just say God or ... or ... Allah?" She made a sidelong glance at Muhammad, hoping he noticed her deference to his deity. His eyes were on her.

Don and Gypsy studied the faces of their four young followers, and then glanced at each other. Slowly, each listening to their helpers from the spirit world, they nodded, yes, now was the time. Gypsy said, "It's like this. We here represent the three great religions of this region, the three main religions that believe in one almighty God. All our religions are looking for something great and grand to happen in these times. We're holding our breaths waiting for it. We Christians are waiting for Jesus to return, take away His believers, and make things right once and for all in the world. You Muslims, Muhammad, I understand, are waiting for something similar, the return of *Isa*, Jesus, peace be upon Him, to bring the hour of the world's judgment. And you who are Jews are waiting for the Messiah to reveal Himself and put things right. We can all realize our dreams. They are embodied in the One we called on to heal Deborah—Jesus, the Messiah. He doesn't demand you receive Him. He doesn't force Himself on you, and He'll even be patient while you give Him a try by asking Him to reveal Himself or just to come and live in your heart. It's like you don't have to buy the whole plate right now. You can take a taste by letting Jesus, if He's real, if He's here with us right now, if He really healed Deborah, come in and show Himself

to you. You can simply pray at this point that if He is real that He will reveal Himself to you and help you to believe. He has never minded being put to the test by an open, searching mind and heart.”

“But I know,” Deborah protested. “I know already. How many miracles do I need to see before I admit that He’s the Messiah? You two have been nothing but miracles for me. How could I still doubt?”

“I know too,” Muhammad said, “that Jesus is the Messiah Who is coming again. I will receive Him gladly.”

“Hell,” Esther said, “as hard as it is to accept one religion after rejecting the one I was born into, I can’t deny what we’ve seen the last few days. So, what the hell, why not? I’ll try. And I have a pretty good idea what’s gonna happen. I have a pretty good idea I’m gonna end up a ... well, like you, I mean not like you, like I think I’m gonna put arms back on or anything, but you know ... like you ... like you believe.”

Shaul’s brow was furrowed as he spoke. “I ... I ... don’t mean to offend anybody. I mean ... it sounds almost ridiculous ... I know ... to have any doubts, but I was ready to die for what I believed, and, well, it was such a disappointment. I guess that makes it a bigger deal for me to trade that in for something new, at least now, so soon after. So if that means I can’t stay with you anymore, well, I guess I’ll have to think of what to do next. I’m confused. I don’t think I’m ready even to ask Him, you know, to show me if He’s real.” His head dropped and he took a deep breath. Almost too softly to be heard, he said, “Maybe once we’ve gotten to where there are other people I could latch onto and travel with, I’ll just go, you know.”

“Shaul,” Gypsy said, squeezing his knee, “stay. Just stay. We love you. Stay with us on whatever terms you’re comfortable with.”

Without looking up, he patted Gypsy’s hand and rose with a half smile on his lips. Instinctively he knew to draw away while they prayed so no one would feel awkward on account of him. He muttered some words of excuse and ambled some fifty feet away, and stood quietly, his hands in his pockets, while the other three joined hands with Don and Gypsy and repeated the simple prayer to open their hearts to receive Jesus.

**PART III**  
**FOR THEN SHALL BE**  
**GREAT TRIBULATION**



## **MARDUKE'S COMEBACK**

Marduke, with Cliff (who had stayed with her out of a blend of motives, including a moronic type of loyalty, a lack of qualifications for any other line of work, and advanced age making it unlikely he could ever be hired as someone else's bodyguard or hit man), piloted her small craft over the rocky hills and dry riverbeds to the base of the tree-topped hillside in the distance. Her present mission was to find the Ward gang of the Family in their desert hideaway and destroy them for the Chairman. This, at last, was to be her great mission, the one she dreamed would put her back in favor and restore her to her former position and beyond if she had her way.

Archibald was now one of the Chairman's chief advisors on American affairs, and if she could somehow be restored to his favor, standing in his reflected glory would place her in a place of honor and power greater than she had ever known. A series of successful missions had helped her recently to climb from the position of mere "operative" to "enchantress"—but her goal was much higher.

She had received a tip that the Ward family had founded a desert village of rebels and dissident terrorists near her present location, and now she had only to find a suitable place to set down the craft. That would

not be too difficult since her craft was designed for maximum adaptability. It could be a jet, a helicopter, a glider, as well as a speedboat and a 4×4 vehicle, each equipped with rockets, machine guns, and a wide array of high-tech gadgets for modern warfare, surveillance, and protection. Now with a touch of a digital button the craft was transformed into a sleek, silent helicopter.

Cliff tapped her on the shoulder and pointed down to where there was a small sandy flat area large enough to land. A dry riverbed stood between the clearing and the hill that was their objective. She nodded and let the craft gently down on the ski-like runners that emerged from its underbelly, switched off the engine, and waited a moment while the blades slowed to a stop, and then retracted into the roof of the vessel. As they stepped out a safe distance from the craft she clicked the button on the key chain and could tell from the beep that the force field had gone up. Cliff knew his job and approached the plane to test the field. A full ten feet away he was repelled and unable to go any closer. The craft began to glow and pulsate, the sign that all its defenses were armed and ready to fend off any who might try to attack it or breach its perimeter. If anyone somehow managed to get through the force field and tamper with the craft itself, it would self-destruct in a mighty explosion that would destroy itself and anyone within 100 feet. Marduke was confident her craft would be safe in her absence.

She signaled Cliff that it was time for them to make their weapons and defense check before they set off through the woods to the top of the hill where intelligence had told her the Ward gang was currently holed up. It took them a few minutes to make sure of all their weaponry. On their persons they had a vast array of powerful yet portable weapons in holsters at their sides, strapped onto their boots, slung across

their backs, and concealed up their sleeves. Every place where a knife or gun or blaster or laser weapon could be hidden there was something, besides the very versatile rifles they held in their hands. Each of the digital weapons responded to their every move and in her case, to her every thought, connected as they were to the tiny state-of-the-art computer system that was sewn into the helmeted jumpsuit she wore. She had thought it better not to equip Cliff's suit or weapons with thought power capability, his mental discipline being what it was.

As she and her archenemies well knew, the chief weapons of their warfare were not physical for either side. They were now ready but for one final touch that would complete their defensive and offensive weaponry. Marduke nodded to Cliff who stepped back to the scrubby trees at the foot of the hill while she planted her legs firmly in the silt of the riverbed, her arms outstretched at shoulder height as far as she could reach and her head thrown back, eyes closed as she silently chanted the incantation that would bring the reinforcements needed for the mission.

Cliff trembled as the sky went dark, as the wind began to whip crazily round them in every direction. The great hulk of a man crouched like a baby curled up, his eyes squinted closed. He had no desire to see the great black whirlwind rising up out of the ground to surround Marduke, nor to behold the great demon head appear at the top just above her, nor to witness the row after row of demonic soldiers swarming out of the ground through the whirlwind to fill the earth and the air with their presence. First there were the fat, ugly, naked ones armed with what seemed to be primitive sticks, stones, flint knives, darts, and blowguns. These were so filthy-looking he could almost sense their stench with his physical nose.

They were followed by the Selvegion, the black elves with sharp teeth that had nearly destroyed the Family in the early years of the century through their sowing discord and division. They were an irreplaceable part of the arsenal in any major campaign against the Family.

Smooth, intelligent-looking men and women wearing capes followed after them. They carried no visible weapons. However, one could immediately sense from the look in their eyes that they were there for mental and spiritual warfare, that their task and forte was to disrupt the finely tuned channels their enemy was known to possess—the channels that made communications with their heavenly headquarters swift and crystal clear—and instead to sow confusion, fear and doubt, to seduce, deceive, and tempt. They were each astoundingly attractive and sexy in the leather-like body suits that could be seen under the capes clinging to every muscular or curvaceous inch of their toned and supple bodies. Like spiritual X-men, each possessed a power that was impossible to resist except by a miracle.

Now demon knights in shining black armor with a wide arsenal of black, shiny, spiky weapons marched out of the whirlwind, and last of all, ascended the captain of Marduke's forces, Ashkerran himself. He bowed to her with a show of respect and his characteristic look of disdain. There was neither love nor respect in their sector of the spirit world, nothing more than a bond of selfish desires, personal goals, and rebellion against the Creator. There was not even any concept of loyalty to any but oneself. Nor were there any in this realm who longed for or missed such attributes, for they were considered weaknesses, the main chink in Christian armor, the main weakness in Christian plans for the world.

Ashkerran nodded first to Marduke that they were ready and then to his forces who on order took to the air just above Marduke and Cliff's heads. The whirlwind curled back into the ground, leaving a mere wispy black trail fading slowly from view. Only then did Cliff stand up from his crouched position to look in Marduke's direction, carefully avoiding looking above his own eye level, for fear of the assisting minions that hovered above them.

Marduke took the lead and, aided by the jets in her boots, lifted gently from the sand to just above tree height, followed by Cliff. Their hellish host stayed just above their heads. As they hovered above the trees, Marduke scanned the horizon till she saw a thin curl of smoke rising from what looked like a clearing about a mile to the west. Leaving Cliff hovering just over the treetops, she rose higher to where she could get a better look through the high-powered binoculars in her helmet, which snapped into place before her eyes at the mere thought that she needed a closer look. She could see the roof of a simple house, from where the smoke was rising. Looking over the treetops, she could just make out the heads of people going about their business in the clearing. Though she could not make out exactly who they were, she could see that there were a few Caucasian heads among the people in the village. They had successfully found the lair of her enemies! They would soon engage and destroy their unsuspecting targets!

The binoculars snapped back into her helmet and she motioned Cliff to follow as she raced toward her goal, readying her automatic rifle as she flew, now again just above the treetops. The full-face visor descended from their helmets before both their faces as they approached the clearing. With the visor on they had all the visibility perks needed to wage high-tech warfare—rearview mir-

rors, heat sensors, communications devices, sensitive microphones, as well as detectors that could sense all manner of danger, including bombs, mines, other explosives, radiation, poisons, and much more. With the visor on, the suit had the capability to even take over and fire if their own reactions were too slow or they were preoccupied with fighting one enemy, while another came attacking from behind. Marduke was confident they were now truly invincible.

Just short of the clearing they stopped, hovering in the air while the Confusion Squad of caped demons and black elves went on ahead like a spiritual artillery barrage to prepare the way by sowing discord, dissension, confusion, doubt, and discontent, while distracting these rebels from communicating with their Headquarters. There was nothing for Marduke to do now but wait. She could read the progress report that appeared on the screen in the upper right hand corner of her visor, and from there know when it was time for them to go in. The Confusion Squad was also sending her the information of where the main targets were, namely Don and Gypsy.

There they were now, identified on her visor as blue silhouettes seen right through the walls of the central cabin in the clearing. She could see the others in the encampment who were behind walls as green silhouettes and she counted about forty, about half children. It looked like things were going to be easier than she thought. There was no sign of any kind of weaponry except, of course, the so-called "new weapons," which from what they had been able to ascertain were mainly gifts of knowing the future and hearing from their God. Obviously this gift was not being utilized now, since they seemed totally ignorant of her approach and their impending defeat and demise.

In the center of the clearing, where had been

erected a makeshift playground, a fight broke out between two of the children, other children joining in while several caregivers went to break them up. The children shouted accusations at each other until the mothers came as well, joining in the argument over who was at fault. On her visor, as nearly half the village gathered to see what was happening with the children, appeared red outlines that intensified by the second around the main antagonists, indicating the degree of their emotions. Don was coming now with an orange glow about him. The moment was almost upon them. The camp was totally distracted by internal discord and oblivious to the danger from without. But where was Gypsy?

Ah, there! Perfect! Her silhouetted form had moved to the forest further to the north, alone, and, from the purple glow round her form, Marduke knew she was deeply discouraged about something. The Confusion Squad had obviously done their job well and their targets were easy prey. Marduke whispered into the microphone in her helmet to Cliff that he was to position himself to be ready to open fire on the central clearing in a few moments, taking out Don first and then destroying as many as he could, while she went north to the forest to confront Gypsy. He nodded and readied his rifle, understanding he would wait for her final signal from the north before firing.

Marduke then flew slowly round the clearing to the north edge of the forest where Gypsy's now very purple silhouette could be seen on her knees, performing a ritual of prayer. Once positioned just above and to the south of the praying form, she gave the signal for firing to commence and dived down to the ground in the forest behind a tall tree mere feet away from Gypsy. She wanted to see her face to face. She wanted to look into her eyes as she killed her.

Now she could see Gypsy's head jerk up as a burst of gunfire shattered the comparative peace and silence. The rebel leader leapt to her feet and started back from the clearing along a path to Marduke's right, and ran past her to the camp. Just at that moment Marduke opened fire with her powerful rifle, and a branch crashed down in front of Gypsy. Gypsy stopped in alarm as Marduke stepped out from behind her tree in full view. Marduke pulled her helmet off, revealing her face to her enemy.

Gypsy stood braced, facing her, recognition slowly dawning on her. She gasped, "You!!"

"Yes, I am here at last, to even the score, my pretty." She could see Gypsy was disoriented and disarmed, not only physically, but that, due to the discouragement she had been struggling with, she was having difficulty gathering her senses as to what to do. Marduke knew she could just kill her outright, yet an evil desire to see her suffer, to see her frightened, to make her pay a little longer for the years Marduke had lost, caused Marduke to prolong the moment. "Aren't you going to run?"

Gypsy looked left, then right, then bolted back toward the village clearing. Marduke let out a burst of fire above, before and behind her. Branches fell in her path once more, yet she struggled falteringly through them. Marduke followed her into the clearing where she could see from the bodies strewn everywhere that Cliff had done his job well. Gypsy ran in a zigzag motion from cabin to cabin looking for survivors. She scooped up one crying baby in her arms before coming to a sudden shocked halt at the sight of Don, lying prostrate in a pool of blood between two cabins.

Quickly discerning he was still and lifeless, she spun about to meet Marduke. Even without her helmet and visor, Marduke could see the red glow around

her small figure and shot into the air with the jets on her boots just as fire issued forth from her enemy's mouth. Gypsy's arm shot up and some kind of laser beam followed, but again Marduke was too fast for her. She was anticipating her every move and dodged, firing at the same time, hitting her target squarely in the arm she had tried to zap her with. Gypsy winced in pain as her right arm flopped useless at her side, blood gushing from her shoulder.

With a baby in her left arm and her right arm useless, she was nearly defenseless, so she dashed into a cabin and emerged from the back minus the baby. She seemed to be fleeing in retreat back to the forest when suddenly, turning to Marduke, she breathed fire once more. Marduke was caught unawares but managed to dodge the worst of the tongue of flame by flying upward. However the flames hit the jet on her left boot, melting it. Marduke, with only one jet, careened madly to the left, forcing her to turn her jet off and drop with a thump to the ground, unable now to take to the air. Another blast of flame burst from Gypsy's mouth, its fiery tongue licking Marduke's back as she rolled away. She stood up, thankful for the suit that had protected her from even feeling the flames. Cliff had now joined her in the clearing and she motioned him to back off, that this was to be her victory alone. That moment of distraction cost dearly though and the laser beam from Gypsy's left hand burned Cliff beyond recognition.

Marduke stood alone now with this one she had hated for decades, this one, so soft, so feminine, so sweet, so loving, representing everything Christian, everything despicable, and now she was going to destroy her. She longed to prolong the moment, to taste the sweetness of victory as long as possible. But she could see that Gypsy was about to cry out

to her God, to the Nazarene for reinforcements, so she shouted first, "Ashkerran, guard me!" and shot Gypsy's right leg from under her. She now approached the wincing, wounded figure at the edge of the forest, and just as a prayer began to form on the lips of her adversary, Marduke fired a bullet squarely into her face, followed by a final one into her heart.

The faint cry of the baby in the cabin was the only sound now, but it was soon joined by another sound, a ringing sound, four or five rings in the distant background, then muffled voices and a more distinct voice: "Marduke, it's for you. ... The phone's for you."

Pulling the virtual reality goggles off her head with a sigh, she turned to Cliff standing at the door. "Who is it?"

He answered, "Archibald."

"Perfect," she said as she left her VR room and headed for the lounge to take the phone. "Shut down the program, will you, Cliff?"

"Yes, Marduke."

She relaxed first in the deep sofa next to the phone, breathed a silent wish, and picked up the receiver. "Hello, Archibald, so good to hear from you."

"And you too, dahling. It *has* been a long time, hasn't it? How have you been keeping yourself?"

Small talk to make her think he was not as excited as he really was about what he had heard about the latest program she had developed, totally compatible with the UC, the Universal Chip. "Oh, I've managed to stay busy with a little here, a little there."

"Wonderful, just wonderful." Pause.

"Did you get my e-mail report?"

"Yes, yes, I did."

"Well?"

"It was very interesting, very interesting indeed. As a matter of fact, that's why I'm calling you."

"Oh, really? Well. What can I do for you?"

"We, the Minister and I, were wondering if you could join us here in New York for a demonstration of your new program. What's it called again?"

"Well, the basic game is called *Search and Destroy*, but it's much more than a game, Archie."

"We understood that, Marduke, and what interests us most are those ... shall we say, additional features. Let's see now, can you meet us in four days, Wednesday morning at ten, in my suite at the Waldorf Astoria?"

"Yes, I'll be there."

"Good, dahling, we look forward to seeing you then. Ta, sweetheart."

"Ciao, Archibald." She slowly hung up the phone and breathed, "I'm back!"

Cliff was standing at the door, having shut down the game and the computer.

"Cliff, you really have to learn to stay more alert when playing."

"Yes, Marduke."

"It's one thing now when the game's in the development stage, but ... well, further down the line, it will be a bit more important to stay on your toes."

"Yes, Marduke."

She chose not to confide any more than she had to in Cliff, but allowed herself to think of the fantastic potential of the game once it was fully integrated into the UC program, linked up to the Cyber Chairman in Jerusalem, how with one command from the Central Brain the game could become reality for the person playing if they had the chip in their forehead. She could just imagine how millions would flock to receive the forehead chip or to upgrade from the hand chip once they knew that it included her free program. The program could be used for the game or just for taking trips to anywhere in the world since she had

programmed it to include every clime, every culture, every terrain, and every city in the world. Museums, shows, exotic places could be visited. Someone of the lower classes could experience the life of the rich leisure class. The lonely and solitary could have safe sex with the most beautiful women and handsome men in the world. Someone with an unhappy marriage and home life could create another world and family that would be more to his or her liking. The possibilities were endless! It would become the ultimate escapism, and she, Marduke, had developed it! This was her ticket back! Her greatest hour was yet to be.

She knew full well that the best feature of all, the most attractive to the Chairman and his Cabinet, was the ultra-secret Execution feature. Now with the vast majority of the world opposed to capital punishment, here was a way to execute criminals and those whose lives posed a threat to the New World Order, and yet make it look like natural causes. She knew she had been inspired and that His Satanic Majesty looked down on her with favor. No doubt he would also soon give her the opportunity to destroy those who had destroyed her, to even the score at last. Closing her eyes, she relived the terror she saw in Gypsy's face those last moments of the game. Judy ... Collin ... Lenny ... and many more ... but wasn't it a shame Will was out of her reach?

Wally nodded to Will, and said, "It's time to go. Seen enough?"

"Yeah, too much," Will said as they hovered in the air above Marduke. "Disgusting!"

"Don't worry. Just like Haman, she's built her own gallows."

- 2 -

## **BUT NOT BY HIS OWN POWER**

The decree had gone out from the new Caesar that all the world should worship him, and, as many of his cabinet had suspected in that fateful moment when the decision was made, it was, in fact, premature. Of a certainty, there were billions who embraced the new "deity" wholeheartedly—the hardened, unbelieving West. Russia, China, and other atheistic peoples saw the arrangement as a purely political one, with "god" simply being a new title akin to king, president, or prime minister—and one that perfectly fit this man who had shown himself worthy to be above all others both politically, financially, and religiously. Other polytheistic religions had no problem adding one more name to their pantheon. And so it was not long before most of the governments of Europe, Russia, China, Australia, Japan, several nations in lower Africa, and other smaller nations and principalities here and there had subscribed themselves into the Chairman's New Improved World Order, along with many hidden splinter-groups of support in the most vociferously opposed nations—and the Chairman himself was deceived into thinking that the world was now truly his.

There was now no force on earth that could stand against him, as the Bible had predicted. True, there had never been an empire as mighty and as far-

reaching as his, but the opposition to his rule was so formidable—including the entire Muslim world, most of the Americas, a sizeable number of small, devout nations dotted round the globe, and many nagging pockets of resistance even within the nations loyal to him—that it kept him busy day and night, kept him from being able to fulfill his promises of peace and safety for the world, so busy was he fighting one brushfire war or political uprising after another.

But the demonstrations against globalization that had died down during his first three and a half years were now ignited in force not only in the Americas but also right in his very stronghold of Europe, so there were mass demonstrations right outside the offices where the Mark was being administered. All the nations of South and Central America except one or two large, rich ones that had already been thoroughly taken over, refused to cooperate. The militias and survivalists in America and Canada were fortifying and arming themselves for what they knew was coming, and there was still opposition in the U.S. Congress to renewed gun control laws, so his master plan for the survivalists was going slower than anticipated.

