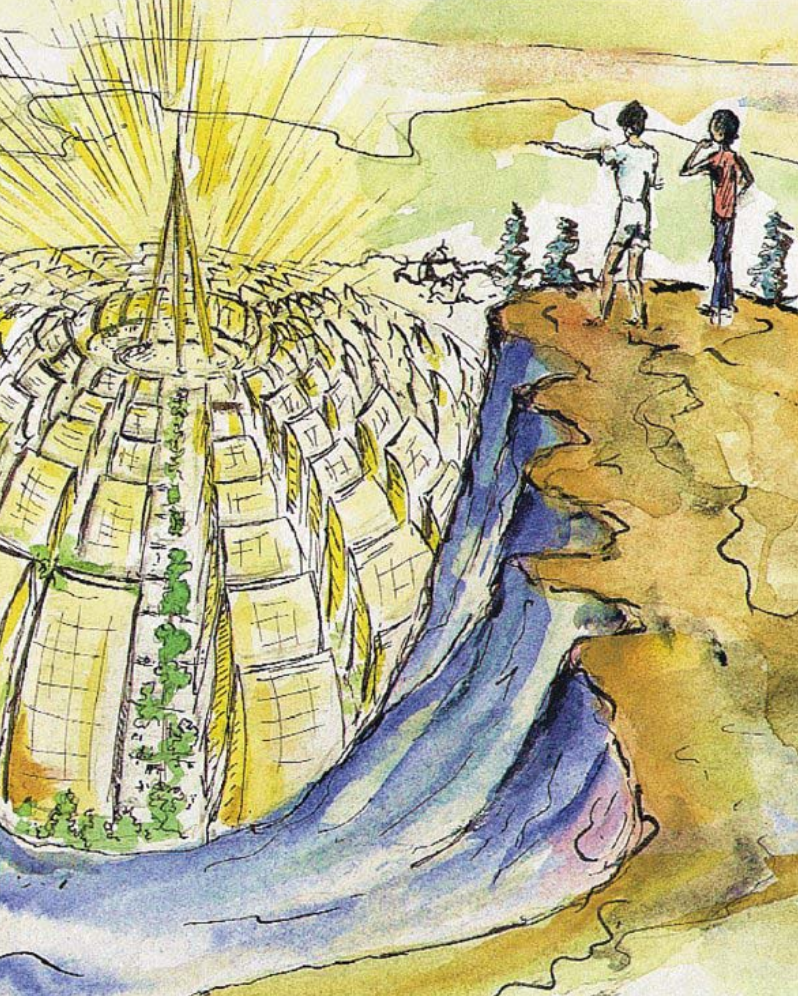


Journey to Tricon



Journey To Tricon

by Daniel Renfew

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Renfew grew up on a farm in western Canada. He began teaching at 19. By 25 he had his degree and a few years of experience as a teacher and school administrator. Outwardly his life seemed promising and predictable, but he found himself increasingly despondent and in want of answers to life. When the son of a close colleague committed suicide, Daniel was devastated.

Shortly afterwards, in the summer of 1972, Daniel was awakened by a Presence that told him to drive onto the freeway and there he “would be delivered.” Once there, Daniel felt urged to pick up some hitchhikers, who turned out to be traveling missionaries. Daniel soon discovered that “the Presence” he had felt was Jesus, and he gladly received Him as his Savior. From then on his life was transformed and set on a new course.

For the last 28 years, Daniel and his wife, his sweetheart of college days, have journeyed across four continents, living and working as missionaries, educators and writers.

Concerning the amazing experience that created this book he writes:

Life is a speck of our existence. We are tossed upon the staggeringly vast and infinitely greater ocean currents of spiritual reality that surround us, and fill us, and flow through us, and carry us into unseen worlds, and at last into the loving embrace of the Creator Himself.

Preface

Have you ever imagined stepping through some mysterious portal and suddenly finding yourself in another world, another dimension? *Journey to Tricon* is an account of what actually happened to me. I was spending a lazy day reading and recovering from a cold, musing over a letter I just received from a dear friend. My friend had presented me with an interesting challenge. Since we humans are essentially spiritual beings dwelling in physical bodies, why is it that we are not more aware of, or able to more directly communicate with, those in that vast realm of the spirit where our own spirits have their origin, and to which we will one day return? What amazing truths would we discover

if we could communicate with someone good and godly from that mysterious spiritual realm now hidden from us? What if the barrier to that world is of our own making, caused by our lack of faith or being too entangled with the affairs of this life and this world to simply reach out and believe and receive unlimited help from beyond? What if it is actually not as hard or as uncommon as we think to draw aside the curtain that divides us from God's world of angels, and the world of spirits that have gone on from here? What if we, by believing, could cross over the threshold dividing time from eternity?

As I lay there praying and thinking about the vast possibilities and the wonders one might discover once through that door, and wanting it to be possible, I began to feel a strange vertigo-like sense of excitement and a rushing sensation within. Something strange and wonderful was happening to me. I felt the urge to pick up my small tape recorder, which was nearby, and turn it on. Then as I closed my eyes, the most amazing visions began to appear. They were more than just "pictures in my head," for it was as though I was actually traveling—or at least some aspect of me was—and I was being transported unimaginable distances, not just to observe, but to actually participate and record my experiences.

While I was struggling to describe the things I was seeing and experiencing, I also had to wrestle with my own dismay and complete disorientation at so suddenly being plunged into a totally "alien" world. I was not afraid or

apprehensive, for the place, although strangely rugged, was very appealing. Also, I had an exciting feeling that what I was seeing actually existed. I believe the people I met also exist, though I wonder if perhaps they took on forms and appearances that I would feel more "at home" or comfortable with. I say this because I myself was quite different, although still "me." I was somehow changed, or modified to where I was a young person going by the name of Travis.

My first "journey" continued for about two hours, and I recorded all that I saw and all that happened to me. Over the next few months in quiet moments, I had more visions, each of which began again at the place and the event where I had left off previously. I have no explanation for this or how I could possibly be two people in two entirely different places at the same time, or any of the other equally unusual occurrences and encounters I have recorded here. I believe that there is much more to this life and our life to come in Heaven than we realize or imagine. I also believe we do not have much longer to wait before the portal dividing our worlds opens.

Daniel Renfew

-I- *Arrival*

I simply closed my eyes and I was there. In a moment of time, as fast as the speed of thought, I was carried over distances and into dimensions unimaginable in earthly terms. Suddenly before me was the breathtaking panorama of some unknown world. Eternity seemed to sweep out in all directions as far as the eye could see, and the sky of this place was charged with all the colors and tints of the rainbow, and some never yet seen by mortal eyes.

What magnificent world was this? Its landscape was so varied, so mysteriously and marvelously fashioned, so spiritual and mystical. It was all too much to comprehend in an instant: the magnitude, the mystery, the marvel of it all.

Here was I, a child of the Earth, a creature of clay and spirit, plucked from the circle of life on Earth and carried up and out into some vast realm of the spirit where the great ocean of eternity surrounds us. How different life on Earth would be if everyone could see for a moment these unimaginable worlds and dimensions that lie just beyond our normal senses.

I traveled on for what seemed a great distance. At one point, though far off, I saw the radiance of what seemed to be the Great City of the Children of Light. What vast regions there were here! I came at last to a place where there was land, a great plain that stretched out as far as eye could see, inconceivably vast distances. I was marveling at the wonder of the scene when I noticed to my right and slightly behind me a small figure in white approaching. I soon realized that a young lad was coming to greet me. I couldn't imagine that anyone would be expecting me. In the first few moments after my arrival I wasn't really sure who I was, or where I was, or even really what I was or how I got there. I'm not sure I even had a human form, for it seemed that when this person came up and greeted me, we somewhat flowed into each other's being.

As shocking as this experience was for me at first, a great peace came over me and I found myself very much at ease merging for a moment with my new friend. From all appearances, he was a boy of about 12 and I seemed to be about the same age as well. He was very friendly, reassuring, and instantly informative. I saw him as a boy, but again it seemed quite out of the

question to put an age to anyone in that region. Time and outward forms and appearances seemed of little significance there.

I can't hope to adequately or even accurately describe for you all that I saw, felt, or that happened to me while there, but I'll do my best. I hope that as I recount this adventure, you might discover some of the secrets of this place. Or better still, discover that same portal through which I came that will whisk you off for an adventure in the mysterious and marvelous worlds of the spirit, off into those dimensions of eternity that totally surround us, but about which we still know so little.

Is this a true story, you ask? I believe it's real, but I leave it to you to ponder and determine for yourself the substance of what I'm about to tell you. And if the things I saw in those regions beyond are true, then incredible things are about to happen here on Earth as well. For we stand at the very doorway to eternity which will soon swing wide open and launch us all into a joyful future together.

Here, then, are the first thoughts and words the boy spoke to me as best I can recall them. At first he was somewhat formal in his speech, but quickly adjusted to me and spoke as a close friend.

"I am Jamal, the first-born son of Ja-al and Joyus. This is the land of Ekron. There in the grassy area just beneath that silvery patch in the sky is where my father's stables are. He is the keeper and trainer of great horses that serve in the armies of the First Born of the Founder, the

Holy One, whose Name is to be blessed forever. I will take you there tomorrow, if it is willed, to see these magnificent creatures. In all creation there are no horses so wondrous as these. They are full of all majesty and power. The sounds of their hooves when they run together is as thunder that could shake a thousand skies! It is a magnificent sight to see the herd running wild in the wind, their white bodies rippling with such strength and muscle and power. I will show them to you later.”

Pausing a moment to let me take in a view such as I'd never seen before in my whole life, my young guide continued, “And there in the distance is the beautiful city of Tricon. That unusual structure in the center of Tricon we call the Temple of Tricon. Tricon is a very small city compared to the Great City of Light, but I think you will find it a wondrous place to visit. We will pass through part of the city on our way home.” Turning and pointing towards a darker region in the distance, he said, “And off over there is a region we do not much go into unescorted. Our great armies are presently reclaiming that region for the Kingdom of Light. But of course you must already know these things, for in that region is your home world. I call it the Place of the Spheres, or the Land of Orbs. There in the distance is a great gateway to your world and the sphere called Earth, where the people of time live, and where the Prince will someday place His City—the Great City of Light!”

“Did I come through the great gateway to get here?” I asked, trying to understand how I had come here so instantly.

Jamal smiled at how little I seemed to know about what was probably quite simple geography to him. “No, you came here through the spirit. Your spirit is here, but your body is still back on Earth. You see, our Founding Father is a Spirit. He is the Father of all spirits and the source and substance of all life. In Him we live and breathe and have our being. In Him and through Him and within His Spirit, all things, all places, and all times are united. Through His Spirit we may easily travel from one place to another, communicate over great distances, or see places that are far off as though close by. In His Spirit you can even pass from one time to another, or one dimension to another almost instantly. God’s Spirit is like a great heavenly hyperlink through which He permits us, His children, to move and communicate.”

Jamal smiled at my reaction when he compared God’s Spirit to a hyperlink. He must have been familiar with that worldwide computer linkup that we call the Internet and used that term so I could relate to what he was saying. I was always amazed at the ability to just click on a certain “hot spot” on a computer screen and instantly be transported far away to another place on the planet. For someone who in appearance could have passed for a simple country boy, Jamal seemed to know a lot, not only about his world, but mine as well.

“Distance and time are very important where you come from, aren’t they?” Jamal commented. Then, reflecting a bit on what life on Earth must be like, he added, “It must be strange to live in a place where time is so important.”

I could see him trying to imagine what it must be like for me. At last he shrugged and added, “Well, there is sort of a sense of time here too, I guess, but I think we measure change differently than you do. Where you come from, time is mostly measured by the movement of clocks, or changes in your own bodies, or the changes in things around you. We have changes here too. But in this region where the breath of eternity flows through every being and every element of existence, there is no real sense of time as you know it. Still, we do have changes—wonderful changes—and I’ll get into that shortly.

“Anyway,” he said, pointing off in the distance again, “over yonder is that dark region of the wars, where great battles are fought in the spirit. My father often tells me the stories of the wars fought there, the great adventures, and the victories won. Tremendous battles have been fought there. My father is a warrior in the armies of the Prince. All the men of my city are, and I am too, and some day we shall all join in the last, great battle. Oh, what excitement that will be, when we mount the mighty horses trained by my father, Ja-al, and ride across the Great Plain and down into that dark region where all the armies of God shall assemble to break the power of darkness and bring Light back into that land!

Oh, what a day that shall be. How I long for that day to come soon!”

Jamal’s eyes were alive with excitement as he spoke, gazing off in the distance at things and places I could not see as yet. He seemed to be speaking of a great, final, triumphant battle some time in the future, when the rulers of darkness would at last be cast down. The Earth would once again be ruled by the Lord of the Host of Heaven, the Prince of Heaven, the Only Begotten Son of the Founding Father, Jesus Himself.

Jamal turned to me excitedly, still caught up in his inner thoughts. “Can you imagine the rejoicing when your world will be set free and brought into the Light again? How we all long for that time!”

His face seemed to shine at just the thought of it. With an effort, he pulled himself back to our present reality, perhaps realizing that I knew relatively little about all these matters and the workings of his world. He looked at me with concern in his eyes. “It must be very hard for you living there where everything is so dark, so confusing...” His voice trailed off a bit again as he mused for a moment longer about what life must really be like for those living on Earth. Then he cheerfully added, with a warm pat on my shoulder, “But I’m so happy you’ve been able to come, if only just for a short while!”

As we walked, he went on trying to fill me in on details about his world. “I could tell you of some of the regions here that I know. But of course I don’t know them all, for there are so

many more than I could possibly learn of. There are so many places in our Father's great Kingdom, bless His Name forever. Someday we'll get to explore them—but that will take an eternity, don't you think? Maybe when we're together again in the future we'll go exploring, but that may have to wait until the Fallen Ones have been subdued."

My mind swam through his words, not completely understanding all that he was saying. He noticed my eyes flash with interest at the mention of the Fallen Ones.

"You know," he said, "the Fallen Ones!—Those angels exiled to the dark region. They were once..." he paused. "Dare I speak of them? They were once fellow citizens and servants in Our Father's Kingdom. They were once Children of Light. They were magnificent, and none more so than their leader. I can't tell you all the glories, the wonders, the honor and majesty and privileges they once enjoyed, but they spurned it all and rebelled.

"Yes, even here in this wonderful place given us by God, we've had problems. It was sad for our great Founding Father and His Son. But you see, these Holy Ones have kissed all their children with life and given them the freedom of choice, so that we are like gods, able to choose to love and serve God, or reject Him and serve ourselves. One-third of that great assembly was subverted and rebelled and went out from the presence of God in that day. What battles, what a falling away there was then! But the Prince of God, His only Son, Jesus, overcame them with His own blood, and now the

end is very near for the armies and leader of the Fallen Ones. Though many of those unhappy creatures still wander through the dark and desert regions in torment, most of them have gathered on Earth to prepare for the final battle. But I will tell you more of those things later. Let us now speak of happier things, for this is a time for rejoicing! Come! Let me show you the city of Tricon, the city of a people who serve in the army of the Great Prince."

To me, Jamal appeared to be a boy of perhaps 12 years old, yet in his speech and in his eyes I saw a depth of maturity and wisdom far beyond his age, and his spirit reflected the richness and vastness of this timeless place. He was a child of eternity, never having to hurry to grow up—though perhaps he already was grown up! Perhaps he was actually some ancient sage, who chose for my sake to appear in the form of a boy.



Everything here seemed so peaceful. I could hardly imagine there ever being a war, where angels fought pitched battles with degenerated creatures called the Fallen Ones. As we walked and talked, we came to the edge of a rocky outcropping that overlooked the beautiful city of Tricon. The view from the crest of this lofty place was breathtaking! I couldn't have imagined such a scene in a thousand years. As I looked out across this new land and down at the amazing city below, I wondered how my own world and my life on Earth fit in to all of this. Life on Earth seemed almost insignificant compared to living in this vast dimension, this unimaginable expanse and greater reality that surrounds and engulfs that tiny sphere, the home of humanity. Earth was somehow out there, encased within this greater realm where mighty men and godlike beings ruled and did battle.

Certainly I wanted to know more about the dark forces that held hostage my home world, and how soon their empire would finally weaken and collapse, and what part this friendly boy and his father had to play in our lives and the heavenly wars waged in regions largely hidden from the view of those on Earth. It was hard to imagine that my world had almost since the beginning of time itself been involved in some great celestial battle. I had so much to learn, and I was very curious to learn more. I especially wanted to see and meet the Great Prince, the Only Begotten Son of the Founding Father, the One we served and followed by faith.

-2- *The Temple of Tricon*

We seemed to climb down from quite a height before entering the city. The buildings of Tricon were of unusual architecture, for they all curved inward toward the center of the city. I can't quite describe it, but it was not unlike a great flower beginning to open up. From a distance, the buildings seemed to resemble the golden petals of a chrysanthemum opening around a most amazing center. The city had such overall symmetry and beauty that clearly it had been carefully designed and constructed with both artistry and practicality in mind. It was a marvelous work of art, a thing of beauty, a joyful creation set like some precious jewel into the side of rugged but magnificent high ground that

overlooked a vast expanse of land. One could see great distances here. Unlike Earth, there didn't seem to be any noticeable curvature of the surface, so the land seemed to stretch out endlessly in all directions.

Tricon was a marvelous crystal city, and at its center was the most beautiful structure of all—the temple. This towering edifice shone with a great light, and being at the very center of this



flower-shaped city, looked much like a large, golden stamen. It was tall, pyramidal in shape, very much like a radio antenna or tower, but it was not made of metal. The whole device seemed to be formed from three columns of light that shone up and out of a foundation of precious stone. These three beams of light converged into a spectacularly bright pinnacle high above the tops of the buildings. Like a great golden candle, or bright beacon, or large lamp, the brightness of the temple filled all the surrounding structures and spaces with the same beautiful light that flowed from its sides and point.

The tops of the tall, curved buildings all faced inward so as to better catch light from the temple. Each building seemed to collect and radiate this same beautiful luminescence. The light entered the top of the building and flowed down and then out, bathing the base of each structure—in fact, the entire floor of the city—with its warmth. This amazing living light from the temple permeated every place and passageway in the city, brightening the very bodies and beings of those who lived there.

We were passing through a series of circular streets, and I stopped to marvel at how all the buildings were designed to capture the light and diffuse it so marvelously, so ingeniously. It was like walking through a bright, joy-filled greenhouse. Everything seemed alive! For woven in between the buildings and on many of the lower floors of the buildings were parks and places alive with plants. Everything was bright

and fresh and restful, and the fragrance of flowers was marvelous.

As we passed through the streets of this amazing city, Jamal explained to me that this was a settlement on the frontier of the Prince's Kingdom. It was a pioneer outpost bordering the dark zone, where the Fallen Ones were largely confined, and where also dwelt all of the inhabitants of the Earth. I was puzzling in my mind, trying to imagine what my dimension, Earth, would look like from here. Was there sort of a hole into my dimension or some kind of depression in the floor of this greater world that contained our universe? I couldn't think what my world would look like if viewed from this place. It was hard to imagine how both these worlds could coexist, since both seemed just as real to me. This new world I was now in was every bit as real, if not more so, than the world I'd just come from. How did these very different worlds fit together? All I knew was that Earth was somewhere "out there" in a region considered by those of this place to be in darkness.

Jamal seemed to be monitoring my struggling thoughts, but here that seemed no invasion of privacy. Participating in another person's thinking seemed to be just how life was here—very open. "You know, your homeland used to be a most glorious place. It was the Garden of God. It was most beautiful until the corruption of mankind through disobedience, and the subsequent takeover by the Fallen Ones."

I wanted to hear more, but I could see that Jamal didn't want to talk further about it now, and I didn't want to press him. In this place there seemed to be a time for everything, and now was just not the time to have all my curious questions answered. Still, a thousand questions flooded my mind and pulled my interest in every direction. There was so much that I didn't know, or until now even realized that I didn't know. I had so many questions I wanted to ask. What is this, and what about that? But for the moment, I knew I must be content with gazing upon all that was before me in great awe, to simply drink in the mystery and the majesty of it all. This reality was beyond anything I could ever have dreamed! Or was this a dream? I didn't know. Still, dream or not, the light and splendor and beauty of this place made my world seem pale and dark by comparison, full of problems and sorrows, a place of confusion and many miseries.

Jamal knew exactly where he was going. I would love to have a friend like him back home. He was so clever and quick, full of understanding and information, and his smile was as warm as life itself. He had rich olive-colored skin, with deep dark brown eyes, a round face, and rust-colored hair. He was a very handsome fellow indeed.

I paused to look around in great wonder at the people here, at their unusual attire, their cosmopolitan appearance, and amazing style of life. "Come," Jamal said, tugging at my sleeve, "let me show you more! Just around this next corner you can see the whole temple."

I wasn't quite prepared for what I was about to see. Never in all my life had I seen such a sight! No sunset had been so glorious, no dawn so joyous! No experience I'd had could compare with the first breathtaking view of that wonder of living light that flooded out from the place Jamal called the temple. It was not like any temple I'd ever seen before. It was so simple in design, mostly composed of just three beams of light going up and up and forming a point. Between these pillars of light was a shimmering veil of colors, and under and inside this tall pyramid of light was a brilliantly lit place of worship, a sanctuary of celestial radiance and splendor.

Jamal said we could go into the temple for a few moments. We slipped off our shoes and entered. There was really nothing else to this structure than light. There were no pews or places to sit other than the floor; no central altar or objects of worship; no pictures, statues or icons. Ah, but what a great washing of my heart and glorious feeling flooded my soul as I stepped through the veil of light into the inner sanctum. It was like living, joyful, cleansing waters of light cascaded down upon me! Everything within my being cried out in ecstasy! The perfect peace and solitude of the place embraced all my senses, and time and place and every care and question washed away. No moment on Earth could compare to the perfect peace I felt in this place, under the light.

Yet, as the light descended on me, I understood that the doors to this temple are not locked nor hidden from us on Earth. This peaceful place of communion with God, this wonderful time with Him like I had had in the temple, was open by God to every human heart. God's true temple was a place in His Spirit that each soul could enter silently and secretly any time, anywhere, and find rest and refreshing communion with their Creator. In those little quiet times I took to stop and pray and talk to Jesus while on Earth, I knew I'd found this passageway to paradise, and had been touched by this heavenly light. Though here in this wonderful place it was all so much more real and intense. Here I was in the arms of Love itself, embraced by the Light of God.

I knelt down, lowered my head, and let the Light lift and carry me deeper into itself. It carried me into the City of Light itself, to the throne room of Light, and into the arms of the Prince of Peace. How wonderful it was to be swept up by the Spirit of the Living God in a great current of love. Up and up into the Light I was carried by the pure and eternal fire of His Holy Spirit, up into the dwelling place of God, into the very bosom and being of God. How joyous and wonderful it was to be safe in His everlasting arms! I was so thankful that I existed, that I was blessed to be His child, and in this special place with Him and in His Spirit. What a communion this was with the great Father and Founder of all things, and with His Holy Spirit, and with His Son, the Prince

of Light, the first Begotten of God, the Holy One, Jesus, the Lover of my soul, and Author of my life.

I remember reading about St. Paul, who once spoke of being caught up by the Spirit into a place he called the Third Heaven. He didn't even know if he was in or out of his body, or if it was really him that was there, so wonderful was that place. I was surely in that dimension beyond dimensions, that Third Heaven, or possibly the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, or perhaps that Heaven above the heavens, the Seventh Heaven, there in the arms of Jesus. I can't even begin to describe it to you, but perhaps you have already experienced a small touch of this all-embracing love and peace in some quiet moment when you opened the doors of your soul to God.

Oh, what a wonderful moment it was! I could have spent the rest of eternity there, but that time had not yet come. I became aware of Jamal pulling me back down to Tricon. There seemed to be some urgency about all the other things he wanted to show me and teach me and prepare me for. It seemed as though I had more to learn, and Jamal had accepted the job of guiding me through them while here. What a marvelous person he was. I certainly wanted to go back as often as I could, to be in the temple, to be in that special place of total peace and understanding and acceptance with Jesus! What strength was there, what rest, what renewing! What refreshing there was in the place called the temple!

-3- *Jamal's House*

We moved along quickly through the streets. Jamal was taking me to his house. Along the way we passed close by a group of people. I'm not sure if it's accurate to call them people, for though they looked like they might at one time have lived on Earth, they seemed more beautiful, and there was something unique, almost mystical about them, a certain ethereal quality that set them apart from normal people. Their movements were more flowing and they went about their business differently. They had a calm, peaceful orderliness and simplicity about them, and though confident, were most humble and considerate. No one stared at me or made me feel out of place or odd in my foreign attire.

They seemed to be from all different races, living together in the greatest harmony, all reflecting the same beautiful light and gentle understanding that filled this entire city. How different this world was from mine! The best of times in the best of places on my world afforded only the tiniest glimpse of the joy and wonder that life could be. I was familiar with the fact that my world had once been a marvelous garden created by God and beautiful beyond belief. Seeing these happy people gave me hope that some day the Earth would be restored to its former glory and the Spirit of God would again fill the Earth.

Still a bit dazed at being here and not able to grasp all that was happening to me, I followed Jamal somewhat mechanically to the outer limits of the city. I noticed a certain quietness and peacefulness begin to fill the air. Evening was settling upon this place. There was a sweetness in the air, a certain coolness. A feeling of relaxation and restfulness began to fill my body. I can't quite say that it was anything like the arrival of our evening or nighttime—although it never actually seemed to get dark like night on Earth. There was always a soft warm subdued lighting, quite like the glow that fills a room from an open fireplace. It seemed more like a time of great peacefulness came over all the land—though in the time I'd been there, I'd not noticed any signs of hard labor, intense work, or heavy construction going on. By outward appearances, there didn't seem to be that much going on, yet I did sense that very much was going on all

around me in ways and dimensions I was not yet aware of. Everything was quite different here, but I certainly understood this wonderful feeling of rest and peacefulness that was coming over me. It was like walking through a rose garden in the cool of the evening.

“In the cool of the evening”—my mind flashed back to Genesis. In the cool of the evening was a very special time of day in the Garden of Eden, for that was when Jesus would come and walk with Adam and Eve in the garden. That was a special time of day for them, walking in the cool of the evening with the Lord. What a restful, peaceful time of day this was! I found it pleasant to think of Jesus coming and tucking His first children, Adam and Eve, in at night—answering their questions, and listening to all the things they had learned that day.

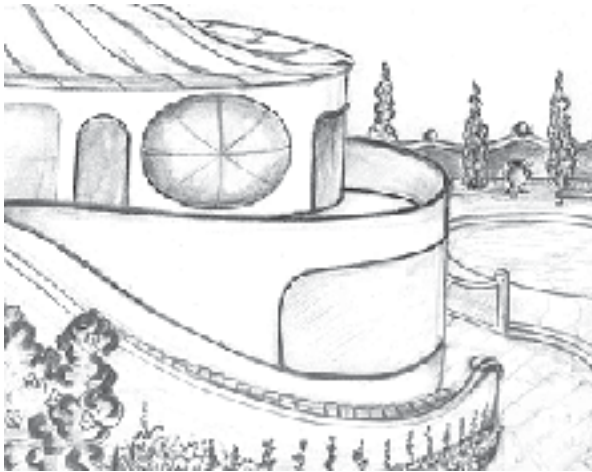
I, too, had surely learned much in this day and much had happened to me. Earlier my mind had been a volcano of questions. There was much more here than I could even imagine or have ever thought to ask about. But now this restful spirit that stilled the land for the moment put my mind at ease and gave peace from questions, peace from the intensity of experiences. Oh, what a marvelous moment this was. Creation itself wrapped its arms around me as I walked, and filled me with as deep a peace as I had ever known. This was surely the time of day when the Lord took His stroll among us.

Jamal's house was partly in the countryside at the edge of the city in a small, friendly town or cozy suburb. His home was humble and very

simple compared to the tall, magnificent, symmetrical design and gleaming crystal architecture of the city's center. It was actually more humble than I had expected for someone of such importance as Jamal's father. He was the trainer and keeper of the Prince's great white herd, the horses whose hooves sounded like thunder, the horses of the armies of God.

I very much wanted to go immediately and see those horses, but Jamal said we would go on the morrow. "All in good time! All in good time!" Patience seemed to be such a virtue here, and one I needed more of. Everything had its time; nothing was hurried or out of place.

We entered the grounds of Jamal's house. It was a two-story white house with smooth curved walls. It didn't seem to have any corners at all. The windows too were curved to match the



contours of the walls. The upper floor was rounded, inset with tall, rounded windows, and a lovely round crystal window facing the sky capped the curved roof. Up close, the house was a very warm and friendly place, very homey and practical. Reflecting upon it for a moment, I realized that it was exactly right for a man of greatness in this world. For here, greatness was not measured in showy outward appearances as is the habit of those back on Earth. Greatness here was measured in love, humility, faithfulness, and all those deeper qualities of character and spirit that a man carries with him at all times. The likeness of a man's soul to God's very open, loving, humble, warm and approachable Spirit was the principal measure of one's greatness here.

Jamal's mother, Joyus, greeted us. She was one of the most beautiful women I'd ever seen. Her figure and the whiteness of her long, flowing gown made her appear every bit like the most glorious goddess imaginable. She had such unimaginable beauty, yet here she was before my very eyes, warmly and humbly greeting me, and welcoming me as a friend.

Jamal introduced me, "This is my mother." She smiled and seemed to know all about me. Jamal continued, "This is the one who came to us. I found him today on the upper ridge and have been telling him about this place and all that I could. It is very different for him here."

"Very different," I repeated, smiling.

"I hope you will enjoy your stay with us," she said. "Come, Jamal will show you your room.

We will eat when my husband arrives, which will be soon.”

It was as though they knew I was coming and they already knew me—friends that knew me but that I had not met. Then again, everyone here seemed to be a friend I hadn’t yet met. Being here was like being in a neighborhood I’d grown up in all my life, with the friendliest people I’d ever known. Of course, this was much better than any neighborhood on Earth! I couldn’t imagine any sort of crime ever happening here, or any problems, or even a cross word.

The room Jamal took me to was a front room on the upper floor. We went up a set of very cleverly made steps winding around the curved sides of the house. There was another set of similar stairs on the inner side of the house. All around one side of this upper room were full-length windows overlooking a lovely back yard. The walls were not straight either, but curved gently around like a French curve. The inner dividing walls, however, were straight—two flat walls that met at a right angle in one corner. In that corner was the bed, like a quarter-sized piece of cream-topped pie, or a large, soft marshmallow pressed into the corner. It looked as soft as a cloud to rest upon. The windows were more like crystal than glass, that caught the light and showered the room in color. The windows opened onto a balcony and the second set of stairs went from there down to the inner yard area.

There were so many mysteries and lovely differences about this house—in fact, this entire

world to which I had suddenly been transported. So many things were different here, especially the people. They were all so very open—so open, in fact, that at times I couldn’t be sure if we were even talking or just exchanging thoughts, it was so easy to communicate. As when I first met Jamal, sometimes our thoughts and even our whole being just seemed to flow together.

After the initial shock of having so little inner privacy, I found it very easy to be around these people. There was nothing hidden, nor anything to hide. Everything was marvelously open, wonderfully shared, and completely understood. Life was a common joy that everyone shared and participated in. And as I said, sometimes I couldn’t really tell where or what I was. Was I there as a real individual, or there as a



participating part of their thoughts and lives and feelings? At times I seemed to be a part of Jamal and his thoughts and feelings. Other times I seemed to be just me following my new friend around. Sometimes I seemed to be almost floating in and out of new places, spaces and dimensions, and experiencing the beginnings of a whole new life for me. Yes, I did say “floating,” because gravity was not as we know it. So moving around seemed different too. Many things were very different here.

“Do you like your room?” Jamal asked.

“It’s beautiful,” I replied, “so restful, so full of light, just the way I like it! It’s just the way I would have made my dream house.”

Jamal smiled, as if he knew so much more than what he spoke. He seemed to be gently waiting for me to begin to comprehend all the things that I could not yet understand. He was so patient.

Now it may seem odd to you, but I couldn’t rightly tell how old I was while there. Back on Earth I was many years old, but in this world I seemed to be a young boy, though age or appearance didn’t seem to really matter at all. How odd that age didn’t seem to matter or be an important difference between people. Everyone was just as loved and as respected and as wonderfully cared for no matter what age they were. Everyone seemed to have a special, important job or place of importance here, no matter how old they were.

I went over to the crystal windows and gazed down into the fresh cool water of the pool below.

“Would you like to have a swim?” Jamal asked, reading my thoughts.

“Sure,” I said.

Jamal led me out onto the balcony overlooking the inner yard and inner court area. We went down the set of steps spiraling down to the pool area—and what a pool it was! This was a pool as I had never seen a pool to be, water such as I had not known existed. At the far end of the garden was a glorious fountain pouring out water unlike water as we know it, but more like it was made of light or diamonds, or what, I could not tell. The vision of it all filled me with wonder. Everything was peacefulness beyond anything I had ever known on Earth.

