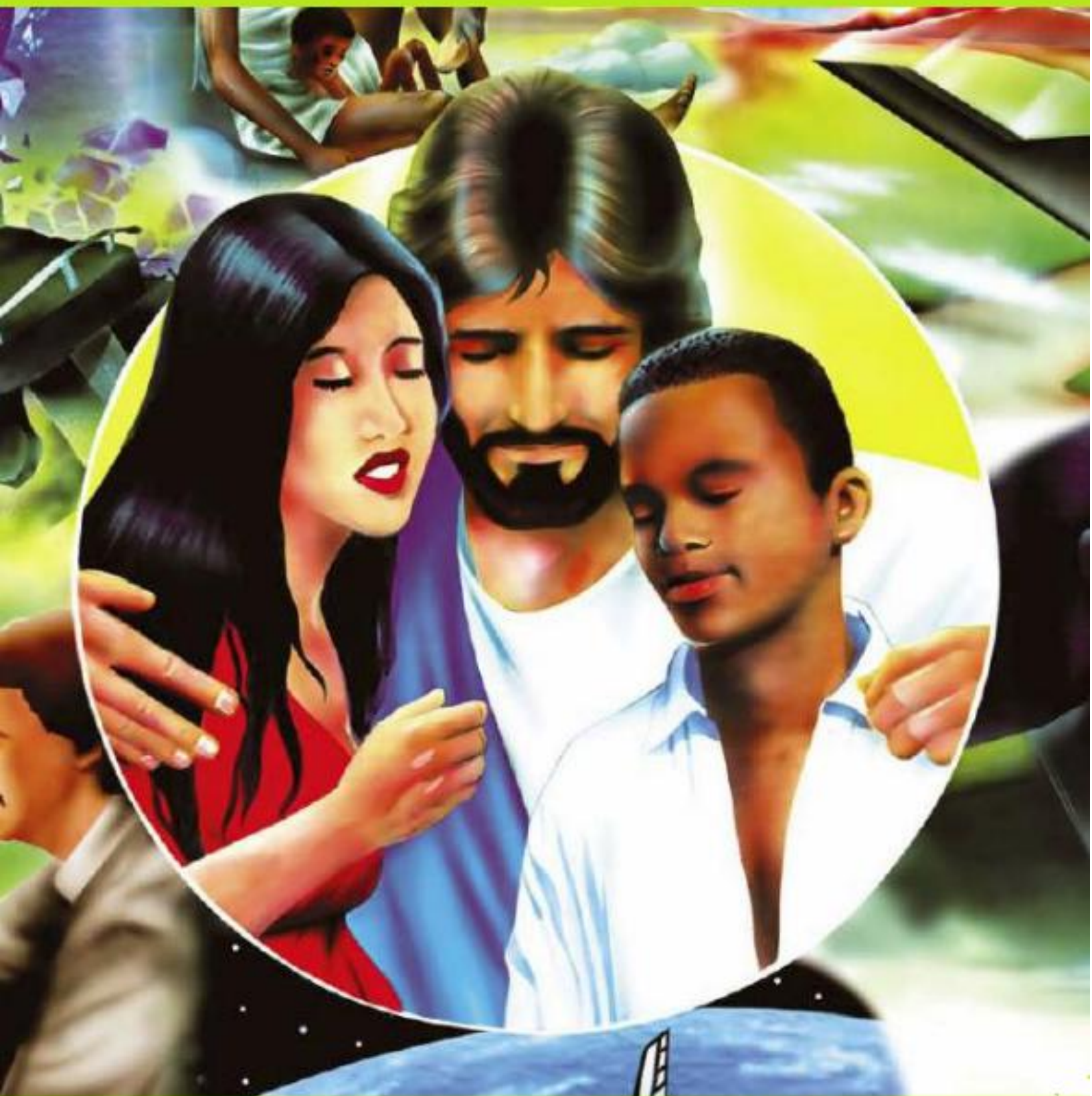


COUNTED WORTHY!



Testimonies from Heaven of Victory in the Midst of Persecutions!

Maria Fontaine

Counted Worthy

Testimonies from Heaven of Victory in the midst of persecutions!

By Maria Fontaine

Digital Book - Not to be sold
Edited by theaudiokey.com
(Password: thekeys)
July 2020

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01. The Life and Persecutions of John Wycliffe

“Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name!”

My name is John Wycliffe and I lived in England in the 1300s. I was an ordained Catholic priest, and a scholar and teacher at Oxford University. Because of the influence of my teachers, I began to see the errors in the way the Catholic Church ordered that our Lord be worshipped, as well as the errors of church hierarchy. They were a hierarchy indeed, a bunch of hirelings who fleeced the sheep and tyrannized them.

Little by little, I let my views be known. I at once found people who received them gladly, some out of self-interest, but many out of relief to find that the God Who called Himself Love, really was that, and not the monster His so-called church on Earth behaved as. Not to say that there weren't many sincere believers in the church, but those were the silent ones who didn't raise the standard, but chose to drift along and not rock the boat.

But I had to rock the boat, and many loved me for it. Many times I was threatened with excommunication, which in those days meant no one could associate with me, let me buy food from them, or receive shelter from them. But I just shrugged those threats off and they came to naught. The enemies of Christ like to try and scare you with a lot of bluff and bluster, but it is mostly that, just hot air.

I was summoned to appear before the bishops on several occasions. The first time, my friend and patron, John, the second son of the king, marched in on one side, and the marshal of England, another friend, marched with me on the other. The

bishop of London was furious when he saw the support I had! The bishop and Duke John spent the entire time shouting at each other, and by the time they were finished, the whole thing was such a fiasco that I just went home, laughing and praising God.

Another time the same bishop, who was now Archbishop of Canterbury, summoned me again to explain myself and face charges. This time the queen mother wrote all the bishops and told them they had better not consider doing me any harm—else they might find their own necks on the line. That was enough to keep that bunch of cowards from voting to do anything to me. So once again I went home laughing and praising God.

Then I fell out of favor with some of my royal friends, but this setback just freed me from many of my duties so that I could get to work on the job I really had wanted to do for years, and that was to translate the Bible into English so that the people could hear the Good News in their own language. I say, “hear,” because most people couldn't read, but at least they could understand if it was spoken to them. Before, all they had available was Latin, and the common people hardly understood a word of that. So what looked like a disappointment and an end of a career turned out to be His appointment to a far more enduring work and legacy. I sent lots of people out to preach the Good News in the language of the people. “The poor preachers,” they were called, because they had no possessions except the Word. Lots of people were enlightened and came to understand who Jesus really was and what His message was to them.

Then the Pope, whom I like to compare to an Antichrist, ordered me to come to Rome. He wanted to deal with me himself and would have probably burnt me at

the stake before I had even set foot in that city. Talk about a kangaroo court. Anyway, by that time I was too old and sick. So I wrote back thanking him for the invitation but that I would have to decline his kind offer. Ha! I died in my bed a little while later.

Many people would have killed me if they'd had the chance. I walked around a good deal of my life with the martyr's crown just inches from my head, but it never had to descend. I had enemies but I also had many friends who stuck by me when I needed them most.

Oh, of all the silly things, the Pope ordered my body dug up, my bones burnt, and the ashes dumped into a river about 40 years after my death. Talk about ridiculous! Well, all those ashes washing down the river were symbolic of the things I had set in motion that couldn't be stopped. Like seed, the words went everywhere and there are many people sitting in Heaven today because of them. All the persecution or threats of it did was to cause the Good News to be spread. The threats and railings were a lot of hot air that blew the seeds to all corners of the world. As far the effect on me, all it did was add to the stars in my crown. And that is what it will do for you too. Don't fear persecution. Ride the wave and let it heap up for you rewards in Heaven as your testimony and the Word of God is preached in all the world. I look forward to seeing you all up here some day. Until then, keep up the good work! (End of message.)

02. Mike and His Indian “Father”

“Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name!”

Note to parents: It’s possible that some younger children would be frightened at what happened.

(Mike:) We were missionaries in a time when missionaries were unpopular amongst the Indians of the Pacific Northwest. Work amongst the Indians had not fared very well, winning very few converts. The tragedy with the Whitmans in the Walla Walla area caused many missionaries and settlers to give up, and to keep to themselves and to the white community. My mother and father were heartbroken by what they saw taking place around them, and longed to change things. It was in these settings that the story I have to tell took place.

My dad was a farmer and a churchgoer, a good Methodist, who, along with his wife and (then) three kids, had decided to head West and start a life for his family there. We were amongst the families that the Whitman missionaries had taken back to the Walla Walla area with them when they returned to their mission there. I was only three when the measles outbreak took place. Though most of the Indian children in that area died of the measles, I survived, as did most of the children of the other settlers. Naturally there was great mistrust stirred up towards the white settlers amongst the Indians due to the death of their children. As you probably know, the end result was the destruction of the Whitmans’ mission, and even the death of the Whitmans themselves*. There was a lot of upheaval during those days, as wars took place between the white settlers and the Indians, and it caused my family to move to Idaho for shelter.

(*Note: The Whitmans were American Protestant missionaries who played an important role in attracting settlers to the Pacific Northwest. After a measles outbreak in which many Native American children died, he, his wife, and 12 associates were killed by hostile Cayuse Indians.)

Years later, when I was about eleven, and things had settled down between the communities, my father and mother still felt that we owed the Indians a sample of real Christianity, of loving forgiveness.

I remember seeing my mother in tears as she and my father bowed in prayer, asking the Lord to help them reach out to the Indians with His love, and to protect their children. They knew that bitterness against the white settlers' children ran high amongst the Indians who had lost their own children. It was a bitterness spurred on by the jealousy of seeing us survive when they had lost their own children.

My dad befriended an Indian in the local town who had come there for trade. He learned some of his new acquaintance's language, and the two became friends, each spurred on by a curiosity of the other's lifestyle.

Our new Indian friend invited us to his village one evening. He had secured the permission of the elders of his village, and we were to come to watch one of their religious ceremonies.

During the ceremony was when my story of Jesus' wonderful protection takes place. My father and mother were sitting there with my three younger brothers and sisters. My mother had her hands full, watching over the little ones, while my

father was giving his full attention to the religious ceremony, doing his utmost to show respect for their ways.

I was sitting off to the side and a bit behind my mother, just out of her sight. That's why she didn't notice when a middle-aged Indian warrior came up from behind, put his hand over my mouth, and pulled me away from the area where all were seated.

Some of the other Indians in the group noticed what had taken place. But they weren't about to stop him, because they knew the great grief and bitterness in this brave's heart. I was on my own.

When the religious ceremony had ended, my father looked around for me, but I was nowhere to be seen. It was three days before my father and mother saw me again. And it was for three days that I was hidden away amongst this tribe's young men and older children.

They painted my face with murky water to darken my skin, and dressed me like one of them, so that I would not stand out to any white man looking for me. Because this was a different tribe than my captor was originally from, there were children and young people, including boys my age that they put me with. During the days, I was watched over by these curious boys, and made to help them with their chores and other responsibilities. At nights I went to sleep with he who was now my new "father."

He hated me, due to the grief and bitterness in his heart over having lost his own children and wife, but he also wanted me as a replacement for his loss. Therefore,

though he was gruff, and even cruel at times to the point of kicking me, he also saw to it during those few days that I had all I needed as far as food, clothing, and bedding. I was not forsaken.

At first, I must admit, the terror of the situation caused me to be hardened against my new Indian “father.” And though I prayed, I prayed mostly prayers against him. My heart was a mirror of the hate in his heart.

On the second night, however, Jesus got through to me. He reminded me of how He had been sent from His Heavenly Father to live with an earthly father, for the sake of helping those of us on Earth to know Him, His ways, and His love, and to receive His gift of a free passage to Heaven.

I then realized how I was possibly being sent by Jesus to this man, to bring him the love of Jesus. I remembered my parents’ prayers, and my mother’s tears, and knew it was time for me to act on the love Jesus had given me. Up until now I was accustomed to living within His love, but had had little opportunity to share it with others. Was this my time to step out?

When we arose the following morning, I smiled. He grunted. I pitched in to arrange not only my own bedding, but his as well. He grunted. I ran to get water for him to clean up with, and again he grunted. But he didn’t kick me as he had the previous morning. He only grunted.

As the day went on, I pitched in where I could, helping the boys I was with, as well as my Indian “father.” He grunted.

That night, I helped prepare his bed, and straightened his area of the teepee. He smiled. I was bending over my own bed, about to crawl in, when I saw that smile, and I turned around in such shock. He grunted. But that smile, though small, was still there.

The next day, he walked me back to my father's friend, who then took me home. My parents' faces were full of joy and thanksgiving as they saw me approach. It was a miracle of His love. He used me to open the door to minister more to that tribe, and we were able to bring many to Jesus due to that night. They became interested in our religion because we had shown an interest in theirs. They learned the power of forgiveness as they saw my Indian "father" turn from his bitterness and open himself to friends and love once again.

Yes, he truly became my Indian "father." Our relationship did not end that night; it only began. We taught each other our languages. He taught me hunting skills. I taught him many of the farming skills my father was teaching me. We learned about each other's religions, and he eventually received Jesus. And today, we share a great place in Heaven together, where we reach out to others on Earth and teach them how to love and forgive.

It was a bit of a frightening experience for me at the time, yet it was the beginning of a wonderful relationship, which led my Indian "father" and many others to know Jesus in a true, personal way. It was also the beginning of the missionary venture my parents had embarked on that night they had prayed for a way to reach the local Indians with His love. One embittered man, whose bitterness was turned to love, was a testimony that stirred the interest of many.

03. Protection and Salvation on a Vietnam Battlefield

(Note: Age recommendation: For 12-year-olds and up.)

If there was ever a time I needed Jesus, it was now under these extreme circumstances. There I was in the thick of the torturously humid, snake and mosquito-infested jungle of Vietnam taking cover behind a fallen tree from a continual stream of enemy heavy machine gun fire.

I cannot begin to describe the fear that takes hold of you when you realize that your life is probably about to end. However, oddly enough, it was my fellow soldier, taking cover beside me—not the attacking Vietcong—that I was to fear the most.

My name is Craig Lambton. In the late 60s I was a skinny 19-year-old active Christian from Oklahoma City. I somehow found myself in the thick of a war that represents a dark page in U.S. history, and that claimed countless U.S. and Vietnamese lives.

My attempt to evade the war as a conscientious objector was not only unsuccessful, but seemed to have made my life in the military even more miserable. Somehow word had gotten around that it was against my religion to kill, and that didn't sit well with one particular flag-waving fellow soldier in my platoon named Chuck.

Chuck was around the same age as I, but had about 50 pounds more muscle. He was a redheaded hulk of a fellow from Virginia, with a long military heritage and far more brawn than brains. While neither of us had been on the front lines long

enough to see any combat action, Chuck envisioned himself as the best soldier in our platoon. He often bragged about his performance during boot camp and frequently made derogatory remarks about the Vietnamese and how much he wanted to get in there and shoot some of them. Chuck's trigger finger was itching for action.

However, for the first three weeks at the base at Khe Sanh, at which we were stationed, the only action Chuck and the rest of us saw was guard duty, trench digging, and emptying the officers' latrines. I was relieved to be back at the relative safety of the base, and I used the time and opportunity to preach the Gospel to my fellow soldiers.

Most of us soldiers realized we hadn't been shipped halfway around the world to dig trenches, so no matter what we were doing, there was always an eerie, thick fog of fear surrounding us. Nearly everyone was regularly thinking about the very real possibility of death and the afterlife, so the harvest was indeed ripe. Chuck, however, seemed to have the idea that he was some self-styled super-soldier who had come to win the war single-handedly. He hated the fact that I was constantly talking about Jesus, because when he wasn't meticulously cleaning his gun or practicing at the firing range, he was usually going from person to person boasting about his abilities and describing in alarming detail his supposed future military exploits.

As you can probably imagine, no one really liked Chuck, and more and more soldiers started to ignore him or even leave the area whenever he arrived. It took some time, but eventually he began to realize he wasn't the great role model he

made himself out to be. Consequently, he decided to blame me and my witnessing for his supposed fall from fame.

Chuck would often mock me publicly and call me names like "Mommy's boy," "Jesus freak," and a lot worse, which I won't repeat here—whatever he could do to make me look like a coward or child. Initially I tried to bring Chuck to Christ, but each time I was met with mockery and some foul expressions of his disdain for me and my religion. It seemed that each attempt to witness to him would infuriate him further, so I eventually decided to ignore him for the most part. Finally, almost three weeks into our stay at the base, Chuck did something that greatly alarmed me. He walked up to me out of nowhere in his usual full fatigue, perfectly polished boots, holding his shiny M16 rifle. Looking me straight in the eyes, he quietly but angrily said, "Hey, Jesus freak, you think Jesus is going to save you when we're out on the front lines together? When it's just you and me out there, it's not Charlie [the Vietcong] you'll have to worry about, it's me." He then put his face no more than an inch from mine, slowly removed the safety on his weapon and whispered, "You're mine, Jesus boy." Before I could say a word he had turned and walked away.

Now, I normally would have ignored Chuck and his boasting, but in that case there was no doubt in my mind he was dead serious. The more I thought about it, the more fear began to take hold of me. That night as I lay in bed in my small, dank bunker, I spent over an hour in prayer asking Christ to give me His promised "peace that passes all understanding." I wasn't even exactly sure what that meant, but whatever it was, it sounded like something I needed. I eventually was able to fall asleep reading passages from the Book of Psalms.

The next thing I knew I was awakened by a sharp pain in my side. I opened my eyes to see none other than Chuck with a great big, gleeful grin on his face. “Wake up, baby doll, it’s your mommy coming to see you off to school,” he said sarcastically as he continued poking my gut with the muzzle of his rifle. “Come on, get out of bed,” he said, punctuating his words with some profanities as usual. “We’re finally going on a recon mission and it might get ugly. It’s time to go hunting!” Chuck cackled and exited the bunker.

I once again felt the grip of fear, and it seemed like I needed at least another hour of prayer to even just survive the day. However, I knew I only had a few seconds to fall into line, so as I suited myself and checked my weapon, I prayed with more desperation than I ever had in my life. I begged the Lord for His protection, but also told Him that if it was His will, I was ready to see His face in Heaven. I don’t know if I honestly felt ready, but it seemed to help to express it by faith.

After a short briefing, Chuck, myself, and several others were sent through the thick jungle, led by a seasoned field commander whom we just called “Sarge.” Our mission was to investigate reports of a possible small enemy entrenchment only a few miles from the base, apparently spotted by aerial reconnaissance. Our orders were to investigate the situation and ascertain the enemy’s strength. We were to engage if the enemy force was a manageable size, so I knew the possibility of combat was very real. I also knew the last thing I wanted to do was to kill, so I had no idea what was going to happen in a situation where I would be faced with the need to defend myself, or if I would be ordered to open fire. I decided not to dwell on it for now and asked God to give me the strength and wisdom I needed. As we quietly and nervously trudged through the mud, swamps, and dense foliage, I continually fought to occupy my mind with thoughts of prayer and trust in my

Lord, and to claim the few scriptures I knew from His Word. However, I felt like my mind was constantly defending itself from an unrelenting siege of panic attacks, worry, and other fear-related emotions, and the struggle was intense. To make matters worse, every so often Chuck would let me know I was still on his mind. He would occasionally jab my back with his muzzle, intentionally knock me forward as he passed me by, and once he looked back at me and pointed in my direction, as if to say, "You're mine!" Again, all I could do was fill my mind with anything I could muster from my Christian upbringing.

Then suddenly our team leader motioned for us to halt and lower to a less conspicuous crouch. He had obviously spotted something in the distance and was peering through his binoculars, and we were eager for some details. "There's an enemy encampment alright," he whispered, "but it looks like we're outnumbered at least ten to one." There were a few moments of intense, uneasy silence as we waited for the verdict, "We'll return to base and report."

I sighed with relief, and everyone else seemed to be relieved as well. Well, almost everyone. Chuck was crouched only about two feet to my right, and I could hear him muttering unintelligible profanities under his breath. The action he craved was finally within his grasp, and he was obviously terribly disappointed to be returning home.

"Sarge!" he said, a bit too loudly in protest. "This is ridiculous! I don't care how many rice-eating, gun-toting runts there are out there, we're the best of the best, and I know we can take'm!" Sarge shook his head a little, told Chuck to shut up, and then proceeded to ignore his continued insistence. He then whispered firmly, "Okay, men, let's move out, we're returning to..."

Before Sarge could complete his sentence, a bullet came out of nowhere and sent him flying backwards, crashing to the ground. Immediately, all hell broke loose with a hail of enemy gunfire, and two others seemed to be hit as well. We all flew to the ground landing in the wet mud to avoid the machine gun fire.

Mass confusion ensued with men around me yelling and screaming orders to each other or crying out in pain. Others were panicking and crawling aimlessly through the grass or blindly opening fire in the general direction from which they thought we were being attacked.

I was personally in a state of confusion, but for some reason the fear of personal death or injury seemed to be taking a back burner as I began to move in the direction of where I thought Sarge had landed. However, at ground level I was almost completely blinded by the tall grass. I was fairly sure I heard him bark out some orders, and though I couldn't make out what they were in the midst of the confusion, at least I was pretty confident he was alive.

I slid around on my belly trying to find Sarge, or anyone, really, but all I could see was grass and the glare of a muzzle flash in the early morning jungle darkness. There was no way I was going to stick my head up, so I just began to crawl with no real direction in mind.

I crawled for several minutes and finally found my way to a large fallen tree, which provided me with more cover, and where I could hopefully get a grip on myself and figure out what to do next. I was no longer under direct fire, so I assumed I must have crawled quite far from our original location, but the foliage was so dense and the grass so high, I couldn't tell where I was or how far I was from the location of the ambush.

Then, to my surprise, I discovered I was not alone. Chuck had found the same tree and was sitting in the grass, noticeably in pain, and definitely scared out of his wits. His eyes were wide and his arms and legs were shaking furiously, either from fear or from the pain of the bullet wound in his right leg, which was oozing blood.

In that desperate situation our differences back at camp barely crossed my mind, and it seemed it was the same for Chuck, who was in a state of immobile shock and panic. All around was the horrifying sound of war: gunfire, distant explosions, and unintelligible screams.

“I think it’s an ambush!” Chuck exclaimed. I guess he didn’t know what else to say. “What the hell are we going to do?! I’m going to die!”

“I don’t know,” I whispered back, “but you’re going to be okay. Your wounds don’t appear to be life-threatening.” I really, truly had no idea what we were going to do or if we were going to come out of this alive. It seemed our group was pinned down and I knew from my training that the enemy was most likely suppressing our positions in preparation for an assault. I was fearful, but I saw it was pointless to give in to fear, and instead pulled out some bandages and set my mind to tending to Chuck’s wound.

It wasn’t long before we were surprised and shaken by a deafening explosion—then another, and another. The sound was artillery, most likely called by our squad mates to help defend them against the ambush. After several horrifying, earsplitting, earthshaking explosions the gunfire all but stopped.

We paused for a while and listened. All we could hear were sporadic rifle bursts, and a few voices and footsteps in the far distance.

Eventually I figured we were safe enough to start making our way back to our buddies. I slowly poked my head around the right side of the tree and motioned to Chuck that the coast was clear, but he just sat there staring into the sky. “Are you okay, Chuck?” I said quietly, but there was no answer. “Chuck?”

After a few moments of silence, Chuck turned his head towards me, and slowly pointed his rifle in my direction without saying a word. His hands were shaking wildly, but I knew there was no escape at such a close range, and my weapon was not at the ready, so it was too late to think of defending myself, even if I wanted to.

Here we were, completely isolated and alone at the end of a fierce battle—exactly the opportunity Chuck had been waiting for, and there was nothing to stop him from killing me. His shaking right finger lightly caressed the trigger and he was staring straight at me with no expression at all. I knew it was just a matter of seconds.

Now, I don’t know how many of you readers have ever had a gun pointed directly at you, but there’s hardly anything more fear inducing. I was so damn scared at that moment I could hardly compose a cohesive thought. My mind searched for words of prayer but none could be found, much less a scripture. The only word that came to mind happened to be the most important one, and that has enough power on its own to fell all the demons of Hell—Jesus!

As I waited for imminent death, I just repeated the word Jesus in my mind over and over again, and then I began to say His Name out loud. Eventually, though in

the space of only a few short seconds, I began to see images in my mind of Jesus' Own face. I felt as if I had already died and was meeting my Savior.

At once I completely lost any sensation of fear, and finally understood with perfect clarity what it means to have "peace that passes all understanding." I had no idea why I felt such peace—it was way beyond the understanding of my earthly mind—but I know I had it, and I was truly happy and ready to meet my Savior. I know now that this is exactly how the martyrs of old felt as they were fed to the lions, or how Joan of Arc felt as she went to her death at the stake, and how so many other Christians felt as they gave their lives for Jesus.

Then I felt something I hadn't expected: sadness. Not sadness because of my own certain death, but sadness that I may never have the opportunity to bring Chuck to Jesus. I knew Chuck was a potential child of God, and if he would just call on Jesus, he would be forgiven all his sins and enter into the Kingdom of God. This must be how Jesus felt on the cross. In spite of unfathomable agony, He cared about the salvation of the dying thief and He forgave even those who crucified Him.

All of this went through my mind in a very short time—probably less than 15 seconds—when I actually began to wonder what was taking Chuck so long. My heart was right with the Lord and I was even eager to see Him. Then I noticed something I would never have imagined I would one day see: a tear running down Chuck's cheek.

He didn't say a word, but slowly lowered his weapon and placed it on his lap. He began to weep like a child, and though he communicated nothing to me verbally,

I knew he was ready to receive his Savior. I slowly crawled over to him, put my hand on his shoulder and told him all he had to do was call on the Name of Jesus and he would be saved. He sobbed for a few moments and then began to say, “Jesus.” He said it again, and again, and again—each time with more meaning and passion than the time before.

Although we sat there in the wake of a furious battle, I knew the real battle had been won in the realm of the spirit. I knew both Chuck and I had called on the Name of the Lord and had been saved.

The End

04. The Story of Joham de Silva and Nkuma

Interesting! I'm flying high above the Earth. I'm with someone, but I'm not sure who it is.

"What's your name?"

"Meu nome é Martin de Silva. I am Martin de Silva."

At first it looked like we were flying towards the continent of South America, but then I realized that it was Africa. I'm not familiar with things here, but I get the name Mozambique.

"Is this your country, Martin?"

"I was born here in the year of our Lord, 1684. My parents were Joham de Silva and Nkuma, a native of our homeland. Father had come to this land as a mercenary, hired by the Portuguese to round up slaves for labor. My mother was the daughter of a tribal chief of the Ntibi tribe.

But my story does not begin with my birth, for many things came before this. The first Portuguese to reach the lands of the Ntibi were not mercenaries, but missionaries. There were few who came to Africa for anything but gold and diamonds, ivory and treasures, but these ones reached the land of my forefathers. The Ntibi had never seen white men and were open to the Gospel, abandoning their demon worship and taking on the mind of Christ joyfully. My mother grew up in the house of these vessels of the Lord who taught her to love Jesus and others. The Ntibi were not wise to the ways of the outside world, which crept closer to their areas day by day.

When my mother was only 14, the white men descended on their village. The missionaries did what they could to try to stop the mercenaries from destroying the village and carrying away the men and boys to be slaves, but were killed as they strove to protect the people they had come to save.

At first my mother was herded into a pen for cows with the other women and children of the village, but when it was discovered that she could speak the language of the Portuguese, she too was taken as a slave. For days they were marched mercilessly through the jungles and grasslands till they reached a large settlement.

Unknown to my mother, one of the mercenaries had watched her closely from the time they left the village. He had been fascinated by the calm and peace which pervaded this woman. In spite of her plight and the probable death soon awaiting her, she had such strength that he couldn't help but admire her. Each night on the journey he had placed guards close enough to her to make sure no one would bother her and no wild beasts could carry her off in the night.

He didn't know of God. He had been raised in a home where war and money were the only things that were respected and had run away at a young age to pursue his dreams of becoming wealthy and powerful.

Each night he would see her crouched and praying to her God. She would often weep at these times, but never for long, because she would soon be filled with something ... he couldn't tell what, but he could almost feel it surrounding her. She would become calm and even begin to smile. He longed to know what could

do that to someone in such a state. He'd never found much reason to smile unless it was the thought of gold or a pretty girl, both of which seemed to elude him. When they reached the settlement, Joham approached his captain to ask if he could purchase the girl.

"Ah, Joham! So you need a bedmate, do you?" Joham laughed but said nothing. After a moment of calculating, the commander said in a bored voice, "I guess you might as well have her for two silver coins. She probably wouldn't survive the trek to the coast anyway, and she's cheap enough that you can have your fun with her and then get rid of her. I don't want to charge you too much or you might try to drag her along with you when you leave. Just be sure when you're through with her to dump her in the pit."

Joham had other plans that had been hatching in his head throughout the trek to the encampment, but he knew better than to say anything about leaving the troops he was stationed with. To abandon your position was punishable by death. That night, Joham had his new possession brought to his room. The frightened girl dropped to her knees as the door closed behind her. Again the weeping and strange words began, and again they were followed by that intangible power that seemed to bring stillness to the whole room.

"I want to help you," Joham managed to get out. He was so overwhelmed by what was going on before him that he was unable to think of anything more to say for several moments. Then Nkuma looked up into his eyes. He had never seen such a thing! Her eyes seemed to almost glow!

“Are you a witch?” Joham stammered, having second thoughts about the plan he had thought was so good only moments before.

“No,” said Nkuma, getting to her feet. “But I have One Who protects me and cares for me. He is the One your people call Jesus.”

“No, this is impossible. The one they call Jesus is a monster, a brutal god who destroys and burns those who don’t do his every bidding. How could he be out here in the jungles of Africa? He is not the one you know. I saw the peace that surrounds you when you speak to your God, and I have never seen such a thing before in those who say they follow this Jesus,” shouted Joham, his voice a bit shaky at the thought that this Jesus he’d heard stories of as a child could have somehow reached this remote place.

“I don’t know what you have seen, sir, but the ones who brought Jesus to my people are His servants—were His servants—and they taught us of a God Who is kind and merciful and loving. They taught us to live as He lived and to reward evil with good and hatred with love. He is real, and I know this each time I come to Him with my heart bursting from the sorrows of the things I have seen. He takes the pain and replaces it with a peace that nothing can destroy.”

Suddenly, a lifetime of greed and hatred, violence and selfishness became empty and hollow. Joham searched through the ruins of what had at best been a life of survival and getting from one day to the next, hoping to find some shred of purpose, some moment of worth. As the full reality of how pointless and futile his existence was suddenly came crashing into his consciousness, he found himself gazing into Nkuma’s eyes. It was as though everything in her life had meaning,

even joy. Maybe there was something more. Maybe he still had a chance to find something of value.

Then in a moment, the thought of such possible joy was shattered. He'd been responsible for the deaths of those very ones who'd brought this life of hope to Nkuma. No God, not even this forgiving, joy-filled God, Whoever He was, could forgive him for that. He had nothing to offer to appease this God. He had no riches, no power, no good deeds.

"It's hopeless. This Jesus of yours can give you peace, but He could never forgive the things I've done." Joham sat down hard on the cot, his face buried in his hands.

"But you're wrong, sir. I know."

Joham jerked to attention at those words. They were so filled with conviction.

"How can you know?" he whispered in disbelief, but hoping against hope that it could be.

Nkuma was silent for a moment. "Before Isabella died," she managed to say, broken with tears, "as she lay in my arms, it was as though she didn't even feel the pain. She smiled and told me that Jesus had forgiven you. She pointed you out to me, and she said I was to let you know of His forgiveness and love for you in spite of what you did. She told me that I would know when the time was right to tell you of this. Then she died."

Nkuma couldn't hold it back any longer, and she broke into uncontrollable sobbing. "She was like a mother to me!"

Joham had never felt the slightest twinge of guilt or caring for anyone up to that moment, but a lifetime of remorse flooded over him, and he put his arms around Nkuma, weeping and begging her to forgive him.

Late into the night they sat holding each other, as Nkuma told Joham everything she had learned from the missionaries. As dawn began to rise, Joham cried out to Jesus to take his life and use it to help undo the wrongs he'd done, and to bring hope and joy where he'd so long sown pain and sorrow.

"I have to find a way to make things right for your people," Joham spoke slowly, but he hardly recognized his own voice. A calmness and conviction had entered it. "We have to leave quickly before daylight. I think I have a plan, but we have to hurry."

They walked quietly into the dusky hues of the first touches of the dawn. As they reached the gate to the settlement, Joham whispered into Nkuma's ear, "I'm sorry to have to do this, but it's the only way." He then roughly tied a rope around her wrists and grabbing her hair with one hand and her wrists with the other, he strode to the gate.

The guards on duty sleepily looked up as he approached.

"Done with her already, Joham? Couldn't even let her sleep before she dies, eh?" One said with a chuckle. "Why not leave her here with us for a while. We'll get rid of her when we're done."

"Sorry, captain's orders were to get rid of her when I'm through, and if you two decided she was good enough to keep around, he'd have my head," he said,

throwing her roughly to the ground. “Now open that gate before I decide to get rid of her here and now and you’ll have to clean up the mess. I’m tired and need to get some sleep before we move on today!”

Joham’s snarling tone snapped the two guards to attention as they quickly fumbled with the heavy bar, opening the one gate just enough to let them through. Joham spun around and in an angry tone ordered one of the guards, “This one has worn me out; we haven’t stopped all night. I’m going to have to ride to the pit. Get my horse.”

The guards were not accustomed to being ordered about, but they knew better than to cross one of these mercenaries. Too many guards with big mouths were later found dead in the morning after having insulted one of them. The guard said nothing but scurried off to get the horse.

“And where is the great Joham heading next?” quizzed the other guard hoping to quell the obviously bad-tempered mercenary before him. “Will you head back into the jungles with the next band to round up more slaves? You must have been well paid with such a large number of slaves in this trip. Or will you take them to the coast and spend some time where the fun is to be had?”

Joham was getting nervous. Every moment spent at the gate increased the danger that the captain could come out. He would not be as easily cowed as these guards, and any suspicion could make their escape impossible. His eyes betrayed nothing of the turmoil inside and never wavered from the icy stare held on the guard until the horse’s hooves could be heard on the soft dirt next to him.

He quickly tied Nkuma's wrists to one end of a long rope and wrapped the other end around the horn of the saddle. "If you hear her screams, don't be surprised—she's a fiery devil."

The guards laughed; their hideous rotten teeth made their cynical cackles even more grotesque. Joham mounted the horse, and trying to appear casual, he held the reins as tightly as he could to ensure the horse wouldn't move at more than a slow walk.

Nkuma, dazed and confused at the sudden change in Joham, stumbled dejectedly after the horse towards she knew not what. As the gate swung shut, Joham could hear the voice of the captain approaching the gate. He pretended not to notice, but inside he was pleading. Jesus, if You really are the One Who gave me this plan and you want Nkuma to be safe, then make us invisible to the captain. The gruff voice could be heard questioning the guards as to who just went out the gate at this time of the morning. "Look for yourself!" muttered one of the guards. "It was just one of your mercenaries, dumping his whore from the night." "You drunken idiot!" cursed the captain. "There's no one out there! You're dreaming again and leaving the gate open. I'll have you put in the stockade if I catch you drinking on duty again. Now get back to work and close that gate!" As the jungle closed around the pair, Joham leapt from the horse and quickly untied Nkuma's wrists, begging her to forgive him for being so rough with her. He swept her into his arms and set her on the horse before leaping on himself. Instantly the horse bolted into the jungle in a desperate bid for time and distance as the sun's first rays filled the sky.

“Eh, where’s Joham? Still sleeping after his escapade last night?” laughed the other members of his band, as they prepared their horses for the long ride to the coast. “I’d better dump him out of bed or the captain will charge us for an extra night’s lodging,” chided another, as he approached Joham’s room and pounded loudly on the door. “Get up, Joham, before we miss the cool of the day. I don’t want to bake to death on the plains before we reach the next encampment.”

“Better throw some water on him, Armando, or we’ll be here all day.” The man grabbed a bucket of water by the door, and kicking the door with all his might, he walked inside. A moment later he returned looking confused. “He’s not here!” he shouted in disbelief, the bucket hanging limply at his side.

“You don’t think he got carried away and ran off with that woman, do you?” another shouted.

“Shut up, Gui!” Armando snapped, looking worried. He liked Joham and the last thing he wanted was to have to hunt him down and kill him for desertion.

But it was too late. The captain was standing just behind Armando, and cursed angrily, “I knew I shouldn’t have trusted Joham with that girl. Men! You know your orders. Deserters are to be hunted down and shot on sight. Don’t return till you are carrying his body with you—and that girl too if she’s with him.”

“But captain—the slaves!” Armando reasoned, a twinkle in his eye. He knew only one thing was more important to the captain than justice for deserters, and that was money. “Each day they have to stay here waiting for us to return means that many less of them survive to be sold. Maybe we can take them to the coast, and then search out Joham when we return.”

The captain pondered the dilemma silently for a moment. “All right! I guess we don’t have much choice,” he said, frustrated that his plan had to give way to the more important work at hand. “But when you return, you’ll have to search till you find him just the same.”

A little relieved, the men began chaining up the slaves into groups to be herded down the narrow path, through five miles of jungle, and out onto the plain where they would have to endure the heat for two days before reaching the coast.

“How many do you think will survive this time?” one of the men quipped as they rode slowly through the lush jungle. “I wager we’ll lose 20 percent—that’s 40 of them—before we reach the coast.” “I’ll wager 45!” another chimed in. “It’s nearly the heat of summer. They’ll be dropping like flies.”

Armando was too engrossed in thought to join in on the conversation. This was the part of the journey he hated most. It seemed so wasteful to lose so many slaves, and deep inside he struggled with more and more questions about this way of life. He’d followed Joham over the last two years into many places and through many adventures. His sudden disappearance was not like him, and Armando’s mind was in turmoil over what could have made him do such a crazy thing. A girl, especially a black girl, wasn’t worth the price he’d have to pay. It had to be something more.

Joham had confided in him once about the nightmares he often had. He could see the faces of so many whose lives he’d caused to be cut short and they seemed to come back to haunt and torment him in the night. Had he finally gone mad from the nightmares and run off into the jungle? He wished he could somehow find

him and help him before the others found him. He knew they had no choice but to kill him or their own lives would be at risk.

Armando's thoughts were interrupted for a moment by a flash in the dense jungle that surrounded them. It was so quick that he couldn't tell if it was his imagination, but for a fleeting second he thought he saw Joham looking at him. Then he was gone.

My mind is playing tricks on me. I'm thinking about him too much, he concluded, pushing the thought from his mind. Joham was far away by now. He'd never be stupid enough to have come to where he knew they'd be going with the slaves. The events of the morning had cost them precious time, and the day was beginning to wane as they came close to the edge of the jungle. The plains spread out in a vast panorama below them, and in the distance a trace of the sea could just be seen on the horizon.

"We'd better camp here tonight. It's easier to build fires to surround the camp here where there's plenty of wood," the leader of the band said wearily as he slowly dismounted his horse. "Set up camp."

The men built a circle of small fires in the clearing. Then tied the horses in another circle just inside the fires. Then the men laid their bedrolls down in a circle inside the horses and corralled the slaves in the middle. Staking their chains to the ground.

"Can't have any of our precious cargo getting lost now, can we?" said one of the men as he pounded the stake deep into the ground. The men ate and bedded

down as the sun sank behind the hills. There would be plenty of entertainment and plenty of money to enjoy it with when they reached the coast. The next two days would be grueling, but each was focused on those beautiful women waiting to take their money when they reached them. All, that is, except Armando. His thoughts kept coming back to Joham. He had to understand. Peace refused to come, and as the hours passed, Armando could do little better than doze in and out of a restless half sleep.

He hadn't heard a sound. Not a horse had stirred. No, but suddenly he felt someone's presence. Sitting bolt upright he found himself face to face with Joham! "What are you doing here?" he said in a low whisper. "They'll kill you!" "Don't worry!" Joham said with a grin. He looked like Joham but something was different. He was changed. "I need your help, Armando. We're taking the slaves back to their homes. Will you help us?" Joham's eyes glowed with a light Armando had never seen before. He was mesmerized for a moment by it. "You're crazy! They'll kill you before you can take up the first stake! And they'll kill the slaves too if they run, and me if they see me talking to you!" "Look for yourself, Armando. See the miracle that Jesus has already done. Will you come with us?"

Armando turned to look at the center of the camp, and to his shock and horror there wasn't a single slave there. The stakes were in place, and the ropes were still tied to them—but not a slave in sight.

"It's too much to explain now, but Jesus told me he needed you to help Nkuma and me to take them back to their village. Will you help us?"

Joham's eyes held such peace that Armando found himself following behind him as he walked calmly through the circle of sleeping men and then through the circle of horses without a stirring or sound. As they reached the edge of the camp, Joham turned, and with a strange look on his face said to Armando, "Whatever happens to me, you have to get Nkuma and the others back to their village. God will go with you and you'll make it there safely. He told me so. Now run! That way! They're waiting for you!"

Armando seemed driven by something beyond himself as he began running through the dark jungle. As he ran, he heard shouts and turned to see three of the men from the band standing with their guns aimed at something. Then he saw Joham standing beneath a large tree in the line of fire. Before they could shoot, a huge tiger appeared out of nowhere and leapt on all three of the men. The chaos that ensued sent the rest of the band scrambling for their weapons, and within a moment the tiger lay dead beside the body of one of the men. Suddenly another tiger leapt from a tree near Joham, and before anyone could move, it had grabbed and dragged him into the jungle.

Armando was frozen with fear at what had just happened before his eyes. The men hadn't seen him in the jungle. He didn't know why, but he knew he had to run, and after a few desperate moments, he found himself in a small clearing surrounded by the slaves.

As they surrounded him, their eyes were filled with fury, and he was sure his life was over. He fell to his knees expecting a blow to the head at any second that would end it all, but silence was all that filled the air. As he looked up, before him

stood a beautiful woman. Her eyes weren't filled with anger or hatred but only sadness.

"I am Nkuma ... where is Joham?" The horror of the scene returned in a flood and his confused mind was overwhelmed with it all.

"He ... he was standing in plain sight of the camp when the men were about to shoot him, but a tiger attacked the men. Then another tiger attacked Joham, and dragged his body into the jungle!" Nkuma dropped to her knees. No words or sounds could express the pain that wrenched her heart.

"Then he is with Jesus," she spoke softly. "Nothing more can be done. We must go on. Joham said that whatever happens we must get my people back to their village. Will you help me? Joham went back to get you. He said you were a good man, and that Jesus had told him you would help us. I don't know this place, but you can lead us to our mountains. There will be time to grieve for Joham when my people are safe, but now we must go."

In the camp, the pandemonium began to calm. Pedro had been closest to the beast when it attacked. His body lay in a heap next to the dead tiger. No one had heard anything until the three men had shouted, followed seconds later by their shrieks of terror as the tiger had pounced on them out of nowhere. Paulo sat near his horse as several struggled to stop the bleeding from his wounded arm.

"What happened?" questioned Joao, the leader of the band of men.

"I woke up suddenly! There, about a hundred feet away stood Joham! I'm sure it was him! I pulled my musket as I shouted for help, and Pedro and his brother

jumped up and we were about to shoot Joham, who just stood there as if he was waiting for us to fire. Then, I don't know. There was a roar and a huge tiger was on top of me! Then I looked up and another tiger was leaping from the tree by Joham. He landed right on him and a moment later dragged his body into the woods. I'm sure he was dead. He was limp as the tiger dragged him away."

"What do we do about the slaves?" questioned another. "How did they escape? It's as though they just vanished. The stakes and ropes are all still there and the chains are tied to them. The shackles are not even open!"

"It's some kind of black magic! Let's get out of here!" one of the men shouted as the others began to fidget, nervously looking about.

Joao laughed loudly. "So you want to return to the captain and tell him someone just spirited the slaves away in the middle of the night? He'd have us all executed on the spot! Calm down. It's no use to search in the jungle in the dark for them. At first light we'll break into teams and find them. We have to recapture them and take them to the coast. No killing if you can help it—we'll lose enough on the plains without killing more than we have to here. Now finish bandaging up the men, cover the body with a blanket, and we'll bury him in the morning. Back to bed. That tiger has had his meal and he won't be back tonight."

No one slept that night. Several times a deep roar from the jungle sent the horses and men into huddled groups, whispering their versions of what was happening to each other, but none could have imagined what had actually occurred in the jungle that night or how it would affect many lives.

Morning found the weary band of slaves still walking. Armando had done his best to head them in the right direction, though he'd never had to travel the jungle in

the dark and everything looked strange and different. Several times Nkuma had paused, gone off for a few moments on her own, only to return and suggest they turn in a certain direction. Armando couldn't understand what she was doing but felt compelled to listen to her, even when it seemed the wrong choice.

As the first rays of light penetrated the jungle she once again left the group. Armando, unable to resist any longer, quietly followed her into the jungle. He watched in amazement as she dropped to her knees and began praying. Armando had been raised by an aunt who had taught him a little about prayer as a child. He'd loved her dearly and had tried his best to follow her example. But when he was 14, his aunt had died, and his grief had turned to bitterness against such a God who would abandon a young lad by stripping away the only loved one he could remember. He decided there was no God and turned away from anything to do with Him.

Now he was faced with someone who seemed to have found reality in some god, but he was torn between his bitterness and the desperation he felt over all the impossible things he'd been through in the last hours. Nkuma turned suddenly, and seeing him standing there staring at her, reached out her hand to him. He found himself drawn and knelt down at her side.

"I don't think I would know where to begin," he stammered. I haven't done this since I was a child." Nkuma looked deep into his eyes and said, "Just open your heart. Isabella taught me to just open my heart and let Him take out whatever He doesn't want there and put in its place what He wants me to understand."

It all seemed so simple when she said it, and he began to understand that what he'd felt before as a child had been the Lord doing just that. "What do I say? We always said prayers, but I don't remember them," he said, feeling embarrassed to be kneeling there.

"You don't have to say anything unless the words come from your heart."

Armando closed his eyes, and it was as though a flood of water were pouring through him, washing away all the confusion, anxiety, pain and horror of last night. Then a warmth enveloped him and he felt more at peace than he'd ever felt before. It didn't seem to matter that he was out in the jungle with hundreds of runaway African slaves. It didn't seem to make any difference that if the men from his band found them, which they probably would, he'd be killed without question. Nothing seemed to be important but the love and acceptance he was experiencing at that moment.

The minutes passed and Armando returned to the reality around him. "We have to be moving soon. They'll be searching the jungle for us on horseback, and they can cover much more area than we can. They won't stop till they find us. It's their necks if they don't."

But Nkuma said, "Wait, it's not time to move. It's time to sit still. I feel it. But we must return to my people at once. They need us in their midst to encourage their faith for what is about to happen."

Back at the camp the men slowly packed their belongings. No one had noticed that Armando's bedding was still there but he was nowhere to be seen. When someone did, the men again began to look warily around. Joao wasn't as calm as the night before. The nervousness of the men was getting to him and the news

that Armando was now missing almost broke the surface cool he was desperately trying to maintain.

“He was Joham’s friend, wasn’t he?” he asked. “Maybe this is some sort of plan they hatched to steal the slaves and take the money for themselves!” His courage was beginning to return. “Break up into groups of four and head out in all directions. They’re on foot so we can overtake them easily. Return here by dusk. We’ll have a party to celebrate their return and deal with Armando and Joham then.”

“But I saw Joham killed by that tiger! He couldn’t have faked that,” Paolo repeated.

“Well, we’ll deal with his partner in crime, Armando. He’ll wish he’d never tried to cheat us!”

The men’s courage rallied and they broke off in groups heading in all directions to find Armando and the slaves.

It wasn’t as simple as they had imagined, as no tracks were found, but each imagining the others to be hot on their trail continued their search on horseback. After several hours, one group thought they heard talking in the distance. Excitedly they broke into a gallop, certain they’d found the several hundred slaves. As they drew closer they could hear their voices, but as they came into a large clearing where they were sure they would be, there was nothing. Not a hint of their having been there. Not a sound to be heard. Confused by this sudden turn of events the men looked at each other uneasily.

“I don’t think they could have gone further than we’ve come,” said one.

“I thought I heard something before, but maybe it was just my imagination...” spoke another nervously. “I don’t like this place for some reason. Something isn’t right here. I think we should head back. They probably already have the slaves back in camp and we’re just wasting our time.”

All four turned and left the clearing the way they’d come, looking back over their shoulders half expecting to see something and hoping, whatever it was, that they wouldn’t. The camp was a dreary place that night as all the teams returned to find that none had found the slaves.

“We can’t go back,” one said. “The captain will have us jailed at the least and probably executed.”

Joao knew he was right. “Well, I think it’s time for some hard decisions. Maybe a new colony? Maybe the New World or Brazil? We’ll have to spread out and disappear quietly, but at least it’ll be several weeks before the captain will realize what has happened, and by then we can be well on our way to new lives and new names. Tomorrow morning we break camp and head for the coast. Good luck to you all.”

Nkuma and Armando had walked quietly back to the clearing where the Ntibi men were resting, exhausted after the long night of walking. Nkuma’s heart was so full of the miracles she’d seen in the last 24 hours that nothing seemed impossible at this point. When she and Joham had followed the band of men as they traveled to the edge of the jungle, their only desperate thought was to find a way to free the slaves. As night had fallen they had watched from a nearby tree as the men settled down for the night.

They'd sought their Savior for guidance but He had simply told them to walk into the camp, and He would do what they couldn't do. As they crept towards the camp as quietly as they could, it seemed an impossible situation. The horses would pick up their scent any second and begin neighing and shuffling about. But as they came to the edge of the fires, nothing moved. No sound could be heard but the snoring of the men.

They stepped into the camp and walked past the sleeping men until they reached the slaves. As they gently woke them, one cried out in fear, and for a moment it seemed that all was lost. But as they all looked around in wonder, not one of the men had stirred, not a horse had moved.

As the slaves stood up, they saw their shackles laid on the ground beside their legs, as though someone had carefully removed them, closed them, and placed them neatly on the ground. Within minutes all were in the jungle clearing a few hundred meters from the camp. It all seemed so happy and perfect.

Nkuma's heart was filled with joy as she hugged Joham. "We're safe! We can get away. Our God has saved us," she whispered in his ear.

"It isn't finished yet," Joham said quietly. "They won't give up hunting for me. I have something I have to do. I don't know what is going to happen, but the Lord's voice said I had to finish what I started. There is a man, a good man. He's a friend and can be trusted. I'm going to bring him to you and he's going to get you to your village.

"Whatever happens, go with him quickly when he comes, and don't wait for anything. I'll always be with you—never doubt that! I've never loved someone

before in my whole life, but I've learned today what love is like and I'll always be there at your side."

Then he vanished into the jungle. Somehow she felt she'd never see him again in this life, and for a time the tears flowed, but they were replaced by the need to bring her people to safety. The sounds of shouting, gunfire, and someone running from the direction of the camp into the clearing had then begun the course of events that had brought them to this clearing.

Now, as they returned from their prayer into the clearing, all eyes were fixed on them. Nkuma spoke in her native tongue to her people, and gasps of despair seemed to flow through the group. But as she continued, a silent resolution and faith seemed to fill the place. She turned to Armando and said, "It's time to pray. Kneel here beside me in the center of the clearing where all can see us. The Lord said to remain silent and watch His mighty hand of deliverance rest on His people."

As they fell to their knees, the sound of horses could be heard galloping closer. Suddenly, four horses burst into the clearing. The men were part of the band who'd been taking them as slaves to be sold. The men stopped as soon as they entered the clearing. Their looks were ones of surprise and confusion. One horse walked slowly to within inches of the two kneeling in the middle but seemed to be oblivious of them.

The Ntibi men sat in stunned silence barely daring to breathe as the four horses walked slowly around the clearing, apparently looking straight at them but seeming to look straight through them. One dismounted and began searching the

ground for anything to show they'd been there but as the men looked at one another they seemed to grow uneasy, and after several minutes left the clearing as though there had been no one there.

Nkuma and Armando knelt in silence for several minutes, hardly able to believe what had just happened. Then they burst into shouts of joy for the miracle they'd just seen.

That night as Nkuma lay quietly weeping, feeling the loss of Joham more sharply than she could bear, she saw a picture of herself back in the village. She was walking through the center of the village with four beautiful children surrounding her. Suddenly the children left her side and ran joyfully into the arms of another. To her dumbfounded amazement, it was Joham! "But how can this be possible?" she asked the One she'd come to trust in every way.

Just then she heard a movement nearby. She sat up quickly to see a huge tiger standing a few feet away, his eyes glowing in the dark night air. "Am I to join Joham this night in Heaven?" she whispered, afraid to move. "I hope not!" came a voice from the darkness. "I'm not quite there yet!" came the voice again as Joham stepped closer, his face reflecting the moonlight.

"How? When? You can't be! Armando saw the tiger drag you into the jungle. You're dead, but you're here! I can't understand." The words jumbled together as he threw his arms around her. The tiger gave a low growl and they both turned to look at the magnificent creature as it slowly turned and vanished into the jungle. "When that huge creature leapt on me I thought I was dead for sure too. It pinned me to the ground with a paw on each shoulder and shook its head furiously. Then it grabbed me by the shoulder of my vest and dragged me into the jungle. I didn't

know if it meant to make me a meal for its young, or what, so I tried to play dead. I couldn't understand why it hadn't killed me, hadn't even hurt me at all.

“As it dragged me deeper into the jungle, it walked slower and slower until it stopped by a cave. It released its grip on me and with a roar it walked away. I went to the cave but it was empty. I was exhausted and shocked by what had happened so I lay down. A while later the tiger returned with some meat, which it laid at the mouth of the cave as if it were giving it to me. I built a small fire and cooked it and ate it. Then I slept again, and when I woke, the tiger was standing over me. Then it walked a few steps and turned as if waiting for me to follow.

“This was all too much to understand, so I followed her. At first I walked behind her, then beside her. I even placed my hand on her back at one point. We walked through the night until she led me straight to you. I don't know why Jesus has done all this for me. I'm the worst of the worst. I know that no sacrifice could ever begin to repay His kindness to me, but if you'll have me, I want to spend the rest of my life serving this God with you!”

They returned to the village where I was born, along with three sisters. My parents spent their lives traveling and telling the story of the miracle God Who could do anything to save those who love and do their best to serve Him, and even takes the worst sinners into His arms, forgives them and makes them into new creatures.

What became of Armando? He stayed for two years with us to learn all they could teach him about this wonderful Savior, and then set out to teach the true nature of Jesus to the native peoples of Brazil.

05. Testimony from Sir Matthew, Knight

“Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name!”

My name is Sir Matthew. Long ago, in the time known as the medieval ages, I was a knight in England. I always believed in God, or at least I thought I did.

My story begins when England was ruled by a very cruel king. He was unjust and was hated and feared by all. One spring day I was summoned into his throne room. As I bowed before him, I felt very uneasy. He commanded me to rise and gave me a mission.

There was a province that had rebelled against his tyrannical rule and he wanted the rebellion put down. I was known as a fearsome fighter and as a battle commander, so he decided to send me.

I marched out of the city with about 200 men following me. As we rode across the countryside, I couldn't help thinking that something was wrong with the orders I'd been given. Over the next few days, as we continued to march across the land towards the province, I continued to question within myself.

Then, one night, the unthinkable happened. A large band of robbers had come upon us and attacked during the night. I had pretty much made up my mind by then already, and when this happened, I decided that this was a good chance to leave my past behind and try to start anew, so I mounted my horse and tried to leave. But my flight was noticed and I was struck three times with arrows from their bows. I continued on until I collapsed unconscious on the ground.

The next thing I remember was waking up in a village. I was being tended to by two young girls who smiled at me as they were dressing my wounds. I asked groggily where I was. One of them answered: "You are safe in our village." I suddenly recognized the emblems they had on their clothes. They were from the village I was sent to destroy!

A man suddenly walked into the room. "I see you are awake. That is good." Just as I was about to ask him why they were helping me, he said, "I know who you are. We all do. We know why you came. But come with me and let me show you something."

I got up and he helped me walk by letting me lean on his shoulder. Everyone we met smiled and gave thanks to God for bringing me back from the edge of death. I finally turned to him and said, "Why are you doing this? I am your enemy!" He simply answered, "There are no enemies to Jesus Christ." I was astonished. "How can you love me?! I was going to destroy you! What makes you do this?" He again answered, "The love of Jesus."

I had thought I served God, but now I realized that I never had the love that they had. The doctrines of the church paled in comparison to what these humble people had. I asked, "How can I find this love?" The old man smiled kindly at me, and right there I received Christ as my Lord and Savior.

But as I got up, a man ran up to us and said, "A large band of men approach!" I realized as I got on the walls and looked out over the land that my band of men had convinced the ruthless robbers to join them in attacking the village. I noticed

the old man was praying on the ground. “God save us!” he was saying. I too prayed with all my heart.

Suddenly I felt a drop of water on my face. I looked up to see the sky dark and ominous. It began to pour rain from the sky in such amounts as I had never seen. It was so much rain that I couldn't even see the army 30 yards away from us. It rained all through the day and through the night. The next morning we looked out and there was no army. All that was there was a very, very wet valley. That was how our Lord delivered us. (End of message.)

06. Joseph and Adelaide, Puritans

“Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!”

There once was a group of us—Protestants and true believers—living in England. We wanted the freedom to believe as we wished, and not have the Scriptures filtered and distorted down to us by compromised or often politically influenced church officials. We wanted to love and serve God purely, and were known as Puritans.

Joseph and Adelaide had a small family of two and were rather well-known in a small town by the port city of Dover. They had a simple but sufficient life. Since she was of higher social standing than he, and her family was fairly wealthy, they were well known in church and in other circles.

To make a long story short, their relatives didn't so much agree with it when Joseph and Adelaide stopped going to church because they felt unfulfilled and disappointed. They were very close, and both couldn't quite take it anymore. They soon met some of us Puritans, and converted to our ways. This was the start of many difficulties for them, as they met resistance from many to their new religion. Her parents disagreed, his family kept a distance, and others started causing trouble in little and big ways.

Joseph and Adelaide's children were both very young, and the youngest was frequently sick. One day, Adelaide's parents had had enough, and with the prodding of some of the local clergy, and the willing support of other religious-minded people, they called on the authorities to have Joseph arrested and

Adelaide given a chance to renounce her faith, or at least not be open and public about it.

One of us heard about it by a miracle, and passed on the news. Through a guard, we learned that he was to be taken that night and thrown in jail, and that if she didn't cave in by morning, she and the kids would go to the locker too.

Now we knew this was serious, because even if they weren't tortured or mistreated, which was more than likely, those small kids wouldn't make it in jail. We all felt that the only way to deal with this was by escaping, so we arranged transport to Dover for them, where we had a brother working as a sailor in ships bound for the newly-discovered Americas.

They traveled that afternoon, and that went well, but apparently someone had seen them leaving, and when the officials heard about it, they immediately sent word to Dover, and a citywide alert of sorts was put out for them. That is, all guards were told to be on the lookout for them, and all inns and pubs were notified, and one or two soldiers stayed at each one in case they showed up. The first miracle was that once in Dover and with the approach of night, Joseph and Adelaide were just seeking out an inn, when as they walked up to one, they overheard some employees commenting on the soldier who was hiding at the inn, waiting for some couple of Puritans to show up. They wisely understood that it was them the soldier was looking for and never entered the inn. But now they needed someplace to stay, and didn't know anyone in Dover. The sailor they needed to get ahold of was going to meet them by a pub—only much later that night—and it wasn't even sure he'd have anything for them.

So they started walking along the streets, praying and thinking about what to do, when as they walked down a residential street of lower middle-class people, a lady opened the door of her house and invited them in out of the cold and frosty streets. She asked where they were going, and served them some hot tea. She asked if they had a place to stay, and when she heard they didn't, told them they could spend the night at her house, if they didn't mind her own two children. That night, they talked and witnessed to her, and then Joseph went out later and met up with the sailor, who told them of a ship he was on and could probably help them to board in the morning. This ship was headed west, where they could get away and start a new life. They decided to go for it, and the next morning, were able to board and leave without being seen by the guards who were posted at the docks.

... And for those who may be interested, the lady whom Joseph and Adelaide had been guests of was put in touch with the sailor, who passed on the acquaintance to others of our group, and in time she too was converted.

07. Lightning Bolts to the Rescue!

“Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!”

It was dark. The only light in the room came through a window, from the streetlight down the road outside. It was quiet, too quiet. I knew instinctively that there was danger about.

"What shall I do, Lord?" I prayed desperately.

"Use your new weapons", came the instant answer.

I immediately offered a string of praises right from my heart—praise for His protection, praise for His leading, and praise for His guidance in times of trouble. Details flooded my mind, and my heart burst with praises for the many things the Lord reminded me of.

Then I quieted down, feeling renewed faith and vision. I claimed the key of divine intervention and protection. It was at that moment that the Lord directed my attention to a car, slowly driving down the street towards me. It was like I could see and sense the people inside. They were police, and were coming for a “surprise raid.”

Our group had been targeted ever since the AC rose to power and enforced worship of his diabolical image—worship manifested by taking his mark and pledging allegiance to his system. As we and other groups had refused to do this, we were systematically being hunted down, and “eliminated.”

So, here they were, coming for us. There were more cars by now: jeeps, and police cars, and heaps of militia decked out in the latest conflict gear.

"What shall I do?" was my desperate plea.

"Stand back, and see the salvation of the Lord!" came the instant reply. All of a sudden, it was as if I was no longer in my body in the flesh, but like I was a separate spirit, viewing this from another dimension. I watched as, one by one, a series of lightning bolts came and hit each one of the vehicles before anyone had a chance to get out.

One by one, each vehicle was hit, and each person in them was instantly killed by millions of volts of heavenly lightning.

All was still, not a person moved.

"Now, flee!" came the voice, even stronger this time.

I quickly went round and woke everyone up, and within ten minutes, we had grabbed our essentials, and were driving away. The Lord led us to a new place of refuge, where we were able to make forays into the AC-controlled city, and where many were witnessed to and released from the bondage of the mark of the Beast. The AC forces never did locate us again. The Lord jammed any surveillance equipment they tried to use. They could not again find where we were. Praise the Lord!

o8. Another Endtime Whispering Vision!

(Jesus:) I love to trumpet My power and to make My cause be the one that inspires you and thrills you—so much so that you will have the greatest time in your life! You will have the fun and excitement that you’ve dreamed about in the Endtime. Of course, it will also be filled with its battles and fights as well, but know that it will beat the monotony and the repetitiveness that your life may seem to have now. Let Me show you again into the future of what your mission may be, as well as a glimpse into the spiritual realm so that you may see My protecting power!

I am one of you—a faithful warrior of the End! The setting is like that of the “Endtime Whispering Vision,” where many were crowded in a dark basement-like hole in a dark and dreary city. This is after a conflict has swept the area, and there is mayhem and confusion out there.

Inside there are a few of us, a little unprepared for all this, but in awe at the accuracy of the prophecies that were received about this very happening. We are desperate to know what we can do. It seems that if we were to go out, there wouldn’t be much that we could do anyways. There is looting and fighting—armed conflicts where even the police are taking advantage of the confusion and doing as they please.

But we here are safe. It’s as if we are hidden from the pestilence and the confusion out there. We know what’s going on and we are able to talk to those that are around us—also hiding among us. We have taken the Word from our

stockpiles and are now sharing this stuff that has been sitting around us for so long—that we were so used to—and we are able to lead many to the Lord. Daily, He supplies us with our needs. There is nothing that we lack.

The Lord is using the miracles to speak to these that have come to us, so that they are inspired and sold-out on the Word. Granted, they don't have the training and the wisdom that we have, but they certainly don't lack the faith, as daily they ask why we don't go out there and start blasting the Antichrist forces with our "finger lasers" as all the posters and pictures in these old Letters show.

Would it surprise you to know that none of us "Family guys" here are over the age of 18? Serious! There was a bit of a mix-up in the evacuation, where the adults and SGAs thought that we were ahead of them and they got safely out, praise God. But we were left here, and now there is no way for them to return, as the city is closed and there is continual bombing and fighting going on.

All we can do is stay here, but that doesn't mean that we're not doing anything. We've converted this rundown basement into a Home—where there is light and life—and, amazingly enough, running water, electricity, network cable connections, gas, heating and air-conditioning. We've knocked down a few walls so that our neighbors can join us, and so that we may have more room for the others that are slowly trickling in one-by-one looking for shelter.

This building has been hit so many times. By the accounts of the ones coming in, there is not much out there that gives us away in here. They were just looking for a temporary place to recoup their senses as they tried to make their way to safety when they found this door. It didn't seem like a door when they first ducked in,

but suddenly it was revealed, and they saw that there was something there and they knocked. Now they don't want to leave.

Outside, all that is left is a heap of bricks, concrete, broken glass and twisted shards of metal. It's amazing that our ceiling is holding out. It must be the full-time job of our helpers whom we've even seen from time to time, holding up the walls and showing us if we need to do anything to keep something from falling. We had a guy in the other day; he was one of the resistance fighters. He got separated from his unit and he had been under heavy enemy fire. He was so disillusioned—he'd had a regular job in the AC system, and had gotten the mark, but then when the revolutionary forces started attacking, he knew that something wasn't right and that he had to join in the rebellion.

He had never heard of the Lord, or prayed in his life—yet as the bullets were coming nearer and he thought that he was going to die any minute, he saw a vision of this peaceful and happy place where people were loving and taking care of each other. He didn't know what it meant except that the life of war and killing wasn't the right thing. He began to search for the place he'd seen, and miraculously, he found his way here.

When he first came, he didn't say a single word till we had finished all of our classes with him. He just ate everything up. We weren't sure what his problem was at first—thought he might have had some kind of mental thing going on—but the Lord just showed us to let him have it.

After we explained about the Lord and His love, we showed him the prayer and he made some kind of acknowledging gesture, so we went right into the Bible

prophecy and all the Endtime stuff that had been revealed to us before, and how we knew what was still going to happen.

He later told us that he couldn't speak—he didn't want to speak—because there was so much to learn and so little time. He wanted to get it all.

Now, after three days, he is one of our staunchest members. He's giving the classes, and teaching just like one of us. His faith is so strong, and because of that I guess the Lord can really do great things through him. GBH! Well, it's not like he's the only one doing anything, but for a "babe," he sure is doing a lot. He hears from the Lord with us and the things that he has the faith to receive about what we should do are just awesome.

Just the other day, our food was out, and it was him that prayed the most amazing faith-building prayer that left no doubt in any of our minds that God would supply. He had to, and we now see that that's what it takes—the faith to put God entirely on the spot and have no doubt, no question in our minds that somehow He will come through, and He just does!

We went on with our singing and praising and witnessing, and by the time dinner came around, the pots in our cupboard and on the shelves were full of good food. Every cup in the cabinet was filled with juice, wine, beer, and even mixed drinks. Each one of us got what we liked best in food and drinks, as though we had gone to our favorite restaurant and ordered what we'd wanted, with no regard as to how we were going to pay. God is good!

So as I look through this marred glass into the dreadful state that the world has got itself into, I marvel at all that the Lord has promised, and I have faith that He's going to see us through to the end. It's silly to doubt now, after seeing all He's done and the "foolish" ways in which He's done it—like making this ex-combatant one of us and a senior member of our flock. I have faith that the Lord will provide and supply for the remaining year or so we have left on this dying Earth. I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, but I'm sure that it will be good. I have all that I need and I couldn't ask for anything more. I can't wait for tomorrow!

(Jesus:) I am there with these ones—I am right in their midst. I have been there from the beginning, and even through the "mishap" of them being separated from their loved ones. I have comforted their hearts and given them the courage to go on and keep the faith.

Because of their training and the things that they've learned, I can use them to be the Endtime witnesses that I want them to be. You can even say that I engineered things to be this way, because I knew that they would be the fearless and faithful ones that could keep a base in this battlefield—a base that would help all those that still need another chance, whether AC soldiers, freedom fighters, or the innocent caught up in this terrible war.

Though they be in the middle of seemingly one of the most dangerous places on Earth, they couldn't be safer, as there is nothing that can harm them. I have given them this haven of rest and light and warmth, smack-dab in the center of Hell, as it were. I have built this structure to withstand the bombs and the shrapnel that is falling all about.

This place is invisible to the Enemy—Satan doesn't even know about it. He wouldn't begin to imagine that I would leave My children in this hellhole he has made, and yet this very assumption keeps them safe.

It's not as though Satan not knowing that they are here is why they are safe, but because of it, and because of My keeping him out of the know, I am able to fill this place more with My Spirit. As this dear senior teen said, there is great and mighty faith among them so that great miracles are done daily for them. They do not lack any good thing, as I provide in mysterious ways for them.

They are tapped into My power for the electricity they need. The fresh, flowing water, information cable, gas, warmth, etc., are all coming directly from My source to keep them satisfied and content. I would not leave these, My children, in harm's way. They are under the surveillance and protection of some of My mightiest archangels.

If you or they could only see the great spirits that I have here now and how I am in the center, holding them and speaking great and wondrous things to their hearts! I have let them see some of the protection that they have, but it is nothing compared to the great horde of Heaven that is here and the advanced technology that is at their disposal.

Force fields of energy surround them that shatter the incoming bombs and bullets—and there are many that come close. High-tech surveillance surrounds this Home that not only detects people and humans, but also evil spirits big and small that might venture this way. I have concealed this place so that anything

that shouldn't be seen won't be, as they are "cloaked" by My most advanced devices.

Sometimes, a demon or spirit catches wind of "something funny going on around," as their spirits can also seek out good vibes and happiness and joy that might still abound. Then, before they can go report back, those are taken out swiftly by My special breed of invisible spirit sniper beings that are placed strategically around the center of this city.

I am in charge of this operation and when the time is right, when all is said and done here that can be done, I will awaken the great horde of evil to our presence here. We will attack in such might and power as has never before been witnessed by man! These little ones of faith will be strong in Me, and have great courage to do the wonders and miracles of slaying even the spirits that would fight them here.

They have Me omnipresent by each of their sides, as well as their huge protectors that I have given them specifically for this fight.

They are being prepped now by these spirit beings on how to communicate with them, how to call on them by name specifically, and how to use the greatest amounts of power possible so that the angel slayers, snipers, watchers, messengers, and comforters are each empowered to their maximum ability, and so that the greatest amount of damage to Hell's temporary kingdom is done. None of Satan's forces will withstand this onslaught, and while these "children" are simply witnessing and calling down these simple miracles of protection and supply, I am giving them the spiritual workout/training that they will need. They

are following Me as I lead them; their purity is unmatched and their love and yieldedness to Me is egging Me to do wonderful things for them.

These will make it through the Time of the End without the smell of smoke. They will get the training and fight when I want them to fight, but they will not lose their purity. As I shield them from the evil, I ask that you parents, and would-be parents, of these, not fear for your little ones. I have taken them as My Own, and great woe will be to that man or puny demon who thinks he can touch them. This is an opening into the future that you now see—not some fairy-tale story of My protection, but an actual scene of your children fighting, and My power in fighting for them.

Keep honing those weapons and believing My words to you personally and through the written Word. I will not fail in one of these promises I have spoken, for you are My children—each of you, old and young alike—and I will fight for you!

09. Sally and Sammy Escape from an Institution!

(Jesus:) This story is about kids being taken from their parents, but how I will keep and protect them. There is nothing to fear, for I will care for your little ones more than ever. This story is just a glimpse at some of the miracles that I will be doing for you and for them.

Since entering the Last Days, everything in the Family was a little different. It was dangerous to have too much contact between Homes and Family members. John and Tiffany, or “Tif,” had their own Home that by outward appearances looked like a normal system household. They had two cars in the driveway and a nice house—one of the nicest on the block. They had a good ministry and were still witnessing and winning souls albeit on the “low down.”

They had taught their three kids—Sally (6), Sammy (3-1/2), and little Jonny (1-1/2)—from the very beginning to ask the Lord everything and to use the keys. They were good kids who were responsible and obedient—for the most part. Sally had very piercing eyes, and took on the role of mommy a lot, helping with teaching the younger kids school. She could read, write, and do math better than almost anyone else her age. Most important of all, she had a good channel with the Lord, would hear from her spirit helpers, and loved the Word.

Sammy had a hankering for testing the limits, especially with his older sister. He liked school and learning but would question practically anything someone said. He was more often than not taking things apart and tinkering with his toy tools. Most of his toys were taken apart and “Sam-tically” engineered back together in a

“hybrid” fashion. You could usually spot him walking around with a little motor from a car in his hand, or a screwdriver, and sometimes one of daddy’s “multi-tools,” of course unbeknownst to his dad.

Toddler Jonny—well, he was just a toddler running around copying anything he saw. He spent most of the time with his mommy or older sister, who would sometimes have to take care of both of the younger kids.

For get-out their dad, John, would usually take the two oldest kids out to the park, so they could play with the other kids. Today, as get-out time rolled around, John asked both Sally and Sammy to pray about if they should go to the park, or if the Lord had a better plan. Both kids prayed about it and got a “yes,” that they should go, but to not be of a light heart.

At the park they prayed before running off onto the playground equipment and engaging in some games with some other kids who were already there playing. After about half an hour of being at the park, John noticed a suspicious vehicle driving by. He got a check about it, and looking more closely, sensed that it was a government agent’s car. He shot up a quick prayer and asked the Lord what to do. The Lord said, “Fear not, for I am with you and your kids and nothing that is not My will shall befall them, neither shall a hair of their heads be touched”. After receiving that, John called his kids and told them what he’d got and said a prayer with them. After praying, he looked up and saw two agents walking towards him. As they approached, he smiled and put out his hand to shake theirs and said, “Good afternoon, how can I help you?”

“Are you John Krouger?” one of them asked. “Yes, I am, what’s this about?” John replied. “We have been told that you homeschool your kids, and that you haven’t yet sent them to get mental advancement screening, which is required by law,” replied the other agent.

At this point John shot up a quick prayer and asked the Lord what to do. The Lord answered, “Stand your ground with them.” “That’s right,” answered John. “As a parent I don’t have to subject them to government care and screening unless I want to—or am personally requested to do so by the government.” “Well,” replied one agent, “today is your lucky day—the government is personally requesting that you turn over your kids for screening so that it can be properly determined what to do with them from there.”

John bent down and looked at both kids, realizing that this might be the last time he would see them. He hugged them and whispered in their ears a prayer, and said he would pray for them every day and try and get them back as soon as possible.

He then explained that they would be going with these nice men, who would take them for a little bit, to a place like a “camp,” where there would be other kids their age. He looked at Sally and said, “You’re in charge; look after Sammy, pray every day, and ask the Lord what to do.”

With tears in his eyes he hugged them one last time and stood up, and looked at the agents who seemed to sympathize a little with him. “Don’t worry about clothes or things,” said one agent. “Everything they need will be supplied by the government, they will only give them the best.”

With that, John walked with the kids to the agents' car and waved goodbye, watching until they disappeared down the street.

In the car, Sally and Sammy sat in the backseat and started asking questions. "So where are we going?" asked Sally. "You are going to a nice place where there are other children your age," replied the agent who wasn't driving. "Don't worry, you will have a lot of fun there, and will be able to see your parents soon." "How far away is it?" asked Sammy. "It's not too far, about half-an-hour away," replied the agent. "I mean, how many kilometers away is it?" Sammy corrected him. "About thirty," replied the agent, caught a little off guard.

Both kids seemed to be unfazed by the whole incident, which surprised the agents, who were used to having kids crying and throwing fits the whole way there. "Do you have any kids?" Sally asked the agent who wasn't driving. "Yes, I do. I have two kids a little older than the both of you," he said with a hint of compassion in his voice.

The kids didn't have to wait long before they were driving through the huge gates of the "Institute of Education for the New Age." The agents dropped them at the front of the building and drove off.

Sally and Sammy walked through the door to the front desk, hand-in-hand. At the desk, before Sally could say anything, the lady sitting there said, "Yes, I know who you are. We have been expecting you two. Proceed down the hall to room six on your right."

With that, she was back to typing on her computer. Both kids walked down the hall to the designated room for Orientation. The room quickly filled up with other kids for the same reason.

After Orientation, during which the kids were told they were being given an opportunity like no one else to reach the highest level of their intelligence and career, with much thanks to “our Great Leader” who had made this all possible. They would undergo some tests to see how to best “educate” them and help them achieve their dreams.

All the kids were given their own room with a bed, bathroom, and computer. Sally had her room in the girl’s wing, and Sammy was on the other side of the building in the boy’s wing. In each of their rooms they found clothes, books, and other things that they would need. They both made their way to their rooms to settle down for the night.

Meanwhile, their parents never stopped praying for them. Before they went to bed, they prayed for their kids’ protection, safety, peace, good rest, and a way of escape, after which both they and little Jonny fell asleep.

After reaching his room and checking everything out, Sammy decided that he was missing his sister and didn’t want to sleep by himself. After looking around, he wanted to try and find a way to his sister’s room. Each of the rooms had an automatic lock on the door and would lock at lights out, and also turn off the electricity to the room, except for a little built-in night light and a small light in the bathroom that would automatically turn on upon entering.

Since it was after lights out, Sammy couldn't open the door, so he prayed, "Jesus, I don't want to sleep alone tonight in this place. I claim the keys to unlock all the doors that I need to open." With that faith and determination, Sammy put his hand on the doorknob and the door miraculously opened. He was about to step out in the hall when he remembered his daddy's words: "Down every hall is a camera—on every rooftop, and in every room corner."

Sammy dug around in his pocket a bit, and pulled out a little mirror he had. Sticking it out of the doorway a little, he looked down the hall and up to the ceiling. Sure enough, there was a camera.

The camera wasn't rotating so there was no way to try and dodge it. He said another prayer, "Jesus, I claim the keys of invisibility to walk down this hall and the other ones I have to go down so the cameras won't see me." In faith, Sammy stepped out in the hall and ran down the hallway. Peering around the next corner he saw it was clear, and dashed down that one as well. Making his way to his sister's door, he noticed how every door looked the same. Sammy was glad he remembered her room number—Room 209.

At the door, Sammy stopped briefly, claimed the keys again, and it opened. Inside, his sister Sally looked up, shocked to see him. "I was lonely and couldn't sleep. Can I sleep with you, Sally?" asked Sammy.

The next day, the kids made their way to the "Test Room," where they would be tested in aptitude and for "psychological blocks" in preparation for chip implants and other "mental enhancement" devices they might need.

The room was huge, with a large number of pods sitting on end. Sally and Sammy walked in together and went to their designated pods. The pods opened in half and had a nice comfortable chair inside and a flat screen all around it and speakers. The kids sat in their chairs and the pod doors closed. Inside, a nice voice welcomed them, and said that this would be a fun adventure, like being in a movie.

The screens in the pods showed visuals with sound, while a synaptic and other brain wave scans and tests were being done to determine the kids' "abilities" and any "mental blocks" they might have. It was designed to be fun, so the kids would want to keep going back in for more "mental stimulation." Like a drug, it was also designed to be addictive, and a way to keep track of what was going on in the kids' minds.

Some kids that didn't pass the first screening were taken somewhere else. Others that were bright, but needed "mental progression or readjustment" stayed on at the Institute and were taught things in their field of profession-to-be, but were subjected to "cerebral advancement."