It was not that any one of these forces was powerful enough to pose a threat in itself. They were more like pestering mosquitoes or flies that entered into all the unexpected places through holes in the screen. As fast as one hole was mended, another would appear and the pests would swarm in. There wasn't a day that a report did not reach the Chairman's office that these pests had struck somewhere new, had protested, had attacked. Though the laws were now in place to deal with each of them summarily, the Minister and his cabinet cautioned him to proceed slowly, to handle peaceful protest and even rioting carefully.

One fact stood out to the Chairman and Minister: If there was no independent media present at the time, and they had to use forceful measures to crush their opposition, there was no hindrance to their publishing whatever story about the incident they deemed most helpful to the Cause. Therefore in the name of international security and as a "temporary" emergency measure, all the publications or broadcast facilities of questionable loyalties within the covenanted nations were closed. Now, the Chairman felt assured, he could get on with his vital work in the dark, with none to behold.

Then it was that news began to come to the ears of the Chairman and the Minister of strange plagues afflicting many of his best people. Politicians who were expected to make pivotal speeches would call in that they were unable to leave their quarters due to itchy scabs covering large parts of their bodies. Scientists who were engaged in vital experiments needed for the furtherance of the New World Order would be incapacitated by an unknown strain of flu that resisted all medication. Top people who were needed to deal with resistance forces had to be diverted to searching for means of finding and purifying water sources in places where all the water in the wells, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs had suddenly turned red and begun to wreak of putrefaction.

And finally, the unkindest cut of all, the repeated occurrence of religious fanatics suddenly invading major media events from nowhere to proclaim their message live on radio and television.

The Minister was away in the U.S. trying to consolidate their hold in that part of the world while also addressing the United Nations and dealing with a good bit of other business, including an exciting new



technological development in the computer industry by a has-been witch named Marduke who was trying to make a comeback. The Chairman was in constant videophone contact with his most intimate adviser, but now for the first time since their government had been set up here in Jerusalem, he was on his own without the Minister, and he missed him.

He wished the Minister could be here to discuss things with before the speech today. In just a half-hour he was to step out onto the balcony of his headquarter-temple that had been erected in a semi-circle behind the giant Cyber Chairman, as it was now affectionately called. He was to announce the victory that had been won in the mopping up of the terrorist, dissident forces throughout Israel and of the ongoing victories throughout the world. There were new things he would be revealing now before the worldwide television audience that would change the course of history forever, that would finally make the break with the dead past of religious worship, that would draw a line in the sand and challenge the people to choose once and for all which side they were on.

It was an exciting, thrilling moment for the Chairman, yet he wished the Minister could be here with him to enjoy it, to bask in his glory, to encourage him that they were invincible, that none could stand against them, that even the gods in their heavens were powerless against him, for there had never been nor never would be another so wise, so brilliant, so powerful as he. He truly was the savior, a real savior with benefits everyone could see, feel, and have. This was true salvation. He wished his dear, dear friend could have been here to tell him those things now as he made his last preparations for the speech. He could see him, he could hear him by videophone,

but he wished they could touch with that touch that was so reassuring.

He stood alone and lonely and far too human there in the dark of his private room just off the immense hall that led to the grand balcony. The mighty evil spirit that had taken control of his body and soul determined now was the time to take the last corner of the Chairman's heart. In agitation the Chairman began to pace the room, to clench his fists, to murmur a kind of chant, an incantation he had never known before which rose of its own accord from his bowels, through his throat, out his mouth. His volume slowly increased as his pace accelerated and his clenching grew tighter and tighter, whitening his knuckles.

A surge of power greater than he had ever known—and he had known some great surges these last few weeks—rose from his toes, up his legs to his groin. Here was the answer to the cry of his heart for assurance. But it was not to be as he had expected. As the power increased, he could tell this power was not a power within him but a force against him, like a wrestler's death grip. His heart and soul momentarily fought against yielding totally, but he felt his own soul and spirit pinned down. As he felt a kind of strangulation grip him, he saw the eyes of him he had served faithfully all these years. He saw this present match was unto the death, that nothing short of full control would satisfy his benefactor who had now become his opponent, his enemy, his nemesis. He cried out and struggled, clutching his neck. The very fingers he hoped would set him free now closed on his throat, tighter and tighter. The feet he hoped to use to flee from his adversary stepped in front of the full-length mirror.

With shock he saw his own face grinning sardonically as his own fingers strangled himself. In terror he

watched himself go red, then blue, then purple, yet the grin remained. He felt himself pushed to the ground and beneath, into a dark dank tomb. The last he saw before he was consigned to the imprisonment that was his fate, his earthly body glowed and pulsed. The chest that was no longer his expanded and contracted like the deep breathing of a great monster. And now, as Lucifer stared into his own eyes in the mirror, the final surge reached the crown of his head. He was at last incarnate, and could finally claim his “rightful” place as king of the world! A broad, white-fanged grin spread across the triumphant face in the mirror. His destiny was complete.

Lucifer stood before the mirror in full triumph and breathed, “Now is my kingdom! Now is the hour of darkness! Now I will claim full control over the entire globe and root out, once and for all, all those who would oppose me!”

The erstwhile Chairman in his ghostly prison cell now knew that he himself was the most hopeless of prisoners, now knew that he had forfeited to his master what no earthly warden could ever require of his captives, and nothing, not his body, not his mind, not his soul, nor his will or any glory, belonged to him. From his deep spiritual dungeon, he now realized the glory he had sold all for would never be his. He was now a castoff. There would be no mercy on the earth for its pitiful inhabitants and none for him.

Lucifer grimly adjusted his collar and the cape draped over his broad shoulders and determined it was now time. The Book, the despised Book, said he had only a little more than three years left before he would be destroyed by the power of the Nazarene. In his heart he felt certain that if he could move faster than expected, if he could consolidate his kingdom and destroy all his enemies faster than expected, there

would be nothing left for the Nazarene to return to, none of His children left alive on earth. He would do them the favor of liberating them from this world to go on to a better one as they always dreamed of. Then the “Almighty” could just take them all and start a new world just for them and leave him with this one planet. Didn’t the Almighty only descend where he was wanted, where he was invited? What if there was no one left who wanted him? What if there was no one left to reach or save? What if all had wholeheartedly declared allegiance to him, Lucifer, the Chairman? Would that not rewrite the Book? Would that not change the way things would turn out? The only way to know was to try. He had come down having great wrath, to utterly make away many, to utterly vanquish anything that stood in his way. He had the means to do it now; he could feel it in himself—his body, his mind, his intellect, his spiritual powers were all honed to the finest degree. Surely now he would be victorious. Millions would cry out to him, bow down to him, and proclaim him god. This, the thing he had longed for since those awful, awful days of subservience in the Halls of Heaven, bearing the light and always hearing the praises of the Almighty, of the Merciful, of the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent while having to pass all credit for what he did on to God. No, now it was his turn and he would have his hour, and make it last forever!

He was interrupted by a soft knocking at the door of his chamber. Only now did he hear the sound of the crowd gathered below, clamoring to see him, to hear him, to behold his glory. With a tug to adjust his clothes to perfection, and a nod of confidence in the mirror, he turned to the door and swung it open.

The little man standing there opened his mouth as if to speak. His eyes widened, as he somehow knew

that there had been yet another profound change in the man he served. The Chairman's gaze pierced his eyes until, almost involuntarily, rather than making the standing bow his followers had been used to making, the man at his door fell to one knee and lowered his gaze to the floor.

"Your Eminence, all is ready for your appearance," he whispered in awe. The Chairman brushed past him, pulling his cape in, and entered the antechamber where all his aides awaited his arrival.

He wondered if all would react as the little man had, and, to his satisfaction, every man and woman in the room stood for a split second speechless with mouths agape before falling to one knee before him. Yes, it was real, he had achieved godhead and everyone could see him for what he was: the only remaining power on this earth worthy of worship. Now he stood before the double doors onto the long balcony as the music began to play, paused to give the music the chance to have its effect, then nodded to the two doormen who swung the doors open as he stepped into the sunlight of the Jerusalem afternoon.

At first sight of him a great roar went up, that stopped in mid-roar suddenly, simultaneously and unanimously. Then, in due reverence, every knee below bowed to him and remained in that position, bent over, heads bowed. They each somehow knew it was their duty to remain so until it was indicated that they should rise or look up or whatever their new god asked of them. He was enjoying the moment, this moment he had longed for for thousands of years, to feel the adoration of mankind, to feel their total trust that he had the power to give them what they wanted, to know that they loved him more than they had ever loved anyone. Now, this moment, his eternal goal had been reached—the worship of mankind, to be

the servant no longer but to be the master with none to answer to but himself. And as he stared down at the pitiful masses groveling at his feet, he wondered how God could love them. Look at them! So weak, so helpless, so stupid! He owed them nothing, they owed him everything and he would ask it of them and they would gladly give it just to be near him.

## **A HEAVENLY BRIEFING**

“Frizzy, where am I?” Gypsy’s voice echoed in the great void she found herself in, where she could see no floor, no ceiling, no walls—nothing but smoke or clouds or fog, she knew not what.

“That doesn’t matter right now, baby,” Frizzy whispered with an excited, breathless grin on her face. “I’ve got some people for you to meet here and a mission to embark on that will be like nothing you’ve ever known before.”

“Ha!” Gypsy laughed. “That’s sure become the story of my life the last few days. Nothing’s the same anymore except...”

“Yeah, except Him, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. Come, take my hand. They’re expecting us.” Dreamily Gypsy put her hand into Frizzy’s and followed her submissively toward the right. As they walked, a small group of people became visible waiting there. Other small groups converged on the stationary group she had first seen. As the small group became larger, one figure in particular turned toward them as they approached and shouted, “Gypsy!” and began to run in their direction.

Frizzy winked and said, “Get ready for the surprise of your life, sweetie.”

Gypsy gasped as she saw from his long, flowing blonde hair, and trim physique that it could be none other than Will, her mysterious nocturnal visitor from several years back. With a delighted scream and uncontrolled laughter, she broke from Frizzy and ran to throw herself into Will's arms. He swung her 'round and 'round, staring deep into her eyes. Everything else faded far into the background as they each took in the souls of the other through those bright windows, the eyes. So he *had* been there for real that night in Africa. So he had died. So he had helped John escape from Marduke's clutches. So he had been working ever since for the winning Kingdom. All this she knew from their eye contact. She had so much to tell him, so many questions she wanted to ask, but all she knew to do was kiss his lips tenderly, hoping he would know thereby that she loved and appreciated him, and that she was happy for his being on her side now. The kiss lingered, and slowly, reluctantly, he let her down and even slower broke away from her soft, inviting lips that seemed to promise more than could be given at the moment.

He looked into her eyes and whispered, "Wow!"

"Wow!" she whispered back. "It ... it's good to see you, Will."

"And you too, Gypsy. My God, you're gorgeous."

"No, no, I'm not. Not really."

"Yes, yes, you are. Up here you are and everyone is, because here all the trials and worries and fears just melt away and we see each other for the perfection God gave us to begin with, but then hid just a little to help us walk by faith and stay humble. So, yes, Gypsy, you are beautiful. You are desirable. And I can't tell you how long I have dreamed of being able to see you again and thank you that you had the faith to write me, to feed me, to pray for me, that you had the faith to pray for John and believe that vision in the night."

There was so much more he wanted to say to her, but he sensed it would not be best while she was still in earthly form, with an earthly job to do, to tell her the love he felt for her, equal to what he felt for Judy, yet different.

Just then the others came into focus—Frizzy, Wally, Mantor, Lucretia, and a host of others. Will introduced these and she kissed and squeezed each one, thanking them for all they had done for John. Then they turned to see a tall, stately Spanish knight approaching with someone by the hand who looked as bewildered as she must have some moments ago.

*Could it be?* Gypsy wondered, flashing back to that day so many many years ago when she had been crossing the university campus. The walk hadn't changed, that lumbering, gangly walk. It was! It was! Lenny!

"Lenny!" she cried out and rushed to meet him, but stopped short just before him as their eyes met. She could tell that he, like she, was still alive and active on earth, that he didn't know if he was dreaming or what, that he didn't know how to react to meeting his love of long ago.

He just stared in dumfounded amazement and whispered, "Gypsy?"

She nodded.

"But ... but ... how?"

"I don't know. I just know it's good to see you."

"Yeah, it sure is." He put out his hand, not sure whether to hug, kiss, shake hands, or what. But, with a little laugh, his companion gave him a little shove that sent him off-balance into Gypsy's arms. The warmth of her little body calmed his bewildered mind and heart, and he returned her hug with a love that had only grown over thirty years' time. "Oh, Gypsy, it's great to see you. I don't understand anything, but I

never forgot you. You were always one of the greatest loves of my life and always will be.”

“Wow, I thought you were tongue-tied, but you sure found your tongue fast enough.” Gypsy laughed. Then she nodded and said, “Yeah, you’ll always be there too, Lenny,” as she patted her heart. “I owe it all to you.”

“Okay,” Wally said, “we need to explain what this is all about. We don’t have all day, so we’d better get started.” He paused and looked around at all the heavenly helpers, “Pardon the expression, I know time is no more to us, but these guys are still on an earthly schedule and the Chairman’s speech has already started, so we don’t have all day, like I said.” Everyone gathered in a circle around Wally who was obviously in charge. He instructed Gypsy and Lenny to close their eyes and listen with their hearts, that it would go much faster that way.

And so it was. In a combination of pictures, words, impressions, and feelings, it was explained to Lenny and Gypsy why they were here, what they were to do, where they were to go, what they were to say, everything except why they of all people were chosen. They knew now was not the time to ask that, now they just had to take it by faith.

It seemed like an eternity and a split second both, and neither of them could say which it was by the time they opened their eyes and stared across the circle. They were each robed in red sackcloth, ashes on their foreheads and rods in their hands. With a gasp she turned to Wally and saw he understood her unspoken question. *Does this mean we’re the two last witnesses?*

His thoughts in her mind told her, *It means you are two of the last witnesses.* That’s all he said and no more. Then he nodded that it was time to go.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly the void around them began to take shape. First, they could see beneath their feet a pavement of huge, ancient stones, polished shiny and smooth by millions of feet walking over them for over a thousand years. Next, the blue sky and hot sun came into focus, then a huge courtyard surrounded by a low stone wall. Finally, they could see they were standing in the midst of a crowd of people facing the great image of the Chairman, the Abomination, and beside it, on the balcony of the Chairman’s new headquarters, could be seen the tiny figure of a man, his booming voice being broadcast over the square and into all the world via the air waves. The Chairman himself! They had materialized right under his nose, in his very courtyard before the Image! A shudder shook Gypsy’s body until she cast her gaze firmly on the Chairman on the balcony. At once she knew only the frame was the Chairman, that all had been claimed by Satan himself, and she knew he was a pitiful, helpless foe who was being allowed his tiny moment in the sun before his ignominious defeat. To fear him would be to mock the Almighty.

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## **STAND AND SPEAK IN THE TEMPLE**

Without looking at each other, on cue from their heavenly helpers, Gypsy and Lenny slowly walked at a diagonal of forty-five degrees away from each other and closer to the balcony and the image. The sea of people parted before them, leaving the way clear. As they passed through the crowd, those around them stared in wonder, forgetting the speech, whispering to each other. A hubbub built up, louder and louder, involving more and more people as they passed further, heading toward the front. Now, as they were crossing the final stretch of the great square, it was clear to Lenny and Gypsy they had been seen by the Chairman himself. He had paused in his speech and turned to his aides on the balcony to whisper something. Frenzied guards were looking about anxiously for instructions as to what they should do. There was no doubt that these people were different and likely dangerous somehow, but so far they had done nothing wrong except walk forward. The guards were urgently barking into their headsets for instructions, but nothing could be heard but static. The sound system that the Chairman now turned to speak through began to break up with great crackling sounds and the whine of feedback, causing

all to stuff their fingers in their ears. Officers waved their arms wildly to the guards, signaling to stop these strange intruders.

Now Gypsy and Lenny, having reached the halfway mark between the Image and the Chairman, standing on opposite sides of the square from each other, turned and faced each other for the first time. In unison they raised their rods as high in the air as their arms could reach and brought them squarely onto the pavement, shouting with supernatural strength, "WOE!" The sound of the rod and their voices emanated over the speaker system for all to hear.

Lenny turned to the balcony and shouted for all to hear in perfect clarity over the great speakers throughout the court yard, "This man who stands before you is he who was prophesied years ago, who would come as an impostor and deceiver from the depths of Hell to steal your hearts away from the one true God. He is a liar and the father of lies. He is Satan in the flesh. Deny him. Refuse him. Receive not his mark. Worship him not, for his steps are the steps to Hell."

The guards by now had managed to struggle through the crowd, and five soldiers descended on Lenny, weapons pointed, beckoning him to stop talking and go with them. Lenny looked round at the soldiers, one by one, making sure to make eye contact with each. He smiled and vanished!

Before any of the guards could gather their wits about them, Gypsy slammed her rod to the pavement and continued, "Those who follow this devil in disguise shall reap the wrath of Almighty God. Spurn this impostor! Drop out of his system and cry out to God, the one true God Who shall gather you as lost lambs into His fold and in His arms. Wherever you are, God will find you, will save you. He knows you, He loves

you." Her mouth shouted out the warning without her thoughts even interfering. There was no effort on her part at all, no wondering what to say next, how to say it, how to look, none of those self-conscious distractions disturbed her at all, for God was in complete control with the ultimate of full possession and heavenly thought power. Then as she mused on this freedom, she noticed she could hear her own voice broadcasting over the PA system, sometimes in English, sometimes in Arabic, sometimes in Hebrew, and in other languages she didn't even recognize. Could it really be? That God was translating her voice into any language needed, depending on who was listening? How could everyone here and throughout the world hear her in his own language at the same time? Well, of course, with God nothing shall be impossible. Obviously the networks would not be translating her speech, so God had to take complete control of not only their PA system but of the running translation as well.

A sudden heavy hand on her right arm and then another on her left jolted her back to reality. She looked into the eyes of one of the soldiers grabbing her. Deep in his eyes she saw the poor family he was struggling to support through his small salary in the army, saw the pitifully handicapped child who needed continual expensive medication just to keep him barely alive, saw the fear and desperation in the man's face, and she smiled with a tear in her eye. His grip loosened and he stepped back. She touched his cheek gently, and whispered, "Believe, just believe," and vanished.

"Nothing can defeat God's true believers," Lenny shouted as he reappeared on the west wall above the crowd. "Nothing can stop those who trust in the true and living God. This man, the Chairman, is a fool, a clown, a puny excuse for a leader, for he has challenged God and shall live to rue the day he did



so. He shall be destroyed by the sword that proceeds out of the mouth of Jesus Christ when He returns again on yonder hill”—and his arm flung out to point with his rod to the Mount of Olives to the east. “I say unto you, do not receive the chip in your hand or in your forehead, for it is the Mark of the Beast that was foretold two thousand years ago, and it means death to those who receive it and worship the Chairman, the Beast, and follow his Abomination, this evil image that stands even now before you, pretending to be your savior. It is no savior. It is your enemy created by him who hates you and wishes to see every one of you killed or enslaved. I speak of Satan, that old deceiver, who now dwells in this evil yet pitiful man”—his arm flung a quarter circle to point to the Chairman who was raging on the balcony, screaming words no one could hear—“the Antichrist! May God damn him and set you free from his diabolical clutches!!”

With a roar the Image came to life and swiveled on its stand to stare down at Lenny, its beady digital eyes glowing red. Lenny saw what was to come and according to the instructions Rodrigo was whispering to him, stood still with his feet wide apart and his arms clutching the rod raised like a shield between him and the Image. And none too soon, for just then from those eyes shot out two razor sharp laser beams aimed directly at his head and torso. Sparks flew over the crowd as the beams were blocked, and then broke apart in midair right in front of the rod. Lenny’s hair whipped in the wind, his arms and legs tensed with supernatural power, his face glowed with a look of triumph, the glow of a victorious battle warrior. He knew now without a doubt that there was no power that could stand against them in these Last Days. Here he stood in the last place on earth anyone would choose to be, and yet he was as safe as if he were at home in

bed. Nothing could touch him. Now out of the corner of his eyes he could see Gypsy had reappeared and was kneeling beside him, like a modern-day Joan of Arc, her eyes cast heavenward. Her rod lay straight out in front of her bended knees, her hands were raised to Heaven as she prayed, laser sparks showering her with an unearthly aura of light.

“Jesus, Lover of all loves, open the hearts of Your children here to see the truth. Give them the courage to stand strong in the power of the keys and to resist the evil that holds sway in this world in its last dark days. Have mercy. Please, sweet Jesus, have mercy.” Her voice broke and tears began to flow. She struggled to continue, but could only weep and barely choke out, “Please, Jesus ... show them ... Your love. ... Give them ... a chance.” She begged the Lord to help her stop crying so she could get out the message clearly, and He reminded her—yes, He, not Frizzy this time—reminded her that her tears would be her witness. These people had heard persuasive words, powerful words from the Chairman for so long, now they needed to see a demonstration of the Spirit of love and of true power.

