

Chapter I Raptured

"5-O-9, Dispatcher to 5-0-9."

"This is 5-0-9 go ahead, Dispatcher."

"What is your 1020?"

"I'm at the intersection of Kellem and Aragona working radar."

"5-0-9, sorry to call you off radar, but the phones are ringing off the hook."

"Dispatcher, do you think it has anything to do with the bright light and strange sound I just heard coming from the east, back toward the Beach District?"

"5-0-9, I don't know, but everything is going crazy in here. Anyway, you have multiple accidents reported on Virginia Beach Blvd. The people calling in are hysterical. They don't make any sense. They all are screaming and hollering about people vaporizing and driverless vehicles ramming into everything. Respond as soon as possible. I can't talk anymore. I'm too busy, Judy went on break and hasn't come back yet to help me with these calls."

"5-0-9 to dispatcher, 10-4."

I pulled my patrol car out from the quiet road where I was working radar. Then I headed towards the most used road in the city, Virginia Beach Boulevard. Several blocks away I could hear horns blowing and the worst wailing I have ever heard in my five years as a cop. Nothing prepared me for the scene I came upon As I pulled onto Virginia Beach Boulevard. I could see a woman with her clothes smoldering. She was stumbling in the median strip, with her right hand raised to the sky and her left hand clutching a small burnt teddy bear to her chest. I got out of my patrol car with my heart beating so fast I could hardly breathe, and ran to the lady as fast as I could. As I got to her I could smell the sweet repugnant smell of burnt human flesh. I have smelled this odor too many times in my five years as a traffic officer. I grabbed hold of this lady just as she collapsed. I could see she was burned over much of her upper body and was going into shock. If I couldn't get an ambulance on the scene right away, this lady was not going to make it! I laid her down onto the soft grass of the median strip as comfortable as possible and started for my patrol car to call for help. She suddenly grabbed my arm and started crying and mumbling something to me. I couldn't understand her but the look on her face made me lean closer to her and tell her to calm down so I could understand what she was saying.

With what must have been a super-human effort, she struggled to gasp out to me, "My baby! My baby...please find her. She was in the safety seat in the back of my car. This truck crossed the median strip and hits me head on. My car burst into flames! I was able to get out of my front door and open the back door to try and get my baby. Oh...God, she wasn't there. Her blanket and clothes and even her diaper was still lying in her safety seat with the buckles still locked, but my baby wasn't there! I jumped into the back seat, trying to find her! Nowhere...she was nowhere in the car; I couldn't find her! The flames forced me to back out of the car. Oh, please find her! She is my whole life! Please, help me! Oh God, save my little baby! She is only eight months old. Please, God, help me!"

I could hardly comprehend what she was saying, but I rushed to her car, which was a charred mess. All the fire was out except for two of the tires still burning, giving off a lot of

black smoke that choked me and made it hard to see into the car. I checked as best I could, to no avail. I couldn't see any signs of the remains of her baby. Turning my thoughts back to the badly burnt woman, I went back to her and began to tell her I couldn't see anything. My words fell on deaf ears. She died while I was looking for her child. My eyes filled with tears and I bent down on my knees and took the lady's hand in mine. She was still clutching the little teddy bear to her chest. I cried out, "God, what is going on here?" I must have held the lady's hand for just a few minutes when I heard a muffled cry above the horns that were blaring from all the wrecked cars. I gently let go of this poor souls' hand and stood up on trembling legs, trying to pull myself together. After all, I was a cop, a public servant! That's all I ever wanted to be sense a kid. I had to get my act together and do my job. I began to pull the cables off the batteries of the cars whose horns were blowing. I couldn't hear with all the numbing noise and I needed to try and figure out the situation. At last, a quiet enough moment where I could think and hear. The cry was coming from a ditch along side an overturned car about fifty yards from where I was standing. I shouted out, "Hold on I'm coming!" I got there as fast as I could. There in the ditch was a young teenage boy about sixteen or seventeen years old. His right lower leg was trapped under the car.

I said, "Hold on! You'll be all right. I'm going to get you out of here. What's your name, son?"

He weakly replied, "Bobby, Bobby Johnson."

"Bobby, how did this happen?"

Bobby replied, "I was just driving along, going to the store for my mom. All of a sudden that blue pickup truck over there smashed into that car that was on fire. Then it veered into my lane, sliding backwards towards me. I panicked and drove into the ditch to avoid him. He hit the back of my car causing my car to turn over several times. I was thrown out of my car and it landed on my leg. I guess I was unconscious for awhile. When I came to, I spotted you over by the burnt car. I tried to call to you. The noise from the horns was so bad I didn't think you would ever hear me. Are you going to give me a ticket for not wearing my safety belt, Officer? Honest, I couldn't avoid the accident. My mom is going to kill me for wrecking her car!"

"Ticket, safety belt, mom, son you're lucky to be alive! Don't be concerned about such trivial things. Now, let me try to lift the back of your car up and see if you can pull your leg out, okay?"

"Okay, It doesn't hurt much; it's just pinned so I can't move it."

"Get ready now son; here we go." I put all my weight into it as I pulled up on the fender. Being six feet four inches tall and weighing two hundred and sixty-five pounds was an asset to me as the car began to rise. "Pull...pull, Bobby!"

"It's out! I'm free, my leg is free, officer!"

"Great, Bobby!" I dropped the car back to the ditch, grateful I didn't have to go any higher. Bobby stood up and began to limp around while checking himself for injuries. We were both grateful that he only suffered minor contusions and scratches. His right ankle appeared to be swollen, but Bobby was limping alone on it pretty good. "Listen Bobby, I don't know what's going on. There are wrecked cars all up and down the road as far as I can see in both directions. I need your help if you feel up to it."

"I'm fine now that you freed me from under my car. Anything, Officer; you name it!"

I put my arm around this kid's neck and gave him a slight hug. I was glad to have some help and said, "Great Bobby and by the way, don't worry about any tickets. I'll square it with your mother about her car, also."

"Cool! I mean great," Bobby said.

“That's all right, Kid. Now let's get to work. I want you to check every car to the east for about two blocks. Look for injured people and assist them the best you can. Tell them help is on the way and to remain calm. Look, Bobby, this may not be too pleasant for you. There may be dead people and some may be pretty messed up. Do you think you are up to it?”

“Sure, officer, I know it will be hard, but I can handle it.”

“I'm sure you can. Bobby, let's get going. Meet me back here when you have checked two blocks and done all you can. If you find anyone in shape to assist us, ask if they will. Meantime I'll contact the dispatcher and try to get us some medical help out here. Then I'll check two blocks to the west.” I walked back to my patrol car, grateful for Bobby's help, and called the dispatcher. “Dispatcher, this is 5-0-9. I need all the medical help and assistance I can get.” There was no response. I waited a couple of seconds and repeated the message. Still no response. Anger began to replace my confusion and shock and I shouted into the mike, “Get off your fat rear ends and respond to me. I've got the worst mess here I have ever seen and I need help now!” Still no response. I threw the mike down against the radio and started to go on and do what I could. I swore I'd get even with the dispatcher when my shift was completed. Just as I was about to walk away from the patrol car, the radio crackled and the dispatcher came on speaking very slow and emotional.

“Dispatcher to all cars. There is no help for anyone. All emergency services are swamped. Many of our officers and firemen and medical personal aren't responding to phone calls and we can't locate them. Judy is gone from the office and I'm here by myself. The central communication system between all the reciprocal states is blurring out the same conditions in all the States. The President of the United States has informed the governors of all the states that there is a national emergency. The National Guard and all available military personnel not already activated will be called out for this situation. No one knows what has caused this, but the rumors are running rampant. Some say aliens have attacked us with an unknown type of weapon. I don't know! Before Judy disappeared from here she was reading her Bible and singing and praising the Lord, the way she always did. I looked at her Bible and it was open to 1st Thessalonians and she had highlighted chapter 4 vs. 16-18. I couldn't help reading it. I want all of you to hear what it says: ‘For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall raise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.’ I've told you all I know now. I don't see how I can do any more good here. I'm going to try and get home and see if I can find my family. No one answers the phone at home. My wife is a Christian and she has been talking about this same thing coming soon. She referred to it as the Rapture. I passed it off as her being overly religious. I didn't listen; I didn't want to hear of such a thing. I mean, how could this be real? I've been to church and I've given into the emotionalism at the moment, but it soon faded. I didn't want to change my way of life for something that may be just a fairy tale. But, now I don't know! My wife was so sincere in her belief. She's a good wife and mother. She always prayed for me to have a real faith conversion. Now, it may be too late for me. Again, everybody is on their own. Do what you can, but don't expect any help! Dispatcher out!”

I stood there staring into my patrol car, at the radio, not believing what I just heard. My feet and arms seemed numb. I could not believe what the dispatcher had just said. I have known Mike for the whole time I have been on the force. We signed up at the same time. He is not one to crumble like this in a crisis. What in the world is going on? The whole world is messed up

bad.. Nothing is making any sense! Things like these just don't happen! Man, this is 1998. We are a highly sophisticated society. The whole world is coming together like never before. We are on the verge of a new one-world government that promises peace and prosperity to all. Why, just a week ago the newly elected president of the U.N. from Turkey, Oman Tharriff, united the world. He got an overwhelming vote passed, for his proposal to unite all nations into a one-world common market. It calls for free trade and fairness to all nations on the planet. He promised peace to all nations and wanted to unite us all under one god. Everybody loves him for this. No one else has been able to do so much for the world. What is this talk of alien attack? Mike talking about the rapture? This is just too much to digest. I have to get back to doing my job.

The rest of the day was a nightmare. Everywhere I looked there was carnage from wrecks, house and car fires, explosions from busted gas mains, you name it. There were people everywhere trying to find family and loved ones. The ones who approached me thought I would have the answers. I didn't have any answers to anything. I just tried to calm as many people as possible and direct them to the pre-designated shelters and emergency facilities. I enlisted as many citizens as I could to transport the injured and bewildered to the help facilities. I heard someone calling to me from the direction of my cruiser. As I got closer, I could see it was Bobby Johnson, the kid that was assisting me. I had all but forgotten him in all the confusion around me.

"Officer, I did what I could. There are people all over who are injured and some dead. I've never seen anything like this. I got sick to my stomach several times, but I tried to keep my word to you and do all I could. Some people offered to help and others were acting crazy and just running around or sitting somewhere just staring off at the sky, praying. Officer, I'm scared. I want to go home now and see my mom. I'm worried for her and my sister."

"Bobby, don't call me officer, call me Lance, Lance Carper. I'm proud to know you, Bobby. You have been a great help to your fellow citizens and me. I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I'm glad to have known you. Go, Son, find your mom and sister and let them know what a hero you are. Take that Jeep over there, it's not damaged. Thank you for all your help."

"You're welcome, Officer Lance."

Poor Bobby; I felt guilty for involving him in helping me. He's too young to witness so much horror. Yet, I have a feeling that he and all of us haven't seen the worst of it yet! If Mike is right...No, what am I thinking! I have to reason this out. There must be a sensible explanation for all this. I just can't comprehend aliens or supernatural biblical explanations like Mike was babbling about. Yet, what was that loud sound coming from the East and that bright blinding light that followed? The sound was like nothing I have ever heard before. Like a muted trumpet blast and rumblings of thunder. But the sky is clear and it is a beautiful spring day. No signs of bad weather anywhere. Maybe a plane crashed, with the Navy base so close! That must be it. It was bound to happen with all the flying in and out of the base. I...I don't know! I don't want to think about it anymore.

Getting back into my patrol car, I headed back to headquarters. I had been on duty from 7:00 a.m. until now, 6:30 p.m.. My body was racked with pain and my mind was confused and filled with the horror I witnessed, all around me. I just wanted to get back to headquarters, turn in my patrol car, get in my car, go home, take a long shower and go to sleep. Yea, sure! Arriving at headquarters, I was met by half the force plus armed units of the National Guard all over the place. As I was parking, my best friend, Rob, came over to me and opened my car door.

"Well, old buddy where have you been for so long."

"What do you mean, Rob, I've been working my butt off. Haven't you heard about all the

accidents, fires and other catastrophes going on? I've been working them until I can't go anymore!"

"Lance, you haven't seen anything yet! Doesn't your radio work?"

"No, not since I threw the mike at it, why?"

"Well' just look around you, Lance. The Chief has been calling all available personnel, on or off duty, to report to headquarters and he called out the weekend warriors, also. He is going to talk to all of us in a few minutes. Everybody has to be here!"

"Man, I can't handle this, Rob! I'm beat, too beat to stick around. I'm going home to rest. Tell the Chief how long I've been out there. He will understand."

"No way, Lance, here he comes now. Listen up."

Chief Lister walked swiftly to the top of the steps near the muster room and looked around. He surveyed all who were there, some seventy officers and perhaps two hundred National Guardsmen along with sixty or seventy firemen. There were municipal employees from all the city and state agencies in the adjoining court buildings, also. He reached into his breast coat pocket and pulled out a letter, opened it, and looked at it for a few seconds. Shaking his head slightly he held the letter up and waved it in the air as he began to talk. "I have here a copy of a letter from the President of the United States. It has been passed down from the Governor to all the police, fire and rescue, and judicial authorities in the state. I will read it to you: To the Governors of all the fifty states of the United States. From the President of the United States of America; this morning at approximately 7:25 a.m., May 5, 1998, my Cabinet staff and I were advised by the Pentagon that an unidentified flying object landed on the Potomac River near the Capital. The craft landed, undetected by our most sophisticated devices. It was clocked in a highly advanced stealth system rendering them totally invisible even to the human eye. Our Defense Department was contacted by way of computer that an alien contingency would meet with the Joint Chiefs, the Senate and House members with my Cabinet members and me at 8:00 a.m., in the courtyards of the White House. They stated that they were friendly and had no weapons and wanted only to explain our origin and destiny. At eight o'clock sharp there appeared, out of thin air, three small creatures of human like features that resembled the gray aliens so often reported by what we use to call crackpots. They spoke in no audible voice but we were able to hear them clearly, telepathically. They related that in the beginning of the Earth, they had placed a colony of beings from a distant galaxy here and they reproduced with them creating the race of humans we are today. They explained that genetic mutations in some humans made them unable to reach the next level of creation. So, at approximately 7:15 a.m. this morning, they removed the defective humans by vaporizing most of them. This was so that the rest of humanity could evolve without being contaminated by breeding with the defective ones. They cautioned that others may have escaped the eradication and pop up later with this defect. If so, we are to eradicate them at once. These Creators have shared with us many secrets of the Universe and technology that will help us evolve to the next level. They left as they had appeared, into thin air. We were told to do our part and they would be watching us to assist us when we needed them. As the President of the United States, after conferring with all the world leaders, who were also contacted by these Creators, I issued a decree that all the military and civilian authorities will act in one accord to search out and destroy the Defective by whatever means necessary. We are standing on the edge of a new world where we will all be equal and prosperous. I grant absolute authority to the governors of each state to enact these policies. God bless the United States and the New World Order."

Chief Lister lowered the letter and said, "This letter is signed by the President. We have

no choice but to do as requested by him. I will be relieved of my duties and replaced by Mr. George Black from the State Department. He will be coordinating our city in these new directives."