Sally's test showed that she was bright, and had all the aptitude to be a "power person" in the New Age, but she needed a lot of "readjustment and advancement."

Sammy's tests showed aptitude to be a brilliant engineer or other high-tech expert, but warned that he was quite mischievous, and in the words of the test results, "hard to handle." Since Sammy wasn't yet the required four years old, he

didn't have to go through "readjustment and advancement" programs, but he had to be taught carefully.

Sally, on the other hand, needed lots of work apparently, since she was already six and had almost passed the "critical stage," meaning that she couldn't be medicated with the usual drugs to "fix" certain parts of the brain, since she was too old and her brain too developed. She would have to undergo electric brain manipulation before receiving the chip implant.

Sally was sent to another room right after the tests to begin the next phase of her training. She walked down the hall to a room that just had the numbers 606 on the door. Almost before she fully reached it, the door opened automatically. It didn't seem very big, and looked almost cozy.

Praying silently, she claimed the keys for whatever would happen next. A man and a woman came out of another room and seemed to be friendly and greet her warmly. The woman approached with her hand outstretched to shake Sally's hand. As soon as they were shaking hands, everything went black.

It was almost "lights out," and Sammy was getting anxious. He hadn't seen Sally all day; unlike her, he was allowed to play in the playground with the other kids since he was deemed safe.

Sammy heard a gentle sound, and then a "click," meaning it was lights out and everything was "locked down." Sammy prayed what to do next, and got that he should go and try to find Sally.

Again, claiming the keys, he was able to get out of his room and down to Sally's room. Upon opening it, he saw it was empty. Hearing footsteps down the hall, he slipped inside her room and closed the door. Not knowing what to do next, he closed his eyes and prayed again, asking the Lord where to go and what to do. He then remembered his daddy telling him to ask for the help of his specific spirit helpers.

Sammy claimed the keys and asked for his spirit helper Victor, a former commando and secret agent, to help lead and guide him. Opening his eyes he was shocked to see a man standing in front of him. "What's your name?" he asked. "I'm Victor, and I'm here to help you. Don't worry, no cameras will be able to see us."

Victor opened the door and put Sammy on his shoulders and walked down the hallway towards room 606. "Where are we going?" Sammy whispered to Victor. "To the room where your sister is," Victor answered.

Victor peered around each corner they approached, not because he needed to, but to teach Sammy how to do it right. They had to go down a couple of floors since the bedrooms were on the top floor and the main rooms were downstairs. "Are we going to take the elevator?" Sammy asked. "No, because if you get caught you have nowhere to go. We are going to go down the stairs—that way you can hear people coming," replied Victor.

Victor walked down the stairs as far away from the railing as possible, explaining to Sammy that this way people wouldn't be able to see you or your hand. Getting to the bottom floor, Victor sat on the bottom step and let Sammy peer out to see if

it was all clear. Sammy gave the thumbs up, and they proceeded across the main floor and down another hallway. Finding room 606, Victor asked Sammy for his mirror so he could look under the door. Making sure all was clear, Victor opened the door, peered in, and gave Sammy the thumbs up.

They found the room to be almost inviting, except it had a sinister feeling to it. It seemed to be normal, with a couple of sofas, magazines on a table, screens, and game controllers, all the kind of stuff kids would like. At the end of the room was another door, which seemed normal. Going up to it and putting his palm on it, Victor said it was a special door: it didn't have any door handle. Victor explained that this door could only be opened by certain people with a special card or chip that the door reads and automatically opens.

"The keys can unlock anything," Sammy quoted, and the door immediately opened. "Down every hall is a camera—on every rooftop, and in every room corner," Victor said, before entering the room. "Hey, that's just what my daddy says", Sammy replied. Victor just looked at Sammy and smiled.

"I thought we didn't need to worry about cameras?" questioned Sammy. "We don't", Victor answered, "but you should always be aware of them."

Victor and Sammy entered cautiously, Sammy copying every move that Victor made. This room was huge and had the same type of pods that the "test room" had, except these were all laying down, not standing up. Walking up to one of the pods they could see a boy sleeping inside with wires and electrodes attached to his head. "What do we do now?" Sammy asked. "We look for the Main Control," Victor replied. The Main Control wasn't hard to find, it was at one end of the room sticking up out of the ground like a mini pulpit. Looking at the screen,

Victor saw that they hadn't started the "program" yet; all the kids in the pods were just sleeping for now.

Picking Sammy up so he could see the Main Control screen, Victor looked for the pod that Sally was in. After finding her pod, he asked Sammy to lay hands on the screen and pray. After praying, the screen went blank and all the pods started to open. They both ran down one aisle of pods to where Sally was. She still seemed to be sleeping. Victor picked Sammy up and onto the pod as they both started detaching the wires going to her head. Sammy whispered in her ear and claimed the keys and she instantly woke up.

Sally looked first at Sammy, then Victor, then Sammy again. "This is Victor," Sammy said matter-of-factly. "He's one of my spirit helpers." "Will you take us back to our parents?" Sally asked Victor. "Yes, I will—that's the reason I'm here," he replied.

At the back of the room was a sign, which read "Emergency Exit," and they headed towards it. Once out of the door, they found that they were in the back of the parking lot. "How will we get home?" Sammy asked. "We don't have a car." "And we don't need one," replied Victor. "We are going to use something very special."

As soon as he said that, a key craft appeared in front of them. Taking the hands of the two kids, Victor stepped into it and they were immediately at the front door of their parents' house. Victor gave them each a hug and said goodbye. Sammy was a little distraught, but Victor reassured him that even though he wouldn't see him

all the time, he would still always be there, watching over him. Before they could ring the doorbell, the door swung wide open and there stood John.

Grabbing both of the kids and pulling them inside, he hugged them tight, while their brother Jonny came running up to them. Tiffany was also hugging them now. “How did you get back here?” she asked. “It’s a long story,” replied Sammy with a smile, and a knowing look at his sister.

(Jesus:) The spiritual world will become much more real to you all in the days to come, but particularly to your children. To whom has much faith, much will be revealed, and those that are growing up now have an abundance of faith at their disposal.

10. Miracle Heals the Police Chief

11.

(Jesus:) My healing power will no longer be referenced by things that happened in the past—either with Me, or by Me, or My early disciples. I will cause manifestations of My healing power to perform wonders and miracles, and the world will stand in shock and awe. So undeniable will be the manifestations of My power in you that you will even be saved from certain persecution through the miracles of healing that you will perform, such as in this scenario I will speak of now.

(Scenario:) Though in an AAC country, the local chief of police has been investigating a Home as a result of lies fed to him by external forces and other sinister “sources.” He has already visited the Home once, and was not satisfied. Before leaving, he stated to all there, "Whatever you're hiding will be discovered. I will leave no stone unturned in my investigation of you!"

A week has gone by since his visit and the Family Home has prepared and purged everything. Contrary to carnal reasoning, I have indicated to the Home that while some who do not have the faith for what might come next should leave, those who wish to remain will be protected, provided for, and astounded by the miracles that I will do in this potentially damaging situation.

Early one morning while taking P&P time, Sara, a young teen girl, is shown a vision by her spirit helpers of members of the Home praying for a man on a bed. She goes to her dad and relates to him the vision; he then goes to the teamwork with this very vivid and amazing picture.

The teamwork take it to the Lord, and along with Sara, hear from Me in prophecy. I tell them that this man they have seen is someone that I want them to pray for and heal. I tell them that they will know who it is and what to do when the time comes, but that they should be prepared and ready to do even what seems to be stupid or dumb, in order that My will can be performed.

That day at lunch, the phone rings and a woman with a sobbing voice on the other side explains that her husband has been shot, and that she believes it's a judgment from God for not listening to the voice of reason, but persecuting good people who do good works.

Over her sobs and tears the woman begs for someone from the Home to come and pray for his soul, as he lies mortally wounded. After getting directions and more details, the teamwork and the Home hear from Me and get that they should indeed go, and that this is the follow-up to the vision received earlier that day. Arriving at a well-guarded mini-fortress, one of the Home Shepherds, accompanied by Sara and two other members of the Home, answer the intercom at the gate and state their business. Instantly the steel gate opens and they are instructed to drive to the end of the road and park.

They proceed, desperately praying for protection and safekeeping. As soon as the engine is turned off, a woman appears with some armed men, who then proceed to lead the group of Family members to a side room with medical facilities. It is there that they see, lying on a blood-stained operating table, the body of the police chief.

With faith and dumb-founded amazement, they proceed to the bed and pray fervently and desperately for the internal hemorrhaging from the multiple bullet wounds to cease. Instantly, the heart monitor's rapid bleeping slows down to a normal healthy rate and they all look at each other in amazement. With the man still in a coma, and having followed through on exactly what I showed them to do, they return home glorifying and praising Me at the turn of events.

The next morning during devotions, they get a phone call from the wife of the police chief saying that he is still alive, and in fact awake, sitting in bed and responding positively and normally to the continued medical treatment.

Two weeks later, a police convoy pulls up to the Family Home and out steps the Chief of Police in full official attire. Knocking on the door, he humbly apologizes for his error of judgment, while thanking the brethren for saving his life. He then orders his officers to “bring them in.” Asking the Home to forgive him and accept these tokens as a gift of thankfulness, he instructs the policemen to begin unloading food supplies, gifts for the children, toys and other useful items. The Chief then says goodbye, slightly embarrassed at his unusual display of humility and contriteness. The Family Home continues to keep in contact with the police department, resulting in the initiation of a weekly Bible study where many of the top officials at the Police Headquarters attend, thus eventually ensuring the safety and long-lived fruitfulness and productivity of the Home. (Jesus:) This story is a testimonial to the miracles that I will do for, and indeed through, you in the days to come!

12. A Soul Saved Amid Persecution

13.

My name is Musa. I grew up in the lands of Palestine. Ours was a peaceful little village tucked away in the hills surrounding Beersheba, far from the busy trade routes and life in the bustling city. My story is a simple one, for I was not a learned boy who could read or write, but was only a young shepherd who helped tend to my family's herds.

We were Christians and lived peacefully side by side with our Jewish and Muslim neighbors. Our village was as one big happy family and we cared for one another and helped each other as if we were blood brothers, regardless of our religion or background. We blended harmoniously together facing relatively few upheavals in our little community, and we were somewhat sheltered and oblivious to the growing troubles looming on the horizon that were soon to impact and change our happy lives forever.

It all began one day while playing with a little friend of mine, a Jewish boy named Uri, in the streets of our little village—something we did every day after work, and before our evening meal. The weekend was soon to begin and we were enjoying the fact that we would be able to stay up later than usual and participate in the evening nightlife that took place after the week's work.

We were talking about our day, our work, the various happenings amongst the other boys in our community, and what new adventures we could have during our time off. Uri commented how blessed he was with some traditions in his religion, particularly the one which forbade them to work on the Sabbath, as that secured

his right to a full day off—unlike I, who many times was called on and expected to help my father care for the animals or run errands for my mother, even on religious holidays.

Uri then paused in his comments, and after some moments of silence continued in a serious, sober and very definite tone, "You know, according to the Torah, this land of Israel was promised by God to the Jews, because we were chosen by God to be His people." His comment took me completely by surprise, as I had never before heard him speak like this, or make any differentiation between our peoples. I was an Arab and he was a Jew; I a Christian and he of the Jewish faith—yet there had never been any rivalry between us regarding whose faith was the "right" one.

We even shared the same Holy Book, or part of it, so it never crossed my mind that one day these seemingly minor differences would eventually become the foundation to a wall that would divide us for years to come. "Perhaps that was something promised long ago in Biblical times," I answered, "but the world is different now, and our family has been on this land for centuries. I'm sure God meant it to be for all peoples of the faith, and He will grant us continued blessing and prosperity as we live together in peace and acceptance of one another as we do now. There's plenty of land for all, don't you think so?"

Uri didn't respond—in fact, something about his mannerisms and prolonged silence seemed to give me the feeling he wasn't in agreement with what I had said. His spirit seemed to have closed itself or switched off to the truth of my words and he quickly excused himself, saying it was getting late and he was expected home.

That night marked the end of our friendship as it had been, as after that time, Uri never came out to play with us boys, his family never participated in village celebrations, events, or meetings. They had distanced themselves from the rest of the neighborhood until they eventually moved out to join some new Jewish settlers in a nearby budding farming community a year later.

Animosity slowly developed between our two villages as they tried to demean us by openly displaying their contempt for us Arabs and their supposed superiority and predominance as Jews. Everything changed from that point on. The peaceful balance of our quiet land had been set off and we began to hear of more troubles and similar disruptions in villages or towns in other parts of Palestine. Even though my father and his fathers had seen continuous wars and conflict with one army after another invading and gaining control of this oft-coveted Holy Land, and I had heard numerous tales told, I was young at the time, and my only memories were ones of peace, so I was therefore naïve in my understanding of true conflict.

My parents brought me up to know our Savior's love and forgiveness, kindness and mercy, and it was hard to perceive that men's hearts could be so evil as to want to purposely hurt and harm anyone—particularly the poor and innocent. These Jewish farming communities seemed to be expanding with more and more returning Jews from many parts of the world choosing to settle in Palestine, but what was most alarming were the stories that began to spread throughout our towns that they were gaining not only in strength and population, but amassing weapons as well. What and who were they afraid of? we began to wonder.

The harsh reality of it hit us all one early Sunday morning. My brothers and I had been up early with our father helping to tend to the daily chores of caring for our herds, while my sisters and mother, as well as some other members of the family, had been making preparations for our united midday meal. This was a big weekly event that took place after the morning church service. Being that my father was the eldest in his family, it was our custom to host a meal for the entire extended family on our holy day. This was usually a joyous and festive occasion flavored with loud and lively discussions, laughter, music, and oftentimes dancing as well. We looked forward to this time with our family and it helped to keep that closeness and bond of love between us.

Our church service that morning had been particularly meaningful to me. As I stood there amongst the simple furnishings of our small chapel and heard the priest recount the story of Jesus on the cross as He loved the thief who was hanging by His side, and then heard him talk about forgiveness and loving one's neighbor as oneself, I couldn't help but think of my long lost friend Uri and the change that had taken place in his life.

As I thought about how he had chosen to walk down the path of hatred and strife, how now he was in the enemy camp and no longer a part of our community and peaceful lives, how he no longer saw things the same way as we did or desired the same simplicity and innocence that we'd once had together, a voice inside me spoke saying, He still needs your love and forgiveness.

Right then I poured out my soul to Jesus and asked for His love and forgiveness for my old friend. I asked that Jesus would help him see and turn towards the light and forsake this dark path he was following. I knew this would take a

miracle, but I claimed it in faith with all my heart. That morning I prayed that He would also grant me the chance to one day be able to convey the love of My Savior and His power of forgiveness to this dear lost friend. Little did I know that the answer to my prayer would arrive so soon, and in such an unexpected manner. As was our custom, the priest closed the service with rounds of singing as we praised and thanked God for his bountiful blessings, when suddenly 50 armed men stormed into our chapel. The head of their group stood on the pulpit after pushing the priest aside and in a forceful threatening manner announced to all that we had ten hours to pack up and leave the village or they would be taking it by force.

This terrifying news sent shivers of fear down my spine, and I wondered what would become of us. I listened to the petrified chatter of voices around me, and the crowd quickly dispersed and frantically scurried about trying to gather their families and determine where to go. Just then, I felt my father's hand firmly grasp mine and calmly lead me and the others of my family outside and back to our home.

Once inside, he bid us all to kneel for a moment of prayer as he poured out his soul to the Lord and committed our family, our future, our lives, and our destiny into His loving care. He prayed with such faith and trust, such confidence in our loving Savior's care and safekeeping that I knew at that moment, no matter what happened, the Lord would be watching over us. My fears were dispelled and a feeling of faith and calm washed over my spirit, soothing and giving me courage to face whatever was to befall us.

My family and I then quickly began to gather our few most valuable possessions, as my father made plans for our exodus with others of the villagers and relatives. The Lord prepared my heart with the knowledge that we would never be returning to this beloved land, and that we would be going out like Abraham, not knowing where we went, but that He would lead us to a place of refuge and peace to begin our new life.

As we were making our preparations we could hear shouts and much clatter, as neighbors and friends hastily and desperately ran about, preparing to leave. There was a great sense of fear among the villagers who had not put their trust in the Lord, for surely there was reason to be afraid. The armed men who had threatened us were milling about, checking up on each family and continuing to pressure and threaten. Their presence was menacing and gave rise to much fear, as we had heard horrible accounts of such groups mercilessly attacking other simple and peaceful villages such as ours throughout Palestine. We knew that our lives would be at stake unless we complied with their demands for our departure. It was a very sad time for our people.

We had packed up our possessions and goods, and the only thing remaining was to try to secure the animals that we would be leaving behind. As I walked towards the small field behind our house, I noticed a figure walking in the same direction but still a ways away.

At first I couldn't make out who this person was, but as he came closer my heart began to pound heavily as I realized it was a gunman from the religious group that had stormed our village. There was nowhere to turn, nowhere to run or hide in this open field and I knew I was in God's hands. All I could do at that moment

was pray and commit my life to Him, asking for the grace to face death, which at that moment seemed imminent.

I began to go over in my mind all the promises of protection that I had read and memorized as a child. Each word was like a drop of soothing balm on my fearful soul, and once again my heart was overwhelmed with inexplicable peace and reassurance of the Lord's faithful love and care. My fears vanished and I had unearthly courage in the face of this great uncertainty.

My thoughts turned to times past when God did many mighty miracles to protect and deliver His people, to save them from the lions, open the seas so they could cross on dry land, and send fire from the heavens to be their defense and weapon against their enemies. Ironically, it was these same Jews that He had worked wonders for who were now persecuting the believers and followers of Jesus.

I was suddenly awakened from my reverie with the sound of a familiar voice. Right in front of me, not even three feet away, stood my enemy— yet something about him felt so familiar. I had been so startled by the sound of his voice that I didn't even hear what he had said. He spoke again: "Musa, do you remember me?" Had he called me by name? Who is this person? Where does he know me from? Thoughts like these raced through my mind as I tried to make sense of what was happening, but it wasn't until he took off his mask that I recognized who it was.

"Uri?" I called out. "Yes", he answered in a low voice. I could hardly believe my eyes, as standing in front of me was my long-lost friend, now looking several

years older—not so much from age as from the wear that fear and hatred cause. We both stood in silence for a moment, not knowing what to say or how to react. There was no fear in my heart—only a strange sense of destiny, as if this uncanny occurrence was a godsend and part of His perfect plan. So much had changed in our lives, and now here we were—once friends, now supposed enemies—yet there was something that seemed to hold us together and give us a bond of peace despite it all.

Uri's spirit was different from when I had last seen him years ago. The hardness and determination was gone. I felt a brokenness and desperation through the tone of his voice and the spirit in his eyes, as if he was reaching out to me for help and answers. Uri broke the silence saying, "You have no need to fear; I won't harm you in any way. I came to see you because I need your help."

He then began to recount to me his life and the various phases he had gone through since our childhood. He explained how he had made certain choices that had taken him down a path of hate, violence, and war, all in the supposed name of freedom. He zealously joined the fundamentalist movement with the intent of providing a safe and prosperous homeland for his people, but now was not only disillusioned but repulsed with the ruthless, cruel, and inhumane tactics this movement was using to reach their goals.

Realizing it wasn't the path he wanted to go down, he searched for true freedom, but there seemed to be no alternative, no way out. He told me how the things that I had shared with him numerous times when we were younger about God's love, sharing, giving and forgiveness would replay in his mind. Because I had spoken with such conviction and such unwavering faith, he felt like he had to come to see

me, and that I might be able to help him understand what was happening or find the answers to the conflict, confusion, and misery he was going through.

My heart immediately reached out to his, and I knew this was the chance I had asked Jesus for, the chance to win this dear lost friend to Him.

Words flowed from my mouth and I felt an anointing like I had never experienced, as if Jesus Himself was speaking through me and leading this desperate soul to Him.

There in that arid field, surrounded by sheep and goats, we both knelt down, and Uri accepted Jesus as his Savior. A spirit of love, gentleness, and understanding filled his heart, and he determined right then that he wanted to try to undo the bad he had done and the hurt he had caused, by helping my people. There was no way he could save us from having to leave the village, but he knew of places and routes that were safe for us to go. He knew of the movement's plans and tactics and was able to secretly divulge this information so that we would be prepared. He helped my family load up our belongings onto our small donkey cart and we set out on our journey. It was a sad parting as we said our final goodbyes. We both knew that we would probably never see each other again, but also that the brotherhood we shared through Jesus would last for eternity, and that one day in Heaven we would be able to recount to each other the many miracles that He had done in our lives from that point on.

We both had new lives to begin: Uri, one of living the Christian faith among a people who hated even the mention of the Name of Jesus, and for me, a life with new horizons, a new destination, and an unknown future awaiting. Though our paths were different, we both had one thing in common—the assurance that our

Savior's presence would go with us, and His love would guide us and cover us all the days of our lives. This gave us the peace, faith, and courage to endure whatever hardships lay ahead, with the belief that, just as He came though for us this time, He would never fail in one of His promises.

12. It Was at the Same Time!

(Departed Christian, Paul, speaking:) Here is an amazing testimony that happened when I was living in China.

I lay in my bed one night, tossing and turning, not being able to sleep. I took a look at my watch and it was 2:00 a.m. There was something that was giving me a feeling of uneasiness. Something is not right, I thought. “Lord, please show me what this feeling is. I can’t sleep and I can’t figure out why. There must be something You’re trying to show me, or something You want me to do.”

Just then, I had a visual of one of my missionary friends, Sheena, who was in another city here in China. She had been living there for the past year. I got the impression that the Lord wanted me to pray for her. I climbed out of bed, got down on my knees and prayed:

“Jesus, I know it was You Who gave me this impression to pray for Sheena. I don’t know what she’s doing right now, or what You want me to pray for, but I know that China is a very dangerous country for a Christian to be living in. So I pray that You will be with her, and keep her from any harm. Help her if she’s in any trouble, Jesus. You said that You would deliver us in our hour of need, and that You’re always near to comfort, protect, and save. So I ask that You’ll be near to Sheena right now and help her in whatever way she needs help.—In Your Name I pray.”

After praying, I climbed back into bed and fell into a deep sleep. I didn’t find out why the Lord had me pray for Sheena that night, till one day, a few months later, I got a letter from her. In the letter she told me something that, to this day, will

always remind me to heed those impressions the Lord gives, no matter what time of day—or night—it is! In her letter she wrote:

Dear Paul,

How are you? I'm sorry I haven't written or called you for what seems like an eternity. These last few months have been a bit difficult, but the Lord has kept me and I know that it's because of your prayers for me.

I wanted to tell you about an amazing thing that happened to me about two months ago. It was a total miracle and something that I will always thank the Lord for.

It happened one night. A group of us had gathered secretly to pray and read from the Bible. The group that night was just the usual people that normally came. But then in the middle of the meeting a man knocked on the door and asked if this was where the secret Bible study was being held. I wasn't sure what to say, as he looked a little strange, but at the same time he didn't seem like he could cause us any trouble. He told me that a friend of his had told him about our meetings and that he should come and visit us, so he thought he'd stop by. I let him in, but I asked a few of the others to keep an eye on him, just because you can't be too sure in this country. There's always someone on the lookout for believers.

I kept looking at him throughout the class and thinking that there was something funny about him—and not funny in a good way. I thought there was something strange about him. He then got up and asked if he could use the bathroom, I showed him the way and stayed close just to make sure he wouldn't wander into any other part of the house. This is crazy, I thought. I'm probably being way too

paranoid. He's probably fine and I shouldn't worry too much about him. But just as I was turning to leave, I heard him talking in the bathroom. It sounded like he was talking on his cell phone. I couldn't really make out what he was saying as I'm still not very good with the language, and he was talking very fast.

Just then I thought that maybe I should tell someone else, just in case this wasn't a good call. As soon as I stepped into the living room, there was a loud "bang, bang" on the door. A gruff voice was saying, "Open up now!" One of the men got up to open the door, but by then they had already bashed the door down.

In an instant, all these armed men filled the room and were telling us we were all under arrest. They were questioning each one of us and saying that they would kill us because they knew we were Christians.

At one point I got so desperate I just started praying out loud. I was praying for these men and I was calling on the Lord's help and protection. The men kept telling me to shut up, but I kept praying out loud. Hours had passed and I didn't know what they were going to do with us. I thought I would surely die at the hands of these men.

All of a sudden the Lord told me to tell them that "Jesus loved them and He died for their sins." So I started telling them that, and telling them that Jesus was a Man Who loved them, and that if they believed in Him, they could go to Heaven. I was practically yelling at these men as they were talking so loud and telling me to shut up.

I looked up and saw that the man that had come in earlier was standing with the others. I knew he was up to no good, I told myself. Our eyes met and I could see

he had tears in his eyes. He wasn't saying anything, but I knew that he felt bad for what he'd done. He then raised his voice and told everyone to be quiet.

He said, "I have something to say. I came in here to check you all out. I was sure I was going to find criminals and lawbreakers, but instead I found loving, peaceful people who know about a Man I've searched for all my life. These people have done no harm. Let them go."

At that moment, all the men turned and left. The man came up to me and, still with tears in his eyes, said, "I'm sorry for what was done here tonight. I don't know what I was thinking. I made that call and I told them to come here and take you all away. I was just doing my job. But I no longer want to do this. It's bad. Please tell me more about this Man, Jesus, Who loves us so much. I want to know more about Him."

Well, to say the least, I was in shock! I didn't know what to say. It was pretty late, but I knew I had to talk to this man about the Lord. Since then he's been coming regularly to our classes and he told us that he would protect us in any way he could. I'm just ever so grateful for the Lord's protection and mercy.

Thank you for all your prayers for us.

Love, Sheena

Wow! I thought to myself. That's truly amazing! As the day went on, I kept thinking about that letter, and then all of a sudden I remembered the night that I couldn't sleep. My heart started beating faster and I had to find out when this all happened! I wrote to Sheena and asked her the exact date and timing of all this,

and she confirmed what I'd been thinking. That was the same night the Lord had impressed upon my heart that I needed to pray for her. Never again will I brush away these little "feelings" I get!

(Jesus:) Sheena was possibly not very wise in inviting a stranger into her Bible study in the first place; but I was not limited by that, and I delivered her. Don't neglect to pray for those I lay on your heart, even when you don't understand why, or when you are otherwise busy. Take a few moments at least to commit them to Me in prayer.

13. Near to the Heart of God

As told by Tanya Petrovich

“There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God. A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God.”

The coughs racked my body as I quietly sang this hymn that had comforted my troubled mind in the years that I’d come to know my Savior. The clatter of my teeth could not drown out the peace that encased my spirit, when knowing that my loving Jesus was by my side, drawing me close to the heart of God.

“Oh Jesus, blessed Redeemer, sent from the heart of God, hold those who wait before Thee, near to the heart of God.”

How those words comforted me. Though my body ached, and the winter chill had settled in my bones, still the warmth of my Savior’s love for me sustained me. The memories of what I had been through seemed to dim in comparison to the peace and joy I felt in my heart. Jesus would see me through.

I’d known Jesus my whole life. Though the Communists ruled Russia, and dictators like Stalin sought to stamp out religion and those who believed in Jesus, my parents had been strong Christians, devout in their love for Jesus, and willing, if need be, to give their life for Him.

I was an only child. My parents called me their “gift child,” because like Isaac, I’d been promised to my father and mother, and given to them when they were “past age.” My parents lovingly poured into me all they knew about Jesus, and helped

me develop a strong connection and love for Jesus.—It was this faith that would see me through the troublous times of persecution that swept through our country.

My father went to be with Jesus when I was 19, my mother had passed away only a few months earlier. They were both old and had run a good race. However, with the passing of my parents I wondered what would become of me. I knew Jesus wanted me to tell others of my faith, but I felt inexperienced, even fearful at times, wondering whether I was strong enough to bravely endure persecution.

In the year prior to this there had been an increased “purge” of Christians in Volgograd, and many of the Christians whom I had fellowshiped with had either disappeared or many more had been shipped off to work camps in Siberia. I felt very alone at this time, because I was still young, uncertain about what to do with my life, and lacking a vision of what path I should walk.

I tried to be cautious about my beliefs, because I didn’t want to unwisely get myself into trouble. But I was also disillusioned with the secrecy of some Christians, who it seemed watered down their faith in order to survive these times. I was desperate to find my path in life.

One night I fell into a restless sleep. I’d been praying that evening for Jesus to show me how to live my life for Him. I’d fallen asleep with a tear-stained cheek, when I was jolted from my sleep by the memories of a vivid dream.

The dream had been simple: Everything was dark, but from this darkness I heard voices—some crying, some calling, and some weeping for deliverance. Tears filled

my eyes, for though I could not see the desperate need, I could hear the sounds of those in need. What do I do? How can I help? I wondered. Oh Jesus, what am I supposed to do?

It was then that as clearly as ever I heard the words: “Be My light—My candle in the midst of darkness.”

“Jesus, make me Your light,” I cried out. Suddenly it was as if my body began to glow—as a candle penetrates the darkness with its light.

Hands reached up for me from the darkness, pulling on my clothing, reaching for me in whatever way they could. There were many calling for my help in the darkness, and as they drew nearer to the light that surrounded my body, many saddened hearts turned to hearts of joy.

As I lay shivering and shaking on the cold, stone prison floor, singing my favorite hymn, I wondered whether I would see the fulfillment of that dream. I thought back on all that had happened since the blessed night that Jesus had called me. It was three months after the dream that I met Alexei, a pastor—albeit a secret one. He was 30 at the time, and had been faithfully feeding several groups of Christians throughout the city. He was a wonderful Christian, strong in his love for the Lord, and he had a vibrant and loving personality.

Alexei had been through his share of tribulations, and yet those trials had only served to strengthen his faith in Jesus. His young wife had died a year earlier giving birth to their first child. Alexei would often tell me that Jesus had rescued his precious wife from this difficult and troublous time, and had left him with a beautiful gift—their son, Mikhail (or Misha as he was affectionately called). It was

at that time that Alexei had dedicated all his heart and soul into helping to strengthen the underground church of believers.

Whenever Alexei spoke of Jesus, his face would shine magnificently; he radiated Jesus. I had seen that shine first at a secret fellowship that I'd attended where Alexei was giving a talk about the blessing of trials. I almost did not hear the words he spoke, for the resounding memory in my head was that of my dream, where Jesus had asked me to be His light. Like Alexei.

Over the next few months I got to know Alexei better, and a strong bond of friendship developed between us. One day the Lord told me to ask Alexei how I could help him do his work for Jesus.

"I need help with Misha," was Alexei's response. "He's so young, and I am often not around to properly teach him and care for him."

I happily agreed, and was so pleased to see the broad smile on Alexei's face. It was as if a great weight had been lifted off of him.

"Tanya, you are the answer to my prayers!" he said. "I have been worried for Misha, wondering how I would continue my work for the Lord when Misha also needed my time, love, and care. I don't know how to thank you."

This wasn't the "light in the darkness" dream fulfilled exactly, but I knew I was doing what God wanted me to do at that time. During that next year as I cared for Misha, my faith also grew. I learned so much from Alexei, and being able to teach Misha all about Jesus helped to strengthen my faith and conviction.

One time, Alexei was too sick to make trips to the underground get-togethers. He'd caught pneumonia, and had been bedridden for a week.

“Tanya,” he whispered. (I’d been caring for him over the last week in his illness.)
“Sergey’s family is in need of comfort and reassurance.”

I nodded my head in agreement. Sergey’s eldest son had recently been imprisoned, and rumor had it that he was to be sent off to Siberia, accused of being a political insurgent.

“You are too ill to go,” I told Alexei.

“I know,” he replied. “Will you go in my place?”

Me? I was too stunned to say anything. I was inexperienced in teaching others about Jesus, and in the back of my mind there were worries and fears about being caught, questioned, and perhaps forced to deny my faith. We all knew Sergey’s eldest son, Yuri, was a professing Christian, and that the “political insurgent” label they’d placed on him was only a pretext.

“I-I...” I stuttered and stammered, trying to answer.

Alexei laid his hand on my knee and softly said, “Jesus needs you to be His light.” I was shocked, I had not told Alexei about my dream, and yet he seemed to speak as if he had known all along. A peace washed over me. “What must I do?” I asked. Alexei heaved a sigh of relief. He’d been worried for his flock, and knew that they could use all the comfort possible in this time of trouble. He instructed me in what I should do and say, and he also cautioned me about how to secretively go about this meeting. With this, I set off on my first mission.

Oh, the thrill of being able to bring Jesus’ comfort to another’s heart cannot be adequately described! I only seemed to open my mouth and words spilled from my lips, as if it was not me speaking, but Jesus Himself.

I returned to Alexei's apartment several hours later to find him sitting up in bed, quietly praying. I told him all that happened, and together we lifted our arms in praise to Jesus for His anointing.

That was the beginning of my ministry. The underground church had grown considerably, and it was more than a full-time job for Alexei to keep it up himself. He said that Jesus had showed him that I was to help him in this ministry, to teach and strengthen the believers. And so I began doing this with Alexei. Six months later, the Lord had shown Alexei to travel to Vladimir outside of Moscow to visit his aging mother, and also to strengthen the brethren there. He took Misha with him, while I remained in Volgograd to continue with our ministry.

Three days after Alexei left I once again woke up in the middle of the night having had the same dream where all was dark and Jesus called me to be His light. I was confused when I woke, because I felt that helping Alexei in this ministry was shining my light in darkness. I couldn't fall asleep again, so I earnestly sought the Lord concerning this dream.

The calm and comforting voice of Jesus spoke to my heart: Be My light—My candle ... in the midst of greater darkness. I wasn't sure what to make of this, but once again, I committed it into God's hands, and asked that He make me into whatever light He needed me to be.

A week later while returning home in the dark of night from a meeting with an elderly couple who were believers, I turned the corner of a deserted street only to run into two KGB agents.

“We’ve been keeping an eye on you this last week, Tanya Petrovich,” one of them said. “We have a few questions to ask you.”

A myriad of thoughts flooded my brain. I wanted to turn and run and warn all those I could, but a hand firmly gripped my arms and led me toward the car. Help me, Jesus, I prayed silently. Care for Your little ones.

My mind raced through the events of the week, worried about all those I’d come in contact with. And then a smile of peace spread across my face. In the same hour that Jesus had instructed me to be a light in greater darkness, He had also cautioned me to limit my visitations, and most of my visits had only been with one or two people throughout the entire week. I knew that Jesus would take care of all those I’d been in contact with, just as I knew He would take care of me.

The next couple of days were a blur to me. There were many hours of questioning, threats, deprivation, and humiliation. I was beaten and tortured in an attempt to procure information from me. Although the officials thought they had something on me, they could turn up no evidence of my “crimes,” except that I was a believer. However, they would not release me, but instead kept me locked up separately in a freezing cold cell, where I contracted a terrible cough.

One week into the ordeal, I found myself being ushered through a different section of prison. It was late at night and I’d been through another round of questioning and torture. I was thrown into the prison cell and landed roughly on the cold, stone floor. The lights went out almost immediately, before I could even see where I had been placed.

My body was in pain, and wracked with coughing. I felt alone and destitute, but it was at that moment that the words to my favorite hymn ran through my head. With great effort I began to sing the words in a whisper:

“There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God. A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God. Oh Jesus, blessed Redeemer, sent from the heart of God, hold those who wait before Thee, near to the heart of God.”

I sang these beautiful words several times over, and my heart was once again filled with joy unspeakable. It was then that I heard the whimpers and cries near me. My eyes had somewhat adjusted to the darkness, and I came to realize that I had been placed in a cell with others.

“Sing that again,” I heard a timid female voice say near me. And so I sang it again. “It’s so beautiful!” the same timid voice said.

A loud voice telling us to be quiet came from across the cell, and the cell went silent.

Then I heard the small voice again. “Will you sing more of those songs tomorrow? I want my friend to hear them too.”

I nodded, and whispered, “Yes.”

“Thank you,” she said. I soon drifted off to sleep.

I awoke the next morning to a gentle nudge, and looked up to see a frail girl in her mid-twenties kneeling next to me. “Will you sing that song again,” she said, “my friend wants to hear it.”

She pointed to a pale, sickly girl lying in the corner of the cell. I looked around the rest of the room. There were about 7 or 8 women in the small cell, most of whom were criminals, I later found out.

My body ached from the torture, but I had awakened with the thought of the dream I'd had, of how I would be a light in greater darkness. Was this the darkness Jesus was talking about?

I made my way to the sickly girl's side, and sang the song to her. Tears welled up in her eyes, and she smiled. "If such a God is real, then I want to be near to His heart."

"There is no God, and there is no Jesus!" a gruff voice said behind me. I turned to see a monster of a woman glaring at me.

"Oh, but there is," I replied. I don't know what came over me. I felt so bold, so empowered by the spirit. Over the years I'd learned to be cautious and be mindful about any open proclamation of Jesus or God. But I felt I couldn't withhold it, my love for Jesus was all-consuming, and I wanted to let my light shine.

Over the next few days, I witnessed to these women more, and each one of them received Jesus as their Savior. That time wasn't without its testings, and I wasn't sure if my body would be able to withstand the deprivation and pain and sickness that I experienced. But each day, Jesus would lovingly top me up with all the spiritual energy, comfort, and love that I needed to pour into these hungry souls, so that Jesus' light in me could shine bright in the dark dismal prison.

A month after my arrest I was released from prison. The faith of those in prison was strong, and they too began to secretly spread the love of Jesus to others. In time I was reunited with Alexei and Misha, and we moved to a different city, where we became a family. The Lord continued to bless our ministry of helping others to find Jesus and be strengthened in the faith. Many other times Jesus

kept us from persecution, surrounding us with His angels, and without fail leading us away from trouble, and keeping us safe in the hallow of His wings. Always remember that Jesus will faithfully care for you. He knows how to use even the direst of circumstances to work His will. He'll use you as a light in the midst of darkness, and cause that light to shine even brighter. You just have to do your part and be willing to follow Him and love Jesus with all your heart. He'll use you for His glory, just like He used me while I was on Earth. (End of message.) (Jesus:) I want this story to go out as a testimony that even when I allow My children to be imprisoned and tortured, as this one was, I am still with them, and My delivering hand is not stilled.

14. Keycraft Frequencies Disrupt Checkpoint!

(Spirit helper:) The time is the future. The Antichrist is in power, and you are on the run! His soldiers and agents are everywhere, it seems, and it takes a lot of amazing key power to escape them, but you do, time and time again. Here is one such example of an Endtime escape through the invincible power of the keys. You and your family and friends have been on the move for quite some time now. It seems you just have to keep moving, you can't settle down anywhere for too long, lest your enemies catch up with you. Your constant movement helps to keep you safe, because the Enemy always seems to be one step behind.

They are really on top of it now, though. Every citizen is tracked. Every good systemite has a number. It's all happening, just as it was predicted. Of course, you don't have the mark, and it has become increasingly hard to buy or sell.

With each day that passes you are increasingly thankful for the Lord's miraculous supply, and for your friends and supporters who help to keep you fed and stocked with everything you need to live outside of the System.

The New World Order is doing its utmost to rid itself of "scum" like you who live on its fringes, who are able to exist outside of its system. It is a testimony against them and they want you eradicated.

There is no freedom any more, hardly anywhere. Yes, there are a few countries that are still holding out, but even they will be overtaken before our Lord's return.

Still, there are lots of ways to beat the System, and with the power of the keys, you are doing just that.

Here is the story of one such time:

As your vehicle is approaching the highway checkpoint, you know that you will be flagged, then questioned, and asked for your papers proving that you are loyal citizens. There was no other way around it, really—you had to take this road to get to your next destination, the next safe haven that the Lord had prepared for you.

Your vehicle is full of praises and desperate prayers, reaching up to Heaven and to the throne of God! Above your vehicle hovers a keycraft. The music of the keys reaches your ears, and you are comforted. The guards, of course, can't see it, nor hear it. It is only visible and audible to those whom the Lord allows to see and hear it. Their eyes are blinded to what is above, and all they see is your car approaching.

You know there is no human, natural way to get through this checkpoint, and you know that Jesus is going to have to do something amazing and supernatural for you—that's all there is to it. Your faith is totally in Him, and there is no doubt in your minds that you will make it through.

But it takes faith, because at this point, you don't know what He is going to do, just that He will do something to save you, if it is His will, which you are convinced it is! You've come this far by faith, and you don't believe He's going to let you down now! You're greatly needed in these last dark days to continue spreading the message of His great love and of His soon return.

As the guard approaches your window, you roll it down and look into his eyes, silently saying a prayer; this is when the Lord comes through for you. From the keycraft hovering overhead comes a piercing sound that causes the guard at your window, and those in the shelter, to put their hands over their ears, and go running frantically into the nearby fields. You can hear just a faint sound; it sounds like beautiful music to you, but to them it is an unbearable sound frequency that sends them running to try to escape.

And then, of course, you continue your drive through the checkpoint, unharmed, unscathed, to live another day, and to witness our great Lord's love to yet another city, yet another hungry sheep, who awaits His message.

(Jesus:) This is a good illustration of the kind of miracles I will perform, not just once, but many times over in the days to come!

15. Maia's Story of Protection

My name is Maia. I was born in the earlier years of the 1900s in the rural foothills of the Atai Mountains of Mongolia, in an area often disputed with China. Our village was similar to the others of the region, tight in unity, which was so very needed for survival. We had to stick together, because otherwise the stronger warlords of the northern areas would expand their territories and take us and our area as their own.

This unity was a good thing. It gave us family-like ties even with those who were not of our own flesh-and-blood families. And it was especially beneficial in our village, because we were Christians in a non-Christian country. The villages around us were largely Buddhists—peaceful and friendly people, but just of a different faith, which caused them to look at us with mistrust.

We were very much on our own, and even the majority of the world's Christians didn't know about us. If it had not been for a close relationship with Jesus' words through our few well-preserved Bibles, we would not have survived.

This was when communism was starting to make inroads into the government of our country. As it grew in power, those who adhered to a religion were being pushed aside. There was a lot of hostility towards religionists, due to the belief that religion had squelched the initiative of the people, and that it made it easy to hold them under domination. There was a lot of truth to this, since the Buddhist religion didn't teach the people to reach up, but to instead find ways to be satisfied with their lot in life and to meekly accept it.

But our Christian village was uniquely different. We cared for each other. We provided for each other. We lived much like Jesus' earlier followers had lived. We even lived a form of communism by the way we were able to help each other in need. We had our separate homes and families, but we were quick to act when it was time to pull together to help one another in both joyous times and difficult times.

For this reason, even when our religion was stamped out, in that our church was closed, we still were able to continue with our faith. The neighboring Buddhist communities lost their religion, and lost the little faith they had. They began to disintegrate through losing the quality that had held them together. They no longer looked out for one another, but became easy to infiltrate with new beliefs and ideology from the government.

Because they'd lost the unity that they had with their Buddhist faith, the infrastructure of their villages was weakened, and this is what allowed the spread of disease to nearly conquer our part of Mongolia.

Today you hear of many killer viruses that threaten to spread across entire continents. There is SARS, Avian flu, Ebola, even AIDS. Some of these spread quickly. Some are only spread through unwise practices. I don't know what you'd call the sickness that came into these villages. It probably wouldn't have made any headway in our land if the communists had not stamped out the little faith people had that helped to hold them together.

You see, the Buddhism in our land, though it did not give people faith in Heaven through Jesus, still did give them some morals to live by. Theirs was not a

religion of demonology, but rather of good works and peaceful living. But without this, what did they have left?

Our Christianity couldn't so easily be stamped out. It was a vibrant faith that lived in our hearts. Even without our Bibles, the Word was still alive and could be passed on orally. We were living Bibles. It's much easier to stamp out a religion of tradition than it is to stamp out a religion that is the heart and soul of people. After all, how can you kill Jesus Christ Who had already been killed and overpowered death? That's why persecution against the church has never succeeded. You can take away all of the trappings of Buddhism, and you are left without faith. You can take away all of the trappings of Christianity, and you are left with stronger Christians, strengthened by the fact that they are now relying on Jesus Christ as their only hope, and no longer leaning on the weak crutches of churchianity. And that's how it was with us.

The communist banning of religion did close our church, but didn't cause Jesus Christ to run away and hide. No, instead He became more powerful because we got to know Him more personally.

But as for our poor neighbors, the communists took away what little faith they had, and they were left defenseless. As you know, the Devil doesn't only want to rule the world; he wants to destroy the world. So when he gets ahold of a government, he first makes people think the new rule will better their lives. But then, step-by-step, he destroys their lives.

And this is what he was doing in these villages. He stamped out the religion they had, and then left them with nothing. He was gleeful when a new sickness

reached these villages. He was full of evil joy when he saw the people in these villages not only dying from the sickness, but turning on each other.

Neighboring villages would go in fear and kill the ones in the villages where the sickness was prevalent, hoping that by killing even the healthy they would stop the sickness in its tracks and keep it from spreading to their own village. But instead, by going in and murdering the innocent, they spread the disease further. It grew in those dead bodies and filth, and then infected those who came to destroy them. The same men who came to the village to kill the remaining villagers, would then go home to their villages and take the disease with them. Soon there were very few villages left in our area of Mongolia. What stopped the killing raids was the fact that there weren't enough men left to go on these raids. The few who survived the sickness were no longer able to raid their neighbors. All villages were infected, and it was the same disease that killed so many that also protected the remaining villages from being wiped out.

I'm sure the Devil inspired this sickness to wipe out our little community. He surely didn't care that much about killing those who were already under his control. But he hated us. He thought that by bringing this disease into all of the villages of our area that surely our village would also fall under it. Then our light, which was shining brightly in a darkened communist country, would be snuffed out.

All logical reasoning pointed to us meeting the same fate as our neighbors. But that's not what happened. The disease that nearly destroyed the neighboring villages never came into our gates. We were protected by the very anger and savagery that destroyed our neighbors. How's that?

If only sickness had been killing in these villages, we would have ventured out to see what we could do to help our neighbors. But because they were sending warring parties from the healthy villages to the ones infected with the disease, we were unable to go minister and help. For this reason, our village was fully protected from the disease while those around us were being destroyed by it. However, in the end, when there were no longer men of strength going from village to village to destroy the infected villages, we did venture out. We began going village-to-village bringing supplies to the few survivors. We brought them gifts of love, made up of food, water, and materials to clean and rebuild with. We brought them gifts from our wonderful Savior; we brought them Jesus in a tangible form that they could not deny.

Not one of us was infected by the disease. We relied on the verse, “They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:18). This was our daily promise that we claimed as we went forth to conquer in love, and Jesus Christ never failed us.

The Devil sent this disease to wipe us out. He thought that he had a foothold through those whose faith had been stolen away. But instead, he made a way for more Christians to be born. He made a way for Jesus Christ to conquer the souls of men. The Man Who gave His life for all, gave us the salvation of the souls of our neighbors, and He conquered through us. “Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4b).

(Jesus:) This story is a tribute to My power and protection.

16. Yasumi, Japanese Washerwoman

My name is Yasumi, and I lived in Japan during the time of the great persecution of Christians under Emperor Hideoshi, in the late 1500s. It was a very dangerous time for Christians, as anyone who professed to be a Christian was immediately sentenced to death. Many of my friends had been taken and killed; however, I was never found out.

This was a miracle, as I had always tried to spread the truth I had known, and was willing to die for it. But my loving Savior, in His great love and wisdom, knew that it was best for me to stay and live out my life here on Earth, so as to witness His truth to many.

My job in our village was to wash clothes, and I would often have a large bundle of clothes to take down to the river and wash. It was during these times that I would talk and get to know the other washerwomen in our village. We became close friends, and, one by one, each of them gave their hearts to Jesus. We shared a common faith and love, and because we were good at our work and were helping the village, no one questioned our faith in Christ.

17. The Prophet Jeremiah!

(Jesus:) Listen to the voice of My prophet Jeremiah, the child prophet who said, “I cannot speak, for who would listen to me—I am but a child,” but who did not fear in the end and who stood strong till the end and was used by Me.

(Jeremiah:) I come to you now as the child that I was when I was first drafted into the Lord’s service. I knew nothing! I was uneducated and unlearned.

Compared to you, I knew nothing, but I was educated in the Scriptures and I believed them as the actual words that came from God’s mouth. I memorized, I studied, and I read often the passages of the prophets that had come before me. I believed that God could speak to me and I heard His voice, still and small in my ear. There were times when I questioned whether it was really Him, but I was encouraged by other prophets that if I just believed, God would speak, and He always came through.

I was very much like you are now. I was nothing—a nobody really—that would stand out from the crowd to do anything special. At the time, the Lord spoke clearly to many—to those of the Temple, and to anyone else who would listen. So my gift of hearing God’s voice was not a special thing that only I could do. I was chosen by God to speak His words, but only because God knew that through His power I would stand strong in Him and proclaim His message without fear of death and persecution.

When I first started speaking out against the wickedness that was rampant, I was weak. I didn’t always do what the Lord asked of me. I would be asked to go into the markets, and without knowing what was going to happen, to stand up in front of the crowd and be open for anything that the Lord would say.

The first time that I stood up and raised my voice to speak, I squeaked and stuttered. I couldn't get the message out, and people laughed at me, and mocked me. There were folks that had known me since I was a boy. There were people there that I'd played with, that had corrected me, fed me, and invited me to their house for parties.

There were people around me, just as there are around you—people that you like, have relationships with, love, respect, even those that you don't really have a rep with. They were all there.

I stood up and tried repeating what the voice in my head was saying, and I just fell flat on my face. I couldn't say it straight, and there were people telling me to shut up, and to stop thinking so highly of myself that I could really do what I was trying to do. I heard all that, and I really didn't feel like going on. I was ready to start laughing with those that were laughing at me and ridiculing the message that the Lord was giving me.

After my first initial stuttering and slurring speech, when I was tempted to quit and throw in the towel, that's right when the Lord's voice sounded loudly through my own, so that the crowd was hushed and not a word was heard from those that had been mocking and laughing at me.

The voice of the Lord was so clear, so eloquent, and so powerful, that every soul there knew that it was not the voice that had first started out speaking. This was spoken in a different tone even, one that people then associated with the voice of God. God came through for me because I stuck to standing there by faith—even though at first the message wasn't coming out right or clearly.

God used that very weakness that I had to make known that I was to be His prophet and that He would speak through me when He had something to say. It was not because of my talents or because I could do anything that others couldn't. In fact, it was because of my obvious lacks that He chose me. It was because I knew that I couldn't that He was able to make a mighty man of me without it glorifying me in any way. Praise God!

After speaking with the clear sounding voice that was obviously God's pure and unadulterated Word, I was taken by the king's men to speak those same words to the king.

The king was really influenced by Satan and was under his direction and doing his bidding. Satan thought that I would fold under the pressure of being in front of the king and in front of the prophets of the other gods who demonstrated their power freely for all to see—powers of demons, and all sorts of unclean and diabolical things that would instill fear in many.

Once again, under threat of death and torture, I was ordered to speak the words that I had spoken earlier with the same power of God in the presence of these that did not believe and did not care to change their wicked ways.

This was a real test, and while I was waiting for the anointing to come to speak, I was expecting that God's voice would once again astound everyone there through the obvious change that came over me when I spoke—but this time, the Lord did not speak like before. God would not dignify these unbelievers with the sign that they were asking for.

Rather, I once again heard the voice of the Lord in my head and I was told to proclaim all that I heard in my own words.

This was a trial, as I knew that this wasn't the sign that these were looking for. Rather than appearing before all as the mighty prophet and mouth of God, I had to do it all with just the conviction in my own heart and my own faith. The faith was given to me to continue and to speak what I heard—even though at times I faltered and stuttered. The message was clear to all that God was not pleased and that He would punish those who rejected Him if they did not turn away from their idols and ask for repentance.

The message did not go as I expected, but I knew in my heart that God was with me, and that as long as He had more to say, He would deliver me from death and the pain that the king's men could inflict on me. I knew that the king was not pleased with the obvious lack in my own speaking skills, and through their ridicule, the voices of the false prophets and the screams and roars from those that were being pricked in their hearts by the message that God gave, I heard of their plans to offer me to their false gods as a sacrifice for my insolence.

I was afraid at first, but I continued to hear the voice of the Lord in my heart and to proclaim what I was hearing. Though I was surrounded by the soldiers of the king and in the presence of strange spirits who weren't afraid of showing their true faces in the bodies of those that they tormented, I preached and I spoke of the things that I heard from God.

I spoke for hours, and when I was done, the rage and the noise that was going on earlier had died out. The Lord had awakened in those that would listen a yielded heart, and in those that wouldn't hear anymore, my God made them immobile and unable to speak or contradict anything that He had put into my mouth.

When I heard no more, I simply assumed that I was finished, and that God would take care of me as I left that place. I walked away from the crowd and no one—not even the prophets of Baal—could say a word against me.

Praise be to God, for I needed that sign in my life and He gave it to me. He could have let me die, and it would have been alright with me, for I know now that if that was His plan, He would have given me greater grace than I ever needed and it would have been a wonderful experience. But He wasn't through with me yet, and there were still many that needed the warning message.

God continued to keep me all my life from those that would have hurt me, and believe me, there were many of them!

Everyone that I spoke to made a decision whether to listen to the message that I had from God, or to reject it. Considering the results of my preaching, most were of the objecting kind and were enraged that I would speak to them about their lives as I did.

Though I was arrested many times, God always came through for me, and eventually, after many years of warning and wailing, the judgments came and my God vindicated me—it was not in vain. Even then, though, I could not gloat: for all my warnings, my heart was with these erring people, and I just wished that they would see the light and follow God's way.

Just as you have many strange doctrines and beliefs, the things that I was saying in those times sounded strange and weird to my people too. The accepted norm was satanic and involved other gods and material things that people put in places of greater esteem than their God.

But just as my God protected me, you have the help and blessing from Him too, and as long as you have the message to speak, no man will be able to even touch you or speak out against you. God will make sure that you have a means to speak, and if you feel that you can't and that your voice would fail you, He will give you the grace and the faith to speak what you hear, or He will speak through you, and you will stand back in awe at the power and strength of those words.

Believe me, God has a message too for this generation and you are His prophets of the End. There will come a time when all will have no choice but to hear these words, and though many will reject them and conspire against you to bring you down, God's great power does not bow to puny outbursts of rhetoric from the evil-doers of your day, just the same as it was in my day.

He will empower you to speak and to be brave and to have courage when you need it—especially in those of you who feel incapable in being fiery witnesses of the End. As my God allows me, I will stand also by your side and aid you as you speak His words to this day's wicked and Godless generation—to give you the experience and pointers that were given to me when I was doing what you will now do.

Your heart will be broken for this generation as mine was in my days. Your love will reflect Jesus' love, and they will see and be driven to where they must decide. All must decide, and that is why your day is so important—the day that the rest of us dreamed that we could partake of, for this is the day that all of our ministries and works were for. Each of us prophets had a mission to fulfill that would someday help and assist you in these last days of persecution.

We will be by your side and we will not leave you alone. Our God will stand for you in the End, and what a great end that will be!

(Jesus:) Sometimes the stories from people such as Jeremiah are the most interesting, because folks feel like they can relate to them, since they've already heard about them a lot, or know their lives well. That's why I've been encouraging some of these great men and women of times past to speak out and give details about their experiences. There are many more...!

18. Daniel in the Lions' Den!

My Lord! I thought to myself, I've never smelled anything so wretched in my life! Have you ever been around animals in a cage? The smell is never pleasant, but believe me, the stench of this place was much worse than anything I'd smelled in my life. I think that, more than the actual circumstances of being in this cave and the events leading up to it, the smell was what got to me the most. I'll bet you're wondering just what exactly I was doing in such a foul place anyway. This is my story, told from perhaps a perspective you never thought of before, or if you did think of it, you never heard it from me before. My name is Daniel. You know me well from the Bible and from all the accounts of my life that are recorded there. This time, however, I'm going to recount to you in my own words the thoughts that went through my mind when I was captured by my enemies and sentenced to be put to death.

To start at the beginning, I heard the announcement read one day in the public square, and I knew right away, of course, that the king had been duped into signing the decree. Blinded by his pride and desire for glory, he had signed a law making it a crime to pray to any god other than himself for a certain amount of days.

For a moment, I remember feeling a small sting in my heart. It was similar to the feeling you feel when you're up real high and you look down. It's a bit of a scary feeling. My heart was a bit unsettled, to say the least. I didn't sleep well that night. I tossed and turned on my bed for most of the night, battling with my convictions.

Deep inside, I knew what was right, but I also knew all I stood to lose on this Earth if I didn't compromise. I thought I could possibly shut my windows, pray in secret, and maybe that'd be okay. Sometimes it's okay to go underground. But since this law was pretty much tailor-made to catch me, I knew the Lord was asking me to be a testimony.

If I had gone underground, or skipped my prayer times, I would have been a horrible sample to all those other Israelites who came up captive to Babylon with me. And so it was that I found myself in this dilemma. On one hand, there was the option of compromise, which didn't actually seem all that bad at first. Then on the other hand, there was my faith in God, which had kept me through the years.

All night I had seen pictures of how God had kept me, how He had provided for me, and how much I owed Him. To tell you the truth, I even went through a few hours of feeling that God was being pretty unjust to ask this of me—to basically ask me to knowingly and openly break the law and suffer death for it. There seemed to be a very good case to be made for compromising just this once.

But after those hours of seeing my life reviewed, and all the times the Lord had come through for me, I couldn't dismiss the conviction in my heart. Realizing how much He had done for me made dying for Him seem much easier. I thought about the pain, about the cruel death I would be subjected to, and there was definitely a time when I felt as if I couldn't go through it. But then something changed.

I sat up on my bed, sweating from the struggle with the Lord in my mind, and I realized I had to get some help on this, that I couldn't just lay here being tossed to and fro by the Devil. I had to find some peace—either peace about the fate that I was going to suffer, or peace that He was going to change the circumstances and get me out of it somehow.

I climbed out of bed and got on my knees. I opened my window and looked up at the moon, which was almost full. I remember thinking that this could be the last time I'd ever see that moon. Then I began to pour out my heart before the Lord, telling Him of all my doubts, all the lies of the Devil that I was considering, of my personal weakness, and how I didn't feel I could go through this. What of my family? What of those I loved and provided for? What of my position? My riches, power, and influence? I couldn't possibly give all that up, could I? Couldn't I be a better influence in the position God had given me?

Then it was like the moonlight grew stronger and enveloped my soul. Spiritual warmth washed over my soul, and I knew what God's plan was for me; I knew it was my destiny to go through this and to fulfill God's will in this way.

He didn't actually tell me that He'd deliver me right then; He pretty much just took away the fear of death. Then, as I yielded to Him, telling Him that I'd go to any length for Him, even death if that's what He wanted, He spoke to My heart and told me that just like He'd delivered my three Hebrew friends out of the fiery furnace many years earlier, He'd deliver me again.

Then, I have to admit, I laughed. I laughed at God's sense of humor. Here I was, a respected, reputable man of the kingdom and He was going to have me thrown into a lion's den to prove a point. Well, it seemed pretty funny to see puny men

trying to outsmart God. He told me that He'd work it out, that things would go according to His plan, and that even if He'd have to raise me from the dead, I would stand before the king again. He told me that even if He had to put my bones back together, the flesh and skin back on them, and raise me up from the lions' bellies, He'd do it, and I'd be in the palace again to prove His point.

At that point I found peace—not just peace within my own heart, but peace with God. We came to an agreement of sorts. I told Him that I was holding Him to His Word and that I expected to be before the king again, just as He had said, but at the same time, I was willing to head Home to Heaven. I wasn't stuck on hanging around here anymore. My bones were getting old, my body was getting creaky, and I realized how happy I'd be to let all that go, and go to my heavenly reward if that was the plan.

After God and I had "made peace" (which amounted to me accepting His plan for me, whatever that might be), I went back to bed. I was so tired that I slept past my normal waking time. The servants in the house were very worried because they knew it was my custom to pray every morning after breakfast and they waited for what I'd do.

I awoke, dressed, and ate in a spirit of calmness, savoring every bite of my food as though it were my last. The servants whispered to each other, wondering what my decision would be, and how could I be so calm in these circumstances.

Many of them were Israelites as well, fellow-countrymen that I had helped through the years and who had been faithful servants in my household. They were in quite a tizzy about the decree, watching to see what I'd do, if I'd go underground and hide, and hide my light under a bushel.

As I finished eating, I smiled and wiped my face on a napkin. I put the napkin down, stood up, and walked to the window. The servants had left it closed just in case I wanted to pray in secret. But I flung the shutters wide open, so that all could see me. I even moved myself closer to the window, in even plainer view of the busy crowd below.

I knew my enemies were waiting down there, poised to strike, but I figured, If I'm going to give them a show, if they've come all the way here to see me pray, then I'm going to give them something to remember. I prayed earnestly and desperately on my knees, first for their forgiveness, that'd they'd repent, but if not, that they would suffer the same fate as I. I prayed a prayer of consolation first, and then I socked it to them with the wrath of God that would fall on them should they touch me.

They knew what I was doing, they knew that I had called down God's curses on them, but they were so wickedly possessed that they hardly heard it. But others heard it, others around me heard my testimony of faith in that prayer, and just as I was finishing, I turned to see four palace guards behind me. They couldn't touch me while I prayed; they must have been sent the moment I started praying, but God didn't let them lay a finger on me till I was good and ready to go.

They grabbed me, pretty unceremoniously, one on each foot and under each arm. They didn't even walk me off; they pretty much carried me to the king.

Oh, the look of horror on the king's face when he saw me! It was so shamefully sad—he realized he'd been drawn into a trap to catch me, and that I hadn't avoided it. He realized it was all his fault; he realized that his pride had been the source of this problem.

He tried for more than an hour to get me to give up my faith in God and to worship him, just so that he could revoke the sentence. He begged and pleaded with me to just even fake it in front of the wise men so that he could let me go free. But each time he suggested it I felt the conviction get stronger in my heart. Pretty soon my heart was pounding—not with fear but with joy.

I am going Home was what was on my mind, and then as an afterthought were God's promises that I'd be here standing before the King again. When that thought reentered my mind, I stood tall and plainly told the king that I realized it was not his intention and that he was not to blame—it was the wicked trickery of my enemies that had caught him in this snare—and I also boldly told him that I'd be here standing before him again as a testimony against them.

The other wise men laughed and mocked me when I said that. I heard jeers of, "Wait till the lions are done with you, you'll be singing a different tune then!" The king had to fulfill the law. Even he was bound by it, so he finally gave the word to take me to the pit.

Many had heard what I had said to the king, what God had told me, that I'd be back in the palace standing before the king again. Many laughed; others followed with curiosity to see what magical power I possessed that would deliver me from the lions' den.

They brought me to the mouth of the cave and heaved me in, then ran for their lives. The guards ran so fast that they didn't even check to see if they had thrown me all the way down into the pit. They were pretty frightened of what might happen.

There was a loud roar as I entered the cave; they thought that was the end of me. I've viewed the scene from up here, and most people left when they heard those growls. The wise men cackled and congratulated each other on having so slyly gotten rid of me.

Down in the cave, like I said earlier, the stench was overwhelming. The smell of animal excrement along with the smell of decaying flesh of previous unfinished dinners almost made me sick to my stomach. I remembered God saying He was going to shut the lions' mouths, and my first reaction was, "Oh God, shut my nose!"

Thinking back on it now, I remember I didn't fear. In my heart there was a promise from God that He'd take care of me, come what may. I remember standing there taunting the lions, I yelled at them to come and get a piece of me. A couple of female lions circled around me, snarling, and I thought for a moment, This is it. As I braced myself for what I thought was the inevitable crushing of bones and severing of limbs, nothing happened. I watched as one of the lionesses scampered off to the back of the cave, then I looked down and the other one was lying at my feet rubbing her head against my leg.

Needless to say, I was both overjoyed and overwhelmed with the fulfillment of God's promises to me. I sat down on a stone, and several lions came up to me and purred like kittens as I stroked their manes. Then one big old male came up and sat behind me, almost like he was being led on a leash. He came over and sat behind me and I leaned on him and fell asleep.

I was pretty tired from the night before, so I fell into a deep sleep with lions as my pillows. That big male sat behind me all night and let me lean on him, and I had

one of the best night's sleep I've ever had, because I knew I couldn't have been closer to God's will for me than right there. I was surrounded in spirit by angels, I could feel their comfort, I could feel their presence. It gave me goosebumps at times when I thought about it, because I knew they were there—though I never actually did see them.

The lions saw them, though. I remember at one point, one really ugly-looking lion started towards me, definitely being demon possessed. He was slobbering and I knew he wanted a piece of me. But you should have seen the look of fright that suddenly came over his face. He was so terrified that he jumped backwards and hit his head against the cave wall, knocking himself unconscious. Again I just praised the Lord for His protection.

I awoke the next morning to a frantic voice, one I knew well: "Daniel! Daniel!" it called. "Daniel, thou servant of the living God, are you there?" The voice was one of terror and yet faint hope at the same time. "Has your God saved you? Are you there? Oh, Daniel, speak to me if you are!"

I rose to my feet, and I heard the wicked wise men mocking the king as he fell silent. Then I found my voice. "Yes, O king, I am here! God has shut the mouths of the lions, and I am whole!"

I felt so victorious, so overjoyed, and so full of faith that I stood there and I was the proudest man alive.—Proud of my God, proud of my faith, proud to be known by God's Name. A feeling of victory swelled within me and I shouted again, "O king, I am here. God has answered my prayer. Now, I pray thee, get me out of this wretched place!"

The king was laughing; he personally grabbed a rope and tossed it to me, yelling at his guards to pull me out. They were all astonished. "Daniel!" he exclaimed as he hugged me, "I now know that your God is God of all and has delivered you this day from the lions' den. Truly He is God!"

Then I saw my enemies in fear and horror, they were trying to sneak away, but the crowd held them there, and someone yelled the curse God had placed on them through me. The king, filled with wrath, commanded the guards to seize them and throw them in!—And not just them, but their families also, and all who had come with them to gloat over their assumed victory.

Down into the den they were thrown, and the lions' roars silenced their screams. All were in the fear of the Lord that day. As I walked, I don't know if it was the Lord's anointing or just the fact that my clothes must have smelled so bad, but everyone stepped aside as I passed through the crowd, victorious over God's enemies.

The king made a decree that day, much like the one that was made when Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah had passed through the fiery furnace without harm, and all knew that God had answered my prayer and proven His power. Great fear fell over all who heard this story told, and great faith was given to the people of God who proudly stood or knelt in their windows and doorways praying to the God of Heaven. The message got out like never before, many were converted, and the king himself was humbled before God and gave glory to God before all the people.

That's my story, that's my tale of deliverance from the hand of my enemies. Out of the mouths of lions—and out of the hand of the wicked to give glory to God!
(Jesus:) This is a story that has gone down in history as one of the greatest miracles of protection of all time. It is wonderful to hear it from the mouth of My servant Daniel himself, and I will that as many as possible be able to read this.

19. Raymond, Traveling Evangelist

My name is Raymond and this is one of the many times that our Lord delivered me from persecution. I was a traveling evangelist, and often traveled from town to town spreading the message of salvation. I also had the gift of healing, so this attracted many to the meetings where I would preach.

I wasn't a "major" evangelist known all over; my ministry was more geared towards winning others to the Lord, and healing not only their bodies, but most importantly their spirits. The Lord had also given me the gift of discernment and understanding people's needs. Sometimes this was a difficult ministry because I would want to immediately solve people's problems and fix situations that were wrong. I had a lot to learn and the Lord was patient and would gently speak to my heart, giving me His words and showing me what they needed so that He could then do the work in their hearts.

This story is about one time when I didn't obey, but tried to take matters into my own hands and fix a situation that was wrong. I had been leading some meetings in a town for a couple of days preaching a message of salvation and of lives changed through God's love. Many were saved and there were some who showed great changes in their lives from that day forward, all through their acceptance of the Lord's forgiveness.

After one meeting a woman approached me. Her name was Elisabeth, and she said that she wanted to see her husband change: he was an alcoholic and did not like her attending these meetings or even talking about the Lord. But after hearing me preach she'd begun to have faith that he could change and was feeling

the Lord telling her to pray for her husband's life, and now she wanted to know what she should do next.

As I listened, my heart went out to her, and I so wanted to change the situation that she was in. But rather than praying for her and giving her faith in the Lord's ability to change lives, I decided to counsel her myself.

I knew what it was like to live with someone like that, as I'd had a brother who was the same way and who'd totally rejected me and what I was doing, telling me that I was wasting my life—but since he'd eventually come around and changed his ways, I felt confident that I could help her.

I felt the Lord speaking to my heart with His counsel, but I thought I knew better, so shared the things that had worked for my brother. Now, that's not to say that the counsel that I gave was bad or wrong, it's just that it wasn't what the Lord wanted me to share and what He knew would work best in the situation.

Elisabeth left, thankful for the advice, and said that she would come back to the next meeting and tell me how it had gone.

The following night, after the meeting, I waited for quite a while. It was a large meeting hall, so I thought that maybe I'd missed her. I waited until everyone had left but still no sign of her. I thought that was odd and wondered what had happened, but because I had other engagements that evening, teaching a Bible class, I decided to put off any enquiries until the next day.

As I walked out towards my car I was hit on the head from someone behind me and knocked down to the ground. As I rolled over, squinting in pain, I looked up

to see several men around me. They were obviously drunk and were laughing and cracking jokes. “Ha, ha! So here is the great preacher! Where are your angels of protection?” “Want a drink?” They then poured whisky on me and laughed all the louder.

As I began to pray, wondering what was going on, one of the men stepped forward and said, “So you're trying to convert our wives, are you? You don't think we're good enough for them?” It then became clear to me that this was Elizabeth's husband, and that that was the reason why she hadn't come that night. Lord, I prayed, forgive me for being so proud and thinking that I knew what this man needed to hear and for not sharing Your words. Please do a miracle and send Your angels to protect me; please speak to me and show me what I can do to win this man's heart to You.

The taunts, jeers, and threats continued, but by a miracle they didn't touch me or hurt me further. I then heard the Lord's voice clearly telling me to get up and to look them square in the eyes. I thought Lord, isn't that going to provoke them and make them even more upset and cause them to think I'm going to fight back? The Lord said, “Yes, you are going to fight back, but in My Spirit!” As I stood up, the men all took a step back. They said “Oh, look! Now the preacher's gonna fight back,” and they all braced for a fight. I stood up straight and calmly, and looked over at Elizabeth's husband, whose name I later found out was Luke.

As I looked into his eyes, I began to cry, as my heart broke for this man who was so bound by hatred, fear, and remorse over the things that he had done, and whose spirit was desperately crying out for the Lord's love and forgiveness.

I said to Luke, “I don’t hate you; I don’t look down on you, or think that you're any worse a sinner than I am.” I told him of the Lord’s unconditional love for each one of us, no matter who we are or what we’ve done. It doesn’t matter to Him—He still loves us and wants to forgive us.

I could see in his eyes that he was drinking it all in, but he was confused, and was having a hard time concentrating because he had been drinking so much. I then prayed in my heart that he would be freed from the alcohol and the spirits that came with it so that he could clearly make a decision.

It was then as if he had woken up from a daze: he got a grip on his senses; his mind seemed to become clear and his eyes focused on mine. He then looked around at his friends and realized what he was doing. He was a good and kind man by nature, but it was due to the influence of his friends that he’d gotten into drinking and the wild sort of life he was leading.

When he “woke up” and saw where he was at, and fully understood what was happening and the chance that he was being offered here to change, he accepted it! He put out his hand and said, “Friend, I ask for your forgiveness. I don’t know what came over me, but I apologize for what we’ve done here tonight—you're free to go.”

I took his hand and said, “Thank you, my friend. I want you to know that I hold no ill will towards any of you, and if you want to be free you can be, through the love and forgiveness of Jesus.” At this point, some of them walked off, saying that this was turning into a revival and that they needed more to drink, but a few stayed with Luke and were wonderfully saved.

That night I learned a lesson that I never forgot—a lesson on the Lord’s mercy and forgiveness, and on the importance of obedience. As Christians, we all will suffer persecution, but when we do, if we know that we’re in the Lord’s highest will, then we have nothing to fear, and even if we’ve unwisely said or done something to cause people to persecute us, the Lord is able to reverse the situation and bring good out of it, if we’ll let Him, through asking for forgiveness and being obedient to what He shows us to do.

20. Josef's Ring

I'm sold on prayer. You would be too, if you had been through what I've been through. It takes a desperate situation to get you desperate—and this is my story, as it happened.

My name is Josef. I am German, an eleven-year-old boy, the only child of my German father and Russian mother. At the time of my story, we were on a train, ostensibly to visit my grandparents in Russia. And who would doubt that. Germany and Russia, although opposites politically, were at least allied at the time—the time between the wars.

My parents had been through tough times, as my father had fought in the trenches in World War I. Although part of the vanquished, he'd survived, and had, like Germany, rebuilt his life. We weren't poor, but neither would we be considered rich. Although it was unusual to be traveling to Russia (even Russians generally desired to leave, due to the accelerating repressions of Stalin), my Russian mother provided a good reason.

What we were really doing was something else. You see, when my father was a POW in France, a fellow prisoner “took advantage” of his misery and despair to tell him how to escape the inescapable prison camp. “Just receive Jesus as your Savior and He will release you from this Hell on Earth and give you Heaven.” This was an offer even my previously proud, skeptical father couldn't refuse. After all, what did he have to lose? He'd lost his pride, security, health, and the war. Why not grasp at this straw?

Am I glad he did, as not only did he eventually “escape” the prison camp (the prisoners were eventually released and allowed to return home), but he gained Heaven in his heart and became a dedicated Christian. So did my mother, who’d been devoutly Orthodox, yet had never come to know Jesus personally. Of course, by the time I came along, I was received with joy and dedicated to the Lord from birth. I made my decision to serve Him at ten years old.

So what does all this have to do with being on a train to Russia? While we were apparently going to visit relatives, the “relatives” we were to visit were actually the homes of our spiritual brothers and sisters who had to remain secret believers, as Stalin and the Communist Party were no friends to Christians! In fact, if one didn’t know Bible prophecy a bit better, one might have thought he was the Antichrist and this was the Great Tribulation!

So why the fuss and worry then? Well, we had a problem with our luggage. Instead of being full of clothes and gifts, every spare inch was packed with Russian New Testaments. While the few remaining (State-run) Orthodox churches had Bibles, they were in locked cabinets on display, and weren’t allowed in the hands of the believers. Those who attended such churches were either too old to read much, or were spies paid to attend and watch the rest of the flock worship the building, the relics, and the costumed priests.

Bibles in the hands of believers were banned, and those bringing Bibles into the country, if caught, were assured of “room and board”—an indefinite stay on the icy desolate steppes of Siberia. Only my father had an inkling of how much suffering that involved, but he was willing to pay the price to share Jesus with others. My mother and I both agreed to this mission and we understood the

risks ... by faith. We knew that sudden death was sudden glory, but we weren't sure about the grace for separation and slow icy deaths.

But the risk was worth the joy of believers being fed and strengthened by the books we were bringing, and we knew it was worth it all, especially as this mission pleased our Jesus. It cost Him His life to bring us the Word of life, and since He saved us, we could do no less. Praise His Name!

The train approached the checkpoint, and we said silent prayers, so as not to alert fellow passengers (and spies) of our nervousness—or our faith. After a jolt, we gathered our things and hobbled over to join the line of weary, luggage-laden travelers.

As “fate” would have it (I should say “as faith would have it,” as Jesus likes to put us in situations which only He can work out), we found ourselves channeled into a line leading up to the sternest-looking uniformed inspection guard. Although engaged in perusing the opened cases of those ahead of us, he began looking our way. Casually looking behind us, we realized we were the last in line, and thus he could only be giving us the evil eye. We knew each other was praying desperately, as this didn't look good at all. The closer we got, the more he eyed us—particularly me. He even spoke to several of his equally intimidating henchmen, and they scurried off just before we arrived at the head of the line.

“Papers!” he barked—not asked—never taking his eyes off of me. He immediately handed them back without opening them! Either he was able to take in all their details in their entirety in an instant just by touch, or he already had made up his mind to have us arrested. He seemed to know that we, not our papers, deserved

his special scrutiny. “Open!” was his next demand. We quickly lifted our cases onto the inspection table and before we could open them he ordered, “Enough!” It was unsettling, as he never seemed to blink, as if that would cause him to miss some detail about me. Yet he didn’t seem to be looking into my eyes, but slightly above my head. Like a judge about to issue a severe sentence, he pointed his gloved finger at me. “What is the purpose of your trip to the Soviet Union?” he intoned a bit more gently, if that word could even be applied to such a person. As I began to open my mouth, he surprisingly and almost in a whisper said, “Silence!” This was not making sense. “I must ask you to step aside into my office, now!” His next command was even worse. “And bring your bag.” I fearfully looked over at my parents, whose slightly raised eyebrows communicated that I had better go without hesitation—or fear. With a slight shove, he ushered me into the “chamber” and removed his officer’s hat. He offered me a chair, and then he slowly began to pace the floor with his hands clasped behind his back, as any interrogator would, gathering his torturous thoughts.

“Explain what that is over your head.”

“Excuse me, sir?” Coming from a bi-lingual family, I knew Russian enough to realize he was unsettled and fearful, and not at all in command of this situation.

“What is that round ring of light you have over your head? Why does no one else seem to see it but me?”

“Sir, may I stand?”

“Of course ... but I want an answer now.”

Walking over to the mirror, I now understood the “problem.”

“Sir, that is a halo.”

“What is a halo?”

“Sir, I confess I am a believer in Jesus Christ. He has seen fit to allow you to see a form of my guardian angel. Often in pictures and religious icons, you will see the halo depicted as a ring of light over the head of the believer.”

“So you are a secret believer? Then I would be right to assume that you have some things in your bag you prefer not to show me. It is probably items you brought to give away?”

“Yes, sir,” I said with unexpected frankness.

“Show me,” he said as he wrote something on a piece of paper.

I reluctantly opened my bag. He took the glove off his right hand and like a skilled surgeon, instinctively knew exactly where to extract one copy of my contraband without disturbing my neatly folded camouflage of clothes.

“I will need to retain this for further inspection. However, you and your parents are free to go. Hurry, son, so you won’t miss your train.” After handing me the clearance pass, he clicked his heels together and gave me a slight bareheaded salute, and, to my remaining surprise, he leaked a barely noticeable smile.

(Jesus:) Josef was a young boy with childlike faith, and I allowed him to see the halo. His parents did not see it, but so that he could explain it to the officer, he needed to see it. The miracles I can do to protect My children are manifold! I like to come up with new ways ... it is exciting even for Me! This is such a time when I did something “unusual.”

21. A Viking Missionary's Story

Intro:

I was a Viking—proud, dangerous, and terrible. I plundered and I pillaged and gave no mercy. I sailed to the shores of Britain with my horde, and we made our living by robbing and enslaving the simple people there. Great warriors like us were blessed by the gods; these others were mere livestock in our hands.