The water in the pool looked so inviting, so refreshing. For a moment I was suddenly concerned because I had no bathing suit. But it didn’t seem that bathing suits were necessary here. People here were all so open, they didn’t have the same sense of personal body awareness or shame we have. Everything was so open and honest and pure and clean before all. The unclothed body was as natural as the wind blowing through the trees, or rain splashing upon the ground in a summer shower. It seemed as natural and right as all creation itself to just slip out of my clothes and plunge into that refreshing pool.

Ah, the marvel of it! Those bubbles! So many exciting bubbles rippling up and tickling across my skin. The most wondrous thing of all was that back on Earth I’d somewhat feared water, especially going beneath the surface and getting

water in my nose and eyes and ears. I'd always experienced a sort of panic sensation at not being able to breathe under water, but it was not so here. The water—if I can say it was water, for it was much more joyful to touch than any water I had experienced—had the coolness and refreshing of fresh air. And strangest of all, I discovered that I could breathe underwater without any sensation of choking or sputtering. It seemed to make no difference to my breathing whether I was above or below the surface. I could swim under the water in this pool as long as I wanted! Oh, how free and fun it was for me to at last be a creature of the sea, as free and agile as any dolphin or fish ever was!

So many new experiences in one day—perhaps in one moment. How wonderful it all was! I could have stayed down there for hours swimming around, totally weightless and at peace, but I felt it was now time to go. I didn't want to be late for whatever my hosts were preparing for me. I surfaced, and there was Jamal sitting on the side of the pool, his big smiling face beaming at me. I pulled myself out of the water expecting that I would need a towel, but to my amazement, the water slipped quickly off my body, leaving me dry in a moment. Jamal handed me what looked like a white tunic and showed me how to put it on. It fit perfectly and felt fun and free to be in; new clothes in a new and mysterious land. What next?

-4- Helios—The Fiery Stallion

“Come! Father will be arriving soon. Let's go greet him!” Jamal hurried excitedly toward a side gate in the garden. The gate opened onto a lovely countryside lane, with lush green meadows, clumps of trees, and small hills in the distance. The light seemed to be dimming now, though I hadn't noticed any actual sun or light source in the sky as we have on Earth. The entire sky itself seemed to be the source of the light during the day, and during what I suppose would be the evening and their version of night, a subdued, amber glow clothed creation in a soft mantle of light as cozy as being curled up in a chair by a warm fireplace after a long, adventure-filled day.

In the distance I could see a figure riding a large, white horse. “Is that one of the great horses?” I asked.

Jamal’s eyes sparkled. “Yes! That’s one of my father’s horses. That is Helios, my father’s prized champion stallion! He’s ridden that horse many times into battle!”

I still could not imagine this gentle people ever being at war with anyone, other than perhaps the Fallen Ones. “Your father has done battle with the Fallen Ones?” I asked.

“Oh yes!” Jamal replied. “Perhaps tonight he will tell of one of his adventures.”

I’d never seen such a marvelous horse in all my life. The ground trembled under its great hooves. The stallion moved with a majesty I had only come close to seeing in slow-motion scenes in movies. It had such power! I couldn’t imagine a creature more magnificent. As he approached at full gallop, his large nostrils flared, his white mane tossed in the wind, and his long, white tail streamed out behind him like a comet. On his back was a tall, muscular, ruggedly handsome man dressed in the same light garb of this region. There was something almost angelic about him, and as he came closer I could see his broad, bronzed shoulders, his strong face, and his deep, penetrating eyes.

So this was Ja-al, Jamal’s father. To my surprise, he didn’t look a lot like Jamal, for his hair was much fairer and his skin a lighter color, though still a rich bronze. His eyes were a deep blue. Around his forehead was a small, flat, blue

band that seemed might be a sign of his rank or position.

Jamal ran to greet his father. He threw his arms around his neck as he dismounted. The man was warm and affectionate with his son. “Father,” Jamal said looking towards me, “come and meet my friend. This is the one who has come to us from the Land of the Spheres in the dark region. He is from the physical dimension of Earth.”

The man smiled a broad, majestic smile. I could feel the warmth of his character rushing ahead of him to greet me. “Welcome!” he said. His voice almost seemed to rumble. “I’m glad you’ve come, and you are most welcome with us. Come now, boys, let us go eat, for I’m sure Mother has prepared a wonderful meal that we might share together.”

It wasn’t as if anyone here was really hungry or even had to eat. Hunger here seemed unimaginable. Eating was more an enjoyable thing to do together, to sit around, taste some delicious food, and relax and enjoy each other’s company.

Ja-al turned to his magnificent mount standing faithfully by, waiting for his master’s command. I was amazed that so powerful an animal didn’t seem to have on any form of bit and bridle. It didn’t seem to need one, for it was loyal and obedient to its master. Though so tremendously powerful, it seemed to be happy to yield its whole being in loving service to Ja-al. “Come for me in the morning, Helios. You can go now, my

precious friend, and enjoy yourself.” The huge animal nodded and obeyed immediately. Turning to go, it then reared up in salute and raced away towards the meadows. In awe, I watched as it disappeared in the distance. It moved so quickly I could not imagine what its speed would be if measured in Earth terms.

“Come! Come!” the man said, grasping my shoulder warmly. I could just as easily have been his own son, so accepting was he of this stranger to his world. It was at that moment that I truly realized that here I did appear to them to be about Jamal’s age. I didn’t mind. It was fun to be young again, and fantastic to just be here and to be so loved and accepted by this warm and wonderful family.

Country homes, I was soon to understand, were generally simpler and more individually expressive of those who lived in them. The very orderly, carefully designed, somewhat symmetrical structures found in the city of Tricon were more for efficiency and inspiration while at work. To assure the best conditions for each person in the city, it was necessary that all buildings be in harmony, not only to capture and disperse the light evenly, but also to be compact, convenient, practical, and pleasant. I had the feeling that the unique design of Tricon provided its inhabitants with more than just efficiency and esthetics, but that it possibly even served as some kind of great listening device, and might even transform instantly into some kind of giant weapon in the event of attack! Tricon was, after

all, a kind of military outpost on the frontier of the war zone.

seemed so alive and radiant, sparkling, and her eyes shone with such love and understanding. There was a great aura of gentleness and tenderness about her. I couldn't help but gaze at her from time to time. I wondered what her life story was. Did she have a life on Earth before this one? I couldn't just ask if she'd "been alive" before this, for certainly no life on Earth could be more "alive" than this, for this place was life itself. This seemed to be where life truly blossomed, and life on Earth was but a seedling or shadow of this greater reality. I finally mustered the courage to ask her if she'd ever lived on Earth.

She seemed to understand instantly what I was asking, and smiled understandingly at me.

Jamal piped in, "Yes, Mother, tell him! Tell him the story of when you were on Earth."

She paused a moment as though prayerfully reflecting on what would be suitable to tell me. I sensed that her story might be a difficult one to tell. Still, difficult things from one's past did not seem like they would be difficulties in the present here, especially since everyone was able to communicate with each other so openly. I was to learn that they had wonderful attitudes even towards things that had been very terrible or unpleasant for them at the time, and more surprising, they never seemed to mind opening up their lives to others in any way that might be a help. Here there didn't seem to really be anything that could not be talked about, if done lovingly. On Earth, many such questions would be considered rude, or prying, or too personal

- 5 - *Dinner Stories*

We entered the dining area of Jamal's house. It was very light and cheery, and there was a large, round table set quite low to the floor. Upon it, Jamal's mother, Joyus, had set out all sorts of dishes, mostly interesting looking fruits and vegetables, things I'd never seen or tasted before. We all sat down on cushions and relaxed around the table together.

Ja-al led us in praise as we held hands in a circle, bowed our heads, and gave thanks for the goodness and wonders of God and His many blessings on us all. How close I felt to this wonderful little family here in their cozy home.

Joyus was particularly beautiful, and it was difficult to keep from openly staring at her. She

or painful to discuss; here, the dark or painful parts of life were replaced with joy, and washed away by the Spirit of God.

“Well, parts of my story are not exactly pretty to tell,” she began, “but as you can see, my story does have a very happy ending.”

“It sure does,” said Jamal.

“A very happy ending,” Ja-al added, reaching over and squeezing her hand affectionately as their eyes met.

Is this a love story, I wondered?

“Yes, long ago I lived on Earth close to a small Phoenician village,” she continued. “I was just a little barefooted girl who loved to wander through the hills by myself and talk to God in my heart. I was not very much like the other children in and around the village. In fact, they were often quite cruel to me, because they saw that somehow I was different. You see, the people of my village worshipped Moloch. He is one of the Fallen Ones. Everyone in the village practiced or was forced to follow that religion, but I didn’t like it. It didn’t seem to be right. They did things that seemed very wrong to me. At a certain time of year, some of them would sacrifice their own little babies and children to a terrible image of Moloch. It was a dreadful, fiery death they put them to, casting these children into the mouth of this idol that had a fiery furnace raging within.

“It was a terrible, terrible religion, an evil religion that called for the destruction of children. When I was sixteen, I was forced to attend one of the rituals. There, several men forced themselves on me, and in the months that

followed I found I was with child. Soon everyone knew, but because I had no husband, the people said my child belonged to Moloch and must be given in sacrifice to him. I said, ‘No, this child belongs to the one true God, the Creator of all, and I will keep this child and raise it for Him.’

“The people became very cruel to me. The more pregnant I appeared, the more pressure they put upon me to give up my child as soon as it was born. Some of the older women would even throw rocks at me and curse me when I passed by. They said I was a blasphemous child, a wicked one, and that I would bring the curses of Moloch upon them all, that he would cause the rain to stop and our crops would fail if I did not yield. They said I was selfish and didn’t love the people. But I couldn’t yield to them, for a voice in me comforted me and told me that what they were doing was wrong. So I kept fighting them and refused to give in. Even my own father did everything in his power to make me yield, for he feared the people.

“Then one day, when bad things seemed to be happening to our village, a furious mob led by the high priest of the temple of Moloch came to our house to get me. I fought with them. They told me that if I did not yield and promise to give the fruit of my womb to Moloch, then they would be forced to cast me alive into the idol’s furnace with my unborn baby. They said they had no choice, for I was the cause of their problems and my stubbornness had brought the wrath of Moloch upon them. My father begged me to give in to their wishes and promise to give my child

to Moloch, but I stood up and refused. I told them that I would rather die with my baby than give it to Moloch.

“You stubborn child,’ they said, ‘why will you die?’

“I will not die,’ I told them, ‘nor will my baby, but we shall live.’

“That is the last thing I said, for they took me immediately and cast me alive into the fire. I didn’t feel any pain. The first thing I felt were two strong, loving arms around me, lifting me up and carrying me away from that place. It was my own dear guardian from God, Ja-al.”

She turned and smiled over at her husband. I sat stunned for a moment. Ja-al had been her guardian in life—Ja-al the great warrior, defender of the weak from the wickedness of the Fallen Ones. Tears came to my eyes. It was such a wonderful love story.

She continued, “You see, Ja-al had watched over me all my life and loved me very dearly. He was my guardian appointed to look after me. Ja-al then took me up to meet the great Prince of Heaven, and I found favor in His eyes. He counted my fight against evil as righteousness, because in my heart I was searching for the truth. So then I came to live with Ja-al, and soon I gave birth to my baby right here in this house.”

“That was me!” Jamal said with a smile.

“Yes, dear, that was you.” She turned and said to me, “You see, Jamal never got to be born on Earth; he is a spirit-born child.” Jamal laughed, and both of his parents smiled and laughed lovingly with him.

I now understood why Jamal looked so different from Ja-al, yet certainly this great man had been a true father to him. But I was not quite ready for the next realization that hit me. If that baby was the same happy Jamal that was now sitting beside me ... my mind was stunned! In Earth years, he would be about 3,000 years old! They must have noticed my look of complete shock, for they all suddenly burst out laughing. I had to laugh too. “Oh my!” I said. “And I thought that I was so much older than I looked in this place!”

Jamal was eager for more stories. “Father, tell us one of the stories about the wars with the Fallen Ones.”

The man seemed to look somewhere deep within as he recalled events long gone by. “Oh, we have had many wars,” he said. “Some battles are so critical that the Prince of the Host Himself leads an army into that region to subdue or cast down some evil principality or foil some wicked plot against one of His earthly children or one of His prophets. Shortly after your mother came here and you were born, when you were quite small, just a baby, one of the prophets of God was in trouble. The Lord sent His army to go and defend him.”

Ja-al laughed out loud as he began to recall the events of that day. “What a day that was! On that occasion, we harnessed the horses in teams to the great war chariots. Warriors driving horses from several stables around the Kingdom gathered on the Great Plain. The Prince Himself

led the charge into the dark region. Of course, no Fallen One can stand before Him when He rides into battle, for all power is given to Him in Heaven and Earth. The thunder of the horses' feet and the rumble of the wheels of those great chariots could be heard throughout creation and the regions of time.

"The dark forces fled in terror. Some cried, 'This is the terrible day of the Lord! He is coming to judge the Earth!' They ran and hid as best they could in the dens and caves and dark places of the earth. They said to the mountains, 'Fall on us and hide us from His face!' You should have seen them trying to hide. A few of their forces tried to resist us, but soon broke and fled.

"What had happened, you see, was that the King of Syria, under an evil influence, had become furious with the prophet of God and was determined to kill him. That was the prophet Elisha. This king was mad, because Elisha would tell the King of Israel who ruled over God's people at that time, everything that the King of Syria planned to do against them, so none of the King of Syria's strategies worked out. He couldn't surprise them or get an advantage over the people, because all his plans were being spoiled by Elisha.

"So in his anger, the King of Syria raised up a great army and sent spies into the land to find out exactly where Elisha was staying. Well, they found him in the city of Dothan. So the armies of the King of Syria swept in and surrounded the city of Dothan in the night. Of course, our messengers went ahead to warn Elisha and to

tell him what was happening, that we were on our way and not to be afraid.

"In the morning, the whole city was surrounded by the Syrian army, and they were demanding that Elisha be turned over to them immediately. The people of the city were very afraid. Elisha's own servant was afraid. He was a young man, and all he could see were all those horses and chariots of the Syrian army surrounding the city, all their lances and their angry looks. So he cried out to Elisha, wondering what could be done, for it seemed to him that they were about to be killed. Well, right about then, we arrived!"

Ja-al laughed again, recalling the scene. "Oh, it was glorious! We had ridden across the great plain at a tremendous speed and were now descending into that region. Our chariots rumbled in and began filling all the hills and area that surrounded Dothan, until we totally surrounded the Syrian army.

"Of course, because we were in a higher dimension, no normal people on Earth could see or hear us. But Elisha, who was in tune with the Spirit of God, looked up and saw us come, and he laughed, for he knew that the Lord was with him.

"What a day that was! The forces of the Fallen Ones fell back in fear before the Lord, and the army of the King of Syria was helpless. Then the Lord called out to Elisha, 'What shall we do with them?'

"Elisha was quite a funny little man. He was going bald and was not at all a fierce or

dangerous enough looking fellow that you would think to send an entire army to arrest him. He looked totally harmless to all those soldiers. But, you see, he was the prophet of God. He was God's voice to His people, so God protected him. So this little man prayed to the Lord, 'Blind them!'—And the entire army of Syria was blinded by God!

Elisha just walked out of the city and talked to them and convinced them that they were all at the wrong city, and that he would lead them to where they needed to go. So he set off leading them straight for the city of Samaria, where there were many armed soldiers ready to destroy them. Blindly the whole Syrian army followed the very man they'd come to kill. Elisha led them all straight into a trap, taking them right into the center of heavily guarded Samaria. Then Elisha prayed again, and the Lord lifted their blindness. Suddenly they realized they were in Samaria and that they'd all been captured!

"Well, the King of Israel was so amazed by all this, that he asked Elisha whether they should kill them or not. Elisha was a wise man and said, 'Oh no, no, don't kill them. Feed them, take care of them, treat them nicely, and send them home!' And then he laughed, and we all laughed too. That was such a day! They were all so surprised. I really liked that battle—no one got hurt, and God won a great victory!"

Ja-al laughed a deep, hearty laugh. Suddenly he remembered he'd left out something. "Oh, but I forgot to tell you the most interesting part. Remember when Elisha's servant was upset and

fearful and asking Elisha to tell him what was going to happen to them? Well, Elisha prayed and the Lord opened the servant's eyes so he could see our armies and chariots rolling in. We were coming down from the mountains all around. What a sight that must have been for him. He sure looked surprised! That was his first peek into the great spirit world that was all around him. He got to see this world that you are in right now, so he got quite an eyeful that day!"

I'd remembered reading that story in the Bible, but it had never seemed so real and alive as hearing about it from someone who'd actually been there. I realized that Helios, the great horse I'd seen Ja-al ride up on, had probably been with him there in that battle, and many other horses from the herd. I couldn't help but ask, "Was Helios there too?"

"Oh, yes!" Ja-al replied. "Helios helped pull my chariot. Helios has done a lot of work for the Lord." He smiled, "Well, that's how he got his name. You see, he loves to appear as though he's made of fire, and he may well be! He's like the burning sun in battle. Helios was one of the horses helping to pull the fiery chariot that rode down and divided Elisha and Elijah on the day that Elijah was taken up to be with us here. Oh, yes, Helios has had many adventures, but those are stories for another time."

I could have listened on and on to the wondrous tales of adventure that seemed to be a daily part of the life here. The most exciting things from all history were here to be learned

so easily. I had so many more questions tumbling into my mind, of great battles in the spirit, of the messenger who battled with the Fallen Ones as he tried to get a message from God through to the prophet Daniel. There were so many things I wanted to know, so many mysteries I was eager to discover. But those things would have to wait, for it was clearly time now to retire in peaceful rest. This had been a long day, my first day in this new world.

The whole family showed me to my room and prayed for me that I would have a good sleep and that I would be blessed and able to stay with them longer—or if not, then to some day return. I thanked them for all their love and hospitality. I lay awake for quite a long while, turning over in my mind the events of that day. I wondered what would happen to me when I closed my eyes and drifted off to sleep. Where would I awake, here or back on Earth? I heard the gentle cooing of a dove outside my window and closed my eyes.

-6- My New Name

I awoke to a bright and beautiful day! To my relief and joy, I found myself still in Jamal's house. I looked up through the clear, crystal dome that formed the roof of this part of the house and was the ceiling of my room. Above me was a very beautiful, bright, colorful sky. I mused for a moment and wondered what further excitement and adventures awaited me this day. My thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a voice beside me. It was not a voice I knew or recognized.

“Oh, good morning. You're awake!”

A little shocked, I turned my head to see sitting by the window not far from my bed, a girl slightly

older than Jamal. She had lovely, rusty-red hair, and a very happy, round, smiling, freckled face.

“Jamal is over at the stables with his father,” she said. “He was concerned that you would awake and find him gone, so asked me to come over and wait for you to wake up. So here I am!”

I struggled with a few awkward Earth feelings at the realization that someone I didn’t even know, and a girl at that, was in my room watching me and waiting for me to wake up. I guess I must have shown a bit of surprise on my face, for she sort of laughed or chuckled a bit to see me taken aback. Such behavior must seem so odd to these people who are so honest and open and totally comfortable with each other.

“You just arrived yesterday, didn’t you?” she said, seeming to want to put me at ease by getting a conversation going.

“Yes,” I said. “I’m the new kid on the block,” trying to be a bit humorous. She looked a little puzzled, as though she hadn’t heard that expression before, so was not quite sure what it meant exactly.

She seemed quite different than Jamal. Although she seemed older in appearance, she didn’t seem to be quite as ... well, how should I put it ... understanding and sensitive to others. Still, I liked her! She had a fun twinkle in her eyes like she could be quite unpredictable at times.

“What’s your name?” I asked.

“Zaapha,” she replied. “And yours?”

At that moment I realized that I had never actually used my name yet here. Names mean a

lot back on Earth, but they didn’t seem to be so needed or important here. In this place you just seemed to know people in a very close and personal way almost as soon as you met them, plus everyone I’d met so far seemed to know me so well it hardly seemed necessary to give them a name. They were like old friends I’d known all my life. But as I said, Zaapha seemed a little different than Jamal and his parents, and was asking for my name. I began to say my Earth name, but somehow it just seemed out of place. It wasn’t really me, not this new me.

Zaapha noticed my puzzlement and hesitation. “Oh, you probably don’t have a new name yet, do you?”

“A new name?” I asked.

“Yes,” she said. “We often give people who come here a new name, because everything is so different when you first arrive. At least it sure was for me!”

Zaapha obviously wasn’t spirit-born. She must have been born on Earth. So in that respect she was more like me than Jamal, who had never lived on Earth. I wanted to ask her about herself, but thought I’d better stick to the topic at hand.

“Well, how do you get a new name?” I asked.

“Oh, there are lots of ways,” she laughed. “Come on, we’ll think and pray about it on the way to the stables. Do you want breakfast?”

I had slept in my tunic, the one Jamal had given me. To my surprise, it wasn’t wrinkled, but was as white and fresh as the moment I’d put it on. I was already dressed for the day. I jumped up and followed Zaapha out onto the balcony

and down the curved stairs opposite the pool side of the house.

Joyus was busily working in a small but breathtakingly exotic flower garden along the side of the house.

“Good morning!” she called cheerfully. “Would you like something to eat?”

I thought about it a moment, and to my amazement, I realized that I didn’t feel the least bit hungry.

“Thank you so much for the offer,” I replied, “but I don’t really feel hungry at the moment.”

Noting the rather puzzled tone in my voice at this discovery about my new self—for on Earth I usually very much like to eat—Joyus said, “Well, I guess you just discovered that here you eat if you want to, or don’t eat if you don’t feel like eating. Whatever pleases you! Hunger is never a problem here.”

“Well,” I said, “I guess, I won’t eat just now then. I’ll see how long I can go.”

She laughed warmly. Then Zaapha grabbed my hand and pulled me along, heading towards the back gate. I waved goodbye to Joyus as we hurried out. She smiled and waved back. We dashed down the back lane that led off towards the open countryside of trees and streams, hills and meadows.

Zaapha was spontaneous and fun. She didn’t seem at all cumbered with concerns about this or that. Also, there was an air of mystery about her that fueled my growing curiosity and interest.

The countryside was beautiful. A small crystal stream bubbled cheerfully alongside the lane. I

couldn’t help but run over to it and look down into its fresh, clean waters. A collection of bright, shiny objects caught my eye, and I reached down and pulled one out. In the stream were beautiful, shining gems, uncut of course, but bright and beautiful, and nuggets of what appeared to be pure gold.

“Look at these,” I said excitedly, holding up to the light what appeared to be a large diamond in the rough. “What is it?”

“A diamond, I suppose,” Zaapha said casually and matter-of-factly, as though that was about the most plain and common rock one could find in the streams around here. It was very exciting for me to find a diamond, but to her it was just another beautiful stone.

My mind being still tainted by the material values on Earth, I blurted out, “Can you imagine how much this would be worth back on Earth?”

Zaapha looked at me a little oddly for a moment, and then with a little look of disapproval, took the precious pebble from my hand and casually tossed it back in the stream. Obviously such things were of no great value here, or at least not valued in the same strange way that we value them back on Earth. On Earth, people take such rocks and make little trinkets out of them, which are then hid or hoarded and only worn out in proud, showy displays on rare occasions. Some even measure greatness in people by their possession of such things. How totally different it was here, as Zaapha had just clearly demonstrated.

I realized how much I liked this place. It was so free of all those earthly attitudes and oddities that only left people envious and discontent. Wealth and power and riches really didn't seem to have any meaning or significance at all here. Everyone seemed about the same, and to have about the same—which was a lot, really! There was enough, and no one took too much. It was wonderful. I hadn't seen anything like money in this place; it just didn't seem to exist or be needed in this great, loving, and cooperative society. How wonderfully strange and different this world was from Earth! I peered down into the crystal water of the sparkling stream a moment longer. Zaapha turned to go. It was hard to pull myself away from each new object of interest; there was always so much more to be learned. I was like a brand-new baby reaching out to experience everything in reach.

"Wait for me," I said, calling after her, and ran to catch up. "So how do I get a new name?" I asked, when I was beside her again.

"Well, you could pray and ask the Lord to give you one."

"But isn't that quite a small matter to bother the Lord about?" I asked.

"Oh no, not at all," she said. "He doesn't mind. In fact, He likes us to talk to Him very often."

By now we were passing under a large, shady tree. "Here, let's pray." She took my hand and pulled me off the path, and we plopped down under the tree. She didn't close her eyes, but was smiling and looking off as though she were actually seeing and talking to Jesus right there at

that moment. "Jesus, please help us find a new name for this traveler in the Spirit who has come to visit us."

I was about to speak, but she signaled me to remain still. "Listen," she said, "and the Lord will speak to you."

I closed my eyes and began to listen. At first I heard nothing more than the sounds around me and the hum of my own thoughts, but then as I began to relax and reach out to Jesus, I began to hear a still, gentle voice speaking within me, saying, "Well, what names do you like?"

I replied to Him, "Well, I am a traveler here. I kind of like the sound of 'Traveler,' or maybe something like 'Travis.'"

"That's quite nice," the Lord said. "Why don't you go with whichever one of those you like best for now. Then when you return here to stay, I'll give you a new and special name."

"Okay, Travis it is!" I said out loud.

"Travis!" Zaapha repeated. "That's a good name. It sort of sounds like 'travels to us'—and that's what you are, a spirit traveler. Travis it is then!"

movements, and carefully coordinated moves. It was sheer poetry in motion. These creatures were so graceful and moved with such unity and ease, with not a second of hesitation or uncertainty. They looked like a great troop of heavenly dance horses practicing for the greatest performance of their lives.

In the center of this great natural amphitheater formed by the brightly colored hills on all sides stood the tall figure of Ja-al. There by his side was Jamal, learning how to communicate with the horses and direct them through their paces. They seemed to somehow be able to communicate with the whole herd, and at the same time direct individual horses through their paces. How this communication took place was not entirely obvious, though they did seem to speak to the horses in a peculiar tongue.

“Is this the whole herd, or does the Lord have more horses than this?” I asked.

Zaapha smiled and almost laughed, but caught herself. “This is just a small herd,” she said. “There are many trainers and keepers of the Lord’s horses. The Lord has tens of thousands of fine horses, but He likes to keep the herds small so their keepers can get to know each horse individually. They’re very clever creatures and fun to work with and learn to ride.”

“The horses seem to understand when Ja-al speaks to them,” I said.

“Oh, yes. They understand perfectly,” Zaapha said. “All the animals in this region communicate with each other and with people.” Zaapha

-7- Angel Patrol

We got up and continued down the country road. Suddenly in the distance I could hear a rumbling, thundering kind of a roar.

“What is that noise?” I said. “It seems to shake the ground like a tremor. Do you have earthquakes here?”

“Oh, the horses are doing their morning exercises. Come on, it’s marvelous to see.” Zaapha broke into a run. As we came to the crest of a small hill, there below us lay a huge, bowl-shaped valley. A hundred or so powerful white horses were going through some sort of exercise course and special maneuvers that required considerable skill, a lot of jumps, turns, side

seemed very aware how different everything was for me here.

Jamal suddenly noticed us standing there on the crest of the hill watching the performance. He waved happily, took leave of his father, and ran towards us.

“I hoped you would come soon,” he said. “I didn’t want you to miss the morning drills.”

Jamal smiled and nodded to Zaapha, “Thank you, Zaapha, for bringing him.”

“Him’ has a new name,” Zaapha laughed. “It’s Travis.”

“Okay, Travis,” Jamal smiled taking my hand. “It’s good to meet you. What would you like to do today? Would you like to go for a ride?”

My heart skipped a beat. I couldn’t imagine what it would be like on the back of one of those huge beasts, for the lowest part of their back was as high as I could reach into the air, and then some.

“You can ride with Zaapha on Regent,” he said. “I have my own horse. There he is! His name is Thunder.” I followed the direction that Jamal pointed and saw a fine animal easily clearing a 20- or 30-foot-high mound.

Regent also was a magnificent animal. Jamal made a special sound something like a whistle, and both horses instantly responded. Regent and Thunder raised their heads and acknowledged Jamal, seemed to excuse themselves from the herd, and came thundering towards us. I felt a little trepidation at the approach of such large and powerful animals, but the calmness and

confidence of Jamal and Zaapha encouraged me to stand my ground and not run for cover.

I’d only ridden a horse a few times in my life, yet here I was about to mount and ride bareback on probably the most powerful horses in all creation! It was all a little daunting, but nonetheless very exciting and something I certainly wanted to do.

As Regent and Thunder raced up to us, I wondered how I would ever be able to get up on to the back of such a tall animal. Jamal reached up and grabbed Thunder’s mane and deftly pulled himself up onto the great horse’s back.

“I don’t think I can do that,” I said.

Jamal turned to Regent and spoke in that special language that I didn’t understand. “Jaii brach shamma!” Instantly the horse responded and knelt down, making it possible for me to climb up onto his broad back. Zaapha hopped on behind me. She seemed to be more familiar with the animals, and I was glad for that. At a command from Jamal, Regent rose. I hadn’t realized how high off the ground we would be. It seemed like I was on top of a moving mountain overlooking the world. Jamal said a short prayer for God’s help and blessing on the journey.

“Eloay ja,” he said, and the horses began to move out.

I grabbed a clump of the horse’s mane and held on tightly. I didn’t want to get thrown off, not from way up there!

Zaapha leaned over and whispered in my ear, “There’s a secret to riding the great horses of the Prince.”

“What is it?” I said, eager for any advice that might help me at this moment.

“Relax,” she said, obviously sensing how tense I was and concerned. “You must learn to relax. You must rest and get in tune with the animal. You must learn to communicate with him.”

“Me, learn to communicate with these animals?” I replied, wondering if I could ever learn such a skill.

“Yes,” she said. “A rider and his horse must learn to work together, especially in battle. Regent knows that you’re inexperienced, so he’s making allowance for you, but a great rider quickly becomes one with his horse. The horse’s great strength and speed combined with your guidance make for a powerful team. Regent can feel your thoughts, and as you come to know him, you’ll be able to feel his too.”

“Let’s ride over closer to the border,” Jamal said. “There was a patrol passing though this morning. It seems like there’s been some activity today.”

“Activity?” I questioned. “What do you mean?”

“Oh, it’s a desperate time for the Fallen Ones,” he said, “for increasingly they’re being expelled entirely from this region. That’s good for us here, but not so good for those down in the temporal regions. And things are going to get a whole lot worse down there before they get better, I’m afraid.”

Expelled from this region? Those words sounded so familiar. Where had I heard something like that before? Yes, now I remembered, the Book of Revelation of Saint John the Divine said that there was war in Heaven, and Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. And the dragon fought and his angels fought and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in Heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceives the whole world. He was cast out into the Earth and his angels were cast out with him. Satan and his angels were the Fallen Ones, who would continue to be overcome and cast down until they could trouble us no more.

“Can Satan still come here if he wants?” I asked.

“With the Lord’s permission, but his days are numbered. It won’t be long now till he’s totally shut out and entirely banned from entering this region. He knows it and is filled with anger about it, as are his followers. Come on, let’s see what’s happening.” In response to some unseen command, Regent and Thunder bolted into action, their huge, muscular bodies leaping forward. The ground churned away behind us in a great cloud of dust. I’d seen the distorted faces of astronauts taking off in rockets, but I couldn’t imagine that they felt any greater force moving them than I felt at this moment. The powerful thrill of suddenly accelerating swept through me as these great animals broke into a run.

“Relax,” whispered Zaapha. “Move with the animal, flow with the spirit. It’s like riding the wind.”

It was true. Every time I sensed that I was tensing up, I felt more and more that I would be swept off the animal’s back. But the more I relaxed and trusted and tuned in to the animal’s movements, the more I became one with the movement, which indeed was like moving with the freedom and power of the wind. The wildest carnival ride, the most incredible roller coaster, could not compare with the experience of being on this animal’s back. It was total joy!

“Look! Over there!” Jamal yelled. “It’s the patrol!”

In the distance I could see five or six horses charging across a narrow valley, heading toward what appeared to be a gap in a canyon wall.

“They must have spotted one,” Jamal called back excitedly.

A chill filled my heart. They must have spotted one? One what? One of the Fallen Ones?

“Maybe just a wanderer, or a spy trying to make trouble,” Jamal said. “They’re quite desperate these days. They know their time is short. Come on, let’s go see if they catch him.”

“But is it safe?” I cried.

He didn’t seem to hear me, for Thunder was accelerating at a great speed. Regent too seemed more highly charged, sensing his battlefield enemy. His nostrils flared, his head thrust forward, clearly determined not to miss out on a chance to help rout the enemy.