Just then a large man in a dark blue suit stepped in front of the Chief and, grinning broadly said, "Glad to be here. You look like a great bunch to be working with. I will meet with all Sergeants and above on the police and fire departments and military units, as well as all supervisors and above in the civilian branches of the judiciaries. Be there at 7 PM in the Municipal Court Building to lay out our plans and set up a chain of command. See you then."

I turned and looked at Rob in disbelief. He appeared as stunned as I was. We both stood there for a short time just staring at each other.

The silence was broken when Captain Barker shouted out, "Sergeant Carper, Sergeant Laven, don't stand there with your mouths open: get over to the Court building; you heard the man."

We both turned and started across the parking lot to the court building.

"What in the world is he talking about? Surely this can't be happening! Rob, tell me this is a dream and who is this government man telling us what to do?"

"I don't know, Lance, and I don't think I want to know, either!"

Chapter 2 Where Did They Go?

Bobby Johnson got into the Jeep and made his way through the wreckage, heading back to his home as fast as possible.

Bobby began to think out loud, “Man, I can't believe all this! What is Mom going to do to me for trashing her car? She only let me drive to the store this morning because we were out of milk and it was six forty-five a.m., Saturday morning. She wanted to sleep in just awhile longer because she and my fifteen-year-old sister were late coming in last night from a prayer group at our church. She didn't make me go like she often did because I threw such a fit. I wanted to be with my friends. We had a party at someone's house whose parents were out of town. There was alcohol and some drugs there and I knew better than to let Mom know the kind of friends I hang with. Parents just don't understand how it is today. After all, I don't hate church I just want to do my own thing while I'm young. I have plenty of time to get straight. I have to make my own mistakes, don't I? I love Mom but I hate her always pushing me to go to church. I'm seventeen and old enough to make my own decisions in life. Officer Carper told me I was a hero. Doesn't that show how I've grown up and became a responsible person? Yeah, Mom your son is a hero! You will be proud of me and maybe you'll get off my back about going to church. I'm a big man now; yeah, a big man now!”

“Hey mom, I'm home! You won't believe what happened to me. Mom...Mom, where are you? I know I've been gone for several hours, but I can explain it. Mom, your baby boy is a real hero! Come on, Mom, where are you? Sis...Sis, isn't anyone home?” I looked in Mom's and Sis's bedrooms and all through the house; nobody was home. I know they couldn't go off. I was driving the only car we have. Dad disappeared with a dancer he met at some club when I was nine. Since then Mom had to do the best she could in raising Sis and me, as a single parent. That doesn't leave room for a second car. I've been trying to save for a car for me from the odd and end jobs I get, but I keep spending it on partying. Man, I've got to get control of that. I need my own car. Maybe they're next door at Margie's house. That's Mom's best friend and prayer partner. The bell's ringing but no one answers.

I went around back and looked into the kitchen window. Mr. Wilson, Margie's husband was sitting at the kitchen table. He had a bottle of whiskey in his hand and a blank stare on his face. I knew he was a heavy drinker, but really, drunk at this time of the day! What a loser! The rear door off the kitchen was open so I stepped in to ask Mr. Wilson if he had seen my Mom or Sis.

“Hey, Mr. Wilson, have you seen Mom?” George Wilson turned his head slowly in my direction. He looked liked Hell warmed over.

“Bobby, are you still here? They're gone, all gone!”

“What do you mean, Mr. Wilson, all gone?”

“Where have you been, Bobby? Haven't you heard the news? Look around you Boy; they are gone...gone! Can't you understand? It's all over for us who are left. We are as good as dead! I didn't believe a word of what Margie and your mother had to say about the Lord coming back to get them who believed in Him. However, it was all real and it happened just like they said, in a moment, in the twinkle of an eye....Oh, God! Bobby, I was talking to Margie as she was cooking breakfast, and she just disappeared in front of my eyes! You hear what I'm saying,

Boy? Gone only her clothes she had on were left. There was a bright flash of light and a rumbling sound and then, nothing. She just disappeared into thin air! Oh, Lord, she tried to tell me that for so many years this would happen one day. Today, Bobby, today is the day! God have mercy on us who wouldn't hear! Oooh, it's too late, it's....too late. Margie....Margie, I need you! Please come back to me! Please, don't leave me like this! I'll listen to you if you'll just come back. I'll be a better person. please, oh, pleeease.”

I began to back for the door. This drunken old fool was out of his mind! “What’s a matter with you, Mr. Wilson? You're talking like a crazy man! You need to put that whiskey bottle down and sleep it off. It's way too early to be drinking like that. Look what it's done to you!”

I backed out the door while Mr. Wilson buried his head in his arms and sobbed like a baby. “Man, what in the world is going on, Bobby mumbled. Is everybody losing their mind? First, all those accidents and people killed while many people were reported missing and now Mom and Sis missing and Mr. Wilson.....Wait a second; a cold chill ran down my spine as I stopped dead in my tracks. “People missing....people missing everywhere! Is Mr. Wilson drunk out of his mind or is he serious? Did he really see his wife disappear right in front of him? Too many people talking the same thing. But, how could it be? No....no! I can't handle this! No! Wait, I'll go back into my house and look better. Mom and Sis are playing a joke on me. Yeah, that must be it.”

I ran back into the house and went into my sister Dawn’s room. No sign of her! Wait, just as I turned to leave her room I noticed something. I went over to her bed and saw the Jesus Loves Me T-shirt she wore as a nightshirt, sticking from under the bedspread. I pulled back the covers and was dumb-founded to see her T-shirt and her promise ring lying there. She never took that ring off. She and a bunch of teenagers from various churches around the nation had made a covenant with God that they would stay virgins until they married. No way she would take that ring off and leave it lying in her bed! She took that commitment very serious. “Mom...Mom! Can it be true?”

I went slowly to Mom's room and went to her bed. Under the covers I found mom's nightgown and the golden cross necklace she always wore just lying there like in Sissy's room, as if they had vanished like Mr. Wilson said his wife did. I fell to the bed and cuddled Mom's nightgown to my face and began to cry like I have never cried in my entire life. I could smell Mom's perfume in her nightgown, but I couldn't feel her arms around me like before whenever I needed comforting. She was always there to make it better.

“Mom...please make it better. Please...Momm!”

I got up after a long time and went outside and sat on the front porch steps, trying to make sense out of today. People killed everywhere, people missing everywhere, people wondering around in shock everywhere. Other than the wrecked vehicles and a few house fires, everything still looks the same. It was now late evening of a beautiful spring day. The kind of day that should have been full of laughter and fun things; but, it’s a day filled with death and...and...loss!

“I'm alone! I don't have any other family just me to face...what?”

Again, the tears welled up in my eyes and I fell to my knees on the sidewalk and then prone on my face.

“God! Oh, Lord Jesus, please forgive me for my lack of faith and unbelief! I was a fool. I had a godly mother and sister who tried to tell me that time was of the essence. I learned all about you in church but I missed the most important point. I had to confess you with my mouth, but, most of all, I had to believe in you with my heart. I put you aside because I was caught up in

doing my own thing, no matter what the consequences. I guess I put you so far behind me that I walked clean away from you. Now look what's happened. It must be true! You came while I was away, not ready to receive you. Like those five out of ten virgins you write about in Your Bible, I had no oil in my lamp. My light had gone out because I said, 'later' to you. Later, after I've done all I wanted to do in this world to please man and myself. Now I've missed you. Is there any hope left for me? I know it's late, but will you forgive me of my sins and help me to tell others about your saving grace? Lord, I remember Mom telling me about the end times and how the only way for someone to get to Heaven after the Rapture is to be martyred for Your name. Let it be done unto me as pleases you, Lord, so that I can make it to Heaven. I will do anything you ask me to do, Lord Jesus! Please speak to my heart so I can hear you clearly Lord, and I will do your will. I will, Lord; I promise with all my heart and soul! Thank you Lord God for listening to me a sinner. Your child, Bobby. Amen!"

I pulled myself up to my knees and looked up. The sky was so beautiful and the setting sun cast radiant colors of orange and red against the horizon. I wondered out loud, how could everything look the same after the most terrifying event in the history of the world has taken place? I just wanted to die quickly and get it over with, but I had a strange feeling inside after praying to God. I felt I had a mission, a calling perhaps, to research the Bible and find out exactly what has happened and to tell as many people as possible all about it.

"Mom, if you can hear me, I'm so sorry for not paying attention to your motherly advice! You tried to tell me so many times about the coming of the Lord and how I had to prepare for it because time was running out. You told me about the signs of the times. How Israel becoming a nation again after so many years was the sign that Jesus talked about in Matthew, chapter 24. I need to look that up and read it again with a new perspective. I remember you telling me about the tribulation period that would follow the taking up of the Church (the body of believers)."

I began to shake and tremble all over as I started to get the real meaning of what Mom had tried to warn me about. She won't be here to help me through this terrible time, but somehow I know I will make it! I'm going to trust God to see me through. I can feel His presence in my life like I've never felt it before. I need to seek out others who feel like I do and formulate a plan to get to know God's word and His direction for us who have been left behind! Yes, left behind, but with a new purpose and desire to overcome the world, no matter what it takes!

Chapter 3 The New Command

“Rob, something doesn't feel right about this government guy taking over for the Chief. If the Government can take his power away from him like that, what about the rest of us?”

“Well Lance, I guess it doesn't really matter who the boss is as long as we get paid every other Friday, does it? Orders are orders no matter who puts them out. Remember the President is the one who set this up. We've got to do whatever the Commander in Chief says to do; right ol' boy?”

“I don't know Rob, maybe you're right but something stinks! I get a terrible feeling in my gut when Mr. Black talks. Look in his eyes, Rob. There's something cynical in those cold dark eyes. It makes my skin crawl.”

“Come on, Lance, don't try to find fault in someone you don't even know. You heard what the Chief read from the President. There might be a bunch of defective people out there just waiting to infect the rest of us. We all knew or felt that there must be aliens, so don't be so surprised that they finally landed and contacted us. Personally, I kinda believe that Aliens put us here, like they said. This just goes to show us that it was the truth.”

“Rob, you trained me as a police officer and you have been my best friend ever since, but if you buy into this hog wash about us being descendent from aliens, that's where we part company! I don't have a lot of faith, but one thing I know, God created us. You know, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I even believe in Jesus. I just didn't seem to get close to Him. I wish I would have now because a lot of things are starting to get clearer to me. Whoa! Could this be it? Where has my mind been? This is it!”

“Lance, are you going spastic on me? What do you mean, this is it? Don't you start to get religious on me now. You've never talked much about that stuff before, why now?”

“Oh, never mind, Rob. You wouldn't understand anyway.”

We walked the rest of the way to the court building in silence. How could I expect Rob to understand what I was talking about when I wasn't even sure myself?

When everybody got inside and was seated, Mr. Black made his appearance by the judge's stand. He made some dry joke about “Here comes the Judge” and laughed like a hyena. Only a few people tried to respond to the stupid joke.

Mr. Black walked forward and his expression grew somber. He squared his stance and surveyed the room before speaking. “Well, I can see you are all ready to go, and a serious bunch at that. All of you are leaders among your various departments, and as such your government is relying on you to implement the directives of the President and the World Government Leader. These are very serious directives and there is no room for failure or noncompliance by anyone. I assure you that the penalty for failure or noncompliance of any kind, by anyone, will be dealt with in the harshest ways! Now, with that out of the way, let's get down to the business at hand!”

It became evident that Mr. Black was well trained in urban tactics and the manipulations of the rights of the people. He was affiliated with one of the clandestine One-World groups before working for the State Department. The President and the World Government Leader suspended all national solvency of all the nations, then put absolute authority in the hands of a group of people that remain unidentified to the public or even those of us who were supposed to

enact their laws.

Mr. Black set up a state government leader in each of the fifteen police precincts in our city. Under these leaders were leaders from the police department, fire departments, city government officials and leaders of the military and National Guard. A system of command was set up the rest of the way down to us lowly sergeants. Duties and work schedules were assigned to us all. Large manuscripts were handed out to each of us with the admonishment that all of us were to become acquainted with them right away.

Forget any leave time or sick time due you. From this moment on, there would be no sick time or leave time. We were to work in twelve hour shifts, starting right now-twelve hours on and twelve off, seven days a week! It was so kind of Mr. Black to tell us that there would be no overtime pay, either. Just our regular salary because the Government would not be able to absorb such a great increase of expenditures at this time. He believes that since this was for our country and world security, surely we would be willing to make the sacrifice! With that statement Mr. Black walked back over to where the chief of police and the mayor were conferring.

“Bull burgers, he must think all of us have no life! At least most do, Lance muttered. Well, I use to have a life until I pushed my wife to the point that she couldn’t take my trash anymore and she left me two years ago. I don’t blame her for leaving. If I were her, I would have left me a lot sooner than she did.” I dated around some but no relationship lasted very long. It’s not easy to put up with a cop's lifestyle. This job can make you withdrawn from those who aren’t involved in this kind of work. You can also get caught up in the seamier side of life if you aren’t careful. I found myself being pulled by the excitement and naughtiness of the dark side of life. It cost me dearly. First my wife, then my home and about everything I held dear to me. It took me over a year to get my act back together and get on with my life. What does it matter if I work twelve hours or twenty-four hours. I don’t have any reason to rush home. Maybe a little sleep for now, though! I’m beat! Rob, let’s go over to the duty board and check out our schedules. I will croak if I have to go right back out there.”

“Okay Lance, I’m pretty bushed myself.”

We both went to the duty board and found our names and our schedules.

“Oh, no, no! Not me! Lance, they have me on for the next twelve hours!”

“Man, I’m sorry, Rob. They have me off for the next twelve hours. It’s a good thing they do. I would have found a hole and hid in it while I closed my eyes for awhile. My body can’t take but so much.”

“Lance, you lucky dog. I’ll think of you at home sleeping while I’m out there suffering.”

“Yeah, you do that, Rob. This cop is out of here!”

I left Rob standing at the duty board and went out to my assigned parking space and got into my private car and left as fast as I could, before someone changed his mind. My mind was awash with all that I had seen and heard today. How could all this happen in such a short time? Rob wanted to know what I meant by “This is it.” I couldn’t tell him what I meant. He would have laughed his head off and ridiculed me for being foolish. Rob is a great cop and good friend, but he has never shown any interest in religious matters. Some of the parts of my life I keep to myself, I guess that’s why I never really discussed it with him. My mom and dad, God rests their souls, were godly Christians and tried to raise me in their belief. They’re gone on to their rest. A lot of what they taught me is still with me. I can’t shake loose from the Christian teachings, that easy. I know I’ve been living wrong and I lost so much because of it. Could it be that I lost more than the worldly things? Have I lost my soul? Did I miss Jesus for the second time? Am I going

into that eternal abyss I've heard about so many times from my parents and the church I use to attend many years ago?

I pulled the car into my driveway and looked around before getting out of. It was so quiet. Very few lights were on in the homes on my street. My house was pitch black. Of course, there was no one there to greet me and ask me how my day went. No one to put their arms around me and tell me, "Every thing will be okay, we can make it."

I fell forward onto the steering wheel and tears began to swell up into my eyes and then overflowed like a torrential rain. My chest heaved, heavily, to take in the large gulps of air I needed to breathe. I felt light-headed and nauseated at the same time. I didn't want to go into my dark, lonely house.