That was my view on life, until it was overturned by strange and unlikely events. I was seriously injured in a fierce battle and left to die. None of those whom I'd fought beside would take me for fear I would cut into their profits. Instead, by a miracle of God, a monk took me in. He nurtured me back to health, and led me to an understanding of the true meaning of life. The change was more difficult than rowing against a gale, and it required the humility of a ground squirrel, but slowly I became a new man. I owe both my physical life and my new life in debt to this monk.

When I was whole again, I lacked a purpose. No longer did I have a driving force in my life. I was listless at the monastery and wanted to be about and to accomplish some task. My new friends there inspired me with this goal: to return to my homeland and win my Norse brothers to God.

Story:

The leaves had turned in color, and then blown away. The first snows had come, and had covered everything. I was sitting in a cabin, speaking with two men about how I had come to know the Savior. Our discussion was earnest and deep.

Without warning, four large warriors beat down the door, grabbed me, and dragged me out into the cold. A fight erupted when the men I'd been talking with tried to defend me, but in the end, I was tied and quickly dragged off into the night. The men cursed the name of my God and beat me.

We came to our village's lake. It was a landmark of our area, wide and deep, with several small islands and many good fish. But on this night it did not look welcoming in the least. I was thrown in a boat, and the men rowed hard to one of the central islands. With more curses and beating, I was untied and thrown onto its shore. It was all I could do to keep from rolling into the frigid waters.

They had left me there to die. The island was only 100 paces across. No food and no more than a few small shrubs for shelter. I had no skins with which to cover myself. Yes, they meant for me to die.

Did God intend for this to be my end? I prayed and asked Him what His plan was. There were so many more to tell about my God and His way of living. I felt I had barely begun my task.

Many minutes passed. Then I heard a voice speak to me. It said, "Step on the waters." I did not understand. How would getting my feet wet be of any help to me? Again it came: "Step on the waters." And a third time: "Step on the waters." By and by, it became clear to me that God meant for me to walk across the lake as He had done so long ago. But then came the doubts. I was a fool. I would surely perish if I tried. When one swims at these temperatures, one does not live. Maybe I would be better off after all staying where I was....

A deep frost came in over the area. The temperature plummeted and I began to fall into a light, dangerous sleep, teetering on the brink of life's cliff. The voice again awoke me with the same words: "Step on the waters." When I looked at the lake again, a thin layer of ice had begun to form on its surface. I groggily lifted a stone the size of my head and threw it out onto the lake. It plunged straight through the ice into the murky depths.

I was faced with a decision: to follow God against all odds, or to follow my own mind, stay, and die here. This time I put my life in the hands of God. I walked to the point where the water met the land. I closed my eyes and took a step. My foot was on firm, solid ground. I kept my eyes closed and took another and another. For fear I would doubt once again, I kept my eyes closed, and walked. I thought of nothing else but my God and His power to save. I walked on and on. How long it was, I cannot tell, but the lake was large.

Suddenly, I stumbled over something, and hit the ground hard. Yes ... it was ground. Overjoyed, I brought myself to my feet again. I looked out over the lake and what God had brought me through. To my amazement there was no ice except right near the shore, and even that was so thin it would not have borne the scurrying of a marmot.

I was overcome with wonder at God's care for me. God had agreed that my task was not yet complete and had given me the time to complete it.

(Jesus:) This man walked on water—greater things than these shall ye do!

22. Sergei, a Converted Soviet Officer

This is my story from a slightly different perspective, my name is Sergei and this story is about how I got saved and in turn helped save Christians from death in the Soviet labor camps.

I was a soldier in the Russian army during the Soviet era. I was born a Communist and had never heard anything about Christ or the Bible. I was indoctrinated from the very beginning of my life in the Communist ideology. I joined the army when I was in my teens so that I could become a member of the Communist Party, which was considered a very high honor. First, I was a member of the Communist Youth Group—the first step to making it into the Communist Party. There I was taught about Christians and how they were trying to undermine the State with their strange doctrines and teachings against Marxism. I was young and felt responsible to the State and “Mother Russia.” I was indoctrinated from as early as I can remember to love Lenin, and taught that he was the Communist Party’s “Our Father.” After hearing about the Christians, I felt it was my duty to help rid Russia of them and their “dangerous doctrines.” We were told that they were the biggest hindrance to the success of Communism and of our fellow citizens.

I had never seen a Christian or knew anything about them, other than what we had been told. When we started raiding some of their meetings and boarding them on trains headed for Siberia, we were told that they were holding unauthorized gatherings and were trying to sabotage our way of life.

I was assigned to escort a train to Siberia carrying both Christians and criminals and then return to Moscow. The train had several compartments filled with

Christians and other criminal types, and also one compartment filled with a bunch of their “subversive” literature to get burned.

I boarded the train with my fellow comrades ready to make the trip to Siberia to drop these Christians off and then return. Before we started to pull out, I thought I heard something coming from one of the Christian compartments. It was just one voice at first, then I heard others join in and heard them singing all together. The other soldiers just laughed and jeered and said that the cold on the trip would quiet them down, and that they would soon be giving up their foolish ideas. During the rest of the trip I didn't hear the singing subside, but to the contrary, it only grew in conviction. When we finally pulled into the train station in Siberia, we unloaded all the people into trucks to drive them to the concentration camp. It was a pretty long drive and by the time we got there it was late in the night and we found out there were no trains leaving the station. So I had to stay in the concentration camp.

For a moment I let the thought scare me. I knew that if I stayed in Siberia indefinitely, the chances of being promoted were almost nil; plus the conditions were so bad that it generally meant death for any prisoners, and sickness and almost death for soldiers as well! That wouldn't happen to me though—I'd be able to catch a train the next day and soon be back in Moscow, ready for my next assignment.

It was cold that night, so a couple of us soldiers got a fire going. We saw the truckload of Christian “propaganda” and started burning it. Some soldiers were joking that at least their papers and books would keep us warm.

I was curious as to what this “dangerous literature” was, so as I was throwing them in the fire I would try and get peeks at what was written on them. Some were stories from the Bible written out by hand. Some were drawings for their kids of the different miracles that Jesus did. I caught a couple of verses as I was throwing them into the fire—one was, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” another, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,” etc.

After reading a couple of these verses I was intrigued, so I took a small New Testament I found and hid it in my jacket. The other soldiers were drinking vodka now, and were getting drunk and singing and dancing. I walked off to a corner where nobody was, and started reading from this book.

The words from the pages jumped out at me and burned holes through my heart and all the doctrine I had ever been taught. I read how Jesus went around healing people and teaching; everything He taught was so simple yet profound. I wondered how could Christians be so bad and hated when everything in this Bible is about love?

I didn’t understand all of it; some verses seemed so deep and multifaceted that I couldn’t begin to know what they were talking about. I stayed up most of the night reading and then went to the soldiers’ bunkers and fell asleep.

I woke up the next morning and got a ride out to the train station to see if I could catch a train back to Moscow. When I found out that there were no trains scheduled for at least a week, I was a little disappointed, but also a little relieved, as I wanted to read more from this Bible, and maybe even talk to a Christian.

Back at the concentration camp I helped out here and there. I held a higher rank than most of the soldiers present, besides the head of the camp, so I could spend my time inside the barracks reading and studying the Bible. The more I read, the more confused I got. I realized that I would have to talk to the Christians and ask them to help me understand.

There were lots of prisoners in the camp, but there was a huge difference between the Christians and the other criminals. The Christians had some sort of “aura” or something; nothing dampened their faith or conviction. Rather the opposite, they only seemed to grow stronger in these conditions, not just in their faith, but their bodies as well.

A little later that morning they were going to take the Christians to go chop down some trees for firewood, since they were the strongest of the people there, and also to try and weaken them. The colonel in charge asked if I would go and help watch the soldiers, since the last time they’d gone out, some of them had gotten too drunk, had wandered off, and never come back. I saw this as my opportunity to talk to the Christians. I agreed, and we took off in our trucks to a nearby forest. We got there and sent the Christians off to cut down trees.

The soldiers weren’t too concerned about them running off, since there was nowhere to go and it would mean almost certain death. A few of the soldiers made a fire and sat down and started drinking vodka and joking around. I drank a little and waited till most of the soldiers were already quite drunk before trying to talk to a Christian.

I watched them working and wondered why they didn't try and kill us with their axes while the soldiers were drunk and careless? I watched them work and tried to look for the one I thought I could talk to, one who was a leader type. It didn't take long for me to spot him, for he led the singing as they were cutting trees. He seemed so full of energy and light.

I was trying to figure out how to talk to him when my chance came. He was swinging away and the axe head came loose and flew off his stick. I looked at the other soldiers, who couldn't seem to care less about the incident, and mumbled something about fixing his axe; then I took off.

I approached him, gun in hand, just in case it was a trap. I asked him where the axe head had gone, and he pointed in the direction it had flown off, quite a distance into the forest. So I told him to go look for it. I followed behind him as he made his way through the snow. He started looking for it, feeling around in the snow, when I stopped him and told him to stand up.

I looked into his eyes and saw such strength and power, and no fear. I was looking for a way to ask him about the Bible and his beliefs, but didn't know where to start. He kept looking at me and then said, "I saw you reading the Bible that night when you were burning our literature."

I pulled it out of my pocket and showed him. I said, "I started reading it, but I don't understand what it all means. It sounds good, but why are the Communists after you and think you're so dangerous?"

He smiled and looked at me and said, “Because the more people read this book and become Christian, the less hold the Communist ideologies will have on them. They are afraid of us, so they want to get rid of us.” I told him that I could see something different about him and the Christians, but that I couldn’t figure it out. “What is it that you have?” He answered with a question, “What will happen to you when you die? What are you living for?” These words hit me like a freight train, and for the first time I really questioned all the things that I’d been taught. He said, “Would you like to understand what you read in the Bible, would you like to know Who Jesus is?” “Well, yes,” I answered, “I would.” He looked right in my eyes and said, “It’s very simple: repeat after me and you will be saved, and you will be able to meet Jesus and understand His Word.” I was a little skeptical, but was willing to give it a shot. He put his hand on my shoulder and led me in a simple prayer, asking forgiveness for my mistakes, and for an infilling of love to help me to be a better man. Before I got to the end of the prayer I was in tears. I couldn’t describe it, but I felt something washing through me.

I felt Jesus was talking to me right there in that freezing cold Siberian forest. I saw the greed and selfishness of my life. I felt very unworthy, and worse yet, I felt like I was persecuting Jesus as He was saving my life right there. When I opened my eyes, everything looked different. I felt different—I didn’t feel the cold or anything; I felt reborn, as if everything from my past had been washed away in an instant.

Ready to start a new life for Jesus, I asked Vladimir (for that was my new friend’s name), to read me some of the verses in the Bible. He read a couple, and, for the first time, I felt them speaking to me in a way nothing else ever had. The words came alive and seemed to fill a thirst and void that I’d had.

What transpired in those 15 minutes that felt like an eternity is that I felt renewed in a way I never had before. I saw that it was getting dark (in Siberia it gets dark early), so I looked around and saw that most of the soldiers were still sitting by the fire drinking, while a couple seemed to be looking around for me.

Vladimir said a quick prayer to find the axe head, and sure enough, right after that he found it, which took me a little by surprise since the snow was quite deep. I handed him the New Testament I had, since I figured I could try and find another one in the truck back at camp. I walked back to the soldiers and said, "Let's load up the wood and get back to camp."

Back at camp, I got another New Testament and continued to read it and ask Vladimir to help me with the parts I couldn't understand on my own. One evening, one of the soldiers commented that I looked like the Christians, to which I just shrugged and poured him more vodka.

After a few days, Vladimir told me to try and get some of the other soldiers saved; he explained that part of being a Christian is witnessing to others, like he had to me. So I started trying to feel some of the soldiers out to see who was "sheepy." This led to a number of other soldiers getting saved as well, and together we would read and study the Bible.

One day during one of my study times with another soldier I felt the conviction to do something to help the Christians. Besides, now they felt more like family than anyone else ever had. I talked about this with a couple of other soldiers and tried to figure out some sort of plan.

I went down to the train station again to try and find out if any more trains would be passing through. Again, I was told that there weren't any scheduled trains. Back at camp, I went and talked to Vladimir and told him that I wanted to try and help them escape. He said that all the Christians had been praying for the Lord to work a miracle and free them.

He talked to me about listening to the Lord and following His lead. I thought it sounded good, and that, sure, he could do it since he'd been a Christian for so long, but me? I hardly knew how to pray.

Nevertheless, that night I got desperate with the Lord and poured out my whole heart to Him and asked Him to help me free the Christians somehow. Suddenly, I had a thought; I remembered that I still had the transfer order papers of the Christians to this prison camp. I got it and looked at it. While reading through it, I saw that the typewriter it had been typed on was missing ink and letters from the camp where I transferred them to. I discovered that I could change a couple of letters to a town further south, and that way have the transfer papers that I would need to move them from this camp. I changed the date of departure on the transfer paper for two days from then.

The only problem was transportation, since there weren't supposed to be any trains coming in for awhile. I went to the train station again the next day, and again heard that there were no trains expected. This was in the early days of the Soviet Union, and most services were hardly dependable at best.

I was a little discouraged but decided to pray and ask the Lord what to do. I heard a voice telling me to mail to myself the transfer papers that I had. I went to the

little post office in the village, put the papers inside an envelope and wrote the return address of the base in Moscow that I had been in and put the address of the camp on it. I left it at the post office and returned back to the camp.

Back at the camp I prayed again, as I still didn't know how to transport the Christians or what to do. Praying desperately and earnestly for the Lord's leading, I cracked open my Bible, and it opened right to the verse: "He shall make a way in the wilderness." Hmm, I thought, if only....

The next day, I got the letter that I'd mailed to myself, and showed the papers to the Colonel, praying desperately that he wouldn't question the orders. He looked at the envelope and the address and then the papers again and said for me to get some soldiers and trucks and take the Christians down to the train station right away. One good thing about those early revolutionary days was that no one questioned orders, since doing so could mean death.

I went and got some soldiers to round up the Christians and load them into the trucks and drive down to the train station. I picked all the soldiers that I had witnessed to and had gotten saved, which amounted to about two dozen, and a couple more to drive the trucks back to camp after we left.

We drove down to the train station, not really knowing how or what to do. When we got there we saw a train. I could not believe it! I told the soldiers to unload all the Christians and I went to talk to the engineer. He said that the train track was broken, so they'd been re-routed through this station. I also found out that they would be passing through the very town that I had written on the transfer papers.

I showed him the transfer papers, and told him that I needed to load all these “prisoners” on his train and take them to that town. He didn’t even give a second glance at them and said the whole train was practically empty since he just unloaded it before being routed to this train station. I went back and got all the Christians and the soldiers that had gotten saved, and told them to load up, and that we would be on our way. I sent the other soldiers and the trucks back to the camp once we were all on the train and on our way out.

On the train I found Vladimir and told him all that had happened. I was in shock and awe at everything that had just transpired. I could hardly speak, but just praise the Lord and cry. After telling all the other Christians and soldiers what had happened, we started singing together, and then Vladimir turned to me, smiled, and said, “Let’s go get the engineer saved!”

23. Marcello Di Pietroni de Lavina

My name is Marcello Di Pietroni de Lavina. I was born in what was the beginning of the 14th century in Italy, and later moved with my parents at a very early age to the south of France. My father was a merchant and traveled through many cities of southern Europe, but because of the intolerance and growing power of the church in Italy, many people like my family who were simple believers and refused to conform were forced to move.

We suffered many threats from people in our town who wanted us to follow the flow of the masses. But my father was born in the mountains and had never liked the city life and the false pretenses that many carried about themselves.

He believed in God and wanted to live as Jesus' disciples, leading a simple life, sharing with the needy, and helping others. But it wasn't very easy to do in the world of business—one had to be tough and ready for anything to make a profit. Many people around us who were professing Christians and who regularly worshipped in church, would act in ways that were very unchristian.

They appeared on the outside to be very pious and religious, but it was only in name, as their hearts were cold and closed to the needs of others. They followed every iota of the law and rules that the church commanded, but were far away from the original teachings of our Lord Jesus.

So my parents had to choose—to stay and compromise their convictions, to conform to the masses and be as hypocritical as everyone else, or to act on what they believed was right in their heart, which would mean lose business and be

rejected by others. They chose the latter, and one day we sold all that we had and moved on to a new country where we would be able to live our beliefs and follow what Jesus had said. My father had often journeyed to the south of France and had met different people who had promised to help us in case of need.

After a long journey, we settled down in a little town not far from the coast in the beautiful sunny south of France. The climate and the vegetation and the beautiful Mediterranean reminded us a lot of our village back in Italy, so we didn't feel very homesick, and my father was quickly able to open a little business. He would travel around and buy fine materials, draperies, and delicate fabric, and mother would sew pretty dresses and tunics that they would sell in their little shop. We didn't make a lot of money—just enough to help us live with all that we needed, but it was also an opportunity to meet people, to have contact with different strata of the society, and my father was always ready to talk about his faith and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

It was during his travels in the different towns in the South of France that my father heard about the Cathars, a religious group whose members had lived a few centuries ago and had been persecuted and even killed by the Crusader armies. Most of the sect had been annihilated, but some had been able to flee and hide and secretly continue to practice and believe in their religious doctrines.

The Inquisition had been very thorough in trying to find and suppress this movement, and many had suffered martyrdom. But the darkness will never be able to quench completely the true light—just as the early disciples had been persecuted and destroyed, and yet the power of the Roman army and their evil emperors had never succeeded in stopping the spreading of the Good News. Even

when the church became the power and eventually compromised, the true believers had continued to survive!

History states that all the rebellious sects had been destroyed, and that all that opposed the established, approved church had been taken out of the way. But that is not the full truth! Historians are quick to erase any details that are contrary to the normal approved trend of the moment, and it is so sad that the masses just gobble up all this propaganda. But one day when you will come to this side of the real world you will look back and discover the real truth, and many will be surprised that very often it is so different from what the historians there on Earth have written.

Look at history; look at the life of our Lord! He spent three years preaching and talking about heavenly things, and it was so obvious that He was telling the truth. He performed miracles, He raised the dead, He healed every kind of sickness, and He went about everywhere doing good—but how many followed in His footsteps? How many were willing to stand up for their convictions and act according to what their hearts were telling them was right? So few!

Others in the years after that have stood up for the truth, and some have walked the dusty road to follow in Jesus' path, but they were often like the voice of John crying in the desert. It is so sad that so many had heard the truth but had closed their eyes and ears and had preferred to sink back into the oblivion of the masses. So that's the message I wanted to share with you. Because of my father's conviction and the courage of my mother to follow him, I was raised in the admonition of our Lord Jesus and followed Him all my life. Yes, there were times when I was tempted to give up and conform like everybody else, but the courage

and conviction of my father and of the many brethren we had met in our travels helped me to stay firm and stand for what was right.

Yes, I suffered persecution also: I was reviled, I was mocked for my beliefs, I was thrown out of cities, I was beaten up by mobs—but I never denied my faith. And like many of these Cathars, these survivors, we continued to keep the fire of our true faith burning and we refused to conform to the approved religion of our day. Sometimes it's easy to stand against an enemy whom you know is obviously anti-God, but it is so much harder to stand up for your convictions when you know that the ones who are opposing you and persecuting you are supposed to be your brothers who believe in the same Lord, but who hate you because you are a testimony against their hypocrisy and falsehood.

That is my simple message for you—dare to be different, even if the whole world is against you. Our Lord knows His sheep, and in the Judgment Day He will separate them from the goats, and many will be quite surprised to be cast out and left in the darkness outside.

Whatever happens, whatever the approved System says is truth, follow what is in your heart! Stand up for what is right, and even if they lie about you, if they twist history and turn it to their own advantage or to their own praise, follow on the dusty path that our Lord Jesus walked, and you will be sure to come to His resting place where He will welcome you with wide open arms into His fold with His other sheep.

24. A Tale from the Stockades!

“Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness ... quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Hebrews 11:33-34).

I was a simple man, a cobbler and general fix-it guy as you might say nowadays. Much of my time was spent alone working on different things in my shop, but my days were filled with talking with Jesus.

I constantly communicated with Him throughout the day and considered Him to be my partner in all that I did. Those that came in to have me work for them would stay for a while, and I would minister to their spirits while I worked, fixing the things that I was being paid to repair.

So that is the background. My humble life was not that glamorous or showy, but it was a fulfilling life, and one that I tried to live for the glory of my Lord.

In my earlier years I had spent some time in a monastery, for I had wanted to join an Order of friars, in order that I might serve my Lord. My days at the monastery were filled with reading and copying His precious words. I loved every moment that I could spend reading these priceless words and dedicated many of them to memory.

This is how I got my basics in Christian teachings, and where I got the different parables and stories that I would later share with those that I met.

I will not get into all that is involved and why I decided not to remain a priest. But suffice it to say that the Lord brought me to a point where I could no longer remain there and was sent away.

At first, I wandered around for a while, not knowing where to go or what to do. Then one night, I received a vision of a man mending a pot and reshaping it and I heard a voice that said, “I call you to be a cobbler for Me, shaping the hearts and lives of men. And adding Me into their lives to restore them and fix the cracks and gaps that they have.” I woke up and was led to a village where I inquired where I could find the local cobbler.

I found his workshop and became his apprentice in the ways of mending and repairing. He taught me his trade, and in exchange, I shared my knowledge of the Holy Scriptures with him. We were a good team and he was skilled and taught me well.

As he grew older, I did more of the work, and got used to sharing passages and stories with him as I would work and mend. Sometimes, others would stop by and listen as well, and sometimes he would tell the stories that I had told him. We so loved telling these stories that it became known that if you had stuff to repair, you would get “a mend and a tale” at our shop.

This is how I got started and how I was called to serve Jesus. On the day of my old friend’s death he bequeathed to me his shop so that I might keep telling others of our wonderful Savior.

One day, a very rich noble came through our village, as he had business with someone there. He had brought along his son for this journey, but as he had to conduct affairs and didn't want to be bothered with fatherly duties, he sent him and a guardian to wander around this "quaint village." They soon found their way to my shop, and seeing the sign promising a tale, he went in, hoping for a tale of dragons and knights, of heroes and lords and ladies.

But instead, I told him a tale of a small boy whom Jesus used to feed thousands of people. He enjoyed this story, and begged for another one. Since business was slow that day, and this boy was so eager for more stories, I obliged him.

"Another miracle story, please," he begged. "Okay," said I, "the best miracle story of all." And I told him the full story of My sweet Lord. He was enthralled the entire time and drank in every word.

Since I wasn't mending or repairing at the time, I got fully into the telling of the tale with props and animated acting. I threw in a couple of miracles that Jesus did while on Earth—some fun, and others more serious, like raising the dead. I came to the closing of the story, and the boy was beaming that the greatest Hero of all time had risen from the dead. He clapped at the end of my story, and I closed by having him pray that "the greatest Hero the world has ever known would be with him then, and always protecting him in life, helping him to make the right choices, and bringing him Home to Him when he died." It was a wonderful day for me, as well as a life-changing day for this young lad.

It was coming to an end, though, and the guardian of this boy took him back to where he would be spending the night. He was so excited, and in his young and

animated fashion, he told his father all of what I had said, animating parts and sending his dad into fits of laughter over his funny way of acting out different parts of his tales.

Unfortunately, the cardinal who'd traveled with them did not enjoy the way that I, a layman, had not only shared the Holy Scriptures with this lad, but had also "added the twist" of making Jesus a personal Savior for everyone.

He spent the night speaking to the father, trying to convince him of the danger that I was to this village, and that I must be put to death for my heresy. The father, however, was not that convinced that I was deserving of any punishment at all. Finally, it was decided that I would be put in stocks for three days, but the cardinal secretly arranged that I would actually remain in them for ten days. I awoke to the sound of soldiers banging on my door, and was dragged unceremoniously through the city and placed in the stockade. A friend came by, and seeing me there, immediately went home and prepared me some food and fed me my morning meal. Another man whom I had ministered to saw me later and fed me my afternoon meal.

This went on all throughout the day, with friends and acquaintances stopping by to give me water and food and everything that I required.—All of this to the great fury of the cardinal who was able to see me from his window.

He sent one of his men down to mock me so that he could watch the "show." "Tell us a story now, cobbler," he mocked in a loud voice, laughing to himself.

“Certainly,” I replied. Several people stopped by to hear what I was saying and heard the tale of the unprofitable servants, since the Lord had brought that one to my remembrance, and it was so fitting to the situation.

Finally, the cardinal could stand it no longer and had guards posted around so that I might not be able to witness anymore, or even be given food. It began to rain on me; my back was cramped, my neck ached, and my wrists were sore, but I praised the Lord loudly for all the blessings that He had given me. I even thanked Him for the rain, which meant I didn’t need to shower. Several passersby laughed good-naturedly, and I was blessed with a feeling of strength, warmth, and peace. By this time the cardinal was desperate for my “humiliation,” and so ordered that baskets of fruit be bought and that the guards offer them to passersby so that they could throw them at me. This worked pretty well, and he ordered more baskets to be brought.

In the window above him a young boy was watching all that was going on with concern and sadness showing in his gentle features. He could hear the cardinal laughing and taunting from his window and finally plucked up the courage to disobey his father’s command to “not go and see him ever again.” He grabbed a small flask of wine and ran down the long spiral stairs, making his way to me. Meanwhile, I was still enjoying the “fruits” of the cardinal’s generosity towards me. The guards, seeing that the cardinal was enjoying this so immensely, and in an effort to carry favors with him, had taken to throwing the fruits themselves. They were throwing harder and harder, from closer and closer, each in an effort to outdo the other. Finally, not to be outdone, one of the guards picked up a rock and threw it. I prayed silently as I saw it coming, and for some reason it missed

me altogether. The guard was flustered, but remembering the merriment of the cardinal, endeavored to find another rock to undo his terrible misfortune.

On this scene stepped a young boy with fiery determination in his eyes and a prayer to the “world’s finest Hero” to be with him and give him courage. He stood in front of me. “STOP THIS!” he yelled. “This man has done nothing wrong.” A murmur of assent went up from the crowd that had started to gather around. “Get out of the way!” roared the guard, by this time livid with anger.

I pleaded for the boy to get out of the way, for I was sure that the guard was about to throw, regardless of if he was in the way or not. But he was steadfast and unmoved and held his ground like a valiant soldier of the Lord.

Then came the moment we all knew was coming. The guard threw, hitting him full in the stomach and he bent over in pain, thus clearing the way for the guard to throw again. A throw that would never happen, though, for as he drew back his arm, he was cuffed so hard on the side of his head that he was sent reeling to the ground.

He jumped up to meet his attacker, but was met instead with the fiery eyes of the boy’s father. “My lord,” he said, as he could think of nothing else. “Seize him!” were the only words that came out of the nobleman’s mouth. Scooping up his son, he strode away, but as he was leaving, he ordered a remaining guard to release me.

I came by later that day and requested to see how the boy was doing. He was fine, and miraculously had not a mark on him. I was summoned before his father and came before him a bit nervously. “You have taught my boy many things, cobbler,”

he said. “Integrity, honor, valor, and conviction. These are things that I could not even teach him myself. I would that you remain with us and be his tutor if it so please you, for you have formed a special bond with him, and I see that the fruit of what you have taught him is only good.” I of course accepted the task with joy, for I knew that I had been called for this very thing.

And what of the cardinal, you ask? Well, he had already fled, and was never to return to that village. After seeing what had happened in the square, and knowing that most of the retribution would fall on his head, he and his men left hastily. One of his servants had told him that he was being sent for, and that the nobleman had “half a mind to put him in the stockades.”

That is the end of my tale but I leave you with this thought: “The person that you are ministering to right now may be the very key to your survival in the future.”

25. Ministry with the Slum Kids

Note: We recommend that parents or teachers read this story first and confirm with the Lord before reading it with children or young teens. In some cases the Lord might show you that it would be good to read it, but that you should have some discussion or hearing from Him with them afterwards, in order to help them come away from it with faith rather than concern. It involves a young teen separated from his parents, which could be difficult for some.

I peered cautiously through the narrow slit in the wall in front of me. A dozen searchlights—maybe more—emanated from the empty street in front of me. I had taken refuge in an abandoned and broken-down house on the east side of town. The slums were no place for me, but right now I knew of nowhere else to hide.

The break-up of our Home had come without warning. One morning I was washing dishes and getting ready for school—the next I was running through our neighbors' lawns and had flagged down a bus. Same time, different days, and my world had changed.

I'm a JETT, you see, just 12 years old. I know that should make you feel sorry for me, but I don't feel sorry for myself. I would have maybe, if I had thought of this earlier, but right now, it seems so right, so fitting. Not like I deserved it, but more like I was born for it.

Our Home had had indication that trouble was brewing for several weeks. Dark men in business suits would follow us, and then there was the usual van parked

outside on our street. We think they let us see them because they wanted to intimidate us into leaving, but we had prayed and the Lord had said that our time for leaving would come, but that He would show us when. I guess He did.

I didn't get to see what happened with the others, though mercifully, we had already contacted our lawyer, and he would check in with us every day to make sure we were still “there.” If we lost contact, we'd worked out for him to contact the appropriate channels, and try to secure our release. But we didn't know for sure that he could get it.

It feels so different, growing up so fast. One day, I was just doing what I was told; I memorized because I knew that's what I was supposed to do, and I read the Word faithfully, never really knowing what it was like for that to be the only thing you have left of the Family.

I kept my face a distance from the slit in case one of the searching beams would find me there. It seemed like just a token search, and maybe they wouldn't get too intense—like going house-to-house. I knew that now would be a good time for desperate prayer, but I couldn't keep my eyes off the police vans and the group of soldiers.

Because of all hell breaking loose when the stock market had collapsed, the government had declared martial law. We knew that it would make things better as far as safety, but we also kept desperate prayer that, for as long as possible, we be spared from the powers that be, in case they were not ruling in our favor.

Little things had caught our attention before the surveillance. Bad publicity on just about every religion had come out, “exposing” their sinister plans for world disruption, and giving a history of all the so-called “religious wars” mankind had suffered.

I didn't really need an explanation to see where that was going, but the adults in the Home kept us constantly updated—especially one guy would keep reminding us that we were "promised" persecution. He really meant business, and I'm glad he did.

Back to reality. I'm watching the soldiers, and they're about to head back into their trucks and the police into their vans. As I saw them pulling away, I started relaxing, but then I heard a faint knocking on the wall behind me.

I tensed. Maybe some soldiers were still behind? But it wasn't an authoritative knock, rather a very hushed tapping. Obviously a signal.

"Um, hello?" I asked into the darkness. The knocking stopped. I heard a faint scuffle coming from the next room.

A small figure walked around the wall and up to where I stood.

"They are gone—yes?" he queried. It seemed he couldn't help but already know the answer, but he was trying to make conversation.

"Yes," I replied, still looking at him and trying to place him.

I heard more scuffling, and saw a group of boys behind him, watching by the wall.

"I am Bob," he said, though it sounded more like "Bobe." He spoke in halting English. "We watch you come in here, and we not make sound so soldiers not find you." He smiled a pleased smile, as if they had somehow rescued me.

"Thank you," was all I found to say.

"You stay here. You need anything, you let me know?"

"Okay..."

They left, back around the wall again, I guessed.

I wondered what that meant. Why did they show up to talk to me? Then it dawned on me. I guess they must be one of the slum gangs, maybe the boys we were helping before our CTP work was halted by "new urban legislation," or something like that.

I had heard that many of the boys' gangs did things that seemed incomprehensible to adults, but I didn't let this fear worry me now.

I'd be getting hungry soon, I knew, though I wasn't sure if this was something I should bring to the attention of my newfound "protector." Suddenly, a feeling welled up inside of me, and I knew I had to pray and get the Lord's perspective on things.

I bowed my head and closed my eyes. "Jesus, I know You're there. You said You'd always be with me. I don't really know what to do now, and I don't really know what questions I should be asking You. But please speak to me. I really want to hear from You."

A moment passed, and then I heard the familiar sound coming in my head. "My precious child, I have not left you, nor have I left your parents, brothers, sisters, and friends, all of whom I love." They are going to fulfill their purpose, but I have brought you here for a special mission."

That brought some relief to my heart. At least I hadn't failed yet.

The voice continued, "Go now, talk to the boys; ask them why they are here, and ask them for food and shelter. I have a purpose for you being here. Trust Me, and it will be so."

"Um... excuse me," I said, peeking my head around the wall.

It was darker in this room. I should've hidden in here.

"Yes," came the answer from Bobe. "You need something?" he queried.

"Um, yes, if it's alright. Do you have some food, or water perhaps? And is it alright that I stay with you?"

"Yes, yes!" he responded, though I wasn't sure to which question he was replying. He snapped his fingers and muttered something in the local language. A younger-looking boy went over to get something.

I couldn't resist the next question: "Why are you helping me?"

Bobe smiled. "I knew you before," he said. "Long time ago, you come to help us. You make sure we have food and water and good clothes. Now, government close down school. They say Christian staff are bad, but I know that not true. I think they must say you are bad too. We not have much, but we can give to you. Same as you do for us," he smirked again.

"This is Raol, my second man," he said, introducing us to a scruffy-haired kid, with wide-open brown eyes. It almost seemed that he didn't blink.

"Raol says that many people were arrested today, many houses were emptied. People with families all gone. Staff at our old school all gone. I see you here and figure your family must be gone too."

I looked at the floor, remembering them.

"But this no problem," he said, trying to sound self-assured. "We now your family." I tried to smile. "Thank you."

This exchange completed, he beckoned me to sit next to him. I assumed the rest of the boys didn't speak English, so most of my communicating was with Bob. The boy who had been previously assigned to fetch something returned. He had a small paper cup, and a crust of bread. I could tell the bread was stale, but it still smelled good.

"Government give food to poor people. All crowded around food center. Some stand in line to get food, and we stand with them to pretend we are children. But still, not enough food for all. We share."

Clever idea, I thought.

A few moments passed. Now that I knew I was here for a reason, it was hard to sit still in the silence. I made conversation.

"So, you all live here?" I asked.

"Yes, for now. If too many police come nearby, we move again. We like different..." His sentence was interrupted by a moan. A boy of about six or seven years old was huddled in a corner with chattering teeth, and tears in his eyes. It wasn't even cold. I knew by the way he was shivering that he wasn't well. "What happened?" I asked, pointing with my eyes.

"He fell sick a week ago. First, just a small fever. Now, when he pees it hurts, and we don't know what to do. We want to take him to a hospital, but he says he won't go. If he does go, we will probably not see him again, so he does not want to go to hospital."

I nodded, trying to understand.

But there must be something I could do. In an instant, I knew what I should do, but could I really?

"Lay hands on the sick and they shall recover," I remembered a portion of that verse. But I'm only 12, and can barely take care of myself. But now I remembered I had a mission. And no soldier would forget his mission, I thought to myself. That sense of duty brought warmth to my heart.

"I will pray for him," I felt the words coming out of my mouth.

"Yes, the good people used to do that too when we were sick," Bob assented. I presumed he meant the people who ran the orphanage.

I motioned for the others to come around. Bob barked an order, those who were sleeping woke up, and he gathered them around in a circle.

When we moved closer, I saw the boy. He was thin, creating abnormally pronounced cheekbones that were now stained with tears. I touched his face with my hands. I wasn't used to touching people in this way, but I felt a power moving my hands to where they needed to be.

I placed my hands on his stomach. I felt them need to move lower. Right on his lower belly I felt them stop, and at that moment he whimpered in pain.

"What is his name?" I asked.

"Jono," whispered Bob, trying to be as supportive and focused as he possibly could.

"Jono," I repeated, "I'm going to pray for you. Jesus is going to make you better." That last part came out of my mouth before I knew it. Yes, I knew Jesus could do miracles, but through me?

Everyone started folding their hands, and on that cue, I closed my eyes.

"Jesus, please help Jono." I started. Help me, Lord. I started to waver inside. I was never good at praying in public. But the words came.

"Jesus, Your hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is Your ear heavy that it cannot hear. And by the power of the keys..." I tried to remember a promise...

"... Nothing on this Earth can stand against the power of the keys, which you have access to at any time."

I hoped that was a promise, and I continued praying.

"Jesus, I don't know what is wrong with him, but You do." I looked up, and it was almost as if He were right there looking at me. Tears started falling from my eyes, as if I were bearing Jono's pain as my own.

"Please give him deliverance. Touch and heal him as You've promised You could." Many of the boys' eyes moistened seeing my tears. I guess not many folks showed much concern for their cares.

I looked down at Jono. He was sleeping.

Well, Lord, I did my best.

That's okay, I heard a voice say. The rest is up to Me.

I sat next to Jono, still watching him. The morning's exertion had taken its toll, and with my stomach full, I felt weariness take me. I fell asleep.

When I awoke, most of the boys were gone. Bob remained, standing next to the wall where our room led outward.

"Bob," I called. "Where are the others?"

"They have gone to town," he replied. "Big demonstration—pronouncement," he said. I assumed he meant "announcement."

"There are many people there, so ... we find the things we need." He said this rather matter-of-factly.

"Find the things we need"? I thought to myself. Stealing? A foolish grin crept over my face as I figured this out.

I sobered up a bit as I realized the sample I needed to be. Well, it was understandable they would steal, but probably not the best solution. We'd come to that another time, I felt sure.

"What kind of demonstration?" I asked. Before Bob replied, in walked Raol. Bob seemed to forward the question. Raol responded with alternating glances between me and Bob.

"He say they have talk of new changes. Many people still poor, and want health benefit for their children. The government going to identify everyone, and then they will have the food they want."

"I see," I responded. Still not really understanding. Identify?

"What sort of identify? Like, how?" I managed to ask.

Bob asked again, and Raol seemed to answer as if it were no concern of his. "He said they have new computers, new ways to make sure everyone is covered. Maybe something people carry on them, like computer, or even smaller."

Almost as if in a dream, I heard those words.

"It's the Mark of the Beast!" I said out loud.

"What?" Raol and Bob looked at me with quizzical stares.

"Bible," I said. "The Bible said this would happen."

"Your Bible?" asked Bob. He still did not understand.

"The Bible," I said, as I made the motion of opening a book.

"A long time ago, Jesus said that bad things would happen, and that one day, they would try to 'identify' everyone with a small computer in their head and hands." I tried to explain this as slowly and simply as possible. "So then no one can buy or sell or get food unless you have this implant." I further explained.

"Well, then, maybe we should get one," Bob said, trying to be helpful.

"No ... it is not good. Jesus said this man who will make you wear the computer is a bad man, he will hurt many good people—Christians—and he will make you work for him to do bad things."

"Very interesting," was all Bob could say, as he took it in.

He then turned to Raol who was settling down, running his hands through his hair. He muttered a few words, and asked questions so fast I couldn't understand. I should've picked up more of the local language, I chided myself, drawing a blank at what they were talking about. Still, I thought about my being here "for a purpose."—Maybe I'd get them to teach me a few phrases?

"Raol says that they really are making people wear it in their hand. The computer goes inside your skin?" Bob's voice was incredulous. "And he said they have another computer—a better computer—for the head too."

Looking at Bob's now dumbfounded face, I cherished the thought that I had at least paid attention during Bible study.

"Jesus and many people said this a long time ago. He said that there would come a very bad time upon the whole world, and it would be difficult for good people to live. But He also said that He would protect us and provide our needs for us too."

"This Jesus was very good man." said Bob thoughtfully. "Will he protect us?"

"Jesus cares for everyone, all those who want Him to." I struggled for a simple way to explain salvation to him. I remembered the words in the local language. Jesús te ama.

At this, his face brightened. I went closer to him and kept talking.

"Jesus wants to protect you—you and all the boys—and He cares for us so much. If you ask Him into your heart, you will have someone to care for you always," I said.

This caught on with him. I continued, "Please repeat a prayer after me. Say what I say..."

I folded my hands and he did the same. "Jesus, please come into my heart..."

"Jesus, please come into my heart..." repeated Bob.

It was an amazing feeling. I actually felt like a disciple of Jesus. I had witnessed before, but now after being on my own, I realized how much I had to offer, and what my calling was. No one was making me pray with this boy, but I felt Jesus' concern and passion for these kids take over.

After the prayer was over, Bob translated the prayer, and prayed it with Raol, and then we heard a voice from the back of the room.

"I want to pray too!"

It was Jono. He had been wide awake watching and listening to the whole thing.

Bob rushed over to his side. In endearing tones, Bob stroked his head and seemed to ask how he was doing.

Jono responded by saying the same phrase over and over. "What's he saying?" I couldn't help myself asking.

"He says he is better, that a man came and healed him!"

A man? I'm not a man. "Who's he talking about?"

"He said a man came, dressed as a doctor. He put his hand underneath his head, and gave him his favorite juice. After this, the pain he had stopped..." Bob's voice hesitated as he felt his face "...and his fever is gone also!"

At this point, what had happened suddenly dawned on Bob. "It's a miracle," he said, with no pretense or put-on drama. His mouth was agape.

"Jesus did it!" I found myself replying. "He cares for you and all the children."

Bob prayed with Jono upon his request, and then he excused himself for some silent time of meditation. He knelt on the floor, and although I couldn't hear what he was saying, I saw his lips move. He appeared to be thanking God.

Well, I probably need to have a little time alone too, I thought. I thanked the Lord for how He'd brought me here, and the miracles He'd done. I thanked Him for calling me to be one of His soldiers in this Endtime.

Just then the rest of the boys came in. 12 boys in all. Oh my goodness! I thought. Not a coincidence.

My work had just begun. I knew that until the Lord would bring me back together with my family, He would continue to provide and care for me right where I was. I had no fear or apprehension—rather, an excited feeling was welling up in me. Yes, this was the life...!

26. Lydia, a Christian Roman Aristocrat

My name is Lydia and I lived in Rome during the days of one of the purges that went on from time to time as the emperors and the inner ruling circles tried to retain their grip on the increasingly fragmented social fabric of Rome. We lived in exciting times and we saw our Lord do many miracles as a result of our fervent prayers. People don't always understand how deep and wide our witness was in those days and the hearts that we touched and convicted by our love and forthrightness.

I came from a noble Family. My father was a Roman and my mother hailed from what was left of ancient Greek nobility. I was raised part of the time in Italy, and the rest in Greece. Like many children of the wealthy or powerful in those days, I was educated by tutors in my early years.

My parents had been converted when I was around 8, and had taught me in the ways of Christianity. While they were discreet about their faith, it was generally known that they were either believers or, at the very least, sympathetic to the Christians.

The times were very turbulent; there were various factions in Rome that were vying for power, and often alliances between these different factions were forged in order to promote their respective agendas.

There were members of the old aristocracy, whose families had originally served the Republic; there were people who had bought their titles or public office; and there were yet others who had been given various titles or positions due to their being “useful” to the powers that be of their day.

Some people were desperately trying to hold onto power and influence at whatever cost for their own personal gain. Yet others were really trying to do the right thing and be of service to what was at that time the Empire. They reasoned that they could be a moderating influence to preserve some dignity and humanity to the government of the day and to prevent things from sliding into utter chaos. Even people who were not Christians would often stand up for their convictions when they saw things that they felt were unfair and betrayed the once noble aspirations of the early Republic. People who were known to be Christians who were honest and upright inspired others to stand up for the truth.

I personally witnessed many miracles of people's hearts being touched and allowing things to go on that technically they should not have. I saw soldiers release “unpatriotic enemies of the state,” as the soldiers saw firsthand that the people who were supposedly so “bad” were actually more honest and upright than were the officials who had assigned the soldiers to hunt down and imprison the “dissidents” in the first place.

I saw soldiers get down on their knees and ask for forgiveness for what they had either done or were about to do. I saw officials grant amnesty to large groups of people, or in some cases divert grain and other necessities to Christian villages or sections of towns when there had been an official policy to withhold these things from “uncooperative elements in society.”

I also saw miracles where soldiers were stopped in their tracks and prevented from doing things that they were ordered to do. I saw the Lord have wheels fall off of chariots carrying high officials that were leading raids against believers. These officials were either wounded or died, removing the impetus for the raid.

Many times the lower officials and soldiers were sympathetic to the “rebels” and knew that they were being persecuted under some pretense which was many times an attempt to cover up or divert attention from the real problems of the day that the powers that be were responsible for.

I think that some of the miracles that stood out the most to me were the ones where officials’ hearts were touched and changed when they were convicted by what they were doing. When we boldly stood up for what we believed in and poured out our hearts to these officials, and witnessed to them and won them, at times they would move Heaven and Earth to help us. These were men and in some cases women of power, wealth, and influence who were no strangers to the futility of lives without a purpose other than selfish goals. In many cases they were aware that they were being used to promote certain agendas that they did not agree with.

When I look back on what we experienced and the many, many miracles the Lord did for us, I realize that it is somewhat of a foretaste of what our dear Lord will do for you, my precious brothers and sisters, in the dark days to come.

I know that some of you might be tempted to worry or fear about whether or not you will be able to “handle” the times that are coming. Will you have the faith, the courage, and the foresight to triumph over what will come your way? Well, the Lord will.

As long as you are faithful to stay in tune with the Lord and your spirit helpers, they will come through for you when you need them. You can never be “ready” for these things that will come to pass in any way other than by being a yielded and open vessel of the Lord's Spirit.

The world of today is very similar to the world in my day where there were these different factions all vying for power and influence, in some cases because they felt it was the “right” thing to do, and in other cases they were merely self-serving and self-centered and only looking out for themselves.

At the end of the day, all of these people are just that: people, frail men and women who, in many cases, know what messes they are and how much they need help. In other cases they are totally deluded and drunken with their power and influence.

In each instance the Lord is able to do miracles and to touch the hearts and minds of these people. In some cases He will use something that has gone on in their life to convict them to do the right thing. In other cases he will just make them do something that they might not even want to do. They will grant permission for something to happen, or they will look the other way, or they will be totally oblivious to the obvious.

There are many ways that the Lord will be able to work mightily on the behalf of His brides as they put their hands into His hands and let Him lead them through the darkness that shall come upon the world. It will be a time of wonderful miracles and great joy, as the Lord will manifest His power in many marvelous ways that otherwise would not be possible if the circumstances were not so dire. Where iniquity abounds, grace does much more abound.

I have asked the Lord to allow me to help and assist you in dealing with these officials who will in many cases have the power of life and death over you. I wish to intercede on your behalf in answer to your prayers I wish to be used by the

Lord to change the minds and hearts of those in power in order to keep and protect you.

Having been raised the way that I was, and having been familiar with moving in circles of power and influence, I had and still do have to this day a special burden for these types of people. I understand their empty lives, their attempts to find satisfaction in many ways and their having the influence and means to be able to pursue whatever their hearts desire.

I became known in the circles of power as an intercessor and advocate for the poor and persecuted, not all of whom were Christians. I would often come face to face with people whom I had been raised with, or who were friends of mine or my family. I was generally well respected for being honest, caring, and even seductive when the need arose, which it did from time to time.

The Lord gave me great wisdom to know how to move in these circles without offending people, while at the same time maintaining my integrity. I had the gift of telling the truth in the most difficult of circumstances and in such a way that it was a real witness.

Understanding the Roman mind, and having been schooled in philosophy and rhetoric, the Lord anointed me to say things just the right way and at just the right time to have the maximum impact on not only the person that I was speaking to, but also to others who were present.

I never ceased to be thrilled with what the Lord did, and I know that the miracles that He did for me in those days were only a shadow of the mighty things that the Lord will do for you all in the days to come. (End of message.)

(Jesus:) This one has revealed herself as an intercessor for you, and as one who will stand with you before kings and magistrates in the days to come. It is good to know her name so that you can call on her when you need to.

27. A Strange Case of Mistaken Identity

(As told by one of you:) There's no telling what could have happened. It could have been for better or for worse. If I was put in that situation again, I'm not sure I would have been any surer that it would end with deliverance. But it did! I had already seen so many jaw-dropping miracles of supply and protection. My faith felt as if it had grown from a mustard seed to a much bigger type of seed. But it's funny how when you are up against a wall, in a tight spot, or whatever you want to call it, there goes through your mind the doubt of "what if the keys fail this time? What if I don't have the faith that is needed?" Especially when a much bigger test comes your way.

However, we know that all things are designed and purposed by the Lord. He is the One Who delivered, Who delivers, and Who will yet deliver. And this incident proved once again to me that with the Lord on our side, what have we to fear? The police had taken in for questioning one of our junior teen girls. We had been able to stay under cover pretty well so far, to the point where we were taking our safety a little for granted. Then it happened. We knew that this was a time where all our spiritual investment would come to use. We were in need of so many things—faith, peace, trust, and most importantly, a plan. Yes, a plan! What were we to do? What did this all mean? Did it mean that our end was near? Did it mean that we would now have to go through the torment of persecution, questioning, hassle?—All those things that we had prepared ourselves for? Many of us had realized that that day would come, but when was the question that had hung for so long over our heads. It had happened to others and there were definite signs that it was coming our way. So why were we surprised?

It was at that moment that we realized just how prepared we were without knowing it. We had studied the Word, had been faithful to use the new weapons, and to strengthen our unity. And it was all good. But it wasn't until we were faced with this testing moment that we realized just how quickly the arsenal of spiritual weapons we needed came in handy. It's like each one presented itself before us in order of their importance at that time. We felt their presence and knew that we had all that we needed to face this distressing situation. All we had to do was ask the Lord and He would show, He would lead, guide, and deliver. But deliver? Deliver us to what? Deliver us from whom?

That's when I realized that I couldn't have those thoughts running through my mind. I needed to focus on the power. I needed to get that heavenly thought power activated through the keys and through total obedience to what the Lord would tell us to do.

It was one of those situations where I felt the way Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego might have felt when the king asked them to bow before the golden image. They were willing to die over that. Well, it wasn't that we were asked to bow down before anyone, but the truth of the matter was that we could have bowed to our fear or our doubts. But we had to make a stand and say that we were willing to face the fires that the Lord had for us rather than give in to the Evil One and his principalities.

There were only a few of us. After using some time to strengthen our spirits, we brought the matter before the Lord and delivered our souls. To make a long story short, He showed us that this teen girl would be released, and that we would be free to move on to our next destination where we would prepare for the full-

fledged tribulation that would soon be upon us. He added that the way this girl would be delivered would be through unconventional methods.

First, all of us except one would go into the main part of town and tell everyone of the coming of the Antichrist and the Tribulation. We were to speak what the Lord would show us and witness it fervently, as a last warning.

Then my heart almost stopped. The Lord told me that He would need for me to go to the police station where they were holding this girl and walk right up to the office and let them know that I was there to see the girl, and that they would let me in. It seemed crazy. It seemed dangerous. But the Lord did say that we would have to act on what He showed us without hesitation or giving the Enemy any time to try to convince us it couldn't be done.

Well, in this case, I didn't necessarily need the Enemy to lie to me that it couldn't be done. It was definitely one of those apparently impossible commands you get from the Lord every once in a while. Or was it going to be a regular occurrence now? We'd just have to wait and see.

However, regardless of what the Lord had in mind, whether He wanted me to go there to be detained with her, so that we could be a strength to one another, or had something of a miracle up His sleeve, I decided to go along with it.

We said a desperate prayer, using the keys and putting everything in the Lord's hands. Then we packed the few belongings the Lord had shown us to take, along with the few belongings of our teen girl, and split the scene.

So there I was, standing in front of the police station. “Giving it time” would only make me become fearful, so I checked in with the Lord and walked up those steps. I went up to the first desk I saw and asked, “May I see the girl? The young girl you detained today for questioning?”

The man looked at me in shock, “Um, oh, you are already here. We weren’t expecting you so soon. Of course, just let me contact my boss and let him know that you are ready to question her to find out where the rest of her sect is.”

“Er...um...yes, you do that.” So that’s what they were doing with her... but who am “I” anyways? It doesn’t matter, this is working. Lord, You continue to lead and guide me. Help me to cling to the keys and not make one wrong move, because obviously You have a plan with this and know exactly where this is going.

“Follow me, sir. We are keeping her in one of our most secure rooms in the back. She has been silent all morning and only opens her mouth to pray. We have used all possible “gentle” tactics, and it’s perhaps time for more “aggressive” methods. She is actually quite strong for such a young girl. We’d have thought that by now she would have broken.”

I remained silent. That’s our Lisa. I bet she has been feeling the impossible become possible too, by just being silent and only praying. Ha. Lord bless her for turning to You.

He opened the door to the highly secured room and closed it behind me. There were cameras all around.

She said, “I knew you were coming”, and smiled. Tears were in her eyes. “They said they had received clues as to where you were, and that it was only a matter of time before they captured you, too. Oh, how I prayed!”

“Yes, but I am here now and the Lord is with us, and He has promised your deliverance. Just how that will happen, though, I don’t know yet.”

“He promised me I would be freed. He showed me that it would involve you, so that’s how I knew you were coming.”

I sat opposite her and we chatted a bit, but most of all prayed and waited for the Lord to show us what to do next. That’s when the alarm went off, and immediately the whole place was filled with noise and action. I opened the door and saw that the hall was clear.

The Lord gave me a strong feeling that now was the time to take our flight. Apparently there had been a prison break, and the one who’d managed to break out had let all the other inmates free. This called for full-scale attention, so much so that it seemed like this new, valuable prisoner of theirs had suddenly been forgotten. Or had she? This was definitely out of my control. All I had to do was follow.

So I started leading her the way that I had come in, but we heard a voice and both knew we were to follow it. It led us in another direction. Out the back way. We don’t know how we got out of there with all the commotion that was going on without running into anyone.

Once we were out, there were police running everywhere, but we walked right out of there without anyone noticing us.

We then went to the main part of the city where the others were witnessing. It was like they knew that it was finished; the anointing left, and they knew that now was the time to leave. We knew that the next step was to use the tickets the Lord had told us to buy as a contingency plan a few weeks back and split.

Once we were on our way to our next destination, we all showed our praise and thankfulness to Jesus by smiling and just closing our eyes in gratitude. Yes, the moment would come when we would scream and throw our hands in the air and do whatever came naturally when thanking the One Who'd saved our lives. But that time would have to wait. Right now we had to focus on acting as normal as we could.

You see, even though this sounds like something the Lord can do for His children and it very well is, it's not until you are faced with it in real life that you realize just how strong and powerful the Lord can be through you. He takes control. He takes over. He knows the story from beginning to end, and while we just need to take it a step at a time—no, in some cases even a second at a time—He gives the grace and trust that everything will be just fine.

How He can use someone like me and transform me to look like a person who was expected at the police station, beats me. But what puzzled me even more is that the police officer called me “sir.” You see, I am a woman!—Talk about defying all impossibilities!

Praise be to our awesome Lord Who not only brings us out of difficult circumstances, but through it, shows that He can use anything.

28. Salvation for a Roman Guard

I still remember that day ... it was an amazing miracle of protection! When you're in the middle of persecution and you don't know exactly what's hitting you and what will happen to you, His power comes in with such strength.

You don't realize how "grace" really works until you need it. Remember what David said about "dying grace"? It usually doesn't come into effect until you actually are confronted with death. The most amazing thing about grace is that you can apply it to any given dangerous situation, like during heavy persecution. Now in Heaven I have seen that throughout history this grace is bestowed each time the believers need it—when they're faced with very tough circumstances and are in great need of a miracle.

This is nothing new for you, the children of David. But your advantage, in comparison to us, is the time period you're living in: the Time of the End. Because of this very important time in history, and because the Enemy has upped the ante, knowing it's his last chance on Earth to gain ground, all power of Heaven through the keys of the Kingdom have been released to you.

Although you don't feel like it, you are some of the most powerful people on the face of the Earth. There are no others trained in spiritual matters as you are. There are no other Christians that have a stronger connection with Jesus than is available to you.

United you will stand against the onslaught of evil and the minions of Satan. Mighty and strong will you be in the days to come. So don't lose faith! Don't give

up hope! Jesus promised that you will never be without His strong arm to defend you. He will be your strength when you are weary. He will be your shield when you fight battles as intense as persecution. He will be there for you to give you great power to withstand. You will stand, and great will be the noise of your victories and conquests!

Great will be your glory in His eyes, and in the eyes of those who look up to you, for they will see that you are indeed the leaders of this generation. They will see, and many will be ashamed of their words against you. They will see, and many will believe that He has sent forth His armies, and that you are their leaders. They will know that He is strong on your behalf, and they will respect you and look up to you. Great are the children of David, and great will be the victories wrought by His hand through you!

I can only tell you a bit of my life, but know that His mind in you is what brings wisdom for battle and strength when you feel weak and at wits' end.

You have a privileged place because you own the keys of Heaven and all of their power. Imagine how much more advantage you have compared to all of us believers of old. We did experience miracles and manifestations of His great power, but it was never as great and powerful as in the days to come. We here in Heaven are so excited to be able to support and help you. Let His mind be in you and strengthen you with the power of the keys.

I was just a young man with a small family of three kids and a beautiful wife. We all loved the Lord with our whole hearts, and although the Romans were unfavorable towards Christianity, we still had a chance to meet with other Christians in the catacombs' chapels.

During times of persecution, the catacombs became places of refuge, because burial places were sacrosanct by law. When churches above ground were destroyed by imperial order, worshippers met in the catacomb chapels. In the middle of the 3rd century, as mobs and officials overcame their superstitions and began to violate the catacombs, Christians destroyed the old entrances and made secret ones.

For us to get there at night was very difficult. Roman soldiers would roam the city in search of Christians.

One day we heard that one of the leaders of the Christian world was to come to the catacombs and preach. It was a most exciting day for us all, because the battle against the authorities was very strong and many Christians were giving up their faith and compromising. It was a difficult life and not easy, especially when you had a family and kids. Your love for your children could sometimes push you to give up your faith under strong persecution. You don't want them to suffer, and as a parent, feel a great responsibility to protect them.

But although all those thoughts and feelings had often crossed my heart and mind, I knew that our lives were in a very strong and powerful hand. We were in the loving hands of the Creator of the whole universe, and despite hardship and danger, our beliefs just became stronger than ever.

That night was an amazing night...

"Honey, what are we going to do? We don't have anyone to leave the kids with, and we have to go to this meeting."

My wife replied, "We're going to have to take a chance and take the kids."

“No, I will never put them in such danger. You know if we are caught they will end up in jail with us and in the arena as well. I will never do such a thing!”

“Lord, do please lead and guide us; help us not to lean to our own understanding. Help us to know what to do! This is a great blessing to see this very special person, and I feel it will strengthen us in a very special way, a way that will change our lives forever and give us the push we so desperately need after battling so much with the Roman unbelievers and the fleshly way of life. Please speak to us and show us what to do, and if only one of us should go or both with the kids.”

To my surprise, I saw a vision of angels carrying heavy shields around us. This gave us the faith to go ahead and go with the three kids: my son who was five, a sweet beautiful girl of three years old, and a cute little eight-month-old baby girl. We left the house at around 11pm. My wife made sure to put the kids to sleep during the afternoon so that they would be happy during the meeting, and also so they wouldn't be tired, because it was a long walk across town and into the outskirts where the secret entrances were.

Our journey was exciting. The kids behaved well, and we took a route that was often not very guarded. Close to the city walls, we were just about to round a corner when we heard footsteps on the other side coming towards us.

“Oh no, there's a patrol. Quickly! Squeeze in between those walls!”

We barely fit and were squashed up against the wall. We heard the footsteps stop and the men discuss something just a few meters away from us.

One of them said, “I don't feel good, let's stop. I don't know what's wrong with me, I've been feeling weak for days, and although I told our superior, he still sent me

to watch these damn Christians. I don't know why we don't just kill them all and get rid of them. If I get my hands on them I will destroy them myself. It's all their fault! If they didn't exist, I wouldn't have to go through this pain. I hate them!" The other responded, "Enough of this whimpering! You're a Roman soldier and you should be strong! But I'm tired of hearing you complain—you can stay here and rest while I go ahead."

Our hearts sunk, and both of us prayed desperately to be delivered! We especially prayed that the kids would be very quiet, as we knew that that would take a miracle.

The poor man that had stayed back was apparently in a very bad condition and we knew he wasn't going to be going anywhere soon. All of a sudden we heard a deep groan, and we heard the guard fall to the ground.

I was tempted to try to leave, as it didn't seem he would be able to stop us, and I thought perhaps the Lord was doing a miracle to protect us. But all of a sudden I felt the Lord's love and compassion for this poor soul, and as I whispered this feeling to my wife, she also felt the same, that we needed to help him. This was the last thing we as Christians would have naturally felt like doing with the anti-Christ Roman soldiers, but love constrained us and moved us to reach out to help. The kids were amazingly quiet, and the baby had fallen asleep in her arms, so I walked out to meet this man in trouble. He barely could lift his head to see me and was too weak to fight. Our eyes met, and I felt the presence of angels around me, and couldn't help but praise the Lord out loud. He was dying and he knew it. It wasn't hard for him to surrender to the Spirit, and as I held him close to me and prayed for his healing out loud, he yielded.

Immediately, his whole body changed from a weak man into a strong one. He knew it was the Lord's presence that had healed him, and although he had heard unbelievable stories of miracles, he himself had never thought they could happen. He lifted himself up and looked at me. "You're a Christian!" he said in a soft voice. I nodded and smiled. He hugged me and knelt down, asking for forgiveness. "I never hated anyone more than Christians such as yourselves, but now I see how mistaken I have been. Please forgive me."

I wrapped my arms around him to reassure him, and as we held each other, the baby cried. I explained our purpose and need to get to the meeting, and he offered to help us.

We then heard the steps of his friend coming back, and he ran to meet him before he came any closer. We heard some mumbling, and then he came back to meet us without his friend. The kids were silent again, and not a sound was made. This precious man who had experienced a miracle in his health accompanied us all the way to the catacombs and left us there for us to enjoy one of the most unforgettable meetings.

It wasn't long after that, that we saw him again, and this time in another catacomb, ready to receive his part of the blessing and spiritual feeding. He was there with five others and their families, excited at becoming part of the Christian community.

As you know, God is a God of miracles, and prayer changes things!—Especially now in your times when all power of Heaven is at your command through the power of the keys of the Kingdom.

29. My Life in the USSR

(Recommended for 14 on up)

(Jesus:) This is a beautiful story, a wonderful testimony both of My protection and care, and also of this dear man's faithfulness and dedication to Me. It's not an easy-to-read story, and it can be quite intense and heart breaking. I would not recommend it for children, or for people who have a tendency to fear persecution in all its forms.

This man had a life that could be described as extremely difficult. I gave him the grace for it, and in truth he was a happy man. He's brought this out the best he could, and certainly doesn't hold any bitterness against Me. To the contrary, he has received his "great reward," and believe Me, it is great! He is honored and rewarded before all of Heaven, and rejoices to have been counted worthy to suffer for Me. But reading the accounts of his days on earth before he received the victory and great reward might seem scary to some—especially the fact that the persecution he endured continued his entire life. It wasn't just a one-time "knock on the door," but rather a lifetime of danger and trials.

Readers might need to be forewarned about this, in case they would want to refrain from reading it, or they could be encouraged to hear from Me after reading this story so that I can reassure them.

My Life in a Capsule

Dmitriy: I was an old man when I finally died, yet I experienced the miracles of the Lord all throughout my life. They are what kept me alive till my time on Earth was done. I grew up in communist Russia and, as a child, knew nothing about the

Lord Jesus Christ. My life changed through a pamphlet I found on the street one day when I was 19 years old. This pamphlet spoke of Jesus Christ in terms the simplest child could understand. A simple prayer of acceptance was written, which I prayed almost just as a dare to myself.

From that moment on though, my life changed. I made it my ongoing mission to find those who had written these words. It took me many years to finally find this answer, but during that time I learned the power of the Faithful.

I held on to that paper for my very life and sanity. I had no one to show me the way but those written words. This is to show that God's power is nigh to any who call unto Him. You don't have to be a saint; you don't have to know the scriptures intensively, for indeed I knew nothing but one simple verse from the pamphlet, John 3:16. In fact, I knew no other prayer to pray but the prayer of acceptance of Jesus into my heart. I was a child, a babe, in Christ, but He did not leave me comfortless, and He came to me.

For ten years I was without a shepherd to lead the way, except my Jesus. And this is how He kept me. Knowing the force and brutality of the communist power in our land, at first I was very careful with this "subversive information" I had found. But because of the warmth, strength and utter freedom I experienced through reading those simple words each day, I knew I couldn't keep them to myself. I began to tell others about this. I began to share these precious words with other students in my class. This wasn't the wisest, but I was young and idealistic. I never left my paper with others, but I'd read the words with them, or copy them down to share with others. Of course, I was persecuted. Within weeks of this activity I was turned in to the head of the school for questioning.

I was naïve and boldly declared my belief in the possibility of a better religion, a better government, and better rule. This was no slight thing to speak out about and I was given a tongue-lashing, was expelled from school, and warned never to speak such things again. Because I was young the army figured they could change me, so I was taken to join the Red Army.

I served in the army for four years, and after an incident in which I was injured, by a miracle I was sent back home to recover. It took me a year to recover from my wounds, and after this, I took up an occupation and began living a life on my own. Five years went by in loneliness, but determination to continue spreading the freedom and light I had found to as many others as I could. I knew I could never give up until I had found those people of the printed words.

Then, when I was at the end of my rope, nearing my 30's, when all my hope had but left me, I found them. Like two lights standing in the midst of darkness, they stood out drastically in the grey shades of the world around them. I approached them clandestinely and made small talk. Once I had felt out the situation, I inconspicuously held out the paper, with a raise of my eyebrows questioning the unspeakable.

A slight smile curved on the man's face, "Yes, yes," was all he replied, then they walked away, but not before slipping another paper into my hand. This paper held directions to a meeting place not far from there. The feeling that leapt within my heart cannot be explained. I was as a man who had been blind for 30 years, but was now miraculously given his sight. I was like a man who had been searching for a priceless treasure, and in his moment of greatest despair had found it. I felt like this was the first day of my life.

I met with them that night and from there my faith grew—and so did the persecution. I traveled with them from then on. We witnessed miracle after miracle, of not only lives changed, and needs supplied, but of eyes blinded, of intervention in time of great peril, and much more. This is the story I give you now.

I never married on this Earth, but I took up a son. A small orphan boy, only just three years old, abandoned on the cold cobblestones of Russia. I took him in my arms and cared for him ever since. I experienced betrayal by those I loved. I experienced despair by my little one being taken from me by the cruel authorities. I experienced torture, imprisonment, and came close to death.

But in each moment I was delivered, for He makes a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. He does not leave His children comfortless, but He comes to you. That is the capsule of my story. Now I will expound on the miracles.

First Proof of His Power

My first year in the army was horrible. Life was rigorous, conditions were harsh, and orders brutal. Yet I had that flicker of hope in me. Before bed each night I'd read the words on the paper, say the prayer, and go to sleep. I can't begin to tell you how much those words saved my life. Just three short paragraphs, but each sentence was a lifesaver. After a while, one soldier in particular noticed my strange ritual and decided to find out what I was up to. Anything was suspicious in those days.

As I slept, he stole the paper from my shirt pocket. After reading the words, and realizing what manner of material this was (as well as hoping for a promotion or

more recognition), he straightaway turned this paper in to the commanding officers.

Immediately I was shaken awake, taken outside in the bitter cold with only my undergarments on, and told to wait out in the snow till the officer could see me for questioning. I had no idea what this was all about, but I felt for my paper to give me strength. Then I noticed it was gone, and I knew the reason for such treatment. I saw the soldier who had turned me in still talking with the officer, and so figured out who might be the cause of this.

As I stood in the bitter cold snow that night, I suddenly began to fear for my life. I hadn't feared until then, but suddenly it dawned on me what such a piece of literature could mean for my life. It was an act of betrayal towards my country. I was a traitor, disloyal, and would most surely receive the "reward" meted out to such people.

I started shaking, not just from the cold, but from thoughts of what would be done to me. Every horrible act of torture and punishment was played out in my mind and I felt like running inside the officer's room, begging for forgiveness and denying the paper and its teachings. I'm glad I spent those hours in the snow, for if I had been taken to the authorities right away, I feel my faith would have wavered and I would've given in. I was just a child in the Lord.

Remember the paper! Just as clear as any order I had received during my military training, I heard those words. That paper is the cause of my trouble! Maybe I had better just forget it, and never think on it again, I tried to reason out in my mind. And again, like a loud order from a drill sergeant, Remember the paper! Giving in

to orders and obeying without thinking is a trait the army tried to instill in us. So I gave in.

Do you long for peace, for freedom, and love? I quoted the first line silently in my mind. And then I started quoting the paragraphs aloud, one after another, and then over and over again: Jesus Christ gave His life so that your sins could be forgiven ... He died to free you, because He loves you ... If you want true freedom, invite Him into your life today ... He is more than you'll ever need....

With each phrase, I felt my faith renewed. Immediately my fears vanished. I didn't even feel the cold. I quoted that verse, "For God so loved the world that He gave...." Yes, my God loved me, and in His great love He gave to me strength, faith, and endurance. This was the first miracle I ever experienced in my life, other than the miracle of receiving Jesus into my heart.

Maybe to you this seems normal and insignificant—that I no longer felt the cold, and that my faith was renewed—but for a little babe in the Lord, for one who only knew one scripture and a lifetime of communistic ideals, to feel this scripture physically envelop my mind, body, and heart—it was all the proof I needed to know that Jesus was real and that He did care for me.

After three hours in the cold I was finally called into the officer's quarters. I stood in the office without a shiver of cold, or a flinch of fright. I gave a nod to the officer and waited. He ordered me to the army prison and said he'd deal with me in the morning. I was chained and carried away.

The prison was cold and damp. Of course the roof was cracked so snow dripped inside and turned to slush. I had my boots on but no socks, and what little clothes

I had on were no match for the below-zero temperatures that night. But what was the phrase again? “He is more than you’ll ever need...” Perhaps He can be my warmth all the night long, I thought.

That night I said my first original prayer, other than the one on the paper. It was simple, as I didn’t know how to pray, but it was my communion with my God in Heaven. “My God, I am cold this night. If You can be more than I’ll ever need, please be my warmth. I’m worried too. What will become of me after this night is over? If You cared enough to send Your Son to Earth, please care enough now to save me from what I fear will surely become of me.” I stuttered through the whole prayer, but afterwards a feeling of relief and warmth swept over me. I just knew everything would be okay.

Then something brushed over my hands. I quickly opened my eyes and saw my little pamphlet float to the floor. I looked up at the prison bars, which graciously let the night air breeze through. I saw a shadow moving and heard footsteps trudging swiftly away. Tears brimmed in my eyes. My God cared enough about me to give me back the one bit of evidence that held my strength.

Until my dying day on Earth, I never knew just who threw my paper back in the window, whether it was the officer—as it had been given to him—or whether an angel had delivered it. But that did not matter. I knew my Jesus cared. I felt the sun on my cheeks and realized morning had already dawned. What a quick night that had been. From the time the paper was returned to my hands until the morning appeared, it seemed but two minutes had passed.

All of a sudden I heard outside the loud noise of tanks being positioned, soldiers running, orders being shouted out, and immediately the prison door was swung open and I was ordered to my tent to get dressed and prepare to leave, as we were being urgently relocated. The whole camp was abuzz with movement and change. It seemed as if the ordeal of the night before had been completely forgotten as I stood in front of the officer with the other soldiers receiving our orders for the day.

We loaded into large trucks and rode for hours to our new location. I kept waiting to see if more would be said in regards to my paper, but since that night, nothing more was ever mentioned. The officer never brought it up again in all the years I served under him, and I was never punished for it.

Only the one soldier who had turned me in acted differently. For months he never spoke to me. We trained side by side at times and he rarely looked in my eyes. One day the spell was broken, as he was shot in the leg and spent a week in the army hospital. I had gone to the hospital as well to get some stitches for a small wound and found him lying in a bed next to where I was sitting waiting to be treated. For a moment all was silent. But then he started speaking very quietly so no one would hear. He asked me what was on the paper and why did I carry it with me all these months.

I explained quietly that it was my strength when I felt weak; it gave me courage when I was afraid. Then he asked me if he could read it again, as ever since the first night he found it and read it, those words haunted him. They repeated themselves in his mind every night. He'd dream of some phrase that said, "Who believeth on Him will not perish..." That was all of the verse he remembered.

During training, portions of each paragraph would replay over and over in his mind. It wouldn't go away; the thoughts and words were always there. It didn't frighten him, but it was a discomfort, for nothing he could do would quiet this gentle voice.

So I read the words to him slowly and carefully. Then, when it came to the prayer, he grabbed my hand, and with all the emotion his manliness could display, asked me to pray it for him, as he felt too bad a man to pray for himself. I told him to just read it with me, and together we read and prayed the prayer. For a moment he looked stunned. He just stared at me, stared at the paper, and then remarked, "I don't hear it anymore!" Now that he finally found the secret of the words, the continual clues and hints he'd constantly heard had faded in the background. He begged me for a copy of these words and I did copy them for him.

It felt so wonderful to have a fellow believer. We'd get together to talk of the prayers we had said during the day and how the phrases gave us comfort. We were so simple and childlike, and often it was frustrating to not know more, to sense that there was more but to not know where to find it. But through our prayers the Lord lovingly led us along. He strengthened our faith day by day and we grew in His love.

Betrayal by a Believer

Over the next year we shared these precious words with other soldiers who seemed hungry to receive something more. Within nine months, we had a small group of believers meeting and praying with us. There were only ten of us, but oh, the strength and comfort of ten when compared to being alone. It was hard to get together with this large a group, but we'd find ways to remain in contact and

strengthen one another—whether it was meeting during the darkest time of night, or secretly passing notes and papers to each other of encouragement or prayers or praises to God.

One soldier knew another verse his grandmother had taught him, which was the only other one I discovered until I met the Christians. This verse was, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, because he trusteth in Thee.” When he first shared that verse, it was like pouring cold, refreshing water over a dried and parched throat. I memorized that immediately and felt a new strength fill me. So beautiful, so precious, these golden promises of Jesus!

Nearing the end of my fourth year in the army, something happened. We are but frail flesh, we do not have the strength to be overcomers, to stand strong, to remain unflinching, and to be faithful—this can only be found in Jesus. I experienced the faithlessness of a friend, the betrayal of a believer. But this only served to show me the power of the Faithful! And it all worked together for good in the end.

There were suspicions regarding Christians in the army. Some of the soldiers reported on some of us, and the officers continued hearing rumors of ongoing subversive behavior. Determined to root this out, they notified the entire camp that whoever turned in the Christians would be given a promotion in the army, as well as a considerable financial raise that they could then help support their families back home with. Now that was a pleasant thought.

Well, each one of us Christians, us ten brothers, had to make the decision whether to stand strong for our Lord and each other, or to give in to this offer. It

was a trying time for us all. Over the next few days you could sense the battle raging in each one's minds. The difficulties of our families back home were a very real problem, while obtaining recognition and more financial benefits was something every soldier dreamed of. It was an honor, a chance of a lifetime. Yet to give in would be to lose the strength of our brotherhood, it would be to hurt the ones we loved. It would be turning our backs on Jesus Christ, who had come to Earth to die just so that we might be saved. Oh, the agony, the decision-making, the difficulty that raged in the spirit!

And then it happened. Poor Igor, the soldier who had turned me in the first time, gave in to the lusts of the flesh. His flesh was weak, his mind was weak, and the desires of recognition and fortune were strong within him.

In a moment of weakness he turned me in, and then, when fiercely questioned whether there were more, and being offered an even more upstanding promotion, he gave the names of each one of us. Immediately we were seized, chained, and trudged through the snow to the army prison.

Noticing that Igor was the only man not standing with us, we held our heads down in sorrow for our friend. We felt for his spirit. The army wanted to hold us up as an example to all the other soldiers, that whoever was accused of being a traitor would receive no mercy, but straightway punishment of death.

As we waited in prison together we began to quote the words from the pamphlet. Another soldier arrived to inform us of our punishment. We were to be beaten, stripped, hung by our hands, then shot before the entire army. The beating would be unbearable, the stripping humiliating, the hanging extensive, and finally, the

death swift. As we heard this described in full detail, some of the men's faith wavered.

What have I done? This is not how I meant to live my life! I could die for my country, but not as a traitor. The despair was evident. Then God's Spirit rested on me. "If Jesus loved us enough to die to forgive us for our sins, can we not surely love Him enough to die for Him?" Then a thought occurred to me. "When God sent His Son to Earth and He died, He must have surely taken Him back to Him again. And if Jesus has sent us to Earth, then maybe we will be taken to that very place where He now lives."

That thought encouraged the men, and me too. I hadn't thought of this before. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace..." I started quoting the verse, and soon all the men quoted it along with me. Then I said a simple prayer, "My Father, we are a little afraid of what is to come. But we know that You are all that we will ever need. We ask You this day to be our deliverance, and if You will not deliver us, then please be our peace."

Soon other prayers were uttered as each soldier poured out their heart to God. Oh, Jesus truly is there in the midst of us when we call on His Name. And He was there for us.

The next day we did receive our scourging and beatings. We were brought before the entire army camp and each of us was beaten until the breath of life was as faint as warmth in winter. Yet through it all, how our Lord kept us in perfect peace! As I was brought for my beating, my heart went out to the other soldiers who did not know my God of love, only this forceful rule of man.

My eyes met Igor's, and I could see the shame and guilt in his eyes. The first blow brought me to my knees. Then, though I felt the initial sting of each blow, it was more like I was watching the incident than actively partaking in it. There was no lingering pain, no excruciating feelings, just a peaceful numbness broken only by a temporary sting every now and then. Oh, the perfect peace of Jesus!

After this episode was over, us nine soldiers were stripped and forced to walk in the snow to the place we were to be hung. As we trudged, I heard one of the soldiers mumble the verse of perfect peace, and I quickly quipped in as well. You don't know how much these verses saved our faith. We were then cruelly hung to a metal pole that had been positioned for this event. The entire time, a commanding officer was shouting out to the crowd about the punishment of traitors, screaming threats and fear into everyone's mind. Yet we had perfect peace.

We hung in the cold and waited for the moment to be released from this life. Purposely we were left for a long time, so that the agony could be prolonged. As I hung, I began to feel the pain of the beatings, the humiliation of such a public punishment, the pain of being hung and stretched for so long in such cold. I began to wonder if this was to be the end of my life.

Is this all, my Jesus? Is this all You had for me? Was this the place that paper was meant to bring me? Discouragement clouded my mind as my whole mission in life would have been left unaccomplished—that of finding those who wrote these words. This had been my driving force, the belief that one day I would find fuller meaning to these words, fuller understanding and enlightenment. And yet, this

was how it was to end, after four years of life in the army with only ten, now nine, believers to show for it.

As brave as I tried to be, a tear trickled down my face and I could not cover it or wipe it away. “Jesus...” I mumbled, “I trust in You.” One hour or more must have passed when we finally heard the cocking of the guns. We each looked up at the inevitable that faced us. We looked at each other, we smiled, we praised, some cried. We heard the commands in Russian, “Ready!” We waited. “Aim!” It seemed like an hour in between orders. “Fire!” The guns exploded, the bullets fired, our bodies felt the impact and then blackness.

I opened my eyes and everything was dark. Is this it? This is death? I didn’t expect it to be so black, so cold. I was a little dismayed at the discomfort I felt in death, when I had expected complete release. I tried to rub my eyes but my hands were constrained. Then I realized I was still alive—and hanging.