The patrol had slowed up, perhaps sensing our approach. It was then that I noticed their magnificent leader—his long, blond hair streaming back, his celestial blue gown rippling in the wind. The patrol came to a stop, and the riders turned to greet us.

“Who is that man?” I said in a whisper, almost speechless, to Zaapha.

“Why, he is captain of the Lord’s host,” she said. “That is Michael.”

I can’t describe the feelings that swept through me at that moment. I was half-afraid, half-overwhelmed with joy and wonder. This was Michael the Archangel, prince of the Lord’s army in person! Those with him were equally as majestic.

Jamal greeted the patrol respectfully, raising his hand. “Greetings, Michael, defender of God’s people. These are my friends, Travis and Zaapha. We are from the city of Tricon. My father is the keeper of the Lord’s stables there.”

Michael seemed to know all this information, but received it more as a formal greeting and as a sign of respect to him.

Michael looked at me and said, “I saw you arriving yesterday. We monitor all movements to and from the temporal zone. You need to be careful here, for there’s a fugitive about. Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. Resist the Enemy by the Spirit of the Lord, and he will flee from you.”

He was every bit a general, a true commander, Heaven’s Chief of Police! He took his job very seriously, for it was a serious job.

“Be sober, be vigilant,” he said, and with that warning, raised his hand, and the patrol turned and rode off.

“Wow, that was the Archangel Michael himself,” I exclaimed! “But I thought archangels had a lot of wings.”

Jamal smiled. “He does, but today he’s less formally dressed. Some day you’ll see him when he manifests himself in full regalia. He’s tremendous now, but he’s magnificent then, and he has lots of wings.”

- 8 - *Encounter with the Enemy*

The rock outcroppings all around us made it difficult to get a clear view of the surrounding area and the great plains below. Not far away was a large rock with a tablelike top.

“Regent,” I said, “take me over by that rock. I want to get off and have a look around.” The horse paused a moment, thinking the request over, then walked over to the rock. It was just the right height for me to jump onto from the horse’s back. As I prepared to make the leap, Regent shook his head a bit disapprovingly and snorted.

“What are you doing?” Zaapha asked.

“Oh, I just want to stretch and see around a bit,” I said, and jumped over onto the rock. I

stood on the rock for a while looking out over the landscape. What a paradise it was and how peaceful it all seemed.

Zaapha remained on the horse's back, and Jamal rode up to talk with her.

Suddenly below me I heard a low, guttural snarl. I hadn't felt fear since coming to this place until that moment. I looked down, and there hidden in the shadows among the rocks immediately below me was a vile creature. His eyes were baleful with hate. I could scarcely make a noise, for the words choked in my throat. The creature immediately lunged towards me. Sensing my fear, it moved in to attack. In an instant he was up on the rock with me. He had dark, batlike wings and clawlike fingers, and the coarse, black hair covering his naked body bristled. He made a gurgling, hissing sound as he approached menacingly, fangs bared. I had never in all my life seen such a loathsome creature! I stumbled backwards and almost stepped off the edge of the rock.

"It's the renegade!" Jamal yelled. "Resist him, Travis! Resist him in Jesus' name. It feeds on fear. Fight it!"

I remembered the Bible verse, "Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." I stuck out my hand and yelled, "I rebuke you, foul spirit, in the Name of Jesus, my Lord and Savior! Get thee behind me!"¹

¹James 4:7

The creature snarled, looked perplexed, and then let out an angry hiss, showing its teeth menacingly, the hair on its body, particularly on its neck, still bristled. Then it spread its batlike wings. I could not imagine that this creature had once been glorious or angelic at all, it had so degenerated since its fall.

I heard Jamal command his horse, "Thunder! Up!" In an instant the huge horse leapt high into the air and landed with a clash of hooves upon the rock between the creature and myself. The great stallion then reared in the air and thrashed the air with its huge hooves, threatening to crush the creature. I saw in an instant why the Lord's armies rode to battle upon these great animals. They were formidable in battle. The foul spirit screamed, flapped its wings, and flew up into the air in a rage, then turned and headed out towards the open expanse, presumably trying to get back to the dark region or some neutral zone near the border area. In attacking me, however, it had exposed itself.

Jamal slipped down from his horse, and Zaapha scrambled up the rocks beside us. As we watched it fly off, suddenly a bright flash of light from the ground engulfed the creature. It faltered in flight and seemed paralyzed, then plummeted down. In an instant we saw the patrol rush in and circle it. They had captured the beast.

"What will they do with him?" I asked.

"The Lord will decide," Jamal said. "More than likely he'll be taken back into the confinement area beyond the border, back into the dark region. He may get released for the time being,

or if he's been particularly evil, he may be further restricted, perhaps even bound in chains within the great abyss as a warning to others. Your world is rapidly becoming the last refuge of all such foul creatures and unclean spirits."

"But why doesn't God just destroy all His enemies right now?" I asked.

"God is very patient and merciful. He wants them all to turn from their wicked ways, or at least have every possible opportunity to do so."

How merciful God is, I thought. How wonderfully tolerant He is, even to His enemies.

"Do all of the Fallen Ones look so ugly?" I asked Jamal. He seemed to know something about almost everything. But then again, he was a lot older than I was, by about 3,000 years!

"In this region, they appear much as they are. In your region they can appear much as they choose to. They can appear as ugly demons, or like angels of light with very appealing forms and even doing miracles, or just like any other person. They are, above all, very deceptive."

"Come," said Jamal, "I'll take you to one of my favorite places before we go home."

With that, Jamal quickly mounted Thunder, who then leapt from the rock an incredible distance. What a magnificent animal! I called Regent over and crawled back onto his back. Zaapha jumped on behind me, and we raced after Jamal.

Hills and plains and mountains and streams and forests seemed to whiz by us. I wondered how fast these animals were capable of going, for they seemed more than just horses, more like

spiritual creatures that could move with the speed of thought if they needed to. As impressive as they were to me, I sensed that this was just playful amusement compared to what they were really able to do.

In what seemed like moments, we arrived in very hilly country. The horses bounded up the steep embankments without losing a stride. At times I was sure we were going straight up, and clung to Regent's mane with all my might until I remembered to relax and be in tune and in unity with him. Up and up we went. Soon we were at the very top enjoying another magnificent view. It was a rocky region, but ruggedly beautiful. The rocks in this place were unusual. Many of them appeared to be gemlike, some opaque, some translucent, and others totally transparent, catching, reflecting and refracting the light in a dazzling dance of colors.

Off some distance away there appeared to be an area where some digging or mining had been done. It was hard to imagine any sort of extremely heavy work like that being done in this place. Unlike the ugly gashes in the earth that open-pit mines create back home, this mine only seemed to open up and reveal a treasure chest of glorious, jeweled splendor that had only waited to be revealed. It was as though the dazzling gems and treasures from a thousand galaxies lay in heaps everywhere upon the ground.

"What is that place?" I asked. "That seems to be some sort of beautiful jewel mine!"

“Oh, that’s one of the great quarries,” Jamal said. “Some materials from here were used in the building of Tricon, and some were even used in the Great City of Light.”

“Why is it called the City of Light?” I asked.

“I guess because there is no night there, and no need of a sun or outside light. The City itself shines all the time,” Jamal said.

“Oh, does it have a temple in it like Tricon, that is made of light?”

Jamal laughed. “No, there is no temple at all in the City of Light. It doesn’t need one, for that is the City of the Prince! The Prince Himself lives in the City of Light, and the whole City is lit by His presence.”

It was hard to imagine a whole city being lit up by the presence of one of its inhabitants, but when that person is God Himself, then it becomes imaginable. “Do you go there sometimes?” I asked, showing my obvious hope that somehow I too might be able to see or visit this glorious City.

“Oh, yes, we go there,” Jamal smiled at Zaapha. “It’s actually more home to us than Tricon.” Then with a twinkle in his eye added, “But you have some idea what it’s like there, because you’ve already been there.”

“I have?” I said.

“Well, remember our time in the Temple of Tricon? The place that we went to was in the City of Light.”

“You mean that the temple in Tricon is some sort of transporter that actually took us there?”

“Something like that,” Jamal said. “Okay, now it’s time to be heading home. That’s probably adventure enough for one day. Also, Zaapha has some classes she wants to go to this evening, so let’s ride!”

“Oh, Elementary Creations and Transformations,” she replied. “I’m just a beginner.”

Elementary Creations and Transformations didn’t sound much like a beginner’s course to me, but she said it as though it was one of the more simple courses. I wondered what kind of school it was.

“What sort of other courses do you take there?” I asked.

“Well, I want to be a healer, and this course helps prepare you for performing simple miracles.”

You can learn how to do miracles!? She made it sound like performing miracles was just some sort of practical application of the principles of spiritual science to the problems of life. Well, I did have to admit that to me almost everything going on here was a miracle. Things I thought were impossible seemed not only possible, but commonplace here. Having experienced a touch of the great power of the Spirit in coming here, I could imagine that if one were more in tune with God and His Spirit, it just might be possible to do a lot of things we would otherwise consider impossible. Maybe moving mountains was not so impossible after all. Certainly with God on your side, all sorts of things might be possible.

In no time, we were back racing up the lane to Jamal’s house. At the gate, we all dismounted. Jamal hugged Thunder’s neck and thanked him for being such a willing and helpful horse. With a few more words of praise and commendation to both horses in that special language that only

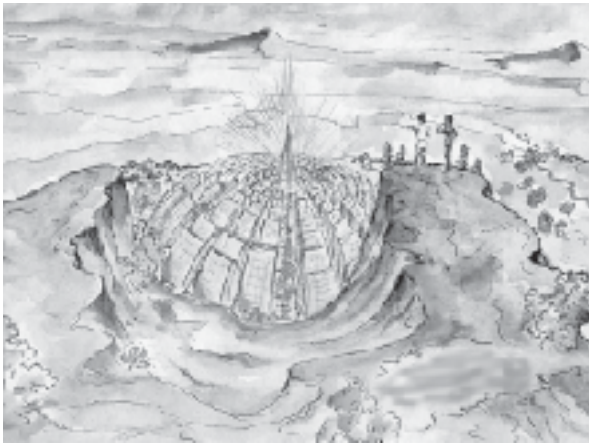
-9- *The Great Library*

When Jamal said that Zaapha wanted to go to some classes, it perked my interest. Classes? Do they have school here? What kind of classes would she go to? Certainly Jamal seemed to be knowledgeable about a lot of things. I wondered how it was that he could know so much about everything. Did he go to school? Sometimes it seemed that he just looked into my mind and used the things that were familiar to me to better communicate. But there was so much he knew, and perhaps some of it he learned in some kind of school. What kind of school or place of learning would they have here?

“What classes are you taking?” I called back to Zaapha.

Jamal and those who work with the horses seem fluent in, the horses turned and galloped back to the herd.

Joyus had prepared a lovely snack for us, seeming to have anticipated the time of our return. I wasn't quite sure how, but it just seemed that everyone was very aware of each other in this place. They seemed to know pretty much where each person was, or when they would arrive, or what they would do. I had the impression that there was an even deeper form of communication in that place, that most of the time I wasn't even aware of—some sort of inner communication system somewhere deeper in the spirit that people had here. Maybe some day I would be more privy to it. I didn't feel left out; it just was not my time yet to be included and involved in such matters. I was still in grade school here, and that was challenging enough for me.



Zaapha ate with us. “Where do you have your classes?” I asked.

“At the center circle,” she said. Sometimes Zaapha wasn't always clear, or just seemed to forget that everything was so new to me here.

“Where is that?” I asked.

“Oh,” she said, catching herself, “well, you know how the city is arranged in concentric circles around the temple? The Creations Building that I go to is located in the innermost ring very close to the temple and just beside the Great Library.”

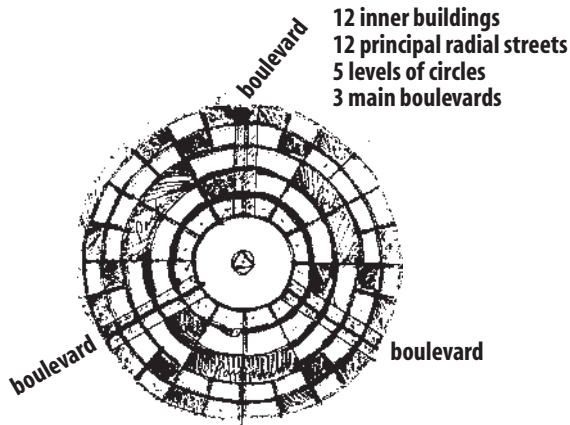
“Oh, I like libraries,” I said. “I like looking through old books.”

They smiled at each other. There was something that I wasn't quite catching here, but I didn't want to ask. I presumed I would find out soon enough what was different about libraries here. We finished eating, thanked Joyus, and headed off. I still didn't know where Zaapha really came from, or who her parents were, or where she lived, or if she even had parents. She was a bit of a mystery to me, but I repeated Jamal's words to myself, *All in good time! All in good time. I'll find all these things out in good time.*

We headed into the city of Tricon again—and what an intricately designed city it was! I hadn't looked closely enough before to notice the unusual layout and design of the buildings. From above the city, the buildings appeared to curve in like the petals of an opening flower. The base of the city and even the tops of the buildings

formed what might be described somewhat like a large satellite dish with the temple at the center. The whole city was a bit like a huge circular stadium, and I imagined the buildings to be like cheering fans all standing up in their seats and leaning forward, looking inward to the center of the playing field. It's not easy to describe in a few words; words always have such limitations.

Twelve large streets radiated out from the center of the city like the spokes of a wagon wheel, and there were probably 12 evenly spaced large circular streets that ran between each concentric row of buildings like the rings of a great target. Three of the radial streets were very wide, parklike boulevards that extended from the Temple of Light straight out to the edge of the city. I'm uncertain exactly how many concentric rings of buildings there were out from the center, possibly up to a dozen.



Another oddity was that the large, somewhat dish-shaped floor of the city was all of one solid foundation material. Compared to a city on Earth, Tricon was quite small and certainly compact. In fact, it seemed that the whole city could be picked up and moved to a new location, like some kind of gigantic housing unit. Open park areas were many, and arranged so that each set of buildings was bordered at least on one side by the lush greenery that these parks provided. Some buildings had park areas on three sides. In the outer circles of the city, more streets radiated from a midpoint out from the center, so that at the perimeter of the city there seemed to be more like 24 streets running into the city.

The very top of each petal-like building was not flat and facing the sky like most buildings, but were more like huge periscopes curved in so that the top of each building faced the temple. In fact, the brightest place at the top of the pillars of light seemed to be the focal point and center of each of these curved surfaces. I could imagine that if you could look out at the tops of the buildings from the brightest part of the pillars of light, the city would seem like one great big bright crystal bowl. Like great optical devices, a top face of each building was perfectly aligned with the brightest point of light emanating from the temple, so as to perfectly receive and diffuse the strength and power of this magnificent, largely spiritual form of light. Tricon was an amazing place!

We made our way through the parks and streets of the city, heading towards the innermost circle of buildings.

“I’ll leave you now,” said Zaapha. “I’ll be in the Creations Building over there. Why don’t you take Travis to the library for a while and come and get me afterwards?” Zaapha seemed to want to explain to me why I was not invited to join her in class. “These classes take quite a bit of concentration and I really have to tune in, otherwise I’d be happy to have you come along. When my class is over I may have a surprise for you. Come and see me then.”

“Okay,” I said, taking her hand and squeezing it affectionately as she left. I was beginning to quite like Zaapha and her bouncy, carefree ways.

Jamal led me to a building nearby. “Here’s the library,” he said. “At least this is one of them.”

We entered the base of the building from the side opposite the temple. There didn’t seem to be a door, yet there was a door. I don’t know how it worked. Like entering the temple, there seemed to be a sheet of light that we passed through. A strange, warm sensation filled my body. It was a bit like being in the temple, but somewhat different. I felt a lot lighter, and had a wonderful, uplifted feeling.

“What kind of books do you want to read?” Jamal said.

I didn’t know quite what to say. “I like books about the future,” I said. “I like the Book of Revelation. That’s exciting.”

Chuckling, Jamal said, “It sure is! Okay, I’ll take you up to Futures.”

We seemed to be standing in a large, light-filled entrance area that had no ceiling, really, since the whole building curved up and inward. The outer wall of the building appeared to be made of one single huge curved piece of crystal many stories high. On the inner side of the building, facing the temple and the center of the city, there seemed to be various rooms and floor levels. Because the building was located on the innermost ring, the entire inner side of the building faced the temple, so it was totally bathed in the warmth and tangible joy of this light. You could see quite well through its transparent walls and floor levels. I looked around, but could see no staircase or elevator or any visible way to get to the higher levels.

Jamal said, “Futures is up at the top.”

“But how are we going to get there?” I asked.

Jamal smiled again with that twinkle in his eye that meant he knew another surprise was waiting for me. “We’re going to fly up,” he said.

“Fly? Here?”

Jamal laughed. “It’s very easy to fly when the Spirit is strong, and the Spirit is very present here.”

It was true. There was something wonderful about this place. You could feel a presence and warm, wonderful buoyancy of body and spirit.

“Whenever you’re ready we can go up,” Jamal said. “Here, I’ll help you till you get the idea.” He took my hand. “Just let the Spirit fill you and flow through you.”

Jamal closed his eyes and I did too. I took a deep breath. Everything got brighter and lighter

and we began to lift off from the ground. I felt almost dizzy with wonder. Was I actually flying? I opened my eyes to see what was happening. Looking down and the sudden shock of seeing the ground some distance below me seemed to upset the flow of the Spirit, and I began to drop, but Jamal had a tight grip on my hand and held me. “Relax!” he said. “Look up at the light streaming in; enter back into the Spirit.” His voice was so calm and reassuring, I was compelled to trust him, and did as he said. Instantly I was washed again by complete joy and peacefulness and I began floating upward on my own.

The whole experience was beyond comparison. Flying was such a marvelous sensation, rising up, lighter than air. Up and up we rose. I could imagine this experience was not unlike what it will be like when the Lord returns to Earth and the living and former living that love Him will rise from the Earth to meet Him in the clouds at the great Rapture. Our bodies will be transformed into new, wonderful bodies in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and we’ll fly up to be with Him. *Oh, what an experience that will be!* I thought. *This certainly must be very much what it will be like in that day.*

Up and up we rose, until we arrived at the top level. We entered again through what seemed like a shimmering panel of light into a large, slightly arc-shaped room aligned with the upper brightest part of the pinnacle of the temple. All the buildings on this inner circle had the advantage that the entire inner face of each

building faced the temple and received its light and spiritual energy in great supply. The light was very bright, but it was not a light that hurt your eyes. It seemed to enter and fill you with a wonderful, peaceful feeling.

The room we entered was long, but narrow, and seemed quite empty of anything except for what appeared to be a single row of curved benches made of clear crystal that faced the temple. In front of this seating area was what seemed like a curved, slanted desktop, but it was quite narrow and seemed more like a hand rest or railing than a desktop. In front of this, mounted to the ceiling and floor by gold mountings on each of their four corners, were several large, highly polished, clear crystal TV-like screens. Sitting down, one could see through each crystal screen to the pinnacle of the Temple of Light, which took on a pulsating and more rainbowlike colorful effect. It was somewhat like the great light rings we sometimes see back home around the sun or moon, only with a much brighter, scintillating, and incandescent glow.

I turned to Jamal. “I don’t understand,” I said. “I thought this was a library.”

“It is,” said Jamal. “This is the finest library we have in Tricon.”

“But where are the books?” I shrugged.

“Well, you wanted Futures,” he said, “and the best books about the future are viewed from here.”

“But where are they?” I said.

“Sit down and I’ll show you,” he said, with a happy grin on his face. Jamal sat down at the

bench facing one of the crystal screens, and indicated that I should sit beside him.

-10- Across the Sky

“What part of the Book of Revelation do you like the most?” Jamal asked.

“Well, riding on the white horses today made me think about chapter 19 where Jesus rides down to Earth on His white horse, leading the armies of God on a great invasion.”

“Oh, I love that part too. I love stories with horses in them,” said Jamal. “Okay, here’s how it works. See these gold circles embedded inside the desktop? Put your hands on those.”

I hadn’t noticed the gold circles at first, but then as I looked closer, embedded in the crystal of the desktop surface were two circles side by side and larger than my hand. I placed my hands palms down inside the circles as Jamal had instructed.

“Now,” Jamal said, “start to think about that section of the book as you look through the crystal screen at the light from the temple.”

As I began to think about Jesus riding a great white horse, the great crystal screen before me began to form actual visions—visions even as John had seen them. This was much better than reading a book; it was like being there and seeing it actually happening! I was seeing it as St. John saw it, and heard the voice of John the prophet speaking: “And I saw Heaven open, and, behold, a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. And in righteousness He doth judge and make war.”

What a marvelous picture of the Prince! He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His Name was “The Word of God.” And the armies that were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

This is just like it will be! I thought. *How beautiful!* I was seeing the future as it was going to happen—and very soon, I hoped! I tried to see if I could recognize any of the horses from Ja-al’s herd. They were magnificent!

The great book continued. Jesus was so regal, and on His clothing and on His thigh was written “King of kings and Lord of lords.” He was awesome! The armies of God seemed to be all around, some charging across the Great Plain to gather for the great battle and follow the King of kings and Lord of lords to victory.

Then it was like the very sky of Earth itself seemed to rip open when the army charged

down into its atmosphere and into the temporal zone to smash the strongholds of the Enemy and break their evil grip on the peoples of the Earth. A sharp piercing laserlike sword flashed from His mouth which He used to smite His enemies on the Earth. His enemies were crushed before Him like grapes caught in the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. It was a tremendous experience! It was like I was on one of the horses, and actually felt the powerful creature beneath me. This was better than virtual reality; it seemed to be actual reality! It was like being there. For a moment, I was one of them in this living library, experiencing this living book. I sort of laughed at the simple technologies of Earth. They tried to imitate the wonders of God’s world, but it really didn’t compare. No computer program or multimedia wonder on Earth was this interactive! I was there!

The scenes continued. There was an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice, he called for all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven to come and gather themselves together to the supper of the great God, to feast upon the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and their mighty armies.

This was an epic, like a gigantic three-dimensional, real time, real place movie. I was in the scene. I could see the Beast¹ and the armies of the Earth gathering to make war against the forces of Heaven and against the Prince that sat

¹The Bible describes the Antichrist as “the Beast.” See Revelation chapter 13.

on the great horse—against this mighty army of God! Then the battle began. What a raging battle it was! The Devil-possessed man called the Beast was captured. And the false prophet was captured, that evil, demon-possessed prophet who worked miracles and deceived the people and made them receive the mark of the Beast. And those who had received the mark and worshipped the image of the Beast were all captured. They then took the Beast, and they took the false prophet, and cast them alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. It was a total and complete triumph for the great Prince and His armies as they slew their enemies.

Then a mighty angel came down from Heaven. He had a key that opened a great bottomless pit, and a great chain in one hand. He took hold of the Devil, Satan himself, who was in the form of a great dragon, and he bound him and dragged him down into the bottomless pit, and chained him up for a thousand years. Ah, what a great day of victory it was! It was the beginning of a thousand years of peace and the wonderful rule of Jesus. It was all so overpowering that I pulled away my hands and turned to Jamal.

“Did you see that? Did you see that?” I gasped in shocked amazement. The scenes had faded back into pulsating light, but the excitement and the joy of having been there was still very much in me.

“This is an incredible library. This is the best library in the whole world.” I caught myself, “I mean ... it’s totally out of this world!”

Jamal laughed.

“Well, it’s certainly out of *my* world. It’s all really going to happen just like that, isn’t it?” I asked excitedly.

“Just like that,” Jamal said, “and we’re all getting ready for it.”

I looked down at my body, kind of feeling funny. “Jamal, I feel like I’m floating again.”

“That’s the joy of the Lord and the Spirit,” he said.

“You know, I read about a man once in the Bible who was physically caught up in the Spirit. His name was Philip. He got so excited after he had told this man from Ethiopia about Jesus that he was taken up and carried away in the Spirit, and disappeared right in front of the man he’d been talking to. He came down a long, long way from where he’d just been.”¹

“Yes, that can easily happen,” Jamal said. “That can easily happen when you get full of the Spirit. In the Spirit you can see things and do things that would otherwise be impossible.”

“God is so wonderful,” I said. “He is so wonderful!”

Jamal smiled back, “He sure is. Zaapha’s class will soon be over. Do you want to go over to her building now?”

“Yes,” I said. “How do we get down? Float down?”

“You can float if you like,” Jamal said. “But I like to slide down!”

¹ Acts 8:39

Jamal suddenly jumped out the door and slid down the contour of the inside of the building to the bottom and landed as gently and as softly as onto a feather bed. It looked like so much fun that I tried it myself. Oh, what a wonderful world this was! Everything was so exciting, but nothing was quite as exciting as being in the Spirit of God. That was tops!—So thrilling, so overwhelming, so mysterious, so free, so liberating.

Jamal and I strolled over to the Creation Building and went in, and a different kind of thrill filled me. Each building looked the same on the outside, but was unique inside. Zaapha's class seemed to be happening on the ground level. A lot of people were busily moving about, involved in what seemed to be various arts and crafts activities. A small girl ran by me carrying what appeared to be a bouquet of flowers made from beautiful crystals. She ran to a lovely woman by the entrance, "See, Mommy? See what I made for you!"

Did I hear her right? Could that marvelous creation in her hands possibly be the work of a child? This was an interesting class indeed. Zaapha was over at a tablelike surface across the room, putting the finishing touches on some creation of her own. As we approached, I heard her tell a young man standing near her, "There, I think I've got it." The bright-looking young man wearing a light blue tunic with a small red band around his forehead smiled and nodded approvingly, "You certainly have done an excellent job today, Zaapha."

"God really helped me," she replied.

Standing on the table in front of Zaapha was a beautiful living flower embedded inside a large, rose-colored crystal. It appeared as though you could somehow almost reach right in and touch the flower, but your fingers were stopped by the surface of the crystal. The whole work of art seemed mystical and miraculous. The flower looked very much alive and growing within the crystal.

"But how did the flower get in there?" I asked. "It looks like a real flower, but it's inside this crystal rock. How did you do that?"

Zaapha looked a little stumped, not knowing quite where to begin or how to attempt to explain this to me. I guess it was like asking a great mathematician or scientist how he did something, without even knowing enough about the subject to begin to understand the answer.

"Well," Zaapha said, "it involves a lot of things, like prayer and faith and visions, applied to spiritual physics, gemology, and botany, combined to produce a work of art."

"And the joy of the Lord," the young man added.

Zaapha jumped up, "You can have it," she said, and handed me this priceless treasure. "Put it in your room."

"Thank you so very much!" I said, taking the gift in shocked surprise. I gazed into the exquisite work of art for a moment. If they made creations like this in the kindergarten classes—for most of those in the class appeared to be very, very young—what unimaginable wonders were they

capable of at the more advanced levels? I could think of no limits to possibility in this land where the Spirit of God was everywhere, alive and guiding and teaching and loving His children.

-II- *The Battle with Beelzebub*

That evening back at Jamal's house it was story time again. There was a certain question that had crossed my mind, but that I didn't quite know how to ask. When I first arrived, my dear friend Jamal had referred to this area near the border as the region of Ekron. In the Bible, however, I remembered that Ekron in ancient times on Earth had been a very wicked city.¹ So this was a question that perplexed me. How was it that there was such a good place here named the same as a bad place on Earth? Ja-al must have somehow sensed that something was unclear to me, for when we sat down, he asked me if I had

¹ 2 Kings 1:2–6; Amos 1:8

any questions that concerned me about this new land that I wanted to ask.

“Yes, there is one.” I replied. “As I recall, in the Bible, Ekron on Earth was a bad city, but here this region is also called Ekron, yet it is such a beautiful place and so full of God’s Spirit. How did that come to be?”

“A very good question,” Ja-al replied. “That is a very good question indeed. To answer that we need to go back practically to the dawn of creation. Actually, there are many places on Earth that have names very similar to those up here, but which do not represent the same spirit. This region we call Ekron has a very long and ancient history. You see, there was a time when a magnificent angel was the keeper of this region, but I’m sad to say, he became a chief among those angels that turned and rebelled against God. In time he was forced to leave his former beautiful estate and went to wander up and down and through the Earth.”

“You mean that this beautiful place was once under the guardianship of one of the Fallen Ones?” It was a bit shocking to even imagine.

“Yes, a once-great prince. He was a particularly beautiful angel of light in the service of God, who was very highly blessed and given many powers. Among his many privileges was the care of Ekron, this beautiful land that you see. But during the rebellion, he lost his place in these regions, and with it lost his rule over this beautiful region. He was very angry, bitter and jealous, and determined in himself, along with others, to go

and destroy the lovely gardenlike creation that God had set in the temporal zone. In rage and rebellion, he decided to try and tempt God and make Him angry. Throughout Earth’s history he has caused much pain and sorrow. Concerning Ekron, one of the things he did was to inspire certain Philistines to build and name one of their cities Ekron. And can you imagine what he encouraged the people to place in the center of that city?”

“A temple?” I asked.

“Yes, but not a temple for the worship of God, but a horrid temple to himself. Do you know who that fallen angel was that was so blasphemous in his workings? The name he went by in that region was Beelzebub. So he got the people to build him a city and a temple in his new Ekron dedicated to worshipping himself, Beelzebub, instead of God. He did this to mock God, to try and annoy and anger God.

“You’ve seen how wonderful God’s Spirit is here and how marvelously He works and moves among us, and what a glory and blessing it is to have God present among us. Well, Beelzebub secretly missed all that joy he once enjoyed with God. So he said in his heart, I will force the Spirit, the great Shekinah Glory of God, to come and dwell here in this land. So Beelzebub moved the heart of his people to go and attack a people that God was trying to bless and instruct in His ways. For God, through His servant Moses, had given this people a sign of His presence among them, an Ark, where from time to time the great

light and glory of God would descend to inspire the people.

“So Beelzebub’s plan was to try and steal the Ark and force the Spirit of God to serve him. What a rebellious creature he had become. He has given us much trouble. By and by, because of the sins of God’s children, Beelzebub got his opportunity to capture and bring back into his territory on Earth the very Ark of God’s Covenant. He had become so darkened in his understanding that he thought he could actually use the splendor of God for his own evil purposes, or at the very least, to upset God. He was deluded, but he was also a careful demon, and still somewhat fearful of God, knowing how quickly he had lost his place in Heaven. So, being a bit concerned at what God might do, rather than bring the Ark directly to his own temple in Ekron, he had the people take it first into another coastal city of the Philistines called Ashdod.

“In Ashdod, there was a lesser temple called the House of Dagon. It was another temple built to honor one of the Fallen Ones. In that temple was an abominable statue of Dagon. So the people brought the Ark of God into the temple of their god, Dagon, and set it before the statue as a gift. Beelzebub was quite afraid and wanted to see if God would do anything about this insult. Well, God did! The next morning the people found that the statue of Dagon had fallen over and was bowing down before the Ark. The people set him aright, and the next morning the same thing happened, except that the hands and head of Dagon were cut off. Then God began to

smite the people with great and sore afflictions, and many people died. Soon all the people of Ashdod were afraid and cried out, ‘Rid us of the Ark of God!’

“So they took the Ark to another city, the city of Gath. And there, such evil plagues and pestilences fell upon that people that all of the Philistines were afraid that God would destroy them. The people of Gath did not want the Ark to even come in their city, and said, ‘No! No! Take it away. Send it to Ekron!’ So they started to carry it to Ekron. But when Beelzebub saw the Ark approaching his city, he was filled with terror, for it was as though the sword of the Lord was approaching to destroy him. His plan had backfired. His mockery of God had nearly destroyed his whole land. So in fear and trembling he went and moved the hearts of the priests to return the Ark of God to the people and place God had chosen for it at that time.¹

“So you see, Travis, it is a great and sad thing, but some of the most beautiful names and wonderful places here have horrible, demonic counterparts created of them down on Earth. Even the holy names of God and His Son are much abused there on Earth. New Jerusalem here is a beautiful city, but the city called Jerusalem there on Earth is not a city of peace, but war. That city where Jesus was slain has become such a place of evil that here we call it Sodom, not Jerusalem.² There have been terrible

¹ 1 Samuel chapters 5 and 6

² See Revelation 11:8.

wars fought over that city. In that city the enemies of God have sought to establish their thrones and palaces, and in that city they have killed the prophets God sent them, and the Holy One. They have shed the blood of the saints there, and many terrible things have been done there in the name of God. There, in a new temple will the Beast set up his own image, and there will the armies of the Earth gather. But in the end of days, Satan shall not be, and all things will be restored. The real City of Peace, God's New Jerusalem, will descend from Heaven, and peace will at last come to the Earth.

"It's a strange thing, Travis, but the Fallen Ones try to turn everything upsidedown and backwards and opposite, and make a mockery of all that is good and holy. They call evil good and good evil, all the while blaspheming and mocking the Holy One and the host of Heaven. God is very patient, but His great patience will end when their cup of iniquity is full."