"Oh God, what's to become of a man who's lost all his direction? How do I find my way in this world that has entered into a pact with the Devil? I don't want to be a part of the new directives just handed down by my Government! They want me to seek out and destroy those they call Defective. I don't believe these people are defective! Is it possible these people are the ones I read about in your Bible a long time ago? Something to do with the Tribulation Saints, I believe? Those who would give up their lives before they would denounce Jesus! Is this what I as a police officer am getting ready to face? Dear God, I can't shoot down your very own! I've never even shot a hardened criminal. I did everything in my power to take control of a perpetrator without using deadly force. Even when it put my life in danger. I believe in the sanctity of human life. God, what am I to do? I know about you and your Son, Jesus, but I went my own destructive way as if I had all the time in the world to get to know you on a personal level. What a great feeling of loss I have at this moment."

I don't know if God heard me or even if He wanted to hear me this late. I slowly got out of my car and walked to my front door and went inside. Switching the light on, I looked around at my sparsely furnished living room. I never realized how empty it looked before. An old couch, a recliner, two end tables with old lamps that don't match on them and a television. So this is it. A lifetime of being my own person and looking out for number one. There it is, pitiful!

I went into my bedroom and undressed and fell into bed, more exhausted than I can ever recall. If I can just sleep. Tomorrow will be better, tomorrow..... will..... .

Chapter 4 Update

The next three and a half years went by with every day becoming worse than the previous one. There were periods when everything looked as if it would get better. Like when Oman Tharrif, the head of the New World Government that was instituted back when the Aliens landed in Washington D. C., signed a seven year treaty with Israel. Most of the Nations experienced peace for the first time since who knows when. Free trade and international cooperation were at its highest. It seemed as if every business on the face of the earth was prospering and the rich got richer, for a little while; at least that's what it looked like on the surface. That is except for most of the Third World Nations.

Famine and terrible viruses seemed to overtake whole villages and even cities. The ever increasing bad weather patterns really took its toll on most of these nations, causing crop destruction and contaminating the soil rendering it unable to grow crops. Worst were the illnesses that affected so many. These sicknesses made the aids virus look like a walk in the park. There was absolutely no known cause or treatment for these horrendous diseases. Some would eat away your flesh like as if a school of piranha attacked you. Others caused your blood vessels to enlarge until they burst open, causing you to bleed to death while in a screaming fit, the pain being unbearable. Still others ate away at your vital organs like some super strain of cancer, eating away at such a rate that you would die within two weeks of being diagnosed with the disease. All of these were too horrible to even imagine just three years ago, but here they are killing people by the thousands. Despite all the efforts of the World Health Organization, these sicknesses are spreading to all the nations, even the United States. Like a runaway wildfire, death is on a rampant torrent and is no respecter of persons.

The weather has progressively gotten to the point that it leaves one to think that our World is slowly destroying itself. Tidal waves are destroying property with loss of thousands of lives in Japan and most of the pacific islands. Some Islands have completely disappeared into the seas. There was a rash of volcanic eruptions and massive earthquakes along the Earth's fault lines. Many of California's coastal areas are either under water or desolated by the quakes and volcanic ash. The air in most of the world is being filled with the ash from the volcanic eruptions around the world, making it dark for days in some areas of the world.

Korea's and Japan's financial institutions and banking systems, have fallen to such lows that there is economic chaos in these countries, as well as most of the world being greatly affected by this. Gold and silver have become almost worthless. The World Bank, located in Germany, controls what's left of the economy. Most of the European Ten Nation Empire seems to have weathered these disasters the best. The only acceptable currency in the world is the Euro dollar issued by the World Bank. Product price, including food, has gone sky high. A lot of items we used to take for granted as being accessible to us have disappeared off the market. Many factories and small business have gone out of business, leaving masses of people unemployed with nowhere to turn for a job.

Most of the people in the Third World Nations are either starving to death or they are dying from one of those incurable diseases. People seem to pay little attention to this because they are preoccupied with their own struggle to survive. The federal government has taken over the operation of all the large product-producing factories. They also control all the utilities and medical facilities. It takes an act of Congress to get medical aid these days! Gas is rationed and food consumption is mathematically worked out to

how much each person, according to age, needs to sustain a normal quality of life. That's all you are able to buy. The elderly seem to get the least of all of us. It's as if the government is saying they are not productive anymore so they don't need to eat. The elderly are also last on the list for medical aid. Many are dying a premature death because of these regulations.

Hatred and wickedness are the order of the day. People are killing each other over just accidentally bumping into one another. Violent deaths among spouses and siblings are beginning to top the murder chart throughout the world. Rape happens to eighty percent of the females of all ages. Young girls and boys under puberty are sold in the streets of the world for sex slaves, even in the United States. Bestiality and unnatural sex with animals are quietly practiced and homosexuality has replaced the old-fashion family unites of the past one man and one woman as the normal family unit.

Christianity, along with the Bible and any other literature espousing that faith, has been banned from the entire world. Anyone professing to be a Christian is considered to be one of the Defectives. This is holding the human race back from reaching the next level of perfection, as related to us by the Creator Aliens. Such creatures as the Defectives must be eliminated. They may infect others with their false teachings of one God, who they say is the Creator of us all and His Son, Jesus, who is the redemptive Savior of us all. The World Alliance Church located in Rome and headed by the New Age Pontiff has become the most accepted form of religion practiced and has the blessings of the New World leader. Together they have enthusiastically joined in the persecution of Christians, even to the murdering of all that were found out for confessing Jesus.

Babylon was rebuilt to its former greatness and beauty and is used extensively as one of the capital cities of our World Leader. The Ten Allied Nations, under the leadership of Oman Tharriff, seems to use the World Alliance Church to gain political and moral power over all the Nations.

Amazingly, Tharriff had allowed Israel to rebuild their Temple to God on the original foundation of Solomon's Temple. They had to leave out the outer court because the Arabs claimed encroaching into this area would desecrate their Shrine that sits just fifty yards away. The Jews found or replicated all the utensils and garments necessary to start back doing blood sacrifices to the God of Abraham. It is widely rumored that the Levite Priests have hidden away a recently discovered original flask of the holy Anointing oil, used to anoint their Messiah. Many Jews and much of the world believe that Oman Tharriff may be the Messiah because of the many miracles he has done and the great power he seems to have over almost everyone.

Yet, there is uneasiness among many of the nations as they begin to see discrepancies and falsities in the Allied Nations. The inequity of power and wealth has caused most nations and people to rise up against each other. There are many wars and slaughter of people, especially in the nations that used to be called Third World countries. The American continent hasn't been spared any of the wholesale killings, either. Racial and ethnic groups of black, white, Hispanic and Asian gangs use the streets of our countries to kill and rob and sell drugs and prostitution at will. No sane person goes out of his house at night. If he does, chances are he won't be coming back! People go about in the daytime as if everything is normal, even when they step over the dead bodies of the last night's victims. After years of legally murdering millions of unborn babies and watching our youth kill and destroy each other along with our neighborhoods, nothing seems to greatly affect our emotions. We go along with the attitude of "Don't bother me and I may not bother you."

The leaders of the United States have little to say about our internal affairs. The World

Government has control over the laws affecting trade, commerce and infrastructure, medical practices, defense and employment of military troops, and all economic strategies in all nations. They decide how the wealth of the world is distributed. This has caused our middle class to disappear. There are only the very wealthy and the very poor. America has been reduced to the levels of some third world countries with hunger, pestilence and disease running wild. Crime has increased to an uncontrollable situation. Peace-loving people are far and few between. Those who have defend what they have with deadly force. Seems no one shares anything, leaving those who don't have trying to take from those who do have, to survive. There is little value placed on human life these days. As for animals of any kind, even domesticated animals, they are killed for food.

Forests are becoming desolated as the trees are cut for firewood. Forget wood being used for housing. The environmentalists have succeeded in getting the World Government to ban most fossil fuels. Gas is produced and sold on a very limited basis' and solar and electric automobiles have been introduced as the primary means of transportation. This has caused the price of transportation to be beyond the ability of the common man to afford. Bicycles and small motorcycles are widely used for local transportation. The Government has a rail system for mass transit if there's a need to travel any distance; but it is restricted to persons with legal business, not vacationers or pleasure seekers. You must have a pass from the captain of the precinct you live in to use the transit rail system and be able to pay a high ride fee, calculated on the distance you ride.

Using wood for cooking and heating is widely practiced, even though the penalty for doing so is a long prison term if caught. Most law enforcers turn their eyes away from wood burning because they and their friends and family are forced to do the same thing.

The citizens of the United States have never known times like these in all their history. Almost all local trade for food and goods are conducted by the barter system. There are just not enough jobs to go around, and the jobs that are there are highly technical, mostly relating to computers. When all this happened three and one half years ago, people were just getting into personal computer use. Most people knew little more than how to cut them on and write a letter or play games on them. Now if you can't program them or build and repair them, you are left out of the good paying jobs. That is except for law enforcement jobs. Because of all the crime, these jobs pay a good wage. However, the life expectancy of a law enforcer is about one third of the general public. Criminals have no respect for authority. They even seem to hunt law enforcers and kill them for trophy kills. You are a big individual in the criminal society if you have a lot of trophy kills. These are designated by the number of badges pinned to the ears severed from the law enforcers and worn on a leather string around the neck for all to see and marvel at. It's getting harder to keep cops, in spite of the good pay, because of this goon-like bunch of criminals who have no respect for human life.

In short, our world has gone to Hell in a hand basket! Suicide is common place because life is too hard for many to bear. Old people are pushed out from their families, left to die in the streets. Husbands and wives often try to avoid getting pregnant; and if they do, they go to their health precinct and get an abortion. Some do this because they don't want to raise a child in this terrible world. Others kill their unborn just because of the hardness of their hearts. They just don't want anything to alter their life. Not even their own flesh and blood!

Most farmers have given up or have been taken over by the government. The changing weather patterns have destroyed crops so many times that most farmers lost all they had. What little land there is that will support crops is tightly run by the government. We can't grow near

enough food to feed our own yet the federal government exports over one third of our crops to the One World Alliance. This is a part of our treaties with the rest of the world to partly divide our resources with all the other nations. We are helping to feed nations who don't even try to feed themselves.

These are the kinds of reasons you would vote your representatives out of office for, except that we don't have elections anymore! Some special unit of the World Government appoints all our government leaders. No one seems to know who these people are, but they appoint the leaders for all nations. Our own government has sold us down the river by buying into this One World fiasco. Now we have little clout in the World Government. In fact, they treat us like we are the spoiled child who has had his way too long. We aren't strong enough militarily to flex any muscles because we downsize our fighting force and weaponry to comply with the New World Government. There are signs that Russia, China, Iraq and Iran have been deceiving the rest of us by secretly stockpiling massive weapons of conventional and biological types. They have trained large armies under the guise of riot and crowd control troops. There is an atmosphere that the world is about to explode. There is no trust in our own government and absolutely no trust in the European Coalition that some call the New Roman Empire. Put it all together and you have a formula for the world to destroy itself at any moment.

The New World Leader, Oman Tharriff, the man of miracles, told a news conference that he had a great announcement to broadcast to the whole world tomorrow. He has ordered that all news organizations of all nations be present in Israel at the newly built Temple. He promises to deliver the greatest good news since the beginning of time. The entire world is poised on the edge of their seats to hear such a claim as this. People are ready to hear anything encouraging! There is too much tension and ill will in the world, and the citizens of this New World Order are ready for a drastic change. Perhaps a better distribution of the world wealth. Perhaps more and better paying jobs. Maybe even a return to worshipping your own God! Something great has to come of this promised good news or the world may fall even deeper into the darkness than it is in now.

Tomorrow! The world waits breathlessly.....tomorrow.

Chapter 5 **The Witness**

Bobby Johnson walked into the center of a circle of about thirty people of varying ages

and backgrounds. They were sitting crossed legged on the floor in the back room of an old dilapidated storefront that used to be a craft shop owned and operated by Bobby's mother before the Rapture. The sunlight was pouring in from the skylight giving off a pleasant glow and warmth that filled the room that used to be a storeroom for all the crafts sold in the Johnsons' store. Long ago, vandals broke in and emptied the store of anything valuable. Bobby and his friends had been using this place, on an irregular schedule, to meet and plan their strategies and to worship the true God, the God of Abraham. Bobby smiled and looked each person in the eyes and began to speak.

"I can't believe it's been about three and a half years since the Rapture. I remember when I came home to an empty house on that great and terrible day. Great because God had fulfilled His word, and terrible because many more and I had been left behind. I remember the feeling of wanting to die in an effort to escape the loss of my family and the knowledge of what was next for the world. I, like most Americans, was raised in the church and had a godly mother and sister to pray for me and exhort me to give my life to Jesus. I thought I was a Christian! I didn't think I had to give up the worldly pleasures that possessed me. After all, I was so young. I had plenty of time to sow my wild oats and then get right with Jesus. As we know now, I was a fool to put off a real relationship with our Lord Jesus. His word tells us that He would come like a thief in the night and He did! I was admonished by my pastor Dr. Herbert, and my mom and Sis to be watchful and be on guard because the signs of the times were right for the Lord's return. How right they were!"

Barbara, the daughter of Bobby's former pastor, stood up and addressed him, "Bobby, how did you come to this knowledge so soon after the Rapture? It took me almost a year after the Rapture to realize this. Remember? That's when you found me hiding in my dad's old church. I was sixteen then and left all alone after the Rapture. My dad, mom, brother and all my relatives I knew of were taken up by the Lord to be with Him forever. I was the black sheep of the family. I rebelled against my family because I resented always being forced to attend church every time the door was open. I hated being a preacher's kid. Most of the cool kids made fun of me, calling me a Holy Roller or pew hopper, things like that. I was determined to be accepted by my peers no matter what it took. That's when I started to do drugs and alcohol and stay out late at night. My parents tried everything they could to make me see the destructive path I was on, but I didn't want to give up my ways or my friends.

I always said, "It's my life and my body and I'll do what I want to with it." Then, I got pregnant! I couldn't tell my parents, so I...I...went to my school nurse and she arranged for me to have an abortion without my parents' consent or knowledge. I killed my baby because I didn't want to face what I had done and because society made it so easy and so acceptable for me. From that point on I lost any self-worth I had left, and spiraled down into the deepest abyss of despair. I ran away from home a lot but my parents always took me back. They were so good to me and I treated them like dirt. Me...me...me, that's all I ever thought of. Now look at me! I wouldn't be here if I had only listened to my parents. They knew what was going to happen to me. It must have been so dreadful for them to think about. Bobby, if you hadn't found me hiding in Dad's church and took me in and fed me on the word of God, I would have died and gone to Hell. You explained what has happened and that we had a last chance to get to heaven. I'd be able to see my parents again and all those who went before us. You told me how we may have to give our lives for the confession of our faith in Jesus Christ, that our only purpose left in this world is to tell as many people as possible about Jesus and how we can be with Him for eternity."