Weeping, Gypsy stepped down the stone steps from the wall to the courtyard. She began to walk among the people, touching them, pleading through cascading tears, “Please ... please ... He loves you. ... Jesus is the truth. ... God loves you. ... Please believe.”

The people initially backed off in fear of being near her, but soon the irresistible web of love drew them in. Their hungry eyes begged to feed from hers, their longing fingers to feel the flow of power from her frail little hands, and those who touched, those who saw, instinctively knew to turn away and quickly disappear back into the crowd, carrying something with them that they could never, would never forget. It was

different for each one—for some it was the knowledge that they were healed of some ancient affliction, for some it was the knowledge that a long-term fear had just melted away, for others it was just a joy they had never known before. For the soldier she had touched earlier on the far side of the square it was knowing that there was a God with the love and the power to help his son.

Now came a barked order to fire on the two sackcloth prophets, to shoot to kill, along with an order for everyone to step back from them. Some last fingertips pulled away, leaving the two of them standing in deserted circles. They looked around and saw hostility and hatred in some eyes, but sympathy, faith, bewilderment, and pain in others.

Gypsy and Lenny simultaneously shouted out, “We shall not die but live and declare the works of God!” as several bursts of automatic fire rang out. Their rods clattered to the ground, their forms slumped into piles on the stone floor of the square, and a shout went up from those who were hard of heart and desired their death, but an empty shout of victory it was. It was short and short-lived, for as anyone could see, what lay before them there on the ground was not the bodies of two dissidents defeated by the mighty Chairman. No, the sting of death had been removed, for the emptiness of their victory was underscored by the emptiness of the red robes strewn on the pavement with no sign of the bodies of the two Temple Mount invaders.

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## A RUDE AWAKENING

Lenny sat up in bed with a jerk. The room was dark save the sliver of light that came through the open door to the living area where he could hear only the sound of the television news. Such a dream he had had! Probably delirium from the fever he had had the last day and a half. Groggy and dazed, he managed to force his body out of the bed and to the door, into the living room in the secret apartment in Isaa’s mansion. Everyone turned to stare at him as he came in, their eyes wide, and their mouths gaping, speechless. He studied their faces, wondering what could have affected them so. They seemed as bemused as he after the vivid dream he had just dreamt. His eyes now fell on the TV. He saw the temple square. He noticed there were guards and crowds standing around something, and he recognized the red sackcloth robe on the ground at their feet with the rough rod fallen across it.

The commentators were explaining that, though this looked like a mysterious and miraculous escape by the two red-robed terrorists, the fact was that the guards had used a newly developed weapon that had simply caused the victims to disintegrate. It was a quick, painless way to get rid of terrorists and trouble-makers in extreme situations such as this.

Lenny would have found it amusing if he weren't so shocked to realize that what he thought he had dreamt had really happened ... somehow. The room spun. He clutched for something solid to hold on to and felt Mary's arm round his waist guide him to a sofa and help him sit down in its cushioned security. She motioned to Juliana, who ran for a glass of cool water, which he gulped down mechanically, his mind racing far and fast to another place, another dimension, trying to put it all back together again. He had been sick, he had slept, he had found himself in a meeting in an undisclosed place with angelic beings and departed saints. Even Will and an ex-witch named Wally were there and Gypsy was there. At about that point he focused on the room of his fellow Family members who were still staring at him, waiting for his explanation of what had happened, yet not wanting to push him above his ability to explain, it being obvious that he was just coming to grips with it himself.

He ran his fingers through his tousled hair, tousling it more, and breathed a deep breath before making an attempt at speech. "What ... what ... did you see?" he asked, wanting first to know if they had seen what he remembered happening or not.

"We saw you and a lady," Steve said. "I guess a sister, but I didn't recognize her. You were in sackcloth, challenging the Chairman at the temple, appearing and disappearing, speaking in every language imaginable while they tried to kill you but couldn't."

Samuel inserted, "I even ran into your room twice to see if you were still there and you were."

"Wow!" Lenny breathed. "What was I doing, Samuel, when you looked in on me?"

"Sleeping ... but kinda restless, you know."

"So, Dad," Julie raised an eyebrow, "what happened? What do you remember?"

"I remember exactly that, exactly what you saw. I was there as real as I'm here. And the lady, well, that's Gypsy, my girlfriend who joined the Family and married my best friend. We had a meeting first in some place in the spirit world. It was like being on a cloud or something. We didn't have a lot of time to talk, but I had the impression that she and Don, her husband, are in Israel not far from Jerusalem right now. Through the whole thing we were never sure if we were dreaming or what. It was all so effortless. We didn't have to do anything. The words just came. What we were to do, to say next, just came. I mean, it was quite literally a case of full possession and heavenly thought power like I've never experienced it before.

"It just came. I just had to let go of myself and yield to the Spirit. There was never any fear and we could see the AC and his forces just the way the Lord sees them, as puny nothings who can do nothing without God's permission. They were silly. They were ridiculous. I knew I was seeing everything exactly as Jesus was seeing it, and feeling what He was feeling at that very instant. And where I am sure I would have felt at least twinges of nervousness, there was not a trace of fear, or even of hesitation. There was only a burning desire and feeling to deliver my soul before these people, knowing that no hand of man could touch so much as a hair of my head. It was, wow, it was everything the Lord told us it would be."

Annie said, "Well, they sure looked ridiculous, unable to shoot you, unable to touch you, unable to fix their sound system. Even their cameras were trained on you, they couldn't even control them, it seemed. When the cameras picked up the Chairman it was to show him totally out of control, totally freaked out. It was awesome!"

Mary, who had been holding his hand the whole time, put her arm round his shoulders and said, “And how do you feel now? It looks like your fever’s gone.”

“I feel ... I feel ... yeah, fine, not sick anymore, no fever, but totally exhausted, so sleepy and weak, like there isn’t anything left in me, like it said about Daniel when he had his most dramatic spiritual experiences. As a matter of fact, I feel like I need to go lie down...” His voice began to trail off and his eyelids close, so Steve and Mary helped him back to his bed. By the time they lay him down, he was sound asleep.

When they reentered the living room, the phone rang. Annie said, “That’ll probably be the first of many,” as she went to pick it up.

- 6 -

## NEVER FORGET A SHEEP

Gypsy opened her eyes and blinked to clear them of sleep. Don was hovering over her, his head silhouetted against the diffused light coming in the window behind him. She struggled to remember where she was and retraced their steps since they had left the destroyed convoy a few days ago. They were in the house of a relative of Muhammad’s in Hebron, on the edge of town outside the circle of destruction wreaked by the main AC attacks on the Jewish community in the center. She had collapsed from exhaustion mixed with delirium as soon as they had arrived here, and now it seemed it was several days later, in the afternoon—late afternoon, judging by the light through the window. Don and Esther were right by her bedside.

Don whispered, “Honey, are you all right? You were having some kind of intense dream and we couldn’t wake you up no matter what we did.”

Gypsy sat up with effort, looked around her bedside, saw a glass of water and drank a sip of it. “I think ... I’m all right. ... Yeah, I had *some* dream ... if it was a dream. Did any of you see TV or hear the radio?”

Esther said, “Muhammad’s upstairs with his aunt. The rest of us were just having a class with Don.”

“I heard some cheers and shouting just a minute ago, like there was some kind of special news,” Shaul

offered from his seat against the wall some distance away. "Why'd you ask?"

"Because," Gypsy said, "I just had the most amazing experience and I don't know if it was a dream or real. If it was real, it should be on the news, because there was TV, radio, and all kinds of press there. If it was real, the whole world knows what I just saw."

Deborah, sitting beside Shaul, said, "Well, we just need to ask Muhammad to find out if anybody saw anything on TV."

Just then they heard a hubbub of voices approaching the house. They were occupying a little two-room apartment below street level. At street level lay the main part of the house with two stories above where the extended Arab family lived. The voices came closer and closer until the sound of footsteps stopped at the main door just above them. Excited words were exchanged, an indistinct invitation was uttered and the crowd of men could be heard crossing the porch-like bridge to the living room upstairs. There was a flight of stairs from the porch leading down and they could hear the hurried steps of a single pair of legs coming down. The door flew open and Muhammad burst in, caught himself, slowed down, and caught his breath.

Gypsy smiled quizzically and said, "What is it, Muhammad? You look like you've seen a ghost."

Still struggling to remain calm, Muhammad answered, "I told them it was impossible, that you had never left here."

Don asked, "Who'd never left here?"

"Jennifer. But they said they saw her on TV! One of the men saw you last night when you first came here, Jennifer, and he said he just saw you on TV in Jerusalem. I told him that was impossible, but he wants to see you himself, to make sure it was really

you or to be convinced it wasn't." He hesitated, and then asked, "Do you think you are strong enough to come upstairs, to see this man?" Another hesitation. "Uh, maybe, Don, you could come too, but would it be all right if the rest of you just stayed down here? I can explain why a little later, but it would be best, all things considered, if you three ... uh ... you know ... stayed here."

"We understand," Shaul said.

"Well, I don't," Esther protested. "I haven't done anything to any of these people. Why should I have to hide and pretend I did, dammit?"

"Esther," Shaul begged, "please let's just do as Muhammad suggests for now, okay?" He gripped her arm and looked into her eyes. "Okay?"

"Oh. Okay. But I really do want that explanation later, Muhammad. I won't forget."

"And neither will I," Muhammad said. "Will you come, Gypsy?"

"Yeah, yes, I'll come. I just need to get dressed."

Muhammad turned his back hastily, said he would come right back and exited. He could be seen just outside their door with his back to their window, waiting for Gypsy and Don. The five all smiled amusedly at their old-fashioned friend and host. Gypsy swung her legs out of bed and was surprised to realize she felt far better than she had earlier, at least physically. Her mind was racing as she considered the possibility that somehow what she had dreamed had actually happened! When she had managed to dress, praying with Don and the others while she did, she stepped out into the fading light of the late afternoon, leaning on Don's arm. Muhammad quickly ushered them upstairs to the waiting men.

There were several unfamiliar men gathered in the lounge above, but they did recognize one who

had been present the night they had come. He was a full-bearded man in his late thirties or early forties, wearing a hata over his head and a robe down to the ground. Beside him stood a fierce-looking man just a bit older than he. The second man sported a huge bushy black beard, fiery eyes, an impressive build with muscular, hairy arms protruding from his sleeves, and what looked like a red bruise or irritation on his forehead right between his eyes. These two seemed to be the leaders of the group.

Muhammad translated as usual, saying the first man, who was called Nasser, was exclaiming, "Yes, yes, it is she. There can be no doubt! I can prove it too." He pulled out a videotape from the deep pocket of his robe and said he had recorded Jennifer's mysterious appearance at the Chairman's gathering on the Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem. He had been recording the Chairman's speech so he could go over what exactly was said so as to know what to expect from the Chairman in these terrible times. He chattered like a machine gun for a few minutes and then stopped himself and turned to Gypsy with a sheepish grin. "Forgive me," he said. "All the excitement and I have forgotten to thank you for standing up like a prophet of God against the Chairman." He approached close to Gypsy and bowed deeply in respect. As he straightened up, he looked Don over and said, almost in question, "But you were not the man I saw, were you?"

"No," Don said, "no, I wasn't. You see, it's all a mystery to us as well how Jennifer could be here in bed sleeping and sick, and also in Jerusalem at the same time. It was some kind of miracle God did that we don't understand."

The wild bearded man with the wound on his forehead, now stepped forward and said in impeccable English, "I am Jihad. We know you are sent from God

to us in these times. No one in his right mind could deny it. We are hoping that you will stay and work with us toward our goal of freeing our people once and for all. With the Israeli army largely slaughtered and routed, we now have a chance. For many long years we have waited for this time to come. We knew from the holy writings that it would, and now it has arrived. *Ahlan*, you are welcome. I have planned and performed many campaigns against the Zionists since the first intifada, but I still have some fight left in me. We would be very happy if you would join with us in our righteous war against evil and help guide us to victory with your spiritual gifts."

Don and Gypsy smiled, but were at a loss as to what they could say to such an invitation. From the looks of him and his self-confessed freedom-fighter past, Jihad was very likely a member of Hamas or Islamic Jihad. How could they unite with them? So they simply said, "We are glad to meet you," and introduced themselves. "But may we see the video you recorded?"

"Yes, of course," Nasser said, "but I don't understand why you need a translator," motioning to Muhammad, who was translating everything said. "Your entire message on this video was spoken in beautiful Arabic."

Gypsy smiled and answered, "There are many things we must explain to you some time when we understand them ourselves." Turning to Muhammad she asked, "Do you think it would be all right to ask the others up to view the video?"

He hesitated, but, not wanting to offend Don and Gypsy, he said, "I suppose ... it would be all right," and scurried out the door and downstairs.

An awkward moment followed. Frizzy punched through just as Gypsy could hear the sound of the trio from downstairs ascending the steps with Muhammad.

*Gypsy, that wasn't the wisest thing to do. You really need to ask about everything. Pray real hard, real fast!*

Gypsy's heart sank like a heavy weight at the possible repercussions of her bringing her Jewish entourage out into the open too early. Don had received a similar message, she could see from the pained look on his face. Their expressions did not escape Jihad's notice, who now turned to the three following Muhammad through the door. He turned to look them over and in spite of the fact that Deborah was out of her army fatigues and dressed in some civilian clothes of Esther's, Jihad knew who or at least what race these were of. Shaul, Esther, and Deborah saw clearly as well that it had been a mistake for them to come up. They stood just inside the entrance awkwardly wondering how they could gracefully exit once more.

Nasser clutched Jihad's arm firmly and smiled as he said, "In these days we must give everyone who wants peace a chance."

Jihad's face flushed and he turned, first to Nasser, then to Muhammad, Gypsy, Don, carefully never casting his gaze on the three Jews as he spoke. He growled, "A chance? Like they gave us when they destroyed our houses, bulldozed our olive trees, rocketed our cities and demolished our cars, our crops, our very lives and livelihood with their tanks? I have taken vows to fight and kill the enemy wherever I find them, and all Zionists, all Israelis, are my sworn enemies. I will give them the same chance they gave us for over fifty years, until they were forced to negotiate by the Chairman, when they were forced to finally deal fairly with us. There was no other way they were ever willing to give up one inch of land, and even then what did we end up with? This miserable, land-locked, riverless excuse for a nation. Even then we were left still at their mercy for water, for employment, for resources,

for our borders. We couldn't even leave or enter without passing through Israel. We were still surrounded by them and their borders and their checkpoints. They still kept almost half their settlements. What chance did they ever give us?"

Shaul hung his head in guilt, knowing he had been part of the cause that had brought the world to its present state of affairs. Esther, pampered debutante that she was, trembled ever so slightly as she clutched her hands together. Deborah, however, stood defiantly facing Jihad, who still never looked directly at them. Even without looking into his eyes, the fire that burned there for the Jews was clear. He continued, "I have nothing but eternal hatred for you and for your people. If this were my house, I would evict you immediately and shoot you as you left. Since it is not, I warn you that you had better stay inside, for I pronounce a curfew on you as you pronounced so many times on us in this city, 24-hour curfew, imprisonment in our own houses in our own town by a foreign, invading power. If you step from this house, I will kill you." He shook his head as he looked Gypsy over. "I must admit I am confused. How could someone who so boldly stood up to the *Dajjal* live and travel with such evil creatures as these?" He swung himself about and was gone.

Nasser shook his head sadly, "I am sorry, but I told you, Muhammad, to keep your other friends well hidden."

"Yes," Muhammad said, "but how could I deny the request of our guest?"

Gypsy, realizing how strong the code of hospitality was among these people, said to Muhammad, "I'm the one who should be sorry. I was so foolish. It's all my fault. I knew even before they came in that I had behaved rashly and unprayerfully. Muhammad, I want you to know for the record that you should and

must instruct me in the many things I still need to learn. I'm new here and don't know your ways. You must teach us."

Esther sheepishly said, "I guess that man just made it pretty clear why I should lie low. I'm sorry, Muhammad, for being so stubborn."

Shaul asked, "What do we do now?"

Nasser said, "I will try to reason with him. As you might have suspected, he is a prominent member and even a leader of one of the main resistance groups, and has the will and the means to do what he threatens, but he is my relative and I hope he can be reasoned with. In the meantime, you would do well to stay put as he told you. He will never attack this house, for he is indebted to the owner, Muhammad's uncle, Abu Ibrahim. I will leave the videotape with you that you may view it, and will go immediately to try to reason with him. I shall return later today." Nasser put the videotape into Don's hand and let himself out the front door.

Gypsy sighed, "I don't feel a lot like watching myself be a heroine after that stupid mistake."

Don shrugged, "Well, it'll just remind you and everyone else that it's only the Lord if anything good gets done. I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm dying to see this stuff. Gypsy already saw it, she was there ... somehow ... so how about it?"

"Yeah," Shaul enjoined, "let's see it. It sounds pretty amazing."

All the visitors had gone and they were left alone with Muhammad and his uncle, Abu Ibrahim. Abu Ibrahim motioned to the sofas in front of the TV, saying, "*Fuddulu*, please sit down." Then he barked to the young girl, his teenaged daughter standing in the kitchen doorway, "*Gahwe*, coffee."

The show was exactly, word for word, what Gypsy remembered. It was only now that she saw that it seemed the cameraman was powerless to move the camera away from whatever the Lord wanted to have shown. Every once in a while some kind of struggle could be detected as the camera attempted to point elsewhere, but it was obviously being guided by angels far stronger than the cameramen. The editing too was controlled from Heaven, as there would be cuts from Gypsy to Lenny and back or to the Chairman always at the perfect moment to get the message across.

It was obvious from observing the faces of everyone watching—including Abu Ibrahim who spoke no English—that each was hearing the broadcast in their own language. Jihad had said she spoke perfect Arabic, but as they watched she heard only English. What a replay of the miracle of tongues on Pentecost and a new twist to that ancient exclamation, "We do all hear them proclaiming in our language the wonderful works of God!"

As the final moments played, all eyes turned to Gypsy, who by now was sitting at the far side of the room with tears running down her cheeks. Though not a word was said, she knew the question on everyone's mind: "How, in God's Name, did this happen? What new kind of miracle is this?"

Gypsy said, "I don't understand it any more than you do. I was asleep and thought I was having probably the most vivid dream of my entire life, which is saying a lot since I've had lots of vivid dreams. This time it was as if I was there, and as you can see, I was. First though, I was taken up to an unknown place in the spirit world where I met with a team of angelic helpers as well as the man who was my companion."

"Yeah," Esther said, "tell us about him. You know him?"



Gypsy smiled, caught Don's glance, smiled still broader and said, "Oh, yeah, we know him, don't we, hon?"

"Yeah, he was our best friend in college," Don added, "the one who brought about the changes that led us to the particular life we're living now."

"Yep, and ... he and I were ... very close for a year, but then Don just swept me off my feet and stole me away from him."

"Well," Don laughed, "that's an exaggeration, but that's another story for another time, I think."

Gypsy noticed the disappointment in Esther and Deborah's faces that they were not going to continue their love story right now, but continued with the tale at hand. "I hadn't seen him in years till we met at that heavenly conference I was telling you about. Oh, Don! I met Will too. ..." Then realizing the others didn't know Will either and that they had a lot of exciting tales to tell to fill everyone in on their past, she added to the others, "Will's another old friend who's dead now and is helping us from the spirit world. Up there we were told everything we were to say and do, and it all happened with effortless ease, as if we were just watching a movie that we happened to be in." She could see from the stunned looks on everyone's faces, as she spoke so naturally of the spirit world and of the departed, that there was much to teach and explain to their new disciples.

"And where's the other fellow now, the one we saw with you?" Shaul asked.

"Lenny's his name, and I have to confess I never asked him where he was coming from, it being a dream as far as we were concerned. So we didn't get to talk about it, but I had the impression he was somewhere nearby, but not in Israel. To be honest, though, I have to tell you that I'm having the hardest time keeping my

mind on anything but ... well, you see, I can't get all those people off my mind, all those people I touched and who were healed. You saw them, the ones who reached out their hands. Their eyes, their faces, are as vivid right now before my eyes as if they were right here in this room. I feel them calling, beckoning me to come. They're like the boys at Flanders Field that Dad saw so long ago." Puzzled looks again. "I can see we'll need to take some time off, Shaul, Muhammad, Esther, Deborah, and fill you in on all these things you don't know about yet. And then, soon, I feel ... and we have to confirm this with God, but I feel I have to go to Jerusalem and find them—some of them, if not all of them. I feel they're expecting me to come to them, that I can't fail them."

"Jerusalem?" Shaul exclaimed. "But how?"

Don interjected, "Shaul, 'how' is never the question. That's God's problem. The only questions to ask are 'when' and 'what' and 'where.' All we have to do then is say 'yes'—and then God and His helpers take over and lead the way." He looked at Gypsy, and then he said, "What we do at this point is take time to hear from the Lord and ask Him for His guidance and words to tell us what to do. Let's go back downstairs and take some prayer time, shall we?"

## FROM DEFEAT TO DEFEAT

Marduke was met like a visiting dignitary at JFK Airport by Archibald himself, with his much younger present flame, a perfectly built blonde glamour boy named Rock. As they stepped out of the airport, a sleek black limousine glided to a halt right before them and the automatic doors opened to allow them entrance.