I had never seen Ja-al speak so earnestly and seriously. There was a great silence in the room. Clearly the hosts of Heaven and the Prince of Heaven and all God's people had suffered many indignations at the hands of the Fallen Ones, the unholy, blasphemous ones, the rebellious children and their followers. I was reminded of the Book of Jude that speaks of these fallen creatures. It says they are "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, behold,

the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."¹

Ja-al continued, "Yes, these have separated themselves from God and do not have the Spirit of God. But we, beloved, must build ourselves up in our faith, the holy faith of God, praying in the Holy Spirit. We must stay very close to God in these troubled times. I think Travis learned more about that lesson in an encounter earlier today, didn't you?"

"I certainly did," I replied, remembering my moment of terror on the top of that rock, as that foul creature was about to attack me.

Ja-al finished, "These are troubled times, especially for our friends and those of God's big family who are still on Earth. It is a time for all of God's true children to build themselves up in faith, stay close to the Lord, and let His Spirit work through them. The day He has promised is nearly upon us. May He find us waiting and watching and prepared; looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ and the promise of eternal life."

How patient God is, I thought, How longsuffering.

"Okay, that's enough on that topic," said Ja-al. "Let's think on happier things. Joyus, sing us one of the songs you know and sing so well."

¹ Jude 13-15

“Okay,” she replied. “Let’s sing ‘The Voice of the Lord,’ and when He calls you, then you need to get up and join in the dance.”

We all sat around the room as Joyus went into the middle of the floor and began to dance and sing a beautiful song that went something like this:

“The voice of the Lord called me from a dry and thirsty land.

The voice of the Lord kissed me and took me by the hand.

He led me by still waters where the gentle meadows blow,

And I will follow Him always, and let His Spirit flow.”

(At this point she danced over to Ja-al, clapped and shouted “Hey!” When she touched him, Ja-al then jumped up and began to dance and continued to sing:)

“The voice of the Lord called me from a dry and dusty land.” (Clap!)

“The voice of the Lord called me from a dry and dusty land.” (Clap!)

“The voice of the Lord called me from a dry and dusty land.” (Clap!) (Hey!)

When he said, “Hey!” he touched Jamal, who immediately jumped up and sang the next lines:

“I answered Him with gladness, ‘Lord, here I am. Yes, here I am!’

When the voice of the Lord called me, I said, ‘Here I am! Here I am!’

Jamal then shouted, “Hey!” and touched Zaapha and me. We both jumped up and joined them in singing and dancing. There were many more choruses and verses to this song, but I didn’t catch them all. It seemed that many of the choruses were like little accounts of what the Lord had done in each person’s life. I think Zaapha sang a chorus something about, “He sent His Word and healed me from a sickness unto death,” and I wondered if that was something from her past.

We all had so much fun that evening, laughing and praising God together after an exciting day. I drifted off to sleep that night gazing into the soft pink glow that radiated from the lovely crystal art piece Zaapha had given me. I thanked God for bringing me to this warm and wonderful home and family, unimaginable distances and dimensions away from my own troubled world.

with me, and it was more than a dream. Zaapha was just too real to be a dream. Was she somehow inside me? I seemed to be in some kind of dreamlike space where we were just spirits sort of floating there.

I felt a little embarrassed that Zaapha could so easily enter right into my innermost being. Then I almost laughed! How isolated we are, and what private lives we live back on Earth compared to here. On Earth we can see, and talk to, and touch our friends, but we never really go right inside their minds! But here, when someone pops in for a visit, they might literally pop in!—Right inside your head, right into your thoughts, where I'm sure they can easily have a look around. I could not imagine anyone here keeping any kind of secret for very long, and you sure would want to keep your thinking tidy.

At first it seemed that I was in my bedroom in Jamal's house, but then we seemed to be moving up and into some other kind of place—just where, I'm not sure. It was in no particular location at all, just somewhere up higher in the spirit, up above the realm of things and distractions. It was a place that only spirits can enter, where they meet and mingle, communicate and travel, a sort of dream dimension where there are no real shapes or forms or even senses other than an awareness of our own being. It was quite exhilarating!

I was free at last from every limitation of space, or place, or being in a body. This was like being everywhere, yet no place in particular. There was no real sense of light or dark, or any sort of

-12- Dreamtime Travels

“Well, are you ready?”

“Zaapha! Uh ... ready for what?”

“To go on a mission!”

“Where?”

“Why, to Earth!”

“But I don't understand,” I said. “Am I awake or am I asleep? Am I really talking to you or is this a dream?”

At this moment I was quite disoriented. I had been restfully gazing at the beautiful crystal art piece that Zaapha had made for me, and I had fallen into what seemed like a sleep. Now suddenly I was having a very vivid dream where Zaapha was right there talking to me. Well, not really there in my room, but somewhere together

normal sense of reality. I seemed to be almost bodiless, yet I did have some sense of feeling, of moving, and sensing things. Of course, in actuality my physical body was worlds and unimaginable dimensions away on Earth. But now my spirit seemed to be in some timeless place or dimension, a bit like the experience I'd had when I traveled to this place, but somehow deeper into the spirit, if that makes sense. It was like being a living, thinking energy form that could move and flow in, through, and around all things, or all others.

It was not unlike dozing off while floating and relaxing in a hot tub. It was a very nice place to be, and I was in no hurry to get back to any sort of recognizable reality—on Earth, or in my new home. Still, Zaapha seemed to be pulling on my spirit, wanting me to go with her on a journey back to Earth. I seemed to understand that we would travel there while in this spiritual dimension or channel.

Words are not sufficient to describe the experience of being in this dreamlike, spiritual state in this strange and wonderful dimension. I realized that there might well be many other levels or dimensions in that invisible world of spirit beyond our tiny, temporal plane on Earth. Entering this new dimension opened up a whole new way of thinking, of existing. It was something like going into a tall building with many floors and getting in the elevator. The ground floor of the building was like physical reality as we know it on Earth, but then when you move up by the Spirit, you discover other floors above the

physical plane, and there are probably even some floors below. The Spirit, like God's great "elevator" or shuttle service, transports you to different levels of existence, and each level is different to be in; in fact, you feel and likely are different while in them.

Wherever this vast and formless place we were now in was, one thing was certain; while there, I was more of a spiritual being than a physical one. There wasn't really anything physically identifiable there at all. Everything was new and strange to me, like being in some incredible dream. I again asked Zaapha—or should I say the presence of Zaapha that was with me—"Am I just dreaming or what?"

"Well, I guess it is sort of like dreaming," she said. "But dreaming up here is a little different than dreaming on Earth." Then she paused, seeming a bit puzzled upon thinking about it, and added, "Yet I guess it *is* sort of the same."

Well, I must be dreaming! How could I be in Jamal's room sort of asleep, yet now somehow be up in this dreamlike dimension getting ready to travel back to Earth, where of all things, my real body was at that very moment. Trying to figure it all out was way beyond me, and even attempting to do so, I knew would just leave me utterly confused. Normal, logical reasoning did not seem to even apply in this spiritual dimension beyond what is imaginable. Still, as much to make conversation as to find answers, I asked, "But what is dreaming?"

"What is dreaming ... hmmm?" That was a tough question and not one Zaapha could

answer quickly. “Dreaming is entering a spiritual dimension. It’s easier to enter dream dimensions when fewer things distract your spirit, like when your body rests. When everything about you is at rest, your spirit is freer to move out and explore. We have all sorts of things we do and learn during our active times, but then during our times of rest, many of us enter deeper into the spirit, or a dimension of the spirit. In the spirit we’re able to move around more freely, and travel and do special things and go places and communicate, and even help people’s spirits back on Earth. When we go deeper into the spirit, we’re more free—just like when you dream on Earth you’re more free to do all sorts of things.”

Looking at me she asked, “Sometimes you have wonderful dreams of flying and doing things that you can’t do in your normal body, don’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Well, when you sleep, your spirit is free from having to attend to the activities of your mind and body. On Earth you dream, and up here we dream too, but we can also use this special time in the spirit to do special things. Actually, we don’t really need to rest very much at all, but it’s so nice to take some quiet time each day to go deeper into the spirit.”

“There is something I don’t understand. This place we’re in seems to be a spiritual place, a spiritual dimension. Is it a place within God’s own Spirit, or are we in some kind of created spiritual dimension apart from God?” I asked this

because when I was in the temple lifted by God’s Holy Spirit, it felt different. I could feel the presence of God’s greater Spirit here too, but moving around in this dimension of the spirit seemed to me to be more like moving through some part of God’s creation than moving through God’s own being. It was an impossible question to ask anyone but God, and I felt a little badly for being so analytical.

“I guess what you’re asking me is where does God begin and His creation end? Well, the simple answer to that is that I don’t know. God is everywhere. He’s a spirit, and the foundation of all things is spiritual, even His physical creation. Exactly what ‘spirit’ is or how it works, I don’t know, and am only beginning to discover. That’s one mystery we’ll have eternity to figure out. But for now, we just know God exists, the spirit exists, it works, and so we use it. Right now, you and I are in a deeper spirit state where our spirits can meet and communicate and do exciting things, like go on this mission to Earth.”

She went on talking about their being able during sleep time to enter the spirit and do a lot of the things they couldn’t when they’re busy doing other things. “During this quiet time, we do a lot of the things that are special to us, like helping others that we didn’t get to help when we were on Earth. In the spirit we can try to make things right that aren’t right. Aren’t you glad you have permission to come with me?”

“Yes! But tell me more about what you can do and what goes on in this special dimension

of the spirit. For example, when you're in this state and in this spiritual plane, can you influence people's thoughts or dreams?" I asked.

Zaapha seemed amused, "Of course! We do it all the time! When people are quietly thinking or resting or dreaming, that's the best time of all to touch their lives with important thoughts or messages."

"But how do you go places while you're in this deeper spiritual state?"

"Well, a spiritual dimension is easier to travel through than a physical dimension. The Earth is a very physical place, so there you use physical vehicles to carry you around. But in the spirit world, especially in this special realm of the spirit, when you enter deep like this you can travel anywhere quickly. The deeper you go into this special place in the spirit, the less aware you are of your own person, or being in any one place, or time. In there, any place you want to be or go is just a thought away."

"Oh my," I sighed, "this is all a bit deep for me. I'm still very much a creature used to being in one place at one time."

Zaapha laughed, "Good, because when we enter Earth space and time you'll feel right at home."

"What will we do there?" I asked.

"Well, there are people there I want to help with their problems. And I thought if you came along and I showed you this part of my life, you would understand me better, and maybe even be able to help."

Help people, I thought. *She's going to help some people?*

Seeing my thoughts as though I had spoken them, Zaapha replied, "Yes, I help people. I often travel in the spirit in these special moments to be a help to people—especially loved ones that need my help."

"What loved ones?" I asked her, almost guessing.

"Well, my mother and father, for example. That's where we're going now, to visit my mother."

Zaapha came closer, and in an electric moment our spirits touched. I began feeling a great sense of adventure. Here I was returning to Earth as a spirit, invisible, in another dimension. Still, I was not sure I wanted to leave this wonderful, all-encompassing, warm, relaxing, peaceful place, where all things seemed at rest. Yet all things seemed possible.

"So how do we get there?" I asked.

"Well, on this trip I'll be your guide," she said. "We're first going to visit my mother. In order to do that I begin to think about and pray for my mother. I begin to reach out to her in the spirit, and when I do that while in this state, we'll begin to move. We'll move in the spirit right there to where she is. Now, take my hand, close your eyes, and you'll see what I mean. Just follow me."

At that point I was not sure I even had hands or eyes, but I followed her lead. I don't know how it worked, but it worked. As she focused on her mother, and as I was holding her hand, suddenly we seemed to be very light and began

to move. I can't quite describe it. We seemed to be bodiless, moving through a place not bound by space or time, yet still I had the feeling we were moving. I soon felt a great inward thrill, sort of like being on some wild and exciting new circus ride. It hadn't really hit me till then, that I was actually at this moment a spirit. What would it be like returning to Earth in this spiritual form and in this spiritual dimension? Would I be like a ghost, or what would it be like?

Zaapha and I moved like two beings composed of little more than a collection of thoughts. The same great Being that had created us and given us our existence was now giving us the freedom and power and permission to travel through the spirit, conceivably to anywhere we wanted to go within Creation or beyond. It seemed we could have gone to worlds unimagined! Then I began to feel the imposing presence of physical reality all around us. We seemed to have moved a great distance in what likely was only an instant, a twinkling of the eye. I couldn't really tell.

Time didn't seem to matter or even be measurable along the pathways and places of the spirit. Anywhere was right there, because everywhere was connected. There in the spirit you weren't really in any one place, or even traveling in any one direction. You could move through all places, to any place, in a moment of time. It was like being inside a special secret passageway hidden inside a great big house with hundreds of rooms, and you could use this shortcut secret passageway to get to any room

in the house almost instantly without having to take the long route around through doors, along walkways and hallways, and up or down stairways to get there.

We traveled instantly to that one place in time and space where Zaapha needed and wanted to be, her mother's apartment. Entering the temporal world from the spirit was kind of like coming in for a landing in an airplane when you come down out of the clouds and suddenly you see the houses and the airport and you then feel the wheels touch the runway and the motors reverse. As we entered the physical dimension, we seemed to be confined somewhat to a spiritual dimension by an unseen barrier. It's hard to explain, but it was as though we didn't have enough physical substance to totally enter the physical world and physically appear. I did notice, however, that once we'd entered the physical dimension I was able to physically see Zaapha, rather than just spiritually sense her. We seemed to be a lot more physical now as far as spirits go, but we were not physical enough to do much other than influence people's minds and spirits.

I was not unhappy about being somewhat confined to this spirit dimension, only able to observe and perhaps lightly influence others. Somehow the spiritual dimension or channel or whatever place we were in seemed to provide us with some needed protection. Upon entering Earth's environment I sensed that we were entering hostile territory. Here was a place where there were spirits at war with God. To really "be"

there in full person and in full power, able to do things, would require greater power and a greater “personal” presence than I had at this time. So I was like a traveler in transit able to look through the airport windows, but not permitted to leave the airport and enter the country just yet.

Still, I was happy for the moment simply to be an observer from the dimension of the spirit. Life looked very different to me from the spirit. It was like I was behind a two-way mirror and could hear and see people, but not be seen or heard. At times I could feel people’s thoughts, because thoughts are very spiritual things. It was different observing life rather than actually being caught up in it. It was nice not to be all bound up in time and space and one’s own self. Life viewed through the eyes of the spirit had more depth and breadth and clarity. Life was a proving ground of souls, a place of decisions, and a starting point on the path to eternity.

-13- *Spirit Helpers*

We came to a tree-lined boulevard. The trees didn’t seem to be doing all that well, and the houses were old and rundown, clearly built many years earlier. We went up a set of dingy, winding stairs and entered a dimly lit, drab apartment. A woman was slumped over a kitchen table with her head down on her arms. Her hair was the same bright reddish color as Zaapha’s. Zaapha led me over to her. She was not aware of our presence. She didn’t seem to be very aware of much of anything at that moment. Zaapha looked affectionately at her and said warmly, “This is my mother.” Zaapha stroked the woman’s hair gently in the spirit.

“Can she hear you? Can she feel you?” I asked.

Zaapha sort of smiled and shrugged. “A little, I guess. Like right now when she’s quiet.”

A near-empty bottle of liquor and an empty glass sat on the table. The woman clearly had been drinking. I looked at Zaapha. “Does your mother have problems?”

“Yes,” she said. “She blames herself and has given up. That’s what I’m trying to help her overcome.” I now saw a side of Zaapha I’d never noticed before—a very deep, mature, loving, concerned woman. She really was like a mature woman at this moment, yet she was at the same time clearly just a teen. From what I understood, in her family it wasn’t just Zaapha’s mother who needed help. What other house calls did Zaapha make during these spirit trips to visit her friends and loved ones in the quiet moments of their lives?

Zaapha seemed to be praying and focusing on encouraging her mother. Some form of deeper communication was taking place in the spirit. I could feel it. I could feel the warmth and the joy and the comfort. Zaapha had such a healing touch. Her artistic soul was every bit as skilled in creating beauty in the spirit as beauty in objects of art.

I heard a gentle sob come from the woman and Zaapha said, “Oh, she feels so badly. It really wasn’t her fault. I’m trying to tell her it wasn’t, but she still blames herself and she just won’t let go of it. How I wish she could understand.”

Somehow I knew that “it” had something to do with Zaapha’s death and more. Perhaps the

breakup of a marriage, or whatever other troubles this poor woman had gone through. Zaapha wrapped her arms around the woman and hugged her closely. The woman awakened and raised her head, seeming to sense that something was different. She’d been crying. Her face was very tearstained, and her eyes were red and puffy. She held a little white handkerchief in her hand that she’d been drying her tears with before she’d fallen asleep. “It’s okay, Mom, it’s okay!” Zaapha said reassuringly. Then she turned to me and said, “We need to do something to get her cheered up. She sits and broods in this room too much and gets too depressed. We need to get her out of here and her mind off of herself.”

The apartment was quite dim because the lights weren’t on and the curtains were partly drawn. Outside the sun was now shining through the clouds, and it promised to be a bright, cheerful afternoon.

The woman fumbled in the pocket of what appeared to be a waitress’ apron pulled over her pink work uniform that she was still wearing. She pulled out a package of cigarettes, and with some difficulty got a cigarette into her mouth and lit. Now that she was awake, she seemed a little more distant and not as easy to influence. It was sad for me to see Zaapha’s mother in such a pitiful condition. Children are sometimes ashamed to let others know when their parents are doing badly. But the beautiful thing in this tender moment was how completely loving, open, unembarrassed, and totally nonjudgmental Zaapha was. Her mother was

going through a very difficult time, and Zaapha loved her just as dearly, and was not at all ashamed to bring me here and see her like this.

I was convicted by her positive attitude towards people with problems. I might have been more concerned about appearances and what my friends would think, but Zaapha had no such flaw in her character, and made no effort to be pretentious or try to change appearances. This was her mother and she loved her very dearly. Her mother was having some problems and she was here to help. It was as simple as that. Love was all that was involved. Love was the principal force behind all things good. Love heals and holds things together. The foundation of life is the love of God, the very breath of His Spirit.

Suddenly through the wall walked a very handsome young man. “Oh, hi!” Zaapha said. “I was wondering where you were! How’s Mom been doing today?”

“Well, she’s had a pretty rough day,” he said. “But I think if we work together we can pull her through it.”

I was a bit surprised by all this. The tall, clean-cut young man appeared to be about 23 years old, and Zaapha seemed to know him very well.

“Oh,” she said, “this is my older brother. His name used to be Frank, and my name was Joan.” Zaapha laughed as she held her brother’s arm and delighted in my look of shocked surprise. They seemed to really enjoy each other’s company.

Frank appeared to be more like a guardian or a protector, someone especially assigned to watch over his mother. He didn’t appear to be a dream traveler like us; he seemed to really be there. I didn’t ask what his spirit name was, Frank was fine. He apparently was older in the spirit and had a more permanent job here on Earth, part of which was watching over his mom. Zaapha seemed to be a more recent arrival to the spirit world. She was still in training and learning the ropes, but she was far beyond me in all these matters.

Everything was totally new to me, and I still wasn’t sure just how I even got into the world of the spirit. I wasn’t dead yet—at least I didn’t think so. Here I was in that greater world that surrounds the same world that I live in, that this dear woman lives in, with all her problems and cares. How did I get to be here? Why? I didn’t know, yet for some reason here I was, just on the other side, a witness to Zaapha and her brother’s great love, concern, and understanding for their mother. The very loved ones she was so sad about were right there trying to help her, trying to guard and guide her and encourage her.

Would I some day upon my return to wakefulness on Earth go and find this woman and tell her the whole story in person? Or maybe I would write it all down in a book so that other hurting souls could also read it and find comfort, knowing that their lost loved ones really are okay and are much happier in God’s care in that greater world just beyond.

I could not help feeling a twinge of earthly sorrow as I realized that these two wonderful, cheerful young people with me, who were so warm and talented, were this sad and lonely woman's departed children. It was sad to see her feeling so depressed. She didn't understand. But how could she? From her point of view they were gone, and she had no idea where; and worst of all, she blamed herself for the loss of her children.

She couldn't see the joy; she could only see the loss. She couldn't see them as they now were; she could only look at old photos and see them as they once were. She couldn't see how they'd grown and matured into lovely young adults in the beautiful place they'd gone to from Earth. She couldn't see how very happy they were, and their only unhappiness was to see her unhappy. I admired Zaapha and Frank at that moment. They were so confident and had such a peace about them. They were there to help their mom make it through, and knew she would.

"We need to get her out more," Zaapha said.

"I agree," said Frank. Frank smiled over at me, as if he kind of knew ahead of time about me tagging along in this place wherever I was, and there was little point in even trying to figure where it was. "Where" wasn't important, because "where" at this moment was in some spiritual dimension close to a hurting soul that needed help, that needed cheering up.

The woman slowly got up, and with a rather thin, frail hand, pulled her hair back. She walked through the somewhat untidy room over to the

kitchen sink, which was full of unwashed dishes. She leaned over the sink, thinking for a moment, looking quite ill and pale, then made her way to the bathroom.

"Okay, here's the game plan," Frank said. "There's a park nearby that she sometimes goes to, and it's still sunny. So when she comes out, let's all concentrate on that. Let's pray and ask the Lord for His help to move her heart in that direction. There's something special waiting for her in that park today, so we need to get her out of here."

In a few minutes the woman returned. Zaapha and Frank held hands, and Zaapha reached over and took my hand as well. We formed a circle around the woman and Frank led us in prayer. "Dear Jesus, help Mom today. Help encourage her heart. Help lead and guide her mind and heart away from these sorrows and problems so that she can open up more to Your light and love and happiness. Help her to know how happy we are."

As we prayed, a beautiful warm light came down and began to fill the room. I was reminded of the beautiful verse, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." I could feel the warm, wonderful presence of Jesus Himself washing down and touching this dear mother of theirs.

Her eyes suddenly seemed to brighten as a thought struck her mind. She just felt like getting out. She didn't know what moved her, but you could see that she was determined to pull herself out of this slump. Somewhere deep inside she

had been given a suggestion and had accepted it. She walked over to the closet, took out her black coat and a funny old-fashioned looking little black hat. Her clothes didn't flatter her, but at least her face was a lot brighter and more hopeful than it had been. She seemed glad at least just to be doing something. She took off her slippers and put on a well-worn pair of shoes.

By this time Frank was grinning. "Mom's on the move!" Frank and Zaapha laughed. Frank put one hand on his mother's shoulder, and Zaapha took her by the arm. I followed them out the door.

-13- A Close Encounter

It was quite an amazing walk for me. Here I was, so very close to the physical world I also lived in, with all its sorrows and troubles and problems; yet I was at the same time in a happier world, just a thought and a breath away, just a flicker of the eye away. Oh, if only I could talk and tell this woman the truth, surely it would help and strengthen her. But she could neither see nor hear me. Her eyes were unable to see into this dimension that only eyes of faith can penetrate, if granted permission. Right now she couldn't see much beyond her immediate sorrows.

She made her way down the dark little stairway to the entrance onto the street. The

houses were old, three- or four-story high tenement houses built in some other more prosperous time. Some were built of brick and had great stone steps with rusty wrought iron, ornate eaves and awnings with clever cornices and carvings, rotting and reduced to just a hint of their former glory.

A gust of chilly wind made her tighten her collar around her neck. As she made her way along the street, I suddenly felt that her name was Ruth. The sidewalks were quite deserted as we made our way towards the park. The garbage cans set out for collecting that morning still seemed to be full. Some had fallen or been knocked over, and their contents lay strewn on the street and sidewalk. It looked like a rather rough neighborhood. The cars parked along the street were not all that new; some were abandoned and left to rust. On walls and fences were the graffiti markings of youth gangs, some sprayed in white and some in black. A few strange designs in yellow caught my eye. Yes, this was Earth all right.

I can't quite describe the effect of moving along like a guardian angel, following this woman up the street. I didn't even seem to really be walking, just sort of hovering along in a spiritual bubble, seeing her from another dimension. Frank was clearly able to move around a lot easier. He seemed to have much more authority and power in this sphere. Zaapha had less ability here than Frank, and of course I had the least of all. It was like we'd come through a tunnel in the spirit world that opened out and

focused on this one woman's life. And because our mission focused mainly on her life, I wasn't able to tune in to all the other things going on around. I guess it helped us to be more single-minded, for I did feel that there was a lot going on all around us, though I couldn't really see much.

I was mildly curious to see it all: all the spiritual things that were going on in other levels of the spirit where spirits good and evil struggled over the hearts and minds and spirits of people. I was curious to get a peek at the street-level warfare of the spirit, but at the same time I was a bit relieved that I couldn't. I was glad that I was protected, as though enclosed by a force field of God's making that shielded me and kept me safe in my own special dimension. I still sensed that there were worlds of unseen spiritual activity going on all around me, though for this moment we were focused on the life of this one person.

I kind of understood what Elisha's servant must have experienced when his eyes were suddenly opened to the greater spiritual world and warfare going on all around him. Some day God will suddenly pull back the curtain which clouds our perception and we'll see clearly again. Maybe Adam and Eve in the beginning could see with eyes of the spirit, but through sin we became blind. Saint Paul said that we now see spiritual things through a dark glass, but some day we'll see clearly.

How rich and deep and wonderful the spirit is, like a great flowing river. Like the river that Ezekiel saw, which the angel measured and called

him to go deeper into until its waters were so deep he could go no further. The waters of the spirit are very much like a wonderful river of life that flows through all things, through the entire universe. In its waters is the wonderful presence of the great Creator of all things, and in its waters we flow and travel and are kept and guided by the great living river of God. The spirit is so wonderful! Could it be a part of the river of life that proceeds from the throne of God?—Living waters that carry us along in their currents and fill our hearts with hope and joy.

I tagged along, somewhat lost in my own thoughts, while Frank and Zaapha were up ahead with their mother. They were talking and making plans, working out the details of the day, considering what they could do to help their mother through this difficult time. I hadn't been paying very much attention, and hadn't been tuning in to the physical world as I suppose I should have. I was in a safe place, but the physical world is a hazardous place at times for people.

Ruth was caught up in her own thoughts, and suddenly decided to cross the street without looking. She stepped out from between some parked vehicles, right in front of a large black car coming at quite a high speed. The driver was distracted at that moment and was looking back and talking to someone in the back seat. He hadn't noticed the woman step out in front of him. Ruth was not thinking or seeing too clearly either. I hadn't noticed the danger, but Frank knew. Had Frank not been on his toes, the poor woman would have been hit. I've never seen a

creature move as fast as Frank. He'd been standing right behind his mother one second, and in the next second he'd made his decision and moved at the speed of lightning.

In an instant, Frank seemed to be at the wheel of the car. The driver suddenly jerked around, sensing that something was wrong, saw the woman and swerved. Frank even seemed to be able to pull the wheel to help guide the driver around his mother, while Zaapha helped her mother jump back just in time. There was a screech of brakes as the car shot by, missing Ruth by inches.

The passenger in the back seat said, "You'd better watch where you're driving." Frank from his own dimension said, "Amen!"

In an instant, Frank was back with us. Whew! I wondered how he did that. He was faster than the eye could move or the mind could think. God had picked a great person to be a guardian—one that could move with the speed of thought, maybe even faster when needed. Though he looked young and relaxed, he certainly was good at his job. He even seemed to know the car was coming. I would have to be a lot more observant and tuned in before I could take on such a responsibility.

I flashed back to when I was younger and had walked out into a street without looking and got hit by a car. I believe I too had been supernaturally rescued by my own guardian angel. The driver hadn't even seen me, but the angel got him to stop and get out of his car, and then he discovered me unconscious with my

sweater caught on a piece of metal under the car. How very much we depend upon our hidden helpers and guardians to watch over us. And how wonderful God's love is for each one of us, to see that we all have somebody assigned to look out for us.

Frank looked up and caught my eye. He was wondering how I was taking all of this. "Cars can kill," he said. "I should know. I was killed in a car accident, so I'm a little sensitive about things like that." He smiled and seemed to have put all that behind him.

Frank and Zaapha now both tuned in to their mother again, who was quite shaken. She was seriously wondering if it had been such a good idea to go to the park after all. Frank took his mother by the shoulder, and though she probably couldn't hear him specifically, he said. "Oh, come on, Mom. The Enemy is just trying to scare you. Let's go and have some fun."

The woman seemed to like this park and its open spaces very much. It was nice to be able to get away from her dingy apartment and breathe some fresh air, if one could call city air fresh. But it seemed fresh, and spring was beginning to happen. Here and there in the flowerbeds were new little leaves peeking up, making their way up into a new growing season. The woman paused for a moment and sat down on a bench. Fumbling in her coat pocket, she found part of a chocolate bar, broke off a piece and began to eat. That seemed to be about all the food she'd eaten in awhile. She hadn't been eating very well.

She nibbled on the chocolate as she looked down at a flowerbed nearby.

Suddenly I could see her thoughts: the white house, the little flower bed in front of it where she'd planted the bulbs herself, and her roses... Tears began to form in her eyes again as she reminisced on a happier time. It was a time when she had roses and her little redheaded Joan, her most precious rose of all, playing beside her in the garden. Some particularly lovely roses were growing nearby, and the little girl was admiring one particularly beautiful rose. *That is very like the rose that Zaapha gave to me imbedded in that crystal*, I thought. It was such a fond memory; just one sweet moment between a mother and her daughter out in the garden. Her mother had hugged her warmly. They cut the rose together and took it into the house.

The barking of a dog suddenly interrupted this beautiful thought. A squirrel had somehow attracted the attention of the pet of a visitor to the park, and it was barking excitedly. Ruth looked up. The owner of the pet, an older man, smiled over at Ruth, and she smiled back.

"How are you doing today, Tom?" she called out cheerfully—at least as cheerfully as she could, which told me a lot about her character. It was clear that Ruth knew this man.

"Oh, pretty good," he said. "Things are getting back to normal. The house is awfully empty, though." The man sort of looked away. He couldn't hide his inner pain as well as Ruth. Then he looked back. "But I guess you know what it's like, losing someone you love."

“Yeah,” she said, “it’s pretty rough.”

“Well, at least she went quickly.” I realized that this older gentleman had lost his wife recently. “We’d been together 35 years. You kind of get used to somebody being there, and then suddenly they’re gone and you really miss them.”

“Mary was a good woman,” Ruth replied. “She was a wonderful woman. I know she’s happier now.”

“Yeah, I think so. She lived a good life.”

Then in a clear attempt to break out of the sadness of the moment, and inspired by some prompting by Zaapha, the man said, “Do you want to go for a cup of coffee, Ruth?”

Ruth smiled. “I’d like that, Tom. I’d really like that.” She got up and joined the man, who was about her age.

Frank winked at his sister and made a funny face, like “Ho, ho, ho! This looks interesting.” How cute it was to watch her children secretly playing Cupid in the background. They were so eager to see their mother find some happiness and enjoy life more, and be more of a help and blessing to others in need around her. For here was another needy soul who just lost the companionship of his wife, Mary. It seemed like it had been some kind of cancer or something, but she mercifully passed on quickly.

The man seemed to be quite well off, and apparently knew Ruth quite well. Perhaps she worked in a coffee shop or restaurant that he frequented and they saw each other from time to time. He obviously knew quite a bit about her

past and her troubles, and she knew him and had also known his wife.

The whole encounter seemed to brighten Ruth’s countenance and put a little spring in her step. You could feel her wishing she had combed her hair a little better, and primped up a bit to make herself look more attractive. She hadn’t expected to meet company in the park, but it was happening. However, she knew him well enough and was friend enough that life’s little details and outward appearances didn’t seem to matter. He understood. He reached over and took her arm, warmly. The small white dog trotted happily along in front of them.

Tom was well dressed. He wore nice gloves, had a nice hat and topcoat, and was dressed comfortably warm for weather that was still quite chilly. He carried himself like a banker, or a local businessman. I had a warm feeling about their meeting. It was good to see lonely people being a comfort to each other. God seemed to have brought them together, probably in answer to someone’s prayers, perhaps their own, or their children’s.

“Any word about Frank?” Tom asked Ruth.

“No, I heard he was in the hospital for awhile, the veterans hospital. Well, he has his pension and things.”

From the conversation I gathered that Zaapha’s father, who had the same name as his son, was still alive. Tom clearly had at one time known him. Perhaps they’d done business together. Maybe this man had financed their

house and had been a close friend or helper to their family. There were so many possibilities, so many paths and ways to go and choices to make in life. Still, for those who love God, everything leads to a wonderful outcome no matter how difficult and confusing things may seem along the way.