“Barbara, to answer your question about me learning these truths so soon after the Rapture, let me tell you what happened to me about a week after staying in my own home. I was afraid to come out. I heard a group of people in the park area two doors down from Mr. Wilson’s house making a lot of noise. Putting aside my fear, I walked outside and down to the park. I saw a group of people gathered around an olive-skinned man with long black hair who was softly speaking to the them. He pointed to the large old oak tree in the park and said, ‘If you don’t believe what I have just told you, there is your fate.’ I looked closely at the tree and saw a man hanging from one of the branches. He had a rope around his neck. It was a hideous sight. The body was hanging in a grotesque position with its neck bent completely over to the side. Most of the people quickly left except Jesse, and me, yeah, our own Jesse Tracer here with us today. Anyway, this stranger saw we were interested and wanted to hear more so he spoke to us. He told us he was one of a group of people who missed the Rapture but, have sense committed their lives to Christ. These people have committed themselves to go about the world witnessing for Jesus telling of His return at the end of the seven years of tribulation. They were to tell about our last chance to repent and accept Jesus as the Son of God. If necessary to give our lives for Him rather than submit to the mark of the Beast.

This stranger said, “the Beast would enter the Holy of Holies in the Temple in three years, five months and three weeks from now. Some Jews would realize at that time that Oman Tharriff was an impostor and of Satan. Others would follow him as the Messiah. Look for three and a half more years of Great Tribulation that will make what has happened up to this time appear to be mild in comparison. Then he told us to band together as many people as possible who would hear this message and teach them what we have heard here today.” After embracing us both and blessing us, this man departed. We haven’t seen him since.

As we began to leave the park, I turned to go over to the hanging man to see him closer. When I walked around in front of the man I had to cup my hands over my mouth and run behind the tree and throw up. The man was my next door neighbor, Mr. Wilson. He must have been hanging there for a few days by the deterioration and smell. It’s too horrible to think about. Poor Mr. Wilson! I guess he couldn’t face what he knew was coming. Not without his Margie! He took his life because he refused to accept that Jesus is the answer. The only way out of here to eternal life is with Him. All those we loved whom are with Him now we will get to see again.

Barbara interjected again and said, “Bobby, how come you never told us this before?”

“I don’t really know, Barbara. I guess seeing Mr. Wilson like that had such a profound effect on me that I just put it all in the back of my memory. I’ve never forgotten what the Witness told me. I guess I’ve been so busy doing what he told me to do that I never thought to tell about it until you asked me how I knew so much about the Rapture. The Witness, my mom and sister and your dad, Barbara, they taught me! I had a lot of Bible knowledge before the Rapture, but I refused to believe that it would happen anytime soon. I was like you just related to us, full of myself as if the whole world was supposed to cater to my wants and needs, whatever they were at the time. I thought time was on my side. How dumb can a person get?”

“Well, listen, Folks, we all have our stories to tell about how we missed the Rapture. The important thing is we have all repented and accepted Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior. Now, everyone listen up! The time has come for us to break up into fifteen groups of two and go into the fifteen governmental precincts, establishing safe houses in each. There we are to seek out anyone who will hear the message of the Witness. They can be saved if they turn away from this world and accept Jesus as the Messiah and be willing to die for their confession of faith in Christ Jesus. Instruct them that no one is to take the Mark of the Beast; this will seal them into

the Antichrist system and they will never be able to enter Heaven after that. It will be hard to persuade people not to take the mark because you won't be able to buy or sell anything without the mark. No food, medicine or merchandise of any kind. Your lives will be in danger like never before. You may be giving up to the authorities, by those you try to save and be taken into custody; and, well, you know the penalty for confessing our Lord. You will surely die! Yes, die from this corruptible body and take on your heavenly body, ever to be with the Lord! So, give it all you got! Try to save as many souls as you can in the short time we have left. Our reward is in Heaven. Don't worry about tomorrow for the Lord is with you."

Barbara ran into my arms and began to cry. "Don't leave me, Bobby. I...I love you! I don't want to live without you with me!"

Bobby took Barbara to the front room of the craft store to talk in private. "Barbara, I have loved you from the first moment I found you cowering in your Dads church! I will be with you until we are separated from our earthly bodies, our Lord willing."

"Bobby, why haven't you told me this before? Couldn't you see the affection and devotion I have for you? I have been on fire with my love for you, afraid to express it to you because you might have rejected me. That would have destroyed me!"

"Yes, sweet Barbara, I wasn't blind to your feelings. I feel the same way about you, but let's talk about this later. We must set up the teams and equip them to go out tonight. You will be my teammate, if that is all right with you?"

"Oh...yes, thank you Bobby!"

Bobby and Barbara went back into the storeroom. Bobby stepped forward and hung his head slightly as he addressed the rest of the group. "Like I said, it's time to go out and witness like never before. You see, I have been keeping track of the time since the Witness spoke to Jesse and me. You have all heard that Oman Tharriff has called a special meeting of all the countries of this One World Government to convene in Jerusalem tomorrow. The Witness said Tharriff is to make an announcement that will take the world to a new level of perfection. Tomorrow is the day when Oman Tharriff, The Antichrist, will go into the Holy of Holies and proclaim himself to be God."

Everyone in the room began to make all kinds of disturbing chatter and noise as they expressed their fears and concerns.

Bobby held his hands up and quieted the group. "We knew this day would come. The Bible says in the book of Matthew chapter 24:15-22: Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF(that causes) DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those that are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in the house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved."

Jesse stepped up and said, "I remember the Witness telling us that at that time all Hell will literally break out on all the world. We can expect Russia and some of their Islamic allies to attack Israel. Look for some nuclear weapons to be used. This is only the beginning of the horror as God pours out His wrath upon the world. Remember him telling us that, Bobby?"

"Yes I do, Jesse. We will face unbelievable situations and most, if not all of us, will die for the sake of the Gospel. Do not be afraid! I repeat, do not be afraid! We who die for Christ's

sake will return with all the host of Heaven to fight along side our beloved Jesus and defeat Satan and all his minions. What a glorious day! To be with the Lord of Lords and King of Kings as He wipes out all those who persecuted Him and us, His believers. Let God's justice be done! Let your fears be turned to gladness and your witness be bold!"

There was a great roar of praise to God as all in the room became filled with a new sense of victory.

Bobby again quieted the group. "We will stay in contact with each group and identify each one of us and any new converts by a code name. That code name is: *COP-OUT*. I chose it because most of my life has been a cop-out of one thing or another. Never again will I cop-out of doing what is right! I make this vow to you all: Bobby Johnson will never let you or my Lord down again. Today I offer my life to our Savior to use as He will. Let us pray: Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Great I Am, hear us your servants. Father, we pray for strength as we depart into our separate assigned areas to witness for our Lord Jesus. We ask that whatever happens to one of us that the others will not falter but gain strength in the knowledge that very soon now, we will be with you. Help us to witness to who-so-ever will hear our testimony. We pray for a great harvest of souls, that you may be glorified. Father God, we ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen and Amen."

All the teams were made up according to their knowledge of the Gospel with one being the more knowledgeable than the other. They were assigned their Precincts, given a Bible and whatever Christian literature they could gather. Bobby blessed each team and sent them out with tears welling up in his eyes. Soon all were gone except Bobby and Barbara. They sat together on an old ragged love seat and just held each other, each consumed by his own thoughts.

After about ten minutes of silence, Barbara laid her head on Bobby's chest and said, "I am so scared, Bobby. Not of dying but of maybe watching you die. I don't know if I can take that. I love you so much."

"Oh, Barbara, I have had the same thoughts about you. Will I be able to see you tortured and killed without being able to do anything to stop it? God help me! I just pray that my faith in Jesus to take us to be with Him after our death will sustain me if it should come down to that. You must let your faith work for you also. Promise me you will, Barbara!"

"I promise, Bobby. Hold me for awhile so I can hear your heartbeat."

"My heart beats with so much love for you, Barbara. You are so beautiful! It is all I can do to control my flesh! I must pray for strength to resist the temptation to..."

"Bobby, I feel the same way! Why can't we say some marriage vows before God and consummate our love for one another?"

"Any other hour but this one and I would happily enter into marriage with you, my beloved! But just a while ago I offered my life to our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Knowing what we will face out there, even torture and death, I couldn't do it if we were married and I knew your body as mine! That would be too hard for both of us to face. I want you with all that's within me, but we must be content in holding one another and letting God have the desire we feel for each other as a blessing to Him of our faithfulness."

"I know you're right, Bobby. I marvel at your devotion and faithfulness to God and I will glean from it. May God be glorified in our denial of our flesh as we pick up our cross and follow Him. Bobby, I think I love you even more! You are my rock I will lean on."

"Lord, Barbara and I offer our bodies to you as a living sacrifice. This, Lord, is the hardest thing I have ever had to do! Give me strength, oh Lord, I pray." "Barbara, we had better get out of here now. It's starting to get dark and all the gangs will be out soon. We don't want to be caught and

harassed by them.”

“You’re right Bobby, let’s go.”

Chapter 6 **We Meet Again**

Lance got into his patrol car ready to face yet another night of extreme danger. He seemed to have escaped the terrible sicknesses that took the lives of so many of his fellow officers and much of the world.

Lance never seemed to fit in with the direction of the new police force. He found it

repugnant to search down and lock up the people the Government labeled as Defectives. Deep in his heart he knew these people were Christians, followers of Jesus.

He never made any higher rank than sergeant because his superiors signaled him out as a slacker. His arrest record was the lowest in all the precincts. In fact, for the last evaluation he was recommended to be fired by the review board. Rob Laven, who had advanced to the rank of Captain and head of the review board, had persuaded them to hold off. He was Lance's friend and said he would see that Lance shaped up. Captain Laven was persuasive because there was a severe shortage of police officers. Those the illnesses didn't take were killed by or quit because of the gangs that took over the neighborhoods at night!

To punish Lance the review board transferred him to the night shift in the Beach Precinct. This was the worst precinct of all of them because of the number of officers that were injured or killed by the gangs. Every police officer in this precinct was aware that he may be killed and his badge pinned to his severed ear and hanged around the neck of some punk as a trophy. Most officers shot first and asked questions later whenever they were confronted by any of the gangs. No one was safe on the streets at night. Evil was in the hearts of most men and they tried to kill or destroy anyone who didn't think like them.

The Christians were sometimes able to walk among them because the gangs recognized them as criminals sought by the police. They knew the police would be driving around in their neighborhoods looking for the Defectives, giving them opportunities to score a trophy badge and ear.

This tolerance of the Christians by the gangs would end tomorrow when the Antichrist shows his real Satanist self by entering the Holy of Holies in the rebuilt Temple of the Jews. The evil that will take place then will consume the entire world! The horror released on the world by the real God of the Bible will make some men die from fright!

Tomorrow, or soon thereafter, the Mark of the Beast will go into effect. All who receives it will be changed in his spirit. He will take on the spirit of Satan and will want to kill and destroy anyone who doesn't take the mark. He will turn in anybody, without the mark, even his closest loved ones because of the evil that will possess him.

But tonight Lance has a date with destiny! He starts his evening shift by making his rounds of all the buildings in his zone. While slowly cruising down a back alley, with his headlights off, Lance notices some movement at the back of an old deserted Craft Store. He shut off his motor and quietly opened his door and got out of his patrol car, taking cover behind the corner of a building next to the store. He saw two figures climbing out of the back window of the craft store. They turned and started to walk in the other direction when Lance turns his five-cell flashlight on the figures and shouts, "Police! Stop or I'll shoot! Make another move and you both will be dead! Do exactly as I say! Put your hands on the top of your heads, now! Walk backwards until I tell you to stop! Stop!"

Lance had moved up and positioned himself just a couple of yards from the suspects, while looking all around him for a set up by the gangs. He was a mass of nervous sweat and the adrenaline was making his heart beat so fast he felt faint. Whipping the sweat from his face with the arm he held the flashlight in, Lance gave the command, "Turn around and don't try any funny stuff or I'll shoot you both!"

Bobby and Barbara slowly turned around. Both were resigned to the fact that this must be their time to die. They had lingered at the meeting place too long after everyone else had left. "Barbara, I love you. No matter what happens, be strong and don't worry. If we die now, we will go to be with the Lord together. Praise His Holy name!"

“I love you too, Bobby. I can hold up with you by my side. I’m tired and ready to meet the Lord.”

Bobby said, “Let whatever happens, happen. Jesus, we place our lives into your hands!”

“Shut up talking and get on your knees, both of you!” Lance bellowed.

When they had done that, Lance spotted his flashlight first in the face of the girl and then in the face of the boy. As Lance studied the boy’s face, he began to relax his demeanor and walked up to the boy.

“Bobby...Bobby, is that you?” Lance began to softly weep tears of joy as he studied the face of the boy he became so fond of some three and a half years ago, when he pulled Bobby from under his car and out of that ditch.

Lance holstered his weapon and grabbed Bobby up to his feet and gave him a big bear hug. Bobby was so taken aback that he almost fainted away, until he noticed the name tag that his face was buried in while Lance hugged him.

“Oh, Praise God, Barbara! This is Sergeant Lance Carper! He is the police officer that saved my life by lifting my car off me while I was trapped under it in a ditch the day of the Rapture!”

Bobby returned Lance’s embrace and began to cry. Barbara got up and embraced them both, not believing what she was witnessing. Then she backed off as fear set in. After all Lance was a cop, the enemy of Christians. She began to tremble as uncertainty filled her mind.

Lance held Bobby at arm’s distance and smiled broadly. “Bobby, it’s so good to see you! Almost everyone dear to me is gone. I’m so glad you are alive and well. Tell me what are you two doing here in this dark alley? Don’t you know it’s extremely dangerous with all these gangs out after dark?”

“Yes, we do, Lance. We were late from leaving our meeting.”

“What meeting are you talking about, Bobby?”

“Oh Lord, I did it now! Lance, Barbara and I are Christians. We assembled here to worship God and to tell others about Jesus and how we can escape the eternal Hell set aside for non-believers by accepting Jesus as the Son of God. We know we will probable die for this belief, but we are ready to if we must!”

Lance stood in silence for a brief moment, contemplating what he had just heard. Bobby and Barbara clung tight to each other as their minds considered what Lance would do.

The silence was split by a high-pitched whistle and a voice about two blocks away shouting for his friends that someone was in the alley.

Lance urged Bobby and Barbara, “Get in the car right away! No time to waste!” Lance put his patrol car in reverse and floored the gas pedal. The patrol car spun off backward at a high rate of speed. Lance swerved into a cross alley and made his way out to the main street and sped off as fast as the car would go. After about a mile away from the alley, Lance slowed down to a normal speed. Soon he found a parking lot and pulled to the middle of it so he could see in all directions and came to a stop, leaving his car running.

Lance began rubbing his right ear and said, “You kids know what was going on back there, don’t you?”

Bobby spoke at almost a whisper, “It was some of the gang members. They must have heard us and were coming to attack us.”

“You got that right, Lance replied. They would have overpowered us and had their way with you two and, as for me, they would have cut off one of my ears and pinned my badge to it. Then they would have tortured me to death. Several of my fellow officers have gone out like that. I guess I’ve been lucky to survive this long. I’m so tired of this out-of-control violence in

our world today. I don't know why God allows this to go on. You would have thought He would have done something by now to stop this madness!"

Bobby spoke up, "Sergeant Carper, are you going to turn us over to the Government authorities?"

"No Bobby, no way would I let those fools get their hands on you two!"

"Lance, we confessed to you that we are Christians. They say we are Defectives! Why do you spare us?"

"I never bought into that garbage they tried to fill our heads with from the beginning! My parents were Christians and I use to go to church years ago. Nobody is going to convince me that Christians are defective and need to be exterminated!"