Archie winked and crooned. “Nothing but the best for one of my dearest friends,” as he motioned for Marduke to climb in. As they pulled out, Archie’s cellphone rang and he was momentarily preoccupied with what seemed an agitating conversation. Rock took over, and Marduke could tell from the way he took her in piece by piece that he was not altogether Archie’s type; he had a taste for female flesh as well and was letting her know that her still lithe shape and elegant demeanor held an attraction for him. *Dangerous but tempting ground*, she thought.

The phone call ended and Archie slapped the phone closed and into his coat pocket with an impetuous pout. “Damn them! They continue to spoil everything, all our fun. Oohh, I do hate them.”

Marduke hesitated before asking, not wanting to do or say anything that would affect her comeback adversely. But she could tell from Archie’s expression

that he wanted to talk about it, so she asked, “Who?”

“Those damn Christians! Somehow two of them gate crashed the Chairman’s speech this afternoon. Can you imagine the audacity?! They spoiled the whole speech. Now the plan has been delayed, when time was of such grave importance. Our great Chairman has told us time and again that the key to defeating the plan of the enemy is speed, moving swiftly and brutally, just like we like it, hmmm, dahling?”

“Yes, absolutely, Archie. So do you know who these Christians were, and were they apprehended?”

“That’s just it, Mahduke. They vanished. Oh, we’re telling the world they were disintegrated with new weapons we developed for just such a purpose, but in actual fact, they vanished into thin air. It wasn’t like they were holograms or anything though. The soldiers actually laid hands on them, they were solid, but then they could vanish right away. A disturbing turn of events, to say the least.” He bit a nail petulantly. Rock gently touched his hand as he chewed on the nail and looked at him with a mild reproof. “Thank you, sweet boy, for reminding me.” He turned to Marduke. “Rock is just wonderful for me. He’s helping me to get over my one and only vice, nail biting. Isn’t he gorgeous?”

Rock winked at her and she smiled. “Well, yes, yes, he is, Archie. Quite.”

“Oh, Mahduke, it just came to me. You’ve had quite a bit to do with these Christians as I recall. Maybe you can watch the video clips and see if you happen to know them.”

“Well, I really have had almost nothing to do with Christians, Archie, except the group that subverted Will, and I don’t like to think about them.”

“Well, you might have to, because we know they’re still around, and we know you think about them a

lot, and that you’ve even designed a whole mission to destroy them for your marvelous computer program. So you have been practicing for what might be your grandest moment. You would do it if your god and his right hand asked it of you, wouldn’t you?” His eyes pierced, and her throat went dry.

“Well, yes ... I suppose I would ... if you put it that way.”

“Good. I knew you would. I can’t say what will be asked of you. Right now the only thing is to watch the video and see if you know the two who appeared in Jerusalem. The Minister has asked to meet with you soon, maybe even in the next day or two, and that we spend the day tomorrow going over the program with some experts and myself. Then in the evening we’ll watch the show, and you can tell me what you think and if you have any insight on it.”

Marduke fumbled for a cigarette to place on her silver holder as she nodded acquiescence.

The afternoon had gone well. She had taught everything there was to know about the program to the experts in Archie’s suite. Everyone raved about her invention and remarked how useful it could be, especially the hidden execution feature. Of course, this feature could not be fully tested without a subject, so a team was choosing a suitable victim from the penitentiary or a mental hospital, and a test was to be conducted later that week. In the meantime, Marduke was invited to stay as long as it took. She had her own suite a few floors below Archibald’s where she had everything she could need or want.

In the evening, a lavish dinner was served in Archibald’s dining room, after which the moment she had dreaded and hoped would not come arrived. Something told her the Family was somehow involved

in this caper at the Temple Mount, and she had no desire to enter the arena once more against them. It was a release and a pleasure to play the game in her VR room, but the thought of actually meeting and fighting them once more made her knees grow weak, made her break out in a cold sweat.

Archie, if he was worried anymore about what had happened in Jerusalem, hid it well as he escorted her back to the lounge where the servants had prepared the videodisk for viewing. Rock whispered something in his ear and he nodded to him. Rock then excused himself and left Archie and Marduke alone. With a flick of the remote control, Archie started playing the disk. The Chairman's theme music came on, followed by a sweeping view of the crowd in the square. There were obviously people there from all over the world, of every race and culture. It was awesome to behold the crowds that came to witness the grandeur of the Chairman's appearance. Marduke herself felt a breathtaking awe every time she saw him on TV and now, as he emerged onto the balcony, she knew something powerful had taken place in his life, and he was yet more powerful than she had ever seen him. The words he opened with were wise, soothing, reassuring, hypnotic. She felt drawn with a great sensation of loyalty to serve him, to worship him, to do anything for him.

Just then she could see a flicker of distraction flash across his face as he stumbled almost imperceptibly on his words. The camera swung from him to take in the crowd. Heads, heads, and more heads gazing in rapt attention up at him, but there was one head that stood out about halfway back to the Cyber Chairman statue, because it was facing away. She could only see the back of his head, but it looked very familiar, with the long blonde wavy hair falling to his shoulders. Her hand began to rise from her lap as if to touch the back

of that head. Archie picked up the motion and asked, "Did you see someone you recognized?"

She jumped at his words. "No. No, I don't think so."

"Look. There. Do you see them?" Archie said. "Two figures in ridiculous red sackcloth coming from the back. You can just make them out now."

Marduke gasped.

"What is it?"

"Wasn't it the Family who used to demonstrate in red sackcloth in the late sixties and early seventies?"

"Ah, yes, I think you're right."

The camera again swept the crowd and there, there was that head again! This time it was in profile for just a split second and, yes, it did look like ... but it couldn't be. How could it be?

Now the camera was careening wildly around the crowd, as if there was a struggle going on for control of it. The "struggle" ceased and the camera focused on the two approaching sackcloth figures and zoomed all the way in on first the male's face and then the female's. It was a little too fast to know, but after a sweep once more over the crowd, a shot back at the uncharacteristically worried-looking Chairman, the camera settled in on the sackcloth figures again, this time in no hurry to move.

Marduke sat up in her seat, squinted to see as clearly as she could, and whispered, "She's older, but it's that bitch, Gypsy." Then after studying the man, "And that's ... Lenny. ... Strange, these two back together again." The cold sweat beaded on her forehead, and she dragged deep on her cigarette and reached for the tall drink on the coffee table, gulping it thirstily.

Archie shook his head as he eyed her. It was good to know who these people were, but such a pity to witness his once-stalwart colleague in such a state of

shell shock. At least they already had all they needed to know about her program except the one thing that needed to be tested. A thought crossed his mind that he dismissed with an ironic silent chuckle.

Marduke, now having seen both Lenny and Gypsy and having definitely confirmed that they were the sackcloth intruders, searched the crowd for a sign of the blonde man once more. As if on her order, the camera slowly began to sweep the crowd until it stood still on the same blonde man she had seen before. He was no longer in profile. He was dressed all in white, looking a dapper thirty years old, thirty-five at the most, staring straight at her. The camera zoomed in on his face and he smiled right at her! Or so it seemed!

She darted a look at Archie who seemed to see nothing at all unusual. She looked back and he was still the center of the screen, this time closer than before. The sound of Lenny speaking could now be heard, but she couldn't tune it in, because now the man's mouth was beginning to move with a mischievous half smile on his lips. Words were forming. Her name was forming on his lips, she could see him distinctly forming "Marduke!" Then Will's face loomed so close he filled the whole screen as he said, "I'm back, Marduke. I'm back!"

With a long shrill scream she covered her eyes and curled her legs up to her breast, hiding her face in the couch cushions.

"Turn it off! Turn it off! I can't see any more!" Frantically, without looking at the TV, she ran to the set, fumbling for the controls to turn it off. "Archie, I can't take it! I want it off ... *now* ... oh, please, *please!*" She sank down in a sobbing clump on the carpet before the TV set as Archie turned the set off.

Slowly he rose and stood over her. "There, there now, dear, that will be enough. You've been very

helpful. I'm sorry it was so difficult for you, dahling. You can go to bed. Rock will see you to your room. Rock!"

Rock appeared at the bedroom door. Archie went quietly to him, leaving Marduke still lightly sobbing on the carpet.

"Rock, sweetheart, take her back to her room."

"Yes, Archie."

"I saw how you looked at her. If you want her, tonight would be the night. There might not be another chance." Rock jerked in surprise and opened his mouth to protest that he wanted no one but Archie. Archie put his index finger to his lip. "I know, I know." Archie smiled. "You have a perverted appetite for female flesh. This time it happens to be all right with me. It happens to be perfect. Tell her I wanted to comfort her and couldn't do it myself so I sent you. Give her the tumble of her life, hmm?"

Rock slowly grinned. "Sure, Arch, I will."

"Good," Archie said as he turned away whispering, "she may not have many more."

## NOT BY MIGHT

Mustafa was visibly perturbed as he paced the carpeted floor of the apartment, smoking yet another cigarette. Only Lenny and Mary were with him at the moment. The rest of the team had to be upstairs with the nearly hundred guests—young people who were bubbling over with questions about what had just happened on international TV. Mustafa had asked for a private audience with Lenny and Mary, but had not yet spoken about the subject they knew he wanted to talk about. They knew from his present demeanor it would not be pleasant when he did. Finally, he stopped and turned to them, gesturing his frustration silently at first. He groaned a bit as he gestured once more before he burst out at last with a roar, “How could you do such a thing without consulting with us?!”

Lenny shook his head and said, “Mustafa, I had nothing to do with it!”

“Nothing to do with it?! Who was that then I saw on TV?”

“It was me, I have to admit it, but you can ask anyone. I was also at home in bed at the same time.”

“But how can that be?”

Mary always had a calming effect on Mustafa, who, as they had come to find out, was the volatile type with a short fuse. Fortunately, his explosions were also

short, and afterwards he returned to his charming self, forgave, and even every once in a while, asked for forgiveness, but not often. She stood and walked to him, “We don’t know, Mustafa, how it happened, but we know Lenny was here, and that God somehow took him away and performed a miracle.”

“But do you realize how serious this is?!” Mustafa protested, but with less vehemence than before. “Lenny is our secret weapon and now his face has been broadcast over the international airwaves. He is now, I am sure, the most wanted criminal in the world. It won’t be long before the Chairman knows he is here and will demand that we turn him over as America did with Bin Laden, and I don’t need to remind you what happened to the nation that refused to turn him over.”

“Mustafa,” Mary said, taking him by the hand, “please sit down and let’s talk more about this.” Reluctantly, he allowed her to lead him to the couch between the two of them. Now he finally sat down before his almost cold cup of mint tea. “We understand your concern, but this is God’s doing, not ours, and He knows what He is doing. I know He loves you and your people and will protect you as long as He can for resisting the Chairman. No matter how powerful the Chairman may be, God is greater by far and will fight for us. We have found over the years that His ways are not ours, but His ways are always wiser and safer and far better than ours.”

“I can’t deny that God is wise and knows better than we, but I must say I can’t see how this is going to help us much. I only wish that, if He is going to ask you to do something like this, He would give you a day or two notice so we could at least prepare for what He is going to do—prepare an answer or plan or ... or ... something.”

Lenny smiled. “Mustafa, I’ve often wished the same. I know how you feel. But this happened in my sleep and as far as I knew, I was dreaming. It was as much of a shock to me as to you to find out it was real.”

Mary smiled and said, scarcely above a whisper, “We’re all in this together. Let’s pray and ask the Lord what we should do.”

Mustafa had been in several sessions with Lenny, Mary, and team when they had “heard from the Lord,” but as yet he had never received anything himself. He looked from Lenny to Mary and back again, then bowed his head, waiting for them to begin to pray and receive something from the Lord.

Lenny prayed, “Dear Lord, our best Friend, we need Your help now to know where to go from here, how to proceed. We know that You got a great victory yesterday in Jerusalem, yet to us it looks like it would have been wiser if You had used someone else. Now my face will be very well known and it’s going to endanger a lot of people, maybe a whole nation. Yet we know that You never make a mistake, so by the power of the keys of the Kingdom, we ask that You show us whatever You need to show us about how to proceed from here. Please in the Name of Jesus, speak to us.”

The three fell silent for a minute or more. Both Lenny and Mary were struggling and straining to get a clear signal, words they could start with to give a message, yet nothing came. Almost simultaneously the two of them received a strange feeling of peace from the Lord that He was going to anoint Mustafa to be the channel this time. Five to ten seconds followed before the two of them felt Mustafa’s fingers in a vice-like grip on their forearms.

“I’m seeing something!” he exclaimed. “This has never happened to me before. I see something with my eyes closed as if it were right before my face.”

Mary whispered, almost hypnotically, “Start to describe it and you’ll see more.”

“It’s our headquarters in the desert, the secret city, hidden in the rocks, the one you confirmed with the Lord that we should set up our main headquarters in. It’s night, but it’s like I have night-vision glasses on. Oh, oh, now it’s like I am flying backwards away from it, back away and high, high up where I can take in the desert for miles north of the passage that leads to the city. There is a nearly full moon, but no clouds, so it is very bright and now I see a convoy making its way across the desert with no headlights on. It is slow but definitely moving toward the city, obviously wanting to maintain secrecy as much as possible. Now I see there are flying things, six of them just above the convoy. I can’t quite make out what they are, but they are in formation, making a kind of diamond shape, one way out in front, then two on each side bordering the road where the convoy is and one way behind the convoy.”

Mary whispered, “Can you describe the flying things at all?”

“Well, they’re white, they seem to be made up of several objects, and ... oh, now it is like I am descending to get a closer look, and I can see cloth billowing in the wind behind each of the objects that make up the six objects. I’m getting still closer and they’re ... *Alhamdulillah, Allah akhbar!*”

“What?”

“Each of the six objects is made up of six objects and each object is an angel of God, flying as protectors of the convoy. You were right. God is with us. This is His doing, and we cannot argue with Him. It’s like they are the guards and the light, and something else. ... They have yet another purpose.”

“What?”

“They are blocking surveillance of the convoy. No satellite, no spy plane, nothing on the ground or in the air can see the convoy.”

“Who’s in the convoy?”

“It’s marvelous. Each time you ask something I am brought to the best vantage point to see the answer. Now I am just outside the lead car, and it is as if I am standing still in the air. The car passes and I can see it is some of our elite troops in the fore, heavily armed. This is followed by a troop carrier truck with a full platoon and another and another. Then comes my car and I can see myself. Dear God, I can see myself and ... and ... you both ... with your children.”

“What about Steve and Annie?”

“No, no, they aren’t there, but ... oh, my God ... it’s amazing. Now I’m back here at Isaa’s house and I see Steve and Annie teaching hundreds of people and David is here with his wife and some others. The work you have started here will go on with others, but you are needed there. That’s what I feel the message is. You are to go there with us and you will be protected and we will be protected. Those angels are mightier than any force the Chairman could ever put together. We are safe as long as they are protecting us. We have nothing to fear.”

“And what are we to do there? Are we just to go there to hide and be safe?” Lenny ventured to ask, speaking as softly as he could, hoping his entering into the discussion would not disrupt anything.

“Oh, no ... I lost it ... I can’t see anything anymore.”

Lenny’s heart sank. No doubt his voice had distracted Mustafa and he had lost the connection.

“Ah, it’s coming in clearer again now. I see you both and some others in a quiet place in the back of the city away from the troops and training fields. I



see computers, books, books, and more books, and I see you praying and receiving things from the Lord. I see you are right there and we can always ask you to pray and get a message at any time, at a moment's notice, and I see you are like the prophets of old in your cave. I see that there will be people who come there to us and to you, that many important things will be decided there. I see that our numbers there will grow, there will be people who are meant to find us who will find the place. I see that we are to trust that anyone who manages to find us there will be meant to find us, at least for now. The angels are in complete control.

"Oh, my God, my God, it's incredible!! I thought the angels guarding the convoy were many and powerful, but look at that, can't you see it? Can't you ask God to let you see it too? Just look. I've never seen anything like it. We truly have nothing to fear."

At that moment it was like a slide snapped into the projector for both Lenny and Mary and they saw the hills around the city and the sky above, and the road leading to it and the road leading away, and the valley down below. And every foot of ground was guarded by a mighty angelic warrior girded for battle. A heavenly host filled the air and the earth beneath so the numbers of the soldiers in the city itself were insignificant. Lenny whispered, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord."

"Yes, yes," Mustafa said, "how could I have ever doubted? It seems so foolish now."

"WAIT!" Mary exclaimed. "I see something else. On the road coming from the south, I see a smaller convoy, beaten and ragged with far fewer angels flying overhead, but nevertheless I can tell it's protected and ordained to come. It looks almost like it can't make it, the three cars are so beaten and battered and running

so haltingly. I can almost feel the weariness of those inside. It's heart breaking. Do you see them?"

"Yes," Mustafa said, "I see them too. I feel their pain and heartbreak too. I know we must help them. And I feel ... I feel..."

"Yes," Lenny said, "I feel it too. They are important, more important than they look."

"Exactly. That's exactly it." Mustafa opened his eyes and Lenny and Mary followed soon after. "Once you are situated, I will go and find them and bring them back to the city."

"Yes, that's what I thought too," Lenny chimed in. "But they must come in by night, without lights, and ... and ... there was something else."

"Yes," Mary said, amazed how the three of them could be getting exactly the same thing, "they must be brought to the back and at first no one must know about them except those who must know, we and your most trusted men, Mustafa."

"It is as good as done."

## **A JEW REQUIRES A SIGN**

A disturbed night's sleep followed for all in the little team in Hebron, but especially for Deborah. She had known these people for the shortest amount of time, and though it was true she owed her life to them, not to mention the use of her right arm, yet following them into the Arab part of Hebron was a crazy thing to do, and now they had a terrorist saying he was going to kill them. As far as she could see, that made their decision to come here sound like a colossal mistake. Maybe by a miracle they would escape death at the hands of Jihad. After all, these people sure knew about miracles. But in her mind she wondered if it might not be pushing their luck and supernatural protection powers too far to expect to escape the wrath of Jihad and then head for Jerusalem of all places, find some unknown people and do God knows what with them and then make their way out to God knows where. It was just all too flaky and unplanned for her pragmatic Jewish mind, let alone her strategically oriented military mind. It just didn't add up to victory somehow, and who could sleep, thinking they were likely to die tomorrow on the whim of a hunch or even a revelation from some strange Christian?

*After all, Deborah, you're a Christian too, you know, a little voice said in her heart.*

The voice, definitely a female voice, sounded like her thoughts, yet *that* was a thought she had never thought, and Jennifer and Don had been wise enough not to say. Was it the truth?

*You know deep down it is.*

*But who are you? Am I going crazy, talking to myself?*

*No, you're not crazy. I've been talking to you all your life. It's just now I've been given a little added volume since you asked Jesus into your heart. I'm the voice who told you Jesus was the truth when you watched those movies about Him. I'm the one who made you care about the Palestinians and told you how they suffered—and made you feel it too. But then our communication was so distant. Now I can be so close, as close as you want me to be. I can guide you all the time.*

*How do I know this crazy plan of Jennifer's is not going to backfire and all of us end up dead?*

*How did you know you weren't going to die in the army?*

*Well, I didn't, but that's what soldiers do. They know they're risking their lives to defend their country, to fight for their country. You know that when you enlist or get drafted.*

*Exactly.*

*What do you mean? Now don't be so smug. I can feel you sitting there with your arms crossed, a smirk on your face, thinking you've proved some kind of point. Answer me. What do you mean?*

*It's exactly the same.*

*But ... I was in the army.*

*Exactly. And what were you fighting for?*

*Well, I was fighting for ... for ... I mean, that's easy ... we were...*

*Want to be in an army where you know exactly what you're fighting for? What you're fighting against?*

*What the goal is? How the war will turn out? Who will win? What the rewards will be? With a guarantee that you can't lose?*

*Ha! Who wouldn't? Is this some kind of fairy tale or something?*

*No, but you see, Deborah, you were always destined to be a soldier, and a good one and a victorious one, but not in the IDF, no, in the ETE.*

*What the Hell is the ETE? This is really getting crazy. I'm getting drafted into some kind of army by my imagination, or a ghost, or what are you anyway?*

*I'm your angel. I'm your helper. I'm your guardian. I'm your friend, the one who saw you through when the kids laughed at the braces on your teeth the first day you wore them at school, the one who comforted you when your boyfriend broke up with you and took your best friend to the dance, the one who saw you through it all and who promises to see you through the rest. I'm the one who is giving you the opportunity to join the End-Time Elite. I won't draft you, but you have to decide, you have to make up your mind, it's your choice. I can tell you that, whether you live or die in this war, you will win, you will see the victory and you will be thankful you made the right choice tonight.*

*Tonight? Can't it wait till morning or when I feel more prepared?*

*Your life depends on the decision you make tonight. Tonight, right now, is all you have. From now on all you will have is the moment you are living in. You have eternity, but decisions are going to have to be made in a split second, and I have put you in the care of some great commanders who listen and tune in to God's voice all the time.*

*Well, she sure blew it with Jihad, didn't she?*

*Yeah, I can't deny that. But things have a way of working out when you're doing the best you can, even*

*when you mess up a little from time to time. But you need to decide now, because there's a mission coming your way almost immediately.*

*Let me think. Can I think ... just a minute?*

*Pray. That's better.*

*I don't know how to pray.*

*Just talk ... talk to God. Talk to Jesus. Ask Him what you should do.*

*I hardly know the Guy.*

*Then start getting to know Him now.*

*Silence.*

*Deborah?*

*Yeah, yeah, okay, all right already, I'll try ... ahem ... uh, Jesus, this is Deborah ... I don't know You real well. I mean we just met. ... I mean I don't know if we met ... I asked You to come in ... so I figure You're on Your way in or something.*

*He's in.*

*This is between me and Him, so can you stay out of it for a minute, okay?*

*Sure. Boy, have you got a temper!*

*Just shut up and let me pray, okay?*

*Silence.*

*Okay, that's better. Now where were we? Uh, Jesus, You still there? Sorry about that interruption, some of Your spirits need to learn some manners. I understand You're awful busy ... but oh, where were we? Anyway she says You're in, so maybe that's so. If You are, then I want to know what I should do, if I should join Your army and follow these two kooks who seem kinda crazy but awful nice and kind of like X-men or something. It's kinda neat and all, but is this for real or just a crazy dream, or what should I do? I guess if You're God and all that stuff, then You can figure out a way to answer me that I would believe. I don't have to figure out how You should do that, You've been doing it for thousands*

*of years, like with Moses and the burning bush and Gideon and the angel at the threshing floor, and let's see, oh, yeah, Abraham had some visitors and ... oh, oh, there was Lot too, and there was Samson's parents. Hey, wait a minute, You showed all those people pretty clearly what they were supposed to do, so that's what I want. I think I should be able to have an angel come and tell me exactly what to do and why and then do a miracle to prove it.*

The voice spoke ever so softly in her heart, this time slightly different from the one she had been hearing.