A funny thought hit me. How startled this couple would be if they could suddenly see all of us merrily following them around. Frank looked very pleased and so did Zaapha at this new development in their mother's life. I was thankful that God does have answers to problems even in this crazy world. As sure as I know God exists, I knew in my heart that this woman's situation would work out too.

Suddenly I began to fade. Everything began to fade. I was moving back into the place of dream travel. I awoke gazing at the rose, the crystal rose that Zaapha had given me. Its warm glow comforted me. I knew a bit better what it all meant. Still, was it all just a dream? Had I really gone anywhere? It certainly seemed like I'd traveled off and away in the spirit. What a strange, wonder-filled place this was. Some day I would get to live here forever. I closed my eyes and drifted peacefully away into sleep again.

-15- *Lambda One*

I awoke to the soft, warm, golden glow of a new morning in this wonderful New World. The air seemed especially alive today, almost electric with a great sense of excitement and anticipation. In the distance I could hear music. Not so much that of a song, or of a marching band, but rather a great rumbling sound of a multitude of trumpets playing a thousand different notes and tones that nonetheless blended beautifully and angelically.

I was barely awake when Jamal rushed into my room. His face was keenly aglow with excitement. He was radiant and happy.

"Today is the day!" he almost shouted. "Come on, Travis! You don't want to miss this!"

The passion and excitement of my usually calm and collected friend instantly stirred my curiosity. I leaped out of bed and followed him outside onto the balcony. In the distance the sky was shining with a bright, golden, shimmering light.

“They’re coming for us!” he said. “Today is the day! Oh, you’ll just love it! I’m so glad you got to stay and be here to see and experience this!” He reached over and put his arm around my shoulder and hugged me warmly. “This is a very big event and you’ll just love it!”

In the courtyard below, Jamal’s mother Joyus was busy setting the house and yard in order, as though about to leave on a journey.

“Are you nearly ready, Mother?” Jamal called down.

“Yes,” she said cheerfully. “I think everything is ready for those taking the next shift!”

By now, my curiosity was almost more than I could bear. It seemed that some event, unknown and unseen to me as yet, was about to happen to us. Jamal turned and looked at me closely. I returned the gaze and looked deeply into his eyes. They were two mysterious, beautiful, deep brown orbs that shone with such inner light, wonder and excitement.

“Today is the day,” he repeated. “Today, Lambda One comes to drop off those taking the next shift and to take us to the Great City. Not only that, but today is also the Great Festival of the Prince of Peace! I can hardly wait!”

His words took a few moments to sink in. “Do you mean we get to go to the Great City of Light? We’re going there today?”

“Yes!” he said excitedly, hugging me again. “Today’s the day we move back to our home in the City! It’s the beginning of a new quarter and our shift here on the frontier is done, so we turn this house over to those on the next shift and we return home!”

“Your home in the City? But I thought this was your home?”

“Well, this is our home when we’re living here, but our real home, our lasting home, is in the City of Light!” Jamal took a deep breath and looked away at the golden glow in the sky that was even brighter now than before. Something very big but indiscernible to my limited senses was approaching Tricon. You could feel its great presence getting closer and closer, but I couldn’t see it yet. I didn’t have as finely tuned spiritual eyes as those I lived with here in this incredible realm. Who knows what wonders they could see all around that were hidden to me? Still, what I did see was beyond my wildest dreams and expectations.

“But what exactly is Lambda One?” I asked.

“It’s one of the greatest cargo and personnel carriers in the fleet,” he answered.

“A ship?” I asked, clearly puzzled as to the nature of the vehicle about to appear.

“You know, a transporter!” he said, “To take us to the City!”

Sometimes in this place the questions in my mind formed so fast that they stumbled and tripped over each other and I wondered which one to throw out first. There was so much to learn, and just when you thought you knew something, things could change so quickly that you realized you'd only just begun to understand.

"Is everyone from here going?" I asked at last.

"Oh, no," was his reply, "just those—well, mostly just those—who are at the end of their shift. But of course some are going just to attend the Festival."

"Help me understand," I said. "Are you saying that you and your family were sent out here to help secure the frontier area for a certain amount of time?"

"Not exactly sent! We volunteered to take our turn and serve in border defense. Tricon is a border city. It's exciting and you get to see different places and do different things, and you know you're helping to win the great battle against the Fallen Ones."

"But what is your father going to do? What happens to the great herd?" The questions began to tumble out.

Jamal laughed. "Oh, Father is bringing the herd with him. There's going to be a great celebration in the City and the horses are going to be star performers. It will be magnificent!"

"But ... but..." I stammered at the thought of how great this mysterious vehicle called Lambda One must be. Could it really take on board an entire herd of horses, plus a great number of

people? The idea staggered my imagination. Yet to Jamal this was simply an accepted part of life, much like catching a bus or something. But this vehicle didn't sound like any bus I knew. What could this transporter be like?

"Here it comes!" Jamal called down excitedly to his mother. "Get ready! It's almost here!"

"All is ready!" she called up cheerfully.

I began to sense it too. I looked around, searching the horizon as best I could, but saw nothing like a vehicle approaching. Only the sky was different, growing in intensity. Finally I asked, "Where will it come from, and how will it appear?"

"There! There!" Jamal said emphatically, pointing to a particularly luminescent part of the sky. "It'll break through any moment!"

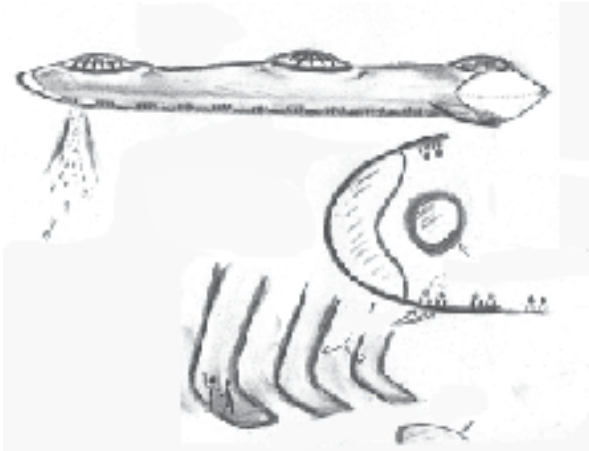
I can't rightly describe what my eyes beheld in the next few moments. Back on Earth we have our theories about light and how it works, how it reflects off of objects and how it's produced and how it moves. But some of the light here is different from any light I'd seen on Earth. This light, for lack of a better description, was living and had its own character and qualities. This light was so alive, and the sky became alive with its presence.

Brighter and brighter the sky became, and then an immense vessel began to take shape overhead, formed and fashioned of light. It filled the sky above and reached out in a long, spacecraftlike shape that stretched for what seemed like an immeasurable distance off towards the horizon, filling much of one side of

the sky. Above us, on the underside of this immense vehicle, were what appeared to be large, round, portal-shaped windows.

There was a glorious burst of heavenly music, like a thousand celestial trumpets blowing a beautiful chord to announce the ship's arrival. Heavenly sounds rippled and vibrated through my very soul, filling my entire being with absolute ecstasy and elation. A great shout of jubilation went up from the city. I looked around at the streets that I could see from Jamal's house. Every passageway was filled with happy waving people who were cheering and pointing up. Lambda One had arrived!

Jamal had not at all exaggerated the immensity of the excitement of this moment. If anything, he had understated it. The only word I can think to describe it is "rapturous." Here was an immense celestial vehicle taking form



above us, fashioned as far as I could tell, from a transcendent form of light. It was light that was alive and had a great sense of its own presence. It was magnificent to behold.

The great ship didn't have to land to receive us, for the light itself seemed to move us. Bright silver fountains of joyous light splashed its underside and rained down upon the city and its inhabitants. Every face was lit with such joy.

Jamal took my hand and said, "All right, are you ready? This is it! Takeoff time!"

My wondrous experience in the library of rising through the air was minor in comparison to the overwhelming elation I now felt. A stream of living, joyful energy began to flow through my body and transform me in a moment. I held Jamal's reassuring hand as we rose up, and others all around us as well. Up, up we ascended into the embrace of this celestial wonder. Closer and closer we drew to that magnificent, indescribably large vessel. Below us all over the city, countless people were rising. Men, women, children, even happy little family pets were joining them and entering into the bright portals that lined the undersides of the vessel as far as the eye could see.

The portals of Lambda One were somewhat like the shimmering doors of light at the great library near the center of Tricon.

As we entered the ship and felt firm footing beneath us again, I asked, "But where are Ja-al and the horses?"

"He will join us shortly," answered Joyus, who had entered right behind us. "He'll be loading

the horses into one of the larger loading areas further back. They have special stalls and places for the animals.” Joyus then went over to talk to another group of friends that had also just entered the ship.

“Are there more ships like this?” I asked Jamal.

“Oh, goodness, yes!” Jamal replied, almost amused. “And there are also other types of all sizes: personnel-carrying crafts, battleships, luxury cruisers, more transport vessels like this one, and of course there are the Lord’s own space vehicles and His ‘royal coach’ as we call it. You know, the one Ezekiel got to see once. That one is pretty wild!”

“But why do you need vehicles at all? Why would you need such a large ship as this, for example?” I wondered out loud.

“Well,” he replied, “this ship is useful at times like this, and it serves in all sorts of frontier and pioneer projects. When we explore some new regions, some new world, we can do so very effectively, moving large numbers of people and huge cargoes, sometimes complete cities if needed.”

I could scarcely believe my ears. Did he really say “new worlds”? I couldn’t pursue the topic at this moment. It was more than I could comprehend or absorb for now. There’s only so much input that even a spiritual being can take at one time, and I was surely the least of all of these, and the most inexperienced at that. I’d reached my maximum for the moment. I wasn’t ready to plunge into the topic of exploring and pioneering and colonizing new worlds at this

moment. I could hardly imagine that here in the spiritual dimension there were regions as yet unexplored by its principal inhabitants, these celestial beings.

they climbed up through the air. They were galloping unimpeded on the wings of the wind. Up and up they charged.

“I thought the horses of Heaven would have wings,” I commented to Jamal, “you know, like Pegasus, the legendary winged horse.”

Jamal laughed in great amusement. “It’s not legendary!” he said, speaking through his laughter. “These horses do have wings, much like the angels, but they don’t always show them. Just when they want to or need to. Most of the time you don’t see them, but you can see them if you want to.”

I couldn’t see them. Jamal saw my look of disappointment. He reached over and put his hands on each side of my head and his fingers pressed on my temples. Instantly I could see more and clearly. “They do have wings!” I exclaimed. “Huge wings!” Now, at least for a moment, I saw these creatures in a whole new dimension. The vision was breathtaking.

“There! You wanted to see wings!” Jamal said. He was still amused as I stood speechless, watching these huge winged animals now entering another section of Lambda One.

“As soon as they’re all loaded and settled, Father will probably come and join us,” Jamal continued.

“Will we be able to go over to the stalls and see them during the flight?” I asked. I was hoping that we might also be able to explore some of the interior of this unbelievable spacecraft, for it was beyond anything science fiction had yet imagined.

-16- All Aboard

“There he is!” shouted Jamal, pointing down at one of the fields. I could see through one of the large floor portals a line of white figures far below. The great herd was gathering. Ja-al was in the lead, riding so magnificently on the back of Helios, the great stallion. With a single hand signal from Ja-al, Helios rose from the ground, and the rest followed in a mighty upward charge. What a show of power there was in these fine animals, so superbly trained and beautiful to behold. They rose majestically from the ground like a flock of great white birds taking off, but without the flapping and confusion. It was as though their feet were still on firm ground as

“Yes,” Jamal said. Then as though reading my mind he added, “And maybe I’ll be able to take you for a tour of part of the ship.”

I understood why he said “part of the ship,” for it was obvious that to explore more than a small section of this vessel would be a very great undertaking. Frankly, I’d never imagined how massive and well equipped the Heavenly Kingdom was, or that the Army of the Lord of Hosts was such an absolutely awesome force!

“With this kind of technology,” I said, not really thinking, “God could run the whole universe and everything in it!”

“He does!” Jamal said a little dryly, then laughed. “His Creation Command and Archives Center makes this ship look like a little toy.”

“A command center? Celestial archives? You mean there’s some sort of celestial center or great computer that controls everything, and where God’s books and records are kept? I thought God did all that in His head!” I said in surprise.

“He can, and does get involved when He needs to, but He likes to let angels and others help Him keep the books and attend to creation, especially the physical creation. God likes to pass down as many jobs and responsibilities to others as He can. It makes life more interesting, challenging, and rewarding for everyone. If God did everything Himself, we wouldn’t feel so loved or needed, and life would get pretty boring.”

“But you can still ask God to do special things that need His special help or approval to accomplish, can’t you?—Like when Elijah asked God to stop the rain for three and a half years,

or Joshua asked God to stop the sun from moving in the sky for several hours, or when Hezekiah asked God to move the sun backward in the sky?”¹

Jamal nodded, “Oh, of course God can override His own machinery and the Control Center any time He wants to.”

Still full of questions, I continued, “But doesn’t the Devil also have a lot of control over conditions on Earth? The Bible even calls him the ‘prince of the power of the air.’”²

Jamal sighed, “Unfortunately, yes, and he and his followers do all they can to sabotage or destroy the orderly workings of creation. In the present fallen state of the people on Earth, and under the influence of the Devil and the Fallen Ones, things are really getting messed up down there. The evil use of spiritual forces can and does greatly affect physical things as well as spiritual things. But remember that as rebellious as our enemies are, they still must have God’s permission before they can do anything really bad or destructive to creation or the people on Earth. Yet if the people get really bad, God does have to lift His blessing and protection, and the Enemy can rush in and do a lot of damage.”

I added, “Like when the Devil had to get God’s permission to wreck Job’s life. Job wasn’t bad, but God did let the Devil steal away all of his stuff and cause a great wind to blow the house down on his children and then give him boils.”³

¹ 1 Kings 17:1; Joshua 10:12–14; Isaiah 38:1–8

² Ephesians 2:2

³ Job 1:8–22; 2:1–7

Jamal continued, “Yes, God is our protector, and even if for some reason He does let the Destroyer get through, we still need to hang on and trust that God will deliver us out of the hands of the Enemy! If you study the records of the great wars between the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, you’ll find many times when the situation for us looked hopeless. Then God turned the tide, often using a small, insignificant, almost foolish thing to confound His enemies.”

As he spoke, I could just imagine Jamal poring over some great book of celestial battles. Actually, there must be many amazing books and records in God’s great archive. What a day that will be when the books are opened!—Though I was a little apprehensive at the thought of someone reading out loud at the great Judgment Seat of Christ all my deeds and the effect that everything I did in life had on others. I felt a little nervous about that, knowing how many sins and mistakes I’d made already in life, and all the times I’d been selfish and not very loving and kind to others. It was pretty scary realizing that everything I do, think, or say, is recorded. My only source of hope is in the great love and mercy of Jesus, and knowing that He has already paid for all my sins with His own life and death on the cross. I just accept Him and His forgiveness and receive His gift of eternal life. I’m happy my name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and nothing can change that.

These little conversations with Jamal often had a great effect on me. He helped answer a

lot of my questions, and his sample made me want to be a better person and a stronger soldier for Jesus. My people, my nation, my Kingdom and my King were at war with the powers of darkness, and each one of us, whether on Earth or in the spirit world, had to do our part. I realized that Jamal was no ordinary 12-year-old—nor was I—but for some reason God had brought us together in this youthful form.

I continued to gaze out the window of the craft at a world those on Earth could only imagine. I turned and said to Jamal, “I think I’m beginning to see why God made everything so different, so vast, so full of things for us to see and do. Creation is actually a gigantic playground God built for His children.”

Jamal laughed, “Hey, you’re starting to sound like me! Well, you’re right. God sure didn’t make it for Himself. Did you know that even for God to enter into His creation, or for that matter even to look at creation, He has to greatly humble Himself? Psalm 113:6 says that God ‘humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!’ But He does so for our sakes because He loves us so much, and knows what a joy it is for us to be able to be with Him. He likes it when we show Him we’re thankful and praise Him for all He does for us. He likes it when we show our appreciation. He didn’t have to make creation so big, but He did. Think about it! He could have made just one kind of fruit for us to eat, but He knew that wouldn’t have been much fun for us! He didn’t need to build the City of Light, or ‘Space City’ as some folks call it, just

for Himself, but He built it for us so we could be with Him and enjoy Him and He could enjoy having us there too! He made everything good and perfect and enjoyable for us because He loves us. He really wants us to be happy.”

Jamal loved God so much that whenever he spoke about God or Jesus, his whole face would shine with joy and inspiration. I was enjoying this deeper talk about God very much.

“Still, it’s hard to imagine that God would create the whole vast universe and everything else just to make things fun for us.”

“Well, He did!” Jamal assured. “God loves us a lot and wants us to have fun, and He likes to have fun with us.”

“Really?”

“Really!” he replied. “Besides, eternity is a long, long time, and He knows that kids need plenty to do, so you can be sure He has lots of surprises in store for us!”

I must have looked a bit shocked and said, “It’s hard for me to imagine God liking to have fun and being such a fun Father. I think of Him as being kind of sober and serious about everything.”

“Oh, He can be fun, or serious, when He wants to. After all, He created us in His own image, so we’re already a lot like Him. Think about it. Don’t you like to do different things, and have fun with the people you love and that you have a lot in common with? Don’t you want to go places, explore things, share adventures, give them things, and surprise them with presents? Well, that’s how God is with us!”

Then to make sure I got a more balanced picture, Jamal added, “Of course, there are all sorts of practical and technical and hidden reasons why things are the way they are: the need for this ship, for example; or why God built Space City so beautiful, yet so well fortified. There are all sorts of reasons for things being the way they are. Some things may be a little hard to explain, and some things we don’t understand yet. But you know God has a reason, and in the end we’ll discover it was for our benefit and because God loves us so much.”

-17- Flying Saucers and The War of the Worlds

I had a growing sense of puzzlement about Space City, so I asked Jamal, “I get the impression that it’s not very easy right now to get to the City. Where is it exactly, and just how do we get there? When I first came here I vaguely remember seeing a City of Light off in the distance somewhere, but directions are somehow different in the spirit, plus there seem to be all sorts of levels and dimensions to the spirit world, so that I’m not really sure where I am right now, let alone know what direction Space City is from here. Is that great City up on a higher spiritual

level, or is it somewhere down in the physical dimension?”

Seeing my confusion, and knowing a simple answer would require some thought, Jamal took a deep breath and said, “I’m sorry. I should have tried to explain things better to you. *This* world that we are in is the only one I have known since birth, so I forget sometimes how hard it must be for you to figure things out when you come here. I’ll try to make it simple for you, but I’m not always very good at that.

“Right now we are in one of the main creation levels of the spirit world. This level is quite ‘physical,’ as you can see, and a lot like life on Earth. There’s land and water and plants and animals, and we have houses and cities and country areas. Beyond that, there are vast expanses of spiritual space with many more wonders and places that even we have never seen or explored yet. Deeper or farther up, or however you want to say it, are other levels in the spirit. You experienced a bit of what it’s like to go to a higher level when you were in the Temple of Tricon, or when you went with Zaapha back to Earth in a different spiritual level. At that level you discovered that in the spirit all creation becomes very interconnected, am I right?”

“Yes,” I nodded, adding, “so I really was there after all, wasn’t I?”

Jamal smiled one of his knowing, cryptic smiles, and then continued. “Living on Earth, you already know what it’s like to be at that level of the spirit, a very physical and temporal level, yet still spiritual nonetheless.” He smiled, and with

a twinkle in his eyes, added one of his intriguing little commentaries: “Earth is at a lower level in the spirit, at least for the *present*—until God moves in!” Jamal continued, “When you go from this world to your world, things are very different, right? Things down there at this moment seem to be quite different from here. Why is that?” He paused, “Are you following all this?”

“I think so,” I said, hoping I was understanding.

“Right now you’re almost completely in the spirit, free of your physical body. But think for a moment and tell me how your spirit feels when you’re in your body. Or think how your body is affected or changed when your spirit is lifted!”

I laughed and said, “Well, when your spirit goes to a higher level, you look and feel a lot happier, for one thing. And I guess the lower a spirit goes, the more ‘physical’ things become. Down there I feel heavier and more confined to my body. I’m a lot more limited in what I can do, and how and where I can go. I feel more under the control of physical forces, like light and heat and gravity. But when I move up in the spirit, I feel freer, and like I can fly and do all sorts of things. Of course, when I’m way up here in the spirit, I really can fly!”

Jamal continued, “The point is that the spiritual and the physical can greatly affect each other when they’re joined together. Movements up or down in the spirit change a person’s body. The point you need to understand is that the spirit can move the physical to a different dimension if it’s given enough power. Do you

remember the verse, ‘But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you’? Also, ‘But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God’?¹—Now that takes a lot of power! When you move up in the spirit even a tiny bit, it shows in your eyes and face. The higher you go, the brighter you get.

“When they stoned Stephen in the Book of Acts and he saw Jesus, his face began to shine, right? They also had to put a veil over Moses’ face after he came down from Mt. Sinai because his face shone so brightly after meeting with the Lord. If your spirit really gets turned on and is given enough power, it can pull your body up with it to a higher level in the spirit, where you can even seem to disappear. That’s what happened to Philip in the Book of Acts. He got ‘caught up in the spirit’ and completely disappeared for a time. Enoch got so far out there in the spirit that he walked with God and was translated, body and all. When Jesus had finished His work on Earth, He just rose from the ground and went up and up and disappeared.² Anyway, the secret of shifting in and out of the physical world is having enough spiritual power.”

He looked at me closely, “It’s simple enough to experience these things, but it can get pretty complicated to try and explain them. We can talk more about this later. Let’s go over to the window now. We’re about to start our voyage, and I want you to see this.”

¹ Acts 1:8; John 1:12

² Acts 6:15; Exodus 34:30,33; Acts 8:39,40; Genesis 5:24; Acts 1:9–11

I went with Jamal over to a large side window that was near one of the entrance portals in the floor. When Jamal saw me walk around the portal he laughed. “Go ahead and walk across it. You won’t fall out, if that’s what you’re worried about. It looks transparent, but it’s very solid, believe me.”

It was hard for me to step out onto the open area of the portal. It still looked like there was nothing at all to stand on, and the ground was a great distance below. Back on Earth, looking down from a great height always gave me butterflies in my tummy. I knew that it was probably okay to walk over the portal entrance, for I’d felt how solid it was under my feet when I entered the ship. Still, I’d not yet lost my respect for heights. I just didn’t feel completely at ease walking out onto what looked like a big hole in the floor.

At last I managed to overcome my fears, and, somewhat gingerly, stepped out onto the portal area. It was perfectly solid underfoot, though invisible. Below me lay the city of Tricon and its surroundings. I wondered how long it might be before I would see this place again. I wondered, too, if Zaapha was somewhere on board with us, or if she was still in Tricon. I had wanted to thank her for taking me with her in the spirit back to Earth, but everything had happened so quickly. From one moment to the next it seemed I’d gone from my bed to boarding an interstellar spaceship now about to plunge down into temporal space.

“Do the Fallen Ones have similar spacecraft?” I asked.

“A few runabout crafts and smaller vessels,” he replied. “Not nearly as good, but enough to confuse and deceive people and cause problems for us. So far the hand of the Lord has prevented them from any widespread use of their vehicles, or any show of great signs and wonders to those on Earth. However, as we come closer to the final battle, more ‘sightings’ cannot be prevented. There will be many signs in the sky, for when the spiritual world fully engages in battle, the physical world immediately feels the ripples and experiences changes and events of cataclysmic proportion—the signs of the End!”

“But I can’t see why they don’t just surrender! They can’t hope to win against God, who has an army of angels twice as large as theirs!”

“In addition to God’s angels,” Jamal added, “don’t forget that just before the great battle, countless millions of us will join the Lord with our new supernatural, resurrected, eternal bodies with the powers of angels.”

“So why don’t they just give up?” I asked. “Don’t they know they can’t win a war with God?”

“Probably, but it’s their pride,” was Jamal’s reply. “Their leader is the king and prince of all the children of pride. So, yes, they will fight! They will fight to the death—all for the sake of pride—and they will lose. They’ve already lost!”

As he said that, Jamal gestured toward a beautiful, glowing, lifelike representation of Jesus on a far wall of the large reception area we

were presently in. Odd, I hadn't noticed it when we came in, but now it seemed to come alive. It was wonderful to just gaze into His reassuring face for a moment of peace, personal prayer, and thankfulness for Him. I can't quite say if it was just an image of Jesus, or somehow it really was Him appearing for a moment to encourage us, but it looked so real and so alive. His eyes looked right into my very soul with understanding, and His Spirit was total purity, humility and much, much more. Just to see Him was a touch of utter ecstasy.

With my eyes still fixed on Jesus, I said to Jamal, "I see! I see why pride can't win and why Jesus can't lose. He is all-loving and giving, whereas pride is selfish and taking, just the opposite of God. Pride takes from others to feed itself. But no matter how much it takes, it will always be hungry. Whereas true happiness only comes from loving God and living for others."

Jamal agreed, "The Devil is his own worst enemy, because pride destroys itself in the end. Selfishness soon leaves you unloved, unhappy, unfulfilled, and without any lasting purpose or constructive reason for living or existing. You soon end up with nothing, if all you can do is hate and destroy. So the armies of the Lord are winning, and the Devil is being driven out of the spiritual realm, as well as temporal space. They have no nice places left to go, so they're upset and determined to not go quietly."

"You mean that the Fallen Ones are in more places than just the Earth?"

Jamal looked a bit surprised. "Didn't you read in the books of the prophet David what he said when people were so disappointed at not discovering life on Mars? 'God only knows what some of these planets are for, and what their purposes are besides being astrological bodies. Some of those planets may be loaded already, but not with the kind of life man is looking for!' Well, he was right about that; some planets are loaded with demons, all right!"

A bit shocked, I said, "So when people on Earth tell about 'aliens' doing things to them, or taking them to other planets, could some of that be somewhat true?"

"If the Fallen Ones use one of the spiritual channels still open to them, spirit trips may be possible. But people are treading on dangerous spiritual ground when they take trips in their bodies or in the spirit with those guys. They end up used or abused, and are never told the whole truth. The sad part is that they could have just as much joy and adventure taking trips in the spirit with Jesus if they wanted. It's very sad!"

"Anyway, the war is heating up. Satan and his forces are being driven out of the spiritual dimension and being confined to the physical plane, principally the planet Earth. Actually, poor old Earth is becoming quite a prison house for every kind of foul-spirited character there has ever been. That's good news for us up here, but bad news for our people still down there on Earth. The end of the war is near when Satan finally falls from this realm and possesses a great world leader."

“But where will they flee to next when we win the war?” I asked.

“They really have no other place to go but down into the Earth itself. The Bible says that when they see the Lord arriving with the armies of Heaven, they will even want the mountains to fall on them to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. So, down into the prison house of the Earth they will go, where they will be bound in and around that great bottomless pit, God’s lockup area for characters like them. Their leader, the Devil, will be chained up for a thousand years. And as I understand it, prison life down there is not going to be easy for him. The other prisoners are not so nice and are going to give him a pretty rough time.”

This was all so interesting and exciting to hear, but at this moment I did want him to get back to explaining to me just where exactly the Heavenly City was.

“Hang on!” he said. “We’re going in now!”

- 18 - *Heaven Bound:
The Journey Home*

I became aware that the great ship was now moving. Loading was complete, and Lambda One was beginning its voyage to that great city with so many names: the Celestial City, Space City, the City of Light, the Holy City, New Jerusalem, the City of God, Heaven—whatever you want to call it! The small border city of Tricon was its last stop before making the descent into temporal space. I felt a great rushing sensation throughout my body, a bit like being up in an elevator as it descends rapidly in a very tall building. We weren’t really moving up or down or forward or backward as much as shifting somehow to

another dimension. The ship was transporting us down into the physical realm, to the temporal plane where distance and time have greater reign.

Suddenly we emerged into a whole new world, as though we had stepped through a veil and come out in a different room. Actually, it was more like coming out in a whole different house. Everything was so different, and we were somewhere out in deep space. Shimmering clouds of stars and galaxies surrounded us.

“Look!” Jamal pointed out of one of the windows. “We’re in temporal space now. You know for sure when you see the protective force field in place.”

Through the portals and windows, I could see what appeared to be a sea of crystal blue encapsulating the entire vessel in one great domelike shield. Beyond this crystal blue was the vast expanse of outer space. I gazed in awe at dazzling colored clouds, composed entirely of stars and glowing stellar gases. *What adventures and worlds wait for us out there yet to be discovered!* I thought. It was magnificent! A bright flash appeared on the periphery of the force field. I glanced questioningly over to Jamal.

“That was just a meteorite or some small piece of cosmic debris being deflected or disintegrated by the shields.” Jamal continued, “There are other routes we could have taken to get to the City. We could have gone overland or at a slightly higher spiritual altitude, but this route is fun and

interesting. Today we’re traveling through temporal space, following part of the original flight path taken by the great City itself when it was moved to its new location.”

Being here can at times be very humbling. There’s just so much one does not understand, and you must continually admit how much you don’t know in order to learn and get answers. At times I seemed to only be making baby steps in my understanding, though I was eager to learn about everything. I was thankful for Jamal who never made me feel badly for asking so many questions. Nor did he make me feel that he was so much smarter and knew so much more than me about everything. Actually, I think for Jamal, being with this greenhorn from Earth was at times quite fun and amusing, and he also seemed to be learning from me, especially patience.

I understood from what Jamal was saying that “overland” must mean traveling to Earth across the Great Plains beyond Tricon. For up in that dimension there seemed to be some kind of land forms in regions that appear to us on Earth to simply be the emptiness of outer space. It seemed that parallel locations in the physical and spiritual dimensions could appear totally different when viewed from a different spiritual level, or by someone with a different spiritual viewing ability. Elisha certainly saw things his servant did not see, at least to begin with, that day when the city they were in was surrounded by an enemy army. Back on Earth prophets and other spiritually gifted people often report seeing

things that others cannot see. I knew that Jamal often saw things that I could not see. God's creation seemed to be full of many such marvels and mysteries.

"Jamal," I said, "you know sometimes I feel badly about having to ask you so many questions, but I just can't seem to help it."

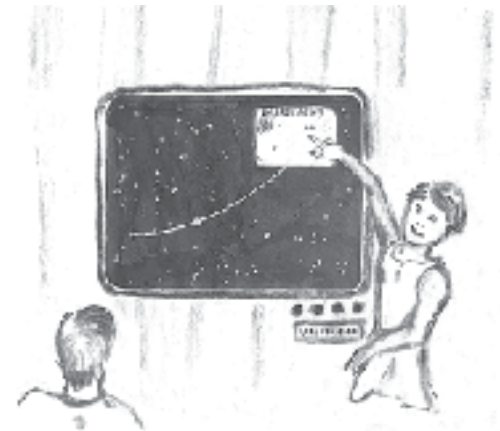
"Ask away," he replied.

"Well, I still want you to try and tell me exactly where the Heavenly City is located. How long are we going to be there? And..." There were so many questions piled up on the tip of my tongue that I couldn't even say them all!

Jamal smiled that warm, reassuring smile of his and squeezed my shoulder. "Patience! You will understand all in good time." He turned to a wall screen and waved his hand over the activation controls. The screen filled with a collection of characters and writing in a language I had never seen before. Jamal keyed in some command codes, and the screen lit up with a puzzling-looking map unlike anything I'd ever seen before. He made a few more adjustments, and it became clearer to me what it was.

"This is a celestial navigation map of temporal space. I've made it two-dimensional and filtered out the temporal events and astrological influence overlays to make it simple. We entered temporal space here." He pointed to a red cross-hair on the screen. Then his finger followed a thin red line up to a bright blue dot that appeared part way into the line. "This is where we are now."

He continued up the line for what proportionally seemed like a great distance and



said, "That yellow dot is the sun, and this small dot here is the Earth. He touched the screen and that section of the screen was instantly enlarged.

He continued, "And this tiny white dot here in the physical realm is where the Celestial City is now stationed, though it is still somewhat in the spiritual."

I clearly would need a crash course in celestial cartography, geometry or astrological metaphysical transcendental physics, or some such unheard-of studies, to even begin to understand! Jamal paused, trying to think of some way to make it simpler for me. For him it must have been a bit like trying to explain advanced calculus to a boy in kindergarten. Time and space, physical and spiritual levels and dimensions, were still great mysteries to me. At last he said, "Well, I guess to make it easy you could think of temporal existence as being like a sphere within the greater expanse of all creation.

Imagine that all creation is made from some kind of spiritual liquid that's like water. Well, the physical creation would then be like a piece of ice floating within this water."

Jamal laughed and shrugged his shoulders and grinned at me, "Sorry, that's about the best I can do till I figure it out better myself!"

"But the physical universe is so vast," I said. "It seems to go out and out forever through countless stars and galaxies. It seems so big to us when we're on Earth, as though it has no end."