"Well, Lance, why...that is, how were you able to stay a police officer if you feel this way?"

"Bobby, I was all alone. The only thing I had to hold on to was my job. I'm a good cop and I would like to think that I made a difference in some peoples lives. Unfortunately, my bosses don't feel that way. I've been passed over for advances in rank many times. Even my best buddy Captain Laven, has grown cool towards me. Just before I went on duty this evening he told me that I would be fired if my arrest record didn't improve drastically this month! I guess they will have to fire me. The few arrests I did make, well, like the Bates Motel they would check in but no one checked out! No court dates were set and when I tried to find out what happened to them, there were no records of them. They just disappeared! I was told to forget about it or I would be dealt with severely. So, for me, no more arrests. I am a cop, not an executioner!"

"Lance, can I ask you a personal question?"

"Sure, Bobby go ahead."

"Do you...believe in God?"

"Yes, I do, Bobby! How good it is to be able to tell someone! I do believe in God!"

"One more question, Lance. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God?"

"I think I do. I mean, I was taught that and my parents believed that. I never lived a Christian life like my parents. I really got caught up in materialism and neglected my wife and family. Funny, all the things I used to think were important are gone now. I never gave Jesus a chance to enter my life; anyway it is too late now. I really believe that Jesus came back and took all his believers to Heaven with Him that day three and a half years ago. Remember, Bobby, that was the day I met you. I can still hear that loud rumbling in the sky and see that blinding flash of light coming from the east. That had to be the Rapture, the blessed hope. A lot of people used to talk about it back then, but now it's against the law to discuss it. Not all laws are good, Bobby. I've come to the point that I just try to keep peace and stop as much hateful crime as I can. Everything else is just too messed up to deal with. How I wish I could do it all over again! I would have accepted Jesus!"

"Lance, I've got some great news for you! It's not too late to accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior."

"How can that be, Bobby? We have been left behind! Hell is our lot in life, even I know that!"

"Oh...Lance, just hear me out. The Bible tells about the Disciple John being taken up into Heaven. He was shown the things that would come on this earth in the end times and in the seven years of tribulation. This will end with Jesus coming back with his Church and all the host of Heaven to defeat Satan and his troops. John saw a great multitude dressed in white garments

over to the side. He asked who they were and the angle told him they were the ones who came out of the great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Tomorrow will start the last three and one half years of the tribulation. Those of us who are willing to die, for our confession of faith in Jesus Christ, will join those tribulation saints in Heaven and come back with our victorious Lord to rule and reign with Him, forever! Lance, if you ever believed anything in your life, believe this!"

Lance had been tearing up the whole time Bobby was talking to him. Now he began to weep openly and sob great tears.

Barbara leaned over the front seat and cuddled Lance to her chest. "Officer Lance, we love you and want you to join us as Christians. Heaven is our reward and great peace in knowing our future. All you have to do is accept Jesus. Don't let this opportunity pass you by. It will be so much harder tomorrow after Satan and the Antichrist intensifies their terror and destruction on the world. Also, God will pour out His harshest punishments on the earth. Life will be a living Hell. Much of the earth will be destroyed and most of the living will be killed. What do you say, Officer Lance?"

"Yes, oh yes. Yes, yes! How do I do it?"

Bobby leaned over, took Lance's hand and said, "Repeat this prayer with me: Father God, I am a sinner! I failed to believe in your Son, Jesus, while we were under grace. But, I believe now and I will serve you even though I may have to give up my life for the confession of my faith in you. Please accept me as one of your own and I will praise you throughout eternity. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus! Amen and Amen."

Lance repeated the pray with Bobby. "Bobby, I feel as if the weight of the world has been lifted off my back. How great it is!"

Bobby and Barbara began to hug each other and Officer Carper. Everyone was crying and praising the Lord. Lance told them that he would join their efforts to share Jesus, no matter what the cost!

"Lance, what a glorious day to see the way God has His hand on us. When you found us, we thought we would be killed. Then it turns out to be you who saved my life on the day of the Rapture. Now you have excepted Jesus and again saved my life because any other cop would have taken us in to a certain death. This has to be of God! Praise you Lord! Lance, anybody who uses the password, *cop-out*, is one of us. We have fifteen teams of two spread out within the fifteen precincts. If you could stay on the force until they let you go, you would be of great assistance to us by passing on information of any raids on our people."

"You got it, Bobby. I want cop-out this time. This cop is living for Jesus, now! I feel like a new man with a future for the first time ever. Thank you, Bobby and Barbara and you, God!"

"Dispatcher to 203."

Lance responded, "This is 203; go ahead."

"Sergeant, there is a building on fire at the 1400 block of Pacific Street. Cars 207 and 205 are on the scene now. They need backup fast. The gangs have them cornered off behind their patrol cars and they are running out of ammo fast."

"Dispatcher, 203, I'm on the way."

Lance drove Bobby and Barbara to their hideout, which was on the way to the fire, and let them out. He paused long enough to tell them he loved them and would get up with them soon and then sped to the scene as fast as he could go.

"Barbara, you realize the fire is on the same block as the Craft Shop? We made it out of there into the arms of safety just in time!"

“Yes, I do, Bobby. I know God has our future in His hands and He turned what was meant as evil to us into good. He never fails to show us that our God is an awesome God!” Bobby, let’s get on our knees before God and pray for the safety of Lance and his fellow officers as they face those evil monstrous gang members!”

“Yes, Barbara, God will save them all because he has called out Lance to be a leader in these times. Lets Pray.”

Chapter 7 **Trial by Fire**

The fire was in full development when Lance slammed on his brakes and slid beside 207’s patrol car. Lance dove over into his back seat, taking his shotgun with him. Then he crawled out the back door and over to Officer Joshua Gold who was crouching behind his patrol car. Lance quickly noticed that Josh was wounded in the leg, pretty bad!

“Josh, how bad is it?”

“I don’t know Sergeant. I feel like I’m going to pass out. I lost a lot of blood.”

“Just hold on Josh, I’ll get you out of here! Where is 205, Tim Mayfield?”

Josh replied, “The last I saw of him was when he took cover in the burning building

across the street.”

Lance’s heart leaped inside him as he saw the Craft Shop fully engulfed in flames! “Josh, have you heard from him since the fire broke out?”

“Only once Sergeant, when he hollered out that he was running out of ammo and could I cover him? Sergeant, I tried to cover him but they flanked me and blew out my leg. I can’t move much! I shot a couple of them and they retreated to somewhere, I don’t know where. I figured they would overpower me anytime now before you showed up.”

“Let’s get you into my car. Do you think you can drive enough to get clear of here?”

“Sergeant, I can’t leave you here to face them alone!”

“Funny thing is, I’m not alone anymore, Josh! Now, help me as much as you can!”

As Lance dragged Josh to the driver’s seat of his car, shots rang out from the rooftops across the street. Lance was hit twice in his flack jacket as he shielded Josh with his body. Josh was able to get into the driver’s seat and speed off to safety. Lance dropped and rolled to the corner of the building nearest him. His back was hurting from the impact of bullets that were stopped by his flack jacket. Lance spotted a brick on the pavement and picked it up.

“God, I haven’t been with you but for a few minutes so I don’t know if you can hear me, but if you can, please be with me now.”

With that said, Lance threw the brick into the back window of 205’s patrol car while watching the rooftops. Instantly two gang members stood up on the rooftop to the left of Lance and across the street and opened fire on the patrol car with automatic weapons. Lance killed them both with his shotgun. He then crouched and ran as fast as he could to the burning building, crashing through the open front door and falling over officer Mayfield’s body, which was covered with smoke soot! He checked officer Mayfield for vital signs and got a weak pulse. Wiping the soot from around Tims’ mouth and nose, Lance administered CPR for a few minutes before Tim began to sputter and sit up.

“Sergeant, how did you get here? I thought I was a goner! There was too much fire power to go outside. I felt myself being overcome by the smoke. You know, I would rather be burned alive than to let one of those gang members wear my badge pinned to one of my ears around his neck!”

“Nobody is going to get your ear, Tim. The fire and smoke are about to get to us though! Hold onto me and we will run for your car. Can you shoot your weapon, Tim?”

“Sure, let’s hit the door, Sergeant!”

With that, Lance and Tim dashed out the door and made a beeline to Tim’s car, firing their guns as they ran. Lance covered Tim by leaning over him as much as he could. Many shots rang out as both Tim and Lance dove into the car and hot tailed it out of there! Six blocks away, Lance noticed his patrol car that Josh had fled in stopped in the middle of the street. He pulled along side of the car and saw Josh slumped over the driver’s wheel. Lance jumped out and opened the drivers’ door to get Josh out and put him in the back seat of the patrol car he was driving. He put a belt around the wounded leg of officer Gold and made a tourniquet out of it. Joshua had lost a lot of blood but was still alive, though passed out! Lance made it to the Precinct Hospital where he had already radioed ahead that he was bringing in two officers in bad condition. When Lance was sure that both officers were being well taken care of, he went to the waiting room and slumped down in a chair. A nurse came in to get some information from Lance about the two officers he brought in. Lance had passed out in the chair after taking off his flack jacket. The nurse noticed a lot of blood running down the left arm of Lance and dripping off his fingers onto the floor. She quickly called for help and had Lance taken to one of the treatment

rooms. After taking off the rest of Lance's clothes, they noticed a large bullet hole in his left upper forearm. He also had two large black and blue bruises on his back from the bullets that hit his flack jacket, and he was treated for burns on both his hands and smoke inhalation. When Lance came to, he was surprised to see his injuries. He never felt them while he was involved in the action.

"Nurse, how are the two other officers doing?"

"They will make it, thanks to you, Sergeant! Officer Gold is still in re-constructive surgery on his leg. He lost a lot of blood, but that belt you applied to his leg made all the difference in his not bleeding to death. The doctor said it was a close call but he believes the patient will be able to return to work again, soon. Officer Mayfield was lightly burned over twenty-five percent of his body and is being treated for smoke inhalation. Fortunately, the burns weren't severe. You got him out in time! He told me to tell you that if you think you two are an item now because you gave him mouth to mouth resuscitation, you got another think coming!"

"Oooh..., Nurse, don't make me laugh, it hurts too much!"

"Sorry, Sergeant, now you lay back and rest. We are going to admit you for tonight so we can keep a watch on that bullet wound and treat your burnt hands."

Lance wanted to go home but they put him in a private room to spend the night. He was so hopped up from all the action that he wasn't able to fall asleep. Lance turned on the television to watch a little news. He flipped to the National News Channel and was watching a live report of a concert being held in the Dunbar stadium in the Capital city. The stadium was filled to capacity with forty-eight thousand young people watching some weird, emaciated kid with his face painted up in black spider webs. He and his band were singing songs about Satan and devilish practices. After the song, this freak told the crowd that they were going to have a deadly communion to honor Satan. Communion cups would be passed out with goat's blood and arsenic in them. All were exhorted to give their lives to Satan and drink the communion to him. Lance watched the television in disbelief! Surely these kids weren't taken in by this crazy punk. They had to be too smart to go along with this idiot. The music started up again. The ushers started to pass around the communion cups while the lead singer shouted into his mike to hold the cups until he tells them to drink. The music got louder and seemed to mesmerize the audience. They swayed back and forth as if they were in a trance. The music stopped abruptly and the grotesque slim that was leading this freak show suddenly raised his cup.

"Praise to Satan and all the underworld. We take this communion to honor you and accept you as our Lord!"

With that said, the entire audience drank the potion without any hesitation. The band started playing some freakish song as the audience screamed out praises to Satan. The leader of the band was gloating because he knew the communion juice was just red kool-aid with some baking soda in it. He had put one over on the crowd. This sicko was elated at the response of his followers. He pranced back and forth on the forty feet high stage built on scaffolding. Swinging the mike stand around his head, he jumped and crawled over the stage like some wild animal, all the time singing words that called for murder and self-abasement.

One by one, people in the audience fell over dead. Then by the hundreds, they fell dead. The crazed performers didn't notice the audience dying off until they finished the song they were singing.

The television camera operators who were filming the event thought the audience was acting out dying as part of the show. They kept filming, showing close up of the faces of the band members as well as the crowd.

Soon all the people in the stadium who had drunk the potion in the communion cups, lie dead through the arena. All, that is, except the band.

The camera operators filming the concert left their cameras running and fled in horror and disbelief at what had just happened. Most of the cameras were focused on the band, high on top of the stage.

The creep, Murden, leader of the band, looked down in disbelief at the crowd. “What in Hell has happened? He asked his fellow band members. They all look like they’re really dead! Is this some kind of joke on us?”

Just then the drummer stepped forward and addressed the band. “This is the greatest moment in our career and our service to Satan. I replaced the baking soda with real arsenic! We are responsible for forty-eight thousand people giving their lives to Satan tonight! What a glorious moment. Satan will reward us for this like never before. He will make us more famous than ever!”

Murden screamed out, “You fool! It was just for the money we acted this way! This pretense of Satanism was just to attract the stupid kids out there that were looking for some way to rebel against society. It was their money we wanted, you dumb idiot! Now you have destroyed us! Satan can’t give us anything. The police will give us the death penalty, you crazy fool!”

The drummer walked over to Murden and said, “How can you deny Satan? We have been dedicated to him since we started. Everything we are is because of him! Don’t you get it? We belong to him!”

Murden pushed the drummer away and said, “I won’t have anything to do with this. You are the one the police will get. I’m out of here!”

A deep growl slowly rolled up out of the drummers’ mouth as he grabbed Murden and hurled him off the stage, forty feet to the bottom. Murden screamed all the way down and fell across a section of seats. His body looked like a rag doll as he lay twisted across the seats with all the life gone out of him. Fear overtook the rest of the band members as they ran to the ladder at the corner of the stage. All were trying to get down at the same time. All the weight on the corner of the platform at one time caused the scaffolding to buckle, sending the band members to their death! The abandoned cameras caught all the action. Once the last piece of scaffolding rested on the crushed band members there was nothing but dead silence.

Lance stared at the television in his hospital room in total disbelief. The pain medication he had taken earlier, was starting to make him sleepy. He was almost in shock from what he had witnessed by way of television. Sleep would be a welcomed companion!

Chapter 8 **The Abomination of Desolation**

Lance had let off Bobby and Barbara at the old church building that used to be pastored by Barbara’s dad. They went into the church and knelt before the altar. Both prayed for the safety of Lance and the other officers. They also gave thanks to God for their safe encounter with Lance and his confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

“Bobby, tonight has been quite a lesson for me. I was so frighten when Sergeant Carper caught us. I just knew we would die, then and there. But, instead, I got to see God at work. Not only did He save us from death, He gave us a convert that will be an asset to our group. His placement on the police force may be a real blessing in the days to come.”

“You are so right, Barbara! I believe God will protect us from those who mean us harm.

We still have a work to do for God. Tomorrow will bring the ‘abomination of desolation,’ when the Antichrist enters the Holy of Holies of the rebuilt Temple! Up to this point, we have been persecuted by the False Church for our belief in the true God. After tonight, we will be hunted down with vengeance by the Antichrist and his demonic thugs. God will supernaturally protect His Chosen People. We, His repentant sinners, shall escape the wrath of God. However, we will have to deal with the unrepentant sinners who will want to kill the tribulation saints. They will hate God and worship Satan. God will pour out His wrath and judgment on Satan’s followers making their lives a living Hell on earth. Pay back is Hell!”