Only a flicker of light could be seen in the distance of the army camp. Night had fallen and all was still. I looked over to the right at my companions, each one hanging silently in the dark. “Viktor?” I whispered. No answer. “Vanya?” This time I whispered a little louder. Still no reply. Did the bullet miss me? I wondered, as I dangled helplessly.

Well, if the bullet didn’t kill me, this night surely will. I cannot survive this cold much longer. I closed my eyes and tried to go to sleep, to help my death come more swiftly. I wondered what would happen if the soldiers found me alive the next morning. I could imagine the next set of grueling torment that awaited me.

Dmitriy! I awoke startled. “What?” I said aloud, hoping one of my friends was awake. Dmitriy! I looked at my friends, but each one still hung lifelessly. This must be the call of death, I muttered, as I closed my eyes again. Dmitriy, My son, wake up! I opened my eyes again looking around suspiciously. If you are alive, why do you give up hope? Where there is life, there is hope. You still have hope, Dmitriy. You still have life. Suddenly I realized Who was calling me, my Savior Jesus.

“But, Lord,” I whispered, “there is not much hope in being tied. I cannot free myself. I am naked and have no clothes, so that even if I could free myself, I wouldn’t get very far. How can there be hope in this little flicker of life I have left?”

Remember, I am more than you’ll ever need....

Hope sparked in my life again. “Yes, yes, more than I need. Jesus, my God, I need to be free from this knot that holds my arms above me. I need to be clothed once I am set free. I need to know where to go and what to do once I have what I need, because I cannot go back to the army—they would surely kill me. These are the things I need. If You are more than that, show me.”

Don’t disbelieve the next thing I tell you, for it is as true as the fact that you were born into this world. A snow squirrel came. I heard scampering of little feet above my head and saw a furry little figure running on the metal pole. She stopped at each rope, nibbled a little, and then moved to the next. When she came to my ropes she nibbled until each string split in half. As the last string broke, my body fell in a heap to the ground. Then the squirrel jumped off the pole and scampered away.

“Oh my God! My God, my wonderful, wonderful Jesus, how You save and deliver!” I could only praise my Lord.

I stood up and brushed the snow off my body, and that’s when I felt it. The cold butt of a bullet nuzzled securely in my chest. I looked down and in the dark could make out dark splotches of blood on my chest. I had been shot, dead center in my chest, and yet I was alive. Tears streamed down my face. Again the power of God Almighty had proven Himself to me, such a little one of His children. “...That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish.” Oh, what a fitting promise! Since this is the main miracle of deliverance I wanted to speak about in this portion of my story, I’ll tell the rest with little detail. I found a jacket of one of the officers lying over a snow-covered stone. Apparently he had left it during the day.

I wrapped myself in its warmth and prayed to God for shoes and pants to at least make my coverings complete. He led me to walk a little ways in the opposite direction of the camp and I found a lone army tent. Inside were boots, pants, a hat, gloves, scarf and another jacket lying neatly on the mat. I quickly put them on and didn’t dare stop lest morning come and I be discovered.

My Lord led me through the snow all night long. He spoke clearly when to turn left, when to turn right, and as I followed His guidance, I felt peace about where I was heading. Then I saw an encampment of another group of Russian soldiers in the distance. Surely the news of my “disloyalty” had not reached these yet. The Lord confirmed this and told me to walk up to it.

Here is another miracle: as soon as I walked into the camp, immediately I felt the pain in my chest from where the bullet stopped. I felt warmth as blood began

oozing out of the wound. I fell to the ground, clutching my chest, and some soldiers saw me and ran up to me. Because I had an officer's coat on, I was immediately admitted into the best bed in the hospital and given immediate care. The doctors said the wounds were much too grave to be cared for, and that I should return home in order to recover, as the military lifestyle would only kill me. Since most thought I was an officer, due to my apparel, I was given the best care and attention one could desire. The next day I was transported by truck to my hometown and respectfully dropped off at my mother's home.

That was the end of my military life, and those were two of the most outstanding miracles the Lord did for me during my four years there. Of course there were more miracles, but these two were the ones that drastically saved my life. As soon as I arrived home, my wound began to heal and I recovered in a matter of months.

My Search Ended

I told you that five more years passed before I found the Christians. Those were difficult years. I struggled alone, but I continued to do my best to share these words with others. In the five years on my own, I again built up a small following of believers. We were a few more than when I was in the army, this time around 20. Not all were from around where I lived; some who I met had traveled from far across the country, and only by the Lord's working did they happen to cross my path. We did not meet that often, but when we did, we shared the testimonies of the miracles of our Lord.

Then when my hope began to fade and the cares of this life began to set in, my Lord sent the light to guide my way. When I found the Christians that day and met them later that night in the cold basement of their apartment, we talked for

hours and hours of God's Word. I explained what I had been through, and the miraculous saving of my life, and they marveled at God's power. Then they took out a small Bible, translated into Russian, and showed me that this was where those two verses I knew had come from.

My hunger was insatiable and I stayed awake until dawn reading chapter after chapter after chapter. After that night, I decided I would stay with them and do whatever it was they were doing, for now I had found the answer I had been searching for. They were very happy for this help, as they too had been feeling alone for many years in their mission to change lives and hearts. They were a sweet Christian couple, a little older than me, and had come from another country to shed God's light in this dark, cold land of Russia.

So I began to meet with them regularly and soon introduced my little following to them. We began to have "underground meetings" where we sang, read from the Bible, shared testimonies, and prayed—oh, the strength of such sweet fellowship!

Pasha

I'll tell you about my little boy now, for I too know the pain of being taken from the one you love.

I was 35 when I found little Pasha. I don't know what his name was, but this is what I named him when he became my own. He was so small—a thin, frail little boy, a little toddler who had been abandoned either just that day, or the day before. He had golden curly hair, large blue eyes, and soft baby skin.

He had been walking on the street, just crying his little heart out, obviously hungry, cold, and afraid. Though people were walking up and down the streets,

they did not seem to care, or if they did, they did not want the responsibility that comes with caring for one like this.

My heart broke as I watched his little bare feet toddle on the cold stone road. His face was dirty, his clothes were mere rags, but oh, such a precious bundle. I knew I couldn't just approach him, for this would cause suspicion, I had to plan this carefully. I waited till the evening, which was not that far away, only an hour or so. As the sun began to set and the chilly winds blew in, I watched as his cries turned to tired sobs, which faded as he began to fall asleep, leaning against a wall.

Slowly, I walked up to him and touched his cheeks. Oh, how cold they were! He shivered and opened his eyes. He was half asleep, but he saw me and reached out his arms to me. "Papa," he said, and he clutched my neck as he drifted back to sleep. My heart broke for him and it was all I could do to not cry, but I lifted him up and carried him to my little place. I wasn't too sure how I could live taking care of him, as I was sure others would get suspicious of this, as they were suspicious of everything.

I'll tell you this quickly, because I know you want to hear of the miracle. That night the Lord had shown the Christian couple, through a dream, that it was time to move to another city, far away from where we were, and that the believers we had trained would carry on where we left off. The next day they told me this news, and I introduced them to my little Pasha. We saw the Lord's wisdom in this leading. I kept Pasha hidden from prying eyes for the week while we prepared to move and prepared our followers for our move. They took it graciously and promised to keep up the good work.

One night we made our move, and through a series of events, arrived at the town the Lord had for us. Only one month after we departed, the small town we'd left suffered persecution. The believers were sought out and tried. Some suffered imprisonment, some were released through death to the flesh, and many others were saved by the Lord's miraculous intervention. And their following only grew through this.

As for us, in the new place we moved to, I had a story regarding Pasha, that his mother had died and he was left in my care. Folks were fine with this and all went well. We continued living the preaching of Jesus and following His Word. We again built up a church of believers. It was hard work, and it took many months before we even had one convert, but Jesus showed us that Pasha was our forever convert, and that even if no other seeds shot up, we always had this little plant to water and care for, which was worth every effort on our part. That was encouraging.

Within a year we finally had two believers, and at least one other was interested in believing. It took a while. It was hard work; things didn't just come easy. There were trials. We battled with discouragement and hopelessness. We worried about the future. We wondered about the supply of our needs. But did Jesus ever fail? Not even once. Not even when we simply needed one loaf of bread for our meal! He always supplied.

But here's the experience I suffered with Pasha. I was getting older, in my forties, but just as active and alive for my Lord as ever. Pasha was around 10 years old at the time, a wonderful boy who loved Jesus and the scriptures. Lisa, the Christian

woman, faithfully taught him along with her other children, of which she had four by now, while Stephan and I worked to bring in the food.

Well, all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. How true this is. We again suffered persecution for righteousness' sake. It was a tough time, and we started being suspiciously eyed by others. The authorities visited us on account of the tales the villagers spread, and we had to find ways to be even more discreet about our gatherings with others.

We were also questioned because our children were schooled at home, as opposed to the public Russian schools. Every day we had to be prayerful and careful in all our actions. Every day we had to find a scripture and promise from the Lord to keep us on the path of His will.

Persecuted—But Not Forsaken

And then the Lord saw fit to break my heart and strengthen my connection with Him. I too began to waver in the faith. The strain of facing so much trouble, so much difficulty, began to wear on my faith, because I stopped looking so intently to the Lord for everything.

When I only had Him to lean on, when I only had that little pamphlet to hold on to for ten years, oh how my faith was strengthened, my love for Jesus deepened! But I began to lose that desperation, that utter dependence on Jesus for everything.

Because I had so much wealth, so much Word, so much support in others, I put less and less to memory. I began leaning more on the arm of the flesh than on the

strength of His Words. My work became more important to me and I was losing touch with my precious Savior.

He was not punishing me, only making me stronger in Him. His plan was perfect, and through it, many, many more souls were won, and one precious soul found forgiveness and relief, which was worth it all in the end.

Eventually it was found out that Pasha was not my boy. This drove so much suspicion our way that Lisa and Stephan felt it better for all of our safety that I not interact with them too closely in public, but keep our interactions on the same level as the others.

We tried this for a week, but then one morning I received a brash knock on the door. It was all a daze to me. The authorities demanded that I show them my papers regarding Pasha. If I was his father, I should be able to prove it. If not, if he was adopted, I should have papers to prove that too. Of course, I had nothing. My words of defense were weak, and before I knew it the authorities stormed into the house, pulled Pasha from the bed where he was sleeping, and marched out of the house. Pasha was crying as he called me, "Papa!" I saw them slap him while they shoved him in the truck. I ran after them, begging them to reconsider, to take me with them, to let me explain. I received a firm bash in the head from the butt of their gun in reply, and then they drove off.

My heart broke. The only one in my life who meant anything to me was being taken away. I had no wife, I had no children, I'd only had Pasha. And now because of my mistakes, he was gone. Oh, I blamed myself for everything. I wept

and figured that if I were smarter he would not have been taken away. Where was he being taken, anyway?

I don't want you to despair with this next part. The Lord works in each one's life differently, and in my life He chose a different path. But I can assure you that in most cases this will not be the same for you. The Lord gives and He takes away, but when He allows the Enemy to take your children from you for a time, it is only a small time, and never more than you can bear.

He always cares for His Own. He always wins the victory in this regard. He always brings your children safely home to you again. In the Family's history, your children have been returned pretty quickly in each case, and this is His will in your life!

But it took me many years before I saw Pasha again—seven whole years. But in those years He broke me and remade me anew. I was imprisoned after this event, and in prison I once again learned the strength of weakness, and experienced the Lord's power in time of trouble. Oh, the verses that came back to me!—Now, when I was desperate and had nothing else to lean on, I found my faith renewed again.

There in the depths, I found my highest heights! There, in the place of such darkness, I found the souls with the greatest hunger. Yes, I witnessed more than I had ever before. If I was already within Hell's gates, I might as well make the greatest collection of redeemed souls I could.

Miraculously, it seemed the authorities had forgotten about me. For months I learned nothing about my situation or the crimes I was supposed to have committed, though Stephan and Lisa found a way to communicate with me and send me provisions while in prison. I was able to write them of the many miracles that I was experiencing too, and this strengthened their faith as they shared these testimonies with their flock of believers, giving them strength in their time of trouble.

Oh, of course I was mocked for my beliefs! Some of the prisoners hated me for speaking about Jesus, and I was beaten and tormented. But those whose lives were changed made all the pain worth it. Lisa had been able to smuggle a Bible into my hands, and this just accelerated every effort to win more disciples. Each heart was so ripe and ready to be harvested. Each soul was so eager for the truth. You will always have those who don't believe, but your job is not to look for the unbelievers, but to find the pearls, for they outweigh the scoffers a million to one. Coincidence?

Pasha was taken to a boy's school, which was more like a military training academy for young boys. But the Lord did not forsake him. For one precious soul who had also been assigned to this military training school, as one of the overseers, was my close friend from the army, Igor. The Lord had not given up on him, and even though he betrayed us, just as Peter had betrayed Jesus the night of His trial, he would be given a second chance.

Igor took a liking to Pasha, as he was a bright boy and possessed a shine and alertness that no other boy held. After talking with Pasha over the weeks, he finally heard a name that sounded familiar, "My father Dmitriy." Igor asked him

to describe his father, and the description was everything the same as the friend he'd known years ago. He asked Pasha why he had been brought here and Pasha explained the story. Now Igor found his chance to redeem himself and perhaps win the forgiveness of his long-lost friend.

He had been overrun with shame since he'd betrayed us, and for years—20 years by now—he'd lived with the guilt that he'd betrayed the only people who'd ever meant anything to him.

He remembered when he had been assigned to bury the bodies of his nine friends who had been killed, and how, upon arriving at the site, he'd found only eight bodies hanging. Dmitriy was missing. Could it be that he was saved by the God he prayed to? He hoped in his heart that this was the case, as he quickly pulled down the remaining bodies before anyone else would notice the missing corpse.

For the next seven years, Igor took care of Pasha as discreetly as he could. He discovered other Christians so that he could continue to give Pasha the type of upbringing he knew I, Dmitriy, would've wanted. All this time he desperately tried to find my whereabouts. But as I was forgotten in prison, his search was to no avail.

Pasha grew into a fine young Christian, and in this Igor felt like he was repaying his debt to me. Oh, he did not have to make retribution for his mistake years ago, but the Lord used him to be a part of His intricate plan. Through this, Igor was himself brought closer to Christ and discovered the strength of fellowship from meeting other Christians.

Then one day, Igor discovered my whereabouts. I had been moved from prison to prison, making tracking me almost impossible. Igor's security at his job was also daily being put in danger, due to his frequent contact with the Christians. What a man of God he was becoming! He knew his time was running short as he could sense the suspicions of his co-workers and overseers. He knew that he had to act quickly if he wanted to pay his debt to me at all.

Another Face-Off with Death

Late one night, he and Pasha escaped the school and ran for many miles until a man offered them a ride in his truck. They were dropped off near the prison where they heard I had been kept. Quietly they approached the grey building, while Igor tried to think of a plan. He was still a respectable citizen; he could just walk in and demand to see me. But then, how to get me out? That would take quick thinking.

Oh God, you've brought me this far, please show me Your way.

Just then, the prison gates were opened, and prisoners, most of us Christians, were being marched out with guards leading the way. Yes, this was to be my third face-off with death. I had by now spent seven years in prison, seven fruitful years of witnessing, soul winning, and experiencing miracle after miracle day after day. I missed Pasha, but I knew he was in the Lord's hand. Did not the Lord say, "I will always care for My Own"? He was the Lord's, after all. I felt ready to go Home to my Saviors arms. I had lived a full life and felt my mission on Earth was done. I was the last of the prisoners in line, and as I walked into the cold, dark night I felt two hands grab me by my legs and yank me to the floor. For an older man, that was a hard fall! I was quickly pulled into a nearby bush and was startled to

find myself face to face with my friend of long ago—albeit a much older version of him. “Igor?” I whispered.

“Dmitriy, it is I. I have come to pay my debt from so long ago. I have brought you back your son, Pasha, so that now I can ask forgiveness with a clean heart.” His whisper was slurred with tears and sobs.

“Oh, Igor, I forgave you the moment your faith failed. There was never a debt for you to pay. But it is now my time to go, for yet again I have an appointment with death and this time I am ready to meet my Savior.”

“No, Dmitriy, I have brought your son back to you. You can’t leave him now. He needs you, God needs you, and this world needs you. I came to help you escape, to bring you away from this place.” Igor’s impassioned pleas touched my heart. But I knew it was my time to go.

“You see, only 15 of us prisoners have come out to meet this fate. Surely, one missing will be noticed. You take care of my son now. I give him to you.” Just then I heard the soldiers’ gruff voices, “You idiot!” one was saying, “There are supposed to be 15 prisoners, and you only bring out 14! Go get the last one, now, before I make you take the place of the one missing.”

“I’m serious! There were 15 when we left the prison. One must have escaped!” “Then go find him, you moron, or I’m serious, I will shoot you instead!” then a scuffle of soldiers could be heard heading our direction.

Suddenly something changed in the atmosphere. Igor kissed my hands, “God be with you, my friend.” And he jumped up and clumsily sauntered out of the bushes in front of the oncoming guards. Immediately guns were raised.

“What!?” Igor slurred, as any angry prisoner would. “Can’t a man take a piss?!” He trudged impatiently back into line with the other prisoners.

The guards were a little stunned and annoyed, but took the strange display with not too much alarm. The alarm was all mine when I realized what Igor had done. I crawled over so that I could peer out of the bushes, and then saw all the prisoners being lined up, backs facing the soldiers. I could make out Igor’s form clearly. “Ready!”—a flashback of many years ago screened in my mind—“Aim! ... Fire!”

As the guns shot and the bodies fell, I saw the most beautiful thing my eyes have ever beheld. Just before the bullets hit the bodies, I saw a channel of light form over each child of Christ’s. I saw their arms raised as their spirits shot up this tube of light, and then the bullets hit and bodies fell. Oh, how our God delivers us out of all our troubles.

Igor went to meet his heavenly reward, along with the other Christians, and what a joyful day in Heaven that was as Jesus embraced each martyr and welcomed them Home forever.

This is where the story of the miracles of my protection will come to an end. I was reunited with Pasha, and we reestablished contact with Lisa and Stephan and continued on our work for the Lord. That wasn’t the end of our troubles, but only the beginning of many more victories and miracles to be experienced. I died not

very long ago, at the age of 78, from natural causes. My son Pasha and my dear friends Lisa and Stephan are also here, having each fought the good fight and completed the race the Lord had for us.

The Lord will remain faithful, and will protect you until it's your time to go. Until then, He will continue to work His wonders to deliver again and again. He needs to shine brightly in this time of darkness. He will protect your flame. He will keep you from blowing out. He will keep your candle from waxing thin. You are His light to the world, so let your light so shine that others may see your good works and glorify your Father, our Lord Jesus Christ!

After reading this, you may feel I endured an excessive amount of hardship in my life on earth, but from my perspective, I would consider it a blessed life. I have not told of the many years of relative peace and calm that I had in between the bigger persecutions I faced, and I couldn't begin to explain the grace that was given me every time I faced a serious test, it's beyond words. All I can say is that it was all worth it, and I would do it over again, even every moment of trial. In everything I went through, as young or unknowledgeable as I was in the faith, Jesus never allowed more than I could bear, and He gave me more than sufficient grace, peace, and relief. As He was faithful to me, just a little child in faith, will He not also be faithful to you? Who hath delivered, Who doth deliver, and Who will yet deliver.

30. John and Judy's Brush with a Car Bomb!

(Jesus:) What you've seen in movies like X-Men, Superman, Spiderman and other fantastically unbelievable stories, you will see come to life before your eyes in the days to come. You are My heroes and heroines, and I will stop at nothing to save you and to prove to the world that you are My children whom I love, care for, and protect.

The days are coming when the spiritual world will merge with the physical world you now live in, and in that day, those who are practiced at rising above, thinking My thoughts, asking Me everything, and claiming the power of the keys, will have the doors of no impossibilities opened up to them. Once through those doors of no impossibilities, you will defy the laws of nature and the laws of the physical world that you live in.

When the time comes, if you have obeyed Me and followed faithfully, you will perform miracles and wonders that will hit the headlines of newspapers and magazines like nothing you've ever seen.

You will be accustomed to headlines like:

“GIRL FLIES OFF BUILDING AND LIVES! AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATING!”

**“YOUNG MAN ARRESTED FOR BLASPHEMING ONE-WORLD
GOVERNMENT IS SOLE SURVIVOR OF POLICE CAR CRASH!”**

**“THE END WAS DRAWING NEAR FOR CHRISTIAN REBELS, BUT CELL IS
FOUND EMPTY!”**

“LIONS IN ARENA STRUCK BY LIGHTNING!—CONDEMNED DISAPPEAR.”

Not everyone will survive the era of great trouble that is coming, but those who do will be testimonies for Me such as the world has never seen before. Those who do die in Me and My service will know beforehand that it is their time, for I will have comforted them and told them so.

When it comes down to the wire, you will have such close communication with Me that you will be talking more with Me than you will to each other or those you live and work with. It'll be a very fantastic and wonderful time in your lives. Here's a scenario of what will happen to you, My children.

Scenario: The deadline for receiving the Mark of the Beast has not passed, and yet those who have still not received it are targeted for their hesitation and delay. All are expected to receive the Mark before the deadline passes.

John and Judy are going shopping. They have to travel long distances because too much shopping in the local area without the Mark of the Beast is identifying and raises suspicion. The occasional glitch or exception is acceptable, but repeated offenders are taken note of and records are sent to the authorities and investigated.

It's a couple of days before the deadline and one last shopping trip has been prayed about and confirmed with Me. With faith in My promises, and those at home supporting the shopping team in vigil, John and Judy have set out, only to notice that they are being followed by an unusual car, different from most in the area.

They shoot up a quick prayer and I tell them that they are safe to proceed, so they continue on to the shopping mall in a city a couple of hours away. The car that was following them then disappears, and they heave a sigh of relief.

After explaining to the cashier at the register why they haven't gotten the Mark yet and implying they plan to do so tomorrow (the explanation which I told them to give), they proceed to load up their vehicle quickly in order to get back home before dark.

As they jump into the car and turn the key in the ignition, they hear a "tick-tick-tick" noise under the car's engine. At the moment they turn to look at each other, the van is blown into a thousand pieces as the bomb set by their pursuers goes off. John and Judy pick themselves up off the ground, and seeing what is left of the van in the distance, look at each other in amazement as they realize the miracle that has just taken place! They dust themselves off, marveling that they are whole and completely unhurt. Turning quickly, they catch a cab to a nearby location where a friend lives, and where they stay for a couple of days while they figure out what to do next.

In the end, their friend helps them with their shopping and delivers them and their supplies secretly to their home. John and Judy are able to strengthen this contact's faith, not just with the Word they feed him, but by the testimony of My supernatural protection provided for them and evidenced by their presence in his house, though reported as dead.

The Home, having read the news reports, but now seeing their beloved brethren still alive, have a praise meeting and their faith in My power to protect and miraculously save is wonderfully strengthened.

Incidentally, this was the headline covering the bomb story: “ANOTHER TERRORIST SUICIDE BOMBING IN THE CITY. CLUES STILL BEING SOUGHT.”

(Jesus:) It’s interesting to see how the media in a totalitarian regime works, and how untrustworthy their reports are. In a so-called free state, the media is also pretty untrustworthy—not because they’re censored per se, but because they’re ignorant and misled. It’s an interesting angle to tell a story by, and also a wonderful example of the wondrous works I will do to protect My Own in the days to come.

31. Raised from the Dead in the Endtime

It happened while we were out witnessing in the city. The group of well-dressed men in sunglasses stepped onto the sidewalk, and with swift precision grabbed all five of us and pulled us into an alley.

Hands were clamped over our mouths so we couldn't scream, as we were pulled deeper in and then down a flight of stairs. All we could do was pray, and each one of us knew that the other was also praying and claiming the keys for our protection.

By the time we had reached the bottom, it was clear we weren't going back out that way. Many guards were around and placed near the exit door, which was locked. We were all shoved into a closed cement cell and the door was locked. Grateful that we were all together, we got down on our knees and prayed that Jesus would get us out by whatever way He would choose. It was clear we were being held by some of the Antichrist's forces.

As soon as we had prayed, one of us began to cough. It continued until he was doubled over and could barely catch his breath. Then another one ... then I started coughing and choking too. All of us were gripped by this severe coughing and we started to lose consciousness.

Soon all of us were unconscious on the floor and not breathing. The men who had abducted us, satisfied that their newly developed gas had worked, dragged us out, back up the stairs, tossed our supposedly dead bodies back into the alleyway, and left us.

In a heap in the alley, just as suddenly as the coughing had begun, one of us started breathing again. After a few gulps of fresh air, he had regained consciousness and stood up, followed by another who had also started to breathe. They helped the rest of us who were waking up to stand. Strength and full breath quickly returned to us, and we made haste back out onto the street.

There we found our bags and purses filled with our lit and tools just where they'd fallen when we were taken. Simultaneous praises burst from our lips as the magnitude of the miracle the Lord had just done dawned on us. The Lord had taken us straight from the grasp of the Evil One and right back into His fold. We praised Jesus like never before right then, for we then knew there was nothing that could stop us if He wanted us alive.

Like Peter and John after they had been released, we found we couldn't stop preaching the Lord's Word even after this had happened to us. Picking up our bags, we strode out again, ready to do His bidding and wrest the world from Satan with our Lord's power.

32. Travel in the Endtime

These are the days of the End, the time when nothing is as it appears. In these days, the light is very dim and the darkness is growing around everything; though the sun does still shine, it's not as bright as it once was. Those that have to travel are forced to do so in the very dark—darkness so thick that you can even feel it. Welcome to the future...

In these scenarios we'll see how the Lord still protects those that must travel. Mary has to travel between two major cities. Normally this would be easy, but she is being hunted, so all the major roads are out of the question, and she has to travel by the back roads. She begins her trip in a friend's car. He's able to drive a good distance and get her clear of the city, but from there on, she's on her own. At her first stop, which is in a small town, she inquires about a bus, and is told that one comes through daily, but that this bus won't take her to the city, but rather to a town pretty close by. She is able to buy her ticket with cash, but she doesn't realize that this too marks her, because cash is a thing of the past, and anyone that pays in cash is watched closely.

She makes it onto the bus and begins her trip. After traveling awhile, she notices that they've stopped at a roadblock. She shoots up a prayer, claiming the keys that those there will not ask for her ID, as she is being sought after and any check of her ID now will surely spell her capture.

The guards board the bus and begin checking each person's ID. As they approach her, they are suddenly called off—the bus needs to get moving because there is a semi-important person on board who needs to get to his destination quickly.

As they leave, she thanks the Lord for His protection and safekeeping. After they've been driving a little longer, she gets a check to speak to the man in front of her, and it turns out it was he who had them get the bus moving because of an important appointment he has. After talking to him for a while, she is able to bring the Lord into her conversation and he explains that he wants to learn more. But they've reached her destination, and if she would continue with him, the bus would go by a few more checkpoints as it enters another city. The man says not to worry and that he will be able to get her past. She shoots up a quick prayer and the Lord confirms that she is indeed supposed to continue with him.

As they approach his final station, they see that there are guards waiting there for them, because the bus had never been fully searched. As they arrive, everyone is asked to remain in their seats, except for this man, as he had already arranged to have a car waiting outside for him. He gets off with Mary and both go and continue in the car. Miraculously, they are not stopped or questioned. Mary is now within this other city—one she didn't even know she was going to, but that the Lord in His wisdom knew was the place for her.

Two people are running through the woods, being chased by enemy forces. They are seeking the Lord about which way to go. It's hard to see because of how dark it is, but as they pray, suddenly everything brightens up as if it were day! But it is only for them and not their pursuers, and they are able to clearly see which way to go.

Darkness is sweeping the land and anyone who goes anywhere must carry large lights, but that's not always possible when trying to escape, so ask the Lord for night eyes. These are eyes that can clearly see in the dark, allowing you full

movement—while those chasing you, or even just those around you, cannot see clearly.

(Jesus:) There will be many different types of scenarios. Some will be more “light” than others; some will be difficult, and might even seem unpleasant. There will be tests, and not everything will be rosy all the time. The girl in the first story is obviously not in what seems like an ideal situation, but I’m still leading and protecting her because she’s doing what I want her to do. That’s the important thing—not what you feel when you go through these things but whether you’re in My will. These scenarios show a little of the other side of some experiences that you might go through in the Endtime, and therefore it is My will that they be posted.

33. Deliverance from Queen Mary's Persecutions

My name is Robin, and I want to tell you my story. This happened when I was about 12 in my hometown in the south of England, during the reign of Queen Mary, a devout Catholic who mounted the throne shortly after King Henry had rebelled against the Roman Catholic Church and declared himself head of the church in England. It was a time when there were great rifts between Catholics and Protestants.

My family and I were having our breakfast, and as usual, we read something from the Bible before starting our day.

Suddenly there was a loud knock at our door, and before we had time to get up, there was a group of about 15 soldiers in our house. It was illegal at that time to own or read the Bible in English, and a jealous acquaintance had tipped the authorities off, so they had come in for this raid during our breakfast devotions. We were all carted off to prison, and were separated. I was put in a cell with two other Protestants who were in prison for similar things. One was an old man, the other about 20 years of age.

Every day in prison we would quote from memory anything we could remember from the Scriptures. This was very strengthening and faith-building for us, as we had no written Word available. I had no word of what happened to my brothers and sisters, or my dear parents, but I had faith that they were in God's hands. Then one day a man came to the cell I was in. He was a former friend of ours, and had heard what had happened to us. This man was fairly influential in our community, and had secured our release.

All of us were released, and were together again. We had been in prison for about two months, and were quite weak. Other friends of ours helped us to recover our health, and we were soon back on the road to recovery, and were much stronger as a family because of what we'd gone through. Others were not so fortunate, and were imprisoned for years, some dying in prison. But the Lord was merciful to us, and we were all released in a relatively short time.

It wasn't long after this that Queen Mary died and the new Queen Elizabeth—Good Queen Bess, we called her—changed the laws again so that we could have the Bible in our own language. We were so thankful to see this come to pass, and through it, we were able to reach many others.

34. Sandra's Endtime Adventures in France!

(Jesus:) Sandra's mom had died of cancer when she was 12. It had been heartbreaking for Sandra. Her mom had always been there for her. She had homeschooled her. She had taught her how to witness and win souls. She was a sample of faith and trust and a witness to the day of her death.

It all seems like it was just yesterday, thought Sandra.

But it wasn't. Sandra was now 19, and the world was a completely different place from when her mom was still alive. Sandra was completely different as well. She and three other brethren, two SGAs and one FGA, were hiding out in the countryside in a rundown, abandoned farmhouse in France.

France, of all places! thought Sandra.

Over the past decade, the people of this country had grown increasingly unreceptive toward Christians. Indeed, Sandra remembered her road trip to Paris when she was 15, and how few had received the witness. Her team had been hassled and kicked out of the park area they were in. Sandra remembered the bright spot in all of that. She had experienced that when darkness abounds, grace abounds more. The Lord had given her the grace to persevere, and one girl that was sheepy ended up getting saved, Activated, dropped out, and now was a part of their team.

Sandra's team was based in Spain, and in the summer traveled on the road to France and sometimes Italy, following up on their Activated members, witnessing as they went.

On one such trip, all hell had broken loose, literally. It was global chaos, with the stock markets crashing and people going crazy. Some nutty person in the village they had been in, who had seen them witnessing, had started screaming at the top of his lungs, “It’s all happening because of those Children of God, those Doomsday Prophets!”

Sandra had smiled, Doomsday Prophets? I’m glad it’s finally happening! We’ve made a mark in history! Grandpa’s words are rocking the world!

The witnessing they had been doing hadn’t just been to get folks Activated, but also to be true to God’s current counsel at the time, which had been to proclaim the warning message far and wide. Well, that had always been His counsel, but now it was to stand up and deliver the message of judgment to a wicked world. The Antichrist had been faithful to preach his message, Sandra figured. I’m glad we finally got the go ahead to tell the other side of the truth in no uncertain terms! She and other members of the Family throughout the world were often found at rallies organized by the new One World government, passing out tracts exposing the Antichrist and his lies. Sandra had taken a few swings from ungrateful recipients, and although it didn’t feel so great physically, it had brought alive her decision to commitment, to be willing to go the distance for Jesus, “suffering for His Name’s sake.”

It was pretty scary today as well. The Lord had instructed them to stop their witnessing immediately, head south, and “go to the countryside where you will find an abandoned farmhouse.” They had found this place easily enough, and were waiting for Geneviève, the French sheep whom Sandra had witnessed to and who had joined the Family, to meet up with them.

After what seemed too long a time to wait, they finally saw her approaching. As she ran to meet them, hugging and praising the Lord for their safe reunion, she informed them that the authorities at the village had been called to find the now famous “Doomsday Prophets” who had been subverting the people against the regime with anti-One-World-Government literature, and to bring them in! She also said that there was turmoil and tons of gossip amongst the people over another piece of news—“good news for us,” she said—the “Covenant” had been broken!

Now what are we going to do? wondered Sandra. Thank the Lord for the keys of the Kingdom. We’re going to need them to work as never before.

Sandra had wondered why her prayers hadn’t “worked” when her mom went to be with the Lord. She had never prayed so hard as she had when she prayed for her Mom’s healing. When her mom died, it had been a trial for her—not just missing her mom, but wondering why God didn’t come through. After all, her mom had a lot of years of experience serving the Lord and the laborers are so few. Sandra’s Home members had been her salvation. Out of that tragedy of her life had come some life-changing decisions and progress. That’s when she made the decision to believe the Word, even though things didn’t come to pass as she thought they would or should.

One of the members of her Home called it “the test of a great prophet.” They said, “You’re up there with Job now, Sandra. You’re trusting the Lord even though you’ve lost someone near and dear to you. And not just Job—remember Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? They went into the fiery furnace and came out without the smell of smoke. So did you, Sandra. You trusted even though outwardly it seems that it didn’t pay off. That’s coming out without the smell of smoke because

you believed, not looking at the circumstances and conditions and allowing them to hinder your faith.”

It was only the Lord, prayer, encouragement, and hearing from heaven that had done it, Sandra remembered.

Presently, they needed the keys to perform a miracle. They needed to get out of this farmhouse and out of harm's way. They prayed, asking the Lord what to do. Sandra heard her mother's voice.

My dear ones. This is Sandra's mother, Lily, speaking. I am here to be your spirit helper and help guide you through the days ahead. As you have been faithful to the Lord, He will be faithful to you. He will not forsake you in your hour of need. Call on the keys and see the deliverance of the Lord.

The team continued praying desperately, calling on the keys of deliverance. Sandra remembered from way back the main foundation for the manifestation of the keys' power. "According to your faith be it done unto you." They were desperate. They were calling on the keys of deliverance. They had no way out. They needed a miracle!

This team who had gone through many breakings together to bring them to this unified, solid condition were holding hands, eyes closed. As they opened their eyes, they found themselves back home in Spain. Whoa! They all looked at each other in utter amazement!

Sandra remembered how the Lord had “walked through the midst of the crowd and so escaped from them,” but this was totally awesome—truly one of those “greater works than these shall you do” events!

“I think we’re going to make it through the Great Tribulation after all,” said Mark. “Does this show the power of the keys, or what?!” exclaimed Sandra.

Yes, it was a manifestation of the power of the keys—the keys of the Kingdom that Jesus had given to His children years ago, to become familiar with and to hone their skill in using them. They all had been through many a supposed “dry run” test with the keys, where they had prayed without many visible manifestations, yet they had continued to believe. All those experiences, which had been tallied as tried and proven tests of faith in the halls of Heaven, worked to increase their faith when they needed it most in the Great Tribulation.

“Tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed” (Romans 5:3-5). The desire accomplished was indeed sweet to the soul! (Proverbs 13:19.)

(Jesus:) Like I’ve said before, “greater works than I did shall ye do!” In this case, the people involved didn’t specifically ask Me for that particular miracle, but in some cases, when your faith will have been stretched and reached heights that you cannot today imagine, you will be able to command Me to perform specific out-of-this-world miracles, and see them happen.

That is a wonderful thought to reflect on, and I want people to hear about stories such as this, so that they’re inspired to do what they can to learn to use the new weapons, to work with their spirit helpers, and to stretch their faith, so that when the time comes, they’ll truly be able to “command Me.”

35. The Escapade

(Note: We recommend that parents or teachers read this story first and confirm with the Lord before reading it with children. There are some things that some might find disturbing, and others that might be over the head of the younger ones.)

—By the Unnamed Disciple

Esther never looked more beautiful. It wasn't just her sexy near-nakedness, but the "I'm here just for you" look in her eyes. Then the light diminished as she closed the door behind her and slowly entered the bedroom. Now in the pitch dark, I could only hear the sound of her slippers moving across the carpet. Trying to hold back my breathing, I awaited the feel of the duvet being lifted and folded back. Ah, I would soon be holding in my arms one of the most exquisite works of art the Lord had ever created. ☺

"Blang! Blang! Blang!" The room filled with an awful cacophony of clangs. Simultaneously, the once dark room was filled with light of such intensity that it burned though my tightly shut eyelids. Planting my hands firmly over my ringing ears, I knew I had to open my eyes. You cannot grasp the depth of disorientation that rocks you to the core when the human spirit is exposed to such an assault of noise and light.

The guards ceased banging their sticks on the bars of the "classrooms," since I and others were by now assuredly awake and standing at attention by our bunks ☺ or at least, we'd better be.

Opening my eyes when my feet touched the cold cement floor almost erased my vision of Esther, my angel, but I fought to retain that part of my life. Yet, like the image on a turned-off TV screen fading down to a dot, the details of her touch of Heaven all but disappeared. Reality had pushed away my peaceful yet passionate dream and I was once again aware of my surroundings.

Now for the good part. Having really forsaken all, not just my "goods" and comforts, but my loved ones, my comrades and shepherds, my library of Word, I had nothing but Jesus. It was strangely liberating to have nothing but Jesus. Having less of me and other things made more room for Him. My existence was so miserable, I couldn't dwell on it for a moment, or I'd go under. I had to keep looking up to Him. I no longer could rely on being trained; I had to put my training into practice. It was as if I had been forced to graduate and put away childish things. I had to stand alone-with God- against the world.

One amazing miracle was that often when the day was done and the lights had mercifully been switched off, the walls would seem to light up like a color LCD screen and they would display beautifully laid-out pages of key promises, Psalms, Bible prophecies, MO Letters, and prophecies. "Displayed prophecies"-that was a new way of Him speaking to me. Yes, He'd still speak in my head, but to see fresh living words displayed on the wall was unique and new-and very inspiring. Sometimes, there were snippets of multimedia clips of Jesus, and also of my Family being strong and doing exploits. And no, I was not going mad.

Jesus did many things like this to show He was with me. There were the sheep, both amongst the guards and the other prisoners, who let me know by very subtle gestures that they were with me. And there were also my tormentors, like Ken, the "sheep" who had turned me in, yet had also managed to be thrown in jail for other misdeeds. He blamed me for that and seemed obsessed with turning others against me-especially the "principal" and his staff.

But prison life is not the point of the testimony-my escapade is what He wants me to share with you. One night on prophecy wall ☉ hey, God likes to write on walls:

Remember "Mene, Mene"?—Instead of graffiti, God-ffiti, ha! ☉ One night on the wall He wrote this strange childlike poem-or you could call it a riddle.

I knew Samson of old liked riddles, so I asked him to help me "crack this one." He cryptically answered me with, "Sorry, I deal in pillars, not walls!"

Ah, John the Revelator!-Surely he'd help me decode these words on the wall.

"Take it"-he said-"and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." I figured that was a good start. "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Now that sounded good, as to do that I had to be free to travel, unless they were all going to travel here to my cell. But none of this explained the riddle. Oh, I almost forgot to quote it to you. ☉

Trust no one but Me; not those who set you free.

Go left when told right and keep Me in sight.

Pass through the red, and you'll be full of lead.

Go through the green, and you'll be unseen.

Now go right when told left, and you'll not be bereft.
Trust not your own mind, in this case lag behind.

Okay Lord, is this necessary? Why write this simplistic poem on the wall? Well, I know You don't make mistakes, and it seems You're going to deliver me to carry on Your work. I'm not sure I get the gist of it all, Lord, but please help me follow Your advice when the time comes. Your ways of communicating are best, and like You said, I'm to not trust myself or others.

Turns out it was good I didn't understand it all. You see, I was often accused of receiving outside communication, as I was kept well informed by the Lord and my heavenly helpers about things that happened or were going to happen to me. For instance, one evening I was given extra food by a friendly night guard, Hank. He said he was doing this at great personal risk. The Lord spoke to me in prophecy-not via wall this time-and He gave me the story of Joseph. Although hungry, I managed to store half of that dinner until morning. The next morning, Tom, the morning guard, brought me a double portion for breakfast, which I put aside, as instead I finished my last night's dinner. I was one whole meal ahead, and things were kept fairly fresh. As predicted, this went on for seven days, and I ended up with quite a store of food.

On the eighth evening, another guard said Hank was on unpaid leave, being disciplined for some reason, and he pointedly left me nothing. Thank the Lord I had some food stored up, and lacked nothing. (Water was available via a faucet.) The next morning a new guard likewise told me Tom was off duty until further notice, and again, no food was left. I figured this would go on for twelve more meals (we ate twice a day), and that proved correct. Miraculously, even the

"oldest" food was preserved, and my last stored meals, although the usual fare, were not spoiled or rancid. (I will leave more details on the food and my daily activities for another time, as they're not the point of this testimony.)

So I was fit as a fed fiddle, at least one in solitary, otherwise hopeless, incarceration. And on the eighth day, Hank and Tom were back on duty. Several stripes were missing on their uniforms, and they looked more dreary than usual, plus from the way they walked and from some visible marks, it was clear that they'd suffered some manhandling. But they didn't seem to harbor a grudge against me, thank the Lord.

I felt a bit bad that they may have suffered for my sake. One week later, while eating my evening meal (let's call it "bread and gravy"), I was about to close my eyes and thank the Lord for supplying it, when my teeth felt something as I bit into the chunk of bread. Cleaning the something off, I saw it was a piece of cellophane that had some words written on it with a thin black marker. "Be ready to go tonight."

Later, lying awake fully dressed in the bed, a small bundle was quietly slid into my "dorm" through the bars. Taking care not to have the cot creak, I got up and found it contained street clothes, shoes, ID, and some money. (Cash was still used-albeit highly discouraged-amongst the street people and riffraff who hadn't yet been chipped.) I prayed about it, and got to put on the clothes and make ready. An hour later, smoke drifted into my cell and fire alarms went off. Guards were scurrying around, and in some cases opening "dorm" doors and herding the blanket-laden "students" down the halls. Hank came for me and roughly ordered me up and out, then gave me a special look and quietly whispered, "Are you ready

and dressed to go?" At my nod, he then threw a blanket over me. I looked like one of many prisoners being escorted outside.

Tom, not usually on duty, appeared in uniform and together they rushed me across the field and pointed to their right and said go through that red door behind building C. "It's open and you'll be safe. Do not use any other door! Hurry!" Then they grabbed a couple of inmates from the throng and took them over to the group that was being gathered in the main field for roll call. Fire trucks had arrived and fire fighters were working on dousing the kitchen's flames. Jesus' wall words were replayed. "Trust no one but Me; not those who set you free. Go left when told right and keep Me in sight." That was clear, and was confirmed by a mind picture of Samson looking pleased. Of course, he was holding up the huge broken gates of that Philistine city. Fitting! Like he said, he definitely was a pillar and gate man-not into walls.

So obviously Hank and Tom were not to be trusted, and I was to go left instead of right. Then what? Daniel flashed in my mind and I heard the words, "Pass through the red, and you'll be full of lead; go through the green, and you'll be unseen." Looking ahead I spied the green gate. (I rarely was let outside, so had no prior knowledge of the gates and their colors.) It was locked, but as I approached, the chain moved and slunk to the ground. Without hesitating, I chalked it up as a miracle, quickly thanked Samson and the Lord, and slipped out of the "school" into the wide world outside, unseen. Now what?

There was a sign at the end of the alley that said "No right turn!" I then saw (and heard) Daniel quoting, "Now go right when told left, and you'll not be bereft. Trust not your own mind, in this case lag behind." I knew I should slowly turn

right and not be in a hurry, although my mind was screaming, "Flee!" This was a good thing as several squad cars went by towards the main entrance of the school, and I looked quite normal to them, slowly walking down the street.

The blast and wail of the school's speakers alerted that part of the world that there had been a jailbreak. That more than quickened my pulse, but I fought the urge to run. I then heard automatic gunfire and from my vantage point, now across the street from the main entrance of the law school, I saw a commotion outside of that red gate. The tower lights were focused on a scene of a bloodied lifeless body sprawled on the ground, partially covered by a shredded, blood-splattered blanket. I could see that Tom and Hank were among the first to approach the scene after the shooting stopped. The high fives they were giving each other and the black uniformed shooters revealed that this had been an ambush, an ambush prepared for me. All doubt fled when I heard them shouting, "That's a great way to get rid of incorrigibles."

As I more tightly merged into the crowd of onlookers I wondered who had taken my place. Faithful John the Revelator had lived up to his name when he'd reminded me, "Pass through the red, and you'll be full of lead." He then added, "Don't worry, the victim was your worst tormentor, Ken. He's in God's hands now. Go forth and Jesus will lead you to others who have stayed free, and they will help you and you will help them. You will prophesy many days and encourage many. Forgive me, but I have not the authority to reveal to you if you will die for His sake or be still standing when the Seventh Trump sounds and He returns to take His Own away in the clouds."

(Jesus:) The personality of the person telling the story is a light one, and that was a gift I gave him so that he could live through such difficult events. He sees things in a simple, uncluttered way. And there's nothing wrong with having a good time with spirit beings-they like to have fun too!

36. Noah's Story

The Lord said, "Let Us go down and see if there are any worth saving"-for the Lord knew that there were still a few that He heard from daily.

He began His search on the one side of the Earth and swept over the land, searching for just enough people to withhold His wrath, but in the end He did not find them. But those that He did find He had mercy on, and chose to save them, for He said, "You are the only worthy ones in all the land."

Yes, I am Noah, and I'm here to tell you how the Lord brought me out of not just persecution, but spared me from His just wrath.

When I was young, I was taught to love the Lord; I was brought up in Him, and my family all trusted in Him. But as time passed, most lost faith and no longer believed. When it was time to build the Ark, the Lord started off by asking a number of us to work on it, but as the years went by, some left, others died, and in the end it was just my little family that entered and sojourned in the Ark.

As the centuries of my youth had gone by, I had many times wondered if He was true or not, and it was in large part due to my father's belief that I remained a believer. As I grew, I was told many of the things that had happened over the years, and some of these were hard to believe. But as my family before me all believed, so I too believed.

Over time, though, I got tired of always hearing about it, and kept wondering if the Lord was real. I had prayed before and listened to His guidance, but never had I heard His voice as clearly as I did on that day when He spoke to Me about building the Ark.

I was taught to fear the Lord, and when I first heard Him speak, I was afraid of what He would ask of me, for I reasoned, "Had He not always asked great things of those that He talked to?"

On that fateful day, as I was in my fields, the Lord came down and spoke to me. I fell down before Him and asked, "What would You have me do, Lord?" And He spoke and told me of the wickedness of the world and that He would destroy it, but promised to keep me safe as long as I followed His instructions.

To begin with, I was frightened of what would happen if I said no. As I began to receive the Lord's commandments, I didn't know what to think. How was I supposed to build this large boat, and how was it supposed to work? Many of these thoughts flooded my mind, and I began to wonder if I was truly hearing from the Lord. He reassured me that I was indeed hearing His voice and His commandments.

After the Lord had spoken to me, I rose up and went on my way home. I was eager and excited that I had such a large project ahead of me. I spoke with my family about what the Lord had shown me and told them what was to come. This was when I felt the first bit of persecution and doubt.

Some of my family, mainly those that weren't as close to the Lord, wanted nothing to do with this project; others listened only out of respect for my father. I visited many of my relatives, talking to each one and asking them for their help, but from the replies I received, I saw for the first time how wicked the world really was.

I had known for a while that some of the world was evil, but I never really thought that it would infect my family and loved ones. I could now see it creeping up on them and devouring them. From those I was closest to, to those I barely knew, I could now see that the world had gained a hold on them.

At first I didn't understand completely why some of my friends and family didn't want to have anything to do with me, but as time passed, I saw and heard the reasons behind it. The main one was that they thought I was crazy, because I claimed I had heard from God and that He had spoken with me. While it wasn't uncommon for the older generations to believe me, most of the younger generations did not and could not, for they had not been taught in the ways of the Lord.

So I took my immediate family and a few friends and moved away from where I was living so that I could begin work on the Ark. I had nothing but the Lord's plans, and I went to work drawing up exactly what would be needed. We made a space large enough for the final Ark to reside, and we starting building it there. Every so often people would come by, wondering what I was up to, and I even hired some of them as laborers to help with some of the heavy work. I'd also try to tell them of the Lord and how His judgment was going to come upon them, but most of them just laughed and said that as long as I paid them they would help me out, but that they weren't going to believe in why I was doing it.

This was discouraging to hear, for I thought that surely there were going to be some who would like to know of the Lord. But as time passed, it became clear to me that there wasn't anything that was going to change their minds.

My work had started 20 years before I had my first son, and through those years I dwelt with my father and some of my other relatives. I would work on the Ark daily, and though it was long hours, I did it faithfully. The Lord told me I would have more sons, and that my seed would replenish the Earth. He also instructed me to search out future brides for them, so even before my sons were born I began looking for the parents of those that they would marry.

The Lord led me to three different families. These families each bore a daughter, and the Lord blessed them, saying, "I will use this child to preserve man and his seed on the Earth forever, for her family has found favor in My eyes."

The parents would not be allowed to enter the Ark, but the Lord wanted to bless them, for they had turned back to Him even though they'd gone astray. When I told them about what I was doing for the Lord and how the Earth was going to be destroyed, they repented, but their past wickedness had been too great, and the Lord didn't want them to continue. But the Lord gave them daughters to represent them.

It is not mentioned in the Bible about those who did repent when they heard the Lord's words, but because of how great their wickedness had been, the Lord chose not to allow them to escape the flood. There were a number of people over the 120 years of building who wanted to join me in the Ark, but I sought the Lord's face about each one and He said, "While these do repent and turn back to Me, I cannot allow the wickedness that is yet in their hearts to continue. They

love Me and are willing to give it up, but for what they've done I must punish them, and that punishment is that they shall not continue into the new earth." The Lord loved each one that repented, and mercifully allowed most of them to peacefully sleep with their fathers before the floods came. This happened even to my own father, who died five years before the flood. He'd faithfully followed the Lord all the days of his life, but the Lord said that he too was not worthy to go in the Ark; notwithstanding, his seed would repopulate the Earth.

Now, in the beginning of the building of the Ark, the Lord commanded me to hire some men to do the manual labor, for even with my father and a few other relatives, we could not possibly do all that was required. When I had my first son after about 20 years, the Lord again spoke to me, saying, "Let these that do not believe go, for this Ark should last for an eternity, but if it is further touched by these wicked ones, it shall perish."

So I let go all those that I had hired. There were still some that believed the Lord's words and followed Him, and they were allowed to continue the work beside me. But without the help of many laborers, progress was slow.

In time, I had my next two sons, and they later began to work beside us. The years passed quickly, and each boy grew to be a man, but in those days, they were still considered young compared to all those around them. But the Lord helped them to learn quickly and they grew in the Lord as He commanded me to teach them.

My sons knew not most of the wickedness that was happening around them, for the Lord wanted them free from the knowledge of the world and its corruption.

The daughters of those families that the Lord commanded me to bring as wives for my sons also were without worldly knowledge, for they were being saved for the new life. From their youth they had lived with us, brought up under our own roof in preparation for marrying my sons.

I knew not what was going on outside our lives, for I was solely focused on building the Ark as the Lord told me. So it was with great shame that one day I learned that my youngest son had sought out some neighbors and had inquired into some of the things of the world, for he had a taste for knowledge and wasn't satisfied with what the Lord had commanded us to teach him.

When he returned, he was brought forth unto all of us, and we asked him what this thing was that he had done. He told us that he had heard some things before and was curious, and he had gone to find the answers.

Well, the Lord was angry, for He had told us that these children were not to be taught of worldly ways, so that the wickedness of man would not be passed on to future generations. The Lord said that because of his disobedience, he should not continue work on the Ark and that he would have to stay.

But being that he was my son and I loved him, I begged the Lord for mercy. I called out to Him for a week asking Him to change his mind. In the end, the Lord listened and did incline Himself unto me. But because of this, the Lord said that the new world would not be as pure as it could have been, and that I would take on the responsibility for that forever.

It's not that I'm responsible for all the wickedness of the world, but I was the small hole through which it was able to leak through. Since that time, I've repented and I've learned my lesson: that even though we are able to change God's mind upon occasion, it's not always the best thing.

Over the years of building, there were many who would come to watch and laugh, or to mostly just sit and use us as entertainment. In the first few years, I would talk about the Lord and some would listen, but as time went on, they would just laugh and yell and tell me to be quiet and that they weren't interested.

After my sons began to work on the Ark, the Lord commanded me to make sure they did not learn of the wickedness around them, so those that would come and scoff were moved even further away. The Lord gave me the idea to build a sort of seating area for them; this way I could put it far enough away that they could still laugh and make jokes at us, but that we would not be able to hear them clearly. There were still a few that would come closer and talk to us—some of them truly interested, others just to be a nuisance. We would regularly chase them away and they weren't a real problem at that time.

But as the years passed, the people around us started to get angry that we continued to follow the Lord, and they wanted us to stop. The spirits that they worshipped as gods told them that if they allowed us to continue, they were going to leave them. They believed that, and began to persecute us. They would come by and try to disrupt the work, or they would destroy parts of the Ark overnight. Anything that wasn't within the Ark itself was open for destruction; anything lying around would be destroyed or messed up.

The Lord kept any harm from coming directly to the Ark, so as we worked nothing would harm us if we were within or on the Ark. The Lord said that this was His plan and that nothing would prevail against it. They even tried to burn it, but the Lord caused that not to work either-nothing would burn no matter how often they tried.

As we continued to work, they started persecuting us more and more, to the point that they would come to our homes and either try to attack us or destroy as much as possible. Most of us who were faithfully working on the Ark moved to a large house right near it, so that we would all be under one roof and be better able to defend ourselves and the Ark.

The Lord was our main protection, but He does believe in you doing what you can also. So those of us working would carry weapons. We never really used them, but as long as we showed force, it did enable us to work a lot more without bother. They would still come and taunt us, but usually their interest would dwindle after awhile.

About 30 years before we completed the Ark, there came a period when no one bothered us. We thought that they had finally given up and were going to leave us alone. But, no, they started coming at night and chanting all around us and the Ark. However, they were never able to move against us. The Lord kept them at bay, for if they had come closer, much worse damage could have been done. Over the last 25 years is when a lot of my friends and family that had believed in the Lord began to die off. In those days, the Lord would come and warn us that it was their time, and we would have a day or two to say goodbye and for them to get their hearts in order. He would take them in different ways-some even by the

enemy forces, whom He used as a testimony for Him and to give those in the world another chance. But sadly, not many changed their hearts. As time went on, there was only my immediate family left, and the last five years were when there were just the eight of us.

Those last years were very interesting, because it was during that time that animals began to appear in the woods and hills around us-some that we didn't even know existed. We didn't have to take care of any of them, besides our own small herd of sheep and cattle. The Lord, Who'd brought them to us from close and far, kept them. It was a miracle to see so many different animals coexisting in such a small area.

As the last year approached, the Lord gave us the date of when He was going to bring about the flood. We began carrying into the Ark all the supplies that we would need. He told us how to preserve different foods so that they could be stored for long periods of time, and He taught us about the different animals and what kind of forage each one would need.

During this time the Lord also gave us the instructions to build some rainwater storage tanks into the Ark for holding water. These were areas that could hold run-off water, and could be opened and closed when needed. During the forty days and nights when it rained, we were able to fully fill these and then had a large supply of clean and clear water.

The Lord said that in the last days before the flood we would be sought after even more, for the Enemy was really mad that we had still been able to work without problems. Over the last 25 years, he had thought he was gaining victories in

having different ones killed, but little did he know that it had in fact been a fulfillment of the Lord's will for them. He had only told me who would join me in the Ark; He had not told them, and neither would I until their time had come. The Devil didn't know the Lord's plan at that time, so when there were only eight of us left, he was quite happy. He thought he had done away with a lot of those that would help replenish the Earth, but when he found out that it didn't stop us, and that we were still going about our business without worry, he began to have his suspicions.

He went to the Lord and asked Him if we had been His choices all along, and the Lord said that, yes, we were the ones He'd use to reseed the Earth. At this, the Devil freaked out, because he had thought all along that he was winning. But it was the Lord's will that we survive. He gave us the power to silence our enemies, and we used this power to stop those that would harm us.

When the time came to load all the animals into the Ark, the Lord told me that we would be in there for seven days and then the floods would come. To me, this was a surprise, because until then I had thought the Lord would bring us directly into it when we were done, but He wanted to make sure we still trusted Him completely.

During these seven days, many people came around and began trying as best they could to destroy the Ark, trying to get inside. But no matter what they tried, the Ark had been built to withstand it. The Ark's lowest windows were still too high for any ladder that they had, so all their attacks came to naught.

These days were truly a test, for there was nothing to do but sit back and care for the animals and wait on the Lord, all the while being attacked from without. But in the end the Lord did it. He brought forth His flood and swept the Earth of the wicked, and through it brought about a new world and a new life for all of us. After that time of doubting, the Lord again came to me and told me that it was He Who would rule the world, and that I should continue to train my family in Him. I'd wanted to teach them so much more during the time of building the Ark, but we were so busy every day with work that it was very difficult to find enough time with them to teach them fully about Him. Now, during the year's stay within the Ark, I was able to focus directly on what the Lord wanted me to teach them.

(Jesus:) Noah is one of My servants who accomplished so very much for Me, and he could tell many more stories about the experiences he went through during his long life. Even in the matter of how I protected him during his days of building the Ark, there could be so many more specific incidents related. But this is a good overview, and I am pleased that he was able to give it. Many people will find it interesting and inspiring, and it was given for their sakes.

37. Dumpster Truck Provides an Unlikely Escape!

The Lord was giving me the strength and urging me to run like there was no tomorrow! Yet at the same time, I had total peace. I turned my head slightly to see my pursuers gaining on me. Originally they had been in an armored vehicle, but the delay caused by city traffic put us on an even footing-that is, quite literally on foot. My leather dress shoes were starting to pinch and slow me down. I should have worn my runners today, I thought. But then I remembered that they just didn't go with my casual businessman "become one" attire.

As I dodged around the maze of people and cars on those backstreets, I wondered (as I had on several other occasions in the last couple of years) Is this dying grace? I feel so peaceful. But a little voice inside me was saying, He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day. I chuckled to myself and thought, Yes, Lord, but sometimes there's a time to turn and stand your ground. Show me what to do. I turned a corner, and for a moment was out of sight of the soldiers. Just then, as clear as anything I heard a voice, it was almost audible. I knew it was my Commander-in-Chief giving me directions from Headquarters: Stop now! Go stand by that homeless man and dig in the garbage with him.

I stopped and saw a grubby-looking old man rummaging through a small dumpster, which was about to be emptied by an approaching garbage truck. The man, the dumpster, and the truck seemed to have appeared out of nowhere. But then again, I had been focusing only on my escape. At first I thought, Yeah, that's going to work. I'm wearing a dress shirt and slacks. Like I'm going to blend in with him^o But I followed instructions by faith, and began sorting through the

dumpster with the eagerness of a beggar scrounging for anything of worth that could make life a little better.

"Hey, what do you think you're doing?" growled the homeless man. "This is my turf! Find your own dumpster!" I turned toward him to apologize, only just in time to see him lunge for my legs and flip me head first into the smelly metal bin. As I lay flat on my back amidst the boxes and bags, I looked up into the eyes of the homeless man and noticed they had a strange glow. He was wearing a small smile as he closed the lid of the dumpster and trotted off with his shopping cart down the alley.

Well that was unexpected, Lord. I thought. But at least I'm safe ☺ for now! The last words were added as I realized that the ever-louder rumbling I could hear was an approaching truck, about to toss the contents of this dumpster into its gaping mouth, with me along. My thoughts raced with memories of stories I'd heard of people being crushed or maimed by encounters with dumpsters, such as I was about to experience.

Lord, I claim the keys of protection. The forklift slid under the dumpster, and I felt the metal container begin to rise. As the dumpster was tilted and emptied, I landed on a soft pile of garbage bags, which thankfully were filled only with fabric scraps. A few harmless pieces of garbage and newspaper rained on top of me, which I was able to deflect.

Before the dump truck door closed I glanced out to see my would-be pursuers talking to each other on their radios and looking confused, wondering where I had gone.

Thankfully, that was the truck's last stop, and as the garbage truck approached its deposit station and slowed at the gate, I was able to scurry out unawares.

Thank You, Jesus, for keeping me. I praise You for Your miraculous protection, even if You had to shove me into a dumpster to bring it.

(Jesus:) Some of you will even see angels. And just like for your Father David, sometimes they will appear to be bums on the street!

38. Protection and Deliverance from Bolsheviks

I lived in the time of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution, which took place in 1917. I was only 16 when our lives were turned around, and the country that we lived in changed before our very eyes. Whereas there had once been a measure of freedom to worship the Lord, even outside of the Orthodox Church, we later had to meet in secret. We had to keep undercover and be very careful about who we talked to about our faith.

I grew up in a strong Christian family, with parents who loved the Lord and did what they could to always help their neighbors and be witnesses of their faith. We held small gatherings in our humble house. We were simple people, and didn't have a lot of earthly possessions, but we were happy. I was one of six children, and my name is Anya.

This is my story of how Jesus protected me from almost certain death in the labor camps of Siberia so that I could go on for Him and live a life that would glorify Him. Even though my accomplishments might seem small, yet the ripple effect was very great, and to this day faith lives on in the hearts of those who were touched by the sample of love I showed them, and who in turn passed it on to others.

I wasn't completely delivered from the fires of persecution, but I was kept through them-and though Jesus did call my parents to their heavenly reward, He delivered us children and gave us the grace and courage to carry on, despite the heartbreak and loss.

Because my parents and our family refused to accept the Communist way, we were looked on as dissenters. In those days many thousands died for a number of reasons. Those who didn't conform were looked on as expendables, and it didn't matter who or where they were.

It was a hard time for many, and every family felt the touch of heartbreak in one way or another. Many loved ones were taken away, never to be heard of again—often sent off to Siberia. But the Lord's hand was strong on behalf of His children—His true children who loved Him as a personal Friend and Savior and who cried out to Him for help and deliverance. My story is but one of many stories, and not particularly outstanding on its own, but what the Lord did for us was miraculous and nothing to be belittled.

We knew that it was only a matter of time until something would happen—what, we didn't know. They had already started making things difficult for us, and we were having a hard time subsisting on the small amount of food we could grow in our own back yard.

We had to survive on what we could, and it wasn't easy, but we never lacked for something to eat, even though it wasn't always plentiful. My two older brothers and father were quite innovative and found ways to bring in what we needed—through hunting, trapping, and other means.

One day, my father did not return home from his work of logging in the forests. We inquired as to what had become of him and were told that he'd been arrested and taken in for questioning. We knew this was not good news, because many who were taken in for questioning never resurfaced, and their fate was unknown.

We prayed earnestly and desperately for our father. I found out much later that he'd been sent to Siberia, and hadn't lived much longer, due to the hard rigors of the labor camp. It seemed our life got even more difficult after this. My mother succumbed to illness and passed away. But she did not complain, and until the end kept faith that the Lord was in control and would somehow take care of us children.

My two brothers and I had to take care of the house and the rest of the children-our three young siblings. My eldest brother was barely 20 by this time, but he was a wise and mature young man, no doubt because of the battles and tests that we had faced. He also had strong faith. I prayed daily that he wouldn't also be taken away. We talked about what we would do if that happened. We talked about leaving our home and escaping further into the countryside, but we couldn't imagine how we would survive, and how we could properly care for the three younger ones-the youngest being only eight. We also knew that it would be quite conspicuous if all six of us left, as we were kept under close watch.

The "Reds" had hoped that taking our father away would help us realize that they were serious, and that we children would conform to their ways. They thought they could break us. But we were not about to be pushed around, and Father's disappearance only made us more determined to hold on to our faith. We had a strong foundation in the Bible and knew that we were suffering persecution for Christ's sake. We were glad that we were counted worthy.

The next big change occurred when they decided to "re-educate" us children-in other words, brainwash us with their doctrines. We had stopped letting the younger ones attend the local school when we realized that all they were receiving

was communist indoctrination. This really angered the local officials, and we found ourselves all getting hauled off to a boarding school closer to the city. It looked more like an institution or prison to us, and we dreaded being separated, as was always the case-the boys in one section of the school and the girls in the other. They also wanted to separate us older, more incorrigible ones, from the younger ones, who were more "malleable"-or so they thought.

It wasn't an easy time, and we all spent nearly a year in this boarding school. I found out later that, like myself, my older brothers had at times been put in solitary confinement because we continued to speak of our faith and would not "conform." Many times we were told that we would be sent to a labor camp in Siberia if we did not change our ways. I knew that that would likely mean death, but I was not deterred.

In the midst of this adversity, I felt the Lord's comfort and presence very near. In fact, I was even blessed to see visions of the Lord and of one of my personal guardian angels, which encouraged my faith that I was not alone. I was told in these visions that we would not be in the prison much longer, and that the Lord would make a way of escape for us. How I didn't know, but it would have to be nothing short of a miracle. And whether they would let my younger brothers and sister come along was also not known. We were under the State's care and had no say in what was to become of us.

My older brothers ended up getting away. It wasn't like an escape from prison, because we were not under lock and key, though the compound was guarded and you couldn't just leave at your own will. But they came up with a plan to leave together by cover of night, and from there went to find some of our relatives-my

great-uncle and aunt. These people lived quite some ways away, and had heard no news about us or what had happened to us, so it was quite a surprise for them when my two brothers stumbled into their home one evening, after an obviously long and difficult trip. They recounted all that had happened to us since our father's disappearance.

My great-uncle and aunt were fairly well off and had a lovely house. They didn't share the same Christian faith we had, but they were kind-hearted and wanted to do something to help us. They weren't hard-core communists, although they kept up this appearance on the outside. They were older-in their late sixties-and didn't want to jeopardize their position or rock the boat. It was during the following weeks that, together with my brothers, they came up with a plan. And wonderfully, through the samples of love, faith and courage they saw in my brothers, they both accepted the Lord into their hearts as their personal Savior and Friend.

They contacted some of their friends of influence, and went to the boarding school. Through a series of events they got legal custody of the three younger children. I was over 18 by this time, and thus considered an adult, though I was still being kept at the school. They were very angry with me and treated me even more harshly after my brothers' escape, and that's when I was sure they would send me off to a labor camp. I didn't mind, I knew the Lord would take care of me, or take me Home, but I was worried about my younger siblings and wanted to make sure that they were taken care of.

But just when it seemed like the inevitable would happen, my great-uncle and aunt appeared on the scene, and because of their standing and the influential

backing they had, the school authorities had no option but to release me into their care as well. It was a joyous reunion when I saw my younger brothers come through the door. I had caught glimpses of them from time to time, but had never been allowed to speak with them. The compound was large and you weren't allowed to go where you pleased. My sister was closer, but our personal contact was very limited. We were so happy to see one another again, and embraced and cried. I just couldn't stop thanking the Lord in my heart for all He had done. I decided to be quiet about it, not wanting to risk anything coming between us and our freedom now-the freedom to live together again as a family.

We were taken to our great-uncle and aunt's home. They became both parents and grandparents to us children, and we spent the next years very happy. We kept the Lord's love and faith in our hearts, we read the Bible together, and in time, won others to the Lord as well. We remained clandestine and God protected us throughout the continuing troubles around us, in order that we might be a light to others that needed Him.

My older brothers both married and started families of their own. I decided to stay with my great-uncle and aunt, and to care for them as they grew older, to repay them for the kindness they had shown to us. We spent many wonderful moments together in the last years of their lives.

I married in my thirties, after they had both passed on, and had two beautiful children of my own, whom I did my best to raise in the Lord's nurture and admonition. I felt though that I had already raised a family, as I had cared for my younger siblings and watched them grow and go on to lead good lives.

When my time came to leave the world behind and enter into My Savior's Kingdom, I was happy, knowing that I had done what I could, and seeing the fruit of my life and labors behind Me. Jesus never failed me and my loved ones. We did have hard times, but He always kept us through them, and we lived to tell the tale, and to lead others to Him and His love.

39. "I Was Not Myself!"

(Mary:) Hi! I'm so excited to be able to share my story with you. It's a little different, in that in this particular case I wasn't being persecuted for my faith, but rather was singled out because of the tribe I belonged to. It was a time of inter-tribal fighting in our country.

I lived in a small, rural village in West Africa. We lived simple but happy lives, because we had been converted by a dear and faithful missionary couple who had come to our area. They didn't live in our village, but were faithful to travel around to the surrounding areas from where they were and establish little churches in each village, and I and my family came to know Jesus' love, and in turn how to share it with others.

Africa has never been a peaceful continent, and there are often wars and tribal conflicts-it's just so sad. One day I will return to my land and help to turn it right side up for Jesus-but that's off the subject. My Christian name was Mary, so you can call me that. I was just 16 at the time, and fairly new to the faith, but I was already witnessing to others, and our little church was growing.

There were tensions in the area, but we didn't expect things to get to the state that they did. Within a very short while we started hearing horrible stories of villages being attacked, and of those who were perpetrating this evil. We started holding daily prayer vigils for the protection of our village, as well as our loved ones. It was a difficult time for us, because the stories were starting to get closer to home and we never knew when it would hit us. But we held on strong to our faith, and I can see now the powerful effect that prayer had in keeping the Lord's children in our village safe.

I was out in the field-which was somewhat removed from our village-when I heard noises in the bush. I carefully went to check it out, and stumbled upon a group of soldiers. There were only a couple of dozen at the most, but they were armed with guns and crude weapons, and we would have been no match for them. They were quietly biding their time until night, when I figured they planned to strike.

My first reaction was a very fearful one, I'm sorry to say, but all the stories I had heard came rushing to me-the stories of torture, rape, and killing. These were not peaceful people, and they were bent on destruction. I figured that, being alone and away from where anyone could help me, I didn't stand a chance. The Enemy tried to overpower me with fear at that point, and if I had yielded to that fear, the Lord would not have been able to use me as He did to turn the tide of evil that was about to come upon my small village.

Their captain came over to me and grabbed me, with obvious intentions. I prayed desperately for Jesus to fill me with His peace, and at that moment I felt as if something poured right through me. A feeling of comfort, warmth, and peace

overwhelmed me. It must have been obvious to this man, who roughly dragged me to the side. I felt as though I wasn't my own person at that time, but that I was being possessed by a heavenly being who spoke through me and guided my actions.

I looked into this man's eyes, and I could see tenderness that I didn't expect to find there. He was taken aback by my peaceful nature and by the fact that I wasn't afraid. He looked very surprised as he looked at me. I took this as an opportunity to speak to him, though I couldn't know how he would react. The words that came through my mouth were definitely put there by someone else; they were simple, but cut straight to this man's heart.

"Jesus loves you," I found myself saying. "He wants you to be His child, and He wants to forgive you and help you. I see loneliness and fear in your eyes, and I know Who can fill that emptiness. I found Jesus and He worked for me. There is a better way to solve the problems than through war and killing." By this time I was crying, not for myself, but for him-crying because of the pain and torment I knew he was in.

What I said wasn't so big and earthshaking in itself, but I think he saw something spiritual in me. In fact, I know he did. He didn't see me, but he saw his departed wife as he looked into my face (this I found out later, only when I came to Heaven). He was overcome with emotion, and slumped down on the ground and started weeping. I, still not feeling myself, knelt down beside him, laid my hand on his shoulder and prayed for him. A few minutes later, he was himself asking for forgiveness, from his wife and from her God.

I didn't quite understand it at the time, but I saw the full picture when I came to Heaven, and I was so happy to have been used to touch this dear man in that way. I found out that his wife had died in childbirth some years before. She was a new Christian at the time, and was trying to talk to her husband about her faith, but he scorned and mocked her, which greatly saddened her. When she died, he hardened his heart, and became even more bitter and resentful, blaming her God, Jesus, for his troubles.

It was a beautiful moment, as we both knelt there crying. We were far enough removed from the rest of the soldiers that we were undisturbed, though I'm sure the soldiers wondered what was happening, why I wasn't screaming, or why there wasn't more commotion, so they started coming over to see what was happening, and were so surprised at what they saw!

The captain stood up, looked at the soldiers, and said, "We're moving along. We all need a break. Go home to your families, and I will contact you about further duties." And that was it. They dispersed and left, without hardly a word or look in my direction. These men must have been happy to go home, or somehow were under the influence of God's Spirit that was very strong in that moment. The man looked back at me, and said, "Go home to your family. You will not be harmed." And that was it!

I honestly didn't realize what had happened. I knew it was miraculous, because I felt I had hardly done anything, except that I knew something or someone had taken over my actions and words for those few moments, and something profound had touched this man's heart. I knew for sure it wasn't me.

I felt that no one would believe my story if I related it to them, so I decided to keep it quiet for some time. I just went home, and continued with my duties, full of wonder at what God had done. Not only had He delivered me from what could have been an awful experience, but our whole village was spared, by God's grace. That wasn't the end of the tumult in our country, but God spared the little area we were in, and the fighting became less and less violent and further removed. I found out when I came to Heaven that after this, the man decided to go back to his family and to stop fighting. He moved his whole family into hiding; they crossed borders into another country and lived peacefully, although in difficult circumstances. I was so thankful to have been used as an instrument to bring this dear man into His Kingdom, and to save my village.

So that is my simple story, which I hope is an encouragement to you-how Jesus can overcome fear in an instant and use you to be a vessel of His love, even to your most bitter enemy-it's nothing short of miraculous!

40. The Day the Lord Used Me!

I grew up as one of the youngest children in a large family many, many years ago. I had many great ambitions when I was growing up. I lived in Russia and my family was from the minor aristocracy. Somewhere up the line my forebears were from the rich and landed nobility, but we were descendants of younger sons, the so-called minor lines of the family, so our belongings and means were meager. My parents had a strong faith in God, which they tried to impart to my brothers and sisters and me as we grew up.

I never understood much about God, just that He was a great Spirit that knew and saw each time we were bad, and would punish us, or help our parents to, for any wrongdoing. So I had a fear of God, but not much more. Still, I had grown up with all the stories of the Bible and I knew a great deal about the lives of the biblical heroes. I think this is what helped me to perform what I had been destined to do.

I was very interested in joining the army and helping our country. So I did, and after only a few years was made a captain, even though I was young. One day, when I was patrolling a village in the district where I was stationed, I saw something that shocked me. There in the middle of the town square was a young woman, not more than 20 years old, preaching about God. Many were mocking her and laughing, but still she preached on.

Someone brought her a child who was obviously very ill, and as she touched and prayed for him, he was healed! After this, the Orthodox priest went to the head officer of the town and told him that she was a witch and that he needed to put an

end to her evildoings. They said that she was using some sort of wicked power to perform these "tricks."

The officer ordered the woman arrested and he presided over her court case. The woman was young, beautiful, and had great peace on her face during the trial; her very soul and spirit emanated peace to all. She was obviously unafraid. Fear was the greatest power that the army and church used over the people, so we were all shocked to see her so peaceful and unafraid.

Her accusers stood up one by one and berated her, telling her that she was a witch, and to prove it, she would be burned at the stake. If she was a witch and survived it, then they would put her to death by another way. There was no way out for this dear girl, I could see that. I knew that everything that was being threatened would indeed happen. She knew this too.

She explained how much she loved God, and that she'd only prayed for God to heal the child. It was not an evildoing on her part, but merely an act of God that she, as His humble servant, had requested. This angered the religious authorities even more, and they began to shout curses at her, "Witch! Blasphemous witch!" they cried. "You will be put to death today!"

At this moment, I felt something come over me that I'd never felt before. I had very little faith, so I didn't understand what was happening; it was almost as though an unseen force was moving me and I stood up.

"Sir," I said with a loud voice as I addressed the judge, "I saw what this woman did with the child. I saw her pray, just as we have all prayed at one time or

another. She had no special potions, no strange rituals; she only touched his little forehead and asked God to heal the lad.

"I say that we let her go-that we tell her to not do this again if we must-but that we let her go. She is no witch, we all know this, for we have heard much of witches and some have even seen them before. Any with eyes can behold this woman and see that she is not one of their accursed number. Let her go."

A stunned silence fell over the whole courtroom. The officer in charge sat silently for a few moments, reading over his papers and quietly thinking about the words I had just said.

"Nikolai, you have spoken well. I agree with you: she is no witch." Then, looking at the girl, he said, "Go now, and quiet thyself from these things, for I do not like to have to preside over petty disputes."

Many months passed and still she preached to the people about God's love, about His mercy, and that He wasn't a God of punishment and fear as they had been taught before. She healed many others, but through her first encounter with the law and the priests, she learned wisdom and was much more careful and judicious of how and when she taught and healed.

Soon, I began to listen to her words too, and after a time we married and spent our lives working together, traveling from town to town telling of God's love and mercy, healing the sick and caring for those who needed our love, comfort, and help. It was a sad time in our land, with many hardships, trials, and difficulties, and we knew that God had called us to bring life to the dying, comfort to those who had lost much, and hope to those whose hope had faded.

We lived blessed lives, and oh, how many times I thanked God for filling me-the weak and quiet-spoken vessel that I am-with His power to plead that day for the life of the woman who would be my wife and bring God's love to my heart, and a greater purpose to my life.

(Jesus:) This is an example of how I can use others to help you. I'm not limited in the ways I can save My children, and in many cases, I will use "natural" means, such as a defender. This is an encouraging example of such a situation.

41. Apostles Escape Temple Prison!

(Peter the Apostle:)

I want to explain to you how we escaped that time that the Chief Priest and the Sadducees had us imprisoned.

James and John and I, and all the others, had begun to see the amazing power of God at work, to where we knew it wasn't us doing the works, but the actual Spirit of God, alive and working in our physical world.

The times had become so cataclysmic with good and evil at such a sharp contrast with each other that it was obvious when an evil or good spirit was working. Jesus had spent His life not only giving us the Words of how to live, not only talking the talk, but also living it Himself-walking that very narrow road Himself to the very end-and we were eye-witnesses of all that. So step-by-step, day-by-day, even though the odds seemed stacked against us, we yielded to what He had shown us to do by His living example.

In those weeks after His resurrection, He led us all to form a brand-new society based on His way, just as He is doing with you today, the Endtime Family. Only, in our day it was more localized, whilst in your day you are spread abroad across the face of the earth.

This is why you are going to do greater things than we did, or than even our Lord did in His day, simply because you have a greater reach across the face of the Earth, and when the Spirit of God begins to move in you the way it moved in us in our day, the entire world will sit up and notice.

When they threw us in prison, it was actually kind of exciting.-Exciting because we had seen so many manifestations of the supernatural already that we were just waiting to see what the Spirit of God would do next under these circumstances. It reminded me of the story of Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, and I took great heart in that.