Jamal sort of chuckled again, "If you think that's big, you ought to have a glimpse at the size of spiritual space! As I looked into his eyes, they seemed to shine like mystical orbs through which I could see the things of which he spoke. For a moment I caught a glimpse of the utterly unimaginable vastness of eternity, and the immeasurable, unfathomable greatness of God's spiritual world. The tiniest glimpse of the tiniest part of it left me confounded. I understood now why Jamal had said there was really no comparison. No matter how vast we consider the universe in which we live, it was as nothing compared to the least part of the greater worlds of the spirit.

Turning back to the map, Jamal continued, "We'll shift slightly out of the temporal dimension here, following almost the exact path taken by the Celestial City on its journey. At this point here," indicating the edge of a yellow circle whose center was Earth, "those on Earth could detect us as we approach and come into dock."

"Will the people on Earth see us coming?" I asked.

Jamal looked over from where he was standing by another window and said, "Sometimes we let them get a glimpse of us, but perhaps not this time." He grinned and added, "The funny thing is that when they do see us, they either don't believe it, don't want to admit it, or want more proof so others don't think they're going crazy. Of course, some who see us coming really *do* go crazy. So generally we don't let them see us. We can get pretty close, though, before we have to move back up a bit in the spirit to be out of their visual and electronic surveillance range."

"It sounds as though the City is itself a spaceship. Is it?" I asked.

"It's everything you could possibly imagine and more!" he replied. "God built it, and then let us help with some of the inner layout and furnishings. We fix up our homes the way we like them. As I told you, God likes to have fun and to make things fun for us!" He stopped and looked at me, "But you must have read some of the accounts of the building of the City and its great voyage through space?"

"Yes," I replied. "The prophets of old wrote about it. But it's one thing to read about something and quite another to actually be here and live it like this."

"You're about to see many wondrous things," he laughed. "God has denied us nothing that is good and perfect in the City. He's given us

everything that our hearts desired. You saw the great quarry of precious stones that He gave us just for our personal decorative uses, in addition to all the priceless wonders that God Himself created and built right into the City.”

“So is the City itself something spiritual, or is it physical?” I asked.

“Both!” he replied. “It’s the crowning jewel of God’s physical creation. But like our bodies, it’s at the same time a spiritual temple where God Himself dwells so He can be with us. The City itself is a lot like us, partly physical and partly spiritual. Jesus Himself, who was Spirit, took on a physical body so He could become one with us. Actually, it’s kind of fitting that His City, made partly of physical materials and partly of spiritual, will come down to the physical world to rule, for Jesus is Lord of the physical as well as the spiritual. Right now we’re a bit separated from our physical bodies, but that’s only temporary. One day, when Jesus has again subdued all of creation under Himself, then the physical and spiritual realms will once more be in perfect harmony.”

Inside the City must be a move up in the spirit, but from what Jamal was saying, the City itself was now actually in, or nearly in, the physical dimension. Jamal continued before I could ask, “At the moment, the City itself is stationed very close to Earth, and rests largely in temporal space, though it stays slightly deeper in the spiritual dimension to avoid detection from Earth. It’s somewhat camouflaged as well.”

Jamal pointed again to a crystal viewing screen on the wall. “Let me show you on the map! On this trip we’ll not be traveling entirely in a spiritual dimension. Lambda One is able to travel at great speeds even down in one of the lower temporal dimensions of space.”

Pointing to a dot on the star map, Jamal continued, “So this point here is where we’re headed, and where our great Mothership is now docked.”

“Mothership?” I said.

“Well, yes. Space City is, after all, the Lord’s main command ship. It’s certainly the greatest celestial spaceship ever built. It’s a great pyramidal vessel surrounded by a force field of the most beautiful, spherical, shimmering sea of azure blue crystal you have ever seen! The Great City is parked like a giant interstellar warship right in the war zone itself. But you must know that, coming from Earth.”

“I wouldn’t have thought that the great City would be so close to Earth just yet,” I responded.

“It is even at the door!” he replied. “Like Jesus said, ‘Behold, I stand at the door!’ Jesus is at the very portal that opens upon your world, and is about to enter with such power and magnificence as the Earth has never seen!”

I looked closely at the location of the City on the stellar map and saw that it seemed to be located right where the Earth’s moon should be. I couldn’t read the inscriptions, as they were all in a strange, almost mathlike, symbolic language that I couldn’t understand. Perhaps it was the writings of angels and not men. I asked the

obvious, “Is it true then, what the prophet David said, that the portal from the spirit world through which the Holy City will appear and descend will be the moon itself?”

“You got it!” he said, still laughing. “You got it! Yes, God created and chose the moon itself as the physical form to shield the City and be the physical doorway, or portal if you prefer, through which the Great City will first appear. It will appear quite suddenly and catch the whole world by surprise—just like a thief in the night! Surprise! What a thief, and what a night that will be!¹ Our Home, our City, the Capital of our Nation, the greatest Mothership, Spaceship and Stellar Battleship ever constructed will appear and then descend as though out of the moon itself and approach the Earth. What better door could He choose? What better symbolism? For Jesus is like our sun, and we are like His moon, shining with His light.²

Jamal paused and turned to me, “And you know the rest from there. It’s all in the Bible.”

“No, no,” I begged, “please go on!”

“Then the seventh trumpet, that is the last trumpet, shall sound and all those on Earth who believed in Jesus, both the living and the dead—that is, until this resurrection—will gather in the spirit and unite with our newly recreated, resurrected, supernatural bodies, formed again for us by the very breath of God from the dust of our former earthen bodies—only this time they

will be perfect and eternal! Those of faith who are alive and on Earth at the time, God will transform, as St. Paul wrote, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” Then we will all rise up in a great, rapturous moving of the Spirit, gathering together and being gathered together by the Lord’s faithful angels. Then Jesus will enter triumphantly with us into the Great Heavenly City where we will prepare for the final battle.”¹

I just had to ask him another of my questions. “The Bible speaks of there appearing in the heavens ‘the sign of the Son of Man.’ When the Heavenly City emerges from hiding and people see it, will that be the sign?”

Jamal was full of his subject, “As the war intensifies, there will be other signs and wonders in the heavens. As that great day approaches, huge celestial ships like this one will begin to arrive, loaded with people coming in from everywhere in God’s great spiritual Kingdom. They’ll all come to join in the great battle and to enter the great Marriage Feast of the Lamb, and witness the wrath of God being poured out upon His enemies. So, most likely lots of odd things will happen in space, and the people on Earth will start getting the idea that the End is near. But certainly the final sign of the End will be when Jesus gives the command to show them the Holy City. When the City completely transposes from the spiritual realm to the

¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10

² Revelation 21:1; Psalm 89:36,37

¹ Revelation chapter 19

physical, every eye shall see it, and the nations shall bewail.”

“Will everyone arrive in spaceships?”

“No, I want to ride overland in a great charge on horseback with my father and other great warriors. It will be a very exciting time with all the armies of the Earth, along with the Fallen Ones and the Devil gathering their forces, and all the armies of God and His people gathered for the great showdown at the Battle of Armageddon. I can hardly wait to see their faces when we come charging out of the City and ride down from the sky!”

“Will the City actually land on Earth at that time?”

“No, it’ll just come close enough for them to get a good look at it so those that survive will want to be good for a long time. Also, having the City close by will make it handy for us after the takeover, to keep an eye on things, and to take turns being on the Earth doing surface shifts and ground patrol.”

“What if they shoot at the City with some of their nuclear missiles?” I asked.

“They might try it, but the City is well defended from all weapons of devils or man. God encased it in a blue spherical force field able to withstand any physical attack, even the fury of the final great battle, the Battle of Gog and Magog, which comes at the end of the Millennium.¹ After that final battle, God will

clean up the whole surface of the Earth with fire, and replace its entire atmosphere. I think we’ll be pretty thankful for how strong He made our outer shields then. It might help you to remember that Jesus and millions of inhabitants of the City have been getting ready for this battle for a long time now, and have worked on the City itself for nearly 2000 years Earth time. So don’t worry about a few worldly weapons wrecking Heaven for us.”

¹ The thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth. See Revelation 20:1–10.

outside, it appeared to be made entirely of light; but on the inside, things appeared to be made of solid material.

As I mentioned, on the bottom of the ship were large, circular portals varying in size and placement. Skirting the outer edge of the ship is what from a distance looks like a continuous strip of decorative, illuminated molding. Upon entering, this glowing strip turned out to be large curved windows all around the outer edge of the craft. This peripheral area seemed to house the reception areas, various work stations, observation decks, and special quarters for the passengers and crew.

As I stood for a moment gazing out at the wonders of space through one of the reception area windows, I tried to imagine what this vessel would look like to someone below us out there in space. I imagined it would look like some kind of elongated, luminescent jellyfishlike creature with a long, inner, flattened, glowing, hot-dog shaped object, fringed by a thousand points of

-19 - Power Supply

What a fascinating flying machine Lambda One was! I hesitate to call it a machine, though, for it seemed somehow very much alive. A viewing screen on the wall to my left indicated our present location on the ship. We'd entered on the front underside of the port side or larboard side of the ship, which are nautical terms for the left side of a ship as you face forward. From the picture of the ship showing on the wall monitor, I could see that Lambda One was rather like a long, streamlined airplane wing, rounded on top and quite flat on the bottom. The midsection of the ship was quite thick. Overall it reminded me somewhat of a gigantic surfboard in the sky. Viewed from the



light. The many circular portals on the underside would seem to peer at them like a creature with countless glowing eyes.

“Let me show you around the ship,” Jamal offered.

“Great!” I replied, and we began to walk toward a shimmering circle-shaped door on the inner wall.

The portal, through which we entered, opened into a luxurious reception area far beyond what the finest hotel on Earth could boast. It had any number of beautiful and well-arranged lounging areas, an inviting pool and play area, and a very appealing buffet-style eating area.

On one side of this particular reception area were enormous, solid crystal view windows inset in the side of the ship. They began as part of the floor, then curved up the outer wall to a great height, then curved back in high above our heads following the contour of the ship. Through these windows, one could look out and see a great distance. In this particular reception area were at least three portal entrances that looked like large, decorative, circular observation windows cut into the floor, each one easily 15 meters across. Standing near a floor portal I felt a similar sensation to being in a glass-bottomed boat. There were other larger loading portals further back. Higher up on the inner wall, facing the windows, were several tiers of balconies overlooking the reception area. They seemed to lead into more accommodations for the passengers. No elevators or stairways were visible

or needed, for the people simply approached the wall and floated up to their quarters.

On each of the upper sections of the end walls were beautiful, lifelike murals which were explained to me as depicting some great moments in celestial history involving Lambda One. Lower on these walls were large viewing screens, and below that, a number of smaller screens and communication consoles for passenger use.

It was not clear to me how the ship was powered, but it seemed to be almost a spiritual process, it was so clean, so silent.

Jamal interrupted my thoughts, “What would you like to know first?”

“What is the source of its power?” I asked. “I don’t see any rockets or jets or anything visibly propelling this ship along.”

“This ship runs on different sources of power. When it’s in the spiritual dimension, it operates on a spirit-based source of power; when it’s down in temporal space, it harnesses the great hidden power of harmonics.”

“Harmonics?” I questioned. “What is that? I think I’ve heard of it, but all that comes to mind is a harmonica.”

“Harmonics is the science of musical sounds and vibrations. It’s all about the characteristics and properties of musical sounds. In the physical creation, all matter responds to a certain frequency or chord or wave pattern. For example, each natural object like a rock, a crystal or a tree, or each man-made object like a bridge, a wineglass, or a skyscraper, responds to certain

sounds or vibrations. You may not be able to hear them, but if the tone or sound is just right, the object ‘hears’ it and responds.

“The sound waves you hear on Earth are just a small part of the great celestial spectrum of ‘sounds,’ the music of creation. Sound travels in waves, light travels in waves, energy travels in waves. In the physical dimension there are all kinds of gravitational forces and electromagnetic waves around us that we don’t see. As the stars and planets move in their courses, as they dance around the universe, they create waves, deep cosmic waves and winds. Creation pulsates and vibrates with such power, that as it moves, tremendous forces seen and unseen sweep back and forth through it in wavelike motions.”

“Sort of like waves on the ocean,” I added.

“A bit like that,” he replied, “but these waves are not only on the surface of the ocean of space, but some are very slow, deep and powerful that move through the very foundation of creation itself. Some people call this great symphony of moving waves ‘the music of the stars.’”

“So how does Lambda use these hidden forces to move along?” I asked.

“Sort of like we respond to different sounds and music, Lambda One can respond to the many different waves around us. If you have special ears you could hear them. Angels can hear all kinds of things we can’t, at least not yet.”

“I studied about lasers in science, where they get light waves to move in harmony until it makes a powerful beam. Is Lambda something like a big laser device?” I asked.

“Lambda is a bit like a laser because it can take this random wave energy coming in all around and convert it, unify it, and use it or even direct it back out as powerful beams of energy. So just as all sorts of different gases, liquids and solids can be made to ‘sing’ or give off energy if stimulated by the ‘singing’ of outside wave energy being applied to it, so likewise, Lambda converts the wave energy of the universe into useful power.”

“That’s kind of like us when we get all filled with the Holy Spirit. We start to shine and are full of energy.”

“It’s a very similar process. Only in our case we respond to spiritual light and energy that excites us, and we light up with light and power. Physical light and energy are similar, but not as powerful.”

“So what I think you’re saying,” I interrupted, “is that creation all around us is sort of ‘singing’ and ‘dancing’ with wave energy, and Lambda is able to use some of that energy.” I knew words like “sing” and “dance” were not meant to be taken too literally. I then had a funny thought and laughed.

“What is it?” Jamal asked.

“Well, you know how on Earth plants take energy from the sun and store it in food. Later this energy, though in another form, is released in the body when people eat the food. So I was thinking that you could say that people on Earth are powered by solar ‘music’—converted energy waves from the sun.

“That’s true,” he said, “but imagine being able to ‘digest’ energy directly. That’s what Lambda does. And if you think about it, that’s what we do now, and will do in our new bodies. Up here we don’t have to eat to live because we get our power from the Lord and from the Spirit. Anyway, getting back to the secret of Lambda’s strength and power, Lambda was built to be in tune with the great unseen waves and forces that sweep through creation, which it converts and channels for its own use.”

“That’s amazing!” I said, “You know, a while back I was trying to think what this ship reminded me of, and I thought of a surfboard!”

Jamal laughed. “It does look a bit like a surfboard, and here we are in outer space catching a wave—a giant, subspace, harmonic wave! There’s no pollution and no noise, as we sail through this great ocean of space in our giant surfboard, pushed along by powerful, unseen winds and waves—forces so great that they not only move us along like a surfboard or a sailing ship without the sound of an engine, but provide us with protective shields and power enough to deliver a searing blast at an enemy warship if we had to.”

Jamal seemed to very much enjoy these scientific discussions, though often they were quite a bit beyond me.

“How fast can this ship travel?” I asked.

Jamal just laughed. “Very fast!” he replied. Then deciding that I probably wanted a bit more of an explanation, he continued, “You need to understand that Lambda, because it’s partly

spiritual in design, is not subject to all the same rules as vehicles made entirely of physical materials. Lambda can accelerate to incredible speeds without gaining mass or distorting or shifting in time and such things.”

He seemed to be referring to things I had only heard and read in accounts of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity.

“We can go faster than light when we need to,” Jamal said with a smile that told me he was not inexperienced in the thrill of high-speed flight.

“Anyway, Lambda was a bit like the Lord’s pet, very loyal to Him, and the Lord had instructed Lambda to stay humble and trust Him and to not reveal to anyone just how very gifted it was, until the Lord told it to. That was quite a test for Lambda, especially when those using the ship were just learning and not always making the best decisions. But Lambda obeyed and didn’t reveal its true powers and abilities to anyone.

“Then the Rebellion happened. It came about when the Father asked all to pledge allegiance to His only begotten Son. Well, Lucifer, also known as Satan and the Devil, one of the greatest angels ever created, became envious and upset and didn’t want to yield to Jesus. Actually, Lucifer wanted to be God himself and have everyone yield to him. So he rebelled. It all happened quite suddenly. Unlike some of us, angels make up their minds very quickly, and one-third of them followed Lucifer in a rebellion against the Son of God. Thankfully, two-thirds yielded and remained loyal to the Lord.

“There came a parting of the ways, and while departing, some of the Fallen Ones decided to take Lambda. Now here is where Lambda’s obedience to the Lord really paid off. The Fallen Ones got on board, never realizing Lambda’s secret abilities. They thought it was just a fancy space vehicle, and took off.”

I questioned, “Didn’t Lambda know they were rebels and renegades? Why didn’t Lambda stop them by just shutting down and refusing to function?”

- 20 - *Lambda's Secret*

“Can you tell me some of the history of Lambda One?” I asked.

“This ship has a pretty exciting history,” he said. “During the terrible Rebellion, the Celestial Civil War, this ship was almost taken over by former crew members who, sad to say, joined the Fallen Ones. But as I think you realize, Lambda One is something more than just a machine. In many ways it is alive. The ship had just recently been constructed at the time, and had made only a few exploratory flights. The Lord Himself had a great part in perfecting and installing some of Lambda’s secret features. What the Fallen Ones didn’t fully realize at the time was just how very ‘alive’ the Lord had made the ship in its ability to think and make decisions.

Jamal replied, “Lambda wasn’t really very old or experienced in the spirit, yet knew right away that something was very wrong. But remember, the Lord told Lambda not to reveal its special abilities until the Lord said it could. It was a very tough choice, but Lambda decided to just trust the Lord and keep quiet and go along with the rebels.”

“So what happened then?” I asked eagerly, remembering the scene on the great murals in the reception area and realizing the connection.

“The rebels decided to head for Earth. They were being pursued, and Lambda seemed to take a direct hit from a powerful spiritual lightning bolt. The rebels decided to drop down into the physical dimension to escape. Had they not been so preoccupied with what was going on and what they’d just done, they might have suspected that something odd was happening. When they entered the physical dimension, they landed right in the middle of a raging inferno! They entered the physical dimension through the sun! You see, Lambda secretly communicated with the Lord, who was now telling it exactly what to do each step of the way. It was the Lord who told Lambda to enter the physical dimension through the sun itself.

“Now ordinarily that would be no problem for angels, even the newly Fallen Ones who still had a lot of spiritual power. But when Lambda translated down to the physical dimension, with the Lord’s help it made changes to their bodies so they became more like matter and less like

spirits. They all became, shall we say, more like physical beings.

“Lambda then weakened its own shielding a bit to allow some of the burning heat of the sun to penetrate. Boy, were those rebels shocked to experience their first taste of fire! They wanted out! Lambda’s transportation conduits were scorching hot inside. They panicked and thought the ship had malfunctioned from the blast it had taken. They landed it on Mars and got out to cool off and see if there was any damage, or what was going on. That’s when the Lord told Lambda that it was okay now to let its secret be known! So Lambda did! In an instant, Lambda took back full control of its functions, took off, and left those semi-materialized rebels stranded on Mars. They weren’t visible physical beings yet, nor were they any longer fully spiritual beings; so they’d lost a lot of their powers and were marooned on Mars. Lambda returned to a hero’s welcome in Heaven!”

“Wow! What an adventure!” I said. “And what happened to the rebels on Mars?”

“Eventually, many of them were picked up by other rebels, and others did stay on Mars to establish an observation post and base. Of course, more and more have gone to Earth now, and even more will likely leave as hitchhikers if scientists bring any ‘samples’ back to Earth from the surface of Mars. You know how these spirits like to hide in rocks, don’t you?” Jamal said, smiling and reminding me of my own close encounter with a Fallen One. Then he shrugged

his shoulders, "But that's okay! It's better if they're all together when the Lord takes over and locks them all up."

"Lambda is quite some ship," I said, getting back to our discussion. "The name Lambda sort of sounds like 'lamb,' and like a good little sheep, it knew who its real Master was and would not follow another. Is that how it got its name?" I asked.

"Lambda is a symbol from angelic script. Later it became used by the Greeks in their alphabet and is the equivalent of the twelfth letter of your alphabet, the letter 'L.'" Then as an afterthought, he added, "and it's also the Lord's initial!"

"The Lord seems to like the number 12!" I commented. "There are 12 months of the year, 12 tribes of Israel, 12 City gates, 12 disciples."

"Yes, and," Jamal continued, "Lambda was the last ship built of the original 12 ships of the Lord's great exploration fleet. It's certainly one of the most adaptable ships there is. It can translate to and operate in nearly any dimension of creation. It's very user-friendly. Angels can operate it using the spiritual controls, but even a physical person could fly it using its physical controls. It can respond to telepathic as well as spoken commands. It's extremely versatile."

Like a schoolboy fascinated with airplanes, Jamal seemed to know all the details about this ship.

"How big is it?" I asked.

"In what measuring system?" he asked.

"Miles or kilometers is fine for me," I said.

He thought for a moment as he converted numbers in his head. "Down in temporal space they usually scale this ship to be roughly the same proportions as God gave Noah for the ark. Only this ship is much bigger. It's about 150 miles long, 25 miles wide, and 15 miles high at the thickest part of its midsection. The top is curved and tapers down to about one mile thick, which again narrows into this outer rim where we are. However, the measurements are not absolute, as the ship stretches and flexes." Jamal was amazing with math and measurements. He was amazing at almost anything.

"You mean this ship can even change its size and shape?" I asked in surprise.

"Sure!" he replied. "It's basically a living spiritual light form, so it's able to adapt much more easily than something made entirely of physical material."

"Wow! I hope it doesn't start morphing with us in it," I said.

"Oh, don't worry about that. If a drastic transformation is needed, the ship will let us know. Most of the other adjustments it makes you hardly notice."

Lambda One was amazing!

Ja-al and the horses had entered a special loading area farther back on the ship, and this was our immediate destination, many miles away. At the entrance to the transportation grid, or whatever they might call it, Jamal spoke to a wall monitor: "Central stables, please!"

We suddenly became weightless. My body became buoyant and I felt like I was floating—but on what, or in what, I could not tell. Instantly we were swept along inside a large transportation tube by some kind of invisible force or stream. I can only describe it as a stream, though there was no sign of any fluid or movement of any sort around us. Effortlessly and efficiently, Jamal and I seemed to be carried along at a great speed, yet without any sense of danger. We seemed like two bits of wood caught in the current of some great river.

We traveled for some distance toward the back of the ship, and then at a certain point suddenly made a right angle turn, and proceeded some distance in toward the middle, or interior section, of the ship. As we whisked along through this long passageway, I thought it a bit odd that I saw no other exits, intersections, or offshoots leading to other parts of the ship. They must have been there all around us—up, down, left and right—but they seemed invisible and closed to us. The central transportation system moving us along seemed to know exactly where we needed to go, and was taking us there using the shortest, most efficient route. Near what I assumed to be the midsection of the ship, the transportation tube turned straight up in a vertical ascent.

- 21 - Tube Travel

We left the reception area through circular portals shimmering with the same light as many of the light doors I'd seen in Tricon. Light here seemed to have more properties, uses, or abilities than light on Earth. Some light here seemed to be able to be like a solid object at times, or as in the case of the doors, only allow certain persons or materials to pass through.

We entered what appeared to be a large arterial transportation system that ran throughout the ship. Large, tubelike conduits, again made out of what appeared to be a lightlike substance, were used to move goods and personnel efficiently back and forth through the ship.

Judging by the length and width of the ship, I guess the total distance from the reception room to the glowing entrance of the stables would be about 70 or 75 miles, though while in the tubes, distances traveled were difficult to estimate. This was partly due to the great speed with which we were moving, and also the fact that the walls of the tubes or tunnels, whatever they were made of, remained a soft white glow of light. Every once in a while I thought I noticed a sign or marking, but the symbols were unfamiliar to me and in the strange language used here on the ship.

I commented to Jamal, "This seems like one continuous passageway made just for us! I don't see anyone else, or any other passageways leading off."

"Customized transportation!" Jamal replied. "It's personalized, more efficient, and it's more secure. We need clearance for wherever we choose to go. Invaders or troublemakers, should they get on the ship, would have a hard time getting around inside without Lambda's permission. We have none of the problems you face back on Earth using a subway system. This is free, personal, and efficient. No line-ups, muggers, or drunks here, plus it's very well policed! You can't go anywhere without Lambda's permission. The ship knows all about you and right where you are at all times."

Getting used to being in a thinking, somewhat living ship was a little uncomfortable for me. "I'm

not sure I like the idea of being inside something that's living!" I said at last.

"That bothers you?" he asked with a grin.

"Well, for example, I hope this isn't its digestive system and we end up in Lambda's tummy somewhere!" I blurted out, half jokingly.

Jamal chuckled, "Don't worry, Lambda doesn't consider you food! It gets all the energy it needs from other sources." Then he stopped for a moment, his eyes twinkling, looking at me as if I were a large serving of food, and added, "But then again..." At that, we broke out laughing.

We rose straight up through the air to a circular portal of shimmering light that seemed to be the door to our destination. Passing through the door, our eyes beheld a magnificent scene. We came into what appeared to be a very large, parklike rotunda covered with a huge crystal canopy. We had entered a side entrance quite high up on the side of what seemed more like a planetarium or vivarium than a stable. Out and around, forward and back through the crystal dome I could see the stars and the top side of Lambda One stretching out in all directions from this central viewpoint. Below us lay the greatest aviary, vivarium, terrarium, glass-domed botanical garden I had ever seen! It was massive, many miles across, filled with beautiful plants, trees, open grassy areas, fountains, streams and crystal clear pools with living creatures everywhere, some of which I was totally unfamiliar with.

It was a very beautiful place, more like a magnificent natural park than an animal stable. It was an ideal place for the horses to relax and pass their time during the flight. We could see the horses resting in groups below us. They seemed very much at home in this natural paradise. Some were lying down, others nuzzling each other affectionately, others grazing on the open areas in this amazing indoor area of greenery.

“Some stables!” I exclaimed, grinning at Jamal. I thought back to the kinds of places that we keep animals in back on Earth and shuddered at the comparison.

“Father!” Jamal called down and waved excitedly.

I looked down from the balconylike platform that we were standing on. There below us, beside a magnificent stand of date palm and bananalike trees, stood Ja-al. He was talking to and petting one of the great horses.

Jamal said, “He’s preparing them for the Festival. He’s telling them what to expect and what to do at the big show when we arrive. They’re planning a pretty grand entrance. And of course after the show, a lot of the children, and adults, too, will want to ride the horses around a bit. So it’s going to be a big day for them.”

Seeing that his father was quite involved with comforting and counseling the horses, the good trainer that he was, Jamal said to me, “Would you like to go up there to that lookout area at

the very top of the rotunda? I call that the eagle’s nest. You get a great view of everything from up there.”

At what seemed like the very apex or pinnacle of the dome was a special circular observation deck that offered a full, 360-degree view of the rotunda area and out into space.

“From up there you also get a nice view of space and the top of the ship,” he added.

I could see no obvious way to get up to this crystal deck built into the ceiling high above. Jamal turned to what appeared to be another wall console and politely requested Lambda to take us to the upper observation deck.

Instantly we began to rise, carried up by the same mysterious, invisible force. It was different than being lifted up in the great library of Tricon. It was a bit more mechanical and impersonal. Up and up we went, passing through the bottom of the large, crystal-clear platform. Once inside, the floor of the observation area, though transparent, was solid like the entrance portals. The whole deck appeared to be fastened right into the crystal dome of the ceiling on all sides. If viewed from outside, I could imagine that this construction must have looked very much like a great big green eye, and ourselves a couple of dots in its pupil. The circular platform had two levels. We were standing in the inner part of the lower level, which was dropped down below the level of the ceiling by more than the height of a tall person. Through its clear walls and flooring we had a spectacular view of the entire park area

below. Moving up and outward to the higher level that was even with the top surface of the ship and that had a clear dome covering, one could look out and see the entire ship and the wonders of space all around.

This lookout area seemed to be the highest point on the top of the ship. Towards the front, closer to the nose of the vessel, I could see another similar crystal canopied area, apparently some 50 or 60 miles away. My eyesight in this realm seemed much more acute. "What's up there?" I asked, pointing to it.

Jamal said, "That's the ship's main command center."

"Will we be able to go and see it?" I asked.

"We can get very close," he said, "at least into one of the observation galleries. It's very impressive."



I could see along the length of the ship a great distance. Looking out the observation windows, Lambda looked like a large, luminescent sea creature, or great white whale swimming through the waters of outer space.

“Really!” she replied, putting on the best look of mock surprise she could muster. “Most interesting!”

Zaapha gave Jamal a big sisterly hug and kiss. Then seeing that we were looking towards the front of the ship, asked me, “Have you seen the Control Center yet?”

“No, not yet!” I replied.

“If you’re ready to move on, I’ll race you there!” she said, casting a challenging look Jamal’s way.

“You’re on!” he said, in a surprising show of youthful character I’d not often seen in him.

They both raced over to the front side of the viewing area, and with a word and a wave of the hand, a transportation portal appeared and opened. With a giggle of glee, Zaapha raced ahead into the transportation tube. Jamal beckoned me to follow, and turned to catch up to Zaapha. I stepped into the entranceway, but nothing seemed to happen. “Hey, wait for me! I can’t get this thing to work!”

“Just tell the ship what you want,” Jamal called back.

“I want to keep up with you guys!” I yelled back. Instantly I began to move and catch up to Zaapha and Jamal. We were traveling at a great speed. Zaapha and Jamal were making a great game of seeing who could coax the ship to move them ahead of the other in this supersonic race to the front of the ship.

Having exhausted all of her normal commands, Zaapha decided to try pleading. “Lambda, please, please let me win!” But the

- 22 - *The Grand Tour*

“Oh, there you are!” a cheery familiar voice called up to us. “Lambda told me you were here.”

“Zaapha!” I called out, thrilled to see her. “You came!”

“I wouldn’t miss it!” she said with a spunky laugh as she rose through the air to join us. Once inside, she looked me closely in the eyes, and with a little teasing twinkle said, “I trust you had a good sleep.”

“I dreamt a lot,” I commented with a grin and a shrug, going along with the game of pretending nothing had happened. “It was a most peculiar dream! I actually dreamt that I was with you only a few hours ago!”

more she pleaded, the more Jamal gained on her.

“The first shall be last!” Jamal called out, taunting her.

“Oh, no!” she said, and laughed, as Jamal and I were moved up right beside her. Lambda had clearly decided to stay out of this contest entirely. We began to slow down and were placed all in a line at a portal entrance.

“I guess it’s a tie!” I said.

Jamal laughed, “Well, we knew it would be. Lambda doesn’t get involved or play favorites when people are playing around in the transportation tubes. But,” he laughed again, “you never know. There might be a first time!”

We passed through the large, oval portal of shimmering light and entered an observation deck overlooking Lambda’s chief control center. I was as excited as a child being taken by the stewardess to see the inside of the cockpit of an airplane. But this cockpit was like nothing on Earth!

“That section there,” Jamal said, pointing down and to the right, “is the manual control center I told you about.”

“But there’s nobody in that section!” I said.

“Well, on this flight, Raphael is commanding the ship.” He gestured towards a tall, handsome, angelic being who was obviously in command.

“And who is that?” I asked of the lovely female assistant with him.

“That’s his assistant on this flight, Rachelli,” Jamal replied, smiling at my evident interest in so beautiful a creature.

Numerous others were busy monitoring screens and moving about handling the various tasks needed to operate this most sophisticated celestial instrumentation and navigation equipment. For anyone but the Lord and some of the angels, multidimensional navigation requires some very sophisticated equipment. A man with a red band around his forehead entered and spoke to Raphael. Again I assumed that the color band was some kind of indication of the man’s rank.

“That’s one of the ship’s chief officers,” Jamal told me. “He’s in charge of special passengers and cargo.”

“Passengers like me?” I said.

“Yes, like you!” Jamal said, laughing. “Arrangements for you to be on board were made through him. And of course he made the arrangements for the horses to come on board as well! He’s a pretty busy fellow!”

“Oh, look!” Zaapha said, pointing to a small, pulsating yellow circle on one of the monitors. “We’re approaching the visible zone.”

“The visible zone?” I asked.

“You know,” Jamal reminded me, “the point beyond which those on Earth can detect us!”

“So what are they going to do about it?” I continued, pulling for more information.

“Watch Raphael! He’ll soon give the command for the ship to shift up to a slightly higher dimension. We’ll still be flying in the physical realm, but be a bit higher in the spirit. Instruments on Earth will not be able to see or detect us as easily.”

With a single gesture of his right hand over a console, Raphael gave the command for the ship to rise to a higher level. Suddenly I felt a mild, rippling sensation throughout my body, similar to what I'd experienced when we came down to this dimension, only this time we were moving up slightly higher in the spirit. The stars around us seemed to change in appearance. Everything became lighter and brighter and more beautiful. Moving up in the spirit was a wonderful sensation—a joy, a thrill, an exhilaration! At this slightly higher level, the sky of outer space was not so dark anymore. The whole universe seemed to be brighter, bluer, joyful and alive. Space became a warmer, friendlier place.