“Bobby, was that the hand of God when all those Arab Nations attacked Israel three and a half years ago? When Israel defended their land by using nuclear weapons against all the biological and nuclear weapons sent against them by their enemies? You know what I mean? Much of the population of Israel survived and they held onto most of their land. God had to have spared His Chosen People against such overwhelming odds!”

“You got it, Honey! Nobody, no nation, no people will completely destroy God’s Chosen! Those who try will be destroyed themselves. Sweetheart, we need to go to the hidden pantry and take inventory of the supplies and food stock. Tomorrow, we need to distribute these supplies to the other fourteen cell groups. We are to meet them in the old Thompson warehouse, which is centrally located to all the groups.”

“Sure, let’s go. By the way, Bobby, that is the first time you called me sweetheart...I like it!”

Bobby pushed aside the altar and revealed the secret trap door to the room where he and his followers had been stock piling food and needed items. Ever since Bobby knew what had happened at the Rapture, he started to store up food and supplies. When he found Barbara hiding in the church, they constructed the room below the altar with the trap door. Bobby bricked up the outer door that once led to the room, concealing its existence. Every since then they had pilfered the abandon homes of people who were taken up in the Rapture. They took canned food and dry food goods, clothes, matches and lighters. They took bibles and other Christian literature along with propane and gas grills, virtually anything that might be needed in the future. The greatest commodity was gas. The church had an old unused five hundred-gallon, underground oil tank that was empty. Bobby and his group had ciphered gas out of all the abandoned vehicles and took all the gallon containers of gas they could find. They almost filled the five hundred-gallon tank to the top with gas. Gas is a very valued commodity. One can trade it for almost anything as well as use it for their transportation needs.

“Bobby, where do we start?”

“Well, Barbara, I think we should start with a big hug!”

“You silly boy, that sounds like a real winner. I could sure use a hug right about now!” Bobby took Barbara into his arms and gently held her to him. His heart began to beat as if it was a drum. Barbara seemed to melt into Bobby’s chest as he held her tighter. “Barbara, what bliss! You make me feel so alive amidst all this madness. I thank God for you!”

“Oh, Bobby, I love you so much! I wish you could hold me all night.”

“I wish we were able to express our love...gee, Barbara, we had better go back to work. The temptation is overwhelming!”

“Whoa Bobby, Yes, back to work, whoa!”

Bobby and Barbara divided a month of rations into fourteen piles. Bobby then went to the garage of the parsonage next door and started up the mini-van they had stored there. He pulled the van behind the church without the lights. He and Barbara loaded the food and supplies into

the van. Then Bobby filled all the gas containers they had and loaded them into the van and returned the van to the garage.

“Barbara, we had better sleep in the storeroom tonight. It’s the safest place I know of for now.”

“That will be fine, Bobby. I’m very tired so any place to lay my head sounds good to me.”

Bobby and Barbara went back to the church and down into the storeroom. Barbara nestled next to Bobby on an old sofa and pulled a blanket over them.

“Good night Sweetheart, I love you.”

“Goodnight, Bobby, my love.”

Barbara and Bobby fell asleep as their minds contemplated what tomorrow had in store for them. Whatever was to be, they were ready for it. Their love for God and each other would sustain them throughout the darkness that lay ahead!

Morning came too quickly for Bobby. He was still worn out from the events of the night before. Bobby looked at Barbara lying asleep in his arms. She looked so beautiful to him. He marveled at her smooth skin and her perfect shaped mouth. He nestled his face in her long black hair and inhaled the fragrance of it. How he longed to know her completely as his wife. Yet, Bobby knew it could not be. He had a commitment to God and nothing was going to override or interfere with his devotion to Him. Bobby brushed the hair from Barbara’s cheek and gave her a warm kiss on the corner of her mouth. Barbara stretched and yawned and looked at Bobby with big dark doe eyes. A big smile came over her beautiful face as she studied Bobby’s features while holding his face with both her hands. She caressed his cheeks with her loving hands and returned his kiss on his nose.

“What a wonderful way to be awakened, Bobby.”

“I couldn’t resist, Barbara. You looked so beautiful lying there. I was overcome with emotions. Please forgive me!”

“Bobby, I know the limits we have set before God. I will honor those commitments just as I know you will. I need the warmth and tenderness you show me and I look forward to it. Precious love of my life, please don’t feel guilty or ashamed to show me that affection. I believe I would wither and die without you showing your love and devotion to me and God!”

Bobby said, “I don’t deserve someone like you, Barbara. You are so wonderful! Just when I think I have things all figured out, you teach me a new realm of what love is all about. I am thankful to God for you. You are truly a gift to me, in these tribulation days, to hold me up and comfort me! Thank you Father God! Bless your holy name.”

Bobby and Barbara got the van and headed for the Thompson Warehouse as planned. The traffic was extremely light for a Saturday morning. When they pulled into the warehouse, Jesse was already there to meet them. He ran over to the van to greet them and see if they knew what is going on.

“Bobby...Bobby, it has happened! The Antichrist, Oman Tharriff, went into the Holy of Holies. You know, in the Temple in Jerusalem. It was covered by the World News Station live as he did it.”

“When did this happen, Jesse?”

“Well, it was 8:00 a.m. our time, so it must have been about noon their time. That was three hours ago it happened. They have been showing the reruns ever since.”

Jesse pulled out a small, hand-held color television and handed it to Bobby.

Bobby and Barbara huddled over the small screen and watched the prophecy of the Bible being

fulfilled just as it said it would be.

While they watched, the news station came back to live broadcast with the news commentator shouting, "They killed him...they killed the World's Leader! Oh no, how can this be? Let's go live to the steps of the Temple where our field correspondent Madison Remora is standing by."

"This is Madison Remora on the steps of the Temple where just seconds ago we witnessed a horrendous act of terrorism. It appears that some unnamed rabbinical priest pulled a large dagger from his clothing and plunged it into the neck of our World Leader, Oman Tharriff. He appears to be fatally wounded. Again, I say the man who brought Israel peace has been murdered by one of those he brought peace to. The priest has been taken into custody by the security forces and is being rushed off to a security van and taken to some unknown location. Our Leader has just been put into an ambulance and taken to the secured facilities at Jerusalem Medical Center. All reports coming down to me indicate that Oman Tharriff is dead! The Roman Pontiff has called for quiet so that he can address the world. Let's listen as he speaks."

"Citizens of the World. You have witnessed what had to take place that the prophecy be fulfilled. In three days Oman Tharriff will rise from the dead and take his place as the prophesied Messiah, savior of the World! You will no longer have doubt that Oman is God incarnate. When he arises and takes his rightful place in the Temple, we will make a statue of his image for all to worship. All will worship the one who was wounded by the sword and lived! Everyone go back to their nations and countries and prepare your people for the coming of the Messiah and his new system of Government."

Bobby cut off the television and handed it back to Jesse. By then all the followers had arrived and were huddled around Bobby.

"You have seen with your own eyes and heard with your own ears. Bobby went on to explain. Everything you witnessed was written in the Bible some two thousand years ago! Today it has happened just as the Prophets said it would be, just as the Rapture happened as prophesied. We can count the days until the true Messiah, Jesus, comes back to fight the last battle. That will be 1260 biblical days from today. There are 360 days in a year in the old Jewish calendar. We know how many days are left and we know something else very important. The Bible tells us that at the mid point of the seven year tribulation, Satan and his fallen angels were completely cast out of Heaven by Michael, the Archangel. That means that Satan and all his hosts are here on earth, all around us. The whole world will feel his wrath like never before because he knows his days are numbered."

Barbara spoke out to the group. "There is one thing I've learned in the last couple days. That is to have absolute faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I've experienced His mercy and His protection with Bobby and me. I'm not afraid of what tomorrow might bring because if I die for His sake, I will go to be with our Lord forever! If I endure until the end, serving our Lord, He said I will be saved. You see, no matter what happens to our bodies, our souls will live forever in a changed, incorruptible body with Christ. I guess that is what you call a win...win situation."

"That's my girl. Tell it like it is, Barbara; Bobby went on to say, If anyone has any doubt about staying with the group, say so now."

No one spoke up or moved to leave.

Bobby said, "I was pretty sure no one would cop-out. Hey, that's our password and now, let's refer to our group as the Cop-Out Gang. Kinda' ironic, don't you think?"

Everyone laughed and the name was lightheartedly used by all.

Bobby then called each precinct leader to the van and he and Barbara passed out the food, supplies and gas. It was settled that they would meet once a month at the same place to re-supply each group. Bobby told them not to reveal the location of the warehouse or any other of the group's location to any new converts they may recruit. With Satan on the warpath, there may be those who will fake a conversion to Jesus just to rat us out. Bobby told each one to be on guard and never waver in their faith. After a prayer, each group departed as they had come.

Bobby and Barbara looked lovingly at each other and Barbara said, "Well Handsome, it begins!"

Bobby gave her a big hug and said, "Yes, it does Sweetheart. I'm so proud of what you said to the group, today. No doubt it has inspired them as it inspired me. Handsome? Hum, what do you know? You can say that all you want. That is, in private."

They both started giggling and left to go back to their hideout to make plans for telling others about Jesus. On the way home, Bobby turned the radio to a local news station to see what was happening here at home. There was a lot of news on the happenings in Israel. Then the newscaster came on with a local news story.

"This is Jeremy Bradley with a story of courage and devotion to duty and his fellow citizen. Last night Sergeant Lance Carper of our police department became a hero. Acting on his own without any backup Sergeant Carper rushed head on into a raging gun battle between two of his fellow officers and the outlaw gang known as the Night Devils. While taking cover behind his patrol car one officer was seriously wounded in the leg. Sergeant Carper drove his patrol car along side of Officer Joshua Gold and put the wounded officer into his patrol car. Officer Gold was able to drive off to a safe distance before he came to a stop and passed out from loss of blood. Sergeant Carper mortally wounded two gang members on a rooftop while he made his way into the burning building where he found Officer Tim Mayfield passed out from smoke inhalation. Sergeant Carper revived Officer Mayfield and while shielding him with his body he was able to get to a patrol car and get them both out of harms way. Sergeant Carper got the wounded officers to the hospital for treatment. It was then, hospital nurses discovered Sergeant Carper had been shot in the left arm during the rescue of his fellow officers. The latest reports are that all three officers are recuperating well. Captain Rob Laven, Commander of the First Police Precinct, stated that he would recommend Sergeant Carper be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and receive the Gold Star Medal of Valor. This is the highest honor that can be bestowed on a police officer. He will also recommend that all three officers receive the Purple Heart for being wounded in the line of duty. The citizens of our providence owe Sergeant Carper our deepest respect for his courageous acts of heroism! This is Jeremy Bradley of radio station WXRE, reporting."

Bobby and Barbara listened, fixed to the news they were hearing.

"Thank God he is all right, Barbara! God must have been with him. All three of them were spared death."

"Oh, Bobby, I feel so bad for Sergeant Carper. For him to be hurt just after helping us, my heart goes out to him! I Know God must have delivered him to serve His cause during these last days. Let's go to the Hospital to see him."

"Barbara, that will be very dangerous for us. They probably have our names down on a list of Christians to be apprehended. But if we kinda sneak in, you know, act like we belong there. Maybe we can pull it off. We owe Lance and I'm very concerned for him."

"Let's do it, Bobby. Let's let him know how much we feel for him and that we are there for him if he needs us."

“God be with us, Sweetheart. Let’s go for it!”

Chapter 9 **Martyred**

Lance was awakened from his first night in the hospital by all the noise going on out in the hall. His television was still on from the night before. Lance was soon focusing on the events on the television. He turned the volume control up and took in all that was going on concerning the events at the Temple in Israel. “Well I’ll be! It’s happening just like Bobby said the Bible foretold! Man, am I glad I ran into that kid last night! His message to me was just in the nick of time. I might have been drawn into this nonsense if Bobby hadn’t witnessed to me first. As far as that goes, if Bobby and his girlfriend hadn’t prayed for me to received Jesus and the protection of God, all three of us might have been killed! I did feel the presence of God while I was in that awful situation. I was at peace with a feeling that all would come out okay. That had to be the hand of God! Lord, I don’t know how to pray very well, but I want to thank you for helping me and Tim and Josh last night. If some way I can be of service to you, I sure hope you would let

me know. I really do appreciate you and...well...ah...Amen, Lord.”

Tears came to Lance’s eyes as he contemplated his new commitment to God and how good it was to belong to someone who loves him. Lance felt like the void in his life, that had left him a shell of a person was now filled. He had a new awareness in his heart and soul that he couldn’t explain, except that it had to be God.

Lance was just about to get out of his bed when the door was pushed wide open and Captain Laven rushed in and grabbed Lance by his good arm, shaking him slightly.

“You old son of a gun, Lance! Just when we all thought you had gone soft and ineffective on us, you turn around and make us all proud of you! You old dog, you still got it! I thought you were out the door on us there for awhile. After the review board read the reports of Officers Gold and Mayfield early this morning, they accepted my recommendations that you get that long over due promotion. Let me be the first to salute you, Lieutenant Carper.” With that said, Captain Laven snapped his heals together and saluted Lance, and gave him a big smile. “That ain’t all, you old hero, you. You and the other two officers are to receive the Purple Heart for being wounded in the line of duty. Lance, you....you will receive the Gold Star Medal of Valor! That makes you only the third officer in the history of this department to receive such an honor! I’m so proud of you, Lance. We have been through a lot together. You don’t know how many times I defended your butt in the last couple of years. The board wanted to get rid of you long ago because of your low arrest record and, well, frankly, your attitude. This kinda redeems my fighting for you. The Board sees you in a different light now. Don’t take this wrong, Lance, but you were on your way out before this happened anyway. I think you already knew that. But blessed be the name of the soon to rise savior of the World, they couldn’t let you go, considering all the news coverage praising you! You are a hero, now. They couldn’t fire a hero, could they?”

“Rob, I’m no dummy. I know why they promoted me and are going to give me a medal. They promoted me to get me off the street and into an office. They are going to give me, Josh and Tim medals because we are losing too many police officers and the publicity may cause some to stay and maybe even some new ones to sign up. Anyway, Rob, I appreciate everything you have done for me. I’ve known you never understood where I’m coming from for a long time now. Don’t worry, old Buddy. I’ll be a good boy and make you proud of me. Besides, I’m a new person now. I’m not alone anymore.”

A nurse entered the room and said, “Sorry to interrupt you two but, Sergeant Carper, there is a young couple in the lobby to see you. The boy said he was your relative and for you not to cop-out on him.”

Lance stiffened and looked surprised.

Captain Laven said, “I didn’t know you had any relatives around here, Lance. As long as I’ve known you, you never mentioned any close relatives. That must be why you said you aren’t alone anymore! Well, that’s great for you, Lance.”

“Yeah, I have a distant cousin I’ve been communicating with for a while. He said he would get up with me sometime. I guess he found out about me being in the hospital some way and decided now was a good time to come see me.”

“Wonderful, Lance, I’ll leave you to your family and get back to work. Take care now and don’t fantasize about why you are being honored! You hear me, old Buddy?”

“I hear you, Rob. Now get your ornery self out of here and back to work where you belong.”

They both laughed as Captain Laven left the room.

“I’ll send in your cousin on the way out, Lance.”