So there we were, just waiting.-Praying and waiting. Lo and behold, as we humbled ourselves and sought Him and called out to Him and made room for Him, He came.

We began to perceive that the veil between the spirit world and our physical world was parting, and there stood the Archangel Gabriel, one of the Lord's most powerful messengers, sent straight from the throne of God.

Contrary to what you might have thought, Gabriel was inside the prison room with us; he didn't open the door from the outside. We were in awe, of course, to see such a manifestation happen before our very eyes.

The first thing he did was beam us the message that God intended for us to fearlessly continue to teach and preach, to just give it out, give it out, give it out. That was our most important job.

The Spirit moved into the door, into the locking system, until it undid the mechanism with Gabriel's hand following it and performing the act in the physical through his being in tune with the spiritual force of God, and then he pulled the door open physically. As the Spirit took over the spiritual atmosphere, it entered into the physical and caused the physical things to happen.-What we would call "supernatural," but what to God is simply His Nature at work. Gabriel was the interface, bringing the two worlds together and performing the Master's will. He pulled open the door and beckoned us to leave. We gingerly walked out and closed the door calmly, silently relocking the mechanism, and off we walked, up the stairs, out the upper doors and onto the street in the dead of night. He told us to go to the Temple and tell everyone all about our life. So we did.

In the early morning, we went and told all about our life, and all that was happening and how there was another way, an alternative, God's way, and multitudes continued to join us.

Well, you know the rest of the story. The officers went to the jail to get us and bring us to the great gathering of the religious authorities, and we simply weren't there!-Ha! What a surprise it was for them! And where did they find us?-Back in the Temple, doing just what we'd been doing before.

They took us and scornfully asked us how we could possibly break their law by speaking these things they had ordered us to keep to ourselves. I simply said, "Because it is better to obey God than to obey man"-simple as that. And then we all gave witness to them of the great things God Himself was doing. God bless Gamaliel, now my dear friend, who stood up for us and gave us some breathing room.

Yes, they finally took us and beat us, but I'll tell you, if you were the kind of man I'd been, with so many sins and failings, you would have been glad to have been beaten for our Lord, because it is proof that you are not only serving Him despite all your mistakes, but also that He has put His stamp of approval on you!-That's like a badge of honor, let me tell you!

Tears came to my eyes!-Not from the beating, mind you, but tears of joy from the realization that I was still His. That's the way I took it. I thought, "Thank You, Jesus, for counting me worthy! I love You, my Lord! Thank You for giving me another chance! Thank You for letting me suffer for Your Name's sake! It's an honor!"

That was the main thing on my heart and mind. I'd failed so many times! I'd backslidden! I'd even denied the Master, and only by God's grace hadn't betrayed Him! So when it finally came time for me to stand up for Jesus, and I did it, and was beaten for it, I took it with joy.-Despite all of my failings, the Lord was telling me, "You're one of Mine, Peter. I'm not going to let you go."

So that's how it happened! That's how it was from an eyewitness. And I just want to encourage you whom He has raised up in these Last Days, that as you make

your stand boldly against the System, He is going to stand up even more boldly for you. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. And as you stand up and make your stand for Him, He is going to stand up to the point that at times you are going to see the veil part too, and you will see that there are many, many, many more with you than those few that stand against you. You will be able to harness the power of the Spirit of God and His world, and great will be your witness! You too will say, "Thank You, Jesus, for counting me worthy to be one of Your disciples!"

I was a man full of pride, yet He helped me to make it and to be a disciple and to give my all to the end. That was my heart's desire, and He fulfilled it for me, because he knew it was what I wanted above all else, to give myself for Him, in spite of my pride and faults and all the things that were stacked up against that happening. He judged it according to what I had in my heart-my deepest desires there-and not according to my faults and the many things and attributes I didn't have. And He'll do it for you. Just watch and see.

I love you, my fellow laborers. Right now I have been attending war-room councils and forming battle plans with the Lord. It's all being taken care of in the spirit world and being carefully planned. You'd be amazed at the mass of plans laid out and how the Lord is attuned to each one of them, how He is changing things as each of your days go by, and is constantly revamping, updating, and reorganizing them to reach His promised end.

(Jesus:) This is another deliverance story, and it's interesting for you to see how it actually happened. Although there's not too much new information, you do understand a bit better how he felt and a few more details.

42. "As Told by the Apostle Paul..."

All that I am or was is only by the blessing of God. I am the Apostle Paul-you've definitely heard of me before. I have many stories to tell of how God saved me. One such incident occurred when I was leaving a certain city in Asia Minor. The people had received our message well, and I-along with my companions-was content, and started on the road to new places and cities. I did know, however, that some were very angry with us, such as the rulers of the local synagogue. They were furious, but did not speak out because of our popularity.

As we walked, I heard God tell me to turn off the road. I obeyed, and the others followed. God kept telling me directions on where to turn and where to go. Then the command came: "STOP"! I stopped instantly and looked down the small hill. There, facing the road, were four men, armed with knives and bows. I heard God's voice telling me to call out to them and that we would not be hurt. I called out, "Hello, my good men! What are you doing on this fine morning?" The men turned, and one of the bigger ones said, "That's him!-The one the rabbi sent us after!" I then understood that they'd been hired to kill us.

I talked to them for quite some time. They listened, for God had poured His Spirit upon us. Eventually, all but one got saved. This one, however, drew his bow, and took a shot at me. But as soon as the arrow left his bow, he screamed and fell dead. The arrow ended harmlessly in a tree.

I ran over to the man. He was plainly dead. I told the others to go back to the town. They agreed and hurried off. My companions and I, however, stayed with the man and prayed that his life would be given back to him.

With a start, he sat up! He wept and pled for forgiveness. I gave it readily, reassuring him that even the worst of sinners can be converted. I told him I was living proof. I shared my story with him, and he received our Lord into his heart. He then left, and we continued on our way, giving thanks with every step for the goodness of the Lord!

(Jesus:) As Paul said, he has many such stories of how I delivered him during his ministry. There are more to come!

43. Tribulation Travel

(Jesus:) Never will My power be so obvious as it will be in those days when My whole Church is being persecuted, from one end of the Earth to the other. Yet, I will miraculously spare you, My children, and bring you to safe havens. Those safe havens might be in a country that is resisting the Antichrist regime, or they might be in the midst of the Enemy's territory, right under their noses. My power is not limited, and no matter where you are, or where I've called you during those days, you will be protected and cared for.

Yes, I'll take some Home to be with Me, but many will carry on right through the Tribulation and right on up to the Rapture. Those days are going to be thrilling beyond measure, and you will see miracles right and left-upright, downright, outright miracles that will keep you awed, and praising Me with all your hearts. I have called a young family of four to move from their current hideout to a new location in another country. They heard through the underground communication system My children have between them that there is a need for shepherds at a large camp of people who have resisted the Antichrist's rule and

regime. There is a small band of My dedicated Family brides there who are helping to shepherd and feed the flock with My Words, and they have a growing group of labor leaders who are turning around now to strengthen their brethren. But they are in need of reinforcements, so I call this young couple in their mid-twenties with two young children.

The big question is: How are they going to get from one place to the other? They will have to travel on roads that they are sure will have checkpoints and other monitoring systems, and they will have to cross a border from one Antichrist-affiliated country into another. Although these countries are both allies of the Antichrist, they still have a measure of national sovereignty for now, and border posts are manned jointly by personnel from each country.

A big issue is that they will need to obtain fuel along the way to keep their car going. It's a long ways to their destination—at least 12 hours of driving to the border, and another day's trip beyond that. They will be able to fill up their tank at their current refuge, but what about refills? The small car's tank would not be able to hold enough fuel for the trip, and their belongings will take up a good deal of room in the car, so carrying extra jerry cans of fuel is not an option.

There are many obstacles that stand in their way, but they are not daunted. They know that I will supply somehow. I have clearly led for them to drive, and clearly led for them to go to this location, so they know I'm going to do it somehow. As they come to Me for further specific direction, I tell them to launch out by faith, to pack up the car, and head out. I lay out the route before them as they study the map. This route takes them off the main highways, through the countryside and around the main urban areas to a small border crossing.

As the day of their departure arrives, they say their goodbyes, pack up enough supplies to last them for the two days' travel, and take what few belongings they can fit into the boot of the car. They've certainly learned to cut down in the last couple years of moving, but they've always had what they needed, and whenever they had to forsake something they were sure was needed, it was always somehow provided in their next location-often through the kind and generous offer of another. My children have learned to truly work as one body.

After a good night's rest, they set off on their journey, completely by faith, and going on the promises that I will provide what they need along the way-most importantly fuel to get them to their destination-and make the enemy oblivious to their presence along the way. There is little traffic on the back roads, and their car attracts little attention. It's a fairly common model, and they packed it in such a way that you can't see stuff piled up everywhere, which would attract attention. They look like a typical young family, headed for a short vacation or visit with their relatives-nothing out of the ordinary.

As the level of their gas tank gauge starts going down, they continue to pray about what they should do. I instruct them to keep going and not to worry, but to continue their prayers for My supply, which they do at regular intervals. At the halfway mark, they again pray for a miracle.

After another couple of hours of driving, they notice that the fuel gauge is still at the halfway mark, and has not gone down at all! They praise Me and continue on their way.

The children have remained remarkably calm throughout this trip (another miracle!), and are excited about the new location they are headed to, having heard stories of what they will be able to see and do when they arrive there. The children take an active part in prayer and in claiming keys throughout the trip as well, and are happy to play quietly in the back seat and watch Family videos on their portable player.

I instruct them to spend the night in a secluded spot off the road. It's not the most comfortable to sleep, but they manage to get the kids comfortable at least, and recline their seats, and I supernaturally strengthen them while they sleep, so that they are fresh the next day for the trip ahead and for the border crossing, now just an hour's drive away. Again, they have no idea how I'm going to get them through, except that they are going on My promises and direction.

They awake refreshed and ready for the rest of the journey. Before starting, they again ask Me for instructions about the border crossing, and get another clear confirmation that they should head to that specific one. So, on their way they go, praying desperately, claiming keys, and listening to faith-building Word.

It's fairly early in the morning, and the traffic is very light on this day. As they approach the border they notice that there are very few cars around them. This concerns them initially because they think they might stand out more or get more attention. Now just a few moments away from the border, with their hearts thumping wildly, they call on the key of peace, and instantly are covered with a bubble of peace that helps them to feel and appear calm-just like anyone else who has nothing to worry about going through that border.

The borders have been set up to scan the cars and passengers as they go through, only alerting attention to cars or passengers who set off an alarm for some reason. Drivers are instructed to drive through at a specific, slow speed, and should an alarm go off, a barrier is lowered in front of the car, blocking them from proceeding further. There are also several officers ready and on standby to deal with anyone who would try to race past the border.

Two cars to go now and both breeze through without alarm. Our little team then drives steadily forward, through the border crossing and the scan ... and continues driving. No alarms have gone off, no one even looked up at them; it was as if they weren't even there!

A couple of minutes down the road, they let out a huge sigh of relief and praise Me profusely for the miracle I've just done-a true example of "seeing eyes blinded," or perhaps of some spirit beings tricking the scanner into reading them as if they were someone else-someone marked by the Beast! They don't know exactly how I did it, but here they are, on their way, in a new country, and without a single alarm having been raised!

They travel throughout the rest of the day, mostly through "wilderness" territory, with their fuel gauge still at the halfway mark, then arrive at their destination in the evening, and are met by a team from the camp, who lead them the rest of the way to their hideout in the beautiful mountainous countryside.

A new phase of their lives is about to begin, as they step into the role of teamworking with the other shepherds there to help guide this large flock of new believers and resisters of the Antichrist's regime.

44. Saved from Jail!

It was a cold winter's day. The snowdrifts had reached almost up to the roofs in the little village in Russia where I lived. Our family was huddled around the fire in the livingroom reading a story from the Bible, as was our custom in the evenings.

We had many friends in the village, as my father was known as a man of prayer. He had the gift of healing and had often prayed for the sick. However, these were dangerous times. The Red Army had put out a proclamation forbidding the spread of Christianity, and many people had been shipped off to concentration camps for professing Christ.

Fortunately, ours was a very small village, and had been relatively peaceful during the turbulent and blood-filled years of the Revolution. It was our remoteness that was our protection. Gradually, however, those in authority in our area were forced to conform to the dictates of the land, and eventually persecution of Christians reached even our remote village.

That evening as we were huddled around the fire, there was a sharp knock on the door, and a group of soldiers entered. They carried rifles and were quite rough and mean to us. They said we were under arrest for spreading Christian propaganda. They were not from our village, but had been sent there to rid our area of those that still professed Christianity, and especially any who, like my father, were active in spreading it.

My whole family was taken. We were carted on the back of a rough wagon to the nearest town, where we were put in prison, together with about a hundred others that had been rounded up from the surrounding villages. It was a desperate time. The authorities weren't the least bit sympathetic to our plight, and were very rough and forceful with us.

We all desperately prayed for God to do a miracle, to save us, and to bring us relief. Well, relief did come for us, in the most unexpected way. There was one soldier who was secretly a Christian, who had devised a plan to have us released.

This was very dangerous for him, because had he been found out, he would have surely been executed.

It was late on the second night after we'd been imprisoned that a murmur arose outside our prison cell. Some of the guards were arguing. They had been drinking, and an argument about something had broken out. Our friend had been waiting for something like this, and was biding his time until he was able to get the key he needed to release us while the other soldiers were distracted with the fight. God truly caused the wrath of man to praise Him. As soon as the Christian guard got the key, he quickly unlocked the door, returned the key, and before the other soldiers could stop us, we were all outside the prison and running through the town.

We managed to escape to a relative's nearby place. My father had many friends in this town, as he had often come there to pray for the sick and to help minister to these people. We were well taken care of, and were never bothered again. Strangely enough, no one was sent out to try to find us again, and we were soon

able to return to our homes. Apparently the authorities had other more urgent matters that had come up, and this incident was quietly swept under the rug. The news of what happened never left our area, and the soldiers never came for us again.

45. A New Twist to a Raid!

It was 11:45 p.m., and we had just finished a united meeting of desperate prayer and hearing from the Lord after being warned by a king that trouble was coming our way. Our time was heralded a "new era of world peace," but we all knew that for us it meant the biggest battles in the age-old war of good versus evil had begun, and that our lives would now become entirely dependent on the new weapons we had practiced long and hard with.

When praying, the Lord told us to "sit tight and prepare to see miracles," to "call on the keys and claim the gift of heavenly thought power," and to "speak the words I will speak through you." He told us that He had engineered the coming situation so that we could witness and win souls we otherwise never would have been able to reach. He said He would use the healing ministry He'd led us to start as a key to unlock the doors of protection and safety we needed.

So it was no surprise when a team of Special Forces appeared. The spirit of the Lord fell, and no sooner had they appeared than we all knew exactly what to do. Guided by our spirit helpers we each focused on one, two, or a small group of people, and started witnessing for all we were worth.

As it turns out, the officer in charge had recently been diagnosed with Hepatitis C, and had had a vision of being healed by us. He had volunteered to head up the operation of arresting us, secretly hoping to have a chance to talk to us and see if we could help him.

True to His Word, the Lord miraculously and instantly healed him, (appearing to him in a vision as we prayed), resulting in our being escorted to a safe place where we could stay for a month with all our needs taken care of, so that we could pray, hear further from the Lord, and decide what to do next.

(Jesus:) This is a short and sweet story, which is also very encouraging. Raids are things that some of My children have come to fear and be worried about. But in such a situation, as in any other, I am just as present, and My power to deliver is just as great if such is My will.

46. An Ancient, Though Unusual, Method...

(Note from Jesus:) Parents should be aware that this story might be a little disturbing or frightening for some younger children. Although nothing bad happens, he is still captured and brought in for questioning. The somewhat unconventional way I deliver him might also be a question for some small children.

Chale is 15, living in the Endtime as it rages in its full force. These are the last three-and-a-half years. The training he had received in the last five years of his life was intense, heavy-duty, and powerful. He had grown in the Word considerably, simply because he'd had to. The Endtime was clearly on the horizon-everyone knew it and it was the talk all over the place. It was inevitable that if he didn't learn what he could, he wouldn't make it in the End; he wouldn't have the faith that he saw in his parents and the SGAs. He'd known his future depended on his applying himself then.

He was only 12 when he'd hit upon this realization, but times were growing worse, and the need for the younger ones to mature and grow up had accelerated with each day that passed. It was imperative that each one was as strong as they could be; there was no time for frivolous play or room for half-hearted soldiers. So he made his decision. Even if he didn't feel capable or trustworthy of the term "Endtime warrior," he would give it his best shot anyway.

He memorized the keys with all his heart. He did his best to apply himself to the Word. Even though at times he could only get through 15 minutes of focused reading, he was still doing his best. He tried to learn to praise, even though it felt

awkward. He wanted to receive prophecies, although for him this gift just never seemed to come.

When the last seven years of the Endtime had started, he still wondered why he hadn't been given the gift of prophecy. "Isn't it vital to making it through the Endtime?" he had once lamented to his older sister. "Sure it is," she'd replied. "But don't worry, Chale. When your time is right, the Lord won't fail to give it to you."

Finally, it seemed Chale had gotten a message. It was very small, actually only a verse. The Home had been praying about a future move, or the option of splitting up their Home into smaller units for increased security and fruitfulness. As they were praying and hearing from the Lord, he received the verse, "And you will hear a voice behind you saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when you should turn to the right hand or to the left." It took all his courage to say what he had gotten, and he was greatly encouraged to know that three other people had received that same verse. His heart soared! Aha! I do have the gift! he thought. He made a pledge to practice his gift every day after that, and to keep asking the Lord to speak to him, even if all he ever got was the same verse over and over. As time went by, the Lord began bringing different verses to mind, and soon verses turned to quotes, quotes to portions from the Word, and then to full-blown one-paragraph prophecies-not a word-for-word repeat of anything he had read! Chale was on a high. Now this was Endtime living!

Well, that was then-this is now. Chale is now soon to be 16, and although still excited that he has the gift of prophecy, a part of him wonders why they can never seem to go beyond a simple paragraph. It frustrates him that he can't receive the

same type of messages his older brother and sister receive, and his parents receive, or what comes out in the new Word. Such a lame channel, he'd say in despair and frustration. No, no, no!-I can't give in to that thought. Just simply can't! Refuse, rebuke it, by the power of the keys!

He had come to realize, even more so in these dark times, that giving in to just one negative thought, one hopeless reaction, could cause serious repercussions to his spirit. One little negative thought didn't just lead to another little negative thought, but it wrapped him in a blanket of negativity. It hindered his ability to hear clearly from Heaven, and just made fighting difficult. He had to be on the up-and-up, doing all he could to remain focused on the power in order to be empowered. It was just a fact of life.

So Chale fought for the victory. He claimed the key promises, which he had found easy to memorize. He had a whole "InfoStore" of them in his mind and could easily pull them out for whatever the need.

"Perhaps that's the main weapon the Lord wants to use in your life, Chale. Did you ever think of that?" his older brother had mentioned to him one day. "For me, remembering key promises is so difficult, whereas for you it comes real easy. That's a great gift, you know?"

Chale was encouraged by this, so tried to focus on his strengths instead of what he considered his weaknesses. His baby gift of prophecy did make him more desperate to be a clear channel-that was a plus too, he figured.

Well, here's the story of Chale's deliverance. His mom had been ministering to an influential government official of the country. She would meet monthly with him, feeding him the Word and passing on prophecies for him that answered questions he'd put together beforehand. She would help to give him the Lord's counsel for situations he was dealing with, and in return, he would provide supplies for their Home.

Mr. Official (as we'll call him) had been dealing with some pretty heavy decisions over the past week and had asked for Linay (Chale's mom) to please meet with him for some urgent business. He hand-delivered the questions, and wanted her to ask Jesus for instruction on what he should do about these matters. These papers contained very important information—secret information, that if found in her possession would not only sentence her and those who knew about it to indescribable punishment, but Mr. Official would undoubtedly never be seen or heard of again.

The Home had called on the key craft to latch on to these papers, and to protect them in all they did. Linay and other channels got together repeatedly over the weeks to seek the Lord in desperation for His clear and complete counsel regarding each question, each official matter. Finally the answers had been pulled down and the written response was ready to be sent back.

As usual before such trips, the Home got together to pray about how to deliver the package to Mr. Official, as not only did the papers containing the solutions need to be given, but the important papers had to be returned as well. As Chale was praying with the rest of the Home members, again he got the verse he frequently received, "And you will hear a voice behind you saying..."

"Chale!" Just then his mom nudged him, trying to get his attention to pass the recording device to the person on his left who was receiving a message. But for Chale, that was all the message he needed to receive. He knew the Lord was calling him to help deliver these papers. Now that's exciting, he thought. After the Lord spoke, it was determined that Yan, an older SGA, should be the one to deliver the papers. Chale was a little disappointed, but he went ahead and recounted the prophecy he had received as well, about his going too. The Lord confirmed it was His will and the two set out.

They both looked the part of typical systemites of the day. It was a national holiday, so not too much suspicion should be aroused at their strange trip on skateboards to the business side of town. As they neared the office building where Mr. Official worked, Yan made a stop at a coffee shop that was offering free hot drinks for the occasion. He handed his backpack, which contained the legal documents, to Chale.

However, Chale's teenage mind was not as focused as it could have been, and he absentmindedly entered the store. While Yan was careful to order a drink just from the outside of the little coffee shop, Chale wandered inside. Within seconds alarms went off. Not audibly to anyone around them—in fact, no one even knew an alarm had gone off, except for those in the little police boxes that were stationed in every block of town.

Yan was handed his coffee from one of the waitresses as he looked around for Chale. Where did the boy go? Just then he saw Chale meandering out of the store again. Oh, Jesus! Immediately he knew they were in trouble. You must have a reason for allowing this to happen, Lord, especially since Chale is carrying the

important papers now. I call on a key craft of safety and protection right now. Please have Your way.

Just then, Yan saw two black vehicles slowly approaching their street. Chale still seemed lost in thought and Yan quickly asked the Lord if he should join him, or if it would be less suspicious if Chale were alone. He is in My hands; today is My time to show him that with Me nothing is impossible. So stand back and let Me do this miracle.

Finally, Chale snapped back to reality and looked over for Yan, seeing him skateboarding down the street. Chale wondered, That's strange, he wouldn't usually leave without me. He got back on his board, and just as he was about to start after Yan, a car pulled up beside him and a tall man stepped out.

It all happened so quickly for Chale, he didn't know what to do or how to respond. Suddenly he was being pushed into a car that continued down the road, past the business side of town, down dark alleys, and stopping at what seemed like an old abandoned warehouse or factory. During the whole ride, all Chale could manage to do was repeat the countless keys he had put to memory in his mind. When first shoved into the car, something had been shot into his arm, which made his tongue go numb and his sight blurry. He realized this was the modern equivalent of a blindfold and gag. Yet his mind remained clear.

When the car stopped, Chale was pushed out and hands grabbed his arms and led him inside the building. He noticed his eyesight coming back as little splotches of light were now visible. His tongue no longer felt limp and numb and he realized

he was able to whisper coherently to himself. Finally, he was seated in a chair in the middle of a cold, dark room. His backpack was pulled off of him.

"So, boy, our scans read that you don't have the mark. We're intent on finding out why. But first, what are you carrying in here, eh?" the one man loudly demanded, as he threw the backpack to a soldier beside him.

Oh God, not the bag! This is bad news, Chale, very bad news. Chale's heart sank as he watched the soldier pulling out the different files and papers that held such valuable information. The soldier immediately whispered something in the man's ear while handing him the papers. It was apparent they understood what the papers were about.

Jesus, You said You would give us a mouth of wisdom through the keys; I call on that power right now. Show me what to say and how to react. Do a miracle! I need You to do a miracle of deliverance today. Please!

Just then, he felt a sharp jab in his side as the soldier hit him with the dull end of his weapon.

"So, boy, you're one of those 'people of the keys,' eh? You're one of those who call themselves the 'Endtime Witnesses.' Don't think we don't know about your kind." The man in the black suit sneered at him, as he shoved the papers in Chale's face. Chale, still recovering from the pain, was unable to make any reply.

Without another word, the tall man went to the far side of the room and talked for a while on what seemed like an intercom. Then he motioned the soldier to

follow him outside of the room. Chale was left alone, tied and aching, on the cold chair. "Dear Jesus," he whispered, "if ever I needed a miracle, I need one now. Those papers they found are so very important to You and Your children. You told us that it was imperative that these papers made it safely to Mr. Official. You said that You would place Your key craft around them to protect them from those who shouldn't see them. Jesus, I call on the key of miracles for You to honor that promise, for You to do an outright miracle, simply because, well, I need it! And I believe You can do it! Please, I'm very, very desperate, Jesus!"

He heard a voice in his mind, Be still and know that I am God. Just then, the door flung open and about 20 men entered the room. Most of the men were in military fatigues, but the man in charge had a distinct uniform unlike the others.

"So this is the boy?" he asked the tall man who had started this scene.

"Yes, General Sir, this is one of those 'missionary Christians,' and he was carrying these treacherous papers with him." The tall man was obviously feeling inferior next to such a high-ranking officer, but he did his best to display confidence. The General motioned for the backpack to be brought to him. Before looking through it, he approached Chale.

"What's your name, boy?" He asked sternly, only four inches away from Chale's face.

I call on the keys of wisdom Lord!

Just then Chale felt a surge stream through his body, as if someone had just taken charge of his form. He opened his mouth on impulse to answer the question, and while his mind clearly said "Chale," what came out was, "Salamahababalal." Gibberish, pure gibberish.

Well, that's just great, thought Chale. I can talk, I'm sure I can talk! Let's try it again....

"Thababalmamalalah," again gibberish. Then, even more to Chale's horror, he felt drool running down his chin.

The General stood looking at the boy appalled. Was this a ploy? Was he pretending? Or was he actually insane, a total nut case, a retard? He eyed the boy suspiciously.

"Who are you, boy?!" he demanded a bit more forcefully this time. Again Chale's pitiful expressions of gibberish were the only decent reply he received.

Lord! Chale thought. I am almost definite that I had prayed for a mouth of wisdom, not a mouth of insanity! What are You doing to me? Why can't I say awesome, breathtaking things! Why can't I feel the power of Your Spirit speaking with such great wisdom that all my adversaries will not be able to gainsay nor resist! His perfectly coherent and frustrated mind asked the Lord what was going on.

Chale, haven't you always heard that I work in mysterious ways My wonders to perform?

Yes, well, this definitely is mysterious.

Remember King David, when I instructed him to act as a mad man, an insane loser before the King of Gath, so that he could experience freedom and deliverance from My hand?

Finally it was all coming together for Chale. Yes, I remember. Is this going to be similar to that?

Pretty similar.

So Chale yielded to the continual display of drool and gibberish, until finally the General grabbed the backpack to produce the evidence against this vile boy. As he opened the bag, his eyes froze as he glared at the contents within.

"See, General Sir? A rebel, just as we thought," the tall man said eagerly, as he noticed the upset look on the General's face.

"Yes, a villain indeed!" the General said as he reached into the bag and pulled out none other than a handful of toy cars. "And this is the treacherous material? This is the cause for your interrupting my meeting with the military officials to question a retarded boy with a bag full of cars!"

The tall man could not hide his shock upon seeing the cars in the General's hands. "But, Sir, I swear, there were papers in the bag-top secret papers! Isn't that right, soldier?" Quickly he turned to the soldier by his side for support.

"No, not at all, General. I don't recall even looking through the bag," the soldier affirmed, rationalizing that it was better to agree with the General than speak the truth, which sounded as ridiculous as the boy drooling in front of them looked.

"This is insane!" the General fumed as he threw the bag full of cars in Chale's lap. The General turned to the tall man. "I relieve you of your post! And..." he paused "I don't ever want to hear from you again!" He gave a curt nod to three of the military men by his side.

"And what of the boy, Sir?" one of them asked.

"Put him back wherever you found him, you idiot!" and with that he stormed out of the room.

Chale and his backpack were again placed in the car, and he quickly found himself back at the same street he'd been picked up at. Still in a demented state, Chale couldn't quite get out of the car on his own, so the soldier opened the door and threw him out. Chale stumbled onto the sidewalk, clutching his bag tightly. The minute the car sped off, Chale breathed a sigh of relief. "Oh, thank You, Lord!" he exclaimed. "Wait a minute! I can talk. I can actually physically, audibly talk!" Chale then caught himself, realizing how silly he sounded if anyone were to hear him, although it was already dusk by this time and the street was pretty empty.

Okay, Lord, thank You for that terrific miracle. What to do now? Would You like me to deliver these papers, or return home? What's best?

Well, start with walking the direction of Mr. Official's office and then I'll show you what to do.

All right, Lord, as long as it doesn't involve an epileptic fit or something else like that.

And if it did, wouldn't it be for your own good, because I know what is best for you?

Sigh! You're right, Lord. Okay, lead as You will, do as You please ...

Just as Chale neared the office building, he heard footsteps coming up behind him. Immediately his heart skipped a beat. Okay, Lord, any time now for the epileptic fit would be just great. I don't care how it makes me look, please just save me from this attacker! The footsteps were so close now that Chale thought he might just have to fake the whole scene himself, when all of a sudden a hand grabbed his shoulder. Chale, in mid-motion of an over-exaggerated move to fall over and writhe in pain, was surprised to hear the sound of his name.

"Chale!" It was none other than Yan. Ah, the relief that swept over Chale's face, along with a slight shade of embarrassment at his previous sentiments of fear. "I've been waiting for you all day, as the Lord told me He'd bring you through without even the smell of smoke, and that tonight you'd be found safe and sound right here again. That was definitely a test of my faith!" Yan whispered almost all in one breath.

"It is so great to see you too, Yan! You had me freaked for a second there. I have to tell you all about what happened to me, it was too awesome-and well, embarrassing-to go through ever again, but it saved me!" Chale said excitedly.

"Okay, well, first let's get these papers to Mr. Official, and on the way home you can tell me all about it," Yan decided.

"Sounds good," Chale agreed.

And good it was, because the papers were safely delivered into Mr. Official's hands, the Lord's Words were preserved and passed on, and His children were saved and cared for through it.

Thousands more miracles occurred in the remaining three-and-a-half years of tribulation, as the Lord had millions of miracles reserved for His Endtime Children, and He managed to pack each of them into the short period.

(Spirit helper:) What a miraculous time that'll be—one you'll never forget! If the era of miracles during the Great Tribulation is but a demo of greater works and miracles to come, then you have nothing to worry about. Passing on to your heavenly reward will be only the beginning of your life. That's when everything really starts; that's when the fun really begins; that's when you'll live your life to the full!

Your life on Earth is like the intro, the beginning chapters of the book of your life. After this, things only get better, more exciting, more thrilling, more awesome, more captivating than ever—in every good sense of those words. Sometimes you wonder what more can happen in the eternity of life after this life on Earth. It might frustrate you to think of "forever and ever and ever." What will we do, what's to be done, what will be exciting? What cool things will we discover? How can life go on for eternity with daily fresh excitement, joy continually, and everything else that's promised?

Ah, that's because you're living in a world defined by time. But when you get to Heaven, that notion of time will be lost to you. You won't wonder about "eternity"—it will be as if you were living it all along and never missed a beat. And

you won't wonder about "excitement" or "fulfillment" or "new challenges"—those will practically be in the air you breathe!

Heaven is more awesome than you think. Heaven will be more than you could have hoped for. Heaven is going to rock your world!—And you'll never be the same again!

47. God's Mercy and Deliverance

My name is Matthew. I was an orphan boy, and lived in England in the 1600s during the rule of King Charles the Second. My parents had died in a flu epidemic that devastated many villages during one particularly harsh winter. Conditions were very different than they are in your day, There wasn't much medicine or many doctors, and when a sickness would strike, people would simply close themselves up in their house and wait for the dreadful plagues to pass.

The ones who got sick didn't receive much help either; people were scared, and no one dared to touch a sick person. So many people died through lack of care and attention, many of whom might have survived; but that's the way it'd always been.

At an early age I became an orphan like many other children around me. Somehow we seemed to have had strong health and had survived—but surviving the sickness wasn't a great gift for many, as they had no one to care for them. The very young ones were sometimes adopted by relatives, but the older ones, like myself, had to survive on our own; and often the only way was to leave the countryside and try to find work and somehow a place to stay in the city.

And that's how I ended up in London. I didn't live in a nice part of town, but in the "shadowlands," the poor part of town, begging most of the time to get something to eat, or even stealing when there was no other way. Once in awhile I would find some little job on the pier unloading boats, or doing some errands for people. It was the most miserable time of my life. I slept wherever I could, ate whatever I could, and tried to stay alive.

My parents had been Christian and had given me a foundation in godly life, with good morals and principles. They, and others like them, did not agree with some of the rites and doctrines of the Church of England. Of course, it was one thing to read our Bible and love God when all was going well, when we had a nice house and a roof over our heads, and when you can always sit at the table to enjoy a good meal; but there in the streets of the big city with practically nothing to eat, just enough clothes on my back to keep me from freezing, and no future except maybe dying of cold or ending up locked in jail, one gets a different view on religion and God.

I never blasphemed the Name of God, though at times I was tempted to. I guess the good education and sample of my parents had been ingrained deep enough in me to help me stay on the right path. As it is written in the Book, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Pro. 22:6). So this training and the Word they had read to me as a child stayed with me and helped me in my time of affliction, and no matter what, no matter the trials and difficulty, the Lord always took care of His children. I didn't think so at the time, but I knew that despite my difficulties and the hard life I was forced to live, the Lord Jesus was keeping me and protecting me. Many times I found myself in very difficult or sometimes dangerous situations, but I was always able

to get out of them. The Lord was always there with me, even when at times I believed I'd been abandoned by Him.

Through staying true to what my parents had taught me, I was noticed by a man who later on adopted me as his own son. He was an older man who lived a simple, peaceful life with his wife on the outskirts of London. He had worked most of his life as a merchant and had a small fleet of trading ships that carried goods to different places in Europe.

He'd somehow noticed me and had felt an urge to help me. Why me and not one of the other hundreds of young boys like me, I don't know, but he was a devoted Christian man who had beliefs like my parents, and the Lord put it in his heart to help and care for me.

He was also a wise man, and he took some time to first observe me and see how I was doing, if I was faithful in the little jobs I had, and how I was interacting with the others around me. I'm so thankful for the good training my parents had given me. This man took time to weigh me in the balances; he knew where I was staying and some of my habits, he questioned people around me, until he knew in his heart that it was the right time. Then one day he approached me and invited me to his home.

It was a big surprise for me, but at the same time, somehow in my heart I knew it was the path prepared for me. You might feel that it was an easy choice, as I didn't have anything to lose, but in those days, just like today, many a young person could easily fall prey to some evil. Life was a constant fight, and one had

to be very alert to make the right choices. But I had peace in my heart. I could see in his face that he was an honest man, and he had a Christian light in his eyes.

I moved in with him and his wife, and they adopted me almost instantly as their own son and gave me all of my needs. They gave me a room to stay in and new clothes. They helped me to go to school, and treated me as part of their family. They had a few children, but one of their sons had died in the war, another from sickness, and their eldest son had left to live his own life away from them. They not only gave me all of my physical needs, but also took care of my spiritual life. My parents had instilled character in me, and through afflictions and trials, that had grown and shaped me into a mature young man. My new parents taught me how to read and study the Bible, how to understand it, and how to apply it in my everyday life. At first I was annoyed at this constant exhortation, but as I grew older and more versed in the study of the Bible, I began to enjoy these times of discussion and counseling.

But it was also a time of great confusion spiritually. The king was trying to favor the Roman Catholics, whereas the parliament was dominated by those who insisted that the rites of the Church of England be followed. Those of us who didn't conform lost the right to worship together and we had to worship in the open fields in what were called conventicles.

The church was going through a very difficult time, and there was persecution, and fighting amongst the believers. It broke my heart, as I never understood why there was so much arguing and fighting amongst people who professed belief in the same God and read the same holy texts. It is a very sad testimony when so many people are dying without knowing their Savior, while the ones who are

supposed to be telling them only fight between themselves. Often with my adopted parents, we would pray for all those concerned to realize the errors of their ways.

Yet I lived a happy life for several years, growing in the knowledge of the Lord and in the love of my new parents, until persecution finally knocked at our door. We knew it was coming; many people had already left England for the New World beyond the ocean. It was a time of exploration and of new beginnings. The gap was building up between the "old world" and the "new world." Many people around us believed that the time had come to leave the old behind and start again where there could be religious freedom and one could believe and live his religion as it seemed good to him. But many people weren't sure; it was far away, and there were lots of stories about conflicts with the Indians living there and of the difficult conditions, so many waited to hear back from those who'd already left. My new parents were among these people; they knew that one day they would have to make a decision, but it was a difficult one for them to make. But God is always faithful to prepare our hearts, and through our reading and study of the scriptures, we'd seen the light ahead clearly defining the new path we were to follow.

Then persecution against us started in earnest. It began slowly with words, insults, and threats; then a few windows were broken; then they started to be more violent in their actions against us, to the point that it was almost dangerous to go out, and we knew the time had come to separate ourselves from these and follow the new road ahead of us.

We had several friends and we would meet in secret. I would often be the one going out at night to meet some of our brothers and discuss plans of action. Some of the older ones were a little more reserved in their decisions, but we all knew that the time was drawing near when we would have to leave.

The tension had been mounting rapidly in our neighborhood. Some of our brethren had been violently attacked in the street, but God always controlled the hands of our persecutors.

One evening, as we gathered together with a few people, the Lord spoke to us through the reading of the Gospel of Matthew, in verse 10:23, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." We knew without a doubt that it was the Lord admonishing us to leave right then. Someone read afterward, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it," from Matthew 10:29. At the time we didn't completely understand the meaning of these words in our situation, but later on we saw the insight of God and His forewarning.

We quickly sent word to all our friends, and after packing our few but most important belongings, we headed to the docks. There a boat was waiting for us to take us across the Channel to the Continent, from where we would embark for the New World. As we were leaving, my father closed the door behind him, but as he was turning the key in the lock, he paused for a moment, and then left the door unlocked. I looked at him, but he just smiled back and said that it didn't matter anymore, that we had died so that we could find life again. I didn't completely understand what he was talking about, but later we realized that if we had stayed

and tried to save our lives, we would have most likely lost them, just as the verse had warned us.

We left London on Saturday evening. On Sunday morning, the fire that has become known as the Great Fire of London started. The fire burned for five days and destroyed a great part of the city.

We had escaped, and our persecutors never followed us.

(Jesus:) I will always care for My Own, both to supply them with what they need, and to protect them when they're in danger.

48. Out of the Fiery Furnace!

This is a story that happened a very long time ago, in a place very far away from most of you. My name was Hananiah, but you probably know me better by my Babylonian name, Shadrach.

I was the youngest of the four Hebrew youths chosen to stand in the king's palace among his counselors and wise men. It was a strange destiny for us, being uprooted from our families and our backgrounds, and being taken into the care of the king's eunuch Ashpenaz and his deputy Melzar.

We were young, we were scared, and we felt very inferior and very out of place. I thank God that I was with my friends, and particularly that Daniel was with us. His faith and his conviction to stand up for what he believed in was such a wonderful sample to the rest of us, and particularly to me.

Daniel was the first one who refused to eat the meat and drink the wine from the king's table and convinced Melzar to provide us with pulse to eat and water to drink. It was also Daniel who would remind us of our heritage as God's chosen people, and would help to guard us against the temptations of the world we saw around us. He would lead us in prayers and make sure that we observed the religious traditions which God had commanded.

It sometimes seemed like he went overboard, or was being too strict about mere traditions—and of course now we understand that the tradition isn't what pleases God. But there was much more than that in it for Daniel. While he was very observant of all the little details of our religious laws, he was motivated by a very

deep love and respect for God, and not a mere respect for the jots and tittles of the law. He wasn't self-righteous and never looked down on the rest of us for our frequent failings.

The Lord had given him the heart of a true shepherd, and he shepherded us with firmness, yes, but also with tremendous love, understanding, and forgiveness. It was not an easy task for him, and he could so often have compromised for the sake of simplicity, or plain laziness. But he held fast to the truth, and always did his best to help us to do the same.

I wanted to take this little time to give honor to whom honor is due, as without Daniel, the story I'm going to tell would probably never have happened. Over the months and years, we learnt much together, both from our Chaldean lords, and also from the scrolls of the Law, which Daniel had somehow put together. During that time we became very dependent on Daniel; I know I did. He was my mentor, my role model, my counselor, and my friend.

We spent three years learning the tongue and the wisdom of the Babylonians, which in those days mainly meant an enormous amount of memorizing and reciting. Their language was an excruciatingly difficult one, very unlike our own Hebrew. I was 12 when we started, and it was a very difficult time, physically and intellectually. We were constantly pushed beyond our limits, and then further still. And it wasn't just a matter of long hours and lots of learning. As foreigners, we were subject to a fair amount of discrimination and just plain meanness.-Not at the hands of our teachers or caretakers, those men were honest and true, but mainly from the other Babylonian children, or even regular ignorant people.

The Babylonian mentality was generally quite tolerant. For instance, it was not uncommon for foreigners to serve in the king's court, or to occupy high places in the administration of the empire. There were other children such as ourselves who were also being trained and groomed for the king's service.

Generally, though, it was understood that those people would adapt to the Babylonian ways and try as much as possible to integrate into local society by giving up their original customs. It was unheard of that anyone would resist what you could call "peer pressure," and retain their foreign ways, such as Daniel led us to do.

The Lord was with us though, and blessed us for standing up for Him. At the end of the three years, we were brought before the king and he was amazed at the answers that we were able to give him, and decided that we should be added to his council of wise men and astrologers.

I'll never forget when Daniel called us to his home one night and told us that we had three days to find out the dream the king had dreamt, as well as the interpretation thereof. He had peace and faith in the Lord, but it was a real test for me. We proceeded to fast and pray. For two whole days and nights we knelt facing Jerusalem-praying, singing hymns, and crying out to our God for deliverance. I knew that He could do it; He could show us the dream and the interpretation ... but it seemed so theoretical to me. In a way, I believed

He could do it, but I didn't believe it would happen.

It was the most marvelous thing that happened though. At night, Daniel received the vision of the great statue whose head was made of gold. The interpretation of

the dream was given too. When Daniel presented it to the king, he was so astounded and astonished that he fell to his knees and tried to worship Daniel. He commanded incense and perfumes be offered him and made Daniel ruler of Babylon and chief of all its governors. Daniel asked that we all be made rulers over the province of Babylon as well, and the king agreed.

This incident played a very important part in the story I'm about to tell, as it showed us the physical, tangible power of God. God was not only an Entity that lived in scrolls, or even that had created the world, had chosen Abraham, and had brought our fathers out of Egypt. God was a real and extremely relevant Being Who had power over us and cared intimately about us-today and here. There was a definite change in the way we perceived our God-we'd always believed in Him, and never doubted His existence, but this was so much more than simply believing He existed.

Daniel's new job as chief of all the Babylonian governors meant that he had to travel quite often and visit the different provinces. It was on one such visit that the king decided to build a statue of himself and command his servants to worship it. Nebuchadnezzar was a fickle character. Over and over, he would assure Daniel of his respect for our God, and he would have proofs of the other gods' ineptness; yet over and over he would turn back to them and persecute us for worshipping our Lord. This is the story of one of those times.

It was only a few years after the Lord had shown us the interpretation to the king's dream that some of his other wise men and Chaldean astrologers and soothsayers convinced the king that we were a threat to his power and authority. Surely, they said, the king could see that we were trying to usurp his power and

that we were planning to revolt against his rule. What else could he expect from foreigners who would not even pretend to take on the Babylonian customs? The king agreed and ordered a statue of himself made with the greatest secrecy. He wanted to have Daniel out of the way when he would unveil it, as he feared Daniel more than anyone, and took care to send him to the very furthest province at the time when he would dedicate the image.

One day he called for all his court to assemble in a large plain called Dura, and there we were all shown the huge image. It was truly monstrous-90 feet high and almost 20 feet wide-and was overlaid with gold. There was to be a great feast made for the dedication of the image, and a herald read the king's proclamation to all: "That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up; and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

All day long the courtiers and great men of Babylon partied and were amused by diverse spectacles and entertainments. The king had spared no expense and there was an abundance of food and drink for all who were there-altogether hundreds of men, plus the female company that had been so numerously provided. The three of us who were there did not take part in the merrymaking that day. Our hearts were heavy, and we were distressed. We tried to find a quiet place to pray, but there was noise and music everywhere. We also noticed that we were being discreetly followed. Obviously, this whole scene had been made just for our sakes. When we reached the edge of the encampment, we observed some men

putting together a large furnace, and preparing wood and burning materials around it. Yes, this was for us.

My heart started to pound faster. I really did not want to die then. I was only 18, and felt my life was just beginning. I tried to comfort myself: Surely it was not God's will for us to perish in the flames. Surely He would perform some miracle to deliver us-to change the king's heart. Maybe if we could speak to the king.... Oh, if only Daniel were here. I thought of Myriam, a girl I loved with all my heart, and thought of marrying. I thought of my parents whom I hadn't seen since I came to Babylon, and whom I'd wanted to ask leave to visit. A thousand thoughts flashed through my mind as I stared at the stone construction being hastily put together, and my mouth became very dry.

Meshach, whom we still called Mishael among ourselves, said a low prayer: "Dear God, provide for us a place where we can commune with Thee, and find out Thy will for us."

As we wandered back towards the encampment, the Lord led us to look into one of the first tents that was pitched there. It was a storage tent, but had basically been emptied of all its goods over the duration of the day, and had almost nothing left in it. We discovered that, when inside, you could barely hear the sound of music and of revelry coming from the rest of the area. Our God had provided us with a place in which to seek His face and we thanked Him for it. We each joined into the prayer:

"God of our fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, we know that Thou art God, the One, the True, and the Only, and that there is none other beside Thee.

We know that we cannot bow down and worship the king's image, but we know that if we don't, we will surely be put to death.

"We know, oh Lord, that Thou art able to deliver us; nevertheless, if it be Thy will.... We ask for Your will to be accomplished here, among these heathen, just as it is in Heaven. Give us the courage to stand up for You, to proclaim loud and clear our faith in Your mighty hand and Your power.

"If it be Thy perfect will, oh Lord, deliver us from the hands of the king and of those that would seek to harm us. Stretch forth Thy mighty hand, and show the multitude of those assembled that Thou art God. If not-give us strength to die for You, and through that, to testify of our faith."

Then we each kept our silence, in quiet personal communion with God. I felt very strongly that although it had been the wise men's cunning arrangement, and the king's decision, to have Daniel absent this day was all a part of the Lord's plan. God was in effect testing us, and seeing how we would do without him.

I determined in my heart that my faith and love for God did not depend on Daniel, and that I would do my best to go through with what I knew to be right, even if he was not around to lean on. It was a very difficult decision to make, because I'd become very used to following him, and trusting in him, rather than on what I could personally get from the Lord.

I finally decided that I owed it to Daniel-that after all the time and effort he'd spent on helping and coaching me in the ways of the Lord, he deserved, upon his return, to find out that I had stood strong, whatever the consequence, and whether I would be there to tell him or not.

The sun was now setting, and presently we heard the sound of music being played. We walked out of our tent and slowly approached the center area. Crowds were running and thronging to get closer and pushing to be able to touch the giant image. When everyone had assembled, the order came to bow down and worship the image.

To every last man, all there threw themselves to the earth, and a clamor arose as everyone lifted up their voices and worshipped in their own tongues and dialects. In all the plain, there were but us three left standing. Immediately, guards took us to where the king's throne was set, on a little eminence overlooking the crowd. Some of the king's wise men told the king that we had not obeyed his commandment and that we should be put to death. To do him justice, Nebuchadnezzar hadn't expected that, as a matter of fact. He'd assumed that we would give in, and that was the way he intended to have a victory over us; he had not expected that he would have to reach the point of sentencing.

He told us that if we would bow when the music started again, then all would be well with us. If not, we would surely be thrown into the fiery furnace.

We answered simply that we would not change our minds, but the king would not listen. He commanded the minstrels to resume their playing, and again, everyone prostrated themselves and worshipped the image—everyone but us!

The king asked if we believed our God could save us from the furnace. It was Azariah who replied that "our God is indeed able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, and even from your hand, oh king. But if He chooses not to, and we

perish, still we would not serve thy false gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up!"

This made the king madder than any of us had ever seen him. The Bible records that his face literally changed to the point that he was unrecognizable, and he yelled that we be bound and thrown into the fire by the strongest of his guards. First he ordered that the fire be heated seven times hotter that it was. We were so hastily bound that they didn't even take our hats or outer cloaks off. The evil men inspiring the king were determined to get this over with as quickly as possible, and commanded that nothing delay the men who were to throw us in.-So much so that they had them take us to the furnace before the fire had been properly controlled, and the flames were still leaping around the gate uncontrollably. The courtiers yelled for us to be thrown in at once, and the men obeyed-though it cost them their lives. The fire caught on their hair and their tunics, and in a moment they were all consumed—but not before we'd been thrown into the inferno! The first feeling I had was one of intense heat. For a split second I felt a part of what it must feel like to actually be burnt to death. I didn't feel any pain, but I felt the heat flush my face and my eyes be blinded by the smoke. Then, nothing. For quite a while, I remained with my eyes shut, not knowing if I was already dead or still alive, as I felt nothing at all.

I heard my name, and I opened my eyes to see Azariah and Mishael sitting facing me with amused grins. I tried to move and found that my bindings had burnt off of my wrists and legs, and that I was free to move about as I liked. I sat in front of them and we looked at each other with perplexed faces. I think that none of us had yet decided if we'd died or not.

And then the most wonderful thing in my entire life happened; I still cry when I think of it. My friends saw a shape of a Man behind me in the flames, and when I turned around, I saw it as well. Had someone else been thrown in as well?we wondered.

But then, the shape moved closer, and it was obvious to all of us that we were in the presence of the Divine. The light that streamed from His entire Being dimmed even the light of the flames, and all of a sudden, it was dark all around us, and there was nobody around but the three of us and Him.

We fell to our faces and reached out our hands in front of us, but He gently lifted us up and embraced us. He said that He was so very proud of us, that we'd passed one of the most trying tests of all time, and that He had great rewards in store for us. He'd wanted to personally tell us how much He loved us and was thankful for the testimony that we'd been for Him.

We felt so incredibly unworthy and awed at the sight of Him, but He was so very natural that it put us at ease very quickly. I know it sounds odd to say that you talked with the Lord and that He was very natural and easy to relate to, but that's the way He was.

He was a theophany-a manifestation of God-whom we knew had appeared unto Moses on Mount Sinai and to our fathers in the desert. It was wonderful that He appeared in man-form, but we didn't yet ask ourselves Who exactly He was. The king, however, when looking in and seeing a fourth man, was blessed with insight and identified him as the "Son of God," but we didn't ask ourselves that question right then.

He told us that we were alive (apparently, we still hadn't figured that out!), that we were going to be released, and that there was still much for us to do before we would join Him again in His Kingdom.

Then the king made his call to us: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither." We stepped out of the furnace, and, looking back, I saw the Man that had been with us disappear. The king was waiting for us as close to the fire as he dared go, and when he saw that we were whole, unbound, and unhurt, with no traces whatsoever of the fire on us-not even the smell of smoke on our clothes or hats-he was awed, and slowly sank to his knees.

One of Nebuchadnezzar's good points was that he many times confessed his faults, sometimes to the entire empire. That day, lifting his hands towards Heaven, he recognized and proclaimed the power of our Lord before the entire assembled court, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."

He decreed punishments for anyone, and any nation, that would speak against the Lord, and he also exalted us above the other princes, for the sake of our God. As it turned out, Daniel had caught wind of the king's plans, and had cut his trip short, hoping to make it back in time to change the king's mind. He arrived the following day, exhausted from his fast traveling, to find that all had been said and done. We were so happy to see him, though, and spent most of the next few days talking about what had happened, and about how the Lord had protected us. We

all gave thanks to our God and praised His Name, for His works truly are wondrous and His might to deliver is greater than all the armies of man. Of course, much later, it was Daniel's turn to be tried for his faith, and he also had a wonderful testimony of God's protection when he was thrown to the lions.

(Jesus:) Just as with other stories of My men and women of old whose great works for Me have been recorded in the Bible, I'm very happy that they're getting a chance to tell the stories themselves, and add in extra details, or perhaps what they felt when they were going through their experiences.

These are stories that a lot of people can relate to because they're already familiar with the basis for them, and these can help them to better understand and even remember the original episodes as told in the Bible.

49. The Dream that Saved the Christians from the Lions!

My name is Attius. I was a Roman/Greek Christian during the time of Nero in Rome. Though you have heard a lot about the Christians dying and being martyred at that time, some people seem to think that no one really survived. Though a lot of martyrdom did occur, the Lord at the same time was saving and delivering us from the hands of our would-be attackers.

I am one of those Christians who was miraculously saved during that time. We had many friends in high places. We had friends in Nero's palaces, as well as among his soldiers and centurions. Lots of times we were warned about an attack or persecution that was coming through these sources, and thus were able to escape. I was a man of science; I was intrigued with the way that things worked, and I was also into philosophy. I came to know Jesus through my curiosity. I had heard about Christians and vaguely knew about their teachings. I was intrigued with their beliefs and conviction which I had seen and heard of them dying for. I had heard about a secret meeting one day through a friend, and decided to go with him and check them out. It was in the catacombs and there were quite a few people gathered, which was risky. I stayed at the back of the meeting. I sat and listened and heard the man tell of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and of some of His other parables. Being into philosophy, I found his words and the parables told captivating—a great way to convey a message and moral subtly. I started attending these secret meetings more regularly, at first out of curiosity, but then I realized how different I felt afterwards. I realized how happy I had

become. I was baptized after one of the meetings, gave my life to Jesus, and became a Christian.

I changed even more from that moment on. My friends mentioned how different I was, how happy I had become. I started talking to them about Jesus and the Christians, at first a little bit covertly to see what they thought about them. They thought I was just on another science quest of some sort. I found Jesus' method of speaking in parables worked great with them. I would tell some of His parables and see how they received it and then go a little deeper. In time, I managed to convert most of them to Jesus and started bringing them with me to the meetings in the catacombs.

One time I went to the meetings and found out that some of our brothers had been taken to prison and were awaiting their sentence. It was then that I first realized how close to home persecution lay. We were all a little more careful from then on, changing our meeting places often and being careful as to whom we brought to our gatherings.

I had some friends in Nero's palace as well as in high places—other men of like mind who were into higher thinking, men of science and engineers. I would talk to them in parables sometimes about the things Jesus said and about the Christians. I eventually led some of them to Jesus as well. As it was quite dangerous for them to come to our meetings, considering their positions, I would talk to them personally about the Christian meetings and the happenings of the other Christians. We would talk in my house and sometimes in their homes or places of work.

One time I had business to do in another town, so I couldn't make it to the meetings in the catacombs. When I returned I found that all the Christians who had attended those meetings were caught and taken to prison to await the arena. My friends who were in those meetings were taken as well. I went straight away to one of my friends in the palace and asked him what would happen to them. He said that they would be fed to the lions in the next few days and that there was nothing we could do to save them, for if we tried to do something we would be found out and thrown in prison with them.

I went back home and was really desperate with the Lord, praying and wondering if there was anything that we could do. I went to sleep that night after having desperate prayer for all the Christians who were in prison and asking the Lord if there was a way that He could save them.

That night I had a strange dream. I dreamt that the Roman god, Mercury, was flying down to deliver a message to the Emperor, and on his way he stopped to drink some water. The water looked fine except for a slight silver tint to it. After drinking the water he continued his journey until he started to look sickly and weak. He then turned into a liquid silver metal and disappeared.

I awoke the next morning with a fixed determination to help free the Christians being held in prison. I prayed and asked the Lord what I could do to help. In my desperation and pouring out my heart to the Lord I was reminded of the dream I just had. How can a dream help? I thought. I asked the Lord to reveal to me anything about it that He was trying to tell me. Almost immediately I had the answer, but first I would have to see my friend Claudius in Caesar's palace to see how to go about it. After having told Claudius my plan, he said, "I think this will

work, at least it will buy us time if nothing else." He said that they were planning on putting the Christians in the arena to face the lions in two days.

With that in mind, I went straight to work at my house. I knew of an alchemist who had many chemicals that I would need. After having contacted him and getting the necessary things and putting them together, I went to bed that night praying again for the Christians and that the plan that the Lord had given me would work.

The next day I went out to the arena to scope out the place and find out where they kept the lions. I approached the guy who took care of them and enquired as to when he fed and gave them water. He said that they would give the lions water the night before they let them out in the arena. He then showed me the lions that would be in the arena facing the Christians soon.

I returned that night before they would give the lions water and took out a vial that I had with me. I carefully poured out the mercury and salt it contained onto a cloth and wiped down the insides of all the lions water troughs in the arena.

The next day came when the Christians would be fed to the lions in the arena. I got into the arena and watched as they brought out the Christians who were all singing. Then they opened the gates for the lions and they came out walking slowly up to the Christians, who started to sing with more determination than before. As the lions approached they started to look weak and tired; they started laying down and making noises like they were in pain.

All the people in the grandstands started to laugh and say that the lions were trying to sing like the Christians. It wasn't long before all the lions in the arena were lying down still and motionless, while the Christians kept singing.

No one knew what to do, so they went to get the next batch of lions and found them all dead as well. The people in the stands were laughing and shouting and thought it was funny.

Not knowing what to do, they quickly rounded up the Christians and took them back into the jails and sent out gladiators to fight to quickly get people's minds off of what just happened.

And so the Christians were saved that day. We worked hard to eventually get all those Christians out of jail and home safely. After that, a lot of us Christians decided to move out of Rome, as it was getting too dangerous, and we spread to other cities and countries.

* * *

(Jesus:) I wanted Attius to give this testimony, because there were many miracles of deliverance that I performed for My Christians during that era of great persecution of the Church. You mainly hear of the martyrs, the ones who died for their faith—and yes, there were many of those! But they were the seed of the Church, which means that through their death, a thousand more were raised up in their place, a thousand more whom I protected and delivered and saved from death and imprisonment and more. Many were killed, yes, but many more were raised in their stead, and many more experienced My power to deliver them.

While this miracle shows a very practical way I worked, don't wonder about it or question if it's then as miraculous as My other methods of deliverance and salvation. Yes, there were steps involved for Attius to do in order for My miracle to come about, and I showed him those steps through a very mystical, heavenly way—his dream! Just as Namaan had to physically dip in the river seven times in order to receive the miracle of healing, just as I had to put mud on the blind man's eyes in order for that miracle to be complete, just as Elijah had to pour water on the altar so that the miracle of fire could be more powerful, so did Attius have to follow through on the dream I gave so that My miracle of deliverance could be delivered. Don't wonder, just believe. I work in mysterious ways, and My wonders are performed!

50. Four Days of Torture ... and Four Days of Miracles!

In the dark days of yore, in the land of Palestine, about the time of the first crusade back in medieval days, there lived a powerful, yet cruel, king among the Arabs. History knows him as Saladin, but little do they know of his real personality. My name is Magli, and I was one who lived in the court, serving in the palace, but not close to the sultan. History portrays him as a generous king and man, one who respected his opponent, King Richard the Lionhearted, while still strong and commanding. It is true he respected and praised Richard, and was an honorable man according to that day's standard. But he respected his foe as a strong, brave fighter and as a fellow king—not as a Christian. And while he respected even lowly people at times, and took pride in helping them and being unconventional, he had little pity for Christians and evangelizers, except for very rare occasions. So it was that I and a fellow slave, who walked me into the Kingdom, greatly suffered for our faith, yet we escaped unharmed and were a powerful testimony to this man's captives, the ones responsible for our torture. Alifa was a prisoner of war, we were told, and had been sold as a slave to Saladin's household. He and I were put in charge of the water. We supplied the kitchen and other places of the household with water and made sure that it was always available. I was the one on the job first, and learned it well; Alifa was put in my charge, or training, but we were basically equals.

In the course of work we had ample time to converse and become acquaintances, and we did. We got along well, had good conversation and interaction, and were both basically on the same page in life as far as family and friends left behind and

having to work in a place that was not distasteful, yet not our choice. It was almost a peaceful life; we had all we needed to get by, and were content enough with our lot.

To make a long story short, I noticed he was a man of religion and inquired it of him. He was happy to tell me about it, and through his close love for his Lord, influenced and converted me.

I discovered he was not a man of war, but a former priest from France who had come with troops in order to help impart God the way he knew Him to those men of war. He was not too welcome, and suffered some hardships and finally expulsion from among them by a particularly mean captain. He was subsequently imprisoned and ended up here. That also explained why he bore his captivity with so much apparent peace and acceptance. He struggled with it, yes, but he knew that he was here for a reason, and that it would be known to him what that reason was when the time was right, either to escape, or to win others here. Being a man of obvious peace, he was called Alifa, but his real name was Jean of Chretien. Alifa and I became good friends, and soon enough I, too, professed Christ as my Savior. As we both strengthened ourselves in the faith, we knew we had to spread this joy to others, though we also knew how dangerous that could be. We decided it had to be done anyway, and set ourselves to approaching others we worked or came in contact with, befriending them and speaking to them of Christ.

A few listened to us, warily at first, but soon with interest and even hunger, and a good handful were won to Christ. We were eventually discovered though, ratted on by some of the "neutrals" who had listened, but said they were neither here nor there as far as Christ was concerned. We were soon brought to the master of

the slaves and told to renounce this nonsense and be quiet as we went about our duties. We were also whipped.

We couldn't be quiet. How could we? We tried to be more discreet, however they soon heard we were at it again and came for us, this time with armed guards and meaning business. We were taken to the dungeons, and a captain was charged with "breaking" us or disposing of us, either one. This was a time of war—though not of actual fighting at that time—and they would not put up with this kind of disturbance.

And so we lay in jail, awaiting torture or death, or both. We used the time to strengthen ourselves once again with what scriptures Alifa could remember. One verse in particular that seemed to highlight itself strongly to both of us was the one where our Lord promises a way of escape. Alifa had a feeling that this was not the end, though I knew well that it was highly improbable we would last long, considering the tortures inflicted on prisoners at this place.

We were soon taken before our captors, Alifa all the time reminding me there was a way of escape. It was interesting to me to see how the Lord wanted to deliver us, and had promised to do so, but we had to believe that and hold onto it. Only as we did, were we delivered. Alifa kept quoting scriptures and reminding himself and me that this was not the end, and that it didn't even have to hurt—that our Lord would send His angels to deliver us even from the pain.

He was soon put to the test as he went to the wheel first. They strapped him in tightly and tied me down so that I would watch. Alifa did worry for a moment, as he didn't see any kind of deliverance coming, but as the wheel turned and he was

stretched, he focused only on reciting what verses came to mind, though they whipped him to get him to stop. And the wheel started turning, stretching him taut. As soon as he was stretched about as much as is comfortable, the next turn of the wheel snapped the cords as if they were thread.

Alifa praised and cried and told me to do the same. As we both quoted a psalm of praise and deliverance—our way of praising—the puzzled and angered guards quickly got more cords and tied him up again. This time they didn't even whip him for praising and thanking the Lord out loud.

"Thank your God now!" said the captain as he ordered the guards to spin the wheel again. This time, as soon as he was comfortably stretched, the wheel would go no further. It was as if he and the cords were steel chains, and would not stretch. More guards took to the wheel and tried to force it, and when they finally did, the brand new cords they had just put in also broke.

Now more puzzled and upset, they took him down and strapped him to a chair while they discussed what to do. Someone finally went to get chains, and they chained him to the wheel this time. But as with the ropes, the chains broke before he was stretched more than is comfortable. The guards were discomfited; this was obviously not just a coincidence. Still, they pressed on. This time tying him to a chair and strapping me to the wheel, but when the new ropes wouldn't budge while I was still not in pain, the captain ordered them to stop and not break another set of ropes.

"My men are too strong," he proudly explained, "and break the ropes as if they were a woman's sewing thread. But you two will not get away because of that. You will get the full weight of punishment as infidels, and repent or die!"

It must be remembered that through all of this, we praised and quoted scriptures as if our lives depended on it. At times we did so quietly, and closed our eyes to silently commune with Jesus and receive strength. Other times we loudly praised and thanked Him, as much as we could anyways. We knew this wasn't over, but it was thrilling to see none of their devices work against us, and it was exciting to see that He was delivering us, just as He promised.

They tried other torture devices on us, some of which we thought we wouldn't so easily escape from, but we were delivered from each one, and not one of them so much as hurt us. By the end of the day, they were frustrated and upset at us. The captain was strangely silent, perhaps thinking, but angry nevertheless. The other guards' reactions were varied. A few were very angry and wanted to clobber us to death right there. Others were more hesitant, perhaps fearing whatever divine power was obviously protecting us.

We were left in a corner, tied up, while they discussed their failures of the day and what to do about it. The captain only watched with an impassive expression. Soon he ordered us tied and taken back to our cells for the night, and promised that the next day would be different.

Two of the meanest guards were chosen to take us back to our cells, and they did their best to drag us roughly there. Actually, that was the only thing that slightly hurt.—Not too much, but it wasn't as smooth as the day of torture. In any case,

upon return to our cells, we proceeded to praise and quote any and all scriptures we could. We prayed all the prayers we knew and performed any rituals we equated with religion and pleasing God. He was right there with us, and how comforting and soothing that thought was. But we only felt Him as we praised and lifted our hearts and minds to Him. I can hardly express how relieved and inspired we were that the first day of our torment had gone so well. We slept with praise and thanksgiving on our lips.

Next day was much the same. They tried whatever they could think of to torture us, even beating us with clubs, but none of it inconvenienced us very much, and there was no pain and lasting marks. Towards the end of that day, however, we slacked off in our praising and praying, and one of Alifa's fingers broke. This wasn't just one small unguarded moment when he wasn't praising and praying, but it was after a couple hours of us both having slowed down and hardly praising or praying to God at all! We'd started taking His protection for granted, but I'm sure you can imagine we picked up real quick after that and stayed in touch! On the third day we were sent a new set of guards and captain who'd been told that we were untorturable and were determined to break us. I suppose there wasn't much else of importance going on, so as insignificant as we were, we were given a good deal of attention. Early on the third day they tied us to a stake on the city walls—where this dungeon was located—and let us suffer the sun for awhile. Though we looked pretty baked when they took us down, we felt all right, just a little warm.

I had a fever that night, and Alifa comforted me and tried to take care of me as best he could. He got even more desperate then, as the feeling was creeping in that somehow our protection was wearing off and they would end up getting to us.

As he was tempted to doubt, and wondered what more we could do beyond what we already were doing to please God and bring down His protection, I was able to be an encouragement and inspiration to him, even while sick. And that day ended in victory too, as we both praised and prayed ourselves to sleep.

On the morning of the fourth day, I was fine and healthy. We were both impressed with the feeling that this was it, our day of deliverance, and that after this day we would be in bonds no more. We fed ourselves with praise and thanksgiving to our King and Deliverer, for did I mention that we were not fed during those three days? We felt somewhat tired and drained, but not so much that we could not hold our heads high and smile, much to the new captain's displeasure.

We were brought in early for another try at their torture devices, this time up on the city walls where we'd been tied up the day before. We were taken up and tied to a stake to one side, in the sun, while they prepared the course for that day. As we sat there, Alifa turned to me and said, "Magli, I feel our time here is up, and that we need to get away, maybe run for it. Do you feel anything?"

"I don't know where we would run to," I responded. "We are on the walls; the only way down is past many guards and then out onto the city streets."

"That's just it. I get a feeling that we're not to go back to the city, we are meant to get away, to go that way," he said, pointing to the arid wilderness beyond the city walls. "I don't know how, and I know it sounds like madness, but it is what I feel. And this feeling I know is of God. Besides, that is the only way we'd truly be free—if we were away from this place."

"Alifa, it would be nice to be free. You know I would love nothing more, but look at these walls, how can we get down and out? Maybe with cords we could climb down, but where would we get any, or the time to tie them up and climb down? Unless we ... jumped! The God Who could protect us from the wheel, the fire, and the sword could surely hold us up, could He not?"

"That's just what I was thinking, though I dared not say it."

He did not tell me then, but he was having many doubts about this improbable plan that had entered his mind. It seemed far-fetched and more like something he had thought up because it seemed bold and daring, as well as an end to the mental stress and wearisome torture. Though physically we had hardly suffered, still we were getting more tired by the day, and hungry too.

Now the time to talk and decide was over. Though we had been able to exchange the above words in peace, the guards now turned to us and started walking over to get us. Alifa looked at me and said:

"Now, Magli, we have to go now."

He was the shepherd, and I the babe. Full of trust, I struggled to stand up and tugged at the ropes, but only when he got up and tugged too did the rather small stake just come right up, and we both took off towards the closest wall to us, still with our hands tied to the stake. We ran straight for the edge, claiming whatever verses we could think of, and jumped right over.

It was a pretty big step of faith, for sure, but we knew and felt that it wasn't a whim or illusion that told us to jump off that wall, and after those three days and

nights of miracles, of praising and praying and coming out of those torture dungeons unscathed, we were ready for a big miracle, and that was it.

Well, it was the beginning of it, I should say, because not only did we land nicely without hurting or breaking anything, but we also were given strength to outrun the soldiers on horseback who pursued us. We were then miraculously sustained as we traipsed through that wilderness and even a sandstorm, and arrived safely to our next destination, a story in itself.

Did I mention that the ropes slipped off as we landed from the jump? Well, they did, no problem there. It really is amazing, and sometimes frightfully ordinary, what the Lord will do to deliver His Own.

It was only when we got to Heaven that we learned of the impact our short time in prison had had on the guards and that stern captain. He later became a secret believer, and many of the guards as well, and word of what happened brought about a general respect and tolerance for Christians and Christian activities, and through it many more were left alone.

* * *

(Jesus:) Is the miracle too astounding to believe? Don't even consider that I am bound by conventional, casual sounding miracles. My miracles are meant to be awesome, unbelievable, and incredulous. Isn't splitting a sea in half a completely physically impossible miracle? And yet I would do such a far-out thing so that My precious children would be saved.

I did these far-out miracles for these two men because their mission for Me had only begun! I needed them to reach many more with the message of My love and

My salvation. I knew that these miracles would also serve a dual purpose in that they'd not only save Alifa and Magli from death and pain, but they would even reach through the hardest of hearts of their captors and torturers and change their hearts towards Me. This miracle was needed most importantly so that their souls could be saved and drawn to Me.

This is a beautiful testimony of My love, My power, and My complete care and protection over two of My dear children. It is no less than what I will do for you, My loves. This story will really help to encourage those who often fear the difficult days that they know the Endtime will hold for them. It will show them that I will never suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear, and I always make a way of escape. It will encourage their hearts for the future and enhance their faith that nothing is impossible for them, because I stand with them.

If I have done miracles like this before ever fully releasing the power of the keys—can you imagine what miracles lie in store for you? Multiply each miracle of the past by 100% and imagine what type of miracle that would create, and that is only a glimpse of what awaits you through the keys. Your miracles will be even more astounding than these!

51. Rescued by the Lady with the Flaming Sword!

My name is Maryna, and I have been in Heaven many, many years now. I lived with my family in Russia during the long, dark days after the revolution. This was a time when to hate what was happening to our lands and people and to love Jesus and try to walk in His ways was very dangerous.

This is my story, the story of how my little family came to know of the very personal and supernatural way of our Savior's power to keep and protect and deliver His children.

We lived in the country, outside of a small farming village in the remote regions of the land. We heard of many things that hurt our hearts to hear—of people disappearing, or those who defied or spoke up against the Communist regime being killed or taken to prison camps.

Still, my father had strong faith and testified of that faith, boldly speaking out to all within our small village that this new government made many promises, but they were empty promises and they could not deliver—only our faith could deliver what we needed.

One day my father went to the village to collect supplies. As he entered the village, immediately he sensed something was wrong. Doors and shutters were tightly closed, and there was a strange silence everywhere. Where was everybody? Leaving his horse and wagon, he went on foot. Cautiously turning a corner, down the street he saw soldiers—Communist soldiers—gruffly questioning some of the

townspeople. People were responding anxiously and fearfully to the soldiers' questions, shouting out names of other townspeople—pointing, accusing. Because of my father's deep faith, his first reaction was to pray. And there and then the Lord told him to move no further, but to slowly and quietly turn around and leave the village immediately.

When he came through the door of our home that evening, I knew this day was different than other days. He right away took my mother's hand and asked us children to stay where we were; that he and mother had some praying to do. We could hear their hushed voices as they spoke quickly to each other behind their bedroom door. Then the talking stopped. I crept up and peeked through the small crack in their door and saw my mother and father kneeling at the edge of the bed, their heads and hands buried in the bed covers in prayer, their voices hushed but clearly desperate as they prayed.

A few minutes later they returned and gathered us around about them. "We must leave, children. Our Lord has told us it is time for us to go—but we must leave immediately. We have no time to gather our things; they are not important now." My mother's face was different now, and even though I was only six years old at the time, I sensed the urgency of what she was saying.

Bravely smiling, my mother said, "Let's see who can make it to the edge of the forest first, shall we? But we must run and not breathe a word or make one sound!" Dear Mother, even then she tried to make it as easy as possible for us, by turning our flight into a game of sorts. We would often run across the fields to the edge of the forest and play hide-and-seek amongst the trees.

And run we did!—As fast as our legs could carry us until we reached the edge of the forest. There mother and father instructed us to lay quietly in the undergrowth and wait. Then we heard sounds—the sounds of voices and soldiers pounding on our door. Peeking through the leaves I could see a group of soldiers as they roughly entered our house.

Then one of the soldiers came outside again. He kicked our dog as he angrily tore pages from a book and threw them to the ground, stomping on them madly.—I knew that book was our Bible. Then he raised a fist in the air and shouted out across the fields in our direction. He knew we were there somewhere.

I felt my mother grasp my arm and pull me quickly to my feet. "Now we must go further and deeper into the forest," she said. "Now we must pray and pray and pray as we run on our feet, that our Lord will keep us and preserve us from evil." My mother and father picked up my little brother and sister and, carrying them on their backs, quickly led the way deep into the woods. Darker and darker it grew, until I could no longer see the ground beneath my feet. I could not hear my mother and father's hurried footsteps anymore, nor their labored breathing as they quickly moved.

The sharp sound of a soldier's angry voice broke the silence.—Then another voice, then another. Flashes of light cut through the trees. They were here. The soldiers were not going away this time; they were coming after us. Now I began to get afraid. I couldn't see or hear my parents anymore. I felt very alone and very frightened.

Struggling over what seemed a maze of tangled roots, suddenly my foot wouldn't move. My shoe was caught! Frantically I tried to free myself, pushing and pulling on the shoe in an effort to free it.

Now the tears flowed, and all I could do was sob while I struggled with my shoe. Though I knew many prayers, all I could think of praying was, "Dear Jesus, please help me, please save us!" I tried to think of His face and looking into His eyes as my mother had taught me to do whenever I was afraid, but this time, try as I might, I couldn't see His face.

Then something happened. Suddenly there weren't just the flashing lights of the soldiers behind me, but a very brilliant light was suddenly all about me as if sudden daylight had come to the forest. I dared not turn around.

Still struggling to be free, I fell over again, falling headfirst into a sharp tangle of branches. I was too afraid to pick myself up again, because surely the soldiers had found me. But strangely enough there was no shouting, instead there was a perfect calm—not a sound—and I felt very warm, and very safe. I didn't feel like crying anymore.

Then I heard a voice, a voice I shall never, ever forget. It was the most beautiful voice I'd ever heard. It sounded a bit like Mother's, only much more beautiful. "Little one, don't be afraid," this voice said.

Turning my head slowly, I looked up to see the most beautiful lady I'd ever seen. I still cannot describe what I saw, but her image is forever in my mind. She sat on a magnificent white horse. She was dressed in white and gold and shining armor.

She had short, dark hair, and in her hand she held high a shining sword—a flaming sword. She looked down at me and smiled.

Now I could hear the soldier's angry shouts and threats again, coming closer and closer. They must be almost upon us, I thought. But I wasn't afraid anymore. Turning from me, this beautiful lady lifted high her flaming sword, as her horse reared on its hind legs as if ready to charge. Then I saw them—I saw the soldiers in a row in front of this beautiful lady and horse. But they weren't shouting anymore or holding up their guns. They were hiding their faces with their hands and arms; they could not look at this beautiful lady like I could.

Some of them fell to the ground screaming, others crying out in fear ran back into the woods the way they had come. Then, as if I was standing in a dream, I was left all alone before the lady. Leaning forward, she gently stroked the horse's neck, whispered in his ear, and again smiled at me.

"Little one," she addressed me. "Do not be afraid, because today you have seen the salvation of the Lord! Your work is not yet done, neither that of your family. Just as I and my men were many times saved from peril and certain death, so will you be if you call on His help and our help when you need it. Your times—all of your times—are in His faithful hands and it is a small thing for Him to save, if it be His will.

"I was once a little peasant girl just like you—a simple girl who loved Jesus. Now my role is to rescue the downtrodden and bring victory where victory cannot come by natural means. My heart is always towards the poor and the little people, those who love our Savior and Lord.

"But there is a great war happening, Little One. It is much greater than what is happening around you with the soldiers and guns and Communist government. It is the war between good and evil. It is a war being fought in another world, the world of the heavens, in the clouds.—A war of the spirit. This is where I live with our Savior, and I go to war for you, Little One, and all those who love our Jesus. "So remember, we are here for you. You must call on our help. You must believe in us. Do you believe, Little One?"

I couldn't say anything; my mouth seemed frozen. All I could do was stare at this beautiful lady. I think she knew I believed in her without saying a word, because she smiled again, leaned forward, patted her horse and raised her flaming sword. Then, just as the wind picks up the dust and carries it quickly into the air, she was gone.

I don't know how long I was there, but I was finally able to free my shoe from the tree roots and after a while I found the rest of my family.

Then we all found our way out of the woods and back to our home. My mother and father didn't say much; they just held us all close, while they thanked God for delivering us from sure capture.

That evening I told my mother and father what had happened, and about the beautiful lady from another world on a white horse. They listened very quietly, occasionally glancing at one another. I wasn't sure if they believed me or not, although I could tell they were trying to. I desperately wanted them to believe, because I knew that something very special had happened in the woods, and that we were spared for a reason.

In the night while I slept the idea came to take my family back into the woods and try to find the place where I had seen this beautiful lady. When I told my parents the next morning they were reluctant, but seeing my insistence and conviction, they agreed.

So back into the forest we went. The spot was remarkably easy to find; I felt as if an invisible someone was taking me by the hand and guiding me directly there. And we found it. There in the tangled roots of a tree was my telltale shoelace, just where I'd lost it in finally tearing my shoe loose from the tree roots.

But this spot was no ordinary spot anymore. It was as if a giant hot saucepan had been laid on the earth, because the ground cover was laid bare—scorched as if by a searing heat. Then in the earth were the scuffings, markings, and hoof prints of a horse.