*Deborah, I'd love to continue this conversation. I love talking to you, but Shaul is at the front door about to leave. He needs you. Help him.*

*Why me?*

*You're the only one who's awake. Go help him and I'll tell you exactly what to do. We can talk about your joining My army later.*

*Your army!? You're Jesus?!*

*Go! There's no time to lose.*

Deborah jumped from her bed and dashed to the door of the apartment they were staying in. There was a shadowy figure bent over the handle, turning it soundlessly. Deborah whispered, "Shaul."

He jumped and turned to face her, his back pressed against the door. "Deborah? God, you scared me."

"What are you doing?"

"What does it look like I'm doing? I'm leaving. I can't pretend to be something I'm not. I just feel like, if I stay, I'll be endangering all of you. And besides..." He heaved a sigh and sat on the floor before the door.

Deborah sat down beside him. A prompting in her heart told her to take his hand. A slight smile he couldn't see in the dark flitted across her lips. So uncharacteristic for her, but it was nice to do something to comfort someone.

“Besides what?”

“Besides, I don’t think you know this, but I was part of that Temple invasion, and I just escaped out of Jerusalem. Muhammad rescued me, you know that?”

“No, I didn’t.”

“He did. He risked his life for me. Now I just can’t face the thought of going back in there. I hate to say it, but I’m scared, scared as Hell.”

“But if you go out alone, you’ve got Jihad to worry about. It looks to me like our best bet is staying with Don and Jennifer. They can change and vanish and put arms on and who knows what else?”

“But don’t you think they might just be pushing their luck too far going to Jerusalem?”

“Maybe, I don’t know. They didn’t say when they were going. They did say they were going to have to confirm it upstairs. Please, Shaul, stay. Stay with us.”

“No, no, I’ve gotta go. I’ll just slip out and be out of everyone’s hair when they wake up in the morning.”

“You’re determined?”

“Yeah, yeah, I’m determined.”

“Okay, I’m going with you then. You might need a good soldier for protection.”

“You haven’t even got a gun.”

“Yeah, you’re right, but neither do you. I had some training that might be of help. Come on, let’s go.” Deborah gulped as she said this and cocked her ear to hear what her invisible friend had to say about that. She could almost hear her nod that she was doing the right thing. Crazy, but right.

“I can’t ask that of you,” Shaul said.

“No, you can’t, and you didn’t. I offered it. Let’s go.” She stood and opened the door, beckoning Shaul to follow. He shouldered the little bag he had of things he had gathered since his escape and followed her out

into the moonlight. “Full moon, not the best time for a night-time escape, but can’t wait.” Deborah was shocked how calm she was, even jocund. “Shh,” she said and motioned to Shaul to follow her up the steps.

As they reached the top of the steps, they were confronted by three men in Arab robes with their hatas pulled over their heads concealing their faces in the shadow. Shaul was sure this was the end, that here were the men assigned to kill them. The rough way they pinned the two of them against the railing of the porch convinced him all the more.

*Where do you think you’re going?*

“I’m leaving,” Shaul whispered.

*Are you crazy? Don’t you know you’ll get killed by Jihad or the Chairman’s forces or die in the wilderness?*

“What do I care? The whole situation is hopeless. Just kill me if that’s what you’re here for, or let me go.”

*All right, if that’s what you want.* The three released them and turned their backs as they went ahead of Shaul and Deborah to the street, and looked up and down.

“Come on, Deborah. What are you waiting for?”

“Shaul ... wait ... didn’t you notice anything strange about those men?”

“I’ll say, dressed like Arabs and speaking in perfect English.”

“Hebrew.”

“English.”

“Whatever. Did you notice anything else?”

“Uh ... no.”

“Shaul, they never said a word out loud. You and I both heard them in our minds, in our hearts!”

Shaul’s hand went up to his mouth in shock, and at the same time he saw the silhouettes of the three

figures turn to them and nod simultaneously. “Oh, God, you’re right! You’re right!”

*Are you coming? The coast is about as clear as it’s going to be.*

“Yeah, yeah, we’re coming,” Shaul said as they stepped out into the street directly behind the three robed figures. To their surprise, there were three more just like them who fell in behind them. At a slow, steady pace they walked silently down the street, the only noise being the crunch of pebbles and sand under their feet. Deborah slipped her hand into Shaul’s. The bright moonlight washed them in an ethereal silver glow. If it weren’t for the situation, she could imagine something interesting happening between her and this good-looking young man.

Her reverie was broken by an urgent voice in both their hearts. *Now might be a good time to fall down on the ground.*

“What?” Shaul whispered.

“You heard them!” Deborah said as she threw herself on Shaul and pushed him to the hard roadway just as automatic fire rang out. She lay on top of Shaul, her hand covering his mouth. “Two guns, Kalashnikovs, one ahead of us, one behind. We’re ambushed,” she whispered. “What I would give for an M-16 right now.”

*No need.*

She then noticed that, despite the withering fire that continued from both sides, their six unearthly companions were still standing calmly above them. In fact, they had made almost a complete circle round them, like two horseshoes. She could almost picture their guardians yawning or idly scratching themselves or clipping their fingernails, the spirit they gave off was so unperturbed.

“KHALAS! Stop!” they now heard one of the angelic

beings call out, this time out loud. “Stop shooting! Save your fire. It will do no good, for God is with these people and nothing you can do will harm them—or us, for that matter. Jihad, come out. I want to talk to you.”

Another burst of fire.

“You cannot harm us, Jihad. Come out. We will not harm you either.”

They heard the sound of a weapon being cast down and frightened footsteps running away.

“It looks like Jihad just ran away,” Shaul whispered, having finally pried Deborah’s hand off his mouth.

“Then who’s that?” Deborah asked, pointing to a man who was timidly approaching them, with his weapon pointed at the ground.

“Jihad, *Achui*, brother, come. Come to me,” the spokes-angel said with a sympathy Deborah had not expected.

Jihad was close enough now that they could see he was trembling. His weapon slipped from his fingers and clattered to the roadway. He fell to his knees.

“Please, please, have mercy on me. I know you are somehow supernatural. I know now that God is protecting these people. I know I was wrong. Have mercy on me. Or kill me. Do with me what you will.”

The spokes-angel walked to Jihad and knelt beside him, putting his arms around him. “Jihad, there is a time to kill and a time to heal. There is a time to hate and a time to love, a time to forgive. When you become so full of hate that you hate everyone of one race or another, when you decide they are all evil and all deserve to die, you become like those you hate. I want you to fight, but for the right cause. I want you to fight for God, in His army, an army made up of the faithful of all faiths. It is a time to put away the hatred of the past and to unite against the devil-man, the *Dajjal*. I know what you have suffered, and I have

repaid and will yet repay those who've caused your suffering. You have suffered and they have suffered. The cycle must end somewhere. Why not now? Why not here? I remember the day that changed you, the day that began the change in you. I know it all."

Deborah saw it too, heard it, felt it. She saw it as if it was a faded memory coming into focus clearer and clearer with each scene that unfolded in her mind's eye. It was almost as if she had been there, but she hadn't been, she couldn't have been.

*It was so far away, a world away, the world on the other side of the Green Line where the Palestinians lived an existence she did not know, could not know.*

*Yet there she was. It was the spring of 2001, in this city of Hebron. Amira had decided to venture out during the allotted three hours for shopping, the time when they were allowed out of the house. As she prepared, she thought of the 400 Jews living in the center of Hebron and the soldiers, more than a thousand, who were there to guard them. She thought for a moment how unfair it was, but Jihad had taught her not to dwell on it, not to hate them, to look at the simple facts at hand.*

*The baby needed milk. They needed food for the next two days of curfew. She had saved a few shekels and her uncle had given her a bit last week. The way to the market crossed just below the settlers' hill, the little hill where the settlers often congregated. The settlers threw rocks at them, sometimes taunted them, and from time to time shot at them. What could she do? Jihad was away. He had taken advantage of one of the last liftings of the curfews and closures to slip into Jerusalem to find work. Since Sharon's visit to Al Aqsa it was impossible to make the trip home daily. He had to pass ten or sometimes more checkpoints. Once he got home, he had no guarantee he could get back out.*

*He was young and proud. He could not stand to sit in the house and watch his family go hungry. He was a good man, a peaceful man. He had never even thrown stones in the last intifada. He wanted to live. He wanted to survive for his family. Amira knew he loved her and little baby Khalid with all his heart.*

*She clutched her treasure, Khalid, to her breast as she walked. He was smiling these days, three months and somehow he lived above all the sounds of war and flashes of fire he had seen and heard in his short life. He would just look up at his mother to see her smile flickering on her face and he'd know there was nothing to fear. Now, as they approached the settlers' hill, she spoke softly to Khalid and he laughed. He really laughed! How proud Jihad would be to see his son growing up! Laughing and smiling so much!*

*Deborah saw and heard and felt how the shot had split the silence, how pebbles and dirt had splashed like water up from the ground into Amira's face, and how she had screamed and clutched little Khalid tighter and run for the cover of the house on the side of the road away from the settlers' hill. She saw how the bullet had gone through Amira's back, through her heart, and right through Khalid, how he hadn't had time to look up at his mother to make sure everything was all right. If he had he would have known it wasn't all right. But he hadn't. Neither he nor Amira had been able to look anymore.*

*She saw also how Jihad had stood in line with the other Palestinian men returning from the tiny bit of day labor they had found in Jerusalem. They stood in the sun by the road between Bethlehem and Hebron. He had been told to hold his drill above his head. He had been told to remove his pants and throw them on the ground ten feet away, and now he stood there*

sweating, dressed in a shirt and his underwear, while the soldiers smoked, drank coffee, and laughed.

The cellphone in Jihad's pants pocket began to ring. He looked at the soldiers. One of them gathered the fingertips of his upturned hand into a little circle to signal him to wait. The phone rang and rang and finally stopped. Fifteen minutes later it rang again. Again, the signal to wait. Again it rang and rang and stopped. Two hours passed.

Now a soldier was sauntering over with a handful of licenses to give back to them. Someone in the guardhouse called out and he turned, called back, and returned, motioning them to wait, always to wait. It was the story of their life. Wait. Wait for peace. Wait for land. Wait for permission. Wait for justice. Wait for freedom. Jihad's arms ached, and he lowered the drill. A soldier pointed at him and motioned for him to lift his hands again. Jihad lifted his drill above his head again with two arms that felt like concrete.

Fifteen minutes and the soldier came again with the licenses—the cards that said they were caged animals who could not go here, could not go there, that said they were dangerous, that they had no right to the freedoms that others enjoyed, that they were worthless—the cards that were a constant humiliation, but without which they could not live. The soldier walked slowly, as slowly as he could without crawling. Now he stood there and tossed each card in the dirt as he called the name. Deborah could see the soldier enjoyed how the men had to bow at his feet and pick up the cards that allowed them to struggle home to wife, to family. No explanation why they had to wait. No apology. Just licenses in the dust and a grunted order to be on their way.

Licenses in hand, they pulled their trousers on. Jihad looked back at the soldiers. He hated them. It

was the first time that he wished them dead, that he wished he could see them die, that he hoped they would burn in Hell forever.

The phone rang. His pants were on now. He answered. His brother on the line sobbed and could hardly talk. His brother gave the phone to his father whose voice was thick and low, barely audible. His father managed to tell him what had happened at the settlers' hill. Jihad had bellowed as he slumped to his knees in the dirt. Two of the men helped him up. He choked out what had happened, that Amira and baby Khalid were dead. They wailed with him as they helped him to the waiting yellow cab that would take them the next little way before the next checkpoint on their long pilgrimage home, home where no wife now waited, home where no baby would smile up at him and tell him life had meaning.

As the news spread, so spread the wailing. Jihad looked back one last time. The soldiers laughed and drank coffee. He swore he would now wait, yes, wait for the opportunity to see those men die, to see them with fear in their eyes. He knew what he would do.

And he had done it. He had done it for years and had never stopped. Even when there was peace, he had done it. And now he knew it was over and it was time to forgive, to be forgiven, to forget and to go on. He cried. But he was relieved.

Jihad cried in the angel's arms. Shaul's cheeks were wet with tears. Without a word Deborah and he knew they had both seen it, both heard it, both been there ... somehow. They stood and walked to Jihad and fell on their knees. Deborah choked out, "Forgive us. Forgive us." His arms went around them and they wept a century of tears, washed away a half century of hatred. When they had dried their eyes, they looked



up and saw they were alone in the street. The six men were gone. The six angels had done their job. All that remained was the voice that told Deborah, *How's that for an angel experience? Abraham only got three.*

Hurried footsteps came from the house. Muffled voices could be heard and shadowy figures could be seen at the windows up and down the street. Gypsy's voice called, then Don's.

"Oh God, are you all right?"

"What happened?"

Jihad stood and cried out, "A miracle has happened! Please forgive me for what I thought to do to you." He threw his arms around Gypsy and Don, who cast a questioning glance at Shaul and Deborah.

Deborah said, "Don't ask. It's a long story. We'll tell you later, but it looks like we have some new friends."

Jihad said, "There was an angel—there were many angels. We must talk about how we can work together, how I can help you, how you can help us. My men and I are at your command. There are one hundred of us ready to do whatever you say."

Don interjected, seeing that Jihad would keep talking if he didn't butt in, "Jihad, we can talk in the morning. We are very happy to call you our friend. We are very happy to work with you somehow. This war against the Chairman will be fought on many fronts, and perhaps our fronts are slightly different, but please know that we are with you. Our prayers are with you, and we will pray and decide together what we should do, whether together or apart."

"Yes, that is good. Tomorrow as soon as you wake up, as soon as you are ready, come to my house. Muhammad will show you the way. Go in peace. Go with God."

"And you, God be with you."

With a final squeeze Jihad bade them farewell till the morning and turned about, praising God as he went.

"And that's about all there is to say," Deborah concluded.

Esther and Muhammad sat in stunned silence while Gypsy and Don praised the Lord, though quietly, due to the lateness of the hour. They were sitting around the apartment, and the time was approaching 4:00AM. Shaul had been silent the whole time. Gypsy had been trying to read him but couldn't.

Now he spoke. "It all sounds glorious when she tells it, but the fact was I was trying to desert and put all of our lives at risk, and I feel ... I feel ... all mixed up to tell the truth, ashamed ... relieved ... in awe ... shocked ... happy to be alive ... happy to know there really is a God and He's really with us ... I mean, like *really* with us. I ... I never knew it was we who created guys like Jihad. ... To tell you the truth ... I'm glad to have my whole foundation ripped out from underneath me, but it's kind of disconcerting. I feel like a child again, like I've just been born into a world I don't know the first thing about. "

"Wow," Don breathed. "I know just how you feel. Well, I can't know everything, but I can relate. It was similar for me when Gypsy and that guy you saw on TV came to visit me after they'd gotten changed, what we call saved." He could see from the eyes of all that they wanted to hear it, and especially Shaul needed some input, some explanation.

"Oh, yeah," Gypsy said as she squeezed Don's hand, "you should have seen Don, the shape he was in."

Don continued. "You hit on two things that deserve some comment."

Gypsy was amused at Don's rather prosaic approach to getting this guy saved, but could see this was how Shaul needed it, dispassionate, logical, point by point.

"One, you mentioned how you felt relieved, ashamed, all these mixed up emotions. Well, when we get 'saved' as I said just now, we feel helpless, hopeless, like a drowning man. We feel like we can't make it and realize that we're weak in ourselves, sinful, that we've done some pretty bad things in our lives and don't see how to stop doing them, how to make a change. But then along comes Jesus and He says, 'You must be born again,' and 'You must become as a little child,' and that's exactly what we want, to be released from the guilt, from the impossible task of figuring out what end's up, of cleaning up the mess we've made of our lives, changing our own diapers, so to speak. And that's exactly what Jesus is offering, a chance to start all over again. Whether you come from a Jewish background, a Muslim background, or a church, or you were born to full-time missionaries like us, that moment has to come and when it does, nothing is the same anymore. And thank God for that! Life takes on new meaning, and so does death, which is a definite bonus considering the situation we're in these days."

Shaul was drinking it in. "Born again. Become as a child. Sounds good. What ... what do I do?"

"Pray. Just let Jesus in like we did with Deborah and Muhammad the other day. It's that simple."

"Now? Here? With everyone?"

Gypsy reached over and touched Shaul's hand, giving it an extra squeeze. "We're all family, Shaul. We've gone through so much together. Why not now, here, with everyone?"

Looking down at the floor, he whispered, "Okay,

just pray and I'll follow, like you did with the others. Let's do it."

After the prayer they bedded down, Muhammad going upstairs where he slept with his uncle's family, and Shaul back to the sofa, where he lay staring at the ceiling, bursting with joy, unable to sleep. He knew he wouldn't sleep all night, and he knew there was no need to. He wanted to relish this moment, to milk it for all it was worth, to savor what had happened to him. Born again. Set free from the past. Washed clean. It all sounded so good, and that was exactly what he felt. All the things he felt so ashamed about, now he could see so clearly that things had to happen that way, that this was exactly what God had to do in his life to bring him to this point. It all made perfect sense now.

He heard the door open to the room where Esther and Deborah were sleeping. Probably someone going to the bathroom. But no, someone was coming toward the sofa, stumbling a little in the dark. He could see it wasn't Esther. He could see she was wearing ... well, very little ... and she was coming right toward him. She knelt by his sofa-side. She couldn't tell he had his eyes open. She was hesitating. She wasn't sure if she should wake him. Then Deborah whispered ever so softly, "Shaul?"

"Yes," he said in a voice that said he hadn't slept yet.

"You're still awake?"

"Did you think I'd be able to sleep on a night like this?"

"No, that's why I came."

"And you?"

"I couldn't sleep either and I thought ... well ... I thought maybe I could ... we could ... you know ... keep each other company. Maybe, since you became as

a little child again, you might ... uh ... need someone to tuck you in.”

He nodded.

She could see his nod now, and the big smile that spread across his face. She'd taken the plunge and she hadn't been rejected. She reached out her hand and touched his hair. “Did I hurt you when I threw you down?”

“No, no, you ... nothing you could do ... I mean, I can't think of anything you could do that could hurt me, Deborah.” He took her hand and raised it to his lips. She moved her hand from his mouth and pressed her lips to his.

“I feel like ... I ... want to be with you tonight ... really with you.”

“Me too,” Shaul answered. “I feel the same. But ... I think you ... you're older than me.”

“So?” And she squeezed onto the sofa beside him, her nearly naked body sending an unfamiliar warmth and shiver and shock through his entire person.

“Well, not only older ... but more experienced. I ... I think you should know ... I've never done this before.”

“Umm, now that's very surprising, considering your good looks, but also verrry romantic. So while I'm tucking you in, I'm going to teach you a few things. Okay?”

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## **THOUGH YOUR SINS ARE AS SCARLET**

Mustafa took two APCs fully loaded with armed men to look for the mystery convoy on the southern road. They had agreed there was a blue van in the lead, and a sedan after it and another indistinct vehicle bringing up the rear. They had all seen them. Once he had situated Lenny, Mary, and family in the back of the ancient city, he set out under cover of darkness. The highway to the southern port was practically deserted, but that was usual in these times. And it was good. It would make the convoy easier to find. Just seeing three cars together would be almost enough to identify them, but they could not be too careful, considering the stakes in the game they were playing.