Jamal commented, "We're now traveling at the same level of creation, the same dimension in space as the Holy City. We'll be approaching the moon from the side facing away from the Earth, but because of the dimension we're in, you won't really notice the moon, and the Earth may look a little different to you too."

"How long will it be before we get there?" I asked.

"Well, the higher you go in the spirit, time has less importance, less relevance, so it can seem to be longer or shorter, depending upon the individual."

"I think I can understand that," I replied. "I've often had that experience even on Earth. When I'm wanting to get to some place or do something special, time can seem so long; whereas time can pass so quickly at other times that you hardly notice the days going by."

"Well, we at least have time to visit the tail end of the ship!" Zaapha interjected.

"Do you want to see the gunner's turret?" Jamal asked. "That's what I call it!"

"Gunner's turret? Sure!" I said. "You make it sound like a computer space game."

"We don't have to race this time!" Zaapha said as we turned to re-enter the transportation system.

"But I do want to be back here when the City comes into view and we make our approach," I pleaded.

"For that you'll want to be right up in the nose gallery. That's where you get the best view of the approach. Don't worry, we should have time," Jamal reassured me. "The ship's slowing down a bit. We are, after all, now entering hostile space. The Bible says that 'the Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein,' but the Devil has a lot of his people in this sector at present and he doesn't want to let go and leave quietly."

Zaapha exclaimed, "I can't wait till the Devil and all his minions are driven off the surface and locked up at a lower level where they'll hardly have any power left. It's really getting crazy down there. We had quite a battle after you left us, Travis."

As we entered the transportation portal, Jamal said to the console, "Defense Center, at a moderate pace, please."

permission. Of course, my mother was really praying, and so was Tom in his own way. He doesn't like to show his spiritual side and can pretend to be pretty tough at times, but this time he was really starting to pray! He was scared for his life, and that gets almost anyone desperate. So their prayers helped and we were more empowered to act in their defense. We got clearance to protect their lives, but not their belongings. The robbers were on drugs and were very messed up and very influenced at that moment by the Enemy. When people are on drugs things can get crazy because sometimes they begin to see more into the spirit, both the good side and the bad. I stood my ground protecting Mother, and Frank helped defend Tom. Tom was in more danger because he was so well-dressed and obviously quite wealthy."

"I'm curious," I interjected, "do people like Tom, or the robbers for that matter, have spiritual guardians watching over them?"

"They do, but if they intentionally reject God's love and help, they begin moving in the spirit away from God and more into the Dark Kingdom and region of the Fallen Ones. The farther they wander from God, the more the Fallen Ones can work them over and influence them and try to get control over them. So it gets harder and harder to watch over and protect them. If they insist on going the wrong way, they become like sheep that leave the protection of the shepherd and get lost or tangled up in the thorn bushes."

"Your mother has problems, but she seems to love God," I commented.

- 23 - Free Choice

"What happened?" I asked Zaapha as soon as we were in the transportation tube and on our way.

"Well, I think you left just after my mother met up with Tom. When they reached the edge of the park on their way to have coffee together, two thugs came out of the shrubbery. They were high on drugs. One had a gun and demanded that mother and Tom give them everything of value. They grabbed Mom's purse and took Tom's wallet."

"So what did you do?" I asked. "Did Frank zap them, or what?"

"No, there's only so much we're allowed to do. To interfere in a big way we need special

“When mother lost both Frank and I, she blamed herself and felt hopeless and confused. It broke her heart. She questioned God, but she never rejected Him. The Enemy lies to my mother a lot and tries to beat her down with condemnation and despair. She feels that she must be a worthless person, or that God is angry with her, or punishing her, or something like that. Tom, however, has not led a very troubled or humble life. He’s had wealth and power, and till now has been used to having things go pretty much his own way. So the loss of his wife has not broken him so much as made him angry and bitter towards God.

“The robbers, of course, have had problems in life and made many wrong choices, and the Enemy now has quite a hold on them. But while they’re alive and making decisions, the Spirit of God will keep fighting to turn them back to Him, back to life. It’s a great mystery and miracle of God’s love and mercy when someone who seems to be all but completely gone turns back to God. It’s a cause for great celebration in Heaven. Every soul is so precious to God; He doesn’t want to lose a single one. But if they insist, in the end He leaves the final decision up to each person.”

Zaapha continued in a more cheerful tone, “Anyway, I really focused on this one guy and broke through and made contact with him for a moment. He actually saw me standing there in front of him with my hand up. You should’ve seen the look on his face! He started telling his buddy to forget it, to just go. His friend couldn’t understand what had come over his partner, why

he was acting so strange. He thought his friend must’ve seen some police coming or something. It was pretty rough for a moment or two. We thought he might shoot! I was glad by then we had the power and permission to keep Mom and Tom safe from any physical injury.”

“What would you have done if he shot?” I asked.

“Frank could have jammed the gun, or caused the bullet to miss by jerking his arm, or fogged his vision or something. There are lots of things you can do if you have permission to act.”

“You mean you don’t know ahead of time what a person will do?” I asked.

“Not always!” she answered. “There’s often quite a battle going on in the spirit with both sides trying to influence the person right up to the critical moment of the decision. As long as there’s free choice, you can never be absolutely sure what they’ll do until they do it. Only God knows that. A lot of times we just have to operate by faith. We do what we can and trust God for the outcome. Still, once they’ve made the decision, we can often tell by reading their mind what they’ll do next.

“Anyway, I sure was praying! Mom was pretty shaken up. That was the second fright she’d had that day. Poor Mom, she has so little money, and to lose it like that was hard on her. Tom got a good shakeup too, and it really seemed to help turn him around in the spirit. Tom took Mother to a restaurant nearby that knew him and let him have credit, and they had a nice meal and a long talk together. It looks like some good for both

of them will come of this. It would be nice for Mom to have someone to be with, and Tom needs someone too.”

“But don’t you want your mother to get back with your father again?” I asked.

“Now that would be a real miracle! But I don’t think it will be possible for them while on Earth,” Zaapha said, in her usual open, candid manner. “My father is a very sick man right now, in a veterans hospital. It’s only a short time till his spirit will be free from his body. He’s suffered a lot with lung cancer. My father is another reason I want to be in the City during this time. I want to be there to greet him when he arrives.”

I saw a vision of sweet Zaapha running to greet her father as he arrived. The shackles and sorrows of pain and disease had fallen away and his spirit was rising up to enter into a whole new and wonderful world. It was very encouraging to see.

“Does your father know the Lord?” I asked.

“He was quite close to the Lord as a child, but being in the military and going to war made him a bit hard and moody. After we died he got into heavier drinking and smoking a lot. He’s quite a kind soul most of the time, but being so sick he’s pretty grouchy now and hard to be around. Still, the Lord and love can begin to heal his spirit once he makes it home. His brother, Uncle Jerry, Frank and I, and others, have been getting a place ready for him. It’s simple, but I think he’ll like it.”

I felt a warm sense of love and family as Zaapha spoke. Not so much just of her own

small, troubled family on Earth, but a greater, united, joyful, eternal family of all those who enter into Heaven. It was like we were all one large happy family here in the spirit, dedicated to serving one another. The concerns of one were the concerns of all.

Little by little, God’s great Kingdom was coming down to Earth, and soon God would call His big family together for a great big reunion in that great City of God somewhere out there in space. That City was the center of so much hope. Seeing God’s great City of Promise even from far off had helped pull so many saints of God through some very hard times and places down through the ages. Weak and weary with the trials and tests of life, they’d look forward to that Eternal City whose Builder and Maker was God Himself. That was their reward and resting place.

As we moved along through the transportation tubes in this great ship flying through outer space, I thought about how life itself is a journey, a pilgrimage to the City of God. God’s people are pilgrims and strangers traveling through time and space, trying to get back Home to be with God. Zaapha’s father would soon begin the final stage of that journey, winding down through the valley of the shadow of death. But he would emerge on the other side at the gates of the City of Eternal Life! Somehow I’d been blessed to make this journey into the spirit world without having died, or at least I didn’t think I was dead yet.

“Okay,” Jamal said, “we’re approaching the observation gallery overlooking the defense

center.” His words pulled me back to the present. I was glad that Jamal had instructed Lambda to transport us at a moderate pace, for it had allowed us precious time to relax and talk together, giving me a little more understanding of God’s loving ways and the workings of the spiritual dimension.

- 24 - *The Watchers*

We entered another observation area overlooking the stern, or end of the ship. Although similar to the control center, this area was very different in several ways. For one thing, the spirit here was more vigilant, serious and sober. The construction of this part of the ship was also quite different. From all appearances, it looked like a cut and polished circular jewel set into the end of the ship. The sides of the ship seemed to extend and curve about halfway around it. The observation area was a separate, self-contained area that extended partway out and over the top side of the defense center where it joined the ship.

The center was covered top and bottom with what appeared to be large, clear, interconnecting crystal plates that formed geodesic shapes and patterns. The whole thing reminded me of some kind of great flying saucer embedded into the stern. Looking down into the defense control area was most mysterious. To be honest, I couldn't see anything in it very clearly at all. There was something down there at the center, but I couldn't see what it was.

"Jamal," I said, "I'm not able to see what's down in there."

Jamal smiled. "That's for your sake," he replied. "I can tell you a bit about it, but for now it's best that you don't look upon the creature that's on watch down there."

What could it be?—Some kind of angel or supernatural watchdoglike animal? I was burning with curiosity!

Seeing my eyes so eager for more details, Jamal began: "This is Lambda's defense center. All around the inside of the room is a continuous, curved monitoring screen that shows the entire view of the surrounding space."

As I peered down into the large, circular room below, I could somewhat make out the monitoring screen he mentioned. It seemed to provide a spectacular spiritually enhanced view of space. I looked up at the stars. The entire universe seemed to be alive and rejoicing around us. The heavens truly declare the glory of God and clearly show that it is His own handiwork. I could have spent the rest of the journey gazing up through that domed ceiling at the sky.

Beneath us, and further back into the ship, seemed to be other defense areas where workers were busy about various ship concerns for safety and security. Try as I might, though, I just couldn't seem to see or focus on whatever it was that stood in command in the defense center. It seemed to be some kind of living light form, but I couldn't make out any distinct shape. At times it seemed to pulsate with light and energy. "So what is it?" I asked.

"They're the Watchers!" Jamal answered. "They watch in all directions for any sign of danger or Enemy movement. Ordinarily you would see an eight-seated cluster of command chairs with a guard in each chair facing each direction, but on this flight the Lord has sent one of His own special honor guards to watch over the ship."

"What do they look like?" I asked.

Jamal looked at me a moment, seeming to be deciding if I was ready for the next thing he was about to say, "Well, 'they' is sort of an 'it'!" he said.

"I don't understand," I said. "Is there one creature, or more than one creature down there?"

"Well, they usually come in fours," he said. "That's the way they work best! There are four of them."

"Like four angels?" I asked.

"A quarter of them is very like an angel," he answered, now beginning to smile as I wrinkled up my face, trying to imagine what this mysterious set of creatures looked like!

“Well, if one of them is like an angel, what are the other three like?” I asked.

“You misunderstand,” he said. “I didn’t say that one of the four was an angel. One quarter of each one of them is like an angel.”

His words took a few moments to sink in. “Are you saying that there is a creature down there that is somehow actually four creatures, and one of these four creatures is an angel?”

“You’re beginning to get the idea,” Zaapha said with a smile, grasping my arm playfully.

“Well, does it have arms and legs and a head and eyes and things like that?” I couldn’t imagine what the creature looked like.

“Oh, yes! It has all of those, with a lot more of some parts than others,” he added, laughing with his eyes.

“What part does it have the most of?” I asked.

“Eyes!” he said. “Thirty-two eyes in all!”

“Thirty-two eyes!” I gasped. This mysterious creature was beginning to sound like some supernatural monster. “So how many heads does it have?”

“Just the four,” Jamal replied matter-of-factly.

“Four heads! That would mean it has eight eyes on each head—assuming its eyes are even located in its heads,” I said. My imagination was now running wild.

“Yes, it has a set of eyes on each side of its heads—on the fronts, backs, and sides,” he replied.

“But you said that it was one-quarter like an angel. What are the other three sides of its heads like?” I asked.

“I’ll give you a big clue,” Jamal said, clearly wanting the guessing game to last a little longer. “One clue: Ezekiel saw one of these creatures!”

I thought a moment. What kind of strange creature did Ezekiel see? “Aha! The cherubim!” I exclaimed after a moment.

“You got it!” Jamal said, touching a nearby monitor screen and bringing up a copy of Ezekiel 1, verses 4 through 14, for me to read:

I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding [engulfing] itself, and a brightness was about it, and [radiated] out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one [each one] had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf’s foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass.

And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

As for the likeness of their faces, they four [each of the four] had the face of a

man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

“Wow! That’s some creature!” I exclaimed, looking back down and trying to make out the shape of the creature hidden within the bright, impenetrable, pulsating, formless shape of light at the center of the room. “But why do they each have four faces?” I asked.

“A visual representation of their four natures, I guess,” Jamal answered. “They have the overall nature, beauty, and wisdom of angels. They have very great strength and the ability to do hard and heavy work as shown by the face of an ox. They can ascend very high in the spirit and they have the keen sight, speed and grace of an eagle in flight. In battle they have the fierceness of a lion,

and few creatures are their equals. Also, because they face all directions at once, nothing can sneak up or get by without them noticing.”

“Oh, look!” Zaapha said, nudging my arm and pointing to a pulsating red light on the great 360-degree circular monitor. “An enemy presence has been detected out there!”

“And there’s another one on the opposite side!” Jamal said excitedly. “This is like the old days!”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Well, in the time before the City was moved here, traffic through this part and in the spiritual space around here was difficult to get through at times!”

“I read something like that in the Book of Daniel. It said the messenger had a very hard time and had to fight with one of the Fallen Ones to get God’s message through to Daniel.”¹

Jamal answered, “Yes, Michael the Archangel had to come and help him with that battle.”

“Couldn’t the message just have been sent to him on a spiritual channel, in a dream or something?” I asked.

“It could have gone that way, but with very important messages, it’s much more impressive to people when they’re delivered in person. A lot of messages do go through spiritual channels in dreams and visions, but for the really important stuff, there’s nothing like a personal appearance by an angel! Sometimes, as in the

¹ Daniel 10:13

case of St. John, they just bring him up several levels into the spirit to give him the message.

“Anyway, when the messenger was on his way to talk to Daniel, an evil Fallen One who was ruling over Persia tried to form a blockade and stop him from entering physical space. What a battle that was! Things have changed a lot since those times, and now with the City parked right outside their gates, right on the front lines, messages are getting through a lot easier. The Devil is pretty upset because he sees that his control over this region will soon be over. Anyway, they fought to try and keep the Lord and His messengers away from God’s own property, but now they are trapped in there and the walls of their prison are closing in on them.”

“So I guess the Devil knows we’re here?”

“If he didn’t, he does now! The Enemy’s pretty upset and edgy right now, so it’s a time for vigilance. We never take these trips for granted. They’re fun and everything, but the fact is, we’re at war!”

Below us in another room I could see a sober-faced man, probably one of the regular guards, rise from his chair and study the screen. The mysterious light form on duty seemed to pulsate even more intensely.

“What’s going to happen?” I asked Jamal, noticing that even Zaapha’s generally carefree look was gone, as she too looked on intently.

“I don’t think they’ll engage them in battle today,” he said. “If it comes to that, they’ll likely detach the defense center and fly it independently. It becomes a regular flying

warship when it detaches and shifts to battle mode.”

“You mean the entire command center is actually a spaceship that can detach from the ship?”

“Yes, and if they decide to engage in battle, things are going to get exciting around here very quickly. It could turn into a light show like you’ve never seen.”

Suddenly from within the light form appeared a magnificent, humanlike hand on an extended arm. A dazzling pulse of light flashed out from the hand toward the object in space. Then on the other side of the being of light, another hand and arm appeared and sent out another pulse of light towards the other enemy position. Moments later on the monitor, the red pulsating objects that indicated the presence of enemy invaders were surrounded by rings of white light. Information scrolled across the screen in the strange language found everywhere on Lambda One.

“They’re two renegade runabouts!” Jamal said.

“Will they shoot at us?” I asked.

“Not likely! I don’t think they’ll risk it!” he replied. “Not with the full power of Lambda to contend with. Also, I don’t think they were expecting to be met by cherubim the instant they were poked their heads up. They’re desperate, but not that desperate just yet.”

“Will we shoot at them?” I asked.

“No, I don’t think so. Not before it’s the chosen time. My guess is that they’ll just stand

down and beat a hasty retreat if they're allowed to."

"What was that light beam all about?" I asked.

"The cherubim were projecting their presence out into space to confront the enemy. A lot is happening in the spirit that we don't see from this level," Jamal added.

"Can cherubim be in two places at once?" I asked.

"Only God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit are omnipresent. Many spiritual beings can seem to be in more than one place at a time, or at least appear to be in two places at once and even be doing different things in different places at the same time depending upon their gifts and abilities. Some angels can appear almost any size they want, even stand in the sun, or in the ocean, or wherever they have permission to be and appear. The cherubim are very gifted at appearing to be in more than one place at once. Remember, when trying to understand all these things, that the deeper you go into the spirit, the less relevant time and place become. When the Lord reclaims the Earth and we get our new bodies we'll be able to do a lot more."

"Will we be able to do things like the angels?" I asked.

"You bet!" he answered, "And I can hardly wait!"

Suddenly on the screen, the red areas seemed to burn a fiery red and then vanished, and the white circles surrounding them dissolved. The confrontation was over.

"Wow! If I hadn't seen it happen I wouldn't have been aware that we were even in danger," I commented.

"We're at war, and there are plenty of confrontations like this going on all around us," Jamal explained. "But a lot of what's happening is in the spirit and can only be spiritually discerned. Angels are good at that. They're better than any machine or radar or defense system, because they're living, they're loyal, and are motivated and totally dedicated to the Lord."

"Angels don't seem to talk much, though," I commented.

"Oh, but they do when they have something important to say!" Jamal corrected me. "They communicate all the time, only we don't notice it so much because they don't often use their mouths. They're spiritually linked and communicate in the spirit. It's faster, more direct, and more clear and exact than communicating with words."

Zaapha reminded us, "I think it's time to head back to the front of the ship now. We'll be coming into visual range of the City soon!"

We re-entered the transportation tube and gave Lambda a request to take us quickly to the front observation deck. Inside I felt like a kid at Christmas, all excited, full of anticipation. This was the moment I had long waited for. In what seemed like a matter of moments we arrived at an observation area at the very front of the ship. We entered into a clear nose area with a full panoramic view both left and right and up and

down through a crystal-clear dome and floor area.

In the distance I could see a bright golden light like a small star or great beacon in space.

“That’s the Heavenly City!” Jamal said.

The light was so thrilling, warm, and loving to behold. I couldn’t help but exclaim as though speaking to the City itself, “Oh, let your light so shine before men that they might see your good works and glorify God!”¹

- 25 - *Moonbeams*

“We are approaching the City from the dark side of the moon.” A little smile played across Jamal’s lips and we three laughed at the obvious absurdity of that description.

“This side sure doesn’t look very dark to me! If anything, this should be called the bright side of the moon!” I said.

“Approaching at this level you do not actually see the moon, just the City. In the distance you can see Earth. It looks a bit different from this level as well. But remember that just down a bit in the spirit and in the present physical realm, all you would see of the moon with normal, physical eyes would be the dark side,” Jamal informed me.

¹ Matthew 5:16

“But how can the City be in the same place as the moon?” I asked.

“It is generally true that two physical objects can’t occupy the same place at the same time. But a spiritual object or being can enter a physical object very easily, just as easily as a person’s spirit lives and dwells within their body. The City is at a spiritual level high enough to enter.”

As we approached, but still quite some distance away, I began to see what appeared to be a huge, golden-colored square with a blue crystal sphere all around it. “The City looks like one huge square! But I thought it was a pyramidal shape?” I asked a bit concerned.

“It is a pyramidal shape, all right, but from this distance and angle it looks like a square. From this angle of approach, we are looking down right on top of the City. The base of the City is pointing toward the Earth. You see, it’s like a huge radar dish, a huge ear in the sky, listening to and transmitting countless messages back and forth to those on Earth every single moment.”

“And some people wonder if God is really listening!” I added with a grin. I’d never realized before that the Heavenly City itself also served as a spiritual communication device—one incredibly large transmitter and receiver. This massively tall, clear, golden, triangular, crystal City served as a giant antenna, radar dish, and crystal radiolike tuning device, receiving messages from all over creation. It was like a huge cone aimed right at the Earth that could serve as a giant listening ear or megaphone. In this

capacity, the many layers of precious stones forming its base possibly acted as some sort of tuning or filtering mechanism. The City was not only magnificent to look at and live in, but it was entirely practical, designed, among other things, to play a very important part in Heaven’s communication with those on Earth and elsewhere.

I was still trying to get a clearer picture in my mind of the relative position of things in space. Since right-side up and upside down seemed all about the same out here, I asked, “If we think of the City as being right-side up, then right now we would be dropping straight down out of the sky onto the City?”

“Yes, you could think of it that way, because once you’re inside the City, the sense of direction you get is that the apex of the City is up, and down is the base. Down below that is Earth, and beneath the Earth’s crust is Hell. In that sense you go down to Earth or down to Hell, but you go up to Heaven. But for now you could say we’re going down to Heaven, or over to Heaven, or whatever direction you feel the most comfortable with in your head.” Jamal was always so relaxed and candid about things.

“I never thought I would go down to Heaven!” I laughed.

Jamal continued, “And you’re visiting it while it’s still a bit up in the spirit. Heaven is going to go down even farther—eventually all the way down to the surface of the Earth. God loves to make things easy for everyone and puts His cookies right down where we can reach them.

God will bring Heaven right down to Earth so everyone can enjoy it!¹ Of course, at the same time He'll also bring everything higher up in the spirit."

Approaching the very City of God itself from this height and level in the spirit was an awesome experience. This golden crystal city, with a dazzling base and wall, the foundation of which was made of gems, encased in a spherical sea of blue reminded me of the precious "pearl of great price" Jesus spoke of in a parable. The sky all around was glorious, bright, and shimmering with curtains of stars and points of light. This spiritually enhanced view of creation was very different than that seen by mortal eyes.

The blue, crystal-like force field around the City was very beautiful and unbelievably big. I couldn't help but imagine the saints of all time gathering within the blue "walls" of that great crystal shielding. All the saints of all ages could dance triumphantly on the massive inner side of that huge sea of glass surrounding the City.² There they could assemble for a great, victorious wedding march into the City as the Bride of Jesus, wed forever to the King of kings and Lord of lords! All the enemies of Jesus and His Bride will look on in trembling and remorse the day we enter Heaven together. It was hard to believe that Heaven itself was right here, so close to Earth. True to His Word, God had prepared a table of

rejoicing for us right here in the presence of our enemies.

From a distance, the City looked about the size of the moon. But as we approached, I began to realize how very big it is!—How big the moon must be close up, for that matter. We never think of the moon as being very big because it's always so far away. But now as we approached the City, which is similar in size to the moon, I was struck by how enormous it really is. I was glad we were up in the spirit a bit so we could see the city clearly and not just see the dark side of the moon. We were now approaching the great sphere itself and would enter the force field near the tip of the pyramid, which appeared to stretch out in front of us like one huge, triangular landing strip.

I marveled at its size, "The Bible says that the Heavenly City is 12,000 furlongs long and 12,000 furlongs wide. There are eight furlongs in a mile, so that makes the City about 1500 miles long and 1500 miles wide."

"That's close enough," said Jamal. "Spiritual things can't really be measured in physical terms. In the Bible the Lord gave you dimensions that help you get an approximate idea of the physical distances. The precise size of the City will be revealed when God brings the City down into the physical realm."

On the surface of the Earth there is nothing which we can look at that is 1,500 miles long because of the curvature of the Earth. In fact, from sea level, you can't look out to sea much more than 20 miles. At that point things start to disappear off the horizon. So for me it was quite

¹ Revelation 21:2,3

² Revelation 15:2

a sight to even be looking at such large surfaces as form the sides of the City.

At the moment of entry through the force field, there was the sound of a thousand beautiful trumpets joyfully announcing our arrival! I felt a strange wavelike ripple through my body as we passed through the blue dome shielding surrounding the City. We were now flying over the very top of the pyramid, following the north face of the City towards its base. I say "north face" for it was the north side in relation to the Earth, which we could see off in the distance ahead of us. Lights appeared on either side of the craft as though smaller vessels or beings of light were escorting us in to the docking area.

"Where will we dock and enter?" I asked.

"At one of the middle City gates. You can see them lit up along the base of the City," Jamal answered, pointing off into the distance. Four bright, round beacons of light were visible and evenly spaced along the base of this face of the City, one at each corner, and two equally spaced but midway in from the corners.

Those are the gates of Heaven, I thought. Jamal was right about this being the best place on the ship to see the docking. The whole observation area was transparent in front, and above, as well as under our feet, so that when I looked down I could see right into the City itself. My body position in relationship to the City was as though I was falling through the air, face toward the ground, with my feet closest to the City wall, or sort of like I was walking down one

side of the City. This meant that to me, the City looked upside down.

Zaapha came to my rescue. "I like to turn around and face the opposite direction every once in a while so I can look into the City and see things right-side up!"

"Good idea!" I agreed, and turned around to face in the direction of the top of the pyramid. I was now moving backward through space.

As great in size as Lambda was, it seemed dwarfed alongside this giant City. Beneath us the great north face of the City grew wider and wider the closer we came to the base. Inside the City I saw tier after tier, level after level of magnificent homes and palaces. Entire cities and civilizations were tucked away within this City of Light. Millions upon millions of God's children from all periods of time were dwelling in unity at last. Below me were an endless variety of architectural wonders in a myriad of fantastic surroundings and communities.

The outer walls and the flooring of the inner levels were made from some kind of purified, crystal-clear gold, as yet unknown on Earth. Like cut crystal or fiber optics, this material seemed to conduct the warm, wonderful, joyful, life-giving light emanating from the apex of the City, out into every part of the City. It was the light and reassuring, loving warmth of the Lord's presence. This City had no night, nor need of artificial light or sunshine, for it was lit by the very presence of the Lord Himself. This indeed was the City of Jesus the Great King!

The wall of the City beneath us was like one massive, triangle-shaped runway that grew wider and wider as we came in for a landing. The wall now stretched out left and right of us for hundreds of kilometers, much farther than one could see normally. Here, at this level of spiritual existence, I could see great distances. Also, there was no air pollution or haze in the atmosphere. Lambda was heading towards one of the inner pearly gates to the right along the base of the City. The corner gates seemed to almost be touching the inside of the blue sphere enveloping the City. The inner two gates on each side were a greater distance from the force field that curved up in a great arc away from the square base of the City wall.

Looking down through the transparent walls of the City, I realized that I was now looking at the largest structure in the universe. It was designed to house all of God's children from all ages in one place with room to spare. Here was an entire City, actually many cities housed within one gigantic creation that only God Himself could have constructed.

- 26 - *Heavenly Calculations*

Knowing how good Jamal was with figures, I asked, "How high is each level in the City?"

"I think they vary a bit. The ground level, for example, goes quite high up. I've never really counted the levels, because in one sense, they're really all just one level. And in another sense, every place on them is a slightly different level. But just looking at the City, there would appear to be about 150 levels. That's just a quick guess. So to figure out the average height of each level, you'd have to divide the height of the City by 150. So what measuring system should we use?" he asked.

“Personally I like to work with easy numbers, so I think of the City as being 1,500 miles!” I replied.

“Okay,” he said. “Well, as I said, the levels may vary some, but if we divide 1,500 by 150 levels, we get 10 miles. So the average height of each level would be 10 miles high. That’s about twice as high as the Earth’s tallest mountain.”

“If each of the 150 levels is two mountains high, the City itself would be 300 Mount Everests piled on top of each other!” I exclaimed.

“Well, I said approximately two,” Jamal interjected. “Mount Everest is nearly six miles high, so I think the number of Everests high would be closer to 250.”

“Still, the Lord’s House is an enormous mountain compared to the tallest mountain on Earth!” I said. “I don’t think the Earth’s atmosphere even goes up as high as that if the City sat flat down upon the Earth. Wouldn’t it be sticking way up above the atmosphere?”

“Yes, it would,” Jamal said. “The City itself, without the shielding, is about 30 times higher than the Earth’s present troposphere. That’s the part of the atmosphere where people live and breathe and where weather happens and all that. It’s thickest at the equator, about ten miles thick, so it would only come up to about the level of the first floor! Most traces of air in the Earth’s atmosphere peter out at about 1,000 miles up, but the City is higher than that.”

I asked, “I read once that the land area of Earth is about 60 million square miles. How does that

compare to the total land area inside the City if you add together all the levels?”

Jamal thought for a few moments and said, “That’s a tough question. I could only make a rough estimate without getting into some serious figuring. You see, you would have to deduct the surface area missing from each level. There’s a great hollow section up through the center of the City. I call it ‘the Cathedral area’.”

“The Cathedral?” I asked. “What’s it for?”

“I think you’ll better understand when you’re inside and see it. It serves a lot of purposes: irrigation, ventilation, inspiration, illumination, communication, and of course transportation, just to name a few.” Jamal was obviously having some fun with my question. Clearly there was something very profound and mysterious about the place he called “the Cathedral.”

“Okay, let’s see,” Jamal thought for a moment. “I guess the total floor area in the City is about 100 million square miles.”

“Wow!” I exclaimed. “That means the land area inside the City is more than the present land area on Earth.

“Space City is big!” Jamal made a wide gesture with his hands as he spoke.

Amazed at Jamal’s skill with numbers, I asked, “I’m not so good with numbers. How do you work out how much land area there is in the City?” I asked.

“Oh, don’t even ask!” Zaapha said jokingly. “Jamal is a walking, talking calculator!”

"It's true that I have a special gift for working with numbers in my head, and I'll tell you if you really want to know," he offered.

"Sure, tell me," I said bravely, though obviously not sure if I would understand anything he said.

Jamal began, "To begin with, just think of the City as being a big, cube-shaped building that for the sake of this discussion we say is 1,500 miles wide, by 1,500 miles long, and is 150 floor levels high. Multiply that out and you get 337,500,000 square miles of floor space. But the City is not a cube, it's a pyramid, which is one-third the size of a cube. So we have to divide 337,500,000 by three to get 112,500,000 square miles as the floor space for a pyramid of the same base and height. Now the next part gets a bit tricky," he said.

"What you just explained sounded pretty tricky to me already," I laughed.

"Well, I happen to know that about one ninth of each level in the City is left open in the middle of each level."

"That's the Cathedral area you mentioned?" I asked.

"Yes. Imagine that you cut the floor area into nine equal pieces. That's a square with three equal pieces on each side. Now take out the middle piece, and what's left is the land area you have at each level. Anyway, if we divide 112,500,000 by 9, we get 12,500,000, which we then subtract from 112,500,000 and end up with exactly 100,000,000 square miles!"

"Amazing!" I said.

"But those are just very rough numbers and not the exact measurements, and I could have miscalculated somewhere," he added, "but the point is that there is plenty of room for everyone to live inside the Heavenly City. Also, once the oceans on Earth are no more, there will be lots of room outside the City for others to live on as well."

"Tell him that other idea you had about the City," Zaapha urged, obviously referring to some theory Jamal had, that he preferred to keep to himself.

"Those are just my ideas! I can't prove they're true now, unless the Lord shows us or until they come to pass," Jamal protested.

"I know," Zaapha said, "but it's certainly fun to think about, and it could easily become true! The Lord likes to keep some things as surprises. We don't know everything just because we're here. Even the angels are continuing to learn things."

Zaapha continued to urge Jamal to tell me his thoughts and ideas. At last he agreed, though still a little reluctant. Jamal began, "Well, I don't like to say things that may not be the case, but as long as you understand that this is just one of my wild ideas, I'll tell you."

"I understand," I said, encouraging him to go on.

He began, "Well, you know that physical things appear to have a certain fixed size, whereas the size of something is much easier to change in the spirit, right?"

“Yes,” I said, following his words with interest.

“You also know by now that spiritual things do not have to conform so much to physical laws.”

“It seems to be true,” I replied, beginning to see a little where his reasoning was taking us. “Are you leading up to one of those ‘how many angels can sit on the head of a pin’ kind of questions?” I asked.

“Maybe,” he replied with a laugh. “You know how things can appear one way in the physical, but in the spirit they can actually be quite different. You know that God can make things that seem impossible become possible. So my question for you is, since the City is a very spiritual place, can we really know how big in physical terms the inside of the City is, or whether it will always stay the same size? You see, God has the power to make the inside of the City any size He wants without changing the outer physical size of the City. God could fill the City with multiple dimensions and universes and endless spiritual space never even seen or imagined before! Or God could open up within the City itself portals or doors to new worlds and wonders, places physical and spiritual that are as yet unimagined, mansions unseen. If He wanted to, He could make these only be accessible by those who live in the City and are the citizens of His Kingdom.