That's when I knew my parents believed. From that time on my family was different. We knew we'd been saved for a reason, and it's as if a newfound conviction and boldness to stand up for our faith sprang up in our hearts. Fear of man or what he could do to us didn't have the same place in our hearts anymore. We knew that our times were in His hands, and we knew that another unseen world existed to fight for us and help us! And when we all got to Heaven we found out that our rescuer was none other than Saint Joan—Joan of Arc.

* * *

(Jesus:) This is a beautiful, faith-building testimony for My loves to hear—another clear testimony of a miracle from the past! Yes, I did send My mighty Joan that day to protect My children. No one is too small to be helped from

Heaven. They were precious to Me and to them I extended My hand of divine intervention and protection.

No matter who you are, there is bountiful protection and guardianship over you. If you are My child, My bride, My Endtime soldier, then you are of great importance to Me and I will do all within My power to keep you until that perfect day. The lengths I went to for My children in the past cannot be compared with the lengths and depths and breadths I will go to for you today. I love you.

52. "Let My People Go!"

Tammy lay in her sleeping bag, mulling over the words that had woken her up out of a sound sleep.—Words that seemed to be part of a dream, or perhaps it was a warning. She didn't know, but she'd been jolted from her slumber by the booming voice she heard: "Let My people go!"

Telling too many bedtime stories of Moses and Pharaoh to the children, she chuckled to herself. But there was something urgent in those words. And why had they woken her from her few hours of sleep?

"Jesus," she whispered, "is there a message You were trying to get across to me? Were You telling me something? I call on the keys of revelation to give me understanding and insight."

Tammy lay still, as the calming voice of her Husband and loving Shepherd washed over her. It was a warning, a sign, a preparation for her, but most of all an

assurance that He was looking out for His Own. With those words of promise, Tammy fell back into a blissful sleep.

* * *

"We have you surrounded!" came the booming voice. The bold proclamation resonated through the caved area that had temporarily become the resting place of the group of 30+ people that Tammy had been traveling with.

"We will use force if you resist!" the voice continued.

The group of renegades drew closer to one another inside the main cave; anxious and frightened looks marred many faces.

"I guess this is it, Tam," Matt said. The two had become the de facto leaders of this band of renegades, who were opposed to the one-world domination of the Antichrist and his forces.

"Yes, I guess this is it!" Tammy replied. She smiled at Matt, shut her eyes and lifted her arms in praise for the victory that had been promised them.

Seconds later, Tammy felt a sudden bolt of power course through her body. Her eyes opened wide, and an unearthly glow surrounded her whole being. She walked toward the main entrance of the caves. Matt beckoned the others to follow behind her.

"GOD SAYS, 'LET MY PEOPLE GO!'" Tammy proclaimed in a loud voice. "LET MY PEOPLE GO!"

The soldiers looked at her with hesitancy at first, followed by confusion. The commanding officer shouted angrily at the soldiers. "Fire!"

"LET MY PEOPLE GO!" came Tammy's booming voice, as she stretched out her hand.

Bullets whizzed through the air, aimed at Tammy and the group behind her, only to collide into an invisible shield in front of them.

Matt smiled. "An impenetrable bubble of protection," he whispered, "who would've ever thought."

"FIRE AGAIN!" the officer roared, only to be silenced by the sudden paralysis that traveled up his spine. Not another order rose to his lips, as he sank to the ground.

Seeing the spectacle in front of them, a handful of soldiers put down their guns and fell to their knees, quivering and shaking in fear of the sudden judgments of God. Those intent on firing again on the band of renegades found themselves unable to move. Not another gun fired.

Tammy walked forward into the group of soldiers. The frightened soldiers, who had put down their guns, huddled together.

"Fear not," Tammy said as she approached them. "Today God has freed you."

She placed her hands on them, and the peace of God washed over them, freeing them from the darkness that had shadowed their lives for so long. With tears in their eyes they humbly received their loving Savior into their lives.

Matt, Tammy, and the band of rebels lifted their arms in praise. Surely God's power was mighty, for He had freed His people out of the clutches of darkness once again.

* * *

(Jesus:) Just as happened to the girl in this story, it will be the same for you—when I call you to do a miracle, you will feel My power urging you on and nothing will be able to stop you. You will be so strong in your faith and well practiced in your weapons that there won't even be any hesitation or fear on your part—you'll believe, step out, and obey, and the miracles will happen. This should really give you incentive for practicing and honing your skills with the new weapons today, because in those days, you will need to be experts!

53. Deceiver, Yet True

Thomas sighed. So little now was the way he'd expected it to be. So much of his life he had looked forward to this time when he would have supernatural powers and be able to do incredible things, but it seemed to Thomas that the only incredible thing he was able to do was stay alive.

He had heard of some of the amazing exploits that others were doing and the miraculous escapes and miracle conversions that had occurred. "I guess I'm just not one of the chosen ones. I'm such an ordinary human with very ordinary powers. I'm sorry, Lord, I just don't have the kind of faith needed to be much of a help to anyone in the Endtime."

It was a rough time for Thomas to get hit with so many doubts and fears. He had managed to slip through the guarded barricade set up around what was left of the city and was now resting for a moment in the remains of what was once someone's lovely home. He was sure that one guard had spotted him. Funny he didn't even try to shoot me, he mused.

Thomas looked around at the ruins of this once fine mansion. Who had lived here? Where were they now? Whether originally good people or bad, all their hopes and dreams now lay in useless rubble!—Well, not entirely useless, as it was serving to shield him somewhat from the dreaded eye of the soldiers' portable corposcopes. It was claimed that those new devices could see through walls, even metal ones, and detect any human presence because of some kind of wave that the body gives off. Well, Thomas smiled, I really would have been dead a dozen times over by now if those scopes were all that great! Besides, if they can see me sitting here

right now, why don't they just blow me up? Maybe they just didn't want to waste a whole shell on one guy. Budget cuts in the military had severely reduced the amount of shelling they were able to do.

Okay, well, I'd better move on now! Lord, You told me to come to this town because Your people were trapped somewhere in here and were in great need of my help. I have no idea where they are or how many there are, but judging by the mop-up force the military has set up around this place, they seem to think there are quite a few of them. Please, dear Jesus, it looks like I'm going to need the faith of Moses at the Red Sea, of Elijah calling down fire from Heaven, and the help of the armies of God that helped Elisha if I'm to do any good here.

A burst of machine gun fire off to the south reminded Thomas he had better find whoever God had told him was in this place and start figuring how to get them out. Oh, Lord, where could they be? A word suddenly popped into his mind—jail! "The Jail!" he exclaimed. "Yes, that's probably it." With all the persecution and fighting that had been going on in this city, anyone who was a half-decent Christian would have been arrested for proselytizing and thrown in jail for the public good—actually for their own good!

Thomas reached into his pocket and pulled out a somewhat tattered map of the city. After a few moments of puzzling over the map and trying to make sense of the mounds of rubble that surrounded him, he spotted an old street sign twisted and bent and sticking out from under a collapsed wall. "Melbourne Avenue and Cross Street! ... Wow! That means the 'correctional facility' must be just over that way a few blocks and down," he muttered.

He tucked the map inside his coat and headed off. It was a crisp autumn morning, and the sun was shining brightly, which helped. It was slow going, picking his way through the once-busy streets now lined with wrecked and burned-out cars, large craters, and the wastes of war.

The rebels had held on to this city for quite awhile, but their end was inevitable as the entire weight of the One World for Peace military forces had come crashing down on them. Thomas was trying to be as careful and prayerful as he could, but as cautious as he was, he did not escape the eyes of a deemo.

Unless you have encountered a deemo for yourself, you have no idea of the trouble they can cause. "Deemo," of course, is short for someone who is insanely possessed of a demon. As such, they can be supernaturally clever and very crafty and cunning at doing evil. The Deemo slinked over to a narrow passageway that he knew his victim would likely pass through. His axe was ready for the kill as he waited in crazed silence, preparing to leap out and cut Thomas down as he made his way towards the prison.

Suddenly Thomas stopped. He felt uneasy. Something was wrong. He instinctively crouched down. Ah ha! Silly me! he thought, as his eye caught the slight glint of a trigger wire running almost unseen across the narrow way ahead of him. The rebels have been here and set up another booby trap to blow their enemies to bits if they enter this way.

Thomas studied the situation and decided he had best take a more difficult route, so he turned and started to go another way. He had just made his way over a huge cement slab when he heard a bloodcurdling scream come from where he'd just

been, and then a deafening roar as the earth seemed to move and debris was thrown everywhere.

Thomas was knocked to the ground but remained unhurt, protected by the huge cement slab he'd just passed over. Curious as he was, Thomas did not look back but scrambled on, wondering what on earth had just happened. Someone must have triggered the booby trap. He thanked the Lord it hadn't been him and that he had been protected from the blast by the cement—another one of God's little miracles.

Thankfully, the rest of the way proved somewhat easier to negotiate and Thomas was able to make good time. To his amazement, the correctional facility was largely undamaged. He approached with caution. The outer gates were open, and the small guard post was empty, its occupants having presumably fled when the shelling started.

Thomas went inside, and after a moment called out, "Is anyone here?" What a dumb question, he thought. And now every sniper in the area will know right where I am.

To his surprise, a voice called back, "Here! In here!" Entering through a partly collapsed wall, Thomas could see a far cell coming alive with moving figures and people rising and calling out to him. Men, women, and children!

The stench nearly knocked him over. The doors were locked tight. How could he get them open? He couldn't! These people would soon die in here if he didn't find

a way to help them escape. But how could he? The AC troops had surrounded the city and were about to sweep in and destroy any rebels they found.

Thomas looked at the crying, pleading faces and suddenly knew what he had to do. It seemed almost insane. As calmly as he could, he addressed the prisoners. "I'm going to go and try to get help to get you out. But you must all pray. I know you have been fasting already, but I will need your prayers." Thomas quickly explained his plan—at least the part that the Lord had already revealed to him. Thomas made his way back to the periphery and the soldiers stationed near where he had come in. He carried a long pole, to which he'd tied a white cloth. He was about to step into view when he got a check to remove his clothes down to his boxer shorts. It was cold, but he did as he was told. He made an odd sight as he appeared to the men of the outpost. "Hey, look, one of the rebels wants to surrender!"

One man yelled, "Shoot the bastard!" Another snapped, "It's a trick—he's loaded with explosives!" "How could he be?" another snapped back. "He's almost butt naked and it's cold! Let's see what he wants."

Thomas was praying like a house afire! "I don't come to save my life," he started, "but to ask you to rescue all those people who were thrown into jail because of their love for you and who are now without food or water as they wait for you to come and rescue them."

"You lying scum of a rebel! Nice words, but we've had enough of your bombs and traps and tricks. The only good rebel is a dead one!"

"I expected you to be cleverer than that! Your own supporters are going to die if you sit here and do nothing! You are a hard people if you will not even show mercy to your own!"

A hot exchange of words erupted until a man obviously in command raised his hand. "Bring him to me. A little torture may help reveal the truth and let us know where the rebels are and what they are up to."

Now cold and shivering, Thomas was dragged into a nearby shelter, sat on a chair and bound. The older man entered and sat facing him. "Now I want some truth from you!"

Thomas told him that he was a normal civilian and hadn't been involved in the fighting at all. He explained how he had snuck past the guard post, and gone into the heart of the city, and how he had found some good people in the city who needed rescuing. He'd seen no rebels at all, but had nearly stepped into a booby trap. At last, he'd found people in the city prison: men, women, and children, all locked up and left to die because of their loyalty to the supreme ruler. He could not free them as the cell doors were locked, so he'd come back to plead for help from the soldiers.

The man remained silent for a long time, studying Thomas closely, and looking deeply into his eyes. Finally, as though suddenly moved to action, he said, "Okay, I will go and see your prisoners! But you will walk ahead of the men I send, and you will be the first to die if this is a trap! We are going to enter the city soon anyway, so it might as well be now."

By this time, Thomas was shaking from the cold, and as an afterthought the officer snapped to a soldier nearby, "Get this man some clothes!"

Soon Thomas, now dressed in nice warm military garb, was marching in front of a wary scouting team. Dear God, help me not to be shot by some rebel sniper as we enter the city.

As it was, their incursion could not have gone better, and the soldiers were soon busy liberating the Christians—who played their part very well, thanking and praising their glorious liberators profusely.

Soon a roadway was cleared, and people were being fed by the soldiers and put on trucks to be taken to a special government refugee camp for loyalists.

With tears in his eyes, Thomas thanked the Lord for His miracles and how He had literally spread a table before them right in the midst of their enemies.

Thomas soon began to look for ways he might now escape from his newfound "friends"—but no such luck just yet! Seeing that Thomas had been so courageous and truthful, the gray-haired man decided that he would make an excellent scout for the army and assigned him to a division.

Lord! This was the last thing I would have ever hoped for or wanted in life, but I am just going to have to trust You and Your wisdom. ... Oh, and by the way—if You can spare me just a few of those Endtime supernatural powers, I could really use them about now!

(May be continued...)

54. The Inexplicable Release

It was a bleak and cold winter's night. The snow was almost up to the rooftops, and all was quiet and still. It was then that I realized that there was something stirring outside, something moving across the snow.

Moments later, the door burst open and in came three masked men with machine guns and rifles. They bundled us all into the main room, and began searching our house. They didn't say why they were there, or what they were looking for.

After almost half an hour, they carted us off in a van and threw us in prison. They said we were under arrest for sedition and acts of treason against the government. These charges, of course, were ridiculous. They hated us because we dared to profess our faith in Jesus and witness about His love, despite the ban from the AC government that had come into power. The headlines the next day were about this cult that was apprehended for seditious activities against the government. What could we do? We were in prison and unable to contact our lawyer or any of our friends. Fortunately, we were all placed in the same cell. So that night we all prayed and claimed a victory for the Lord through this situation, and that it would turn into a testimony and witness for Him.

At around two in the morning, a man came into our cell, wearing a black balaclava*. He had a machine gun in his hand, and he appeared to be taking us away to execute us. "Get up!" he said in a very authoritative voice. He then marched us out into the courtyard, and out through the open gates. (*balaclava: a close-fitting knitted covering for the head and neck, leaving only the face, or parts of it, exposed.)

Then, he said in a kinder voice, "You are free to go. Take these tickets, and take the next train out of this country. You will be greatly needed in your next destination."

Well, we did exactly that, and had no trouble leaving and getting to the station just five minutes before the train was to leave. Next thing we knew, we were on our way, quietly praising the Lord for His miracle of protection and for getting us out of prison.

* * *

We found out later, through a friend of ours, that our mysterious escape from prison was quite highly publicized, and that although we were under guard, we had just disappeared in the night. We could only praise and thank the Lord for sending His angel to release us, and for blinding the eyes of our captors. And our next destination?—The neighboring Scandinavian country, where we were indeed mightily used by the Lord to bring His love and salvation to many.

* * *

(Jesus:) No matter what happens to you, no matter what situations you find yourself in, know that I have set angels in your path at every turn, with every mission, in every encounter. I told you that the physical and the spiritual worlds will collide. They will, My loves. In those Last Days you will see your angels walk among you. Be assured that you are never alone. No matter what situation you find yourself in, there will always be those who walk with you as much in spirit as in the flesh. This story bears testimony to that fact.

The miracles I will do for the deliverance of My children are many! I will even reapply miracles of the past to the needs of the future. Of course, even with such "reused" miracles, I will be sure to add an element of surprise and novelty to the miracle, as I am a God of change and wonder. I love to see My children in awe—and awe you I will by the wonders yet to be performed.

55. Pretty Woman 2: Enemy of the State!

(Recommended age: 14 years and up)

Keira stumbled in her stiletto heels, as they clicked along on the pavement in the alley. Boy, do I feel stupid, Keira thought to herself, as she looked down at her black thigh-high latex boots, and wide-mesh fishnet stockings. She adjusted her skimpy top, which she thought revealed more than it covered.

Lord, is this really Your plan? I'm really scraping the bottom of the barrel here, dressing up like a hooker, in order to reach the top.

But that was the instruction the Lord had given Keira and her team. A young influential businessman of the city, Mr. Bentley, who Keira had met personally, wanted to meet with her again, to learn more about the Family's underground Christian activities, and to speak with her about her faith in Christ. The Lord had told them that this man was one of His lost sheep, and had the potential to become a disciple. Mr. Bentley had suggested this particular method of meeting as a disguise, which he felt was the least suspicious way to meet with one of the Family members personally. These days, with the One World Government gaining momentum everywhere, one could never be too careful. Even his longtime girlfriend had begun to question his religious interests, and

wondered who these people were that gave him these "Activated" magazines every month, which she found laying around the house.

That was how Keira found herself dressed like a streetwalker and standing on the corner of a seedy part of town. While she waited, she made contact with a few of the other girls sharing the sidewalk, and was able to discreetly give them some tracts and a light witness.

A dark blue luxury car drove up and slowed at the curb. Keira moved toward the vehicle and Mr. Bentley let down the automatic window. They pretended to be negotiating a price for her services by making casual conversation.

Brushing her long red fingernails over the smooth curves of the car, she noticed the winged emblem on the side of the car, and said casually, "Your namesake, no doubt?"

"That's right. The latest from Bentley Motors—the Presidential—complete with customized leather interior, and all the latest bells and whistles. But please, call me Hans."

With that, Keira let herself in the car, figuring that that was probably enough small talk for their pretend "negotiations."

As the Presidential glided through the city streets, and then wound its way up into the foothills toward his private apartment, Keira prayed desperately in her heart for her time with Hans. Please make it a quality time of witnessing, sweet

Lover. Help me to bring him to You. Also keep me alert to Your checks. I claim the keys of supernatural protection.

* * *

A few hours later, after an inspiring time of witnessing and Bible study around the dining table, Keira had led Hans in receiving Jesus. He was intrigued to hear the exciting tales of miracles, escape, and witnessing that Keira and her team had experienced in this city, since this one she called "the Antichrist" had come to power.

"So you receive direct instruction from Jesus, straight from Him? I can't imagine the level of spirituality you must need to have to be a medium for His Words. I'm sure I could never do that."

"Oh, but it's nothing of me," Keira responded. "You should have seen when I first started asking the Lord to speak to me in this way. I doubted myself all the time. But I soon came to realize that, as I empty myself of my own will and ask Him to override my carnal reasoning, He comes through with the answers every time, albeit sometimes with the most unorthodox plans, as you can see."

Hans and Keira both laughed, looking at Keira's clothing and heavy makeup. She had removed the short red wig she was wearing, and her waist-length blond hair was now cascading over her shoulders.

Suddenly Keira sensed activity outside of the apartment. She wasn't sure if she actually heard a sound, or if it was her spiritual sense and close connection with the Lord kicking in, but she felt definite danger.

"Something is wrong, Hans." Keira moved to replace her wig, stuffing her hair quickly inside of it. Getting on-the-spot directions from the Lord, she said, "We have to make like we've been, you know..." she trailed off.

Hans immediately understood, and unbuttoned his shirt, kicked off his shoes and proceeded to dishevel his hair and the surroundings the best he could.

Facing him, Keira pushed him toward the couch and straddled his lap. They began kissing passionately, and Hans, partially wanting to respect Keira's privacy, but with the circumstances allowing for a little enjoyment, slid his hands up her skirt and ran his fingers over the straps of her garter belt, and caressed her smooth hips.

Just then six soldiers angrily burst into the apartment, machine guns pointed, yelling, and looking for the occupants. When the soldiers saw Hans and Keira on the couch, they were slightly embarrassed and drew back, wondering if there was some mistake. "Who are you?" the apparent leader of the group asked Keira. Keira climbed off Hans, and stood up to the full height that her six-inch heels afforded her. She straightened her skirt suggestively and asked in a perfectly smooth voice, "I'm Candy. What's the big fuss? Wait, don't tell me ... you all came in here for a free sugar sample?" And Keira put on her most winning smile. The officer in charge was put off his guard by her smooth confidence. He turned toward Hans. "I'm sorry, Mr. Bentley, but we got a report from an informant in your household that you've been making contact with some known government rebels, and that you were meeting with one of them today. You understand, of course, that we have to follow all leads that would jeopardize our city from coming closer to joining the One World Government union. You've been trailed

by our undercover agents all week. This ... Candy ... is the only person you've made contact with so far."

"I think there's been some kind of misunderstanding, or this so-called informant is misleading you. Could this perhaps have been the work of my girlfriend, who may be jealous of my, how should I put it ... extra-curricular activities?"

The officer's ears turned bright red. He cleared his throat, and shuffled his feet a bit embarrassedly, but only said, "Well, that's not information that I can reveal, Mr. Bentley."

Hans continued, "Well, sir, I'm afraid she sent you on a wild goose chase ... and for nothing. Wouldn't you say? And there's really nothing going on here, except that I'm ... entertaining a friend."

The officer took one more look at Keira and then turned back to Hans. "Right, then. I don't suppose there's anyone to arrest here. But you need to straighten out the issue of your 'household informant'". He said these words with a revealing emphasis to Hans. "We don't like to be bothered with time wasters when we could be doing the real work of securing our city for entry status into the One World Government."

"Of course," replied Hans. "I'll see to that immediately."

"I'll still need to do a routine check of your International Identification cards, of course, scan them into our database, for my formal report, and so forth." The officer motioned toward one of the soldiers. "Take care of that, will you, Ruthers?"

I'm taking off. Need to be home in time for dinner with the family, you know."
And he spun around and left the apartment.

"Would you show me your IIDs, please," the soldier said rather roughly.
Keira's heart sank. Of course she didn't have an IID card. As Ruthers scanned Hans' card, she prayed silently. Jesus what do I do? Before she even finished the sentence, she immediately heard His answer.

"I think I left my purse in the bedroom," Keira motioned casually toward a closed door. Ruthers followed her through the door with his scanner.

A moment after Keira got inside the bedroom, she turned to face him. "Oh, silly me, I completely forgot," she laughed. "I have one of those new fandangled IIDs. You know ... the microchip thingie?"

"An IID implant, really?" The soldier's face lit up with interest. "I'm not familiar with those. I didn't know they'd been released for the general public yet."

"Well, I used to work for a government facility. They were required there."

"Hmm, well okay, I think this scanner can read them. It's supposed to be programmed for either card or implant, though I haven't had a chance to try it out yet. So where do I scan?"

Keira smiled, and pulled up one side of her skirt revealing her black garter and lace panties. She pointed to her hip and said breathily, "Aim it right here, soldier."

Ruthers fumbled with the scanner and shakily pressed some buttons. Clearly, it didn't matter that what she had told him made absolutely no sense. Logically, the implant would never have been put in such an inconvenient, inaccessible place, but that didn't register with Ruthers. He was new on the force, and was disarmed by Keira's charm and beauty, not to mention the sight of her garter.

He pressed buttons repeatedly, but received no response. "Maybe you need to get a little closer," Keira said coyly. The slider inched a little closer. Nothing.

"Are you sure it's on this side?" he asked.

"Yes, but you can try the other side."

After a few minutes of embarrassed fumbling and button-pressing, Ruthers finally gave up and said, "Maybe this thing isn't compatible with the implants after all. You'll probably have to come down to headquarters."

"How about if I just give you my name and IID number and you can enter it in manually?" Keira suggested.

"Okay, that's not exactly according to protocol, but I guess for you ... "

"Thanks." And she flashed him another melting smile while thinking, And thank You, precious Husband, for working through me, even though none of this is characteristic of me whatsoever. I know it's not my charm or anything of me. It's all You. Thank You for doing the miracles.

After giving him a fake name and an IID number, which she received from Upstairs on the spot, the soldiers left the apartment and headed out to their truck. "We'd better scram," Hans exclaimed breathlessly to Keira after the front door had shut. "Let's go out the back way. I have another car parked in the alley."

They hurriedly made their way out into the deserted alley. Keira looked admiringly at the shiny silver convertible. She rolled her eyes. "Another Bentley, I take it?"

"Only the best for the best," Hans joked. Then he tossed her the keys, "But it's yours now. You'd better get used to driving it."

Keira smiled and hopped in the driver's seat, as Hans climbed in the passenger side. The car started with a purr, and it sped down the alley.

"Thanks for the gift. Why so generous?"

"Let's just say that you and your rebel friends can probably put it to better use than I can."

Keira pulled the car onto the main street and just then caught sight of the soldiers in her rearview mirror. "Looks like you might be becoming something of a rebel yourself, Hans." She raised her eyebrows and gestured over her shoulder back toward his apartment.

"What?!" he exclaimed as he turned and saw that the soldiers were in some frenzy gathered around their truck. They were all gesturing toward poor Ruthers, who was busy trying to explain himself. It seemed that he had finally come to his senses over the whole implant ordeal, and realized he had made a terrible mistake. Then one of the soldiers noticed Hans and Keira making their getaway, and they all hurriedly jumped in the truck to follow in pursuit.

"Looks like you're coming with me. Is that okay with you?" Keira asked as she stepped on the accelerator and sped down a side street in a move to throw off the pursuers.

"If Jesus gave up everything for me, I think I'm willing to take a chance on Him." He gestured toward the distant lights of the city below. "To hell with that life. Take me out of here."

Keira smiled at Hans. "He's totally worth it. Believe me." And she pulled off her wig.

The open top convertible let the warm breeze blow through her hair, and the wind caught it up and made it fly behind her like a flame.

As they sped off into the dimming twilight, both Keira and Hans turned their faces into the wind, as eagerly as they faced the exciting adventures that they knew lay before them.

* * *

(Jesus:) I did say that in the Endtime I would call some to be My modern-day "Esthers" in order to reach those of influence and power whom otherwise would never hear of Me. In this testimony I used this young lady in an almost similar way.

You cannot put the Endtime in a "box" in your mind. You can't have your set opinion of how it will be, or how I will work, or what miracles I will do. The Endtime will be unlike much of what you've ever known! It will be a time of hair-raising danger and supernatural miracles and intervention. You will see and feel

Me as never before. So don't have your set opinion or theories about it. Be open to what I may have in store for you, because it could be a whole lot more different than you think!

There's a lot of adventure awaiting each of you!

56. Mark and Nina's Brush with Death

(Note: Parental discretion is advised. This story is not for younger children. "While this couple does find themselves in a dangerous and life-threatening situation, I specifically allowed it so that the magnitude of My power of deliverance could be displayed."—Jesus.)

My story is something that could happen to you in the future. Jesus has given us glimpses into the future to see how things will play out and the many mighty miracles that He will perform for you, and this is one that I can tell you now, to encourage your faith and to prove to you that through His power, all things are possible.

Mark and Nina had just finished a long day of clandestine witnessing in the city park. They did this at least once a week, for although the danger was great and the chances of them being caught, reported on, or arrested were very real, they knew that this was their calling. While most of the time they spent their days working with and feeding the sheep and followers that they already had, the Lord also called them to go out into the highways and byways to compel others to come in.

They had met many contacts and friends this way and it was a great opportunity to witness and to trust in Him completely. They would stop and ask the Lord who to talk to and how to approach them, and He would lead and guide them each time to many sheepy people.

One day, it was raining and cold. They were tired and didn't feel much like going out, but when praying about it, the Lord told them to do so. While out, the first person they talked to was a little unreceptive and they got a check to move locations. As the day went on, they met many folks who heard what they had to say and it became their most fruitful day to date, with ten souls won and all of them interested in meeting again!

Mark and Nina were pretty sure that each one would soon be part of their little underground church, where they could feed them with Activated and all the materials that had been published and were so precious.

As they were making their way Home, they noticed that the unreceptive person that they'd talked to at the beginning of the day was following them, or at least had changed trains with them twice. So they took a detour and got into another train that was going in the opposite direction. He again followed and soon it was clear that they were indeed being followed.

"What do we do? We can't lead him home, but it's getting late, so where should we go? We can't exactly just walk up and try to provision a hotel anymore," Nina said. "Let's pray," Mark answered. So they prayed for the Lord's protection and He comforted them that while they would walk in the midst of fire, they would not be burned.

Soon they were alone in the last car with this man. He started to laugh and cackle at them, saying that he knew who they were, what they were doing, and he was going to report their entire organization to the authorities, and that he's already been following them for days, knows where they live, the names and addresses of all their friends and contacts and he's got it all ready to present to them. He was just missing one detail and that's why he was following them.

His eyes glowed with an unearthly—but not heavenly—light. It was almost as if it was a piercing evil. Then he started to approach them, yelling at them for taking away his girlfriend and perverting her with their doctrines.

"I have a personal vendetta against you two and I'm here to take care of business!" he said as he started to spit and foam. Nina gasped as she saw a knife in his hand. He was a big man and neither of them stood a chance against him. He reached out and grabbed Nina by the hand, pulling her towards him and then grabbing her by the throat, with the knife held to it.

Mark prayed. Then he remembered the verse that they'd received earlier, "Though you walk in the midst of fire, you shall not be burned." And another verse came to mind, one that he'd never think would come at a time like this, "Open your mouth and I will fill it."

Mark claimed the keys of strength, protection, and faith, and did as he had been commanded, and in that instant a great burst of fire came from his mouth, so much so that it was like an explosion and it threw Mark back to the other end of the caboose.

When he got up, he looked for Nina. There she stood, free of harm, without the smell of smoke on her, even though that burst of fire was so strong, so hot and powerful and directed right at her, and the man was using her as a human shield. But behind them lay the crumpled, burned figure of that demon-possessed person out to destroy their lives. There by his body were the papers and PDA with the list of all the names, phone numbers, and locations of each Home and friend in the entire area.

So not only did the Lord save them from death and harm, but He saved all the Homes too from anything that would try to stop their work for Him and the souls won and the chance to win even more for His Kingdom!

* * *

(Jesus:) This is a more explicit example of My protection and the situations some of you could find yourselves in. You have to realize that during the Endtime you will be fighting the Devil incarnate. He will have fully possessed the Antichrist, and his moves and actions against you are for the purpose of complete eradication.

I already told you that during those days he will unleash his demons on the Earth, and this I will allow for a time. These demons will roam the Earth and possess Satan's men to various degrees in an attempt to bring his goal of world takeover to fruition. It will be a very dark time on the Earth. There will be more lovers of darkness and more dwelling places for demons.

But all of this only makes My light and power and spirit within you to shine even brighter! All of this only makes the force of My might even more powerful and noticeable. No matter what demon stands against you, you have the power of

God's mighty hand within your grasp through the keys you possess. You have to understand that in those days of dire need and desperation you are going to see and feel the power you possess so much more clearly and physically than you ever have before.

You won't need to wonder if the power will work for you, you just know it will. It will be like flipping a switch; you already know the light will be there when you need it. Although there is an element of danger in this story, the magnitude of My power is so much greater! You've become so accustomed to hearing of the miracles I will do for you that sometimes they can stand out even less to you than the dangers you could be faced with.

But you have to realize that in the Endtime your power will be indescribable. You will actually see the power of the keys and feel it surging through your hands. You will laugh in the face of fear, because the power you have in the keys can blow every obstacle to visible bits.

Even though some may fear what the Endtime holds for them, they still long to hear the assurance of the miracles I will do for them regardless of the situation. I wish to describe to you testimonies of miracles on every scale imaginable. I've described miracles of supply, miracles of deliverance from jail, miracles of escape from evil, miracles of safekeeping through Enemy territory, and through this testimony I am describing to you a miracle of deliverance from death. It is an awesome miracle, and I will perform these types of deliverance for you, My children, many times over. You have a job to do, and I will see to it that you are given all the life and time you need on Earth to live your destiny to the full.

57. They Never Caught Me

"Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven!" Oh, how true that verse is. Great is your reward for being persecuted for our dear Savior. I know and am here to give my testimony as such a one that was persecuted and lived to tell the tale.

My name is Claudius. I was just a humble man of not much importance in the world's eyes, but that makes no difference to our sweet Protector. I lived in the days of the Roman persecutions, when the penalty for being found out as a Christian was death, and they seemed to glory in finding horrid and morbid ways to torture and kill people. Needless to say, it was a scary and fearful time.

I was a blacksmith and heard plenty of tales from the customers that came to my shop. One day, I heard of the man called Jesus, and how He had been killed and raised from the dead. This was indeed a strange tale. I had heard plenty of other tales and boastings of many other adventures, but none seemed to stand out as much as this story of Jesus.

Now, just to testify of the power of our Savior's loving grace and mercy, He was able to kindle faith in my heart from just the few strange tales I'd heard, and I believed. And by the time other Christians arrived in Rome—those who not only believed, but also knew what they believed and could teach others—I was ready, and received them with open arms.

When I learned that there were disciples of Jesus in Rome, I was eager to learn more, and eventually I was baptized, and started attending the secret meetings the Christians held. We would meet in different places, often at different ones'

homes, depending on the size of the group and the security of the location. Sometimes, we met in a nobleman's villa, sometimes in a deserted place outside the city, and even occasionally in the back of my shop.

It was at one of those meetings that the Lord delivered me from the hands of our persecutors. Things had become increasingly dangerous for us. For some reason the Romans felt we were a threat to the Empire, and I suppose we were; in fact, I now know we were, but at the time I couldn't see how just a few humble folks preaching love could be such a threat. But what I couldn't see was the spiritual warfare going on, and how we were indeed a threat to the Devil's plans for the destruction of our Lord's testimony.

One evening, we had decided to meet outside the city. We were peaceably praising our Lord and communing together, when all of a sudden we were surrounded by Roman soldiers. There was no escape, but in the confusion of the moment I heard His still, small voice say to me to duck behind a bush and to crouch down. I did so, and to my amazement the soldiers passed right by me. I was relieved that I was not captured, but that was not the Lord's will for some of my other friends.

You may wonder why I was spared, and if you don't, I certainly did. All I can say is the Lord knew He had other plans for me and that I hadn't finished my mission. I can testify that no matter what the odds are, He will either take care of you or take you, according to His will, and either way it is good. If it's your time to go, then He will give you the grace to die as a martyr like He did with the ones who did not escape; and if it's not your time to die, then He will deliver you, no matter what the circumstances are.

There was no way that those soldiers could have missed me. And what's more, there is no way that they couldn't have recognized me the following days at my shop. All I could do at the moment was praise our dear Lord for His mercy and deliverance and pray for my brethren who had been captured.

On one hand, I was glad for my freedom and amazed at the miracle that had taken place; on the other, I was grieving for my brethren, and I was also fearful for my life and future capture. There were so many emotions that whirled through my head and my heart, but I thank God for them, for it was during this time of crisis that my faith was established. I spent that night in agony of spirit, with so many questions on my mind. But what emerged from the testing and trying and struggles of that night was that the Lord transformed me into a bold and fearless witness for Him.

Our sweet Lord was able to get through to me and show me that I had nothing to fear. I didn't need to question what was happening or worry about any future persecutions, for He was more than able to take care of me. All I needed to do was have the boldness to proclaim His message wherever He led me, and He would take care of the rest. He was more than able to protect me, even if He had to blind the eyes of my persecutors—and if not, then He would give me the grace for whatever His plan was.

I lived a long life and never fell into the hands of my enemies.—That was my mission and where my journey in life took me. That was His plan. I was never a great evangelist or anyone famous, but I accomplished my part in His plan, and He has greatly rewarded me, for which I give thanks.

* * *

(Jesus:) The question of why you are spared when others are not can be just as agonizing a question as why I allow you to be taken. In both cases, the secret to peace is having faith that I know best, and letting Me direct your life in whatever way I choose.

58. Endtime Firepower!

Hey, you! Happy Endtime to you! Wow! Now that it's all over, I can't say anything else about how cool it was than that it was everything that I'd hoped it would be! All the dreams that you may have had about the Endtime are flimsy and corny compared to the real thing—even the coolest and best ones! I wish that I could do it all again, imagine that!—The world's worst moments—but the best time of my life.

I'm your average Family member. I worked in childcare, did outreach, fundraised, sang in shows, scrubbed toilets, wiped babies' noses, etc.—definitely all quite regular.

But when it came down to it, God called me to be one of many that were a special part of His plan in the Endtime. And He kept me through till the End. I wasn't martyred, and just when it looked like I finally would be, it was the last day of those last 3½ years ... that I had really lost count of! But I'll tell you about that last day.

It had gotten pretty hot. Communications with the rest of the Family were down, and they had been that way for some time. There was really no way of knowing what had happened to the rest of them. The propaganda news reports claimed

that they were all dead or in the process of being killed. There were still numerous hunts going on which were televised and reported as taking the final sweep. There were a few in different hiding places that we knew of: some in the wilderness, some in apartments, and some even smack-dab in the center of Jerusalem, which wasn't quite the picture of total domination by the Beast that you might think.

Our group, "The Heaven's Girls" (as we called ourselves), had been called to be there. Though it was daunting, the Lord had promised that He'd see us through to the end and that none of us would die.

We went by faith—literally. Every step that we took had to be prayed about and we didn't dare jump to conclusions about anything. Travel was very restricted and it wasn't like we could just drive or jump on a plane to this place without seriously triggering every alert AC minion. There were wanted posters of us everywhere, and it was considered treacherous to not do everything in one's power to apprehend us.

The Lord miraculously protected us as we were traveling. Our friends in the underground had made use of all their contacts and provided us with the latest styles of clothing, and we did our best to "play the part" of regular Systemite tourists of some kind. The Lord did the rest, and we inexplicably were able to pass checkpoints and searches without problems. There was, however, one point where we had to whip out our ugly faces and give a little of the "fire and brimstone treatment" to some Devil worshippers! Those guys were heavy and really in tune with Satan. They knew that we were coming and when, and it was all a matter of finding us and catching us.

They first spotted us on our transport and followed us on our way to the city. When we stopped at a rest stop, the plan was already made and set up to lead the whole group into a restaurant and kill us all. There were countless ways that they could do it. In case anything went wrong, the whole place was wired with explosives and there was a demonic death team that would die along with us if need be. They hadn't even cared to separate us from the "innocents," lest that alert us in any way. Besides, they didn't want to risk those that had even only seen our smiles and beaming countenances turning against the Order as well, so there were to be no survivors!

When we stopped and got out, everything was a little eerie. There were definite warning bells going off in our minds that told us to watch and pray—not to worry, of course, but to be ready for anything. When we made it into the café, the chatter, music, and laughing was broken by simultaneous outbursts as each of us was targeted by a sniper. Each passenger was on someone's scope and they just started firing away.

People dropped right and left, but none of us were touched. It was like the guns that were targeting us were shooting pellets, as there was nothing more than a little sting where we were being hit. The firing continued, but we all remained standing, and we were praising God till there were only the five of us left. There was no fear in our hearts, only pity for those killed and a sense of foreboding that those who had touched God's eye would be smitten down by His angry outburst. When the shooting stopped, we each stood and claimed the power of the keys. Then fire spat from our eyes and from our mouths. This was not a huge burst of flame like a flame-thrower would shoot, but rather laser-like guided bursts that sliced through everything around us.

We were given supernatural skill for this, and each of our shots was guided from above. We not only killed each of the soldiers, but also deactivated the explosives that were all about us.

The place lay in ruins. We looked around at our erstwhile travel companions, but there was not a single survivor among them.

We walked out in sheer amazement at what had just happened and terribly determined to continue on with our mission.

Not one of us spoke to one another after that. The Lord showed each of us what we were to do as we continued our trip on foot, so that by the time we arrived, we had our plans and our missions down. Just outside the city, we embraced and proceeded to enact our plans as they'd been given to each of us.

Though I didn't see my friends again till we were reunited in the sky, each of them has a powerful and awesome victory story to tell of how they were delivered and kept by Jesus' power and the keys of the Kingdom.

Victory was ours that day as we fought long and hard that final night for the souls of those that were repentant. Many were saved, and many more were allowed to live on after the battle of Armageddon, and these are still being taught and brought to the knowledge of God's only Son and His great, awesome power of love.

It was a great time, and like I said, I would love to do it all again. But I have even more exciting stuff ahead of me, as greater and more marvelous things are yet to happen in this wonderful new world that we are now creating.

Awesome things will you do!

Power to the people of the keys!

Power to the children of this Revolution!

And power to all that call on His Name.

* * *

(Jesus:) This is real and is a testament of the power that I have given you through the keys, whose use you are now honing. As you continue to do so, this power will be in each of your hands, and it will be the visible manifestation of My mantle over you in the Time of the End.

Don't worry, My dear loves, for you are on the side that is destined to win. There's no question here. You will have visible manifestations of obviously miraculous events that will leave no doubt in your mind about whether or not you will succeed in the end.

Be excited! Be thrilled!

59. Oni's Dream

(Told in story form by Oni himself—now that it can be told!)

Oni tossed and turned. His sleep was difficult and fretful. For the third night in a row, the same haunting dream had come to him. In the dream, he and all his parishioners were trapped inside his little church. Outside, an angry mob of fanatic Muslims had decided to rid themselves of this plague of Christian infidels and had set fire to the church, thinking to burn them all alive.

Shaking himself awake from the horror of the scene, Oni sat up in bed and began to pray. "Lord, why I am having these terrible dreams? Is this a warning from You, or is it just the Devil trying to shake my faith and make me fear?"

Oni was the pastor of a small church in Africa. He was getting up in years and had seen many changes in his country—mainly for the worse. As a young man, he had done some pretty terrible things himself in the days before he'd converted. But an amazing encounter one night had changed his life forever.

He had agreed to poison the Christians' leader, a godly man of much prayer and patience who loved to read and reflect upon the Scriptures. So in the evening, he'd slipped quietly into the kitchen when the cook was out and put a powerful dose of a terrible poison into the man's food. Then he slipped silently out of the house to watch and wait for the inevitable. He waited and waited and still no commotion came from the house. At last his curiosity could not be contained and he crept back to see if he could see through the window what was happening. Perhaps the cook and her master were both dead.

In the dim light he could see that the man was sitting at the table his head bowed in prayer. In front of him was the food, getting cold now because the man had been so absorbed in his reading and prayer. At last, he began to eat. The poison was quick acting, but the man was eating slowly, and yet showed no harm. The young assassin was confused. Why was the man not crying out in pain and falling down? The cook finally came and took his plate away. Perhaps the poison was not strong enough. No, he had helped to extract it himself, and the dog they'd fed some of it to had died within only a few minutes. Oni's eyes widened. A chill ran down his spine. What magic did this infidel possess that could keep him from harm? He had to know. He went to the door and knocked.

The cook finally approached and called through the door, asking who he was and what was it he wanted. He said he'd come to know more about the Christian God. The door opened, and Oni began the long voyage that had brought him to this place. He was now the pastor. How very odd the ways of God. Oni had seen many miracles in his life. It was not legal to become a Christian, so God had done much to spare his life, and many times had rescued him from the hands of his former friends, who loathed that he had embraced the God of the infidels—he who had been one of the most zealous followers of the old beliefs.

Now, persecution was again upon them, and bad things were happening all around. These terrible dreams... There was nothing to do but pray and ask the Lord what their meaning was. Was he to flee? That didn't seem right, for many of his followers would not be able to. Besides, what kind of a shepherd runs away and lets the wolves devour the flock? No, there must be some other meaning to these troubling visions in the night. "Dear Lord, please show me," he prayed.

As he sat with his eyes closed, the scenes returned. He could see the people huddling together in the center of the church, preparing to die. Then he saw it and laughed, bursting into praise. "As You warned Noah of the evil to come, You have warned me, and shown me Your solution. I'll do it Lord. I'm old but I'll do it!"

Oni seemed to be acting a little odd to those who knew him well. He usually made his parish rounds during the week, but more and more, he seemed to be busy working on "improving the church." That seemed a bit odd because Oni had never been one to pay much attention to buildings. Besides, about all that was noticeably different was that he'd planted a large flower garden. And of course, he looked a whole lot more tired than usual, but he did manage to keep up with services and his evening prayer times and classes with them.

He tried his best to keep the faith of his followers burning strong through increasingly dark and difficult days. The government had fallen to yet another president even more corrupt and vile than the one before him. Plus, this man claimed to be religious and drew much of his support from the Muslim community. Now some extremist groups felt they had his support in the task they'd taken upon themselves of cleansing their country from the Christian infidels. Crazy mobs felt empowered to let loose their religious rage in the chaos that followed the shift in power. In the city, many Christians had been slaughtered right in their homes during the night.

Refugees were pouring in with terrible tales. Oni was a gentle soul who opposed the use of weapons, machetes, guns, and all such violence, so he did not agree that the Christians should arm themselves and start killing Muslims in retaliation.

Many thought he was carrying his faith in God too far, but Oni held fast to his belief that God could keep them, if it was His will, but that they must pray. Then, the terrifying news came that a band of Muslim fanatics were coming, intent on killing anyone who was a Christian. Some armed themselves and prepared to fight. Others grabbed a few precious possessions and fled off into the night. A faithful few gathered at the church, deciding to stand faithful in prayer with their pastor.

Oni let them in, and locked the doors. "Now is the hour of our deliverance," he said. They all knelt down in prayer and poured out their hearts to the Lord. In the distance, they could hear the mob smashing windows and setting fire to their homes. Soon the mob was at the church's doors. Oni rose, and went out on the steps to speak to the mob while a few strong men watched the door. It was useless. When the mob tried to take him, he was pulled back into the church by the men who watched from within.

"Burn the devils alive!" the cry went up. Soon, the frightened people within the church could hear the sounds of fire crackling and the door being blocked so they could not escape. The smell of gasoline and petroleum filled the air. The small congregation gathered in the center around Oni who seemed oddly at peace. At last he spoke.

"Well, I know you all think that today is your last day upon this earth. I hate to disappoint you, but the Lord showed me this was going to happen and told me to get prepared. So I did. I made a few alterations to our church."

With that, he bent down and lifted away a section of the floor that revealed the opening to a crudely dug passageway under the church. The passageway led out and away from the church and into the side of an old well/cistern that had long ago given out. The well bottom had been enlarged, and a stock of food was left there, as well as a ladder. Amazed, the congregation hurried down the escape route to safety, sealing off the entrance behind them.

The political situation did not greatly improve, but eventually the evil president was removed. The little church was rebuilt by many of the same people who supposedly had been burned to death in it. The faithful decided to keep Oni's "Ark" a secret and let the world assume they had all been killed in the fire—though no human remains were ever found among the ashes.

* * *

(Jesus:) When I can, I often prefer to save through natural means. There is a time for supernatural help and miraculous escapes, but other times, I let you do what you can and take on Myself only what you can't do.

60. A Missionary to the American Indians

I'd always had a love for different peoples, cultures, and tribes. I lived in North America at the time when it was still being pioneered by the Europeans. I had a knack for languages, and spent much of my time as a translator for the Governor and those who worked with the Indians.

I would spend many nights learning new dialects, and about new tribes we'd found and their cultures and peoples. It was challenging to always be learning new languages, which I could learn to a fluent level in about a month! It was a gift from God, but I always just thought of it as something that I had cultivated myself.

One day, when talking with my father, who was the pastor of one of our local churches, he brought up the subject of the Indians, which many did when talking to me, since all knew that this was my career and I always had plenty to say about them. They fascinated me, and I also prided myself in how much more I knew about each tribe than anyone else. He said that he felt that my calling wasn't to continue as a translator, but to go and actually live with those people and to use my gift for languages for a greater good—to help others, not to further the cause of greedy men.

I didn't like those words; they stirred in me a calling, but one that I knew would bring much hardship and sacrifice. I had such a comfortable life, one that was easy, fun, exciting and challenging, but which kept me from harm's way. But I'd have to live the life of a poor wanderer if I gave it all up to try and reach the Indians with God's love.

Months and years went by, and I kept working as a translator, but the words that my father had spoken echoed in my heart. What had started out as a tiny whisper grew louder and louder, to where I could hardly concentrate on translating words about trade, roads, and commerce. All I wanted to say was, "God loves you" to those sad and tired-looking Indians.

"What's come over you, John? You're not the same anymore," my wife said to me one day. As she uttered those words, it's like a dam was opened in my heart and I wept. I told her what my father had said to me and how I'd felt God's call, but hadn't wanted to obey, for I was afraid. I knew how hostile some of the Indians were to us white men and how much they'd love to hurt me if I ventured out into their tribes unprotected and unarmed. She laid her hand on my shoulder and said, "I thank God for this day! I have been praying for it for years! I will go with you, I will learn their languages from you and we will help to teach them and love them."

I looked up in total shock. Here was this woman, so beautiful, so proper, and someone who I'd thought would try to discourage me from going—or even make me go alone—but no, God had been speaking to her heart too, and we were both ready to heed His call.

Seeing her determination and conviction to venture out into the unknown with me, with only our Bibles and God on our side—which in times to come we would see was better than a whole army to protect us—we went out, not knowing whither we went, trusting our lives into God's hands!

We made preparations and ventured into the wilderness to seek the closest tribe to our area. From there, we hoped we would understand what God wanted us to do next.

Once we were in view of the tribe, some of their warriors came to us. Recognizing me and thinking that I'd come on a mission from the government, they reluctantly brought me to the chief. He listened to my words and in anger told us to leave his tribe right away or we would be put to death.

I pleaded with him and explained that we were here to tell him of God's love, that I had quit my job with the government and was here of my own accord. Still, he would not listen and told his braves to carry us away.

As I left, I dropped a piece of paper with a translation of the verse John 3:16 on it. The chief's men pushed us forward with gruff, harsh words as they marched us into a wigwam and held us under guard as they decided what to do next.

As far as they were concerned, this was their chance to be rid of me and use my death as a message to the government that they were displeased with our attempts to infiltrate their tribe. I knew what they were thinking and talking about, and fear filled my heart. I wondered what I was doing here in the first place, why I'd given up a life of relative ease and comfort, safety and protection to subject myself and my wife to death upon our first attempt at converting these people.

"Oh God, I'm so afraid, I'm doubting Your plan for me and why You've called me to take up this mission. Was it just for me to die before my first convert is even won?" I leaned over and wept, feeling like a real failure.

We were imprisoned in the wigwam for many more days, awaiting our death, or so we thought. Then one day I heard some commotion outside; the door opened, and there was the chief with a great smile on his face. He was holding the little piece of paper with John 3:16 written on it in his hand, and said to me, "Do you believe this?"

I said, "Yes, I do."

"Is this why you are here?"

"Yes, it is."

"Then tell me what it is that you are supposed to preach to me, I will listen."

Oh, what a glorious moment that was. I had been certain that death was literally at my very door, for I knew these people only too well. I knew of their little regard for life, especially that of a white man, and I knew how quickly and remorselessly they could put us to death at any opportunity. But now, here was the chief, putting aside all the past and our racial differences, and being willing to listen to me.

I preached for many hours of God's love, of this Spirit that would free him and his people from bondage and bring them peace forever. He prayed with me there to receive God into his life, and from then on we spent many months with his tribe teaching them about God's love, and how to live at peace with their neighbors. Their tribe prospered greatly, and was blessed in many ways for their acceptance of God as their King and Savior.

We traveled on to many other tribes, telling them of God's love.—Some received us with joy, while others drove us away. But we knew that some day, all would have a chance to know His love—that is what drove us onwards to our final reward in Heaven.

61. A Biblical Sign

(Departed saint:) I come from the county of Armenia, and from a long line of Christians. My grandparents would often tell stories of their grandparents, and how all of them loved Jesus. They told stories of how they would meet together for prayer, and how the Lord would do miracles for them by supplying their every need and keeping them from harm or danger.

Life in Armenia was not easy, and my parents were poor, which forced them to both work hard and pray hard. Though they were poor in the material realm, they were rich in faith, and they passed on that inheritance of faith to me. I was always thankful to have grown up in a household like this, and their stories and testimonies of faith had a great impact on me in the years to come.

My name is Misak. I was born at the turn of the 19th century, and life was rough. The house I grew up in was simple and cold. There was not a lot of food, but I always felt a warmth in my heart. I knew my parents loved me, and I knew they loved Jesus and had faith that He would keep us and care for us, and He always did. I don't think I ever saw my parents worry when things got tough, or when supplies were low—they would just get together to read the Word and pray. Sometimes it would take a little while before the answer came, other times it

would come through right away. But no matter how long it took, they never worried, but always trusted that the Lord would come through for them.

That is the heritage of faith I had, and as I grew up and went through life, I would always remember my parents' great faith. And when times of testing came, I too would pray and then trust that the Lord would come through for me. And the tests did come. As a young boy going to school, some of my classmates would make fun of me because of my faith. Sometimes the bullies would push me around and slap me and hit me, just because I was a Christian. They would make fun of me, but I tried to not let it bother me too much. I actually felt sorry for them at times, as I knew that what I had in my heart was real, and that Jesus was with me, whereas they seemed to be empty inside. And though those times weren't easy for me, they did bring me closer to the Lord, as I would pray and ask Him for His protection and comfort.

But that was just the beginning of trials and persecutions for me. Looking back, I can see how the Lord allowed me to go through that as a young child, as He knew there would be bigger and greater tests to come. The political situation was very tense when I was a young man. There were the Russians on one side, who were promoting communism and atheism, and the Turks on the other, who were strong in their Muslim beliefs.

These opposite ideologies were united about one thing: they did not like us Armenians, and they made life hard for us. They had different reasons or excuses for why they didn't like us, but I knew the real reason was because we were Christians. And our Christianity was strong and deep. Most of us Armenians had been Christians for centuries, and we had a strong faith in the Lord and a deep

love for Jesus. They were afraid of us in a way—afraid that our faith would spread and that others would be converted. I can see and understand now that it was really the Devil fighting us through them. He had put it in their hearts to fight and persecute us and to even try to destroy us in order to stamp out our faith in Christ.

And that's what happened; the Turks came and tried to wipe us out. They were merciless and killed many, many Armenians. But they didn't destroy us all, as hard as they tried. They thought they had us surrounded and that there was no escape, and they wanted to annihilate us, but many of us did escape, and how that happened was truly a miracle.

I was with a small group of friends, and when we saw and realized what the Turks were doing, and how they were trying to destroy us, we decided to escape. We left our town by night and ran into the woods. But we knew there would be many soldiers out there, and that their job was to stop us from escaping, so it seemed like an impossible situation.

It was dark. We didn't know where the soldiers were, and we didn't see how we could run through the woods without them hearing or spotting us. We got to the edge of the forest, and I remember desperately praying that the Lord would lead us through the woods, just as He led the children of Israel through the Red Sea and the wilderness.

Right after praying that prayer, I looked up, and it seemed like one of the trees was shining, like it had some kind of light on it. At first I wondered about it, and thought that maybe it was a lantern from one of the soldiers, but it was a different

kind of light. For one, it was the top of the tree that was lit up, not the bottom. The top half of the tree seemed to be shining with this light, which wasn't a bright light, but was clearly noticeable, as all the other trees were dark. And then it hit me: I realized that just as the Lord had led the children of Israel with a pillar of fire by night, the Lord was leading us and showing us the path by causing this tree to shine with light.

That gave me the faith to run quietly over to that tree, and once I had, the rest of my friends followed suit. Then, as we were all gathered safely around the base, I looked up and saw another treetop shining with light, and I knew that was the next tree we were meant to run to. As we would get to them, one by one the trees would light up, and show us the way to escape. It took us the whole night, but by daybreak we were safely out of the woods.

We still didn't know where to go. We kept traveling for days, as we wanted to get as far away as possible, though we had very little money and no idea of where we could settle. Then the Lord showed one of my friends that we should travel to an island called Cyprus, and that there we would be able to start over. So we walked and walked till we hit the sea, and there we took a boat over to Cyprus, which at this point was much like our Promised Land.

We'd had to escape the Turkish soldiers and pass through the wilderness, but the Lord finally led us to the place that He had prepared for us. It wasn't easy to start over again, but we knew this was the place where the Lord wanted us to be. And it wasn't long before we met other Armenians who had also escaped, and whom the Lord had shown to come to Cyprus as well. Slowly but surely we rebuilt our homes and our communities.

The Turks tried to destroy us and our faith, and though many were killed, and many died as martyrs, they were not able to stop us. In fact, all they did was cause us to spread to many places. Now, you can find Armenian communities in many cities in many countries of the world.

So remember, no matter how hard the Enemy tries to stop you, he can't, and the Lord will always make a way of escape. So keep the faith and keep trusting Him.

62. Story of Endtime Past

(Small child speaking:) My name is Amanda. You can call me Mandy. I have a story I'd like to tell you of how Jesus was with me when the bad people came to my house.

I was with my mommy and I was playing a Word game. There was a hard knock on the door. "Bam, bam, bam!" I immediately knew that these were not friendly knocks.

Again, "Bam, bam, bam!" So loud. And then a man shouted, "Open up your door! This is the R. A.!" Mommy came out of the kitchen and said, "It's the Registration Authorities!"

"Mandy—you and Bryan come with me."

Mommy ushered us to the back room of our house. She picked up the phone to call my dad and suddenly we all heard a big noise! "Boom!" I was getting scared and grabbed mommy. I started crying.

"Hush, Darling. Jesus is with us," Mommy said as she put the phone down.

"They've knocked the door down and there is no other way out. We must pray now for Jesus to protect us."

Mommy pulled us toward her and prayed for our protection as she called on the keys of miracles. As we all looked up, there they were before us—three scary men all dressed up in police suits with these funny-looking guns.

"Come with us!" one man yelled.

"I'm sorry," my mom replied. "I'm late in taking my children to school."

I looked at the man. He looked funny. He put down his gun. He said, "Okay, then go."

Mommy got her purse, the car keys, and we all left, passing them by as they stood there, very still, not talking.

As Mommy helped us in the car, she was praising the Lord for the power of the keys and we drove away. I was so happy nothing bad had happened. I like the keys. I'm glad Mommy was faithful to help us memorize the key promises.

"Nothing is impossible when you call on the keys of the Kingdom."

63. I Was Made Invisible

The thing I always found is that the Enemy's spirit could never dominate the Lord's Spirit. So as long as I stayed in the Lord's Spirit, nothing could touch me, and I was perfectly safe. There were times when people couldn't even see me, because I was standing still in His Spirit. These are the kind of miracles He did for me.

One time the soldiers came to my house. I backed up against the wall, where Jesus told me to go, and they couldn't see me. Yes, the room was a little dark, but they could see the bed when they came in for me, the curtains, everything. But they couldn't see me standing there up against the wall. They left and I was safe. After that, the soldiers went down the road to the next house, and the next, pillaging and plundering them all. But for some reason they never took one thing from my house.

It was as if they'd been befuddled somehow in their minds and they just couldn't see properly. They expected I'd be in the room, and when it seemed I wasn't there, they became confused, befuddled, and just left. And my Lord had protected me once again.

My name was Lydia. I was a young woman living in Germany during World War II. I kept my spirit hidden within Jesus', and I was safe there. I survived the war and eventually died of old age, full of tales of how My Lord never once left me, because I didn't leave Him. There's nothing He can't do for you, my friends. This is a tried and proven fact.

64. A Tale by Armina

(Spirit helper, Armina:)

My dear children of David, called-out ones of the End, soldiers of David and Maria's Endtime Army:

I reveal to you now, for your faith and encouragement in the face of persecution for righteousness' sake—which our Lord and Husband has warned you will come to you in His time—some of the supernatural powers and out-of-your-world gifts that will be given to you as you call on us, your counterparts in the heavenly realm, who fight by your side and empower you with the might and power of Heaven that your enemies will not be able to resist.

I am Armina, one of your helpers who has been training you in the art of fighting your enemies and overcoming in the persecution battles to come. I want to encourage you with a testimony which is the foretelling of a possible incident in your future, one which has already happened in the realm of eternity, but which is still to be realized in the realm of time, depending on choices made. It is a brief "slice of life," a glimpse into a few moments of what miracles our Jesus and the keys of the Kingdom will perform in you during the days you will be enduring persecution. I am a player in this scene, as I will be there with you, revealing the strategies of your enemies to you, spying out their evil intentions.

Scene: The dark days of the Endtime have arrived in the country where these children of David are living and clandestinely carrying on their ministry to reach those hungering for the truth. They are aware of the danger of being caught talking with anyone about Jesus or even about any religion that recognizes God.

The "thought police" and the AC undercover agents have infiltrated every part of the society in that country.

Sam cautiously looked around before speaking quietly, almost whispering, to the young couple waiting to cross the intersection alongside him and Joy, his partner. "Hi! Nice day, isn't it? Where are you all headed?"

The young man, appearing a bit surprised at Sam's friendliness, answered, "Oh, we're just going to the park over there to get away from the chaos of the madhouse where we work. It's our lunch break now."

"Oh, yeah? That's where we're headed now, too," said Joy, entering the conversation. "Can we join you?" she asked them.

They crossed the street, and once in the park, the four of them sat down on the grass under a tree. Sam felt a little uneasy about them all sitting together, as it might look as if they were actually talking about something meaningful, which was frowned upon and considered suspicious by the authorities. During this time, both Sam and Joy had been silently shooting up requests to Heaven that the Lord and their spirit helpers would be activated and close at hand in case of trouble, and for wisdom and leading for witnessing to these young adults, who seemed sheepy.

"Hey, would you mind if we just walk around instead of sitting here?" Sam suggested, as he asked the Lord for insight into their hearts.

"Do you guys like working at the store there?" Joy queried.

"Nah, it's a real drag, actually. And the pay is minimal," answered the young man with a frown on his face.

Joy then was about to say something that would bring the conversation around to talking about the Lord, and as she was looking into the face of the young woman, for a split second her head appeared to morph into a beautiful woman's, with a helmet and long plume reaching out above. Her aura was strangely unearthly, but warm with a camaraderie that made Joy feel safe. And just in that same split second as Joy saw this vision, she heard the words, "Watch and pray, and beware!"

Joy blinked her eyes and kind of did a double take, "What did you say?"
The woman answered, "I asked what you do for a living."

Joy gulped, and began to realize that they'd just been supernaturally warned of danger lurking by their spirit helper, Armina, speaking and even appearing to her. She glanced quickly at Sam, whose eyes met hers with a look that told Joy that he'd just had the same out-of-this-world vision and heard the same words. They immediately looked around to search the park for possible trouble, when around the corner of the path strode two "thought policemen," making their rounds, checking on who was there and what was happening. Sam and Joy prayed desperately in their hearts for Armina and her band of key-powered fighters to stand between them and the two AC officers so that they wouldn't even notice them. The two men walked right past them, as if they didn't see them.

* * *

They call me Armina. I am created by God to champion the causes of those in need, to fight against the attacks of the Enemy on those who are in need of help and support. I've been commissioned to fight now for the Family. I am preparing for the days ahead when I will be there to defend you. (Maria Fountain 2002)

65. Saved by the "Gift of Gab!"

"Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought Him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man." (John 7:45-46)

(Departed saint:) I am an ordinary man but I was given "the gift of gab," as they say. It was a temporary gift, given only to protect the brethren. When the officers came for us, the anointing fell and I spoke in rapid-fire mode, almost somewhat like Dwight L. Moody when he would speak rapidly during some of his sermons. My words pierced their hearts and cut through their defenses. I exposed their innermost thoughts. I talked to their hidden man. They could not gainsay nor resist the multitude of insightful, incisive, sharp-pointed words that touched on even the most private areas of their hearts. They would not carry out their duties. They left us alone.

[From Good Thots II, "Famous Characters" section:]

Dwight L. Moody: "His words rushed from his bearded face like a torrent, often 230 words per minute. ..."

66. The Light of the World

(Female story teller:) Imagine yourself walking down a street, people on every side are passing you and yet they give you no acknowledgement or even seem to notice that you are there. This is how you are all going to be in the days to come, when the world grows darker and darker.

I want to tell you my story of how I was chosen of the Lord to be one of His lights or His colors in the dark and grey world of my day. I was persecuted for this, because when you are shining your light and not hiding it under a bushel, there is no way you can be hidden. The light on your face immediately draws others to you, and whether you feel different or not, any ordinary person that possesses the Spirit of God becomes extraordinary and there is no way they can hide their light from others.

I thought that I was one of these people that no one would take notice of, or that would never be able to be used. There were so many around me who had far bolder and more powerful characters that I thought were more useful than mine. I was quieter, and though I had a great love for my Lord and Savior, and I often burned with a passion to do something for the Lord, I did not feel that I had it within me to stand up before hundreds and preach, or lead large groups of people to the Lord, or even reach some people that seemed so above me and out of my reach.

I didn't think people would take notice of me or would listen to what I would say. But as the Lord always has a destiny and a plan for each person's life that He puts on this Earth, so did He have one for me.

I lived in the time of the young church in Rome, and as you know, many were persecuted and killed for their faith, so it was a not a light thing to be a Christian. But the ones who were, and those who were converted, were far stronger than if it were easy.—They knew the price was high, so when they did give their lives to the Lord, they gave them fully, oftentimes even to their death.

Well, I will not continue on with the death part, as although many were martyred for their faith, many more were miraculously protected and delivered from the hands of their enemies, and many others also were able to be reached through such persecution. So this is one of my stories, as the Lord gave me the honor and privilege of being able to go through persecution, but He also kept me through it and delivered me from my enemies and made it possible for me to continue on living a life for Him.

It all started when my father, who was a merchant and dealt in spices and herbs and cloth, started dealing with merchants and traders from other places, as he was trying to expand his business. So we had more contact with people from other lands and places, and there were also some richer people's servants who came to purchase from our store. So in all, it was quite an interesting place to meet people, and the Lord was laying it on my heart to do more for Him and to show Jesus to these ones.

I would often help my father in his shop and deal with some of the customers, so I had this opportunity. Although it was difficult to find chances to talk to others about the Lord, I was just trying to be faithful to be there for Him and to reach those I could. Some people came to know the Lord through seeking out what it was that gave me this spirit of peace, happiness, and joy.

You little realize how much you stand out when you come in contact with others; you little realize how strong the Spirit of the Lord is in you, because you are so used to it. But to people who only know hate, fear, cruelty, war, sadness, and despair, it's like cool waters to a thirsty soul.

In our world it was dangerous to just speak out about our faith, and in a way, you had to sort of hook them to your spirit and hook them to wanting what you had before you could bring them along further.

So this was my task: I would slowly and quietly lead these ones to the Lord. I would often engage them in conversation by getting them to tell me about their lands, people, and travels, and slowly but surely, they would tell me more about themselves, their lives, their hardships, etc. I was just a young girl, and many of these were grown men, having seen much of the world and having known much of the evils that were out there.—To them I was a bit of color in the dark world, and they would always enjoy their times in my father's store.

Of course, it came to the point one day that the truth had to be brought out. There were a few whom we had gotten to know pretty well. And of course they started noticing how we were different, what our attitudes were toward those in need, and how some of the things we said seemed totally different from what the rest of humanity seemed to base their lives upon.

So I was asked one day by one of the bolder and straightforward traders if I was a Christian.

He was not one of the nicer ones. He was hard and cruel, and the one that our family had the hardest time dealing with on the whole. He didn't seem to want to get close, and appeared very cynical. So for him to come and ask such a question was quite a surprise, and at first caught me off guard. I was hit with many things in that one moment, one of which was that I didn't want to endanger my family and cause hurt to them or their business.

I was afraid for myself too, for a second, but then I realized that I was in the Lord's hands, and that if it was His will for me and my family to have to suffer persecution, then there was nothing I could do about it.—It was far better to suffer than to know that I had betrayed my Lord.

So with complete peace and faith and conviction, I looked this man straight in the eyes and gave him my answer. All I said was yes, and I know that when I said that and looked into his eyes, that it shook him to his very soul.

I was able to see how this really happened once I got up here in Heaven, so that is why I know of the power that saying yes to the Lord had given me. It was like Jesus had become a part of me in that moment, and this man who knew of all of the consequences of being a Christian, and also knowing of so few people who were willing to risk their lives for what they believed in, was totally taken by surprise.

He wasn't an evil man, although he was far from the light. He was trying to prove that with such high stakes, surely I wouldn't have the courage to risk my life for such a thing. He was one of the more cynical and proud traders, and had definitely not asked the question because he was seeking for the truth. He had

picked up on it by some of the conversations he had heard, and just by watching us.

So even though he'd come with the intent to scare me, and was sure that I would back down and give him some excuse or beat around the bush or downright deny it, it was he who in the end was taken aback by my one word.

He didn't have anything to say after that, but just walked out of the shop. I was of course worried, because if he was to turn us in, then we would all be sent to prison, and although I knew that the Lord was in control of this, I was still frightened. I told my parents, and they were proud of me for what I'd done, even though they were also aware of what could happen.

We prayed and spent time together as a family seeking the Lord as to what to do, and the Lord gave us peace to just stay and do our best to continue things as usual. He spoke to our hearts that we should not back down or start hiding our lights, but that we should seek to do more and reach out to others more. He gave us the peace that He would take care of this man that could easily turn us in. So over the next couple of days, we continued as we had always done, except that now we did even more than what we would normally do, and the Lord used it to bring a few of the ones that were on the line to Him. We were a bit more desperate that these ones find the Lord now, especially with the possibility that we could be taken away. Anyway, each day we continued with the thought that it would be our last day here, but the days went on and nothing happened. I soon forgot about the whole ordeal. We didn't see this man again, and I often wondered what had happened to him. I would also pray for him, for I felt there

was a reason to it all, and that much more was happening that I did not know about.

One day I was going around town talking with the people I knew and getting food for our family, when a strong hand took my arm, and this man whispered for me to come with him and not to make a scene. I was tempted to yell out for help when I realized it was the same trader as before. He told me that he wasn't going to harm me, but that he needed some answers. I wasn't sure what to do, so I prayed and the Lord gave me the peace that it was going to be okay.

He took me to an inn, and when we were alone he asked me to sit, as he had some questions and he wanted to know what had happened to him.

"After I left the shop, I was very confused, as I could easily go and report you all to the officials, and I knew that you would get in trouble. I was trying to convince myself that I didn't care—that it was you who were breaking the rules and I didn't need to feel any pity towards you.

"But then I decided to wait a bit and watch to see if you were going to flee, and then I saw that you went along with business as usual and were actually even going more and more out of your way to show love to others and to help others, and the peace that you had on your faces was even more apparent.

"It is like you were all glowing with an unearthly peace and light, and I just couldn't understand it. The look you had given me when you had said 'yes' haunted me, and I, thinking that I was tough and could easily stand up to others,

couldn't come close to having the conviction and strength that you had shown in that one moment.

"So now I have been tormented with these thoughts. I've been trying to return to how I was before—to not caring, and looking upon others as none of my business—but I cannot. I can only see the sadness and despair in each person's eyes, and then I remember the peace and happiness that you all have when I look at you, and I cannot keep going on. With each person I come in contact with, I see more and more how empty and cold people are—that all the wealth and riches of this world only seem to leave them empty.

"I must find an answer, for I have looked at my life, and I also see the same emptiness and coldness and hate that I have seen in others, and I cannot continue to live with myself. I want to know what it is that has given you such happiness, contentment, peace, and even courage greater than a fearless warrior. "So tell me now what it is about your Christian faith that seems to give you everything that riches cannot give. I have searched the world over for riches and wealth and prestige—but even though I have done well in some areas, I have always felt that I had nothing in the end. So tell me now, so that I might know and find peace in my heart and mind."

So I told him of my faith, of my Lord, and of the One Who'd died for him. He opened his heart up to Jesus, and the transformation that he experienced surpassed all that he had imagined. It was like he had stepped into another world, and I with him. In that moment, I felt the greatest satisfaction I had ever known. For it is one thing to lead those that are searching to the Lord, but it is another to

watch as the Lord cracks the covering and causes the transformation in someone for whom you'd thought there was no hope.

He later became a great help to the spreading of the Gospel because of his travels, and was also instrumental in helping many Christians to flee in the process. He also ended up helping my own family to escape when it did happen that we were found out. He was so transformed that it would amaze me what a different person he'd become. He was willing to do anything for Jesus and was willing to pay any price. And although I'd had a part in it, I knew that I'd just been an instrument and that the Lord had done all the work in his life. I had just been faithful to let my light shine in the dark world that surrounded me, and that was enough for the Lord to use to bring this one to him.

So don't be afraid even in the face of persecution to continue to shine brightly. You never know who the Lord is bringing across your path and who needs to see that light, so that they might come to know Jesus. You will never regret it, I promise.

67. So, So Proud!

I always knew I was special. I picked up things real fast.—Mentally, physically ... I excelled. Details stuck with me. Ideas were abundant, most of them real good. I was in great shape and excelled at sports—nearly all of them. God had truly blessed me and I knew it. I even thought (mistakenly, I now realize) that the Endtime verse about "knowledge shall be increased" was describing my attributes and abilities.—So many talents, so little time.

Yes, I was born in the Family—in a Third World country in humble surroundings. Not quite as humble as Jesus, but close.

I was used to the loud exuberant call of the faithful to prayers, not within the Home, but within the neighborhood, as we lived close to the local mosque. A few hours later we gathered for kids' devotions, then breakfast—usually rice and fish with lots of chilies and hot sauces.

From the time I was a small, white, blond, cute, and outgoing kid, I was used to being stared at and gawked at, but I liked it. I felt acknowledged. I had known Jesus all my life, and I was well aware of Him during my Family youth. I knew He had chosen me and ordained me and—as I mentioned before and will again—given me many talents.

Little did I know that these talents would prove to be my undoing, and later my redoing. Well, it wasn't the talents, but the user of the talents who was at fault—me. (Yes, the first inkling of humility in this story so far.) You see, I succumbed to the "I know better than anyone else" syndrome, amplified by that other force in

my life, the Ol' Boy himself. My—I still hate to admit it—pride gave him fertile ground to wreak havoc in my life.

Well, I thought I was fine, but my family and Home were at fault. I felt no one recognized my greatness. I was made and designed to operate outside the "childish handholding restraints" of the Family. I would have been happier to go two-by-two if I could have found an equal. In my mind the saying meant "two (me and my superiority) by one half (others)." Yes, after I became of age, I was going to go out and really do something for God.

"Do something for God"—now that's a good one! As if God needs us to take care of Him or His universe—ha! I laugh now, but back then I was serious.—Dead serious. Spiritually dead, that is.

When 18, I took an opportunity offered by one of our kings (the old bottle "tree" kind who didn't like the Sap of the Word) to return to the States and "make something of myself." My parents and peers were sad to see me go, but probably also relieved to have a break from "Ed Flash" personified.

In the States I got help from the rellies—happy to sponsor my new life, "free of the cult." I covered my initial unfamiliarity with the American ways, and out of pride learned faster than ever how to "become one." After setting me up in an apartment (turns out even the rellies could only take so much of my oozing pride), I enrolled in university and sailed through the courses, as my skills were far beyond the scope of the curriculum. I spoke several languages well, thanks to having been raised overseas. My mental ability took me to the top of the class, and of course, being the natural leader I was, I finally felt I was receiving the

recognition I was due. "Delusions of grandeur," you might say? I was far beyond that!

Lots of job offers followed graduation, and like a favored member of a secret society, I was propelled into success. No occult secret society representative had approached me (that I knew of), but I began to feel I was being tracked. And I don't mean physically like, "Hello, want to join Skull and Bones?" but I could sense spiritually that things were just going too easy, and that I was becoming indebted to someone ... or something.

Remembering the multitude of trials and tribulations growing up in the Family (which I now shunned, being ashamed of having been born into and having grown up in "the cult"), I now felt that I was effortlessly skydiving, free as a bird. Yes, I did at times get a twinge of doubt, like when I glanced at my spiritual altimeter and noticed the hands spinning faster and faster towards zero altitude. Hmmm, now where did I put my ripcord?

But whatever, I knew I could find and pull that cord at will and have a smooth—and cool—landing. Yes, I could do anything I wanted to put my mind to. I was a computer looking for a program. A leader looking for a country. A prize stallion waiting to be ridden by a prize jockey. Whoa! Where'd that come from? I was supposed to be the jockey of my life.

But my jockey came via the form of a lucrative job offer. I became part of a "famous" think tank that paradoxically, few had heard of. Finally, a philanthropic foundation that provided me with the resources I needed to develop my full potential, that recognized my genius, that needed me, and which I could work

through to change the world—I mean help change the world. While I was elated and challenged, I admit now that (like when looking at my "altimeter") there were pangs of leanness. But I was above all that. I could just focus on the job at hand and forget the past and press toward the mark of my high calling, which was in ... That's beside the point.

The main thing was that I had access to facilities where I could put my talents to work: Ahead of state-of-the-art supercomputers, way-high-tech communications gear, "for your eyes only" files to read that contained information way beyond the general public—things they would eventually know about, but months later. I knew which stocks were going up (great for acquiring extra spending money and for winning close friends by supplying "tips") and where wars would start (same). I handled not-yet-revealed-to-the-public multiuse cellular devices and met people who worked behind the politicians and pulled their strings. Man, this was interesting. Soon I'd be a real mover and shaker.

Notwithstanding my New York City 97th-floor, corner office suite, I was at a vantage point allowing me to see the vast scheme of things. Yet I was too busy with details and using my special talents and the vast facilities of this think tank to see behind the vast scheme. Yes, I know: So deep in the forest I couldn't see the trees. "Where's this all going?" you ask. Hey, I'm getting to that.

Where was I? Oh yes, going down and down, gaining speed. Yes, yes, of course, I hit bottom. I'll explain in a bit.

One day the "regional director of corporate communications" (try to make sense of that title, if you can) called me into his office. He had me sit down and then

told me he was happy with my work, my language skills were very helpful in Asian and Middle Eastern political and economic analysis, I knew more with less formal in-house training than anyone else in the foundation, etc., etc. Because of that and my skills and successes, and showing the ability to learn quickly from my (very) few mistakes, I was going to be part of a special team. We were going to do advanced work in social engineering. We would do advanced studies on what it takes for people to become wholly dedicated to a brand, a political party, a country, a religion. In other words, extract the social and psychological formulas that cause people to have epiphanies and then give their life to a cause. Evangelize and get people "saved" by Coke, Apple, our country, the Marines, a political party, Barney, etc. (Anything but Jesus, of course.)

Exhibiting an uncharacteristic flash of wanting to see beyond the trees, I asked what this was leading to, and he said that the world was in dire straits and that there was a vast plan in motion to bring dramatic solutions to age-old problems. "Let me guess," I said—remembering a very rusty JETT Bible class, "we need a superman who we can make a world leader."

If he was surprised by my "insight," he didn't show it, but he nodded in a way that confirmed that that was what he was leading to. Handing me a small, elegant leather-bound book, he asked me to take a week off to study and reflect on these writings and get back to him if I would like to be on the "team." (He apologized for not giving me an electronic version, as he said there was something more "captivating" about reading a physical book.) He said that if I decided not to go ahead, he'd understand and that there were many other doors open to me in the foundation. Somehow I got that they all led outside.

* * *

I loved the beach, perhaps because many of the Third World countries I had grown up in were landlocked, dusty, or if on the coast, "sea" meant harbor, oil slicks, tar, flotsam, commerce, and pollution, certainly not leisure. But here I was, situated on a comfortable lounge chair, out in front of an exclusive, very private (except for the army of unobtrusive servants) villa, looking out at the perfect lines of curling surf washing up and then gently receding from the white sands. Next to me was a small glass-topped table, covered with bowls of exotic fruit, exquisite luncheon meats, fresh salads, etc.—And the elegant sculpted glass of an icy tropical punch.

While I had carried the volume, as instructed, on my person for the long non-stop flight, I somehow knew I was not to read it on the plane. I was to wait until I was at my destination, rested and relaxed and ready to absorb its contents. That time was now.

It had a pocket Bible feel to it—not the cheap Gideon, for-the-masses binding. It had a full grain (not bonded) leather cover, gold-edged pages, and these pages were of the thinnest India paper. It was well broken-in by previous readers, although not marked—perhaps out of respect, since my supervisor had not said whether or not I could underline or otherwise mark it. I figured it was a private library edition, since I was expected to return it.