Bobby and Barbara were standing to the side of the hall with their backs turned to Captain Laven as he approached them and slapped Bobby on the shoulder. As Bobby and Barbara turned around, they almost fell to the floor. Both had an ashen look about them.

“Sorry I startled you. I’m Rob Laven. Your cousin is one of my oldest and dearest friends. I told him I would send you in. He is in room 109 at the end of the hall. Good to meet you.”

Captain Laven extended his right hand and vigorously shook first Bobby’s hand and then Barbara’s hand.

“What a beautiful girl you are young lady. Are you kin to Lance?”

“Kinda, Sir. I...err....I’m Bobby’s wife!”

Captain Laven responded, “Well, Bobby, you sure know how to pick them. She is the prettiest thing I’ve seen in a long, long time. Sorry to rush off, but I’ve got to get back to Headquarters. Some officers in the Tenth Precinct brought in one of those Defectives they caught. He was trying to tell some of our good citizens a pack of lies about that old Bible God. Don’t worry, though, when we get through with him he will tell us who his leader is and the names of all their followers. Again, good to meet you two! You take care now.”

Captain Laven rustled out the main lobby door.

Bobby and Barbara looked at each other in disbelief. They couldn’t find words to say. Both walked slowly down the hall while Bobby held Barbara tightly to his side. They came to Lance’s room and peaked inside.

“Come on in and close the door behind you. Are you two crazy? If you had been caught, do you know what they would do to you?”

“We do now, Lance. But let’s not talk about that yet. Barbara and I had to see you to see if you are all right. We couldn’t stand to think of you being laid up here, hurt and alone!”

“Come here you dummies and give me a hug. I’m all right and I’m not alone anymore. I really felt God was with me last night. I felt your prayers going up for me. There was no fear, just action. I trusted God for a safe outcome. He sure delivered, didn’t He?”

Barbara leaned over Lance and kissed him on the cheek. “Lance, you are very special to us. We had to know you were going to be okay.”

“Barbara, I’m going to be okay. In fact, I’m getting out of here in about thirty minutes. I’ll have to come back a few times to get the bandages changed on my arm and hands but, I can leave. Say, why do you two look like you’ve lost your best friend?”

Bobby spoke up, “Lance, your friend Captain Laven is the one who sent us back here. He thinks I am your cousin.”

“Yeah, I told him that.”

“He also told us he had to get back to headquarters because some officers had brought in a defective from the Tenth Precinct. Lance, that’s Jesse’s area! He has been with us from the first. Captain Laven told us he would get him to tell who their leader is and the name of all our followers!”

“Bobby, we have to do something quick! I hear no one comes out of headquarters alive. Get me my clothes out of the closet and help me get dressed!”

“Wait, Lance, you are in no condition to do anything now. We can’t jeopardize exposing you anyway. We will need all the help we can get from you in the future. Please don’t go now.”

“Bobby, if you were me, would you go?”

“That’s not fair, Lance. I can’t answer that!”

“Yes, you can, Boy! Now help me on with my clothes and let me check out of here.”

Bobby and Barbara did as Lance said without anymore talking.

“Now, you two go ahead as if you were leaving. Get into your vehicle and drive to the side parking lot. There’s a large tree overhanging the parking lot that will give you some privacy if you park under the branches. Wait there for me. I’ll check out and meet you there. I love you guys! You are the only family I have and I need you alive!”

Both Bobby and Barbara hugged Lance and expressed their love for him. They left and did what Lance told them to do.

Lance checked out of the hospital and met Bobby and Barbara as planned. Lance told Bobby to drive to the side door of the Headquarters building and park far enough down so that they could see the rear exit, also. Just as Lance was getting out of the van, they saw several people coming out of the back door carrying a body bag. They placed the body bag inside a police van and drove past Lance. He was making his way to Captain Laven, who was standing by the back door.

“Lance, what are you doing out of the hospital so soon? You should have rested while you had a chance to.”

“I’m fine, Rob. I was going buggy in there. I just wanted to check on how it was going with that Defective. My cousin told me about what you said to them about capturing the freak. Were you able to get anything useful out of him?”

“No, can you believe it? This dope wouldn’t rat out his gang even when we peeled his skin off his body, like you peel a catfish. Before he died, he just kept screaming, ‘Glory to God and Jesus is Lord!’ Man, can you believe that kind of devotion to what you believe in?”

“Rob, you mean he’s dead?”

“Yeah, he died when we attached the electrical wires to his manhood. I guess we used too much power. We needed him alive to get to his gang, but maybe the next one we catch. We will catch another one!”

“Rob, do you know who he was?”

“Yes, some guy named Jesse Tracer. He was one of the ringleaders! Captain Laven leaned closer to Lance and looked around before he spoke. Lance, now that you have been promoted to the Inner Circle, I can tell you a few things I couldn’t tell you before. Captain Laven lowered his voice to a whisper, we have an informer infiltrated into their gang. She has been there for several months. We got her to cooperate with us because we were holding her mother in the old jail facilities by the firehouse. Ha....she thinks her mother is still alive. The old gal just up and died on us last month.”

“How do you get the girl to keep on cooperating with you?”

“Not to worry, Lance. We recorded several statements from her mother before she died. We play parts of them to our spy whenever she calls and insists on hearing from her mother. That will keep her in line until we don’t need her anymore.”

Lance tried not to show his emotions while he listened to Rob spill his guts about what really goes on at Headquarters.

“That was a smart thing to do, Rob. Sounds like you will have these gangs eliminated before long.”

“I’m counting on it, Lance. You know, that would pretty much assure me the new promotion I’m up for. Can I count on you for your support, Lance?”

“Hey, what are friends for, old Buddy? You helped me didn’t you, Rob?”

“Yeah, thanks, Lance; I knew I could count on you. Look, I’ve got to get over to the old crematory on P.A. Road. That’s where we dispose of the bodies! When will you be able to come

back to work, Lance? I'm looking forward to showing you the inner workings of the department."

"Probably in a couple days, Rob. I need to get these bandages off my hands to be able to function right. Oh, by the way, who is that girl you have infiltrated into the gang of defectives?"

"All in due time, Lance. I can't let that kind of information out yet."

"Yeah, I can see why. Smart move, Rob! Well...see ya later old Buddy."

"Yes sir, Lieutenant. See you in a couple of days. Oh, don't forget to pick up your new white uniform shirts before you come back on duty. I get to put those bars on your collar myself. Mr. Black, the Government Commander, will give you the medals and your new gold shield. Bye for now."

"See ya, Rob."

Lance started back to the van where Bobby and Barbara were waiting. His heart was as heavy as a rock. He wondered how anyone could torture someone to death and then act as if it was nothing. How could his best buddy become so calloused and bloodthirsty in just a few years?

Lance got into the van and told Bobby to drive away from the precinct towards his house. Bobby and Barbara kept asking Lance what had happened to Jesse? Lance kept stalling them until he reached the privacy of his own home.

"Come on in, you two. I think it's best if you stay with me for a few days!"

Bobby couldn't take the not knowing anymore. "Lance, for mercies' sake, please tell us what happened to Jesse!"

"I am, Bobby. I want you and Barbara to promise me you won't do anything crazy and that you both will stay with me for awhile."

Barbara spoke up, "We will, Lance. She began to cry, sensing the worst scenario for Jesse. Now, please tell us."

Lance cradled Barbara with his hurt arm and Bobby with the other as he began to tell them all that had happened. "We got there too late to help Jesse. They killed him!" Bobby and Barbara began to cry uncontrollably as Lance continued. He was in that body bag that they put into the police van and left with. They were taking him to a crematorium to burn him to ashes and dispose of them. They tortured him in ways I can't begin to tell you. It would be more than you could bear to hear. Captain Laven was a part of it! He told me Jesse wouldn't say anything except, 'Glory to God and Praise the Lord.' He thinks I am with them now because of my promotion into their inner circle, as he calls it. I wanted to tear his head off. I was upset but I had to play it cool to be able to stay in a position to help the group. I can see why God put me in this place at this time. Laven told me something else! Someone has infiltrated our group and furnished the information that got Jesse caught. That person is a girl who joined the group several months ago. I couldn't get her name. I tried to but Laven wouldn't part with it. He said they had her mother in jail and were using the threat of harm to her to get the girl to sell out the group. Sad thing is the mother died a little while ago. They are using recorded statements from the mother to play over the phone whenever the girl wants to make sure her mother is all right. Do either of you have any ideas who this person might be?"

Bobby and Barbara looked at each other through tear stained eyes with bewilderment. It was so much to digest that Jesse was gone and now this. A traitor in the group!

Barbara spoke first, "Jesse had a girl partner, Patricia. She has only been with us for a few months."

"That's right Bobby said. "She was always so silent and seemed troubled all the time. I

remember praying with her and she bawled like a baby. She once said nothing could help her, that it was impossible! If only she would have turned to us, maybe this would have never happened. Maybe we could have rescued her mother and Jesse would still be alive.”

“Don’t try to second guess what might have been, Bobby. We do what we can when we can and God will have to do the rest!”

“Lance, what wisdom you have to be such a young Christian,” Barbara said.

“Well, all I really know is we have to find this young lady and keep her from ever contacting Captain Laven again. I think I know how to go about doing this, too. I’ve got a plan that just might work. Do you two know how to get in touch with her?”

“Yes Barbara and I call a pay phone in her zone and let it ring three times and hang up. Then we call back and let it ring two times. If Patricia is close enough to the phone to hear it ring, she will meet us at a prearranged location in her zone in one half hour.”

“That’s good to hear. We need to wait for dark and put my plan into action. While we wait, I’ll fill you both in on the plan.”

Barbara asked Lance, “Do you have any food in the house? We could all use something to eat?”

“I sure do, Barbara. Let me fix us something to eat.”

“No Sir, you sit there with Bobby and I’ll fix the food. That’s the least I can do! Look at your hands!”

“I forgot all about them. I need to take off about half of the bandages so I can use my hands better. They aren’t that bad, anyway.”

Bobby offered, “Let me help you, Lance. I can do it better than you can with those mitts of yours.”

Barbara went about cooking dinner for the three of them, in silence, while teeny tears flowed slowly down her beautiful cheeks. After Bobby helped Lance adjust his bandages, they both lay back in their chairs and became silent as each pondered what happened that morning and what was to come.

Chapter 10 **Forgiveness**

The phone rang three times and then stopped. The phone rang two times and then silence. Patricia heard the rings and knew it was the code to meet the leader of the group. She was filled with apprehension and debated what to do. Do they know about her already. Maybe the meeting is to tell her about Jesse being arrested this morning. That must be it. There is no way the police would give her identity away. Nobody else could know. Patricia decided to go to the meeting place and see what’s up. The meeting place was behind a bowling alley just off River Road. When Patricia arrived there, she found Bobby and Barbara already there waiting for her. She looked all around to make sure they were alone before she walked up to Bobby’s van.

Bobby said, “Get in, Patricia. We don’t want anyone to see us talking.”

Patricia was nervous as she got into the van. Bobby drove to the end of the building where they could see any approaching vehicles and parked.

Barbara spoke first. “Patricia, where’s Jesse? Why isn’t he with you?”

“I don’t know! He went out on the streets to witness this morning and he never returned. I thought, maybe you might know where he is.”

Bobby asked, “Why weren’t you with him this morning? You know the plan is that we go out two by two so we can watch each other’s back!”

Patricia became extremely nervous and sweat began to roll down her face. She began to cry and rock back and forth. She answered Bobby by saying, “What’s all the questions about? You two are looking at me as if I did something wrong! Jesse wanted to go out alone this morning. He...he just wanted to be by himself, that’s all.”

Barbara said, “Enough lying! You had better tell us the truth. We know where Jesse is!”

At that moment a car pulled up in front of Bobby’s van and a police officer got out and started to walk towards the van. Patricia frantically pushed open the side door of the van and ran to the officer.

“Help me, help me, please! The two people in that van are the leaders of the Defectives. Officer, please arrest them and contact Captain Laven at the Headquarters Building and tell him you have the leaders in custody. Tell him Patricia, his informant, is with you and that I gave them up to you.”

“Oh, you must be the informant that gave up Jesse Tracer this morning. Is that right?”

“Yes, Officer, that was me. I called Captain Laven while Jesse was talking to some people on the street about Jesus. We have a deal. Now that you have the leaders, he can let my mother go!”

Lance took Patricia by the arm and headed her back to the van. “I’m afraid you are a cop-out, Missy”

“Cop-Out, Officer, how did you know that secret password?”

“Well, young lady, I use it to identify who I am, amongst my fellow group members. Yes, I am a Christian! Some choose to call me a defective, do you?”

Patricia slumped in a faint. Lance had to support her until Bobby got there and picked her up in his arms and took her to the van.

As Patricia lay there for a few seconds, unconscious, Bobby and Barbara began to cry.

Bobby stroked Patricia’s hair and said, “She is one of us. What are we to do with her now?”

Barbara sobbed great tears of pain and anguish. “Oh...Bobby, How can we deal with this? She gave Jesse up to be tortured and killed! What are we to do, dear God?”

Lance said, “We can’t let her go. She can bring us all down. Look at that face of hers. She’s just a kid who wanted her mother freed from the hell she was in. Lord, this is so hard. What do we do with her?”

Patricia came to and looked at her captors with great fear as she sobbed deeply. “Please don’t hurt me! I’m so sorry for what I’ve done! I’m the only hope my mother has of getting out of that hellhole they have her in. They said that they would kill her in a horrible way if I didn’t turn you over to them. Captain Laven said that he would send you to a camp in the mountains to rehabilitate you, if I turned you in. I turned in Jesse because I thought he would turn you over. I was too much of a coward to give you up and have to face you in some court of law.”

Lance broke in, “Young lady, there is no court of law for those they think are defective. There is only torture worst than the Nazis could dish out. If you are lucky, you die fast!”

“No...no...that’s not what Captain Laven promised me. Oh...my...God, Jesse! What have they done to Jesse?”

Barbara spoke up in tears, “Jesse was tortured and gruesomely killed. Then they burned his body, reducing it to ashes. That’s what they would have done to us also if Lance had not been one of us!”

“Barbara, please believe me. If I had known that I would have never agreed to help

them.. I bought into a pack of lies in an effort to save my mother.”

“Patricia,” Lance interrupted, “your mother died a month ago. They were playing bits of recorded tapes of your mother talking when you called in to hear her voice. They used you even after your mother died.”

Oh...dear...Lord, what have I done? My mother is dead and I sent Jesse to his death! How evil can I get? Please forgive me, Lord. Let me die in the place of any more of your followers! I am so sorry, so very sorry!”

Patricia collapsed in a heap on the van seat and sobbed her heart out.

Lance, Bobby and Barbara looked at each other and began to cry tears of compassion for Patricia. They all pulled her up into their arms and, one by one, told her they forgave her.

“Bobby, take Patricia and Barbara back to my house and stay away from the windows. I’ve got to go to Headquarters and receive my new rank and be awarded the medals. I detest the thought of the whole thing, but I know it’s best for the group. I’ll be home as soon as I can and we will try to make some sense out of this mess.”

With that, Lance took Patricia by the chin and looked deeply into her eyes. “Any one of us may have done the same thing in an effort to save a loved one. This world isn’t sane! Don’t believe anything anyone tells you unless it lines up with the Word of God. Talk to one of us when you are troubled or in doubt. We are here for each other. We are each other’s family! God loves you and we love you. He forgives you and we forgive you!”