After two hours of silent driving, they reached a long curved section of the road through the dry wadi. Three sets of headlights could be seen approaching. Mustafa gave the order to pull one of the APCs up broadside across the left side of the road and for the sergeant to get out with one other soldier to stop and investigate these vehicles. His own APC faced the oncoming cars, its headlights trained on their side of the road.

Once the three vehicles had been stopped and their headlights turned off by order, Mustafa could tell for sure that it was the exact same convoy he had seen in his vision! There was the blue van in front followed by a green sedan and finally a jeep. But it was only now that Mustafa recognized the jeep was an Israeli army jeep! For some reason God had hidden that fact from him in the vision. How could they have even gotten over the border in an Israeli jeep? Mustafa whispered to his soldiers to be ready for trouble and stepped out of the vehicle, remaining by its side with his pistol drawn and the safety released.

He could see the sergeant and his companion were fingering the triggers of their weapons as well when they ordered the driver of the first vehicle out. To Mustafa's surprise, an elderly gentleman wearing a hata stepped out and began to speak to them in murmured Arabic. The exact words escaped him but it was unmistakably Arabic. He could contain his curiosity no longer and, thinking there might be need for more soldiers, he ordered two more soldiers to join him in approaching the convoy. An Arabic driver driving a bunch of Jews, that really wasn't so strange, come to think of it. His hata would be something they would perhaps ask him to do to try to convince those they met that they were friendly. Was it a ploy? Had he been deceived?

As Mustafa reached them, he heard the old man saying, "I told you, I don't know how or why they let us in at the border. They just waved us past without a question. We were amazed too."

"Why did you come to this country?" Mustafa interjected. "You are from Israel, are you not?"

"I am Assadam Abu Mahmoud. I am from Bethlehem. I am a Palestinian from Palestine. These people are refugees. They would have been killed had they

remained. Their settlement was completely destroyed and everyone who remained in it was killed. Please, there are a few women, a few children. There are three soldiers, but the rest are civilians."

"They are Jews?"

"They are, all but me."

"Why are you helping them, then?"

"Because they need help. Because they are helpless. Because the Chairman is systematically killing all of them in their settlements. Because they needed someone to speak Arabic and to explain their situation to you. I am old. I have lived my life. I knew I was meant to help them. Their leader is a good man. Believe me."

"Call him out."

In Arabic Assadam called out, "Shimon, they want you."

Shimon stepped out of the second car and stood for a moment before venturing forward. The sadness of his face, the deep lines furrowing his brow and cutting like scars down his face, said to Mustafa, "Help us. We will do you no harm. Enough has been done already."

"Your name is Shimon?" Mustafa asked in Arabic.

"Yes," the Jew answered in more than passable Arabic. "Shimon Narmann. It was suggested to us we might find refuge here."

"By whom?"

"If I tell you, you will probably not believe me."

"You won't know until you try, now will you?"

"We were told by an American couple that wandered into the settlement that I was mayor over. They knew things about what was happening. They told us what to do, what not to do, they had an authority that was very ... well, very convincing. Everything

they told us happened. Our intelligence has told us the settlement we left behind has been completely destroyed, everyone in it killed, that those who went north, hoping to attack Jerusalem have been killed on the way, and we, the only ones who did what the two said, have survived. We were more, but about half of us chose to remain in the south of Israel where no trouble has come ... yet."

"This couple. Can you describe them?"

"I think ... in fact, I would be surprised if you have not seen her. I happened to see the TV in a little place we ate before crossing the border ... I saw her ... at the Temple ... the one in red robes ... that was she. You see, they're some kind of modern prophets. They have power. They see things."

"Alhamdulillah, God is great!" Mustafa exclaimed, embracing first Assadam and then Shimon. "I saw you in a vision yesterday. We knew you were coming. I have someone for you to meet that will interest you more than you can imagine."

"And who could that be?"

"Wait and see. Wait and see."

It was midnight by the time the little convoy had been escorted to the back of the cave city. Two hours later Shimon and his entourage had been able to wash themselves, change clothes, and eat something. Still, in spite of the hour, Lenny had told Mustafa he would like to meet Shimon if he was up to it. Shimon, in turn, had said he was eager to end the suspense of finding out who this was he was to meet, and let Mustafa know he wasn't at all sleepy. The much older Assadam, on the other hand, had declined, saying he was exhausted, and had quickly retired after a wash and a light snack. They were all at the quaint but cozy quarters that had been prepared for them by

someone who seemed to sense their numbers, their needs, and even their wants perfectly.

A thin ply-board wall and door had been constructed over the mouth to Lenny's cave. Mustafa knocked respectfully on it and waited, nodding with a big smile to Shimon as if to say, "Just wait till you see who I've got for you to see!"

The door swung open to reveal a pretty blonde lady in her early forties who smiled cordially, gave Mustafa a hug and Shimon pecks on each cheek. Mustafa introduced them to each other and Mary said, "It's so good to meet you. We've been wondering who was so important that the Lord showed us your coming in a vision. You're welcome. Please come in."

"I'm afraid," Shimon said, as he followed Mary down the corridor to the modernized living area of this ancient cave, "I'm much more in need of you than useful to you in any way. So I don't know why you would consider me so important."

"Well," Mary answered as they reached the end of the corridor where the cave opened into a wide room, "we don't know either, but God does and He always knows best, so somehow you are very important to him. And therefore you're important to us, Shimon. *Ahlan.*"

Shimon paused at the entrance to take in the unique surroundings he now found himself in. The dusty cave had been transformed by tasteful furniture and lighting into an inviting environment. In the far corner sat a lone person in an overstuffed leather armchair. He was illuminated by a single shaded lamp on the end table next to him, but Shimon could not make out his features until he rose and approached him, entering the soft cool light from the pin spots on the ceiling. Though now his features had none of the fierceness he had seen in him on TV, Shimon knew he was standing before the prophet at the Temple!

“My God, it’s you!” Shimon whispered.

“Yeah,” Lenny grinned, “it’s me, just me. I judge from your reaction that you got to catch me in one of my better roles, played while I was asleep. Ha!” And he put out his hand. “I’m Lenny.”

“I’m Shimon Narmann. It is a pleasure. I have so many things to ask you about yourself, about Jennifer and Don.”

“Sit down ... please.”

“I’ll get something to drink,” Mary said and exited. Mustafa excused himself, having performed his duty of bringing Shimon, and went back to his quarters to sleep.

Shimon asked question after question about the Temple appearance and Jennifer’s whereabouts and how it all had happened. The ease and humility with which Lenny answered him, the love he felt from both Lenny and Mary, the spirit of acceptance and tolerance and understanding that pervaded everything around him as the hours flew by without notice that the sun had begun to rise in the east, all these elements combined to nudge Shimon in the direction of unburdening his heart of the load he had carried for years. Lenny and Mary, without being manipulative, once they had answered Shimon’s questions to his satisfaction, had guided the conversation to probing into his life, but not in an investigative way, not in a strategic way, as if they were trying to find out how he could be of use to them. The idea that he was important to them had set him a little on edge at first, but he slowly began to realize that they were speaking of a very different kind of importance than the kind he had been used to—both in his former military life and in his business pursuits after his retirement from the IDF. He could sense his importance to them was deeper, more spiritual. They were far more loving and concerned

about him than anything or anyone he had ever met, except maybe those two who had appeared so quickly and vanished just as quickly.

Lenny, meanwhile, as he asked Shimon about his life and family, his work, was receiving input on two levels. There were the surface answers Shimon was giving. Yes, he had been married but was a widower now. He had two children, now grown up with families of their own, a son in Tel Aviv and a daughter in Jerusalem. Since the Chairman’s invasion he had heard from the son but not the daughter. Shimon had been a ranking officer but had retired abruptly some years back and had gone into business, real estate, and had taken up residence in the settlement where he met Jennifer and Don. It was one of the ones that had been allowed to remain after the signing of the Covenant. He had been elected mayor there.

Yet at the same time, in flashes, Lenny was struck by picture after picture of war, of intrigue, of death, of deceit. Shimon in his battle uniform and flak jacket, commanding a squadron of soldiers followed by the famous scene of Muhammad Al Dura screaming as he took shelter behind his father protected only by a tiny stone block until the withering fire felled them both, killing little Muhammad and wounding his father seriously. Shimon in a shadowy room, paying money to an Arab man. A helicopter hovering in the air over a panicked van as it careened through the hills seeking shelter and finding none until the missile tore it to shreds. Shimon paying another man. A car bomb in a shopping area of Jerusalem just before the shops opened. Another car bomb in the Haredi section of Jerusalem. An Arab boy blowing himself up in a residential section near Gilo. Shimon drinking and drinking. More payments. More death. More lies. The pictures began to flash so fast that Lenny could no

longer concentrate on the first level of input. Pictures, sounds, voices, and impressions spun round him till his head finally sank into his cupped hands in his lap. Tears came, followed by great sobs that shook his body. The sobs burst out like caged birds released after years of captivity.

Shimon stopped speaking, looked questioningly at Mary, and waited until the sobs subsided and Lenny lifted his face streaked with tears. Mary moved to the sofa beside him, put her arm round his shoulder, and said to Shimon, "This has never happened before." She patted Lenny and smiled slightly. "We're starting to get used to things that never happened before. They're becoming commonplace."

Lenny smiled a half smile, cleared his throat, and turned to Shimon. "I saw pictures," he said, "a lot of pictures. I saw what your job was. I saw that boy, the one who was killed hiding behind his father at the beginning of the second intifada, the one that was so famous. I know, Shimon, the load you carry, and I know you're sorry but confused. I know how you try to justify what you did, but it won't go away, the pain, the guilt, the remorse, the nightmares."

Now it was Shimon's turn for tears. He fought them. He resisted them. He struggled to retain his composure. Yet he knew it was useless, and he knew it didn't matter. Here was the place, now was the time to let the tears flow, for he was at last among friends, among those who could understand; who knew how wrong what he had done was and yet could forgive, would forgive. He knew like a man standing before the judging angel in the light at the end of the tunnel of death, he knew that he was loved, accepted, and that the only condemnation was what he assigned to himself. And at the same time he knew that there was perfect forgiveness for him, that a clean start was

available to him. So he stopped fighting. He stopped resisting. The tears tumbled down his cheeks, his chin quivered, and a sob escaped followed by more and more ... and more. Mary moved to the arm of Shimon's chair and cradled his head in her lap. They both waited patiently while Shimon cried. There was no hurry. These tears had been stored for years and needed to be given time to flow away.

Finally Shimon lifted his head, dried his eyes on the handful of tissues Mary offered him, and settled back in his chair, taking time in the silence, the stillness, the peace of no pressure to speak, nor to hurry, taking time to study Lenny and Mary, to search their eyes and their entire demeanor. He found no animosity, no repulsion, only understanding, only acceptance. He knew they hated what he had done but loved him. This was what had been missing all these years. There were people who justified what he had done if he ever confided in them, and there were people who condemned him for what he had done, and neither could help him. Lenny and Mary were what he needed. He sighed and smiled a smile that emerged from a peace, a freedom that he had never expected to feel again.

"Thank you," he uttered.

"Thank God," Lenny said. "I did nothing."

"I want to tell you..."

"There's no need."

"But there is ... there is for me. I need to tell." Shimon stared at his fingers as they entwined around each other in his lap. "I need to say the words. I know somehow God ... yes, no doubt it was God ... it could only be God ... showed you the pictures ... but part of what I have to do is say the words of what happened. Somehow I know the final cleansing is in the words."

“Confession is made unto salvation,” Mary whispered.

“Yes, exactly,” Shimon said. “That’s beautiful.”

Lenny thought he would explain later where it came from, from the New Testament.

“I was an officer stationed in Gaza at the beginning of the Palestinian uprising of 2000, and there were orders fed me that led to the orders I gave that cost little Muhammad Dura his life. He’s haunted me ever since, but I did so well in the lies and cover-up that followed that I was given a new job, a clandestine type of duty, a very trusted position sworn to secrecy. My new job started with searching out known or potential terrorists through the use of Palestinian informers. It was not hard to find them, because there were many who were desperate for money to feed their families when there was no work, no income. I could see they hated doing it, they felt filthy, they were taking money and doing deeds that would haunt them forever. I could see I was creating more people just like myself. I had a network of Palestinians helping me, and I was always told never to get close to them, never to let myself like or care about any of them, because ... the time always came ... the awful time ... when we did not need them anymore and we released all the evidence to their own people ... they survived mere days after that.

“Then came even worse assignments ... I cannot even speak of them. Suffice it to say that my job was to make sure that every time there was about to be a breakthrough in the peace process, something happened to derail it again. They trusted me with more and more secret ... more and more dangerous missions. ... They were dark ... so dark ... so evil. ... I couldn’t sleep, I couldn’t think, I couldn’t be alone, I couldn’t be still anymore or the thoughts would come

and torment me, torture me. I had to be busy. So many people died because of me, so many killings that led only to more killings. Sometimes I would think how it could have all been over if I had just not done what I did. And I lost all faith ... if there was a God and we were His chosen people, if we were the best He could do, how could I believe in Him? I became bitter and cynical and full of hate for God and man.

“As soon as I could, I left the army and went into business, thinking the torment would end, but it never did. It never did. Lenny ... Mary ... I don’t know how I have survived. I cannot tell you all I did, for it would be too painful to say the depths I sank to. They told me the goal was a safe, secure Israel and that whatever it took was worth it, that it didn’t matter, the Palestinians were terrorists. But I came to know they were people. They said I should never get close to them, and I knew why, because everyone we used was destined to die, but I couldn’t help but like some of them, many of them, feel for their plight. They had families like mine. They had children they wanted to educate and provide for. They had dreams of things they would like to do. They wanted freedom, a land, safety, and peace for their children—things we say are human rights for all people, and we were denying them those things.

“They had frustrations like everyone, but most of us are frustrated just by the strange things life throws our way. I knew that they had far greater frustrations than I. Lenny, Mary, I will never forget standing on a hill in the West Bank one day waiting to meet with an informer. I turned to look back at Jerusalem and I could see the sports stadium, the big shopping mall, and the beautiful zoo, all in one glance. I stood there and wondered how I would feel if I were a Palestinian father and I could see all those places where people



took their kids for excursions, and know that I could never take my kids there, that they had nowhere they could go without first getting the permission of a rude 18-year-old soldier at a checkpoint—and I their father could not, with any amount of money, provide them with that. And on that hill I understood why we were hated, and I knew it had nothing to do with anti-Semitism. It wasn't some prejudice for past superstitions, it was living hatred for present oppressions.

“You know, in Israel there are the ultra religious who think we are God's chosen people and therefore are worth far more than anyone else, and there are the non-religious who have no conscience, many of them, and then there are ones like me, unsure, in-between, somewhat religious, who have or at least used to have high ideals, used to believe in freedom for all people. It became impossible to reconcile Israeli policy with my world vision. I couldn't reconcile it without believing we were somehow better than others, more deserving, more worthy, but how could we be when we committed such horrible atrocities and then lied about them? These thoughts and the pictures in my mind of people who were dead because of me, families that were destroyed because of me ... have haunted me until now.”

There was a long, thoughtful silence as Shimon stared into space while Lenny and Mary waited. “I believe in God now, because I believe there is retribution, a kind of Hell at least, some place where the dues are paid and the score is even, and I'm afraid. I hate to live, but I'm afraid to die, to face God or whoever decides things over there. I know you know Him, you have some kind of link with Him, and while I'm afraid to face Him, I need to know ... I need to know if there is any hope, if there is anything I can do to make up for what I have

done, or must I just pay in fire and torment? I'm willing to do whatever needs to be done to make things right. Do you know what I need to do?”

Lenny and Mary prayed desperately for the right words, for the way to lead Shimon to the One who could make things right.

“Yes,” Lenny said, “yes, we know. There is a love that forgives the worst sin, the hardest heart, and can restore the most tortured mind. There is a love that can forgive, that has forgiven murderers, thieves, deceivers, harlots, traitors, informers, adulterers, a love that can remove our sins from us as far as the east is from the west. There is such a love and it is near us, even in our hearts. It doesn't take a pilgrimage or a rigorous life of sacrifice to earn merit and persuade it to come down from Heaven to us, because it's crying out to us all the time, in the chief places of concourse, at the top of every street. It's reaching out for the hearts of men. Her delight is with the children of men. She longs to dwell with us, She loves us.”

“That's from the Bible, isn't it?”

“Yes, She's called Wisdom in the Proverbs, and is personified as a woman, tender, forgiving, like a dove. We call Her the Holy Spirit, and Jesus came full of Her and went about everywhere doing good, giving love, never harming anyone, and He was rejected and killed for it. Yet His last words were the very ultimate love, to forgive those who killed Him.”

“And those words were...?”

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' But I knew. I knew what I was doing. Can He forgive me too?”

“In the Bible God also says, ‘Come now and let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they

shall be as wool. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be white as snow.’ ‘As far as the east is from the west, so far have I removed your transgressions from you.’ ‘He that covers his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.’ All that is from the Bible you read. Jesus came to be the embodiment of that forgiveness.”

“But what about the Law? What about ‘an eye for an eye’?”

“‘There is none righteous, no, not one.’ ‘He that keeps the whole Law and offends in one point is guilty of all.’ Shimon, God made a covenant with Abraham that the Law of Moses cannot supersede, a law of promise, a law of faith. And it says, ‘He believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.’ David understood after his great sin with Bathsheba that what God required was not righteousness, not burnt offerings and sacrifices, but brokenness, utter abandonment to God’s mercy, to God’s will. He said, ‘Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.’ Jesus is that washing, that purging, that forgiveness, and it’s yours ... yours for the asking. Jesus is the sacrificial lamb who can take away your sins once and for all.”

“He loves you, Shimon,” Mary said, patting his hand as she sat on the arm of his chair. “Even if you’re not sure, you can ask Him to show you—to come into your heart if He’s real and show you. He’s waited thousands of years for the world to acknowledge Him, He can wait a few more days if that’s what you need for Him to prove Himself to you. Would you like to pray with us?”

Shimon was silent again. They could see that Shimon thought things through and didn’t make hasty decisions. Finally he nodded and said, “Yes ... yes ... I will try ... I will try.”

“Good. Good,” Lenny said. “All you need to do is just repeat the words I pray after me. Jesus ... if You are the Son of God ... come into my heart. ...”

## **AND FIRE PROCEEDETH**

A strange stillness had settled like a smothering blanket over Jerusalem. Over the decades, over the centuries the city had grown accustomed to heavily armed police and soldiers. It had seen wars, invasion, emergencies, and oppression for thousands of years, making the City of Peace the most fought-over city in all the world. Yet previously there had been at least an effort to let life proceed, to carry on. Amid the oppression and danger there had been attempts to celebrate weddings, birthdays, holidays, and other occasions. Now though, it was as if the prophecy had been fulfilled that said, “In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when ... all the daughters of music shall be brought low.” Gypsy, with Muhammad and Esther, stood in awe as they stared down the hill at Damascus Gate and saw only an occasional car—no people moving about where once there had always been a bustling market, thousands of people, the madness of honking, shouting traffic, and a myriad of sights, sounds, and smells.

They had met with Jihad before leaving Hebron and agreed to keep in touch the best they could. He

said he would be quietly organizing a resistance force and waiting for their communications. They had been told in prophecy that he would be an important AAC in the days to come and that they would be able to reach him again in due time.

But for now Gypsy was here, in Jerusalem, with a team of new recruits who had not even had time to start the basic course, but who would have to enter the arena of the world's last great conflict with her—untested, unproven in combat, rookies in the spiritual warfare that Gypsy and others like her had had decades of experience in.

Just a few minutes before, as they stood before the New Gate of the Old City, George and Frizzy had whispered to Don and Gypsy to divide up, that Don was to take Deborah and Shaul and go into the Old City, that there was someone special they needed to see, while Gypsy, with Muhammad and Esther, was to go after the soldier with the handicapped son. As they descended from the hill above Damascus Gate toward the center of Arab East Jerusalem, Gypsy informed the two, "We'll be told when and where to meet back together a little later."

"You mean," Esther questioned, "you didn't even make a place to meet in case of an emergency?"

"No," Gypsy said. "It's safer this way. If we get caught and questioned, we don't even know where Don is or where he will be until our Helpers tell us. It's the best way. We just need faith ... and a clear channel. Can you trust us on that?"

"Yes," Muhammad said, "I know I can. I know how a voice can guide you and tell you exactly, miraculously, what to do. It happened to me when I was a captive at Al Aqsa and it has been coming back to me even more clearly lately."

"Well," Esther said, "it seems a little foolhardy."

"Esther," Gypsy said, "it's not that we know what we're doing, but God knows and we just do our best to follow where He's guiding."

"I sure hope so."

Now, as they talked, Gypsy described a building she was seeing in her mind's eye, and even the buildings surrounding it. She could tell the Lord was choosing to give her only a piece of the puzzle now so her babes could take part in things. Muhammad knew the terrain, and immediately recognized the building she was speaking of.

"The Orient House, that's what you're seeing!" he exclaimed. "I know where that is. It's not far. Maybe a kilometer over that way," and he pointed toward the northeast from where they now stood.

"Then let's go."

As they walked, Esther asked Gypsy, "How is it that you, probably the most wanted criminal in the world, can walk these streets unmolested?"