Opening the cover, I noticed there was no title page or copyright or ISBN or publishing house information. Without meaning to be a tease, I will tell you no more details about the contents of this book. To do so would expose you to the same thing I experienced, and I would not wish that on anyone.

* * *

The beach, book, delicacies, trappings of wealth, status, think-tank position were gone. So were the scales from my eyes. Only one other book had changed my life as much as this one—the Holy Bible. I had been too stupid to realize its worth. Just like there is a Christ and an Antichrist, so there is a Holy Bible and an Unholy Bible. Now that may not be a revelation to you—those who never strayed from following your calling to live for Jesus—but to me, a far more prodigal son than the prodigal, I had a breakdown experience. That book revealed the workings of a darkness and evil more than I had ever imagined. It was like reading the unedited, unpurged original Talmud, or more accurately (since this was a small condensed pocket edition, not an encyclopedic set) an updated Protocols.

It didn't take me long to read it, as it was almost like I was already aware of what it was talking about. The irony is that it took the word of the Devil to help me come back to the Word of God. That is not the route I would recommend to those of you who were raised on the Word of God and who have not strayed as I did. I realized how my pride had blinded me, and how everything that happened to me since going astray (and I went astray long before I physically left the Home) was like being on the fast track of the Enemy. He was blessing me and unwittingly fattening me for the kill. I was to be his next meal.

You know what the volume outlined: the in-the-know "team" realizing that great and drastic things must be done to change the world. Great sacrifices must be made by the masses (not the team, of course) to save the world and make it a paradise for the few. Reverence must be given to the deity (pointedly not Jesus!) of this world, who will come in the form of a man who will show great signs and wonders.

You already know all this. While it wasn't news to me (because of my upbringing), I had forgotten it and had been swept away by my pride and "talents."

My immediate concern was, What do I do now? I was stumped. I was a captive of my pride. I was a nearly cocooned fly in the web of a monstrous spider. My "work" had furthered the cause of this monster, and I was overcome with condemnation and despair. While I was worried for my life, I was more in agony for my soul. Oddly enough, I got a variation of a famous Scripture: "My God, my God, why have I forsaken Thee?"

I had hit bottom, and worse yet, had descended deep into a pit. I wasn't concerned about flying high again. I'd be content to make it back up to level ground! I could see a small light above me. I knew the only thing that could save me was the Lord and His love and mercy and forgiveness. His Word would be the rescue rope to pull me up. I needed Him to save me from myself and my self-inflicted predicament.

Yes, I cried out to God, and as I did, the cobwebs fell away. The fog cleared. My burden lifted. Scales fell from my eyes. You name it, it happened. Oh, I almost forgot, the lights came on and I saw clearly all the obstacles I had been banging against. It would now be so easy to avoid them and find my way out of the junk and into the bright path that led towards eternal rewards.

Then it hit me. I not only owed Jesus my life, but I owed Satan a lot, since I had received so much from him these past few years. "Jesus, You'll have to pull me out of this one. I really got myself in too deep. Are You able to set me free from my obligations and 'debts to the Antichrist society'?" It's like I had joined the Army for its "benefits" and uniform and fancy training and to "see the world," but

then an ugly unjust war broke out, and I was constrained to fight on the wrong side.

I hadn't even been involuntarily drafted, but my pride led me to enlist—that's how deceived I'd been. To drop out now meant going AWOL*—deserting the Devil—and he wasn't going to like that, considering how much he had invested in me! (*AWOL: Absent without leave.)

"Jesus, I need Your specific plan and leading to get out and become the disciple You want me to be." That was just a snippet of the many prayers I prayed. Anxiously, I awaited His reply.

As I had Moses flee his royal position in Egypt, so I call you to flee into the wilderness, leaving behind all the trappings of the System, otherwise they will track you and follow you to the ends of the Earth. For you have accepted their gifts, and now you repudiate them and throw them back in their faces. They will seek to make an example of you. They will try to make your demise look like an accident, an accelerated illness, a car "accident," a victim of a random "madman" running amok, or even a "disappearance." Flee for your life, for you are more hated by the "team" than Saul-turned-Paul was by his fellow Pharisees.

I took that to mean I'd better find that "basket over the wall" fast. Leaving behind my "treasures" (and pleasures) I took only my essentials from the villa. Essentials were no longer my communicator, credit cards, distinct clothes, or other gadgets. Cash (amazing I had any), notebooks, the clothes I was wearing, and my comfortable shoes—those were my essentials. Shunning the chauffeur, I told the steward I was taking a short drive to a more remote place on the island to "read

and reflect" (yes, I had to take the cursed volume with me, for effect), and that I was not to be disturbed—that any calls or anything but the most urgent messages in whatever form, should be held for me until I returned late that night.

It was amazing that I had not formed more intimate relationships with those in the System, so I knew nothing was coming of a personal nature—just the usual "checking up on" feelers my "keepers" sent out.

From the odd look on the steward's face, I knew I had less time than I'd thought to make my getaway. The question was, although I knew I had to get away, where was I to go? I had peace, as I had regained possession of my most valuable asset, the Lord! With Him, I had nothing to worry about.

Having this sudden change of focus—or let's call it what it was, coming back to the faith after having been a prodigal —gave me a deeper insight regarding the quagmire I was in. It also gave me a link with wisdom Herself—the Holy Spirit—who comforted me and gave me assurance of deliverance. Spiritually I was delivered, but I was trusting I'd be physically delivered from this hell as well. I drove the SUV through the almost prehistoric jungle hills, then came to the village. Stepping out with my bag of essentials, I knew my exodus had begun. Looking like a more affluent tourist, I attracted the usual throng of hawkers. However, one older-looking native looked earnestly into my eyes and quietly said in perfect English, "Sir, you must come see my baskets. Now! Please follow me." Jumping in "le truk" (local transport plying the streets—a covered pickup with benches), we sat next to each other without speaking. I would take my cues from this fellow. Disembarking in a nondescript part of town, we went to a quiet "café" and "Atu" began to speak.

"Sir, I know you from a dream I had last night. As a young man I went away to the mainland and became like the mainlanders, losing my values and traditions. When I became a drunk and a derelict, a street preacher showed me some love and told me of the Gospel and I received Jesus as my Savior. I later met others who showed me more how to live for Him effectively. I later was caught as an illegal immigrant (having overstayed my visa several years) and sent back home. I saw it was God who wanted me to return home and help my family and others to know Jesus more personally.

"All that is to explain that I am a Christian. And last night I saw you in my dream. In it I was to say to you to come see my baskets—even though I didn't know what that meant, as I don't have a basket shop."

"I am a Christian, albeit a very bad one who is just now returning to the faith. But please go on."

"That's all. How can I help you?"

"I need to get off the island as soon as possible. I am not a criminal, unless being a Christian is criminal. I am a refugee from the System, and my former bosses are probably not too pleased I chose to leave my place of service and come back to serving the King of kings."

"I know what being a refugee is, sir, so I and my friends can help you. On the mainland is a group I joined who showed me how to serve Jesus full-time and as a disciple, not in the church. They taught..."

"Sorry to interrupt, but I'd guess that they taught you to memorize Scripture, listen to Word MP3s, Bible prophecy classes, and you subscribe to a magazine called Activated? That, plus you have heard about 'the keys'?"

"Yes! Yes! How did you know that? Did you also have a dream?"

"No, Atu. I had all that too, but forsook it for Egypt and lost my crown. But thanks to God's mercy, He's giving me another chance. I am forsaking Egypt and needing help to return to the Promised Land of the Family. You see, I was born into the Family. My parents were and are Family missionaries, and I left my calling years ago to 'find myself.' Instead, I found out I was becoming a tool of the Antichrist, and by a miracle, I came to myself and asked God to deliver me and bring me back to the fold. Please help me to get off the island and return to my people—and my calling."

"Now I see the part I am to play. I will help you get over the 'wall' in a basket and escape your enemies and rejoin your flock."

"What do I do?"

"Let's go see my uncle. I think he holds the key to our 'escape.'"

"What do you mean, 'our'?"

"I want to come with you and serve the Lord full-time again with others. My job here is done—finding you. My new job is apparent, getting back to the Family for the Endtime. Besides, my uncle has a trawler named, of all things, Sea Basket!"

* * *

(Jesus:) There have been those from My Family who have already made decisions like this young man made—that of choosing the world over Me. From now till I

return in the Second Coming, I will be continually speaking to their hearts and prodding them along to a re-awareness and acceptance of Me. Just as I finally brought this young man to his knees in desperation through the dark truths he saw and heard, so will I lovingly bring each of My wayward children to this same position of need and desperation where they will finally find Me again.

This is a very powerful testimony! It speaks of the effects of the Word coming back to life in the heart of one who went astray. It shows how I am always near those who leave My service for another path. It shows that there is a way of escape for even the most messed-up or far-gone child of God. It will encourage the young and the old to know that many of those who have left My fold will surely return when the darkness is inevitable.

I will bring many of your youth who have left back to the fold. That fold may not always mean full-time service, but it does mean back to the truth and to My light. I will use even those who have left for My glory, if they will turn to Me with even the simplest prayer. The truth that has been poured into them and stored deep within their hearts will not return unto Me void. Lives will be touched and hearts changed through the lives of My repentant prodigals.

68. It Was as if I Was Invisible!

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Oh boy, how true that verse is! Great is your reward for being persecuted for our dear Savior!—And part of that reward is being able to testify of our Savior's miraculous saving power. My name is Quartus. I am just a humble man in the world's eyes, but that makes no difference to our sweet Protector. I lived in the days of the Roman persecutions.

I was a blacksmith and heard plenty of tales from the customers that came to my shop. One day I heard of a Man called Jesus, and how He had been killed, but had then risen from the dead. This was indeed a strange tale, especially as I was not directly a part of the conversation, and only overheard bits and pieces of it. Of course, I had heard of plenty of other tales and boastings of many supposed adventures my customers had encountered, but none seemed to stand out so much as this story of Jesus, and I believed. I was eager to learn more, and soon did and was then baptized.

But then persecution started. Nero blamed the infamous fire of Rome on us. The penalty of being found out as a Christian was death, and he and the mob seemed to glory in finding horrid and morbid ways to torture and kill people.—Needless to say, it was a scary and fearful time.

The Christians would meet in different places, generally at believers' homes. Depending on the size of the group and the security of the location, we were always on the lookout for new places to meet—sometimes we met in a nobleman's

villa, sometimes in a deserted place outside the city, and even occasionally in the back of my shop.

It was at a meeting that the Lord delivered me from the hands of our persecutors. Things had become increasingly dangerous for us. Nero proclaimed to the Romans that we were a threat to the Empire, and I suppose we were. In fact, I now know that we were, but at the time I couldn't fathom how a few humble folks practicing a religion of love could be such a threat. But what I couldn't see was the spiritual warfare that was going on, and how we were indeed a threat to the Devil's plans for the destruction of our Lord's testimony.

One evening we had decided to meet outside the city. We were peaceably praising our Lord and communing together when all of a sudden we were surrounded by Roman soldiers. There was no apparent escape for us, but in the confusion of the moment I heard His still small voice tell me to duck behind a bush and to crouch down. And so I did. And to my amazement, the soldiers just passed right by me. It was as if I was invisible.

I was relieved that I hadn't been captured, but some of my other friends were. You may wonder why I in particular was spared—and if you don't, I certainly did! All I can say is that the Lord knew He had other plans for me, and I hadn't finished my life's mission. I can testify that no matter what the odds, He can either preserve your earthly life, or take it, and either way it is good. If it's your time to go, then He will give you the grace to die as a martyr like He's done for so many others, and if it's not your time to die, then He will deliver you, no matter what the circumstances are.

There was no way that those soldiers could have missed me. Although I'd been miraculously preserved, it was a time of turmoil for me. On one hand I was glad for my freedom and amazed at the miracle that had taken place, but on the other, I was grieving for my brethren. I was also still fearful that I might yet get caught. There were so many emotions that whirled through my head and my heart, but I thank God for that time of crisis, for it was then that my faith was established. I spent the night in agony of spirit, with so many questions—the foremost being, Why me, Lord? But what emerged from the testing and trying and struggles of that night was to turn me into a bold and fearless witness.

Our sweet Lord was able to get through to me, and show me that I had nothing to fear. I didn't need to worry about the future or any future persecutions, for He was more than able to take care of me, and if not, then it would be His will and for a purpose that I'd be captured. All I needed to do was have the boldness to proclaim His message wherever He led me, and He would take care of the rest. I lived a long life and never fell into the hands of my enemies—that was the way my journey in life went. I was never a great evangelist, or anyone famous, but I played my role in His plan, and He's greatly rewarded me for it.

And even here in my heavenly life, I continue to do my part. All of us departed saints have parts to play yet, and each of those is needed to reach the goal and to fulfill the ultimate plan of our Savior and King.

* * *

(Jesus:) This is a simple story of My power to protect and to deliver, regardless of conditions in the physical.

69. Through the Door, Down the Steps...

I was pretty shook up as I stood in the doorway that night, praying and asking the Lord what I should do next. It was really happening—the time we all had been praying about and expecting—persecution was happening to me!

This was a long time ago in a town in 17th-century France. So-called "heresy" was widespread in the southwest, and there were frequent riots and fighting between Catholics and Protestants. Some of my friends had been killed already, and I couldn't help but wonder if the Lord would require me to be a martyr also. Would my faith be strong enough? Or was I supposed to find a way of escape—and if so, what was it?

My name was Agnes, and I knew the believers in my little secret church had all been scattered by now, and were making their way of escape in whatever way the Lord had shown them. We knew word was out that we used prophecy and heard from the spirit world, and that was enough to get us all killed. It was just a matter of time before the church and government officials began to take action against us.

I was on my way home when I was warned that they were doing a house-to-house search. I couldn't go back. I had nothing with me except for the clothes on my back, a few coins and a bag of bread. I ducked into a doorway on the street where I hoped I would be out of sight long enough to pray and think more clearly. I had to resist the temptation to panic. I had to get ahold of the Lord and ask Him exactly what to do now. I had hoped I could go into the woods when the time would come to flee, because there I would be more out of sight and could hopefully find others who had fled the town.

It was not as I hoped, and here I was, stuck in the streets, at night, with very little chance of making my way out. "What do I do, Lord? Where should I go?" The Lord told me to rub dirt on my face and start walking down the street to my right, in the direction of the woods. I knew it would take a miracle for me to walk to the end of the street without being seen, but His voice clearly told me to start walking towards the woods. I stayed close to the walls of the houses along the way and started walking. I could hear the knocking on doors, "Open up in the name of His Majesty..." If there was no response, the door was battered down. Our believers were not safe in their houses and had to leave.

Suddenly, as I was feeling my way along the wall, I felt a door inch open. I realized it was the entrance to the stairs that led to the stream below the town. It was always locked at dusk. I slipped through the door, checking to be sure it wasn't a trap. No one was around. I hesitated, not knowing if I should leave the door ajar so others would find this way of escape too, or if I should close it. But the Lord told me to close it and that He was helping each one of us to find a way of escape.

There was just enough moonlight to help me to see the path along the stream that led right to the woods where I wanted to go. Two of my friends were there, and of course we were so happy to see one another. Between us, we now had a horse, some money, and a cooked chicken. We were overjoyed with how the Lord had helped us to escape and be reunited.

When your time comes to face persecution, He can make a way of escape for you, too. Sometimes it will be through the little miracles like He did for me to get me out of the immediate danger. He will not fail to keep and protect and help you.

70. Enemies on Every Side!

(John Candle:) I wasn't sure what I was more afraid of—the enemy across the field shooting at me—or the "enemies" from my squad, whom I'd left behind in the dense jungle cover. I ran with all my might to the nearest covering of trees. The officer in charge of my squad had purposely sent me on this particular mission, and he took no effort to hide his satisfaction that he'd been able to put my life in danger.

In war, men either turn to God or they turn away from Him. There's really no in-between. When you're faced with death every day, you must put all your trust in yourself, or you must steel yourself through your faith in God. I chose the latter. The majority of my buddies chose the former. It seemed to me that something sinister had taken hold of my entire squad. Yes, Vietnam was hell, but this was a different kind of darkness, even darker than the horrors of war all around us. I was only 19. The year was 1969. When my draft number was called, I attempted to get out of the army by claiming "conscientious objector" status. I was a Christian, and I believed it was a sin to kill, even for my country. The big boys in charge dismissed my claims, and when they found that I was a great shot after years of growing up hunting in the hills of Tennessee, they wanted to send me straight to the frontlines.

Boy, did I ever cry and call out to Jesus to deliver me from that hell. Every night in my barracks at boot camp, I would read my Bible and pray. I'd ask the Lord to make a way of escape from this war that I wanted no part in. Jesus spoke to me, and told me that I would be protected, but that I would have a different war to fight—one of the spirit—and that I would learn to enjoy that war, because I'd be

fighting side by side with Him. At the time, I didn't understand what He was referring to. I soon found out.

I was shipped off to Vietnam a few weeks later. When I reached the base camp, I joined an already existing company, and from the start, my squad leader seemed to have it in for me. It may have been the fact that I freely talked about the Lord, witnessed, and read my Bible, but I think the poor guy was just possessed by the dark side. He'd been in Vietnam for a number of years, and those years of fighting and killing had turned his soul to the wrong side.

I was constantly harassed by him and my fellow soldiers. They mocked my faith and insulted me. They blared loud, disturbing music all day in hopes of wearing down my faith. They cursed incessantly, and used every opportunity to take the Lord's Name in vain. They threatened me, and told me horrific stories of war and brutality, in the hopes that those thoughts would disturb my sleep. I think what insulted them the most was that they knew I didn't want to kill, and that I was going to avoid firing my weapon at all costs.

In their hearts they were tormented and conflicted, as they had each done their share of killing, and Satan replayed these scenes to them, both to numb their minds to the violence, as well as to taunt them about the dark deeds they'd done, which they could never erase. It was the Devil's ploy to thwart their acceptance of Christ's salvation and forgiveness. They felt that they, who had committed such cruelty, could never be forgiven. It was around this time that I realized that this was the battle of the spirit that Jesus had been referring to.

I did what I could to minister to those around me. Out of all the guys, there were a couple who were searching and hungry for the truth, and I did win a few souls during my time there. Thankfully, for a good while, we avoided skirmishes with the enemy forces, and I never did have to fire my weapon in those first few months.

However one day my squad was called to advance through a particularly dangerous area on a recon mission. We moved at a slow pace, but made steady progress without incident. As we moved across a jungle area, we came to a clearing, and the staff sergeant in charge sent me on ahead to be a scout. If I drew fire from the enemy, we'd know we'd have to proceed carefully or find another way around.

I paused and prayed desperately before heading out from my cover. Here, every tree and every rock could be hiding the enemy, or worse yet, a tripwire to a trap of some sort that I would likely never get out of alive.

"Shut up and be a man," the sarge whispered to me harshly. "Prayers aren't going to save you. We'll give you cover fire if you need it."

"God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." I said this under my breath, but the men around me caught it, and the staff sergeant, with a devilish look, replied, "We'll see about that."

As I moved out into the clearing, I stayed low, but immediately started drawing enemy fire. I knew I should dive to the ground, but the Lord told me to stay upright and run for a clump of trees nearby. As I ran, the Lord guided my eyes to

some peculiarly placed branches. I recognized in a split second that it was a pitfall trap and was able to leap over it to safety.

By the time I had the cover of the jungle foliage, I realized that I hadn't heard any return fire from my squad. As I peered into the dense greenery behind me, I could see them all falling back and heading a different way. They were leaving me on my own—an unthinkable act in the army—but these guys had it in for me. I shot up a prayer and asked the Lord what to do. I immediately heard His voice telling me to sit tight and wait. A few silent minutes passed in the thick humid heat, when I suddenly heard shouts and shooting coming from the direction my squad was headed. I crept forward silently, and as I peered through the thick underbrush I could see that my buddies had fallen into an ambush. Some Viet Cong forces had followed behind us and my squad had been trapped in the middle. The men were quickly rounded up at gunpoint, and were taken to an enemy base camp a few miles away, deep in the jungle. I followed at a discreet distance, all the while seeking the Lord as to what to do.

From my hidden position, I saw that the men had been imprisoned in a small hut. There was no door, but a guard stood outside with his gun poised and ready to shoot, discouraging any attempts of escape.

As night fell, I heard arguing coming from the camp. The soldiers seemed to be in disagreement about what to do with the prisoners, and although I couldn't understand what they were saying, the impression on my heart was heavy. I knew this was possibly a life-or-death situation for the rest of my squad.

A hint of satisfaction crossed my mind, as I remembered the cruelty I had suffered the past few months, and how I had even been left to fend for myself when I'd come under fire, but the Lord convicted my heart and filled it with compassion for them instead. He then started to give me the beginnings of a plan. As the night wore on, and the arguing grew louder and more heated, the Lord told me that it was my time to act. It was a crazy plan, and took an incredible amount of faith, but I determined to go through with it, even if it meant I'd be joining my fellow soldiers in captivity or death. As the next cloud passed over the thin crescent moon, I was to walk casually up to the guard standing at the hut and tell him that I was relieving him for his meal break—all this in a language that I didn't speak a word of!

I trembled as I walked up behind the guard. He didn't turn to face me, as he was instructed to keep his eye and gun trained on the prisoners at all times. My squad caught sight of me through the opening in the hut, and looked at me astonished, but they didn't say a word. As I got within a few feet of the guard, I opened my mouth and claimed that God would speak through me. The words that came out of my mouth weren't my own. To this day, I don't even know what I said, but it must've sounded authentic, because that guard didn't even turn around to face me, but just muttered a reply, and walked off to get some dinner.

My squad and I crept off into the dark of night as fast as we could, and made it back to base camp by morning. The miracle of the escape was a huge testimony and witness to my entire company. They were even more impressed with my attitude of forgiveness and mercy towards them after they'd treated me so badly. The spirits of the men around me were entirely changed. I began teaching Bible studies and holding prayer meetings. Most of my buddies received Christ as their

Savior. Best of all, the staff sergeant, who'd been my greatest persecutor and enemy, got saved, turned his life around, and finally found true peace and rest at heart through Jesus' forgiveness. He became one of my best friends and a bold fellow witnesser. Although a few months later he was killed in combat, I had the joy of knowing that I would have a buddy up there, a protector and guide on the other side for life.

71. Saved by a Healing!

"Be careful to not restrict the flow," my father said, as we channeled the fresh drinking water from the spring into the large basin that was on our wagon. My dad was very inventive and had made a wooden aqueduct of sorts, which he used to fill our big water basins with spring water by using the force of gravity, saving us from having to bucket it in.

We were living in the mountains in eastern Turkey and were Christians living among Muslims. We were Armenians, but did not live with all the other Armenians. My dad, not being one to fit in easily, wanted to launch out into new territory, trying to do more of what Jesus said about going into all the world, instead of staying all bunched up. Although we didn't witness openly as it was dangerous, we tried to be a good sample and be kind to everyone, and help people in whatever need arose.

The little town we were in seemed tolerant, as long as people didn't start confessing their faith openly among the Muslims. My dad seemed to have the gift of witty inventions. Whenever he'd see a problem, he would pray, and the Lord

would show him some simple solution. This was a witness in itself as he acquired quite a reputation of being able to come up with workable ideas and solutions. He would simply tell people he'd have to pray, which would give God the glory, and that he'd let them know in a little while what the Lord would show him. He was actually becoming quite well known in the whole area for his wisdom and for being a help to people.

When persecution finally did come, it was because of jealous Muslim leaders who had heard about this "infidel" being such a sample of godly wisdom, godly love, and helping everyone. They came one night and took my whole family to a prison in the main town of our district, a day's ride away. They knew we were too popular where we lived, and that's the reason they had to do it that way.

One thing that many people today don't understand or realize about Muslims and their history is that they have gone through many periods or stages. Just as you see Muslim religious zealots or fundamentalists today stir up the people, and turn a whole generation or country into zealots too, and then even change the political structure of the country they live in, so it was back then.

There were times when the zealots would take power and stir up the masses to go through the country killing or imprisoning anybody who was not Muslim. But then there were also times when the various communities settled down and just lived their lives. Each generation was different.

When the zealots and fundamentalists arose, the religious leaders would have more of the power, but during the more peaceful times, the political power was more in secular hands, although they were Muslim as well.

While in jail we could hear the loud conversations in the main room where the major or binbaý in charge of the police had his desk. On the second night, we heard someone come in and tell the major that there was no hope left, that the imams and doctors had done what they could, and that it would just be a matter of hours before his daughter would die.

My father, being a man of faith and a good channel of God, yelled out to the major that he could help the girl. The man who'd come to tell the news urged him not to accept, as everyone knew our God was the Christian God.

But the major replied, "If it was your only daughter whom you loved more than the world itself, what would you do? Would you turn over every stone of possibility to save her, or just accept what some had told you?"

After that we heard heavy footsteps, and soon a big, strong figure filled the doorway to our cell. "So you think you can help my daughter?" he questioned my father. "Yes, take me to her," my father replied, to which the man unlocked the big steel jail door and ushered my father out.

Upon arrival at the man's home, my father saw a young girl who had been crushed by the weight of a horse that had accidentally stumbled and fallen on her while she was riding. Much of her body was purple from bruising, and bones were visibly out of joint.

My father looked into the girl's sad eyes, and weeping at her pain, prayed with desperation and conviction, saying, "Our God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Mohammad and the God of all our forefathers who were

brothers, in the Name of Jesus Christ, I command You to heal this child, so that she can walk!"

At that moment, a gleam came into her eyes and a smile formed on her lips and she immediately tried to get up.—To the astonishment of the others who were standing around, whose reaction was to immediately grab her to hold her down! My father then yelled, "Let her go!" At the same time, he pulled back the covers, and the people saw that there were no longer any bruises whatsoever on her body. People stood staring, their eyes wide and their mouths agape. Then my father took her by the hand and she arose and walked.

Streams of tears poured down her father's and mother's faces, as well as on those of their friends who were there, for indeed a notable miracle had occurred.

The major who was feared by everyone in the district and was well known for his toughness and fighting ability, let our whole family go, and said that from then on we would be under his protection as long as he lived. He even permitted us to go back to our home and live there, as he had friends there to watch out for us.

So the Lord did hear our cry and rose up someone to protect us. But we first had to go through the fire of not knowing, and yet still trusting in Him, regardless of what seemed like the logical conclusion. Our God is a God of miracles.

* * *

(Jesus:) You are familiar with the concept of "rolling away the stone," and doing what you can in the physical to bring about a miracle. This is similar, although the effort had to be made in the spirit rather than in the flesh.

In many cases, I bring events your way that force you to stretch your faith and claim My power in order for there to be a miracle and for Me to save you. This is a testimony of what can happen when you accept the challenge and rise to the occasion.

72. A House Church Miracle!

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!"

I lived during your lifetime, but under a government (in communist China) similar to the soon-coming AC government.

While a great number of Chinese believe in Buddha, or in other superstitions, there are very few by comparison who believe in God. They believe their ancestors can curse them and cause them trouble if they don't pay them respect. In some ways that's true, as many were not saved when they died, and many spirits still roam around and are trapped in rocks and houses and trees and the like, waiting to be set free. Poor, dear China needs much more of the love of Jesus, but that's a different story.

My story is set in the countryside, where superstition and tradition are rampant. As you know, there are many churches in China—what we call house churches. We Christians gather together in different houses to fellowship and worship our Lord, and to build and strengthen each other's faith.

Do you remember the verse in the Bible that says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets"? Well, you

could say the same about the Enemy. He can do nothing that God can't reveal to us.

Anyway, we were praising and praying, when all of a sudden one of our elders began to give a message. He stood up and said there was a traitor within our midst and called out a certain person's name. This was a hard thing to do, to accuse one of the brethren of being a Judas, but God bless our dear elder who had the faith. This so shocked this person that he burst out in tears, for there was no way that anyone could have known.

This poor man had been threatened by the authorities that if he did not spy on and report on us, then he and his family would be thrown in prison. He was a Christian, but his faith was weak and he didn't have a close personal relationship with the Lord. His fear of man had been stronger than his fear of the Lord. But this revealing of evil in his heart and public humiliation and exposure sure drew him close to the Lord real quick.

Although saving face is a very important part of Chinese tradition, the shock of finding out that the Lord knew what he was doing and that He was willing to tell everyone outweighed the humiliation of losing face. Of course, our elders were very wise, and could see what was happening in this man's heart and forgave him. This experience so changed this man and strengthened his faith that he was willing to give the authorities false information, thus saving many from harassment and imprisonment. Our dear Lord also gave him the gift of prophecy, so that he could know what the authorities were planning.

That's my story. It may seem simple, but as I was the man it happened to, you'll understand that it had a profound effect on me.

* * *

(Jesus:) This story, while short, is interesting, and has a twist at the end. It's wholesome and simple and illustrates My power to reveal hidden secrets to you when necessary to protect your security. It's a good story for people to read.

73. They Could Not Approach...

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!"

(Masha, departed spirit:) I could not understand all that was going on around me, as oftentimes there was no rhyme nor reason to the attacks that we were experiencing. There were some people getting killed for their faith, others because of their political views, and others even just because of their education. Many were also simply getting caught up in between everything else. I was very fearful of what our government was doing in the name of the people. They said they were freeing us from our oppressors and giving us freedom, yet they were killing and imprisoning so many of us.

It seemed like there would be no escape. Everyone was turning on everyone, kids were turning on their parents, and at times, whole families would go missing. There was no one you could really trust during the beginning stages of Communism in Russia, and the great "purges" that took place then.

I felt very alone during this time and I was scared because I knew that I too could some day have to endure persecution, and I feared it because there were many stories of what was done to those who were Christians. Fear and terror were the main weapons controlling the people. But the Lord is always faithful to give you the grace for the hour when it comes, and in His love and mercy, He spared me of much.

I was just a normal young person after all. I had it okay because my family was not a part of the aristocratic or bourgeoisie classes, so we did not get it so bad in the beginning. But things were getting less and less predictable and we were never truly safe. Anyone could put you under suspicion or send you to jail just by reporting on you, and this was happening a lot.

After my initial fears and doubts about what would happen to me, the Lord spoke to my heart, asking me to continue to reach out with His love, to help those in need, and to seek out and save the lost. So I made it my mission to go out and help the many homeless who roamed the streets.

Although the government said they would care for them and that there would be equality for all, still many of the former poor were left to themselves.—Especially in the beginning when there was a lot of chaos, some mobs of zealous youths would go out on "patriotic sprees," trying to clean up society from its "garbage." The poorest were often victims of unbridled attacks, and I was very heartbroken for them and would do my best to help them to find places to go to and bring them what little help I could.

On a certain day I was planning to go visit these ones, as I had an eerie feeling that something bad would happen very soon. Our city seemed to be like a pot ready to boil over; many people were very nervous and there was a lot of fear in the air. So I prayed and asked the Lord for His protection and He gave me peace that He would protect me. He said that I would go where angels feared to tread and that He would go with me.

After that, I had the strong feeling of a presence near me, and I felt perfectly safe, even though I started hearing rumors that there was a mob gathering, and that there was going to be some "cleansing" happening.

When I reached those I was helping, they were very fearful, and that gave me the opportunity to witness to them. Those who had not yet received Jesus were so moved that I had come to be with them during this time; they felt the peace that I had and wanted it too. I encouraged them after they had all received the Lord, that the Lord was there with us and well able to protect us, but that if it was His will that we die, we would go to a much better place.

And so we gathered and held hands together, waiting for the mob to sweep through this area. I was tempted for a moment that maybe we would have a greater chance of survival if we were to run and hide, but there was nowhere that we could go, and I also knew in my heart that the Lord wanted us to stand here and meet the mob.

So I called on the Lord for His protection and all those with me prayed too. When the mob reached us, they were all a bit surprised to see us seemingly just waiting for them.

I'd thought I would be fearful when they arrived, but I almost felt more peace and more happiness than I'd ever felt before. I couldn't help having a smile on my face, which totally broke the spirit of the mob.

When I came to Heaven, I was able to see this event and what had happened at that moment in the spirit world. These people were possessed and were being driven by evil spirits. But when our group had prayed for protection, great spirits and angels, and, yes, even Jesus Himself, came to stand with us in that moment. As the mob drew close, the spirits that were driving them could not come near us, for we were so well surrounded, and because our Savior and Lord was there and there was nothing that they could do.

The mob had totally lost its momentum; they became confused and were unable to approach. Then the Spirit of the Lord spoke through me, and He gave a message of peace, love and forgiveness to those that had come to attack us. It was so beautiful that I could not help the tears that were streaming down my face, for I felt in that moment the deep love that Jesus had for even these who had come to harm us. I felt broken for their torment, because they were under the Devil's control.

As I spoke, many were brought to their knees; others were stunned and couldn't do anything, because they were under the control of the Lord. I gave them all the opportunity to receive Jesus, and in so doing, I knew that I had exposed myself as a Christian and that there was no turning back for me. But in that moment, I couldn't care in the least what would happen to me, for I now felt the love that Jesus had for each one of these souls that now stood before me. I felt the lengths

that He would go to, and if it was His will, I too was willing to go the same distance to give them Jesus.

Many, if not all, received Jesus in that moment, and after this, the mob, who initially had planned to hurt, maim, and kill, came up to the homeless ones and took them to their homes to care for them. It was amazing to watch. I was myself thanked by many, who testified that they had felt such bondage and hate, but that now they felt peace and happiness and were free.

Our city was much better after this. We were no longer plagued by roaming mobs, and many of these that had received Jesus later became part of a growing underground Christian movement which became very powerful, and changed many lives. Our city, although still under the tight grip of Communism, seemed much freer than other cities, and had less senseless arrests and missing people. So that is my story of how the Lord protected me. I felt greatly honored to be used by the Lord in that way, and I'm amazed that He even chose me, because I'd been so afraid and fearful. But He came through for me and I never doubted His power after that.

* * *

(Jesus:) This is like the story of how I smote the Syrians with blindness in order to save Elisha and the city of Dothan. My power to save is greater than anything the Enemy can throw your way.

74. I Was an SS Look-Alike!

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!"

The Lord can do anything, big or small. Even though my story does not have a huge testimony of damnation on the wicked, in time all those who had committed atrocities during WW2 did get their just desserts. Those who missed it while there are getting their time on this end to make things right. The Lord has a time and place for that; He never forgets, and always gets around to all who touch His children.

My story is not one of damnation, though I would have loved to deal some out at the time, but of how, when I needed to give encouragement to a family in France, the Lord helped me to get safely there from Holland. It was very dangerous to travel by road without a ton of passes, and without those, I should be arrested. But with the Lord, all things are possible, so when He told me to simply walk to the train station and catch the German military train to France, although I had second thoughts, I obeyed. He also told me to cut my hair real short and leave all my documents behind.

In the physical, this seemed like a bad idea: the only small bit of security I had was being taken from me. The military buzz did not blend in with the general populace and made me stand out just a little more, while traveling without documents of any kind seemed like it would land me in jail right off the bat. But I trusted and obeyed, not knowing what He had in mind. I got on my knees and prayed, committing my spirit into His hands. For me to feel weak, vulnerable, and helpless was what He wanted, and as a result, I was able to touch the hem of

His garment.—Not for physical healing, but for healing from the fear that threatened to engulf me.

Unless you have been in such a situation, there is no way to say you'd have the faith for it. It was not like the movies, with some superhero who's got his act together, it was just me—a believing-Christian-turned-preacher, with no training, and no skills to draw on.—And that's exactly what He wanted.

After prayer, He filled me with His spirit of faith. Obeying His instructions, I went directly to the station. From the moment that I stepped out of the house trusting the Lord, confidence surrounded me.

As I walked to the station, I passed through a roadblock with no questions asked. I had total confidence in the Lord, and an air of being in control, which was different from how I normally was. Normally, if you wanted to get through checkpoints you had to be very submissive, but this time the Lord led me right to the front, and I walked right through as if I knew exactly what I was doing, and no one questioned me.

As I neared the station, I was told by the Lord to go see the stationmaster. So I obeyed. I walked up to his office, but instead of knocking and opening the door, the Lord told me to wait. I did, and soon he came out, and in a very apologetic manner, invited me in. I was about to say something, but the Lord shut my mouth. I simply stood there waiting, with what to me was an air of confidence in the Lord, but to him gave the impression that I ran the whole show. He then apologized for keeping me waiting, and gave me a duffle bag. I took it, turned on my heels, and went out. I hadn't said a word to him.

I strode briskly down the line of rail cars, stopped at the nicest car, and once again, waited. When the conductor emerged and asked to see identification, I reached into the duffle bag and trusted that He knew best.

Almost immediately my hands fell on a pack of papers, one of which was a photo ID. I handed it to the conductor. With hardly a glance, he returned it, and we boarded. I was led to my private compartment, and without another question was left alone.

I shut the door and after dropping the blinds, let out a praise of thanks. I quickly opened the bag to find out what else the Lord had put in there for me. To my surprise—though it answered a lot of questions—was a uniform for a high-ranking SS officer. I changed into the uniform and when I was settled, the train left the station.

Although I could not speak German, I was able to decipher from the documents that "I" was a German infiltrator and on a top-secret mission. The date of birth matched mine, but not the record of my deeds. Also, the only picture I'd ever had taken was one with my parents when I was much younger.

So how had I gotten this whole package and makeover? I know it was a total miracle, but I also enjoy thinking of a proud, cocky, look-alike spy running down the platform after the train and later having to animatedly explain to his superiors how he was late because he'd been stuck at some roadblock/checkpoint. Well, I made it all the way to France without a hitch, and remained there till the end of the war. And even though it didn't seem that my going to France had such an impact on anything seemingly important, I got to witness to many.

Our wonderful Lord had done an outright miracle—not because I'd had the faith, for He gave that to me when I needed it—but because He loves and wants to give us the best, including top SS VIP treatment if we trust fully and explicitly in Him, even if we don't understand.

* * *

(Jesus:) This is an interesting and fun demonstration of My power and ability to provide for and protect My children when you're in My will.

75. A Glimpse into the Future!

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!"

(Note, from Jesus:) This story is better for older children and adults, at least JETTs and older.

(Spirit guide:) You have asked for a true story of protection in the time of persecution, where those who love and serve our Savior live on to witness in spite of oppressive and restrictive circumstances. Come, I will take you into the future. That's right, the future, not the past. I take you to the time of the Great Tribulation. With God all things are possible. John, the Revelator, was shown the future. Glimpses of the future are possible, and when it comes to strengthening and encouraging the faith of God's Endtime Army, He is happy to supply the need. The followers of King David, the prophet of the End, are given the ability to overcome all their fears. Their fear of the Lord is the key that extinguishes all other fears. With this key, many will be enabled to walk in places where angels fear to tread and come forth without harm. With this key, they will be able to defy death, so that the Gospel may continue to be preached. With this key, supply of

physical, emotional and spiritual needs can be manifested in whatever conditions you find yourself in. With this key, power is given to defeat all satanic forces that fight you.

The scene: A rural area. The Antichrist's forces are searching for you. You approach a house seeking a place to hide. The elderly couple who answer the door allow you to come in and agree to help you find refuge from your pursuers. It's an old-fashioned house and there is a small cupboard in the kitchen built into the wall at floor level. The cupboard door opens upwards and there is room for you to hide there. You quickly go in and the door is shut. It's pitch black. You've always had a fear of small spaces and now you are cramped in this cubbyhole. You feel like you're in a coffin. You call on the keys, and immediately you have peace; all fear and feelings of claustrophobia are gone. What's more, your pursuers don't find you. You're safe.

This isn't a fabrication. This is a true story that will happen to one of you. The keys are able to keep you from all harm and spare your life, so that you may witness and win the lost in the Endtime.

The scene: You are being held for questioning. You are in solitary confinement. You are frightened. You are thirsty. The Word of the Lord comes to your heart. "When I was thirsty you gave Me drink." Your spirit helper speaks to you and says, "Call on the keys, my love. As you have given to others of the waters of life, the Lord will give to you that which you need." You call on the keys for comfort and faith. You swallow and your thirst is slaked. How can that be? The keys are yours to call on for every need, every difficulty, and every problem. Your faith is encouraged at the manifestation of God's promise.

His voice further comforts you with the words, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom that your adversaries will not be able to gainsay nor resist." You claim the key of the fear of the Lord and not man, and when your inquisitors come they are not able to withstand your words. You are set free, warned that you will continue being watched, and you leave, smiling in agreement, because you know there is One Who is watching you that is greater than those who oppose you and you have nothing to fear.

The scene: A makeshift camp site in the country, away from city life. You're a junior teen with a group of young people your age and younger. There are no adults present. Trouble has come, and they have left, as per instructions from the Lord to act as decoys to protect your location.

You gather the little ones who are with you together and instruct them to be very still and quiet, and that it's time to claim the miracle-working power of the keys. You look up and see four soldiers coming. This was not supposed to happen! you think. Immediately, your spirit helper envelops you with the peace of Jesus, and speaks to you clearly saying, "Greater protection, greater miracles, greater security and safekeeping are yours through the keys of the Kingdom. Call on the keys and the Lord's will will be done!"

You call on the keys of protection, your eyes meet the eyes of your pursuers and immediately they stop. You continue to desperately call on the keys in your heart, remaining still, your life and all the times you were told times like this would happen flashing before you. Now it has all come upon you, face-to-face. One of the soldiers speaks, "Did you hear that noise? I thought I saw some children!"

"No, sir. Nothing, sir. I don't see anything," replies another one.

You stand in awe, trembling. Jesus hasn't failed you and He has protected you and your brethren. He is not limited by many or by few, by young or old. God is able to use all those who come to Him in their time of need. You breathe a sigh of relief and are so thankful you didn't give up during your times of doubt and testing. God's Word has come to pass just as He promised and you know you'll never be the same again.

The scene: You're in prison, hardly a place of victory in your eyes. Each moment is a moment of potential terror for you. Gray walls. Heartless guards who look at you with disdain, commanding you to do whatever task is to be done. You're in the one place you never wanted to end up in. There is no information given or available, other than what you find out as you experience each moment.

Why should I be delivered? you wonder. There's no greater witness than to die for the faith. The thing is, I wanted to go quick, but now I'm probably going to face torture, and worse.

You realize where your thoughts are leading you and look up to Heaven, to your Husband, to the One Who has been with you all these years and has had mercy on you time and again. "Oh, Jesus, I call on the key of the fear of the Lord. Help me now to rise above. Let Your mind be in me. Possess me fully, Sweetheart!" His voice comes to you immediately, "That's more like it. Faith is the victory. My Word is what will keep you." His peace comes upon you.

Days pass. It isn't fun. You are brought before a tribunal of sorts who demand you tell them all you know about the Family and their whereabouts and operation in

your area. One woman who is particularly yielded to the Devil berates you, and threatens to give you a shot of their "truth serum" if you don't cooperate. You feel like you're living some scene from a novel or a movie, and yet this is reality. What you don't know is that your team has been informed of your misfortune. They are instructed by the Lord to hold prayer vigil, claiming the keys and intercessory spiritual help for you. They are desperate. They are bold in their prayers. They rebuke and bind the powers of the Devil through the keys of the Kingdom and call on the forces of Heaven for help. The Lord speaks and tells them that your captivity is for a witness, that there is a soul for His Kingdom He is seeking, and that you will be released. They must not cease to pray for you. Many of their activities are put on hold. They cease not to pray for you as a rotating prayer vigil is held day and night, claiming the keys and praising the Lord for the answer.

This time you are brought before your accusers, Miss "demon-possessed" has had it. "Enough of your denials! Strap her down to the chair!" You close your eyes and pray, "Jesus, keep me. I pray I will not deny my faith, nor give any information that would harm our Family. I give my life for You, Jesus. I call on the key of total possession."

"Peace, My child. I am with you. I will deliver you to victory. Trust in Me," comes His reply.

You notice the young male assistant who is part of this party. He has been watching you intently, though you have not seen him much due to the lights that have blared in your face, keeping your accusers out of sight at times. Your sample of faith is something he has witnessed over and over from those Family members that have come across his path in this dismal place. Such calm. It is as if each one

he has seen is possessed by an aura of peace, light, and love that he has never experienced outside of this building. And now another has come across his path—you.

The needle goes in. You call on the keys of protection and that you may be a witness for your King. What neither you nor the young man see is that your personal spirit helper places his hand on your arm, after the needle is removed. Immediately the serum is nullified. He then possesses your spirit.

Now the questions come. "Tell us where your nest of agitators are. Has the Prophetess Maria visited your area? There is a rumor she and her husband have been visiting these parts."

Your spirit helper speaks through you, "Oh, fools, and slow to believe! How long will you wrest against the power of the one true God? There is no power in Earth or Hell that can triumph over the keys of the Kingdom. This one is sealed with the keys of the Kingdom and you cannot harm her. You cannot withstand the power of the keys!"

The young man who has been watching you intently through all these proceedings looks up to see his supervisor change before his very eyes. He had thought she was rather attractive, although a fierce one when it came to personality. Her eyes look bloodshot. Then it seems she is crying tears of blood! The tears fall down her cheek and spread over her, covering her figure in this horrifying clingy cloak of blood, the smell of which makes him want to vomit! As he looks at you, he sees a mighty male figure standing before you, dressed as an ancient soldier. He's always wondered about these strange people who are known worldwide as the greatest threat to peace and prosperity of the one-world

government, and who fight against the god of the world, whom they call the Antichrist. He's heard how dangerous and violent your kind are, but each time he has witnessed your actions, he's felt the opposite, an aura of peace and safety and freedom from fear.

Your little team continues in fervent prayer for you. As they pray, the voice of the Lord comes to bring them news. "My dear ones, your mate is being protected by the power of the keys and her spirit helper. Even now the forces of the Devil are being defeated. Soon she will be with you."

When you awake, the last thing you remember is the needle going into your arm, and your heart crying out for the keys of protection. You look around, realizing you are again back in your cell. There are footsteps coming down the hall, and as they grow closer to your cell, you realize they are coming for you. Before you can think about what is happening, a voice bellows out, "Open her door!" The command is given, "Come with us!"

Before you know it, you see you are leaving the cell block and heading for the entrance building to the jail. You are brought before the desk of "Miss demon-possessed."

"We now have the information we need. You are free to go, but we will be tracking you wherever you go, so you're hunted prey no matter what you do," she says with a smirk.

Within minutes, your life of captivity has been turned into a life of freedom once again. But what about this tracking device? What should you do? You pray and ask the Lord.

"Fear not, My love. Go to the town plaza and sit on the bench near the fountain. One of My children will meet you there."

As you sit on the bench, you take time to praise your Lover, the One Who has delivered you and kept you through what you thought you could never endure. You look up to find the young man who was in your interrogation.

"Hello," he says. "May I sit next to you? I have not come to harm you."

"Yes, of course, please sit down."

"I have come to tell you that, during your last questioning, I saw very strange things and I now believe that your God is the true God. I want to know more about Him."

"I'd be happy to tell you about Him," you reply. "But you must know that I have a tracking device implanted in me."

A smile comes over your new-found friend's face. "Yes, you do. One deactivated tracking device."

Again, the keys have triumphed. You have faced your fears and overcome them. You go on to continue being a witness for God.

76. Exposed!

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!"

It was during the Inquisition. It was a time of terror, where fear was rampant and one never knew when one would be called in for questioning.

My name is Alicia and I was a mother of four. My husband was a blacksmith and worked hard to provide for us, so while our lives were humble, and we struggled at times, we never lacked for food and shelter. I admit that at times provisions were scant, but I had four boys, and they were resourceful and a help to their father, and the Lord kept us.

I was raised as a Catholic, and loved our Lord from a young age. I had considered entering a convent, but then I meet Ramón. It was "love at first sight." He was strong and yet tender in heart, and I considered myself very fortunate to have found someone whom I not only loved, but who loved me, and more importantly, also loved the Lord.

The Inquisition was a time when there was much suspicion. Those who veered from the enforced traditional way of worship were in danger. Even if you accepted most of the church's teachings, yet deviated in one aspect, you were considered a heretic and in need of purging and purifying. The treatment was cruel and demeaning. As history has recorded, there were many who died during this long reign of terror, although lesser punishments were actually more common.

The truth of God's ways and His Word were, as they are today in your world, in the minority. Nevertheless, those who believed were strong and vibrant in their faith. We had an underground network of "true believers" that thrived in zeal and purpose, though outwardly we remained inconspicuous. Ramón and I were "leaders" of a band of these believers in our community and surrounding area. His being a blacksmith afforded us interaction with our flock through a viable front—that of the care of the travelers' transportation.

I was 16 when I married Ramón and I lived to the age of 42. I died in childbirth, though I left my husband with a gift, our fifth child, a girl whom he named Alicita in memory of me. Over those 25 years, I was called in for questioning, as well as my husband, upon more than one occasion. I remember the last time. I was brought before a Dominican monk who had come to our town to preside the Inquisition's tribunal there. The monk ranted and raved, saying I was possessed of the Devil. He had witnesses that had seen me perform curses and hypnotize others. I told him that I loved the Lord, had no ill will against anyone, and strove to live a godly life. He would not be dissuaded.

Then before me, the Lord opened my eyes to see this man in the spirit! He was the exact description of what he was accusing me of being! He was the heretic, a disbeliever, a hypocrite, and seeking to wreak havoc within and destroy the very church he was representing! Fear gripped my heart! Then a voice said, "Fear not man, but fear the Lord." I blurted out the words, "I fear not man, but only the Lord!" The inquisitor stood before me dumbfounded and said, "Release her, and let her go!"

The "witnesses" and the rest of those who were there were astounded, but not as astounded as I was. One priest said, "But, your Grace! The witnesses?"

The monk replied, "I have been misinformed. These are false accusations. Release her."

And so I was released!

After this "interrogation," Ramón and I were left alone. Some of the villagers shunned us, but no harm came our way. The Lord kept us through this time of persecution so that we could continue winning others to Him and strengthening them in the faith.

77. A Boy's World

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!"

It's a lot of work for so early in the morning, but it's my job.—Gather the wood, make the fire, check on the animals and feed them, and hardly a minute to myself before my father calls us together. I'd rather be off playing and running around, seeking adventure, and conquering the world in my mind. I just know I could do it. But the all too familiar sound of my name, Juan, rings out, and I know the time for prayer has come.

My parents are not overly religious, but have always been open to and desiring the truth and ways of Jesus. There is so much religiosity around that it is very difficult to know what is right sometimes. There is so much pressure to conform and to do things the way of the church. Anything outside their "norm" is considered heresy. Well, there's that sound again, "Juan," so I had better go.

In our prayer time together, my father impresses on all of us again and again the importance of prayer and desiring the truth. Our very lives depend on it each day. We're traveling from the south of Spain to Portugal. Hopefully, in Portugal we will be free from the "Holy Inquisition," as it is called. Here the overly religious and pious have taken over and want to "purify" the country.

If you ask me, I think it's the work of the Devil, because it has done anything but bring the love of Jesus to the masses.—Instead it has brought an overwhelming fear to most people. Everyone has been warned and ordered to report any unusual activity or behavior that in any way could indicate that someone may not be "pure" in their thoughts or deeds, or may hold any thoughts contrary to Church dogma. Well, all I can think of is that I certainly don't want to go to confession, and if I do, I'm sure not going to tell them what I've been thinking. The result so far is that fear seems to rule most people. But at the same time, it makes it almost easier to see the truth. The truth is the little ray of light that you can see in people's eyes. It's hard to describe, but even at my age, 12, I can see it. My father and mother have been very faithful to encourage us to have love and to show love, and when that's what you're trying to do, it helps you to somehow see if that same spirit is in others also.

Just the fact that we are on the road, obviously moving towards Portugal, makes us very suspicious to all that we meet. Why would we be moving if we were not in fear of getting turned in for our sins? We must be guilty, or we would stay. It just seems that staying is not possible any more. So we go.

Every person we meet, each village we pass, brings new concerns. "Everything depends on prayer," my father says. There are pretty much just two types of

people these days, the fearful, religious zealots who seem to have no love in their hearts, and the simple people who know in their hearts that things aren't right. Those are the ones we look for, and the others we have to avoid. "And how we know the difference," my father says, "is by making sure that our own hearts are full of love and that we are praying for guidance every step of the way."

So we stay on the lookout for the good ones, and we stay on the lookout for the bad ones. We just really have to keep watching all the time. This is why Father calls us early each morning to pray. We pray together for God's love to be in our hearts, for only by His love being in us can we know and see what is in others. It's hard work sometimes, 'cause I'd much rather be off playing. But maybe that will come later. Maybe once we get to Portugal I can do that. But for now, this is what we all have to do, and we all have to be praying as we go, and keeping an eye out for the "lights." It seems that there really are a lot of them. No matter how hard it seems, or how overwhelming the fear may be, the lights just pop out and we can see and sense them in people.

These are the ones who know what we are doing right away. They often envy us and would do the same, but for some reason can't. They see right away the light in our eyes, just as we see the light in theirs, and they often do things to help us. They give us directions as to where are the best places to camp, and sometimes they help us with food. They seem to do all kinds of things to help, even going so far as to distract the bad ones from even noticing us.

That's what love does, it risks itself for the good of someone else.—It's so much the opposite of the fear that is so eager to deliver everyone else up to protect itself. This is what we're learning every day—that starting our day in real prayer and

wanting that love to be in our hearts is what will help us through our day and get us to the good place we want to go, leading us to the good people along the way. I wish everyone were that way. I would love to live in a place where everyone had such love and where everyone only wanted what was good for others. Now that would be a happy place.

I think about all these things a lot, which is why my father is giving me that look right now, to bring me back to Earth. "Yes, let's pray!" I say.

78. Arrested by Saul

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!"

Jesus Christ is a friend that is always with us! I have experienced this firsthand. I was one of the first believers that believed in Jesus after His Ascension. This particular persecution took place during the rampage of Saul, later known as Paul. We met afterwards in Heaven, and he apologized sincerely, but all had already been forgiven. Here is my story.

I had gone to the Temple. Peter was to speak there and I was anxious to hear him. It was a stirring sermon and I reveled in every word. Then we met at the house of one of the believers to worship God together.

Suddenly we heard loud pounds on the front door. We ran towards the back garden and smaller gate, but Saul and another group of temple guards were waiting there as well. "Take them away!" Saul said, as he walked his horse away from us.

We were led into separate prison cells in the temple prison. I remembered how Peter had been rescued from prison by an angel and prayed for deliverance. As I lay there I thought about what Peter had said in the temple the day I'd been converted. Faith—that was what it was! I got up, took hold of the prison bars and remembering the words of our Lord, I commanded that the door be broken asunder.

As soon as those words left my mouth, the prison door twisted and broke into fragments in my feeble, human hands. I rushed out the door and heard the sound of guards' footsteps running towards the cell. I prayed and asked the Lord to not let them see me.

He did more than that. As they rushed towards me they ran right through me! I then helped my brethren to escape as well, and together we left the prison to continue spreading the Word of our Lord far and wide!

79. Now You See Her...

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His Name!"

Please note: (Jesus:) Because of the subject matter of this story, some younger children might be upset by it, or it could cause questions and worries in their minds. It should not be for younger children, but it is a great story for the older ones and the adults.

(Forward from Jesus to the channel:) I know you have a heart for single moms, being that your mom is a single mom, and you've grown up your whole life in those circumstances. Only now can you see a little more clearly all that it must have entailed for her to raise you and your brother, and to follow Me through the persecutions, the multiple changes and moves, and the many separations. You see now how much it must have cost her. Of course, you can't fully comprehend all that it was for her because you've never been in her shoes—it's a path you have never traveled. But you've gotten a good look at the rugged terrain, you've seen her "shoes" that are torn and worn out. You've even heard the sighs and seen the tears—you can only imagine what a difficult and tough walk of faith it's been for her.

Yet still you've seen My hand so clearly in your lives. You've seen how I've provided for your family time and time again. Remember the times of persecution, the times you had to flee in the night? Don't you remember how I cared for you and protected you each time? I sheltered you by touching outsiders' hearts to supply your needs, and having them put you up and care for you. I supplied your food as you went out and asked by faith—I always came through.

During the night as you made your escape, I didn't let you be noticed by those who would have been suspicious of you, and I kept your persecutors from being aware of your whereabouts. My hand was directly on your life, and even more miraculously than you remember. All you remember are the times you had to wake up in the middle of the night to flee, the times you were so sure of coming raids that you even slept with your clothes on and bags packed at the end of your bed in case of persecution.

You remember the excitement of waiting in the basement for the next trip out of the house and into town, to find a hotel to stay in till the next moves had to be made. You remember having regular persecution prep with your teachers, packing and unpacking your bags, practicing flee drills, and it was all a novelty to you. Were you scared? Did you doubt that I would protect you? Did you ever have one thought of fear in your heart?

No, and why do you think this was? Because I sheltered you. I sheltered all My little ones under the blanket of My peace, within the bubble of My protection. I kept you from the fear. Even though some of your parents and teachers had some fear and worry in their hearts, I kept it from the hearts and minds of My little ones. I have promised in My Word to care for My little ones and I have ever fulfilled that promise.

Since I know that in your heart you are concerned for the moms, whether young or old, with young children or older children, single or married, I want to give you this true account of My miraculous protection during a time of great persecution in the Tribulation. This is an account that has already been recorded in the annals of Heaven as a manifestation of My power for one of My children. This is one

specific way I am going to protect and deliver one of My mothers of the End. (End of message)

* * *

Cia is a single mother with two small children. Whether she has been a single mom for awhile or only recently been separated from the father of her children does not matter—she's single now and on her own. She's been staying in a small town in the lower region of the mountains. The people in the area were friendly for the most part, and very active against the AC government and his reign. They had tried to demonstrate their hatred for his worldwide takeover, but each time, they were only met with brutal confrontations and horrible losses.

Cia could sense the unrest, not just in the people around her, but in the spiritual warfare raging. She knew it wasn't long before the Antichrist forces would decide to put a stop to this pestering thorn in their side once and for all.

I had brought her to this small town not only for it to be a place of refuge, but even more so, a platform for miracles. Though the townspeople were "simple," in that they did not have influential jobs, or hold posts in the government now, before the Antichrist had stepped onto the world scene, most of these "common" people had been well educated and fairly wealthy businessmen or women, or had held important positions in their fields.

But now everything had changed as these people had lost all they'd thought they had. Nevertheless, they were not living in the boonies, or in shacks and shanties. The place where they lived was still well-civilized and modern, as per the standards of the world in that day. But as most of them had issues with the government, even going so far as to refuse the mark, they were looked on with

suspicion. Their area was considered a target, as everyone knew that any rebellion was quickly dealt with.

Cia had been here for a few months, caring for her children, and witnessing to all those who were open to the message. Most were, for in their anger they were eager for anything contradictory to the official status quo. The receptive ate up My Words and Cia was faithful to deliver them.

Her youngest child was only ten months old, and suffered from asthma quite frequently. Her older son was five.

This is the account of the miracle:

Cia had just woken up. It was four in the morning, and Baby was having an asthma attack. This was the fifth week of barely any sleep for Cia. Her body was tired and weak. It was hard enough to keep her eyes open, much less to lift the little one into her arms. Her songs of comfort did little to soothe the baby. He cried and coughed, his little body fighting for every breath. She cried too. It was so hard to watch her baby struggle so pitifully and have no way to help him. She remembered a key promise she had put to song to help her retain it: "The keys My perfect rest to give..." Her song was cut short by a sharp noise that pierced through the night's quietness. Her older son slept still, but Baby paused his weeping to listen to the strange sound.

The shrill warning sound seemed to last forever, and soon the distinct sound of fighter planes were heard zooming over the mountain. Cia knew it was only a matter of seconds before the inevitable. She had heard of the air raids before. The old weapons of war were often used for simple wipeouts like these, as the older

armaments still had to get used somehow. The new, more valuable weapons were saved for the larger-scale wars or more important missions.

Cia held her baby close, the keys still in her mind. "Sweet Jesus, shelter me with Your keys" was all she had time to utter before the explosion hit. The ground shuddered. Wave after wave of nauseating gas swarmed across the town. Buildings collapsed. Fires erupted. Heavy winds blew. Glass shattered. Screams were muffled. Trees flew through the streets blasting into buildings, cars, and traffic signals. Debris ricocheted everywhere. The noise was deafening.

Yet Cia heard none of it. The older boy continued sleeping. Baby even fell asleep too, his breathing returned to normal. Outside the windows, Cia could see the destruction from the bombs' wake. Everything was ablaze with flames, and fireballs blasted through the streets as buildings collapsed on every side. But there she calmly sat, her back against the cold brick wall with the baby in her arms. Her eyes transfixed on a scene above her—she saw and heard the keys. Hovering over her and her little ones, a key craft was streaming out rays of protection on every side. She repeated keys in her mind, keeping her focus drawn on My power, letting no vision of the destruction around her sway her faith. It seemed like hours before the destruction had died down, yet the keys kept guard that entire time, faithful as ever. Finally the morning sun rose over the mountain. Cia surveyed the surroundings. There was not a single spark of life in sight. All human life had disappeared; creation in this region was uttering its last breath.

"My precious Jesus, Your miracle of protection is more than I could've asked for. Thank You for delivering me and my little ones from the fury of the wicked. Your

saving arm that has just delivered me must deliver me yet again. I call on the keys of miraculous intervention and transportation to take me from this place to where You have for me. Please provide for Your little ones."

The keys' saving power had only just begun; this had all been but a warmup for the real miracle that was yet to be performed. In the silent morning, the whir of an engine was heard. Cia could see dust rising in the distance, as a vehicle made its way across the charred earth. A prayer shot up to Heaven from her heart, and just as instantly counsel and direction was dispensed.

As the vehicle neared, she saw it was a military vehicle. Her heart quailed, but she remembered the instruction she had received from the Lord, and it had never failed her yet. Why should she doubt now? An older man in military uniform deftly steered the vehicle in her direction. When he saw her, he reacted as if sent on a mission.

Immediately jumping out of the vehicle, he asked if there were any other survivors. She replied she only knew of herself and her little ones. He hurriedly rushed into the brick building, carefully carried each child out, and placed them in the back of the vehicle. Motioning for her to get inside, he drove away, deftly maneuvering through the debris.

Farther and farther up the mountain they drove. Still the little ones slept. Cia tried talking with the older man, yet every question or word was met with a sweet smile, a brief nod, and continued silence. Finally she gave in to sleep. The jeep sped along the dirt path, through crags and woodland, and finally when the sun was beginning to set again, it came to a halt. Cia awoke, and her little ones finally

woke up too. There was still just enough daylight to make out an encampment a little ways away.

The older man carefully picked up the older boy as Cia held her baby. He motioned for her to follow. They neared the encampment, which in fact looked more like a little village. Eventually, they came to a small hovel and the man in uniform tapped on the door. The door opened and a tall local man answered. After seeing the mother with her small children, he inquired what had happened to her. She gave her explanation of the bombing down the mountain and being transported by the kindly man here. The local eyed her suspiciously but allowed her inside. Quickly, he sent a message in the local language to another area of the encampment, and within minutes a vehicle was heard nearing the door.

The door burst open and three people entered to greet the newcomer. Cia recognized one of them immediately, an older woman she had grown up with in the Family. Realizing that all three of them were from the Family, she hugged them warmly with tears in her eyes. The one man explained that they had seen her making her way up the mountain by foot and were desperately praying for her safe arrival. They had seen the destruction in town a few days ago, and had prayed that the Lord would save His children. A day later they had heard reports from their lookout crew that a woman and two children were making their way up the dirt path. There was nothing they could do but wait for her arrival and pray for her protection, as all corners of the mountain were under careful watch by the AC forces. Within a few days she had finally made it up the mountain and they were so relieved to find her safe and looking so physically fresh. They asked if she was tired, hungry or achy from the long journey.

After they had finished talking, Cia quickly clarified that she hadn't trudged up the mountain at all, and suggested that perhaps they had been watching another woman. She had been given a ride by an older military man and the journey had only taken one day to complete. She was sure of this because her children had slept the entire time, an impossibility if it really had taken days.

The three Family members looked confused, and assured her that they had seen her walking and trudging up the mountain with both children. They had seen her enter the encampment alone and on foot. Now it was Cia's turn to be confused, and she again explained how the older man had definitely come up the mountain and walked up to the hovel door with her. To which the local stared and calmly said, "But I saw no other person with you, except your two children. You were most definitely alone."

Only then did all of them realize the miracle of protection I had performed for one of My Own. I knew the journey by foot was more than she could bear. I knew that she did not have the physical strength for the mountain climb, and that her little ones especially would not have been able to make it. So I sent her My angel of not only protection but of transportation and deliverance. For her sake and for My little ones' sake, I made every day a moment in the vehicle of My transportation. For her it was only a day's drive of sleep and relative peace, while others who watched saw the rigorous days of climbing.

This is but a small miracle in My sight. Just like I transported Philip in the Bible to another city where I needed him more after baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch, so have I done at other times, and will yet do for My children of the End.

* * *

(Question:) Sweet Love, that's just beautiful! I was wondering about the "persecution" aspect of the story, as the destruction came about due to the townspeople's dislike for the AC and his government, not necessarily because of their faith in You, particularly.

(Jesus:) Where My Gospel is being preached, the Enemy is always stirring up persecution. While in the physical the reason for the wipeout may have technically been to destroy any force of resistance, Satan's plan was ultimately to touch the apple of My eye in killing My wife and her children. That was his intent, and it didn't matter to him how many other innocent people he had to take down in the process in order to hurt one of My loved ones.

She was touching lives, changing hearts, witnessing faithfully wherever she went. She was using the keys to work miracles of healing for those who asked it of Me. She was using the keys to confound the plans of the wicked ones against these people who were learning of Me. She was harnessing the keys to supply the needs of those who lived in the town, as for the most part they had been cut off from much of the abundance of the outside world.

This was a direct attack of Satan on My church—it was persecution against My beloved bride. So this miracle is an account of saving from persecution. Although Satan's attempt was designed to wipe out My beloved and My little ones, I wiped out his plan by My miraculous protection and proof of power through the keys. As for those whose lives were lost, many of them knew Me already, and were immediately welcomed into My embrace, while the others were given a chance. So in the end, I won all around and the only loss was on Satan's end.

80. The Gold Rush!

Hi! My name is Roy and I'm a 49er. You might think that is a football player, but I am a real 49er, someone who went to California in the gold rush days. The height of the California gold rush was in 1849, and we were called 49ers because that is the year that we and many others left our homes to go and find our fortune in California.

I was 14 at the time, and I had heard my dad discussing something with my mom for weeks. I didn't fully understand everything that they were talking about, but I knew that my dad wanted to go to California and spend a year there. He told my mom that he could make a fortune for us during that year, and that we would never have to struggle again.

When my dad started packing things onto the wagon, I felt something that I couldn't exactly explain. It was like a spiritual thing. We were Christians, my folks took me to church every Sunday, and I knew about Jesus and His wonderful sacrifice, but I can't say that I really knew all that much about the Lord. I knew how to pray and we prayed together as a family every evening, but beyond that I hadn't really had that much of an experience with Jesus. Not yet anyway!

As I watched my dad load the wagon, I began hearing a small voice whispering to me. At first I thought it was just my thoughts, but after awhile, I realized that it was something beyond myself, and that I needed to pay attention to it. The voice was telling me to load four more barrels of water onto the wagon for my dad. My dad had two barrels of water on the wagon, and at first I couldn't understand why this thought kept running through my head, but finally I yielded to it and started

loading another barrel of water on the wagon. I was struggling with that barrel when my dad returned with more things.

"What are you doing?" he asked. "I've got plenty of water there for my trip and I don't need another barrel," he told me as he loaded more things onto the wagon. "Well, Dad, I was actually going to load four more barrels," I said, as he was walking away. "What?" he shouted as he spun around to face me again. "Those horses will collapse from the strain of all that weight before I get halfway to California. Go ahead and put that extra barrel up there if you must, but that's it!" I obeyed and just put one more barrel of water on the wagon, but the voice kept telling me that I had to put three more on the wagon. How was I going to convince my dad that he needed three more barrels? I stopped worrying about that for a while as I struggled to load the additional water on the wagon. Thankfully my dad didn't come out again for awhile, and I was able to get all four barrels up there and in position.

When I went inside the house, my parents were praying together and they asked me to join them. My mom prayed for a safe journey for my dad and that the Lord would protect him all of the way to California and provide for him in every way. When we'd finished praying, my mom said, "You know, the Lord just told me that you need to take four more barrels of water with you. He said that it was imperative that you have at least six barrels of water for the journey." My dad kept saying how ridiculous that was, but he couldn't convince my mom, and then when I piped up and said that I had them already loaded, he was dumfounded and threw up his hands in surrender.

That night as I was sleeping, I had a very vivid dream. In my dream, I'd hid under the supplies in my dad's wagon as he headed away to California, and then later that day came out of hiding. When I awoke, I knew that this was more than a dream and that it was a continuation of the voices that I had been hearing the day before.

The next morning after I'd told my dad goodbye, and while he was still in the house, I hid in the wagon. After awhile, my dad came out of the house, climbed up on the wagon, and off we went. I lay very still for hour upon hour until I could stand it no more. When I climbed out from my hiding place, and tapped my dad on the shoulder, he almost fell out of the seat.

He was of course very angry at first and adamant about taking me home, but after awhile he settled down a bit, and I explained to him what had been leading me in my actions these past two days. I don't know exactly how it happened, but my dad finally agreed that I could continue on with him to California. He knew how strong I was, and that I would be a faithful companion.

We traveled for many weeks, and at first the going was fairly easy. There were lots of small towns where we could get supplies. But then those dwindled away, and then later on in our journey even the rivers that we crossed were dry and there was little water. We met many travelers who had run out of water and we were always so thankful that we had an abundant supply and could help them out with the water that they needed so desperately.

One day, we arrived at a camp where some other people had stopped. They seemed to be in quite desperate shape, with no water and little food. There was

another wagon there with a couple of men who had water, but they wanted to sell the water to the people! These people were almost dying of thirst, but the men there wanted to take advantage of the situation to make lots of money off of them. When we arrived the people were begging the men to give them some water, saying that they could not possibly afford to pay the exorbitant prices they were demanding, as that would take everything they had for their entire journey. When my dad saw what was happening, he offered the people some of our water for free. He told them that he was a Christian and couldn't imagine how someone could try to take advantage of them like that. The other men who had the water went almost insanelly crazy, and started shouting and screaming at us and threatening our lives, but my dad paid no attention to them and gave the people water. The men left, but somehow I knew that we hadn't seen the last of them. That night, I awoke from sleep in a start, and discovered one of the men standing over me with a rifle pointing straight at me. The other man was tying my dad up and was muttering all kinds of terrible things about what he was going to do to us. I knew that we were in very serious danger, and began praying desperately, as that was the only thing I could think of to do. I almost immediately became calm after that and knew that everything would be all right.

The men tied my dad up, and then they tied me up. After that, I could see them drinking whisky over at the campfire, and they were heatedly discussing what to do with us. I knew one of them wanted to kill us, but it seemed like the other one wasn't so eager for that, and was trying to talk him into doing something else. I felt at peace during this whole time because I once again heard a voice reassuring me, and I was not afraid.

All of a sudden, there was an almost deafening sound and everything exploded in confusion. When I finally got hold of my senses, I realized that three Indians had ridden into the camp at full speed, yelling and screaming and hollering, and had immediately surrounded our two captors. Two of them had a rope and they circled them and tied them up, while still on their horses.

It was the most amazing thing that I had ever seen. I should have been afraid as could be, because I had heard many stories about Indians and what they did to their captives, but for some reason I had perfect peace. I was getting much more accustomed to this new voice that was directing me in my mind, and I knew that this event was part of the Lord's plan for our care.

The Indians spoke only a few words of English, but I think they could sense our spirit and we could sense theirs, and a bond of trust grew quickly between us. One of the Indians was trying to communicate with me through sign language something about our water barrels and I finally realized that they had somehow watched us giving our water to the needy, and this is what had sparked in them a desire to help us out of our bad situation.

The next morning the Indians gave us some extra supplies, led us to a hidden spring where we topped up our water barrels, and then sent us on our way. I don't know what they did with those other men, but I know that the Indians had recognized our love and compassion, and it had influenced them to have love and compassion for us also.

We finally made it to California, but it was certainly not what my dad had expected. There was more greed there than you could ever imagine, and it

seemed to bring out the worst in almost everyone. We had learned important lessons about giving and helping others on our trip to California, and that is what we continued to do.

We never even looked for gold, but instead we began giving aid and help to the many desperate people that we encountered there. In the process, we also continued to receive much persecution from the many ungodly people that only cared for themselves and were there to take advantage of any and every situation, but the Lord protected us miraculously in every situation just as He had in that first one.

* * *

(Jesus:) This dear man and his son did raise funds while they were in California, although they didn't search for gold. That environment was not good for them, and would have harmed their spirits, so I provided for them in other ways, but I did provide. And they were able to send money back east to their family.

81. The Turk and I

My name is Peter, and I am Russian. Well, the name is actually Pyotr, but I know that Peter is easier for you to say and to type on your computer. It is a clever machine. I was a blacksmith in my day, and I have an admiration for such things. I lived nearly 300 of your years ago, during a time of war in Russia. My father Alexei was a soldier for Peter the Great and he fought many campaigns for him. He had been a blacksmith in a village in Russia but he wanted to see the world, so he joined Czar Peter's new Russian army.

My father thought it would be exciting and adventurous, but traveling and fighting were very hard in those days. There were some cannons and muskets, but much of the fighting was hand to hand, with swords and spears, on horseback or on foot. It was violent, and it was very bloody, and many men died.

Father was with Czar Peter when he attacked the Turks, and he fought many battles with them near the Black Sea. The Turks were very strong fighters, very fierce; they had no fear, and they just kept coming and coming until they were defeated, or until we were defeated. Sometimes Czar Peter won and sometimes he lost, and the battles swept back and forth around the Black Sea.

During one of those battles my father was wounded and passed out, and they left him for dead. Later, when he came to, he found a peasant family leaning over him. One of them had been taking off his shoes, because they thought he was dead, but once they found he was alive, they took him instead of his shoes, and they helped take care of him until he got better.

When my father was better and stronger, he decided to stay there instead of returning to Russia. If he'd have gone back to Russia, he would have had to go back into the army, because he'd enrolled for life. But Father was tired of fighting, tired of bloodshed and killing, and he wanted peace and quiet. The Black Sea area was also very nice and pleasant, not cold like Russia, and the people were friendly. So he stayed and became a blacksmith, married a Russian girl in the village, and then they had me. He named me after the Czar, Pyotr.

I never knew my mother on Earth. She died right after I was born, and this was a great pain for my father. But it is because of this that I speak to you today, for her death caused Father to turn to Jesus. He had seen much suffering, agony, and death, and when he was mourning my mother, Jesus came to him and comforted him. He had known of Jesus before, but now he knew Jesus personally, and truly believed in his heart. So Father became a believer, and he brought me up to be a believer as well.

As I grew up in the village, others became Christians too. Many had been like my father, who had known of Jesus but had not really known Him. But as they came to my father to bring him their work, they would talk, and my father would tell them what Jesus had done for him, and how he knew Jesus was real. In those days a blacksmith was an important man, and almost everyone came to him sooner or later, and Father's testimony spread. And as they saw the peace he had, his faith spread as well, and many believed.

I watched Father when I was little, and when I was older I helped him and became a blacksmith too. It was hard work, but I enjoyed it, and I sometimes did jobs for the poor people for free, to help them repair their tools or fix their carts. I

got satisfaction from this, and many times they would bring food or vodka or gifts later on, when they could, and they would tell their friends about me. And I would tell them that it was my faith in Jesus that made me do it, and many of them would believe as well.

Maybe it all sounds so tranquil to you, but it was a time of war. The Russians would pass through the area to fight the Turks, and the Turks would pass through to fight the Russians, and there were bandits, mercenaries, and warlords, so there was often fighting and robbing and fear. But for the most part, our village was at peace, for Jesus kept us and protected us because of our faith.

One day there was a skirmish near our village between the Russians and the Turks, and we went out later to see the battlefield and see if we could scavenge anything. On the way back, Father found a wounded Turk and brought him back to our village. It didn't matter to Father whether he was a Russian or a Turk. He saw someone who'd been wounded on the battlefield like he'd been, and he brought him home in our cart and took care of him.

His name was Suleiman and he was my age, so I brought him food sometimes and we talked as he got better. He taught me a little Turkish and I taught him a little Russian, and I taught him about our faith as well, for he was a Muslim. He was surprised that we would take care of him, because he had been taught that Christians were evil. So Father and I explained the difference between knowing about Jesus and truly knowing Jesus; between claiming to be a Christian, and actually being a Christian, and Suleiman thought about these things.

When he was better, he left our village and we did not see him again for many years. Father died, joining Mother in Heaven, and I became the village blacksmith. And the wars and battles continued, because Russia wanted what Turkey had and Turkey wanted what Russia had. In our village, we were content with what we had, and we were very happy when those who wanted to take things from us and each other stayed far away. But this was not to last.

One day, the Turks passed through our area, killing many, burning and looting and doing the many terrible things that men do during war. A troop of Turkish cavalry came to our village, thundering down the road, and many of the villagers fled into the woods. But Jesus showed me to stay for some reason. I did not know why, but His message was very clear: I was to stand in the road near the entrance to the village and talk to the Turks and try to convince them to spare the village. I thought maybe it was because I knew a little Turkish, but I was scared. I wondered if that meant I would soon be joining Father and Mother in Heaven, but I decided to do what Jesus had said. It was wintertime, and if the Turks burned our village and our food, many of the villagers would die in the woods. So I stood there, wondering about the wisdom of Jesus and about my own wisdom, because the Turks were very fierce.

As the Turks came up on horseback, they slowed down when they saw me standing there. They thought maybe it was an ambush, and they began looking around them. If they had been closer, they would have seen me shaking and known it was surely not an ambush.

As the Turks slowed down, their commander and some of his men rode to the front to see what was happening, while he waved to the others to wait. It was then

that I saw Suleiman again, after so many years—he was the commander. I don't know who was the most surprised, Suleiman or I.

I started to say something to him in Turkish, but he held up his hand not to, and he spoke to me in Russian. I replied in Russian, explaining that Jesus had told me to stand here to try and save our village, and he looked thoughtful. After a minute he winked at me, and then he turned and told his men that the people in this village were not to be harmed, and that he would kill anyone who bothered us in any way. Then he turned and asked me to move aside, and he and his men simply rode through the village and continued on their way. We were safe.

And we remained safe for many years after that. The villagers came back, and they were very nervous around the Turks, but we had few problems. Even though the Turks took control of our area, Suleiman was put in charge as the local administrator, and when people would bother us, he would have them killed. So after a while, not many Turks bothered us, and we lived in peace, even in the midst of those who might have been our enemies.

And when it was my time to come home to Heaven and join Father and Mother, I was happy to meet Suleiman as well, who had not only saved us, but was saved by his own faith in Jesus. How wonderful are the ways of our Heavenly King!

82. How We Escaped!

I grew up with little in the way of possessions, but I thought I was the happiest girl in the whole world because I was raised with the most precious values in life, which are the spiritual values. There was a time when I didn't appreciate them, but soon enough I saw how important they were, and how nothing in this world could replace them.