“What I’m saying is that God is able to do or create anything He needs or wants, or that we need or want! With God, anything is possible.

Even the Bible says that our eyes have not seen, nor have our ears heard the things that God has prepared for those that love Him.¹ I think God will always be full of wonderful surprises. Just when we think we know it all, He comes along and shows us we’ve only just begun. And as you may soon discover, there are lots of things about this City that remain great mysteries even to us who live here. And who knows what God may yet reveal.”

“You mean there could even be more than all this?” I asked, unable to imagine anything greater and more incredible that God might still have up His sleeve for all of us.

“I think this is only the beginning,” Jamal said. “We haven’t even scratched the surface of what God has lined up for us. This City,” Jamal said, dramatically pointing down at the huge, golden pyramid below us, “is like the tip of God’s iceberg of wonders yet to come!”

We all laughed! Jamal could be quite funny when he wanted to be. For myself, I couldn’t imagine God having anything greater or beyond the unbelievably beautiful City before my very eyes at that moment.

¹ 1 Corinthians 2:9

“Is the City also tuned in to the creation around and within it?” I asked.

Jamal smiled, “Totally! It’s totally in tune with God’s great creation, and all power has been given to the Lamb.”

At last we approached the base of the City. I saw that it had an amazing base, and a retaining wall made of layers of precious stones into which were set massive spherical gates, each one a giant, transparent, shimmering, iridescent portal of purest pearl. They were like shining beacons of light guiding us into port. It was unimaginable how they could even have come into existence. Only the power of God could create such things in such a place. No creature, no angel, nor craftsman, however clever, could have perfected so wondrous a marvel as just one of these City gates. And there were gates on each of the City’s four corners, and two more gates on each side evenly spaced in from the corners, making 12 gates in all.

As we progressed along what I will call the north face of the City, rising on the horizon that was formed by the base of the City, I could see Earth again, that blue-green planet wrapped lightly in cottony white clouds. It looked so peaceful from this distance. Yet I knew that much still had to happen before a lasting peace would rule in the hearts and lives of those like me dwelling there. But I now saw that Earth itself was not my home. It was just a stop on my way Home—Home to the City of my God, Home to the place He had prepared for my soul, and the souls of the countless other citizens of His

- 27 - Home at Last

Above us, like a bright, beautiful new day dawning, was the shining, crystal blue sky of the force field dome. The entire ship now seemed aglow, bathed in the warm, golden light radiating from the City. As wondrous as the great ship Lambda was, and as wondrous as the spirit world was, this moment was greater! Beholding the City of Light, the City of God, the Command Center of the Lamb, this crowning jewel and priceless gem of God’s creation, this treasure City built by the King of the Universe for His Bride, this was unimaginably more thrilling than anything I had yet experienced. Zaapha was gazing down through the golden wall into the interior, “It’s just beautiful! It’s just so beautiful!”

Kingdom, that we might have a place to live and dwell with Him forever.

No matter where we might travel and explore in this great universe, this would always be our true Homeland, our spiritual roots for all eternity—this great Assembly and Royal Palace of a thousand generations of God’s children. This was the City of God that Abraham left his original country to search for, that Moses forsook his high position in the Egyptian royal family for, that every child of faith seeks and sees set before them in the spirit. Of all the wondrous cities, mansions and buildings in the great house of the spirit world, this house prepared by Jesus for His Bride, this Royal Palace of the Prince of Peace, was the most spectacular of all!

Lambda was now approaching one of the great pearl portals. It positioned itself so that one of its great inner transportation portals lined up with the gate, though still high in the air above it. Then the great ship began to pivot, rotating 180 degrees until its nose pointed towards the top of the City and the end of the ship that contained the Defense Center was directed towards the Earth. The top of the great golden pyramid now lay in front of us, the tip of which was far into the distance. Jamal, Zaapha and I all stood in silent awe as the ship swung around.

“Home at last!” Jamal said when all motion had stopped. “Let’s join Mother at the disembarking portal. Father will bring the horses off separately.”

“Don’t you want to be with your father when he takes the herd off?” said Zaapha. “I’ll be with

Travis to show him around. Go and help your father. I know you want to.” With her charming persistence and my hearty agreement, Jamal was soon persuaded. “We’ll see you at the Festival,” she said as Jamal hopped into a transportation tube, waved, and was whisked away to the stables.

“Working with the horses is one of Jamal’s great joys,” Zaapha commented as we waved goodbye.

I was still a bit dazed by the wonder of all that was happening around us. Zaapha took my hand, “Come on, let’s go over to the exit portal and transport in.”

In a few moments we were floating down through the transportation tunnels of Lambda, and soon emerged from the base of the ship. There in front of us was one of the great gates of pearl, a portal into the City. We continued to float, or should I say gently fly through the air, as gracefully as fine feathers being blown along in a breeze. I felt much more in control while flying than before, for I sensed that somehow my inner desire was what determined where I flew. Like so many other things up here, learning how to fly was something I would have to perfect when I had opportunity.

The great gate before us, though somewhat transparent, seemed to be made of a solid material. I felt so unworthy. I was such a nothing, only a simple sinner who had believed the promises of Jesus and His saving power. Yet He had loved me so much, He not only rescued my soul from destruction, but let me come Home

for this visit. As we penetrated the inexpressibly beautiful pearl-like substance of the gate, I felt a great ripple of joy fill me. I was inside the very gate to Heaven! I felt like I was being washed, cleansed, purified in body and soul. A marvelous peace came upon me. Things were different here. Peace was everywhere—great eternal peace—in this City of Peace!

This wonderful new world and new life stood so quietly within reach of the Earth itself, patiently waiting for the moment it would step from behind the thin curtain of appearances out onto the stage of life for all the world to see. In that moment, when Heaven appears, all the hurry and worry, turmoil and confusion of life on Earth will stop, as all peoples of the world look up at this wonder of God.

Jamal was right about one's sense of direction changing here. As soon as we left Lambda and headed for the great gate of pearl, "up" was towards the top of the pyramid, and "down" was toward the Earth. This sense of direction quickly became an accepted fact in my head once we were inside the City. Looking back at Lambda One through the transparent walls and gate and base of the City, I could imagine how odd the great ship docked there must look; appearing to be hanging down by its nose from some invisible peg in space, or perhaps looking like it was standing up on its end like a rocket about to take off.

"Here come the horses!" Zaapha announced, pointing to two lines of white figures galloping out of a large exit portal on Lambda's underside.

"It's Jamal, riding by his father, each leading a column of horses!" The sight of those great horses filing out of Lambda, two abreast, charging across the sky towards the City, was a total thrill! They didn't enter directly, but as they approached the City gate side by side, each lead horse and rider veered left and right to form two large, circular paths of galloping horses that looped around, then crossed through each other's path forming a giant, moving, synchronized figure eight. They crossed in perfect synchronization at a midpoint directly out from the gate. Then they separated into two large rotating circles like two great white wheels rotating side by side in opposite directions.

The left circle, led by Jamal, galloped in a clockwise direction; the right circle, led by his father, moved in a counterclockwise direction. The horses galloped around in a double circle formation for another complete turn. Then as Jamal and his father came side by side, they stayed together and rode directly towards the gates, each leading a line of horses directly towards the gate. Two perfect lines of paired horses trotted triumphantly toward the City. At this point, Jamal and his father suddenly looked up, smiled radiantly, and waved up in appreciation to some unseen "Spectator" who must have appeared to them outside the City. Their King Himself must have been watching their entrance parade from above, and had appeared to show His appreciation and to encourage them.

With a huge smile on his face, Jamal waved to Zaapha and I, as he and his father rode by, taking the horses deeper into the City.

“They’ll be going over to the great stadium to prepare for the show,” Zaapha informed me, as the herd thundered by, heading toward the open central area of the City. *Considering the enormous size of this place, that could easily be 500 miles away to the interior!* I thought.

Heaven was everything I expected and more. And this was only a sampling. I knew that for me, this experience was mostly happening in the spirit, for I was still just a traveler through these incredible regions. I was somehow just an observer, not fully here yet, and so not experiencing the full, joyful impact that I would one day have when I come Home to stay. By then, I would joyfully enter these gates in my newly created super body to join in the great victory and wedding celebration of the Lamb. That day still seemed a little ways off, but even my present level of joy and happiness seemed enough to last an eternity.

Once inside, everything seemed amazingly open and spacious. The City was bathed in a warm, loving light, and as you entered the gate, you had a feeling of being embraced by the very Spirit of Love itself—like a child or loved one being hugged and greeted warmly at the door when arriving home.

There was a great loving Light that flowed through everything, and seemed to emanate from somewhere in the upper part of the City.

The next level up formed a ceiling high above us. This was several miles up. The crystal-gold material from which the City was made glowed with a rich inner light, plus the ceiling above us seemed to catch and reflect some of the blue of the outer shielding, creating a magnificent white-blue-gold sky effect overhead.

The inside of the City was most intriguing and would take a lot of study to even understand it. I could not easily figure out just how it was designed, mostly because of the great sizes and incredible distances involved. Once inside, I had the impression that the various levels I’d seen from the outside and had assumed to be separate floors, were quite possibly all just one continuous spiraling plane that went up and up, around and around the hollow center inside of this great pyramidal City. Each tier had appeared more or less level from the outside, but even a slight slope of a few degrees over a distance of 1,500 miles would be enough to create a ceiling between levels of five or ten miles high. If my hunch was right, then to take a scenic walkway from the bottom level all the way to the top of the City, following the wall along the edge of each level, would be an incredible distance! That would certainly be the longest street in the universe—something like three hundred thousand miles long!—Almost as far as walking to the moon and back from Earth!

From what Jamal had said, the inner core of the City was hollow. One look up into that inner shaft from the center of the City would prove or

disprove my theory. I could just ask Zaapha, but it didn't seem to be the time to flood her with my questions.

From what I could tell, much of the ground level appeared to be a massive park. If each side of this large area was 1,500 miles, then this one area alone would provide almost two million square miles of park and recreation area for the residents of the City. A large golden boulevard ran from the gate to the center of the City, a central point directly beneath the apex. I assumed there were similar boulevards running to and radiating from the center area out to each one of the twelve gates, and possibly similar highways radiating from the central area of each level above us. There seemed to be vertical thruways running from the gates up to the top of the City as well, and everywhere rising up and down in the joyous light that flooded down from above, were happy souls flying and floating and going about their business. It was rapturous! It was beyond belief. It was true that the City of God had no need of outside light, for it did indeed seem to be lit by the presence of the Lamb and the glory of His Spirit, which dwelt near the pinnacle.

Everywhere around me I felt the presence of the Lord. His glory was everywhere. Although the light and glory of His presence seemed to stream from the upper part of the City, I seemed to feel that Jesus, in a more humble, human form, would freely mix and mingle with the people. It was like He could be anywhere and everywhere

He wanted to be, in any form He wanted to be, with anyone or everyone He wanted to be with, or who wanted to be with Him.

and even do tricks. But for now I was content just to be able to rise up through the air to the next level.

Far below I could now see a magnificent river lined by very large fruit trees. There in the distance appeared to be a marvelous park or garden close by the central area of the City, and in that park stood an enormous tree! My eyes have never been very good, but oddly enough, in this City I could see things at great distances easily.

“That’s the actual, original Tree of Life that was in the Garden of Eden!” Zaapha commented. “People here can eat from it freely now.”

“Wow! That must be the most valuable plant in all creation,” I commented.

“Well, it was pretty heavily guarded by the cherubim after Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden, and finally the Lord removed it before He destroyed the original former world—except for Noah and his family and the pairs and sevens of animals in the ark—with a flood,” Zaapha explained.

I looked out at the City walls and gates and the protective force field and added, “Actually, when you think about it, that tree is still pretty heavily guarded, isn’t it?”

“Well, it’s an important symbol. It stands for the unfailing love and promises of God, His free gift of hope and healing and eternal life! The Tree of Life was one of the first great supernatural love gifts that God gave to His children, way back in the Garden of Eden. Most importantly, it represents Jesus, God’s dearest and greatest love

- 28 - Streets of Gold

“Are you ready to go up?” Zaapha asked, taking my hand. “I so want to see all the changes Uncle Jerry and others have made to the place we’re fixing up for Dad. Frank and I help out when we can.”

We floated up into the air, rising higher and higher, and I could see more and more of the great expanse of the park area. In the distance, over by the corner gate named Judah, I could see some of the amazing buildings, and reception and recreational areas as described in the books of the prophet David. Up and up we rose to a dizzying height. I felt like an eagle flying high above the earth. Flying was truly wonderful, and with a bit of practice I knew I could improve

gift, who paid for our sins and rescued our doomed souls from destruction by offering up His own life as ransom on the terrible tree of death.”

The tree itself seemed to be growing on an island surrounded by a lovely lake or large river that was fed by a waterfall. “And what is that beautiful, rainbow-covered fountain of water cascading down from the next level up?” I asked.

“That is the crystal clear water of the River of Life. Its source is way up top in the Throne of God. The river runs down through all the levels, and then splashes down in a beautiful fountainlike waterfall from the inside edge of the level above. It waters the Tree of Life and continues on as a great winding river refreshing the entire park area. Eventually, I assume its water gets transported back up to the top of the City where it is blessed and refreshed by God and begins its journey back down through the City.”

Zaapha and I continued to rise up and up toward the next level. We emerged through what appeared to be a long golden street that ran from a point above the gate in towards the center of the City. We came to rest for a moment on the great golden street we had just passed through, but that now appeared and felt solid again as our feet came to rest on its radiant, clear gold surface. The first level of the City was magnificent, and I could have strolled along its golden streets in total awe and wonder the rest of my time there, but Zaapha was eager to see

her father’s cottage. We rose again into the air and headed towards the interior.

The base or flooring of each level was the same gold material as the outer shell of the City. Upon this golden foundation flooring seemed to be laid a layer of ground that supported grass and vegetation. I was certain it was not of the same makeup and composition as soil on Earth. It seemed completely clean, more alive and colorful. There was some topography to the landscape. Everything was not perfectly flat, but appeared in places a lot like Earth with riverbeds, rolling hills, and green meadows. The streets, though, did seem to be fairly level, and wrought of the same transparent gold that was the basic building material of the City.

From high above, the streets seemed to shine, unlike streets on Earth. The streets seemed more for strolling along. I saw no vehicles as such using them. I suspect that most people just use the streets as general directional guidelines, as they fly back and forth. Also, when going to a different level, it seemed common to go up through or descend through a street. The street seemed to respond to whether someone wanted to walk on it or pass through it to another level.

“The streets here really are made of gold,” I exclaimed.

“Yes, there are golden streets on every level that appear to converge and point to the center of the City, and others follow concentric paths,” she replied.

Flying with Zaapha was such fun. She was very good at it. We passed over countless lovely homes and orderly little towns and villages and arrived at last in a quiet, rural-looking area. We came down beside a one-story, rambling, ranch-style country home. It had a lovely yard and pool and garden area, as well as a workshop in the back.

“Does your father like to build or fix things?” I asked, nodding towards the workshop.

“Oh, yes, but he just never had much opportunity to develop those talents on Earth,” Zaapha answered.

Some of the houses we had passed over looked very modern and unique, with amazing designs and see-through crystal walls, but this house was more like a country home back on Earth.

“It’s very nice!” I said.

“I think he’ll like it,” she answered.

“How is it decided who lives in what part of the city and in what house?” I asked.

“Well, to begin with, you’re assigned a place, usually with others or near others you know,” she replied.

“Once you have a place assigned to you, do you have to live there forever?” I asked.

“No, not at all!” Zaapha answered, looking a bit shocked. “That’s just where you begin, a secure place to land while you learn and adjust. Children often get placed with loved ones who are already here. I was matched up with Jamal and his family, who always like to help newcomers and travelers. They really helped me a lot when I first got here. Older people like my

father will be in a place close to a relative, in this case his brother. As more family, loved ones, and friends arrive here, other arrangements can be made. Actually, a City dwelling is only one of many homes and places one can go to live. There are lots of very nice places to live elsewhere in the spirit realm within the Kingdom. Having an outside or country dwelling is common, especially if your ministry calls you to be in other places.”

“Why would anyone want to ever leave or live away from the City?” I asked.

“The City is very nice and a lot of fun to live in, but we do have to leave it quite often for the Lord’s work’s sake. Perhaps you have the impression that to leave the City means leaving the presence of the Lord, which is not the case at all in the spirit.”

“Really?” I said, a bit surprised, yet pleased, to hear.

“In the spirit, wherever you are in God’s great Kingdom you can be as close to the Lord as you want to be, whenever you want.”

I toured the house and grounds with Zaapha. Once inside I saw what a real little mother and interior decorator she was. She was so concerned with every little detail and wanted things to be just right. Her little touches of love were everywhere. Her father was a very blessed man to have such a loving daughter. The house was humble in heavenly terms but certainly much more than I think the poor man might expect or imagine. *I guess Heaven will be full of surprises for a lot of people*, I thought.

“I wonder what kind of place I’ll live in when I come here to stay?” I put my thoughts into words.

“Oh, you can’t know that just yet!” Zaapha said, almost chiding me. “What fun would that be knowing now? All that will be for when you come to stay. That’ll be your birthday surprise. On this trip you only get to have a quick look around, and likely will not even meet with close loved ones here. Meeting loved ones can get pretty overwhelming for travelers like you who are here on assignment. It can really throw you off emotionally, and we don’t want you going back unhappy.”

I was a little disappointed to hear that I might not get to see my loved ones here in Heaven this time around. But I had to trust that those guiding me through this incredible experience know what is best. Maybe if I were to get too involved up here, I might not have the grace to go back to Earth or back to my body when the time came. As in my spirit trip back to Earth, it did seem that I knew I could not stay or fully enter in, so I didn’t feel the full, direct impact of being there. I was in a sense still seeing things through a less-than-perfectly-clear window. Opposite to having a dentist or surgeon give you a shot to deaden the pain, I was being protected from feeling the full impact of all the pleasure of being in Heaven. It would have been too much for me, and I would have had a very hard time leaving.

- 29 -
The Festival of the Prince of Peace

Soon it was time for us to head over to the center of the City. That was where Jamal and his father would be with the herd, and where the whole City would be gathering to celebrate the Festival of the Prince of Peace. Zaapha took my hand and we rose into the air. Everywhere people were beginning to make their way towards a stadiumlike area near the center of the City, in the place Jamal called the Cathedral. We were still on the first floor up from the ground floor, or base floor of the City. We must have flown hundreds of miles in a matter of moments. Zaapha took us very high up, several miles I’m sure, and it was breathtaking! Soon we

approached what seemed to be a huge, circular area cut out of the center of this first level, just as Jamal had mentioned. Below us, the Great River of Life poured over the edge of the circle and plunged what could have easily been 10 miles (16 kilometers) down to the ground level below.

I could see the Tree of Life through the opening, growing out of the base of the City in a glorious new Eden never to be destroyed again. It was magnificent! In the distance, though still perhaps some 170 miles (275 kilometers) away in the center, was a huge, beautiful, gleaming, white stadium. The word “stadium,” though, doesn’t convey the true picture of this great “outdoor” circular gathering place of the saints. I was sure that some of those in attendance today would have died as martyrs in Roman stadiumlike places back on Earth, so I hesitate to call this magnificent center a stadium. The word that came to mind to describe it is a “euphorium!” I don’t think you’ll find that word in any dictionary. I’ll only define it here as a place where you go and experience total joy—total euphoria.

Approaching the great Cathedral area of the City, one could begin to see higher and higher up through the center of the City. The golden inner edge of each level appeared as much like a series of great beveled golden rings or halos as it did the great spiral I had anticipated. Once we were well into the great Cathedral area, I was able to look straight up. What I saw overwhelmed me with its beauty. I began to wobble in flight like a drunken man.

“Oh, don’t look up just yet!” Zaapha said. “Save that for when we’re seated.” I could hardly hear her, my mind was still burning with the spectacular glimpse I’d just seen. I hardly noticed when we arrived at the great central seating area and lightly landed and sat down in the unusual seats. Heaven was so absolutely clean and dust-free, that the soft, gleaming-white upholstery covering the seats was unblemished, though for all appearances we seemed to be sitting right outside in the middle of a great park.

“When can I look?” I asked Zaapha, like a schoolboy about to peek up again.

“Just a few more moments until more people get seated and you can see better,” she encouraged.

Beautiful people in shining gossamer gowns rained down around us by the thousands, descending like dew upon the grass, pouring down from a great, gold-blue conic sky. The entire place was lit with the splendor of God. What a gathering! What a celestial party! So this was the Festival of the Prince of Peace. Gleaming, happy faces surrounded us in circular rows that ran back mile upon mile. The structure of this great central stadium was very like the flower petal design of the city of Tricon. Only here, instead of buildings, rows of gleaming white seats stood like flower petals in concentric circles around a central area. Each seat was soft and curved and contoured for comfort.

Suddenly the whole assembly was showered in living light from above, and we all turned our faces upward. A magnificent blast of trumpets

sounded, and the seats began to recline to a more horizontal position so that everyone could easily look straight up into the conic, cathedral-like open area rising up through the center of the City. This was better than any planetarium. What I saw took my breath away!

I looked up into a rich, royal-blue sky, into which rose a magnificent, golden, cone-shaped pillar, formed, it seemed, by the spiraling, golden walkway that edged the cathedral cavity and wound its way to the top of the City. It was like looking through a bright, golden tunnel of light, hundreds of miles wide and more than a thousand miles long. The Cathedral seemed lined with bands of gold and blue, swirling up and up into the sky in one glorious spiral of praise all the way up to the very throne room of Jesus!

At the top of the Cathedral area, the glory of the Lord rested as I assume the Shekinah glory had upon the Ark of the Covenant. It shone so brightly in those upper rooms and chambers that it was too overwhelming for me to look upon for any length of time. Although I was in a spiritual state, I was still partly a mortal beholding these things. And this great, all-consuming light, this burning bush, this eternal, joy-filled flame of life that now flooded the City with its glory was almost more than I could bear.

For a moment as I looked up, it seemed I was gazing into God's great time tunnel in which dwelt the saints of all times. Whole cities and civilizations towered above me, and everywhere, rising up and down and lining the walkways of

this tunnel of life, this joyous shaft filled with heavenly light, were happy eternal souls. It was totally rapturous! It was beyond anything I had yet experienced.

Suddenly the air filled with a glorious rush of heavenly music, a celestial symphony, a colossal spectrum of harmonious sounds. The acoustics here in God's great auditorium were beyond belief. It was as though the City itself had become one great big musical instrument, and each level within this massive pyramid contributed its own unique and wonderful tone and harmonious sound.

The whole musical overture that accompanied the light show seemed to have been especially written and composed just for this day's event. No earthly orchestra could compare to this musical assembly of angels and musicians from a thousand generations joining in this one harmonious medley of voices and instruments. Then they broke into song and sang in the tongue of angels, and tongues of the Spirit, and the whole assembly joined together with them in praise. All arms were lifted and faces radiant in a great outburst of joy!

"The Festival is beginning!" Zaapha exclaimed excitedly.

A host of angels came pouring down from the throne area like falling confetti. As they descended, they sang so beautifully and in such harmony that the entire City reverberated with their voices. I can only describe the experience as heavenly. As the hosts of angels streamed down through the air, they formed a great circle of

rejoicing and praise to the Lord all around in the sky area above the crowds gathered in this huge celestial concert hall.

All along the golden spiral walkways above were other angels and saints gathering, as happy throngs of people from every level, some strolling, some flying, began to descend. Soon thousands upon thousands more of God's children began to rain, laughing and singing and floating down from the sky. Although distances of hundreds, even well over a thousand miles were involved, because of some incredible visual effect in Heaven, looking up I could see anything I wanted to see, as though all things were close up. I don't know how this was possible, but that was just one of the many miracles in this place called the Cathedral.

At the very top, the great inner golden walkway looked very much like a huge golden staircase spiraling up into the very heart of Heaven. A host of people still lined the golden spiral walkways or floated to the sides of the inner dome. For a moment it reminded me of a great theater or opera house with many levels and rows and very high balconies. Near the top where the cone narrowed greatly, the walkway actually seemed to become a golden staircase that approached the throne room and inner chambers and sanctuary of the Lamb. I could only imagine what absolute joy it would be to enter one of those upper rooms, to be able to enter into His courts.

Then Jesus Himself appeared and began to descend from above. Larger and larger He

became. Not only was He larger than life, and very beautiful to behold, but something else was quite miraculous about Him. No matter from what level or angle you looked at Him, He appeared to face just you and be looking only at you. Yet I knew at this same time He most certainly was greeting everyone else. What a great miracle of His love that even here in so great a gathering He still remained so completely personal and intimate with each person, as though they were the only one that He had come to see. Jesus was that personal, even here in Heaven, even in a crowd. And crowds upon crowds of people were lining the great golden staircase and walkways on every level, all waving and cheering Him while He blessed and kissed each one of countless millions as He passed by.

With the miraculous power of sight we seemed to have in this place, I thought I recognized some of those most blessed faces in those lofty places as He hugged and kissed them, while at the same moment I felt Him hugging and kissing me. It's hard to explain, but somehow He spoke personally to each heart, and each soul, and to all.

He spoke of things to come while we all prayed and praised together. The air was filled with waves of light and love and showers of blessing. It was a Festival of Love. I couldn't imagine any greater festivity, yet I knew that soon an even greater day would come when the Lamb would take us all to be His Bride, and we would celebrate a great victory over our enemies. That would be a festival of festivals, a feast of all feasts,

a cup of eternal joy and pleasure poured upon His loved ones.

Oh, how I longed for that day when He would return again to Earth just as we saw Him here coming down to us in all His glory and splendor. What a wonderful Savior! He descended in a very large form so everyone could see Him clearly. And as I said, the miracle was that all could see Him face on from any angle and communicate personally any moment they wanted to.

The conic dome of this Cathedral area of Heaven with all these millions of souls flying around reminded me of a beehive. It was God's great Heavenly Beehive of happy souls in His service, feasting on the wonderful honey of His love. He raised His hands and blessed the great assemblies of Heaven, a sea of joyful faces. As I beheld Him, I could just imagine that rapturous day, that victorious day on Earth when He will return to call His own Home to Heaven! When those who died in faith return for their new bodies and wait to hear His voice gently calling them from the graves, "Come, children! The night is passed. The morning has come and it is time for you to rise from your beds of slumber and rejoice!" At last, peace will rule the Earth and all the planets. Creation will be at rest.

Jesus slowly descended until He stood in the center of the great amphitheater. Our seats moved into a more upright position. He was still very large, what would be many stories high on Earth, standing in the midst of us, yet still seeming to be there just for each one of us personally, with arms outstretched. I looked into

His eyes and He spoke to my heart. "You will now have to return to your life on Earth, but I want you to know how much I love you, and I want you to be sure and remind all My children there how very, very much I love them. We will all be together soon. Be faithful to the end and I will give you a crown of life!"

I began to float upward. I felt Zaapha squeeze my hand in a sweet, parting goodbye. Jesus then humbled Himself and took on a more normal proportion and sat down on a throne set for Him. Things were beginning to fade a little. I heard a great sound of trumpets. The opening show was beginning. I could hear the thunder of horse's hooves. Suddenly Jamal appeared in front of me.

"I wanted to see you before you left," he said, and hugged me closely.

"Thank you for everything, Jamal," I said. "And please thank your dear mother and father for me. I can only hope for the day when I get to see you again."

"That day may come sooner than you think," Jamal said, with a big grin.

"What? Am I going to die soon?" I asked.

"Not just yet," he replied. "Not just yet!"

There was a fun twinkle in his eyes as though he knew a secret he could not yet tell me. He seemed to be saying that there were many adventures still to unfold in the days ahead. I began to slip away. In the distance I could see the great horses performing. They were racing around the ring in several great concentric circles that went in opposing directions, then they began to rise into the air like intertwining curls

of sweet incense. Up and up they rose toward the lofty throne room of God. The air of Heaven was filled with such sweet perfume and the singing of angels.

I closed my eyes for a moment, and breathed deeply one last breath of that heavenly fragrance. When I opened my eyes I knew I was leaving. I was in some kind of transportation tunnel heading back to Earth. Down, down I descended through the long tunnel of light until I came to rest.

The wondrous light and joyous singing began to fade as the shadow and chill of the night air wrapped itself around me. I was back in my own body, in my own bed. I lay still for a long time, not really sure whether to open my eyes or not. At last I blinked open my eyelids. It was night. The window was open and the room was dark, except for the pale, bluish light of a full moon that streamed in upon me. I looked at my hands. They were my hands, wrinkled and worn. I reached up and felt the gray beard that covered my face. Yes, I was back in my own body again. I was no longer a youth tramping through the heavens. I looked out my window into the clear night sky. I looked into the face of the full moon. I gazed for a long time at that mysterious, ghostly looking orb that lit the night sky. It seemed to be every bit the moon as I always remembered it, yet now I understood better its great secret.

Had all this only been the dream of an old man? If so, then I longed to dream on. Or, perhaps what I had just experienced was reality, and this that I called life was actually the dream.

I closed my eyes once more, hoping again to suddenly be transported into realms unknown. Nothing happened! Off in the distance I could hear a barking dog, interrupted by an angry voice telling it to be quiet. I took a deep breath of the cool night air and resolved to accept my present reality. I was back in my earthly home. I was on Earth and in my own body and in my own bed. I looked once more at the bright face of the moon in the distance, and smiled. "Good night, everyone! I hope I see you soon!" Then I closed my eyes, said a little prayer of thankfulness, and drifted off to sleep.

Glossary

apprehensive: anxious about the future, uneasy
aviary: a large enclosure for holding birds
baleful: evil; ominous; sinister
beveled: to be inclined; slant
botany: the science or study of plants
cartography: the art of making maps or charts
cascade: to fall like water over a series of small waterfalls
chrysanthemum: any of numerous, mostly Eurasian plants of the genus *Chrysanthemum*, many of which are cultivated as ornamentals for their showy, radiate flower heads.
conceivably: to be of the opinion that; think
conduits: a means by which something is transmitted
conic: shaped like a cone
cornice: a horizontal molded projection that crowns or completes a building or wall
cryptic: having hidden meaning, mystifying
daunting: discouraging

degenerate: having fallen to an inferior or undesirable state from a former or original state
diffuse: to widely disperse; spread out
eave: the overhang at the lower edge of a roof
edifice: a building, especially one of large appearance or size
elation: pride, joy
encapsulate: to encase in, or as if in a capsule
engulfs: to swallow up or overwhelm by or as if by overflowing and enclosing
epic: a literary or dramatic composition that celebrates heroic feats
esthetics: concerning the appreciation of beauty or good taste
ethereal: not of this world; spiritual
exhilarating: stimulating or refreshing
gemology: the study of gems
geodesic: relating to the geometry of curved surfaces
gingerly: with great care, cautiously
gossamer: something delicate, light, or flimsy
hazardous: dangerous
imposing: impressive
indiscernible: difficult to see or understand
interactive: capable of interacting, or engaging in two-way communication
loathsome: disgusting, repellent
luminescence: light
metaphysics: the branch of philosophy that examines the nature of reality, including the relationship between mind and matter, substance and attribute, fact and value
mystical: having a spiritual reality not apparent to the senses; stemming from direct communion with God
orb: a sphere or spherical object
outcropping: a portion of protruding rock that is visible above ground
panorama: an unbroken view of an entire surrounding area
periphery: a line that forms the boundary of an area; a perimeter
permeated: to spread or flow throughout

pinnacle: a tall, pointed formation, such as a mountain peak

plummet: to fall straight down; plunge

portal: a doorway, an entrance, or a gate

privy: getting to know something private or secret

rambling: irregularly shaped

refracting: the turning or bending of a wave of light or sound

reminisce: to think or tell of past experiences or events

scintillate: to sparkle or shine

stamen: the pollen-producing organ of a flower, which often rises up from within the flower on its stalk, called a “filament”

subvert: to undermine the character, morals, or allegiance of; corrupt

symmetrical: having two or more angles from which a shape, when divided, produces identical halves

symmetry: beauty as a result of perfect balance or harmonious arrangement

tangible: possible to touch

terrarium: a small enclosure in which selected living plants and sometimes small land animals are kept and observed

topography: showing the irregular features of a surface

transcendent: superior, beyond comprehension

transcendental: beyond common thought or experience; mystical or supernatural

turret: heavily armored structure, usually rotating horizontally, containing mounted guns and their gunners, as on a warship or tank

unfathomable: impossible to understand; incomprehensible

unimpeded: with no obstructions

vivarium: sufficiently spacious indoor enclosure for keeping and raising living animals and plants under natural conditions

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