"I'm sure you've heard the story of Elijah and how the eyes of the Syrian army were blinded. There were also a few times after Jesus' resurrection that His disciples didn't recognize Him. The Lord is doing that for us right now. People are either distracted when we walk by and don't notice us at all, or they don't see me as I am and don't make the connection."

"Let's hope the spell doesn't wear off."

Gypsy groaned within herself as her precious Husband and Lover, Jesus, had so long ago as He stood at Lazarus' tomb, just over the Mount of Olives a couple of kilometers from where she was right now. Nothing seemed so difficult to bear as lack of faith. *Don't worry, baby*, Frizzy whispered. *I know it's not easy when you have people who doubt and worry. But you're being given an extra big dose of the power of the keys right now. Her faith will grow, but you'll*

*need to really work on her. She's not used to taking anything at face value. That's good or she never would have broken with her upbringing. Use it, cultivate it, but don't let it drag you down.*

In sight of the Orient House there was a small falafel shop. "We're to wait here," Gypsy said. "He'll come here."

"Who? Who'll come here?" Esther asked.

"The soldier. You saw him in the video, the one who grabbed me first. They're garrisoned in the Orient House and today is his day off. He's hungry and he'll come here in just a few minutes. You'll see."

"We're waiting for one of the Chairman's soldiers?"

"There are hungry, receptive, needy people everywhere, Esther. We have to be there for them. This man knows. He has felt God waiting to do something for his son, and is open, even desperate, for the sign that will tell him the time is at hand. He's been praying to find us. Right now there are many in the army who still aren't sure. It's a job for them. This man—he's Arab, Palestinian. He joined to fight Israel because he had no work. It's been a growing conviction that he made a mistake, but after our appearance at the Temple he's now fully convinced, but he doesn't know what to do. What other kind of work is there for him? He has a family to support. He knows we have answers. He's been praying that he could find us somehow. We're the answer to those prayers."

"Alhamdulillah," Muhammad whispered.

"Yes. And here he comes."

He looked thirty or thereabouts, slim, medium height. He was out of uniform, but he was definitely the soldier she had seen on the Temple grounds. He stopped, stunned, as he crossed the threshold into the shop and saw Gypsy. Gypsy stared intently into his

eyes till he turned to the shopkeeper and ordered a sandwich. As he waited for it to be prepared, he glanced at the three seated quietly in the back several times. Gypsy smiled and he began to relax. Once he had his sandwich, he instinctively walked to the table next to them, greeted them warmly in typical Palestinian fashion, and sat with his back to them, taking no more notice of them than that. Gypsy then began to talk quietly in English while Muhammad translated. She kept her eyes on her two companions, who nodded as she spoke. To anyone in the shop or outside on the street looking in, no connection could be seen between the Arab and the three foreigners.

"Maher," she said, speaking to the soldier, "we came for you. God told us about you and where you were and where you would be and even your name. He told me you were looking for me, wondering if there was any way you could ever find me. We don't have long, but long enough to tell you this one thing. Leave now. Don't even go back to your barracks. Come with us. We're the answer to your prayers. When you finish your sandwich, pay and go outside to your car around the corner. We'll follow very soon. Then as we drive, we can tell you more. We must rendezvous with some friends and then go to your wife and children." She knew they lived somewhere not far from Jerusalem, and they were to go there for more reasons than to gather his family into the fold, but as yet she did not have it clear. After all, there was no need to know just yet.

All she had said up till now had been taken in by Maher without reaction. Now there was silence as he finished his sandwich. Would he obey? Would he do what he was told? Gypsy knew there was no doubt about it, but she could see Esther was still weak in faith and this was a major moment of truth for her.

Esther's mind was, in fact, racing as she thought of all that could go wrong. Here was someone who had recognized Jennifer, who knew who she was. What if he just went his way to inform his officers or other soldiers that he had found the red-robed terrorist? There would no doubt be a reward or a big promotion in it for him. What was to keep him from doing that? How could Jennifer and Muhammad sit there so calmly eating their falafels, sipping their coffee, as Maher went out?

"Esther," Gypsy whispered with a smile on her face, "don't worry, everything will be fine. He's doing exactly as we asked."

"How do you know?" Esther whispered back, too intensely.

"Esther," Muhammad added, "how did she know where Maher was or what his name was? How does she know any of the impossible things she knows? God tells her. You must have faith. Faith brings peace, doesn't it, Jennifer?"

"Exactly," Gypsy said. "Jesus, please give Esther the key of peace and help her not to worry." She patted Esther's hand and smiled. "Now let's go. Everyone finished?"

"Yeah." Esther sighed. "I can't eat any more."

"Okay, then, Muhammad, pay and let's go. He's waiting by his red Ford around the corner to the right."

The bill paid, they walked right past the gateway of the Orient House, turned the corner to the right and saw Maher standing by a dilapidated red Ford, looking a little too nervous. As they approached him, they could see an officer coming from the other direction. His eyes were on Maher, but as they drew nearer, he looked at Gypsy and a light of recognition dawned on his face.

"Oh my God!" Esther exclaimed.

Gypsy scarcely noticed her, because Frizzy was whispering to her, *Don't fear. What's about to happen is to strengthen Esther's faith. This is going to be a rather exciting day, sweetheart, but it's all to further strengthen the faith of your followers, all of them.* Gypsy could tell from Frizzy's "all of them" that the Lord was going to add to their little "church" a fair few today.

Just then the officer froze as the full realization of who he was facing hit him.

"It's her!" he shouted. "Shoot her!" he said, looking at Maher, who motioned that he was unarmed since he was off duty. The officer turned and ran back toward the Orient House, calling back, "Come, we must get reinforcements!" as he turned the corner.

"Quick!" Gypsy shouted. "Get in the car, everyone. Maher, drive east toward the Mount of Olives! Fast!"

Muhammad jumped in the front seat next to Maher, the driver. Maher, who had hardly said a word till now, obeyed every order explicitly. The car pulled away from the curb with a squeal, made a u-turn, and headed down the hill to the valley that lay below the Mount of Olives. Gypsy got a flash of a church tower on a hill and looked up to see the same tower atop the Mount of Olives. "Go there, to that tower." Now she saw a picture of Don with a group of people standing in the parking lot below the tower. There were others waiting with him in several cars there. Could it be they were already there, that he already had a group of followers that big?

As Maher turned the car up the hill they heard a siren sounding behind them, then several more, and two military jeeps came racing down the road toward them. They were a half-kilometer ahead of them, but Maher's old Ford didn't have the speed the vehicles following them had. Now overhead they heard the unmistakable flutter of helicopter blades.

“Oh God! Oh God!” Esther cried. “We’re all gonna die! Oh God!”

Gypsy breathed a deep sigh and said calmly, “We just need to call out to God. We need to pray and claim the keys of His protection. He won’t fail us now. He never has and He won’t now. Jesus, dear God, they’ve sighted us, they’re after us, they know who we are, and there is no way out of this but by a miracle. It’s time, O Lord, for You to work. We’ve done what You said, now deliver us out of the hands of our enemies.”

The jeeps were closing on them, two helicopters hovered overhead, yet peace had come over the car. Muhammad and Maher were quietly praising God in Arabic and Esther at least was quiet, though her hands clutched each other till her knuckles went white. Following the prayer came barked orders on a bullhorn in one of the jeeps to pull over and surrender or they would be fired upon.

Gypsy saw that the road all the way to the wall behind which the tower stood was clear. “Step on the accelerator, Maher! Floor it!”

He did and a power his little car had not known in its best days propelled the car to the top of the hill and round the corner. They had gained some ground on the jeeps, but the helicopters were now ahead of them, hovering over the gate to the compound that was their goal. They were driving right toward them, right into a trap, or so it seemed.

“What shall I tell him to do now?” Muhammad exclaimed.

“Keep going, just keep going, as fast as he can.”

A loud bullhorn could now be heard from the helicopters, calling for them to stop, to surrender, that escape was impossible, that they were surrounded. Jeeps were catching up from behind and the helicopters still loomed before them.

“Okay,” Gypsy said, “slow down, let me out. I’m who they want. Then you drive on into the compound.”

“We can’t just desert you,” Muhammad protested.

“Do as I say. Do it now. Trust me. I’m just following orders. Do it.”

The car slowed almost to a halt and Gypsy stepped out of her side, motioning them to keep going. It worked. The helicopters came at her, leaving the car free to go through the gate to the right. The jeeps now turned the corner, trapping her in a terrifying pincer action.

Her knees trembled as she faced first one way and then the other. *The jeeps are yours. Turn to them. Don’t take care of the helicopters.*

As she turned to face the jeeps, she saw Don ascend the top of the compound wall to her left. He was now facing the two choppers. As the jeeps rapidly approached her with their machine guns trained on her, a mighty explosion directly behind her shook the earth. Then another.

Pieces of the destroyed helicopters showered down round her, narrowly missing her, but leaving her untouched in the middle of the wreckage. The two jeeps screeched to a halt. She could see the panic in the eyes of the soldiers. *Fire, Gypsy, fire! It’s time to use that power, so do it!*

She slowly raised her finger. She could see the drivers struggling to turn their jeeps round and escape. It was not easy to do it, but she thought *Fire!* and flinched as the lead jeep exploded with a roar that shook the earth beneath her feet and seared her face with its heat. Four soldiers lay silent and charred, killed instantly. Another soldier leapt from the jeep, screaming as the billowing flames burned him and

his clothing from head to toe. He ran a few feet before he fell on the road, still, dead.

*How awful, Gypsy thought. I killed them.*

*That's enough, Frizzy said. Keep your finger up. Approach the other jeep. They won't be able to move until you allow them.*

There were five soldiers in the jeep, two in front, one in the middle manning the machine gun and two in the back. They trembled like leaves as she neared them. Sweat ran down their faces like rain. She could hear sobs coming from one or two of them. She could hear and feel their thoughts as she drew nearer in what seemed the longest walk she had ever made. They were terrified, they would do whatever she told them to do. They all knew who she was. They all knew what she had done. She thought how Ahab's soldiers were sent to Elijah time after time, how one group after another was roasted until the final group fell down at his feet and begged mercy. These, like they thousands of years ago, would do what she told them. What should she say?

*Just say what I tell you.*

Gypsy stopped a car length away from the jeep, the twisted remains of the other jeep, the heat, and the foul black smoke a stark reminder of their fate if they refused to obey. She opened her mouth and the words began to come, "You are to come with me. No harm will come to you as long as you do what we tell you. We are offering you a way out of the life you have chosen, because it will soon get worse. You will soon reach a point of no return, where you will have to worship the devil-man of Jerusalem or die, where you will have to receive the Chairman's chip or die, where you will be called on to kill all those who worship any other gods. I know for every one of you that will include some of your loved ones, some of your families. Follow me and

live, not just now but forever. We represent the forces of the one and only true God. I know you all believed once upon a time. Follow me and you shall believe again in greater faith than you have ever known. To show we mean you no harm, if you choose not to follow, you may step out of your jeep and walk back to your base. Choose. Choose now."

One by one they all dropped their weapons and raised their arms in surrender.

"Good. Good. Now pick up your weapons," Gypsy said to their surprise as she climbed into the jeep with the soldiers. "Your weapons are useless against us. And I know you won't try to harm us. Drive into the compound."

It was not easy picking their way through the pieces of the jeep and helicopters on the road, but the driver managed to get them to the compound at last. The sky was surprisingly clear and silent. In the wooded parking lot by the tower stood Don now, conversing with a young Greek-looking man with a beard and a ponytail, dressed in black. There were four carloads of people milling about, speaking excitedly about what had just happened and praising God. Gypsy jumped down from the jeep and ran to Don, throwing herself into his arms. They were both smeared with black soot, but this was no time to worry about that.

"Oh God," she whispered, "was I glad to see you!"

"Me too. Me too." He pulled away and motioned to the young bearded man. "This is Father Nikola. He's an orthodox priest who's managed to escape capture in the Old City. God told him and his followers that we were coming and they were waiting and ready as soon as I rounded the corner to where they were."

Gypsy embraced Nikola warmly and said to the two of them, "Do you know where we're supposed to go now?"



“George said you knew and we were to follow you, but I got that we’re headed toward Jericho and the Dead Sea, is that right?”

“Exactly. And Frizzy said we’d best get moving on the double.”

“Excuse me,” Father Nikola interjected, “but who are George and Frizzy?”

Don smiled, “There’ll be time later to tell you all that, Father. Now let’s get on the road.”

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## HAVING GREAT WRATH

The Chairman paced the thick carpet of his plush quarters waiting for the daily call from the Minister who was still in New York. He had heard some kind of commotion taking place toward the east from where he was, but had been preoccupied and had not taken great notice of the three explosions that followed one upon the other. An electronic beep brought him back from his reverie. His symbol was flashing on the enormous computer screen that covered the entire wall of his room. The expected call was coming through now. The Minister’s face eight times normal size appeared and the Chairman stepped into the square where his own image would be televised to his cohort in New York. At his spoken command, the computer hummed to life and began transmitting.

The Minister bowed deep to him. Their eyes met, and the Chairman asked eagerly for news of the latest progress. The United States was in the vanguard and a major leader when it came to many of his plans, yet there was a mighty resistance there as well, and he hoped the Minister’s present visit and meeting with some of their insider spiritual leaders as well as the President and other top government officials would help to solidify his grip on that great superpower.

“There is much progress, Your Excellence, but still much to do,” the Minister said. He then proceeded with a detailed account of some of the gains he had achieved. He concluded, “Many militias and survivalists are arming themselves and holing up in thick woods in places like North Carolina and other mountainous regions. They have radio stations, even TV stations broadcasting from there, as well as printing presses and a great deal of literature that they are disseminating nationwide. We are rooting them out one by one, but as soon as we get one press or one station, they build another. These people are well prepared. They have stockpiled supplies, funds, gold and cash in abundance. They have been preparing for decades and present a formidable obstacle to our plans.

“If I may suggest,” the Minister continued, “it appears the time is right to make the microchip implant compulsory, to wipe out cash entirely and replace it with our enhanced cyber credit system. The world has been prepared for it long enough. We can step up the advertising, reiterate how it will make the world safer still, how it is the last building block that will complete the perfection of our New World Order. We can allow people the freedom to choose whether they receive it in their hand or forehead, and thereby let them think they are being given free choice.”

“And those who refuse? What do you intend to do with them?”

“They’ll be ostracized and starved by their own choices. We’ll find some prominent and respected naysayer of the system—there have been several over the years who’ve known about its development, and we’ve kept tabs on them—and will dig or trump up something suspicious about them. Then we’ll highlight the case in the media and attach a stigma and suspicion to anyone who speaks against or refuses the implant.

Then the consequences for these objectors will take care of themselves—especially as we will have greater influence and control over public opinion, action, and reaction, through the capabilities of this implant.”

“Ah, yes, good. I agree. That reminds me, how are things progressing with Archibald’s little protégé?”

“Well, Marduke’s invention is all it was cracked up to be and more. What is more, it will work beautifully for disposing of people in ways that can’t be traced to us or to any definite cause. There will be a rash of mysterious deaths once we begin to use this form of execution, that we can then link to any radical, rebellious element that still challenges us—or even use to convince an uncooperative one to cooperate or be pinned with the crime.”

“Good. Very good. And what of Marduke herself?”

“Well, sad to say, she seems to have cracked beyond hope. She’s terrified of the people she was assigned to defeat four years back. Just the mention of their names makes her go pale. As a matter of fact, when she saw the video of the Temple intrusion by two of their members, she panicked and has been very strange ever since. Archibald has his own lover sleeping with her to calm her down and keep her on ice till you decide what should happen to her.”

“Good. Keep her on ice for now. If she has no long-term purpose to us anymore, I think I have an idea of how she can yet be of some final, great service to her lord. But this we can save for later. Why did she panic when she saw the broadcast? What does that have to do with the people she was assigned to get rid of?”

“Why, I thought you knew. They are the same people, the exact same people, not just the same group. The two who invaded your speech that day and delayed your delivering the message were the very

two who challenged her in the seventies, destroyed the band she was backing, and then were instrumental in converting one of her chief lieutenants, Will Ryder, years later.”

“You mean”—the Chairman’s face began to flush and the veins on his neck to pulsate—“that the people who dared to challenge me that day were members of the Family?!”

“Yes, one known by the unlikely name of Gypsy and the other as Lenny. They are believed to be in our region, the lady right in Israel and the man somewhere nearby.”

“Then they must be found and destroyed! I want to know they are dead! I want to see their heads! I must see them torn apart! I want them to rue the day they ever stood against me.”

“Of course, your Excellency.”

“I bid you farewell, my friend,” and with a wave of his hand before the screen in front of him, the connection was terminated. The Chairman swung about just as an urgent knock on the door sounded. “Come in.”

Three generals bustled in with maps under their arms, beaming with looks of major accomplishment. They bowed deep and spread the maps on the huge table in the center of the room.

“Your Excellency, we believe we have located the recent whereabouts of the male invader of the Temple grounds that day. He’s here, almost in our lap just outside Israel—or at least he was until you took over Jerusalem. This was a known fact to our intelligence. We see no reason why he would have fled since that time. We know his group was under house arrest for a time and he established a close relationship with an officer in their army, Colonel Mustafa Saman. This man, interestingly enough, is believed to be

involved in some kind of clandestine operation that the government claims to have no knowledge of. We have reason to believe that the headquarters of this operation is here, in the southern desert in an ancient abandoned city in the mountains. And for our crowning bit of intelligence, we have reason to believe that this Lenny is now working with Mustafa Saman, and they may very well be together right here.” The general’s pointer landed directly on the desert city he spoke of. “Right in this city. An easy prey.”

“Good. Very good. You’ve done well. There is no time to lose. Buzz the city, take pictures, gather all the information you can to prepare the way for whatever our next step might be—invasion, extradition demands, bombing. It doesn’t matter as long as we stop these people who seek to thwart our plans. They are poisonous for morale. They are more dangerous than any of you realize. They must be stopped. And where’s the woman? I’ve heard she is believed to be in Israel.”

“That is not as clear to us yet, but we are searching. If she is in Israel, she will not slip through our checkpoints. There are road blocks everywhere and her picture has been disseminated among the local forces.”

One of the generals’ aides burst in breathless, stopped himself, bowed deep and blurted out, “The woman, that one at the Temple, she was on the Mount of Olives! She’s leading a convoy of cars and one of our jeeps out of town. She and another man with powers like hers destroyed two helicopters and one jeep, killing all the occupants. She commandeered a jeep-load of our men to join her and turn their vehicle over to her. They’re now on the road to Jericho and have passed the first checkpoint because of the military jeep with her.”

The generals looked at each other, hesitating as to what to say or do next, when the Chairman burst out with, “Damn you all! What are you waiting for? Send whatever you have—every helicopter you have, if need be—to catch her if you can, and to destroy her and all who are with her if there is no other way. I want her and that man *alive* if possible so I can see them *die*! I want to see them *fry* as they fried my followers! But if you must kill them, do it! Just get it on film so I can see it! And bring back the traitors from our army alive. They shall be made an example! They shall hang in the square!”

The Chairman pointed to two of the generals. “You two, take care of that. And you!” He pointed to the third general with the map. “I want you to send jets to that man’s hideout. I want to see it burn. I want all of it on camera. I want to watch. I want to conduct the campaign to apprehend these two myself. Give me direct radio communication and video link-up with all soldiers and pilots involved in this mission—and there had better be plenty of them! This mission is to be under my direct command, lest any of your imbecile commanders bungle their capture again. HURRY! MOVE! I WANT THEM BOTH DEAD OR CAPTURED TODAY!”

The generals quickly scooped up their things and scurried out the door.

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## THAT UNWAVERING FAITH

The Chairman didn’t have long to wait until his screen was filled with the dynamic view of Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives. A squadron of 20 helicopters had launched, three of them with live-feed cameras, and they now sped toward the Jericho road where Gypsy and her caravan of vehicles had last been seen. They knew the convoy couldn’t have gotten far with checkpoint after checkpoint to pass. The helicopters broke into three main groups and fanned out over the hillsides, as there were several alternative routes to take out of the city. The cameras went three different directions and to cope with this, the Chairman’s wall-sized screen split into three sections so he could watch all of them.

Each group of choppers passed checkpoints, followed dirt roads and tire tracks wherever they could find them, yet there was still no sign of the fleeing cars. They descended still further past the final great settlement outside Jerusalem to the highway through the barren mountains, and there they were! Four cars and a military jeep wending their way through the winding road at such a leisurely pace it was laughable.

A grim smile played on the Chairman’s lips as all the choppers converged on the helpless fugitives. One of the cameras zoomed in on a gunner on the jeep, who was turning the gun toward the choppers.

But then the tiny, pitiful figure of the rebel woman could be seen motioning him to turn it away, which he promptly did.

The bullhorn on the lead helicopter could be heard now. "There is no escaping. Pull over and step out of your vehicles with your hands on your head, and you shall live. Continue this ridiculous attempt at escape and you shall all die."

The Chairman chuckled as a second camera got a close-up of some of the expressions of dismay on the faces of the deserting soldiers and those inside the cars. The cars were now slowing down and pulling over. So at least someone had sense enough to know when they were outnumbered and outgunned and flight was futile. The cars stopped, and everyone stepped out onto the roadside with their hands over their heads ... except for two. There was a man who climbed out of the lead car, walked to the jeep, and stepped up beside the woman. Now they too raised their hands.