People called me a beautiful girl with many talents, but the Bible taught me that beauty is an inner thing, and no matter how pretty in the physical you are, if you don't have the spirit of the Lord's love then there is no real beauty.

A huge, thick forest surrounded the area we lived in and the surrounding several towns. The town I lived in was not so small, and there were people living there that I didn't personally know. But most people were believers and sweet Christians, living simply and lovingly. My family lived happily till one day we heard that everything would change for us. There was a powerful figure who was determined to eliminate all who believed in Jesus. I couldn't understand why, since we lived at peace with all men.

Little did we know our town would be the first to be attacked by this evil man and his band. He was crafty, and sent spies to find out about us, but the Lord spoke to my dad and mom during one of their prayer times.

We knew that it would cost us our lives if we made the wrong move, but we also trusted that the Lord would protect and keep us. At the time I was 14 and my brother was 16. Although it was to be a time of heavy persecution, my brother and

I learned that the spirit of the Lord is present especially during such times. Now that I am in Heaven, I can see so much more of the way Jesus loves and cares for His Own, how there is nothing to fear, and how whatever comes our way is only to show His mighty power and to strengthen our spirits for what He has in store for us.

Soon several of our believer friends began disappearing. We prayed for them and we knew that Jesus had His hand firmly on their lives.

One of the most important lessons I learned was to tune in to the Spirit of the Lord, and to hear His voice in my mind and heart. I believe that when you find yourself in such hard times there is a greater measure of grace given you, and that grace, coupled with desperation, gives you a greater sensitivity to the spirit world. One day I was to deliver a message from my parents to a friend of ours that lived on the other side of town, and I was the only one who could go there at that time. I walked the streets, looking distrustfully at everyone that I passed. Little did I know that my caution was precisely what alerted the undercover police to what I was doing. I knew someone was following me and I quickened my pace without looking back. My heart pounded and I felt my stomach tighten from fear. Right away my first reaction was to call to Jesus for His peace of mind. As I asked, I heard Him whisper: Turn right, and at the corner go left!

I could recognize that voice in my mind and heart. It was the voice of my very best friend, Jesus. What a relief! He was with me, and I just needed to tune in to Him now and follow.

I don't know how I lost those tailing me, but when I finally dared to turn around, they were no longer behind me. I then fulfilled my mission and got home safely. We were all so happy for the miracle! But this was not the end of it all.

After praying and receiving guidance from Jesus that it was now too dangerous to stay, our family decided to leave town the next morning. We couldn't take anything with us, so as not to give the impression that we were fleeing. The only guideline we received was to go through the forest, and that from there it would be told us what to do next.

We finally made it into the forest after staying with some friends we met on the way who invited us for lunch. We had enough daylight time to go through the forest to the next town. Neither I nor my brother knew the way, but my parents did, and we just followed.

Later in the day, sounds of voices and dogs behind us alerted us that we were being tracked. We were moving as fast as we could, and at one point we all got separated. By this time, it was late afternoon and I had no idea where I was. I didn't hear anyone following anymore, but what could I do, and where would I go?—I was lost in the forest!

I fell on my knees, prayed, and claimed several of God's promises of help found in the Bible; then my heart felt at peace. I felt the presence of angels and I knew I was surrounded by many helpers. I still held my face in my hands, and as I lay there, I heard music.

As I lifted my eyes, I couldn't believe what I saw. Standing right in front of me was a gorgeous girl in a long gown. I couldn't see her feet, but I could feel a gentle wind stroking my face.

I was overwhelmed, but I felt no fear. She told me to keep going, and that I would hear whispers to guide me the rest of the way. She said my parents were okay, and that my brother had also made it safely to the next town.

As I stood up, her image disappeared, but I could still feel her presence near me. I followed the direction the voice within me told me to go, and finally got to the next town where I met my family.

They also had their tales to tell—it was so exciting to share the miracles together! My parents said they had been captured and were walking back to our town when their guards simply vanished. My parents then found my brother, and later on met me at our destination.

How did all this happen? All I know is that it was the work of prayer, and a miracle in every way.

83. The Lord Cares for His Own

(Departed spirit speaking:) Hi, my name is Luke. I lived in the late 1600s. My family didn't own the land that we lived on but rather farmed it for the one who did. Our life was difficult, and we had to work all day just to have enough to live off of. Food was hard to come by, and sometimes we went hungry. Though our life was not easy, we had a happy family and there were times of joy amidst our labors.

I was the oldest of eight children, and my parents looked to me to make sure that my brothers and sisters were well cared for. I wasn't educated but I was considered bright by other standards in that I learned many skills at an early age. I could hunt, work in the fields as well as any man, and I knew the area by heart. The only truth I was acquainted with was that if I didn't work I would not eat. The only goal I had in the long term was that one day I would get married and have children of my own, and that eventually if I worked hard enough, things would be easier for them than they'd been for me. I had a feeling in my heart that there was more to this life, but didn't know how to find it. It sometimes seemed to me that there was a plan for my life because I would hear things in my head that I at first imagined to be just my thoughts, but later found out was the Lord speaking to me.

Sometimes I would see another person in need who was worse off than I, and I would feel compelled to help them, and when I would reach out, I felt joy and happiness come over me, and I wanted to do more. Just feeding someone would only help them for that day, but what about the next? Many times when I was in my teens I would find work or opportunities to make a little money to help out

my family, and those I'd be working with would begin telling me about their lives and how difficult things were, as if there was something I could do to help them. I didn't know why these things happened or why people would talk to me as if I knew of some way to help them, but it was all a part of the Lord's plan.

As I grew older, I knew that I had to find something more to live for than to simply exist, I knew that there was more, so I cried out in my heart to find a meaning to life. It wasn't long afterwards that a traveler rode through our town. Because of his odd clothing, I assumed he was from another country. It turned out that the reason he dressed that way was because of his beliefs. People looked at him funny and some walked away, but this man carried with him a light that could be seen even in the daytime, and I wondered about this and what was it that made him different.

At first I wondered how to approach him so that I could inquire about what made him this way, but my father warned me not to associate with the stranger, so I obeyed and didn't talk to him. Then I had an idea. Surely this man must need someone to take care of his horses while he is here, and surely my father wouldn't object to me taking advantage of an opportunity to make a little more money. So I approached this stranger, and offered to take care of his horses and to give him any other assistance that he might need while staying in our town. The kind old man smiled and said that he didn't have much money, but that if I would take care of his horses and feed them he would tell me some stories. At first this didn't interest me because I thought I was too old by that time for stories, but something inside me was interested and wanted to know more about him, so I accepted.

That night as I was grooming the horse, he began his tale. It was the story of three kings who were following a star through distant lands, searching for a greater King Who was to be born. These kings brought valuable gifts to the new King, Who grew up to be the Savior of the world. This King performed many miracles, such as healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and He even raised people from the dead. He was both loved and hated, but He never hurt anyone or fought a war to conquer lands, but instead desired to live among the humble people. He was eventually killed by those who hated Him for the good that He'd done, but even in His death He showed love and mercy to His executioners. But this was not the end—only the beginning, for He later arose from the dead, and now lives so that we too may know life eternal.

As I listened to this story, I began to wonder how I too could receive this same great love and light into my life. So I asked and was overjoyed to find God's love and light flood into my life at the moment that I opened the door to Him. As the stranger explained more to me about God's plan for each of us and how we are to share that same love with others and to live a life that is pleasing to Him by showing love and being merciful, I felt called to reach out to others in need. The next morning I excitedly told my family of all that I had heard, and how I now wanted to share this same love with others. My family thought that I had gone crazy. What would become of me, they wondered, if all I did was tell stories? In spite of the discouragement that I received from my family, I decided to try. Some people mocked me, some people laughed, but then others listened, until a small group of believers formed. We were united in our love for the Lord and our common goal of sharing this love with others in whatever way we could. More and more people joined us until we had a following that caught the eye of the local religious leaders. Since we were mostly peasants, they thought nothing

would come of our preaching, but as we began to grow, they decided something had to be done.

We were often hungry and slept in the fields, but we were happy because of the unity that we had one with another and the love that we shared. As the days went on, winter set in and it was getting colder. Many in our group were getting sick, and we were mocked for our faith and taunted. People questioned why God would have allowed this to happen if we were actually doing His will. Many in our group began to doubt as well, and wonder if the way we were living was really the best, or if it would be easier just to go back to the life we'd once lived.

One night, as we were huddled in a barn that someone had let us stay in for the night, I prayed and asked the Lord why these things were happening, why weren't we accepted by people, and why didn't they appreciate the love and truth that we were sharing with them. Then I remembered that the old stranger had told me the Savior had also been rejected by those He'd come to save, and was eventually killed by His enemies. As I mentioned this to my companions I felt His voice speak to my heart and I told them what I heard: "Fear not to suffer for My Name's sake, for those who suffer for Me will be rewarded—not only in this life but in the life to come as well."

From that day on, our faith was renewed and our courage strengthened, and we set out proclaiming the Lord's words and winning others even more than before. This enraged the religious leaders and they sought to stop us once and for all, so they devised a plan. That night as we slept in the barn we heard bells ring loudly; everyone woke up and wondered what was happening. In the distance, we could

see the glow from a fire coming from the town, so we decided that we should go and find out what was happening, and see if we could help.

When we arrived, we found that a small building was on fire, and many people had gathered around, listening to someone speak. As we got closer we could see that it was the head local priest who was ranting and raving, saying that we had started the fire. Seeing us in the group, he pointed his finger and shouted for those near us to grab us. As we were dragged to the front of the crowd, the priest said that we should be thrown into the fire as our punishment!

I felt that this was our end, and I'm ashamed to say, started panicking. Then I saw a dark figure's silhouette behind the priest, almost as if he was controlling him, and in an instant I knew that it was Satan who was in control of this attack. I then heard these words ring clearly in my heart, Fear not, but stand firm and I will deliver you! I felt a surge of peace come over me and I was calm. In the place of fear, I felt pity for the many poor souls who were being led astray by this creature who was controlling the priest.

We were told to either "repent" and "confess" our sins and beg for forgiveness, or be thrown into the fire. Suddenly, the attention of the crowd was turned towards the local shrine. The wind had picked up and was blowing the fire towards it. The priest's face went white, and he began to panic, demanding that everyone go and save the house of the god! At that moment I felt the Lord's Spirit descend, and I told everyone to wait.

The priest looked at me with rage and amazement that I would challenge his authority, but he was also being restrained in spirit. I told everyone that we had

not started the fire, that we were innocent of any wrongdoing, and that God would vindicate us. I then knelt down and prayed, asking God to stop this fire and to show His mighty hand. As all around us stood still, wondering what would happen next, suddenly it began to rain—and not just rain, but pour, until it had completely extinguished the fire.

As the smoke from the extinguished fire rose almost like an offering to the Lord, I praised Him for His goodness and might to deliver. Many in the crowd came up and asked to know how God had done this, and what they could do to find favor in His sight, and come to know His love like we did. After this evident miracle, the priest just stood there in silence, partly stunned and partly held back by the Lord's Spirit, until finally, not knowing what else he could do, he slunk off. There were many in the crowd who still disagreed with us, but who couldn't deny the miracle that was performed.

Just like it was said of Jesus by His accusers that He'd cast out devils through the power of the prince of devils, so too many thought that we had done this miracle as a result of some form of witchcraft. Of course their suspicions were urged on and encouraged by the priest until we finally had to leave and go to another town where we could preach the Lord's love more freely. We encountered many similar obstacles from various people, but each time the Lord came through mightily and delivered us, if not always out of the persecution, at least always through it. What He's done for others, He can and will do for you.

84. He Worked Behind the Scenes!

Hi, I'm Angelica. My testimony is not a very dramatic one, but it tells of a miracle, just the same. The Lord doesn't have to work in showy or outstanding ways. In fact, I didn't even find out about this particular miracle until I came over here and received my heavenly reward for following Jesus by faith and witnessing wherever I went.

I was out walking my dog in a park one day when I saw some young girls. The Lord gave me the burden to witness to them, so I did, and all three of them got saved. This was all, and I never thought about the incident again. But when I came here to Heaven and the Lord showed me my life, on this particular scene I noticed someone passing me with a big scowl on his face. So I asked the Lord what I had done to anger this man. This is what the Lord told me had happened:

(Jesus:) The man passing you by with a scowl was the father of one of the girls and was also a very wealthy and influential man in the city. He was a very well-known atheist, and when he saw you praying with his daughter, this angered him greatly. But rather than accuse you right away, he decided to indoctrinate his daughter and have her accuse you of brainwashing and abuse, then cause you to be put in jail, or at least have a court order issued, forbidding you from sharing your faith with other young people.

But the faith you had kindled in this man's daughter by praying with her allowed Me to work in her heart and life. I put it in her heart to go all out for Me. Seeing her father's hatred for Me made her want to know more, and she eventually became a sold-out, active Christian who gave her life in My service.

As for the father, when he couldn't use his daughter against you, he became even more enraged and tried to find you by other means to put a stop to your witnessing to others. But I prevented this by giving him health problems and problems in his work, and even when you once crossed paths, I shielded you from his sight.

(Angelica:) Wow, all that from me just witnessing to a girl I did not know! What's more, the Lord told me that He's done a lot of these miracles in all of the lives of those who follow Him closely and obey His call to preach the Gospel to every creature. So if you are faithful to Him and His message, then there are lots of these stories in your life that you will find out about when you come over to this side.

* * *

(Jesus:) You have no idea how many miracles I perform daily for you. It will be fun to go over them with Me when you get here, and see the big picture and what was behind seemingly innocuous events.

85. A Prayer in Time of Need

Hi, I am Katarina. I was born and raised in Poland. I was not born a Christian, but when I was a teenager I fell in love with the most handsome man I had ever seen, and as I got to know him better, he started telling me about Jesus and about his personal love for Him.

I didn't feel strongly for or against Christians, and decided that as long as this man would love me I would be content to follow along with his beliefs. So when persecution came, I was not in the least ready for it for; I was a believer in name only, whereas my husband had a deep faith and strong belief in his Savior. He had a strong faith that we would be kept safe, and that the Lord would deliver us from these attacks. I, however, had a rough couple of months ahead of me, during which I was tested and tried before I eventually started believing with all my heart.

It all started one gloomy morning when a fellow believer came over when we had just finished breakfast. He told us that the Crakoffs had been arrested with their children, and that no one knew where they had been taken. So we were all to gather this evening in smaller groups and have desperate prayer for their safety and ours.

He then asked my husband if some could come and meet in our house. I had always been respectful of my husband, and normally let him have his way in any decisions regarding meetings and church activities, but this time, after our friend had left, I let him have it with my doubts and fears, and asked him what he was thinking of, letting a group of Christians come to our home to hold a prayer

meeting. There would be no hiding what we were doing if there was a raid. But my husband only replied that "God will take care of us," and "God's will be done." Well, this happened more than once.—More and more of our friends were taken, and we had to be more and more secretive with our meetings. But as time went on, I started admiring my husband's calm faith and trust, to the point that I saw that there had to be something to it. And seeing that we had made it this far, I realized that I could only benefit from partaking of his faith.

One night, I got down on my knees and prayed like I had never done before. I committed my family and husband to the Lord, and from that night on, I had an overwhelming peace inside. I just knew that the Lord would take care of everything. Even though there was still a long time before things let up, my family was never taken or touched by those opposing Christianity. But my faith was strengthened along with many others', and I know without a shadow of a doubt that it was only because of the Lord's protection that we had such peace in the midst of the storm of persecution.

* * *

(Jesus:) While the woman sharing this story is not a Family member, and her circumstances aren't ones that you in the Family would be faced with, it's still a wonderful example of My power to give peace and faith to My children as they go about following Me, even when it seems a dangerous and unwise thing to do.

86. Their Account

(Spirit helper, Karla:) I'm just the moderator. Let these tell their own story...

* * *

(Leticia:) Was this actually happening to me?

Called in for interrogation because I'd had the temerity to leave a tract on the bed when I made up the room of an important man in the secret police.

I had fallen in love with him, and had wanted more than anything to lead him to My Lord and Savior. So I'd taken the chance. And I'd been caught.

People did not leave this KGB office alive.

It was a routine investigation for this interrogator, but it would end in my death, as a deterrent to others.

I confessed and told the interrogator what I had done. I opened my soul and heart and innermost motivations to him, for that was all that I had left—my pure love for and devotion to my Savior. As I did this, I felt my spirit helper stir and begin to speak through me, for it was her turn to testify of her love for that secret police officer in the hotel.

(Boris:) It was just a routine investigation, to be followed by a routine liquidation.

I was not a monster. I had experienced poverty, and had seen the callousness of the rich, their disregard for human life, their greed that knew no limits, their willingness to live like parasites on the backs of the laboring classes, until they consumed their hosts. I have seen overpowering greed that knew no limits, that would crush millions under their lust for more, more, more. I knew that greed was deadly; the lust for wealth and riches was deadly. I had seen firsthand the interminable life of poverty these wealthy ones would condemn their victims to.

And the wealthy men's "religion"—Poisonous teachings that would paralyze their slaves—much as a spider injects its venom into its pitifully helpless victims, so would their bought-and-paid-for priests and saints paralyze the simple with fear of Hell, ensuring the slaves' terrified obeisance to their masters.

As well-meaning as this little simpleton was, I knew she carried the venom of these fables within her. As much as I might've liked to take pity on her, I knew that she could not be allowed to continue living.

Her confession made for a tidy open-and-shut case. I had no fondness for the torture room. The speedy confession made my job much simpler, for which I was thankful, as this work was not pleasant, though I was aware of its importance for the continuation of the Revolution.

So she was confessing, and tearfully at that. I hardened my heart, and concentrated on taking notes, to ensure swift judgment and a routine execution. I felt like a worker in a slaughterhouse. It made no difference to me that she would be executed.

Then I felt obligated to at least look her in the eye. So I did.

And then I saw it.

As she was confessing, very emotional and all of that, she was looking me straight in the eye—of course, as they always are, hoping for mercy. My eyes caught hers ... and I looked ... and looked ... and it was like there was a depth there, like her eyes were more than the globes filled with a gelatinous liquid that I'd been taught of in school.

As I looked, it was like looking at a screen in a movie theatre ... but there was depth as well. I looked more steadfastly, and she transformed into the most beautiful woman I had ever seen in my life.

Words cannot express how beautiful she was to me. She was like a goddess and a mother and a teacher and a lover and a soul-mate and a wife, all combined into one. And, oh, the love in her heart was blinding! I could not even look there! I felt as if all my clothes were removed—like all the trappings of my career and work and officialdom, and all of my thoughts and communist indoctrination were all flying off of me, leaving me naked before her. I had no power before her; I was tender and naked, like a newborn. Tears were flowing from my eyes when I came to my senses again, and by this time, the little maid was holding me, hugging me, and crying on my neck.

I was a mess. I tried to pull myself together, to regain some measure of composure. I looked at this simple, diminutive woman in amazement. It was as if she was a plain, drab case, but a jewel-case nonetheless. And for some reason unbeknownst to me, somehow, the case had been opened a tiny crack, and I'd seen a glimpse, just a brief fleeting glimpse, of an inestimably valuable scintillating, supernatural, glowing, radiant jewel inside! She had something very valuable inside of her. I knew I must protect it at any cost, for such treasure could only possibly come once in my lifetime. This indeed was a jewel of great price. And I went and sold all that I had to protect it.

(Leticia:) So, my friends, yes, this was a miraculous deliverance. Boris became my good friend, and we helped many together from then on.

* * *

(Karla:) Two precious jewels, Boris and Leticia. A sweet testimony of the Lord's miraculous deliverance from an impossible situation.

87. God's Terrorists of the Tribulation!

THANK GOD FOR OUR CHILDREN, AMEN?--THE BEST KIDS ON EARTH & WONDERFUL! THEY'RE GOING TO BE THE SALVATION OF THE FUTURE! They're going to be God's Terrorists of the Tribulation rising up in opposition to the Antichrist government & defying it & performing miracles, God doing mighty signs & wonders to protect them & keep them & help them to continue to preach the Gospel in spite of everything. God's going to take care of them right through to the End & they're going to see Jesus when He comes!--Along with lots of other Christians in the World, thank the Lord, who do have faith & who are saved.

(David Brandt)

"Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" ... but if cornered, turn and fight!

(David Brandt Berg)

(Gregory [a.k.a. George]): I am a quiet and meek person. I don't like confrontation. I don't like to argue. I love to live a quiet life. When called to witness during the Tribulation, I did so quietly, one-on-one. When there was danger from informants, from betrayers, from snooping police, I would go into my closet and beseech the Father, and He would work in those people's lives as He saw fit. Nobody knew that some of the things that happened to our opponents were the result of prayer in the closet.

I was "harmless as a dove," in my actions, for I disliked confrontation. But I would commit those who were a genuine threat to the hands of the living God. Many a time someone would testify, "Did you hear what happened to so-and-so?" some detractor who had met opposition from the Almighty. I would say, "No! You don't say?—Interesting."

I prefer the retribution and neutralization of our enemies to be done by outside forces, engineered from Heaven. I would not lift up my own physical hand against these, for there was no need. Prayer was a potent weapon. Using prayer also avoided a dangerous pitfall for me, the accolade and admiration of man. Nobody knew what went on "in the closet," as I beseeched My Father. All they saw were the results of those prayers, from forces that were outwardly unrelated to my own power or influence.

Through prayer, some of our enemies were dissuaded from persecuting us. Sometimes it took more prayer than others. Sometimes when they were very stubborn, God had to work in their lives strongly, often with so-called "tragic" results, at least in this life. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5).

And thus it went, until one day....

Have you ever seen the movie *Firestarter*? The villain gets blown through several walls before his body finally stops, blasted from the power that the little girl had tapped into. She was so angry, because he had hurt her loved ones. Well, that's what happened with me. I was so full of the Lord's righteous anger—the anger of

He Who is angry at the wicked every day (Psalm 7:11). I looked at those antichrist minions come to harm us, and they got blown right through a wall.

Besides being quite taken aback at what had happened to the squad sent to eliminate us, the ACs had enough other problems to deal with at the time that they left us alone for a while after this incident.

There is a clear Scriptural precedent for this. When his enemies came to take Jesus, He said to them, "I am He," and they fell over backward! (John 18:6).— Let's just say He simply turned up the volume a tweak for us in the Endtime, for He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father" (John 14:12).

* * *

(Jesus:) There are many facets to My Spirit, and many types of miracles I can perform, and people I can use.

88. Protection in the Ural Mountains

Hello, my name is Tania. I was a little Russian girl, and lived with my family in a little cottage near the Ural Mountains. I lived a long time ago during the reign of Czar Nicolas. I was the oldest girl in our family, and I had a few older brothers—altogether, we were twelve children.

My parents were farmers and we lived peacefully for many years in our beautiful land. Close to our house was a big lake, and on the other side was the village. We often went to play around the lake with the other children of the village. The boys would go fishing, and we girls would bring our dolls and walk in little groups along the shore.

It was often very cold, as we were close to the mountains—even in the summer, the cold wind would come down and blow through our valley.

Our life was simple, and we didn't have much interaction with the other towns around. Not too many people came our way, apart from an occasional itinerant merchant who'd bring some "treasures" from the big cities, some new gadgets or fancy clothing. Their visits were exciting for us children.

Somehow we would hear about it on the farm, and we would all run down to the village to see the peddler from the big city and all the marvelous things he was bringing with him, but very often our parents were not interested in all these new trinkets.

We had all that we needed in our village, and if someone needed something that they didn't have, we would share with and help one another. We were all Christians and we wanted to be like Jesus and His disciples, helping one another and caring for those less fortunate.

Of course some people had a few more privileges and comforts than others, but we didn't have any extremely poor people or beggars in our village; everyone had a place to live and enough to eat and plenty of work. And we were all very happy.

There was a little church on a low hill right outside the village, and we would meet there very often to pray together and listen to our priest. He was an old man who had seen many years; he had traveled a lot and knew a lot. He would teach us school, and would tell us stories of faraway lands and different people.

He'd even traveled all the way to where our Savior was born, and he told us many beautiful stories of this land where Jesus had walked, and all the places He'd been to.

For us children, it was like a fairyland and we all wished we could go there and see it, and walk right on the same paths that Jesus had.

But deep in my heart, I always felt I didn't like Jerusalem so much. It seemed like it was a big city, and I never liked big cities.

And we'd also heard the stories of how Jesus was persecuted and killed by the people of Jerusalem, and so even though it sounded to us like a dreamland, I never felt so much for this big city.

But I did dream of going to visit the little stable where Jesus was born. Maybe it was like the little barn in the back of our house? I used to go there and walk very slowly with my eyes closed, trying to imagine I was a little shepherd girl coming to see Baby Jesus, and I always felt there were angels watching me. And then I would kneel down and say a prayer to Jesus, and it felt so good in my heart, like a big warm feeling deep inside, and it made me so happy.

Often my brothers would sneak up on me and make fun of me, you know how brothers are, but they were mostly sweet and respected me.

Mother was a strong woman, she was tough, and often when times were difficult, she would sing and dance and made us jump around to stir us up, so we wouldn't stew in our misery and discouragement. That was her way of fighting the old Devil; she didn't want us to lie down and give in and let the Devil walk over us, but she wanted us to jump and rejoice and be happy as if it was Christmastime and we were receiving presents.

She said we had all the good promises of the Holy Book for us, and that the old Devil couldn't do anything against us because Jesus was so much stronger and that we should be happy and rejoice. It was like Jesus was a nice comfy warm house, and we were all safe and protected inside, while the cold wind would blow fiercely. Because the house was strong, nothing would move it, and no matter how hard the bad wind would try, it would never succeed.

I always remembered this little illustration later on, when greater difficulty came to my life, that no matter how cold and stormy and fierce the wind is outside, we are safe inside Jesus' house, and He can withstand any wind.

And that's just what happened. We didn't know much about it because we were so isolated, and news would take a long time to reach our villages, but we heard one day that the Czar had been deposed and he and his family placed in detention. Then later we heard that they'd probably been executed by terrible people who called themselves the Bolsheviks and who were now running the country. I was terrified. Many people talked of leaving to go and hide in the mountains. They said that these evil men were enemies of God and that they would kill every Christian they found. Others said that they would force the boys and the men to join their armies, and that they would take the women and force them to work for them.

It was scary, and this time Mommy didn't dance, but she gathered us together by the fireplace, and we all knelt down and prayed. This time my brothers didn't make fun of me. We all closed our eyes and prayed very desperately for Jesus to save us and show us what to do.

Papa took the Holy Book and read from it for a long time. At first we were too scared to concentrate on the reading, and our mind was full of terrifying thoughts, but as Papa continued to read, slowly a great peace came into each of our hearts, and at the end we knew that Jesus would care for us. We were inside His house, and though the wind would blow outside, it would not harm us.

Soon war was raging in our part of the country. We knew soldiers would come. We could see smoke rising beyond the hills from where they were fighting. Many people decided to leave and went to hide in the forest and in the caves on the mountain.

Our parents were talking together and trying to decide what we should do. Hiding in the forest and living in caves wasn't really easy to do with lots of children, but staying here would probably be worse for us when the soldiers would arrive. All of us kids were sitting on the floor, very quietly waiting for our parents to make a decision, when I heard a little voice in my heart—a very soft voice like the whisper of an angel—and it told me that we should go in our little barn, the one where I often went to pray, and that the angels would keep us safe there. It also said that we should quickly call other people from the village to join us in our place of refuge. So I told my papa and mommy, and for a few minutes they were very silent.

No one said anything, but my papa looked at each one of us, and all my brothers nodded their heads in agreement. They felt in their hearts that it was the right decision, and we stayed for a few minutes more in silence, then my papa sent the boys to warn the other people from the village that whoever wanted to could come to our barn.

Then we all went quietly to our rooms and put on all our warm clothes, and we went to the little barn and quietly sat in the middle of the room. It was cold and dark, and soon many other children and their parents came to join us—and some even brought their animals with them.

At first, Papa was a little bit worried that it would be too crowded with all the animals, and that the noise would attract the soldiers, but I heard the voice in my heart telling me that it was fine and that we should all be together.

So when everyone was there, Papa closed the big door and we all sat quietly and prayed in our hearts. Then the wind started to blow outside, and hit hard against our little barn. The wind was so strong I thought that our barn would be blown away any minute, but everyone remained silent; even the animals were quiet, almost as if time had stopped, and we'd been taken into another world.

Then my mommy started to sing, very softly, but soon one by one we all began singing with her. We didn't hear the wind anymore, we didn't feel the cold or the fear, but a soft loving warmth enveloped each one of us and filled up the whole barn.

A miraculous and extraordinary peace came over us, and soon the little children fell asleep. I fell asleep too, such a beautiful sleep. I dreamed that everything all around me was bright and beautiful, like a heavenly garden. I could hear birds singing, and children playing, and people talking together, it was so warm and soft and loving. I was walking with my mommy, and we were looking all around us, marveling at the beautiful flowers and the green grass and the river and the sky; everything was so beautiful.

When I woke up, it was already late in the morning, the sun was shining by the open door and many people were already outside. I felt so refreshed; I don't think I ever slept so well and peacefully in my all life, even in my bed under my nice soft, warm blankets.

Some of my brothers came to get me to see outside, and as we walked toward the edge of our little hill over the village, it was a sad sight. Many houses had been destroyed, and burnt down. It looked so sad that I started to cry. Everything

looked so desolate, like a big evil storm had blown over the village. All that we loved had been destroyed and ransacked, and even our little church had been burned.

I stood there for a long time, looking down in silence, then my papa came and put his arm around me and drew me very close to him, and I knew it was going to be alright, that we were safe, and that Jesus had saved us and all the people who'd come to our barn.

Why these evil men didn't attack us, nobody knew at the time, but when I came to Heaven, it is one of the first things I asked Jesus and He showed me. The soldiers had come as wild wolves, sweeping through our lovely valley, burning and destroying, forcing men into their ranks and killing those who refused. But when they'd come to our village, Jesus had sent a strong wind, so strong that most of them couldn't climb the hill toward our little barn. Those that had made it to our house broke in and saw that it was empty, so they left and moved on.

As I looked closer, I saw angels with big swords keeping guard all around our little barn. They were so big, almost as big as the roof of the barn, smiling peacefully as if they were just a group of friends together while the wind was blowing so hard.

We heard later on that many people who had left to hide in the mountains had died of cold, or were killed by the soldiers and some even by wild beasts. It was a terrible experience for so many. But I'd discovered for myself that what my mother had told us was true—that the raging wind outside was powerless against we who trusted in the Lord.

89. Rescued from the Tracks!

My name is Svetlana, and I have come to tell you the story of how I was saved from certain death at the hands of my persecutors. I grew up an orphan in the Ukraine. When I was 16, I met a young man who told me about Jesus and got me saved.

I then joined a local underground church where we practiced our religion and worshipped together. I was very young in the faith and was always fearful and scared of what could or would happen if we'd get caught doing these "illegal" activities. This fear occupied so much of my time that I was never really at peace in my soul. I prayed for God to give me peace, but fear always seemed to have the upper hand. Then one day, my God sent me an answer and did a miracle for me. We worshipped in secret and tried our best to not be noticed. But it only lasted so long. Some thugs were sent out by the police. They came to our door and knocked heavily once.—When we did not answer, they kicked the door down. They beat up everyone that was in the room, but they took me away and out to the railway tracks. I did not know why they chose me. Maybe they thought it would be an example to the others.

They kept cursing at me and mocking me, but I kept praying, and desperately called on Jesus to save me from these evil men. As we neared the tracks, they took me to a place where any approaching train would not be able to stop in time. They told me that because I was a Christian they were going to help me to die for my faith.

They bound my hands and feet and then laid me across the tracks and went and hid in the bushes nearby. I lay on the tracks for what seemed like a very long

while. My captors and would-be executors were drinking and smoking and being vulgar and shouting obscenities at me. I knew that it would have to take a miracle for the train to stop in time. Was this my hour to meet my Savior? I wondered. It was then that I heard the unmistakable sound of a large steam locomotive causing vibrations to ripple through the steel tracks that I was laid out on. It sent chills through my body. I tried to escape, but they had tied me to the track and the ropes wouldn't budge, and being a frail and small girl, and tired besides, I didn't have much strength left in me.

It was then that I committed my body and life into Jesus' hands and asked Him, if it was my time to go, to please forgive these men who didn't know what they were doing, but were influenced by the Devil. I then felt a complete peace all about me. I knew that My Savior would take me quickly or save me.

The rumbling on the tracks grew louder and louder as the sound of the engine also became audible. I prayed and quoted what few verses I knew.

As the train neared the bend from where I would be visible, a loud screeching could be heard. What sounded like a giant explosion echoed through the air and I watched with desperation as the train screeched and tried to reverse its engines. Little did I know that the train driver was also a secret believer and he had been praying and talking to Jesus when suddenly his hand was jerked forward onto the brakes which then proceeded to slow down the entire train, bringing it to a halt a couple of meters in front of me.

I wept tears of joy and thanksgiving as the conductor and maintenance crew jumped down to see what was the matter. The chief engineer also jumped down

and I was seen and rescued. When I told the engineer what had happened, he had sympathy on me and promised to take me with them and later return me home. It was then that I went to a nearby city and took up residence with the train driver who had saved my life by being used as an instrument of God. My faith was strengthened by this experience, and I testified to many there of what God had done for me and how He had protected me.

I ended up marrying that train driver and we had a beautiful little family. The Lord continued to protect and keep me all my days as a believer, and I never once again was afraid of death, or feared what men could do to me.

What had seemed like an impossible situation and certain death became the strongest and most memorable day of my life. I was a changed woman, never again to worry or fret or fear what could happen to me.

I never did return to my hometown, but traveled to many places on my husband's train, telling others about my faith in God. I lived to a ripe old age and died peacefully in my husband's arms, praising and thanking God for the full life of service He had allowed me to live and saved me for.

* * *

(Jesus:) This story shows that I am in control. In some cases, it is My time for them to join Me, and so I don't rescue their earthly body, whereas I did for this girl. Your times are in My hands, and you don't have to worry or fear, because I will not let the Enemy snuff out your light until it is My time.

90. A Persecutor's Diary

(Recommended for older children and up)

A little about myself...

My name is Robert Slighe. I am in the new police task force that has been set up for tracking down insurgents and terrorists that attack our new way of life. I am a family man with a normal life. There was nothing special in my childhood; nothing different from what you would consider a normal education, but I have been fortunate to make it in the New World dream—one where dedication and respect, coupled with honesty, hard work, and self-sacrifice can produce a utopian world full of happy dreams made reality!—One where wealth and plenty are available to all that submit to our leader's wishes.

I don't understand why there must always be some that resist high ideals like ours. It just goes to show that we really need a forceful hand when dealing with these few. The law no longer allows for them to receive fair trials—how could they expect such when they've done so much against our way of life?

I have studied the "Christian Philosophy", and believe, as has been conclusively demonstrated, that it and its followers' morals are intrinsically flawed. If they weren't, why don't we have a working Christian nation? Even one ancient scholar who was a witness to this philosophy's birth and early days pointed out that if they were right, nothing would be able to stop them, but that if they were wrong they would fade into oblivion. Now it seems that they have almost done that, and with the help and cooperation from peace-loving people, we will soon live to see that day!

It seems that all our problems come directly from these Christians. Aren't they supposed to love their neighbors? It seems that they do just the opposite. They tear apart families by recruiting the weak-minded into fighting like them. They steal, sabotage, and even kill members of our forces that have tried to bring them to justice. Though they aren't ever caught in possession of dangerous weapons, it's certain that they've developed new technologies, and those we must soon get our hands on to use for peace and stability.

(Diary:)

Monday, Oct 23

Received report of yet another daughter in an upstanding family gone missing. She had been doing well in her college.—Honor student, member of a number of social groups on her campus, one who had demonstrated great patriotism by reporting many of her classmates who were taking part in terrorist plots. This leads us to the only logical conclusion that she must have been kidnapped by cohorts of the insurgents that she turned in. Her parents reported a recent change in her though; that she was happier than they had ever seen her to be before. Even the breakup with her longstanding police-force member fiancé didn't faze her in the least. Her fiancé, a good man, confided in me that she had come to him saying the strangest things.—Not outright contradicting our way of life, but expounding on love and forgiveness. Irrational!—No doubt a fancy that would quickly pass. Women can be prone to such from time to time. Surely, she would be over it soon, I explained to my friend.

"After all, she's a reasonable girl with a good upbringing, and as our philosophy states, 'Once someone has our life of peace and truth, how can they be happy with anything else?'"

We have issued a bulletin on her abduction though, and are waiting to hear from intel.

Wednesday, Oct 24:

Intelligence has once again tracked the movements of some insurgent groups to a nearby city where they appeared and then disappeared without a trace. Somehow, they got on TV and broadcasted their message unhindered for upwards of 11 minutes. They were wearing hemp robes and carrying sticks, and had smeared soot on their faces.

They proclaimed that they would never yield to the NWO and that as long as they lived, they would fight us. There were tears in the eyes of a couple of them, yet when they spoke they were without remorse, even in proclaiming damnation to our "Devil-worshiping regime." Their countenance and fearlessness could only be inspired by illicit drugs, as they all appear to be strong, capable, well meaning, and caring folk—just the kind of people our system can use for the goal of peace. Why they wouldn't be happy with yielding is beyond me. To go against our powerful rule can only mean death for them, and yet they still refuse to even run away and hide within the rogue nations that have not yet taken on our way of life. Surely there would be a place for them there if they wanted this peace and love that they speak about. Why must they taunt us instead?

There were also reports that before our men arrived on the scene, they walked through the broadcasting station, and spoke with many, moving quickly from one place to another. They "healed" people with terminal illnesses through apparent imposition of hands (a technological breakthrough no doubt stolen from our

system), even curing mental illnesses. Most of those that they spoke to are now being questioned and details are being gathered about this group.

Sheila Watts, who disappeared yesterday, was reported as taking part in the activities and even spoke to a few people on her own. She has evidently been brainwashed and we are making efforts to track them through her monitoring device.

Thursday, Oct 25:

BBI (Big Brother Intelligence) has picked up Ms. Watts' trail. She is on the move and is apparently moving towards her home. Rescue teams are being sent to her location, but so far have not found her. BBI assures us that she is alive and well, though probably a little unstable mentally. We are doing all in our power to upgrade our security here and around the city.

Friday, Oct 26:

Reports are still coming in about Ms. Watts' whereabouts. I'm getting leery about all this, though. It seems that our equipment is malfunctioning. Either that, or there is just human error at every turn. There should have been contact from our many units that were sent into the forest area where they have apparently crossed. Yet they have not communicated with us. BBI informs us that the team's trackers have all gone haywire; some showing officers dead, others in full health and still on the trail. Yet there has been no contact from them.

The "alive" members of the rescue teams have also moved from their ordered positions and are seemingly traipsing through each other's territories. There are

signs of a gun battle with some of our men caught up in the middle.—Plus, apparent failure of equipment as no team is responding.

11:30pm: Contact is established through a third team in the area. Apparently, they had tracked Ms. Watts and her kidnappers and were moving in. Yet from reports of survivors, another of our teams came from the opposite direction and opened fire at the same time.

The survivors from each team say that though Ms. Watts' captors carried no weapons, there was a burst of power that created a force field around them, which no weapons could penetrate, and which deflected our men's shots back at themselves.

This episode gives rise to questions as to how we could fail at such an easy mission where all the odds were for us.

Saturday, Oct 27:

Security is at an all-time high. Never before have we been as unable to locate people as now. We know that they are within the city limits, yet our equipment is not picking them up correctly. We have resumed combing through the fields and forests on the periphery searching for apparent phantoms, as they appear suddenly in one sector, only to disappear and reappear in another sector miles away.

There is no known transportation that can transport as fast as they appear to be able to move. No doubt, they have hacked into our system and are playing jokes on us. Still, we have right on our side and we are vigilant. Our teams are the best

of the best and will die for the State if the need arises. With this kind of commitment on our part, we can't fail. In the end, we will win—it's only logical! Our area leaders are very interested in our progress and have sent us reinforcements for backup, should we be attacked.

I can't help but feel leery still. I haven't slept well for the past few nights and my days are just blending one into the other without peace and rest in between. I have taken medication for this state, though my doctor says that there is nothing wrong with me.

"Then why do I feel this way???" I lost my temper and shouted at him. I've never done this before. What is happening and why?

My instincts are all pointing towards a conclusion that I'm doing something wrong. But what is it? I've done everything as I've been trained to do. It shouldn't be this way, and once I crush these terrorists I'll take some time off for self-analysis on where I've gone wrong.

Sunday, Oct 28:

How did they get past our checkpoints?—There was no way!

We must have been infiltrated. None of the security systems worked as they should have. The Christians knew where, when, and how to come in! There is no logical explanation for this, and I must now go explain what happened to headquarters.

All I can say is what happened. I was there in the end, and I don't know anything else than what I saw, but no one would believe what I saw, nor could I explain it

in a logical, normal way. They were outside my building, holding scrolls and sticks with "Warning!" pasted on them. They were somber and their faces showed no fear. I was watching the whole thing on our security cameras. I knew better than to treat them as though they were normal. I carefully ordered the positioning of my men and the organization of the teams. When we surrounded them, I gave the order to shoot, but strangely, the team opened fire in all directions except at the targets!

What went through their fool heads, I don't know, but according to one who lived, an order was given that they were surrounded and to shoot at will. He then said that he saw terrorists with wings flying all around them, so he obeyed and started shooting. Little did he know that along with the rest of his team, they were hallucinating and seeing their comrades as "little flying angel terrorists." There were many dead and a few wounded among my men—"Victims of friendly fire" was all that I saw on their charts in the morgue or at the ICU.

I can't give an explanation for this—I know that this will be my downfall, and yet I seriously consider where I stand and why. If they have this power, then who gave it to them? If we are the good guys, then why can't we ever win? If what we are doing is right, then no one should be able to stop us—our enemies should crumble at our feet.

Yet since we aren't the victors, I must seriously question why this is happening. I know that I was given life for a reason. Our leader tells us that it's for this purpose of rooting out evil and establishing peace. Yet all I saw today was death and destruction.

Why weren't any of the Christians hit—even though there was no way out for them? Why did they walk away with tears streaming down their faces?

I saw today that they did love mankind, and that in itself tells me that there's something wrong with our intelligence on them. They didn't brandish hurtful weapons, only a message. They didn't speak of death and hate, only love and eternal life. They did not gloat at the death of their enemies; there was only a prayer on their lips. They did not fear; they stood strong and fearless—even in the face of death.

This tells me that they know something that I don't, for today it was I who feared. I shook and trembled when I saw them out there today. When I feared for my life, there was suddenly nothing I could think of that I'd done that was any good. All my contributions to this society that I once believed in only consisted in meting out death and oppression to those who believed in something that they thought was worth living and dying for. I can't say that about my life—I can't say that I'd die for this anymore.

I don't care what they believe; if they can give me that peace in my heart, then it's what's right in this messed-up world. I'll take that Jesus—I want that eternal life. Oh, please come and find me!

* * *

(Jesus:) This is a great story, as it provides fascinating and interesting insight into the potential life and mind of an AC officer.

91. Saved from the Fire

—By Thomas the Apostle

(Thomas:) I had been traveling for years, preaching and teaching about Jesus. I'd traveled to India many months ago, and had just arrived in the south. The land was dark and filled with oppressive spirits. Together with my two companions, we were a candle in the midst of the darkest of nights.

We had taught and preached for several days in the village we were in. It was not easy. Satan fought us at every step to retain his hold on this land so firmly under his control. Not one convert had been made.

One hot evening, we gathered together on the upper floor of a small dwelling. We were desperate for God to use the Holy Spirit to do some great work which would open the way for the message of Christ.

Just then, a mob filled with power from the dark side gathered outside. Magicians and priests led them in a riot to burn our dwelling and us inside it. They had great torches, and in their light we could see them slashing themselves and performing demonic rites against us. It was as if the very forces of Hell in flesh had come to do battle with us.

A doubt entered my mind. Satan's attacks are not only external, but internal. He said, "You are so few to battle against my stronghold." He taunted each of us, and tried his best to fill us with fear. But God spoke plainly and clearly through Hadan the Persian, "Not only will I deliver you, but I will cause you to prevail. No

promise of Mine has ever failed, and neither will this one." It was true, and our faith was renewed.

The three of us continued to pray. The house started to crackle and burn. Smoke filled our room. Just then a wind blew through the room we were in. It was the same wind that had come and filled my brethren and me on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit had come to be our Deliverer. A force field formed around us, and all was quiet and peaceful within. No longer could we hear the chants and cries of those driven by Satan.—We were in a hallowed place. Our prayers for the land continued until we fell asleep, safe in the protection of God's power.

When we awoke the next morning, all around us was ashes. We saw the bodies of some of our persecutors, slain by unknown means. Emboldened by what had taken place, we walked slowly toward the center of the town. Many came up to us in awe, bringing us food and drink. We heard stories of how they had seen a ball of light surrounding us. Some had tried to attack us with weapons and rites, but each of these had been destroyed as they approached, or turned back upon them. The Holy Spirit had not only done battle for us, but had done the greater miracle of turning the poor and oppressed people of this village to the Light. They had proof that the power of God was stronger than that of Satan and fear. Many tens of thousands were won as a result in the surrounding areas, and a foothold was gained in the land of India.

92. Saved from School

I was born during the Communist regime, when we weren't allowed to have Bibles or speak about Jesus to anyone. Now things are different, but back then it was dangerous. My parents were both Christians and taught me about God in secret.

My name is Raphael, because that's what I'm called now—at least that's what you can call me. My name while on Earth was Vladimir Dortosky. I grew up in the north of Russia, along one of the many rivers there. We lived in a small farm in the middle of nowhere, and that's why we didn't have much trouble with the Communists or the Party people.

When I was 11, I had to go to the nearest town with my mother to pick up goods and provisions, while my father stayed home and worked the small farm we had. My mother started talking to the woman who was selling fruits and vegetables, as this woman was curious to know why I wasn't sent to a school in the big city. My mother explained that she and my father needed my help on the farm and that is why I couldn't go.

This woman insisted that I should be taught and raised as a good citizen of my country, a loyal follower of the people and of the great Union of Soviet Republics that was being built. She seemed so intent on me going to the big city to go to school and learn these things that I became afraid. I was only 11 but I didn't want to leave my home and go away.

On the way home from town, I asked my mother what that was all about and why did the woman want me to leave home and go to school. My mother explained that the Motherland's laws compelled all children to go to school and receive an education. I could hardly read or write, and though I didn't mind, my mother knew that if I was going to be able to read the Bible and be able to support myself correctly, I would eventually have to go to school and learn all these things. That night, when we got home and I was in bed, I could hear Mother talking to Father about schooling, and how they would have to face that reality some day. There were benefits to going to school, but there were also serious negative repercussions that would come as well. My father argued against it, but my mother argued for me to go.

Finally my father acquiesced to my mother's wishes, knowing and realizing that I would have to grow up and make a choice as to what is right and wrong one day, and that that day would come soon. So my parents decided for me to stay one more spring and summer at the farm, and that in the autumn I would go to live with my aunt who worked in the city.

They decided that before I left I would be taught double the amount of Word from the Bible and the Christian books that they had, in order for my faith to be strengthened before I went into the city and school.

These months were the best of my life. My father would take me away up into the hills or by the rivers and streams and read to me all the fascinating stories about God's truth and the many wonderful accounts of the men in the Bible.

Slowly but surely, my faith grew, and though it wasn't a major leap or difference from one day to the next, by the end of six months I felt close and dear to my Savior and Lord, the One Who had died for me, and Whom I was determined to serve all the days of my life.

The big day came, and my mother took me on the boat upriver to the large, dirty and noisy city. My aunt lived on the outskirts of town in a small house with a little garden. It was all she could afford, as her work at the factory didn't pay much. She was a bit hesitant to take me in, knowing what a handful of work children my age could be. My mother promised to send money every month to pay for my food and any clothes I needed. My aunt was thankful for that, and though she wasn't super friendly outwardly, she did have a good heart and was decent to me. My first days at school were very difficult. I was put in a classroom with children that were a lot younger than me because I hadn't had that much schooling before. I didn't like the way the teachers always talked about the communistic ideas and goals, as it sounded so opposite to what I had learned and been taught by my parents.

One thing I did like was that I was learning to read and write in school. This was exciting for me because I so longed to read the stories from the Bible that my father used to read to me. The teachers at my school were very impressed with my progress and good work habits. I studied well and really applied myself.

In a matter of months I could read basic Russian and write most of the alphabet. By the end of my first school year I could read and write, much to the surprise of my teachers and the principal. When the school year was ended I was the star student. Of course I was the eldest as well, but my teachers were especially proud

of me for having made so much progress. I was asked to give a speech at the end of the school year of why I was able to learn so much and make so much progress. My teachers hoped that my good example would serve as motivation for others in the class who were lagging behind or not making as much progress as I. Little did they know that I was spurred on to learn these things in order that I might carry out my promise to serve God and tell others about Him.

The big day came, and as I stood in front of my class of 50 children, I began to sing a song my mother had taught me, and then explained that the reason I was able to learn so fast was because of God's help, and because I wanted to be able to read the Bible. The teachers were shocked and embarrassed and immediately removed me from the stage and hurried on with the rest of the graduation ceremony.

I was sent home that day with a letter from the principal explaining what had happened and that I was to be punished. My aunt was quite wroth with me, as news of this would surely spread and she could be in danger of losing her job. My aunt sent me home that day with the letter and all my stuff to my father's farm. My parents weren't expecting me home that early, but were very happy to see me. They were somewhat concerned that their secret had been found out, but not wanting to alarm me, told me that everything was fine and to not worry. I was, however, concerned that my actions had caused them trouble.

Well, before long, my aunt sent word that she had been approached by the authorities as to where I had gone and where my parents lived. She'd had to tell them, as otherwise she could have been fired from her job, or even worse, put in jail or sent to work in a faraway city.

When my parents got the letter, my father and mother got together with me and we knelt down on the floor to implore God for His protection. My parents both prayed very earnest and sincere prayers, and then it was my turn.

I prayed, "Dear Jesus, my Savior, I'm sorry that I brought this trouble to pass. I only wanted to tell others that it wasn't I that did all these things, but You, and that You helped me. Now we could get in trouble for this and I wish I'd never said that. You gave me the ability to read and write and it was Your Word that gave me the desire to practice and apply myself over and over. I want to ask that You please don't let the police come to make trouble for Mother and Father. Please stop them and help them never to come here so that we can live and work in peace and quiet. In Jesus' name, amen."

It was many weeks later when my mother went to the local port to catch the ferry to the big city, that we learned what the Lord had done to protect us. There had been a commission set up to investigate the possibility of a Christian family living out in the wilderness at a certain address, and two investigators had been dispatched to check out the allegations and take action.

While on the ferry from the large city, a massive storm had struck and the ferry had sunk with all on board, including all the documents and papers that had been written about me and my family. While it was sad to hear of the people that had perished in the storm, we knew that God had answered our prayers for protection. I continued my schooling at my parents' home—what is today called homeschooling. It was illegal back in the days when I was a child, so my parents had to sneak schoolbooks home from the big city and use them in my teaching. I learned all that was needed, and when I was old enough I set off for distant cities

and towns to tell my simple testimony and of how God protects and cares for His Own. Later I was secretly ordained and became a pastor in a small underground church.

I experienced God's protection many more times throughout my life in communist Russia, but that story is my first one. From then on, my faith grew larger and stronger as I obeyed what God told me to do and gave Him the glory for all that I was and had become.

93. A Cathar's Tale!

(Song:)

Over the mountains, hills, and plains we come,
Singing our song of happiness and love!
We are simple yet we are free,
Because we've found something greater than what this world could offer,
We have the true love of Jesus,
We won't deny the peace it's brought us,
And no one can take it from us,
For it's in our hearts to stay!

(Christine, departed saint:) Do you see the picture I'm showing you—the lush, green valley, the rising hills, the little streams, and the beautiful blue sky? It's as if all creation is bursting out in praise to its Creator! Beauty flows from the heart that is all good, from our dearest Lord and Savior. But under the same beautiful sky, much evil is being done. You would think that on a day like this people would lay aside their malice, their wickedness, and stop to love their brother because of the love they see being poured upon them by the loving Creator.

But some, no matter what the beauty around them, still hold much evil in their hearts, and thus their spirits are darkened and hardened—so much that no ray of light or truth can be found. Those who profess to be followers of our Lord are often the worst of all, for they make a mockery of His Name. It is as if they spit on Him by seeking to be rid of any that don't follow according to what they feel is true religion to Christ.

We banded together from distant villages, the same love of Christ pulled us together. We made it our passion to tell others of His great love, some of us having to leave our families and homes because we were not accepted there. Here in this town in southern France, we found our family in those who were likeminded in their ideals.

So we came to settle in this beautiful valley, singing our songs of love and freedom, and many came to know the message through our love and sample. Yes, I am a Cathar, one that was born again in the love of our dear Lord. And though I had to leave my family due to their unbelief, the Lord always cared for me and thus led me to this place where I could find others who believed the same truth. A simple girl was I to some, yet with a pure passion and love for my Lord burning in my heart.

Then the days of darkness came; spiritual darkness was once again trying to smother the light and truth that was burning amongst us. Then came the persecution from the church, and times were very dangerous for us and for those who sympathized with us.

At the time I was staying with friends in a small town. When we heard the news of the coming hordes, there was not much we could do to escape. The defenses of our town were not strong, and within minutes they had battered down the gates and were performing their evil deeds.

I looked to our dear Husband for strength, for I knew our time had come. But from within me I heard a voice comforting my heart, telling me that it was not yet my time. And though I didn't completely understand what that meant, still,

knowing that everything was in the Lord's hands, and that He was in perfect control, brought great peace to my heart.

I ran down the street to try and warn some others, but no sooner had I run out the door than I knew that the spirit of the Devil was right behind me pursuing me. Though at first I was tempted to fear, quickly this verse was quickened to my mind: "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." I knew our Love was right beside me.

I hurried down the street trying to put as much distance as possible between me and my pursuer. I dared not look back for fear of what I was to face. But just as I felt that he was upon me, suddenly he stumbled, and it's as if I was gone from his grasp. I didn't quite know how to explain what happened, but it was as if I was translated or invisible and I ran on, knowing that he couldn't harm me. The eyes of my pursuer were blinded so that he couldn't see me.

I then felt burdened to go and warn the other surrounding villages, and supernaturally I arrived there in no time—being translated—and thus completely protected from those who would seek to do away with my life.

Some of my fellow brethren fled to the surrounding hills and countryside, but I felt called to stay on and to face our enemies, to give those who hadn't heard our message a chance, so that they could have the opportunity to believe.

Many times I was called to speak and to refute the lies of our accusers and proclaim the truth of the Word, and I found I was filled with the supernatural strength to gainsay their supposed wisdom. In the marketplaces and streets I

would speak, and when the soldiers tried to arrest me, there was no power in their limbs to do so and I was delivered.

Time and time again I experienced the Lord's perfect protection, whether it was through His supply of my daily needs of food and a place to stay, or by giving me the ability to continue to preach His love and message to many without ever being harmed or killed. Many times when I felt that the end had surely come, miraculously by the Lord's power we would be covered and protected.

Once I found myself standing right in front of men who were determined to rout us out, and yet they couldn't lift a finger to hurt me. It was as if their minds and mouths went dumb and they instead started blabbering like little children—much to their embarrassment—and I went on my way without a hair on my head being touched.

The fear my friends and I once had was replaced by faith, as we daily saw the power of God's almighty protection. Thus we daily came to know the power of God that He administers on behalf of His little ones. Yes, many did die for their faith during this time, and though it was terrible and so sad to witness, yet even in death they were given their final, last glorious chance to be a witness.

But for those of us whom the Lord called to carry on His work, it was truly an awesome experience to see and feel His power manifested through such weak ones. He didn't cause us to hurt or harm those who were persecuting us, but instead chose to surround us with a bubble of protection so that no evil would come nigh us.

It was marvelous to see that when a weak and small one is in the place of God's choosing that He will do whatever it takes to keep them in the hollow of His hand, in order to enable them to perform His perfect will.

* * *

(Jesus:) This is an interesting insight into the various types of miracles I can perform to protect you. I have a miracle for each needy situation.

94. Tertullian on Persecution

The threat of martyrdom hung over me during all of my Christian life. But it was one of those things that never happened. The Lord had a job for me to do, so He kept me going till the day I died, an old man on my bed.

Perhaps it was because I had too high of a profile in the community. Perhaps they were afraid that if they moved against me it would cause a backlash. However, I think the real reason behind it all was that those whose job it was to persecute Christians just really didn't have the stomach to take on someone as irascible as I was.

My name was Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, but I've become more commonly known as Tertullian. I was trained as a lawyer, so in as law-riddled a society as Rome was, I was in a pretty good position to defend myself.

It was illegal to be a Christian during my days. Sometimes the authorities got all excited and went at persecuting us with a demonic persistence. Other times, they just couldn't be bothered.

Every person condemned to death as a Christian had to be brought to a magistrate who would pronounce the sentence. I think the magistrates were afraid of me. They knew that if they were to try me that I would give them a run for their money.

I knew the law, and even though it was illegal to be a Christian, I knew enough about all the other laws that they had to uphold that they would be tied in knots. So I just more or less dared them my whole life to try and drag me before the courts. They didn't have the guts.

It was the easiest thing to avoid martyrdom in those days. If you were hauled up as a Christian before the courts, all you had to do to walk out of the building a free man was to deny Jesus Christ. Some would do that and then would come back to the church during times of peace to get readmitted. I couldn't stomach them. I was inflexible on this issue that I didn't want to be associating with people who had copped out. I was too hard really, but I was ashamed of them. I figured that if Jesus died for me then I would die for Him. And if anyone else wasn't as strong in their convictions, then I figured that they really didn't deserve to be called Christians. I realize that I was missing the love and mercy My Lord had. But the moral of my story, and the one I wanted to get across to you all in this short account, was that persecution, although a real threat to life and limb, is nothing to fear. Most of the time, it is just the Devil breathing out threats. I just

breathed them back at him. I really didn't care what the result was. I was happy to go home to Jesus anytime. So all their bluff and bluster had no power over me. And look what happened. I died an old man, having lived a full and wonderful life for my Lord. Believe you me, as I got old and creaky, I sometimes envied those who had gone on before me. But when the Lord has a plan for you, you don't have to worry. He is going to fulfill it till the end. Stay faithful to Him, and He will make sure you get to live as long as you need to and accomplish everything you need to.

I know that persecution for you now at this stage of the game is probably not going to end in martyrdom, although it is going to result in some discomfort and even some anxious times for a lot of you. However, I want to assure you that the fear of it is a hundred times worse than the actual thing itself. And it doesn't help to worry about it. You haven't done anything wrong that they can really hurt you with. In fact, it is in times of persecution that you can be the greatest witness. If you love witnessing, you'll get to do a lot of it.

I loved to defend the faith, and every time they tried to do anything to me, they got an earful—which resulted in people hearing the undistorted message. And people joined because of that witness. I wrote a lot too, and those writings also got lots of publicity. I didn't compromise an iota and the enemies of Christ knew it. They hated to tangle with me, because I was so pugnacious when they did, that it made them look like a bunch of fools. So don't fear opposition or persecution. Hold your heads up and sock it to them. You'll love it and they'll hate it.

95. Yang and His Uncle

My name is Yang, and I was born in China shortly after WW2.

I became a Christian at the age of 18 and became part of a Christian Youth group that an older Christian had put together to combat the influence of the youth party of the communists—the Red Guards. The kindly Christian man who started our group was taken away and executed, but our faith remained strong, and we did many exploits in our Lord's name.

Much of my story I will have to tell another time, but the story I have to tell now involves the first time I suffered hardship for my faith, and how I, having no strength in myself, was given the grace to bear with it and to live in the realm of the miraculous. I pray that it is an encouragement to your faith, as well as an insight into the hardships Christians face in China and many countries.

In China, families are held very much to the system of honor, where if one member of a family commits a crime, the entire family is dishonored, and feels ashamed. This helps as a deterrent to the would-be criminal, and also provides the family with added motivation for keeping their youth in line.

My mother did not approve of my conversion to Christ, and she especially did not like my overnight change to worship Him only, instead of the false gods of our ancestors. She prayed extra hard to them for my change, and she started feeling that her prayers were answered when she received a knock one day from the police saying that her son was involved in illegal activity and would face discipline from his peers in the Party if he did not stop.

She called me to her when I arrived home, and told me that I had displeased my ancestors, and also the People's Party, and that I must stop my illegal doings. I tried to witness to her the best I could, and I again told her how my conversion had changed my life—making me a happier person—but she would not listen. She warned me that if I did not stop, I would be sent to the house of my mean uncle, and he would have permission to treat me harshly in order to get me to obey. My father, you see, had died in the war with Japan, and so my mother called on my uncle to discipline us when the occasion warranted it. Though she was a very tough woman, she understood that young men need an older man to look up to, and to receive correction from if necessary.

I didn't know what to say to her when she suggested this. I knew too well how harsh my uncle could be. He managed a house in the countryside, and living at his place meant a lot of hard work. I also understood the pressure my mother was under to stop me, as if she would fail, she would lose face amongst the people and be looked down on as a bad mother.

So right then, I asked Jesus for the humility to deal with the situation and bowed my head to my mother. I said, "Mother, I respect your loving care for me and your desire for what you think is best. I will go to my uncle's if it makes you happy, but please understand that Jesus will come with me, and even at my uncle's, I must do His bidding."

My mother brushed this off, and the next day sent me to work at my uncle's, giving me a letter to bear to my uncle saying that I was full of foolishness and instructing him to "work it out of me." I knew by the look on my uncle's face that

this would not be a hard thing for him to do. He was an elderly man, himself a widower, and he did not show mercy when I and my brothers were sent to him.

The next day at 3:00 in the morning, I was ordered to be up and join him in worship. I made him his tea, and he made me jog up the mountain with him on my back, journeying to the shrine where he honored his ancestors. All the way there, he taunted me, calling me a weakling and telling me that all the boys in his village were faster than I. He did this to break me, and to cause me to lose faith in myself. But I asked Jesus that as He bore the weight of the cross, to give me the grace to bear the weight of my uncle and his harsh words. So I simply smiled at him, and tried to comply.

As we got closer to the shrine, I asked my uncle how come he continued to worship his ancestors. His spirit lightened, as he saw the chance to impart some elderly wisdom. He ordered me to put him down, so he could take some rest, and he looked me in the eyes and told me, "Young Yang, sometimes you must follow what you know is right for the sake of the teaching, because of what is passed down to you from before. If you think you know better, you must not measure your personal feeling against what you know to be right."

I asked him then how he knew, and what continued to persuade him to follow these ways after many years. He softened a little, and spoke of his love for his wife. "Even if I did not honor my ancestors, because of my honorable wife, I would still gladly honor hers. Sometimes, the wisdom of one's heart will quiet any doubt of the mind."

Because he had spoken so plainly of the love of his wife, and his desire to honor her, I felt led to ask him more. My uncle is not known for many words, and to talk of his wife was something I had never heard him do. Yet he paused a little, and his eyes moistened. He spoke, "Young Yang, when you grow up from your foolishness, you will find a soul whose radiance blossoms like fire—one who, at your waking moment, instantly sets your day upon the path of good and light, no matter what hard struggles you may face. In the good times and the bad, she will care for you and bear a part of any burden you face. This is the love my wife gave me."

He then continued to walk his way up the mountain, bidding me follow. He never turned his face towards me, and I noticed how every now and then, a hand would reach up to his face to wipe a tear from his eye. But Chinese are taught to be respectful of another's sorrow, so I said nothing.

Yet the next day, it seemed he had forgotten about the previous day's discussion, and saw it again as his duty to purge me from my foolishness. I was commanded to have eaten and done my chores by 5:30 in the morning, so that I could lead the pigs into the main yard for their feeding. My uncle added extra humiliation into this task, asking me to bathe the pigs with water from the well, so that they might fetch a better price at the market.

Everyone knows it is not necessary to bathe a pig, as they will just get dirty as soon as you wash them. Yet remembering the sample of Jesus, Who opened not His mouth, I kept quiet and told my uncle that I would bathe them. My uncle looked at me thoughtfully, but did not say anything.

As I sat bathing each pig that came to the trough, my uncle sought to exact further humiliation upon me. He had fought as a colonel in the People's Army during World War Two, and now instructed the local boys in the art of self defense, physical stamina, and meditation. During a break in one of his classes, he led the young men he was teaching out to watch me bathe the pigs.

As he led the young men there to watch me, there was no need for words on his part. Just the sight of having a group of my peers watch me scrubbing smelly pigs was enough humiliation. But right then, amidst the silent sneers and smiles I saw on their faces, I got an idea.

"Hello there, my friends!" I beamed out, in a voice that was more confident than my nature. "It is a fine day to wash pigs, I feel!" I added this line with a smile on my face, helping them break into a nervous laugh that showed a touch of sympathy. "I must say, while the job of washing swine is a new honor to me, I once heard of a man who craved for a feast of the slop that is fed to these beasts." That held their attention, so as I continued to wash the hogs as best I could under my uncle's watchful eye, I told them the story of the Prodigal Son, and how he'd found himself wanting to eat the pigs' food. This wasn't my first sermon, for the first had been what had gotten me into trouble with the law. But this was definitely my most memorable one.

As I finished my story, my uncle ordered the boys to return to their classroom.

"Who has taught you this story?" my uncle inquired, in somewhat humble tones. I replied, "I learned it from a good Friend." I told him.

"Have you known this friend long?" he wondered.

"Not long, but He has been more to me than a friend. He is, as you put it yesterday, the best part of my life and has shared my burden in sorrow, and enriched my joy."

"Well, you would be wise to learn from this friend, and to keep his company. Perhaps he will help you learn to live your life well."

"My good uncle, I replied, I intend to. That is why I have brought Him here to see you."

"I did not see you bringing a friend", my uncle wondered, looking at me.

"Dear uncle," I said, taking a break from washing, "this Friend's name is Jesus. He died thousands of years ago, but lives within me, and He wants to live in you." My uncle was furious. He was not only concerned about keeping face, but he also worried about my safety, if I was heard to preach Jesus.

"Shut up, foolish boy, and listen to me!" he ordered. I would rather have a nephew knowing nothing better than to wash my hogs every day than to hear you preach such colonial nonsense. There is no Jesus, and to think such a person is your friend shows you are suffering from delusion." His words were bitter, as if repressing something inside.

"If you insist on being crazy, I will make you crazier still." He then ordered me to sharpen a blade as whet as a razor, and to shave the hairs of the hogs. Normally the hairs are removed from hogs after they are slaughtered in the market. But my uncle wished me to shave them now to shame me all the more, and make me repent of my foolish nonsense.

"My dear uncle," I responded, "My Friend Jesus has said He will never leave me, and He has commanded that I do this for you."

My uncle fumed silently and turned away to the house.

Inside, I greatly dreaded the task of shaving the hogs. Although it did not count as worse uncleanness to shave them than to bathe them, hogs do not like to sit still while you are touching them, and they can be violent with their large bodies. I also feared their powerful jaws.

But as I came out with the razor, each hog in the yard flocked to me like a group of sheep. I held the first one and began shaving with the newly sharpened knife. Yet my uncle's tirade wasn't over, and as soon as I started, he came out of the house shouting, "You unbelievable idiot! It's far too late in the morning to shave them. Tomorrow you may give my attentive class the privileged honor of viewing a demonstration on how to properly shave a hog!"

I nodded silently, and removed myself from the stool.

Jesus taught us to be silent, and even when He was to be killed, He opened not His mouth except to forgive and bless. This I asked for the strength to do.

After the long day on the farm was done. I was kept outside to eat dinner in the cold, as I smelled too strongly. Here, full baths were once a week, so I would carry this smell for a long time. However, as I was eating my supper on the porch, my uncle came to me.

He sat before me proudly, his back as stiff as his voice. "How is it, Yang, that you do not abandon your foolish friend, when he has so obviously not helped you at

all today? Possibly such a friend is just in your mind, and you have needs to go out and make a real friend for yourself."

Before I could answer he continued, "I have learned your mother wants to send you to the new university that is being built in your city. If you would show repentance, she would seek the approval of the council in your neighborhood and you might be allowed attendance there."

"Dear uncle," I felt the words coming in my mind, as if whispered in my ear, "it would be a great honor to learn of new things and to make you and my mother proud. Yet I would feel only shame to my dear Friend, who has yet to leave me, if I would not honor His requests of me."

"What does your friend request of you?" My uncle queried. I could tell his mocking undertone, trying to "reach" me through my insanity.

Still, patience filled me. I replied, "My Friend is not of this world, and He is building a Kingdom not of this world. This Kingdom is not built by armies, but is built by loving words and deeds, and by showing goodness to another."

"But such things can be done in this world too! Look at our great leader, and the Red Youth which will make the world a better place! Surely, if you want to do this, you can do it with them!"

"My uncle," I said again, "the Red youth are taught that they must believe in themselves, and look for power in themselves. But my Friend has taught me that all things done for self are naught, and that the truest endeavors come from the heart—out of love for Him and another."

My uncle was shocked. I could not understand what had caused him to be so perplexed, but he pulled back, studying my face for a minute, then he straightened up and stood straight over me.

"No bather of swine may sleep inside. Tonight, you have the company of your friend and the stars."

So, I gathered some hay and made a bed on the porch.

During the short time I was asleep, I dreamt of my Savior comforting me. He reminded me of the story of when He delivered His apostles out of prison in the night, and showed me that a great deliverance was yet to come.

I awoke in the middle of the night with this thought. Our Christian Youth group was prepared for the possibility of persecution, and that we might be put in jail for our faith. Yet I had never conceived of so strange a jail. Here I was bound to my uncle out of love for my mother's and his souls. Yet things were not likely to get better, and each time I was confronted with choosing My Savior over my uncle's advice, I even entertained the possibility that he might get violent with me. I committed these cares to Jesus, and rolled over to get some more sleep.

I felt a firm nudge against my shoulder. The sky was still dark, but my uncle was kicking me with his shoe. "Get up, hog-bather!" I awoke, and he pulled me up. "You have not been content with troubling me, and now my ancestors have awakened in the night and are speaking to me of your nonsense." I could see my uncle was clearly shaken, but also very angry with me.

He told me I was to again carry him to the shrine at the top of the mountain, where we would seek forgiveness and divine guidance as to how they should be appeased.

I was not yet fully awake, but came to my senses and perception of time about halfway up the mountain. I begged my uncle to tell me of the thoughts which perplexed him, but he commanded that we should wait till we reached the altar. When we were there, my uncle dismounted and bowed low before the shrine, lighting some incense which he had brought with him, as well as a small candle. After waving the incense in front of the altar, he commanded me to do the same. "Uncle, to you and my ancestors I convey my utmost respect, but I cannot worship them as gods."

My uncle's eyes looked very intensely at me, and he commanded me that I had done enough to cause my ancestors unrest. He said that in the night, they had tormented him and warned him that if he did not deal with me, I would grow to be a thorn in his side and would cause his family to lose much face. He was appointed, he said, to come to this place now and ask them for forgiveness. I was perplexed, though not entirely shaken at the thought of my uncle communing with his ancestors. I also thought of how Daniel and Joseph in the Bible were faced with strange dreams and were able to call on God's help. But what was I to do? My uncle did not need me to interpret his dream. I felt in quite a puzzle, and wondered what God would have me do.

Then, I felt it within me. I replied to my uncle, "Dear Uncle, I am sorry to cause you so much offense. I will gladly pray, and seek forgiveness for any wrong I have

done. I will also bear the burden of prayer for you, and will seek penance for both of us."

My uncle silently nodded, proud that I would at last come to my senses. I started to pray, "God, if You will listen, I pray for the forgiveness of my soul for I have indeed done many wrong things. I ask for Your forgiveness too, for any shame or hurt my misdeeds have caused my family."

I could tell that by the way my uncle sat silently that this is what he wanted to hear. But then I received another part to include in my prayer, which tested my faith greatly. I prayed, "I also pray, through Your Son Jesus Christ, for forgiveness for my uncle. May he be at peace, even as his wife's soul rests in peace. For You Who have forgiven all sins do not consider anything too great to pardon. Make it so for dear uncle."

I heard movement beside me. Fear rushed in, thinking my uncle would surely smite me for such disrespect towards him and his wife. But instead of a blow, I heard only sobbing, and beside me my uncle knelt with his face to the ground, his tears falling into the dirt in front of the altar.

"Yang-Mei, Yang-Mei, forgive me!" he wept over and over again. I placed my hand on him to comfort him, and his sobs ceased, though he uttered her name one last time.

He sat up, and stared in silence at the valley below us, as the sun started to rise. I sat next to him, leaving his thoughts in peace as the rays started turning the night sky into blue, and as we on the mountain were the first to be bathed in the sun's

golden glow. I looked again upon my uncle. Gone were the hard lines of a man of military discipline. Instead, he gazed softly at the rising sun as a small child might, with such peace in his eyes.

He started down the mountain and I followed him. We walked quietly to his house, and entered, finding his class of students waiting for their teacher.

My uncle walked before them, no longer the proud instructor he had been before, but gently nodded to each as if he were their friend, or father even. He sat upon his chair in front of them, then looked up to me with a smile and said. "Today's lesson is perhaps the most important lesson of life, and since you have shown yourselves to be studious and diligent young men, I will impart it to you." He leaned forward, then stared into the distance.

"A long time ago, I was as you are now—young, full of energy, with many great ideals. I believed in the power of one man to change the future, and I disciplined my mind and body so that I might serve as a perfect instrument for the betterment of the world.

"It was not surprising that I joined the military. If you are good at leading others, the men in the military will make you an officer. You will be looked up to, respected, and will be expected to hold your rank with diligence and precision. You are responsible for others, and also command the fate of many.

"Yet I did not care for people. I thought of myself, and I thought of my mission in this world. I would make this world great, and people would know what power lay within me. The men who were placed under me were disciplined severely, and

many begged to be taken from my regiment because of my high expectations from them. However, the military does not smile upon weakness, and those who complained found themselves either sent home in disgrace, or severely reprimanded in front of their fellow soldiers.

"My good discipline did help the men to become good soldiers, however, and when our country was invaded by the Japanese, we were sent out first to battle. I was proud that ours was the only regiment in our region chosen to lead the first assault. I felt my calling growing near, and that my place amongst the honorable was assured. But at home I had a lovely wife, and although she was proud of my accomplishments, she did not want to see me go off to war. I had a young child on the way, and there was a chance that its birth would be when I was engaged in conflict with the enemy.

"This would be understandable to the army, and the army would have sent another officer if I had asked to stay home till the child was born. But my heart did not want to stay, as I felt I had worked so hard for my dream, and that to avoid going into battle would set a bad example for my men, and perhaps show them that I wasn't tough enough or respectful of my duty. Many times my wife asked that I consider staying here, even saying she needed me just as I had many times needed her during past hardships. But I did not consider her pleas.

"On the day when I would move with my regiment to the areas we were invaded, my wife approached me to say goodbye. I held her close, and wondered in my heart if I had done the wrong thing in choosing to go. But my pride welled within me, blinding me to her tears. I proudly said, 'Yang-Mei, you should be proud to have a husband so committed to his duty.' She withdrew a little, and nodded her

assent, but then looking into my eyes she spoke, 'But yet I also understood that my husband's duty was to love me.' She then turned away, and the last I saw of her was watching me through a window as I drove away.

"When I left my house, I realized the mistake I'd made. Though I could not show it outwardly, my heart felt emotion that could not be buried. Here I was, a colonel in the army, ready to lead some of China's finest troops into battle. Yet my heart failed me. I knew that my choices had been right, by the mind. But by the heart, I had done the wrong thing.

"Though our forces were well-trained, bad leadership caused us to wither from the enemy's attacks. Many brave men died, and everything we had worked for those months and years in training were wasted away as we were called to retreat. The men I had been harsh with became broken, and even my most disciplined soldiers wept at night, thinking of their comrades who had perished. I know now that I had a chance to pity them, and to show I cared. But I hardened my heart yet again.

"Then word reached me from home that my wife had gone into labor, and that I would soon be a proud father. My superiors congratulated me, and gave me leave to return. My grief and dishonor in defeat was forgotten as I thought about the new life that would be waiting as I hurried home.

"Yet in arriving, I noticed the servants dressed in mourning. There were priests walking through my property, and my wife's mother was there. I had come home with the brightest of my uniforms, hoping to impress many with the medals I had received in battle, but when I questioned my mother-in-law, she wept as she told

me that my son and my wife had both passed away at birth. There was no doctor when she was set to be delivered, as many doctors from our district had gone to help the army. Friends and neighbors had come to help her, but because of complications in the delivery, no one had known what to do, and in the agony of that moment she had cried my name, and passed out, her soul passing with her. "Hearing this, my surroundings spun around me, and I collapsed to my knees as the shock unfolded. Apparently they had sent me a telegram of this, but it had not reached me in time.

"So great was the grief that I could not speak to anyone for three days.

"Now my darling wife was taken from me, my child was dead, and my mind was tortured at the thought of having abandoned those I loved in my blind ambition for recognition and power. It was not a single decision that had put me on the path of self-interest, but a consistent and conscious choosing to avoid the needs of others, and to live for myself and for my dreams.

"I now know the power of one choice. My nephew has shown me the power of his belief and of his God. At any moment, he could have given it away, he could have chosen a more comfortable lifestyle away from my taunts and jeers and the misunderstandings of those around him. But he persisted because of the love of his true Friend. It is of this true friendship that I wish for him to speak to you, and today's lesson is a lesson in life and love."

At this, my uncle's eyes watered, and he bowed to me, beckoning me forward. Now the boy who had previously preached from a pigsty was exalted above the teacher, and presented the message of Christ to this audience. I knew within myself that it wasn't because of my devotion or fortitude that I had remained

faithful to Christ, but because He had remained faithful to me, fulfilling every promise that I had learned up until then.

My uncle's story does not stop there. As he grew in faith and knowledge of Jesus, he became an ordained minister. It was humbling for him to submit to the tutelage of those younger in body than he, but the change I saw in him that night on the hilltop remained, and the harshness and discipline that he had exacted before was replaced by the fervent expression of his love for Christ. This he witnessed to the many young boys who would gather at his home, and to any he met.

Finally, the communist party tried to silence him. Knowing that to execute a war hero would raise questions, they announced to the people that they were sending him off to "further the efforts of communist work" in a remote region of China. No news reached us, as his location was too remote, yet I know that even this was God's doing, and I now know that my uncle continued his work there, to the day of his passing.

As for me, I returned to my mother's house. At first she was silent—almost reverent of the power I seemed to have. But soon she turned to distrust, and in hearing that I would not go to college, but would rather continue my activities with this youth group, she yielded to the pressures of the state, and committed me for re-education.

I was sent to a distant province for intense programming in a boarding school known for its harsh discipline and living conditions. Living the life of a disciple was not easy there, but still, God uses what may be beyond the realm of our

possibility to prove His infinite possibilities through His Word. I pray that I may return another time to tell the stories of other things our Lord did for me.

But until then, keep up the fight, dear children of David. Farewell!