"They're making it too easy, too tempting to just kill them there without even touching the others," the Chairman muttered over the radio. "But I want them alive. I want to see her die before my eyes. I want to see her in pain." He barked the order. "Set down and take them all captive, and bring them back to headquarters. I wish to meet these rebels myself."

Five choppers slowly began to descend in front of the group, and five more behind. The Chairman could hear the pilots talking now.

"What are they doing?" one cried out.

"She's raising her hands! She's going to burn us! Shoot first! Kill her!"

"No, we can't. You heard the orders."

The woman and the man beside her slowly and deliberately lifted their hands from their heads and raised them to the sky, stretching as far as they could

and gazing upward. Then with one voice they shouted, and the Chairman heard them as clearly as if they were in the room. "THE KEYS!"

And they were gone!—The man, the woman, the jeep, the four other cars and all the people on the roadside!

"They're gone!" the lead pilot cried out with an unmistakable tremor in his voice. "They ... they just vanished!"

"Find them!" the Chairman screamed back into the radio. "And this time kill them the moment you see them!"

The choppers lifted off once more and now went in every direction imaginable to scour the countryside, though none of the pilots—knowing what had happened to the last choppers that had tried to directly confront these two—were eager to be the first ones to find them.

Gypsy felt a little light-headed, but turned around to see Don still standing next to her, and both of them still standing by the jeep, surrounded by total silence.

"What happened?" she asked. "The helicopters ... they vanished!"

"I think," Don answered, hesitating, "I think *we're* the ones who vanished. I don't know where we are."

Gypsy looked around. They were parked on the outskirts of a quiet Bedouin camp.

"How did we get here?" she asked, then answered her own question. "...The keys."

"Looks like we've just been translated," Don said. "But where are we?"

He turned to the other cars and people. Maher was now excitedly talking to Father Nikola, who was looking around somewhat nervously. The rest of the crowd muttered among themselves, and the mutters

were slowly growing louder as many of them turned to face Don and Gypsy.

Don, in turn, spied some frantic activity within the camp, and within minutes a line of twelve turbaned men, their faces shielded and invisible, formed in front of the tents, machine guns in their hand, and pointed at the intruders.

“We come in peace!” Don said, raising his hands by instinct. It was the only thing that came to his mind to say.

Maher now stepped forward, towards the line of men, waving and saying something in Arabic as he removed his own hata. The men in the line looked at each other questioningly, then one of them strode forward, looked at Maher, and embraced him.

The machine guns lowered, and everyone else heaved a sigh of relief. Esther and Muhammad came running over to Don and Gypsy.

“What is happening?” Gypsy asked.

“This is Maher’s camp, where his parents and family live,” Muhammad explained, his eyes still wide with excitement. “But I imagine *you* have more to do with getting us here than *he* does.”

“What the hell just happened?” It was Esther, the shock of the moment bringing out her more outspoken side.

“I believe we were just translated,” Don answered. “That is, moved from one place to another by the Spirit of God. And it appears God has put us down in a spot where we will be welcome.”

They all followed Don’s gaze to see Maher approaching them with a beaming smile on his face.

“It’s all okay,” he said as he came up to Don and Gypsy. “You are all welcome, though you, Don and Jennifer, will probably find yourself having to answer many questions. Welcome to my home, my family.”

As Muhammad translated, three children came running out from between two of the tents, straight for Maher. “*Abui! Abui!*” they shouted excitedly. Maher turned and ran toward them, scooping the first one up in his arms. A fourth figure followed, a woman, carrying a younger child. She hesitated, seeing the number of people before her. Maher, however, put down the son he was holding and walked over to embrace her with the unabashed passion of a man who had almost lost his life. Then, closely surrounded by the three children, he led the woman over to Don and Gypsy.

“Don and Jennifer,” he said proudly, Muhammad again translating, “meet my wife and children.”

After a grand meal had been prepared and eaten, and much conversation had passed, and many questions had been asked and answered, in a quiet moment when most others had left to return to their business, Gypsy turned to Maher.

“What is wrong with your son,” she asked, “the one your wife was carrying earlier?”

Muhammad translated.

Maher looked down. “Marwan is four years old, but has never been able to walk. He seems generally a happy child, but to tell you the truth, it has been difficult for me to watch him grow up. I have wished so much more for him, but his life will be as Allah wishes.”

Maher looked up again, with an expression of quiet resignation.

“Allah wishes more for him too, Maher,” Gypsy answered in her soft and motherly tone. “You know He does.”

“But what can be done?” Maher knew that if Gypsy prayed for him, he would be healed, but his upbringing prevented him from making a direct request, especially from a woman.

“God wants to heal your son, Maher. Today. Bring me to him.”

Maher rose, but a distant, rumbling noise interrupted the moment and drew everyone outside. Helicopters were approaching rapidly, six of them, in a comb-like search formation, along the road that led directly past the small encampment.

Men, women, and children gathered nervously in the clearing between the cars and tents, wondering what the intentions of the helicopters were, not knowing whether to hide, flee, or just ignore them.

Esther turned to Don and Gypsy, almost frantic. “They’ve found us again!”

One of the younger men who stood nearby looked at Don and Gypsy in alarm. “They are after you?” he asked in English, and then repeated the words in Arabic. “Now we will die because of our hospitality! For who can make war with that beast?” A low groaning and muttering erupted from the crowd, and all eyes turned once again to Don and Gypsy.

“Nobody is going to die!” Don shouted, climbing atop one of the cars and taking command of the situation. “You have nothing to fear! They will not find what they are looking for. Stand still, and see God protect those who call upon His Name!”

The helicopters drew closer, the ominous sound of their rotors now filling the air like a swarm of angry locusts. Then suddenly, as if by an unspoken command, they broke from their pattern and converged over the road, roaring straight on together towards the encampment, and picking up speed.

Maher turned to his friends, as everyone else silently kept their eyes on the approaching vehicles of doom. Even Gypsy looked uncertainly at Don, but he kept his gaze on the approaching helicopters with a look of calm assurance.

The helicopters made no apparent attempt to slow down as they bore down on the camp, and several people now started to panic and run for their vehicles. But before any of the cars or vans could be started, the helicopters had already roared overhead, leaving the camp untouched, and apparently unnoticed.

Then they all saw it. In the distance, a few miles away, a cloud of dust was being thrown up along the road leading away from the camp, as if a great convoy of vehicles was making a rapid getaway. And the helicopters were making all haste to catch up with whatever was running.

They would, however, find nothing to report.

When things in the camp had calmed down again, Gypsy, Don, Muhammad, and Esther followed Maher to his family’s tent. In a corner, seated on large, round cushion, sat the boy, an emaciated little figure who nevertheless put on a large smile when his papa entered the room.

Maher’s wife, out of custom and respect, remained silent and withdrew herself behind some veils into another section of the tent.

Gypsy approached the boy, and he in turn looked at his father as if asking permission to interact with this stranger. Maher gave a short nod, and Marwan held out his hand towards Gypsy. She took it in hers and looked him over.

“Can you heal him?” Maher asked, Muhammad again translating.

Gypsy looked back at him. “I cannot heal him, but God can, if you believe. Do you believe, Maher?”

“After all that I have seen today ... yes, I believe.”

## **A VISION FULFILLED**

Mustafa, Shimon, and Lenny pored over the maps Shimon had brought. Much could be learned from these, all the officers standing round commented—from these, and from the satellite pictures, the last taken before the Chairman's troops gained complete control and there were no more pictures. Excitedly they discussed all that this could mean for their preparations. Mustafa was gaining a clearer and clearer picture of how Shimon could be of assistance to them, especially if they could manage to smuggle more weapons, equipment, and men out of Israel into their country. Shimon thought he could establish contact with a few units that were trying to put up resistance, and that through his contacts he could persuade some to give up their Custer's Last Stand mentality and begin to work toward a greater offensive in the future.

Shimon could scarcely believe it, that he was plotting militarily with a roomful of Arabs and enjoying it. He felt alive, like he was fighting for the right cause at last. He looked across the table at Lenny and smiled a broad smile like he couldn't remember smiling for ten years.

An aide ran in from the bright sunlight outside and announced that there was a squadron of One World aircraft buzzing the city, flying in very low,



probably taking pictures. Men were scurrying for cover and trying to pull in the vehicles, artillery, missile launchers and equipment, but it was most likely too late, they had come upon them so suddenly.

Mustafa was visibly perturbed. “Lenny,” he groaned, “where are all the angels who were supposed to stop all surveillance of our activities?”

“I don’t know, Mustafa,” Lenny said, “but I do know sometimes God’s perfect plan is to save us *in* trouble rather than *from* it. He showed us we were protected, we had nothing to fear, and we assumed it meant they wouldn’t find us, but maybe it means something else. We can only ask God for the answer and what to do now.”

“That’s your specialty. Take a few minutes and ask God what we should do. I will let the capital know and they can at least send a protest to Jerusalem that our air space is being violated without provocation. And in the meantime you ask God if we should try to shoot any of these planes down, if we should do anything or just let them buzz us. Ask Him if we should flee from this place for a safer place. And I’ll ask my superiors the same.”

“I will.” Lenny hustled out of the cave, into the sunlight. No planes were overhead right now though he could hear the wail of their engines toward the east, and from the sound of them they were circling back. He had just enough time to dash across the way to his cave where Mary and the kids were supposed to be preparing lunch.

Mary was at the door as he ran in, a look of question on her face. She had heard the screaming jets.

“Whose are they?” she asked.

“The Chairman’s. We need to pray and get something from the Lord.”

Julie and Samuel joined them in the living room as they cried out to God and quietly listened to His voice telling them what to do now that they were discovered.

Across the way Mustafa nervously stood in the doorway while sortie after sortie screamed through the air. What could be taking Lenny so long? How long could it take God to say, “shoot them down” or “flee for your lives?” Why couldn’t He move a little faster? Messages had been sent to headquarters and word had come back to do nothing, and that they would be protesting this action and questioning why the sovereignty of their air space was being violated. Fifteen minutes had passed when Lenny and Mary strolled calmly out into the sunlight holding hands. A jet was flying right over as they crossed the way to Mustafa with no attempt to hide themselves or avoid being seen.

Lenny simply said, “You don’t need to fight this time. Keep the army out of sight. Don’t let anyone shoot to protect us or even be seen. God is in complete control. When this is over, your government can still declare its neutrality and deny any knowledge of me or what you are doing here if you follow my instructions.”

Mustafa nodded. “As always I will. Good luck. God be with you.”

Lenny hugged him and turned to the path leading up the cliff to the top of the rock face of the mountain the city was dug into. Without hurrying, he and Mary picked their way up the steep cliff in full view of the jets. They were almost to the top, a single unarmed pair standing in the blazing sunlight of the hot day in the desert. The planes buzzed past once, then another time. No doubt they were in communications with headquarters as to what to do next.

A fighter jet was flying directly toward them when a missile dropped from its wing, hung in air for a

second, and then careened toward them, a white trail of smoke streaming behind it. The order to kill had come, it seemed.

Lenny watched quietly. *It's like the vision of so long ago. They're after me. They're here after me, because my friends and I are a great threat to their power.*

The others watched curiously as the missile zeroed in on them, and then everything seemed to start happening in slow motion. There was no hurry, plenty of time to think what to do next, to listen to the whippers.

*Should I point at the missile and blow it up or will it explode by itself in midair or just miss?* Lenny thought calmly. It was very close now. No instructions had come yet. Maybe God was planning to do it Himself this time.

Then Rodrigo shouted, *Point at it!*

Lenny's arm lifted. His finger pointed. The missile exploded in mid-air, sending a heat wave that warmed their faces and blew their hair wildly.

Another jet was coming in now, and obviously Lenny was the target for this one as well. A missile shot out and this time Rodrigo whispered, *Think it back! Think it back!* Lenny didn't know exactly how that was done; nevertheless, still staring at the oncoming missile, he thought, *Turn around. Go back. Reverse!*

The deadly projectile turned enough to fly over their heads, missing them by fifteen feet or so before it made a wide swath in the air and turned back toward the jet it came from. Lenny and Mary watched in thrilled amazement as the missile slammed into the plane and exploded, sending pieces flying in every direction.

Mary threw up her finger at another jet flying in to their right and it exploded as well.

"Oh, Lord, sweet Jesus, I did it!" she whispered. There was a temporary quiet as the remaining jets made a turn to come back at them from the east.

Lenny thought how Mustafa and his government and military could honestly say they had not fired a shot, that some strange error had occurred and several of their planes were destroyed by their own missiles. Lenny now whispered in prayer, "By the power of the keys of the Kingdom, Jesus, tell us what to do next. What do You want done?"

Lenny's eyes fell on a wooden rod oddly left lying on the ground and he picked it up. He raised the rod in the air, just as he had in the Temple intrusion. Guided by the voices, Lenny and Mary turned to face three jets coming at them from behind. Supernaturally Lenny's voice bellowed a shout that was heard in the city below, that was picked up by the TV cameras and microphones on the planes, and was heard in the very chambers of the Chairman and by all his people gathered to watch the destruction of this renegade and his female companion on live, closed-circuit television. The cry exploded supernaturally from his lungs, "IT'S THE END! YOUR FEEBLE ATTEMPTS AT CONQUEST SHALL BE TURNED BACK IN THE FACE OF OUR FIERY ONSLAUGHT, FOR YOUR POWER IS PUNY BEFORE THE POWER OF HEAVEN, AND BEFORE THE INVINCIBLE POWER OF THE KEYS THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN INTO OUR HANDS!"

And then the middle plane exploded with a mighty roar and wave of heat. The two flanking planes veered from their course to escape the same. Without hesitation they flew in the direction of Jerusalem. The roar of the engines faded bit by bit until all was quiet for a minute or two.

The silence was broken by cheering and merry-making from the city below.

Above that sound now came the whispers in Lenny and Mary's hearts from their helpers, *The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. Now is the hour of your destiny, the hour when gross darkness covers the earth, but the Lord arises upon you. His glory shall be seen upon you, and many shall come to the brightness of your rising. You are they who shall go into and come out of Great Tribulation and shall be faithful unto the end and receive the crown of life. Well done, good and faithful servants. Hold fast to the hand of God throughout the coming years and you shall always hear that voice behind you saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.*

## THE END ... AGAIN

And so, dear readers, we must close another story that will probably never end. There are still righteous to be justified, and wicked to be condemned. There are still days to be counted, and the overspreading of abominations to be accomplished. There are cups of iniquity still to be filled, and trumpets of tribulation still to be sounded.

After Marwan's miraculous healing, Gypsy and Don are treated as prophets, even kings, in the small Bedouin camp. They and their guests are invited to stay, and so Don and Gypsy find themselves with a large flock to feed and instruct. Muhammad, being often called on to translate, becomes an excellent teacher himself, while Don and Gypsy make steady progress in learning Arabic—a language it seems they might be using for some time to come.

Lenny, Mary, Mustafa, and the no-longer-secret military outpost where they are staying remain safe for the moment. With the embarrassing defeat of his One World forces, the Chairman's government denies any involvement in an attack on foreign soil, and Mustafa's government denies any knowledge of the incident—or the outpost. But while the Chairman chooses to ignore Lenny's stronghold for the moment, he will not forget it.

With the Great Tribulation finally unleashed upon the earth, the children of the Endtime prophet, David, rise up to fulfill the special calling that was destined to be theirs. All around the world, the Family discovers new spirit helpers, new powers, new anointings, new miracles, new exploits, and new and greater opportunities to witness than ever before.

They hardly need to go *out* to find those who are desperate and searching for the truth anymore, because so many are now flocking *to* them for answers. Hundreds and thousands of people who, in the previous decades, had received MO Letters, posters, tracts, tapes, CDs, videos, *Activated* magazines—or even just heard about the Family through documentaries, friends, or hearsay—are now eagerly looking for “those people” who know their God and are doing exploits.

And they will not be disappointed. For the Family has been diligently trained—through the abundance of Letters, prophecy, and counsel sent out by Mama and Peter—in how to instruct the many; in how to expose, defeat, and overcome the dark spiritual forces that are the backbone of the Chairman’s deceptive New World Order; in how to claim and use the full power of the keys of the Kingdom; in how to work with the countless powerful heavenly warriors who have also been preparing and arming themselves for this day.

And so, with all of Heaven’s power at their command, these bold warriors of the Last Days will march together into the final fray, till all these things be fulfilled.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

In Alphabetical Order

**Abner Golden** [System] - Jewish adviser to the Chairman  
**Abu Ibrahim** [System] - Muhammad’s uncle in Hebron  
**Annie** [Family] - SGA in Lenny’s Home, a secretary  
**Archibald** [System] - Marduke’s homosexual overseer  
**Assadam Abu Mahmoud** [System] - Muhammad’s Palestinian great uncle from Bethlehem  
**Assid, Colonel** [System] - Colonel Saman’s superior officer  
**Avi** [System] - a guard in Shimon’s Jewish settlement  
**Carolyn** [Family] - Don and Gypsy’s daughter, living with them in Tanzania  
**Cliff** [System] - Marduke’s bodyguard  
**Collin** [Family] - bass player who joined the Family with Judy  
**David** [Family] - husband of Shari, and on the Mideast Service Center teamwork  
**Deborah** [System] - Israeli corporal in the Israeli Defense Force  
**Diala** [System] - Lani’s young cousin  
**Don Ward** [Family] - long-time disciple, married to Gypsy, based in Tanzania, Africa  
**Emmeline White** [System] - a British tourist in Jerusalem  
**Esther** [System] - Shaul’s sister  
**Frizzy** [Spirit] - Lenny’s wife who passed away before the beginning of this book  
**George** [Spirit helper] - Palestinian  
**Gideon** [Family] - Lenny’s SGA son, on the Mideast Service Center teamwork  
**Gypsy** [Family] - long-time disciple, married to Don. System name Jennifer.  
**Hanna** [System] - a visitor to Lani’s house, nick-named “Johnny”  
**Isaa** [System] - Lani’s father, a rich Arab Christian businessman  
**Iyyad** [Family] - Arab translator in Lenny’s Home  
**James** [Family] - Don and Gypsy’s son, living with them in Tanzania

## WARRIORS: IN THE FINAL FRAY

**Jemain** [Spirit helper] - Spanish, of Rodrigo  
**Jennifer Ward** [Family] - Gypsy's System name.  
**Jihad** [System] - Palestinian member of Islamic Jihad  
**John** [Family] - Don and Gypsy's oldest son, recently returned to the Family, now in Don and Gypsy's Home in Tanzania  
**John Paul** [Family] - African new disciple in the Tanzania Home engaged to marry Marina  
**Johnny** [System] - Real name Hanna, visitor to Lani's house  
**Judy** [Family] - Will's girlfriend in the first book, who later joined the Family with Colin  
**Juliana (Julie)** [Family] - 14-year-old daughter of Lenny and Frizzy  
**Lani** [System] - spastic Arab Christian lady  
**Leila** [System] - Arab Israeli girl met in Eilat by Don and Gypsy  
**Lenny** [Family] - long-time disciple, living in a Mideast Service Center, widower, formerly married to Frizzy  
**Leonard Sands** [Family] - Lenny's System name  
**Lucretia** [Spirit helper] - Greek, from the Early Church days  
**Maher** [System] - a Palestinian soldier in the Chairman's forces  
**Mantor** [Spirit helper] - major angelic warrior  
**Marduke** [System] - American witch, formerly Will's overseer  
**Marina** [Family] - Don and Gypsy's daughter, engaged to African John Paul  
**Marwan** [System] - Maher's son  
**Mary** [Family] - long-time disciple  
**Mordecai** [System] - an Israeli settler, Shaul's uncle  
**Muhammad** [System] - 18-year-old Palestinian American from New York.  
**Mustafa Saman, Lieutenant Colonel** [System] - lieutenant colonel in the army of the moderate Arab country where Lenny lives  
**Nasser** [System] - Jihad's friend in Hebron  
**Nikola, Father** [System] Orthodox priest  
**Rock** [System] - Archibald's young lover  
**Rodrigo (El Cid)** [Spirit helper] - Spanish, of Jemain  
**Roy** [Family] - guitar player in the Family in South America  
**Samuel** [Family] - 12-year-old son of Lenny and Frizzy  
**Shari** [Family] - David's wife and member of the Mideast Service Center's teamwork  
**Shaul** [System] - 19-year-old Jewish American  
**Shevardsky, General** [System] - military adviser to the Chairman  
**Shimon Narmann** [System] - Jewish mayor of a settlement in southern Palestine  
**Simeon** [Family] - Don and Gypsy's son with them in the Tanzania Home  
**Stan** [Family] - disciple won to the Family in the first book at the Armadillo Club in Austin  
**Stephen (Steve)** [Family] - SGA in Lenny's Home

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**The Chairman** [System] - the Antichrist  
**The Minister** [System] - the False Prophet  
**Wally** [Spirit helper] - former Wicca priest, now working on the right side from Heaven  
**Will** [Spirit helper] - Lenny, Gypsy, and Don's old friend, former music producer working for Marduke, now working for the Family from the spirit world  
**Yakob** [System] - a settler Shaul's age