Patricia fell into Lance’s arms and cried tears of relief. “How can God or you forgive me? I have the blood of Jesse on my hands! I can’t forgive myself for this.”

Barbara spoke to Patricia, “You must forgive yourself to be able to go on. You remember when I testified to our group about how I had an abortion? I have the blood of my baby on my hands! God forgave me, and it took awhile but I forgave myself, also. Not one of us is without sin. God has given us this last chance to accept His Son, Jesus. There are no more tomorrow’s for us Tribulation saints. We must take hold of today and serve God with our bodies, minds and spirits, always ready to give our lives for our confession of Christ, like Jesse did. He glorified God with his life and now he is with our Lord, preparing to come back in victory. Are you ready to be like Jesse, Patricia? Can you give your life to protect the rest of us and glorify God?”

“Yes, I can! If God will have me after what I did, I’ll never fail Him again!”

Bobby and Barbara smothered Patricia with hugs and kisses.

Bobby put his forehead to Patricia’s and said, “I know you will serve God now. No matter what happens to you, I believe in you to do right by God. You must rest now. We all must rest because the Antichrist will reappear in two days and the darkness will soon overtake the whole world. We have to be ready to give a little light to this doomed world.”

Bobby drove to Lances' house and parked the van in his garage. Barbara and Bobby helped Patricia into the house and all three of them lay down to rest. They all cuddled together on the living room floor and soon were fast asleep.

It was 3:00 p.m. when Lance arrived at Headquarters. He was greeted by a large contingency of the news media. Television commentators pushed mikes into his face as the press photographers snapped away at his every move. Lance made his way to the top of the steps where Captain Laven and Mr. Black greeted him. Captain Laven said some appropriate words and pinned the Lieutenant bars on Lance’s collars and then pinned the Lieutenant’s gold shield on his shirt pocket.

Mr. Black went about pinning the Purple Heart medal on all three officers. Officer Gold was standing, with some difficulty, on a set of crutches and Officer Mayfield had bandages on

his hands and arms as well as his head and face. Lance had bandages on his hands and, for the first time, he wore the arm sling that he was supposed to be wearing all along. Lance looked sharp as he stood there in the white shirt of an Officer.

Mr. Black was handed the Gold Medal of Valor and he walked in front of Lance to present the medal to him. As he stood there Captain Laven read the citation to the news media, explaining the heroic events that got Lance nominated for this special honor.

Then Mr. Black said, "Lieutenant, it gives me great pleasure to present this medal to you. You have shown exceptional courage and valor in rescuing your fellow officers from a sure death situation. Let this be an example to the citizens of our State that we have dedicated servants willing to risk their lives for your safety and ours. We need a lot more people like Lieutenant Carper to fill the vacancies we have on the police department. So, if you are a real man wanting a real mans job, give us a call. You may be just the kind of person Lieutenant Carper is. A man of valor! Thank you for coming out today to help us honor these fine officers. You are dismissed!"

Mr. Black turned to Lance and said, "I would like to see you in my office right away."

Lance replied, "I'll be right there."

Captain Laven gave Lance a hug and a salute. Lance gave officers Mayfield and Gold a hug and told them to get well soon. Both officers expressed their gratitude to Lance for getting them to safety at the risk of his own life.

Officer Gold said, "We owe you, Lieutenant. We mean it. You name it and we'll be there!"

Lance replied, "You guys just get well. We need you back at work."

Lance then went on to Mr. Black's office.

"Come on in, Lance, and shut the door behind you. Sit down, please, and make yourself comfortable. Can I get you something to drink?"

"No thank you sir, I'm fine."

"Well, Lance, Captain Laven has already filled me in on how much he has shared with you about our operations here. I want you to know that everything that happens here, stays here! In case you have wondered, we are acting under orders of the highest authority. You will be briefed on a need-to-know basis about our operations. Your duties will be mostly administrative at this time. You get the front office next to the dispatcher. We have provided you with a secretary and a liaison officer to help administer your duties. You will have absolute control of the functions we assign you. You will also be held accountable for the way you administer your duties. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, Sir, perfectly clear!"

"You know, Lance, I don't like you. I have never liked you! Personally, I think you are a slacker and perhaps even a troublemaker, but Captain Laven believes in you and I have great confidence in him. Otherwise, I would have seen that you were fired long ago! However, what you did the other night gave the Department the kind of press we needed. That is the only reason I went along with the Board's recommendation to promote you and hail you as a hero. You had better not let me down, Boy! Don't do anything to provoke my wrath! Do you get the gist of it?"

"How could I miss it, Sir? Will that be all for now, Sir?"

"Yes, you can go now. Just remember, I've got my eye on you, Lieutenant!"

"How could I forget, Sir?"

Lance saluted Mr. Black and turned and walked to his new office. He mumbled under his breath, "You know what you can do with your ugly self, Sir!"

Lance entered his office and immediately his secretary came in to introduce herself.

All smiling and bubbly she said, "Let me introduce myself to you, Lieutenant. I am Grace Alison, your secretary. My desk is in the hall on the other side of the dispatcher's office. You can call me on the intercom or my desk phone extension is 3309." She winked at Lance and smiled, while she cut her eyes toward the ceiling. "I'm so happy to be working for such a brave man, she said. The Gold Metal of Valor, my, my. Can you just believe?"

"Thank you, Grace. I'll just get my things settled in here and then I'm going back home to recuperate a little longer. I'll be back in a couple of days, fit for duty. Please keep things going for me here, if you will?"

"I sure will, Lieutenant. Everything will be in top shape for you when you report for duty."

"Thank you, Grace."

After Grace left his office, Lance began to search for listing devices and video cameras. Considering Mr. Black's feelings for him, Lance believed he might have bugged his office. After about ten minutes, Lance located a listening device embedded in one of the ceiling tiles. It was so small you could hardly see it while looking right at it. Lance discovered it after lifting several ceiling tiles and finding the wire attached to it. He noticed that the wire ran from his office in the direction of Mr. Black's office.

"I might have known," Lance whispered under his breath. So that is why Grace cut her eyes toward the ceiling. She wanted to warn me. I can trust her, I hope!"

Lance went about hanging his plaques and arranging his office while he whistled and sang, as if he didn't have a care in the world. When Lance finished, he said good bye to Grace and winked at her. He then walked passed Mr. Black's door and out the front door with his head held high and an air of authority about him. When he got into his new police car, permanently assigned to him, he had to laugh to himself at the amateur job of bugging his office. Lance also had to assume that his new police car was bugged until he was able to check it out. When he arrived home, he parked on the side of his house on the grass. This was in case there was a video camera hidden in his car to view the area in and outside his car. Better to be safe than sorry, he thought.

Lance went into his house and woke the kids up. They were startled at first until they became oriented.

Barbara shuddered, "Man, Lance, you scared the devil out of me! I'm not use to seeing you in that new uniform. It is quite striking on you, though. Whoa, look at those medals! They are beautiful. You deserve them, Lance. Is that real gold on that big one?"

"I doubt it Barbara. Knowing those cheap skates, it's probably polished brass."

"How did it go at the office?" Bobby asked.

"Well, I know where I stand with Mr. Black. He made it very clear how much he dislikes me. He doesn't trust me as far as he can throw me. He has my office bugged for sound. I'm not sure about my new car, yet. I'll check it out tomorrow to make sure. They gave me a secretary. She seems okay but I'll check her out, too. They also gave me a liaison officer to assist me. I haven't met him yet, but I'm sure he's a plant to spy on me. Laven is still acting like we are old buddies so I guess he is still on my side. I can really feel the pressure from all this. I didn't let on to them, though. I walked out of the Headquarters building as if I owned it. Like I didn't have a care in the world! Man, if I can pull this off, you know God is in it! For the first time, my Friends, I'm scared."

Bobby put his arm around Lance's shoulder and said, "We know how you feel, Lance. We have been living in fear for a long time now. You came into our lives and lifted our spirits.

God truly put you with us to help us and be the adult figure we need. We see you as a tower of strength. You give us courage to go on and a shoulder to cry on. We have witnessed your strength and your compassion.”

Barbara and Patricia both said, “Amen.”

“Hey, enough of that! You guys will have me tearing all over the place. Listen, I’m taking off tomorrow and staying here with you. We must rest up. Like you told me, Bobby, the day after tomorrow the Antichrist will rise from the dead and begin his reign of terror. Sleep may be little and far between. Let’s take advantage of the rest while we can. First, though, Bobby, I want you and me to get out a message to the others to be leery of new converts until they prove themselves. For them not to give out any information about any of the rest of us and to report any new converts that ask a lot of questions about our followers. Also, we have to tell them about Jesse.”

Lance put his hand lovingly on Patricia’s face and lingered there for a second and said, “There is no need to involve Patricia. That won’t change anything but hurt her.”

Patricia kissed Lances hand and wiped the tears from her eyes with his hand.

Lance said, “Let’s take the van, Bobby; and if you ladies don’t mind, would you fix us something to eat? That home cooked food you fixed the last time, Barbara, was the first good food I can remember eating in years!”

“We will make you a feast!” Barbara shouted.

“Let’s go, Bobby, I can’t wait to get back!”

Bobby and Lance made the rounds and informed each group of all the happenings and gave them stern warnings of what was to come. They prayed with each group and told them they may not be able to stay in touch with each other as often as they would like. Bobby told each group leader, in private, where the gas and food and supplies were stashed. If they lost contact or needed supplies they were to go to the church by themselves and get what they needed. They could leave a message in the storeroom concerning any important events or special needs.

After they had contacted all the group leaders, Bobby and Lance went back to Lances home and sat down to a feast. The girls really outdid themselves. Lance was a happy man. “Would you please pass the biscuits,” He grinned.

Chapter 11 **The Satanic Miracle**

Three days have passed since Oman Tharriff was stabbed to death. The Pontiff had his body put in a temporarily constructed tomb. This Tomb was placed on the Mount of Olives and guarded by a complete regiment of troops. Today the Roman Pontiff has gathered many of the nations' leaders to the site of the Tomb. All the top news agencies and television stations have their cameras trained on the Pontiff as he stands silently beside the Tomb. The whole world is tuned in to this event by way of satellite up-links. A hush came over the crowd that was gathered at the site.

The Pontiff slowly raised his arms into the air and said, "Behold, the promised Messiah! The deliverer and hope of all mankind! He whom the prophets spoke about. The one who would defeat death and rise again."

With that said, the Pontiff turned toward the Tomb and said, "Come out and live!"

The silence became unbearable as the entire world looked on in wonderment and suspense. For a brief moment there was nothing but total silence. Then the top of the Tomb began to move on it's on. Slowly at first, and then it quickly crashed to the ground and Oman Tharriff stood straight up and raised his arms to the crowd gathered about him. A roar of fear and praise went up as many people fell to their knees, some in praise and others in mortal fear! Many people fainted from the shock and terror of witnessing such an event. Throughout all the nations, as people looked at their television sets, similar reactions were taking place.

The Roman Pontiff helped the once dead but now alive World Leader, out of the Tomb and then fell at his feet. The pontiff lay prone at Oman's feet for a few seconds before he got to his knees and shouted, "Praise to him that was wounded to death, but now lives. All men must worship our risen Savior. Bow to the King that has come to gather us together as one people! Everyone bow to our Lord and give him praise."

Many in the crowd did just that while others ran off in fear, as if they knew what was really taking place here. The entire world seemed to marvel and follow the Beast. Most people were unaware of the satanic powers that were driving Oman Tharriff, the Antichrist. Many Jews were convinced that he was the Messiah. Many more began to flee Israel to the gentile nations for protection from the Beast. The Roman Pontiff, whom many now recognized as the False Prophet, escorted the Antichrist back to the rebuilt Temple and they both went in. This time the crowds shouted praises and worshipped the Beast.

The False Prophet came back out to address the group and the news media. He said, "Now, no one can dispute the deity of our leader! We will make a statue in the image of our beloved Messiah, and all human beings will worship it and Oman as our God. Any man who fails to worship our Leader or his image will be considered Defectives and destroyed off the face of the earth!"

The Pontiff took a couple steps closer to the battery of microphones the news media had set up. He stated, "Everyone is aware of the economical and financial difficulties our world is experiencing because of all the wars and natural disasters. I have great news for you. Just before our leader was wounded, the Ten Nation Confederacy had been working on a plan to restore our economy and eliminate our financial problems. It's quite ingenious, really!. We have devised a microchip that can hold all an individual's personal and financial records on it. This device is so small we can implant it either in your right hand or your forehead. There will be no more need for cash or keeping cumbersome records. All business can be conducted as simple as scanning the mark or, rather, the implanted chip. We will implement this system right away in the Ten Nation Confederations. It may take us a little while longer to implement this system worldwide, but it will be there as fast as we can get it to you."

Oman Tharriff walked out of the Temple and up to the microphones. His mouth was full of curses and blasphemies for the God of the Bible. He swore an oath to eliminate any of the followers of Jesus, whom he called a false Messiah. He also called for all Jews to follow him and he would restore them to their rightful place in history. The Pontiff and World Leader then left the Temple and traveled to a place in Jerusalem that was set up to be one of the Antichrist's domains.

Many Jews boarded planes, buses, trains or left in their automobiles without going back home for their personal belongings. They fled to nations they knew were still friendly to Jews. It was as if God protected these Jews as they sought shelter and protection from the Antichrist. No authorities challenged their leaving Israel or their entering into other nations. Most of the fleeing Jews went to the United States or Canada.

A Christian Prophecy study group, based in New York State, had foreseen the exodus of the Jews. They had set a preconceived plan in motion to receive as many of these Jews as they could and place them in safe houses all over the country to protect them. Bobby and his group were a part of this operation from the conception of it nearly three years before. Bobby had attended a meeting of the underground Christian Alliance group after being contacted by John Clark, the founder and leader of this group. This took place in Pennsylvania at an old Christian retreat campground.

John was a writer before the Rapture. His wife and kids were faithful followers of Christ and were taken up at the Rapture. John was so devastated, he contemplated suicide at the time. However, he couldn't forget all that his family stood for and all the times they prayed for him to have a true faith conversion in Jesus Christ. John loved and believed in God, but he had problems of believing in Jesus as the Son of God. The deity of Jesus was too much for his educated mind to accept, at that time. After the Rapture, John turned his intellectual mind into doing a complete research of the Bible and its prophetic meanings. He wanted to believe but he had to be convinced beyond any doubt. The greatest evidence to him was the Rapture itself. His whole family and the church he attended never stopped telling him of the things that were happening that would lead up to Christ's return. John was a proud man and fancied himself as an admirer of God. He respected his family's beliefs and sometimes even admired their ability to show total faith in something they believed in. He knew this was a great character trait, to be sold out to your beliefs. John was like King Agrippa in the Bible who, after being witnessed to about Jesus said, "Almost, thou persuaded me?"

After many hours and days of studying the Bible, John was still confused. One day he cut on the computer that his wife and kids used and discovered a file with his name on it. John opened the file and began to read it. The more he read, the more he cried until his tears blinded him. He wiped away the tears and leaned back in his chair and hanged his head in sorrow and remorse. His wife Carol, sensing that the time was near for the Rapture had composed a letter to her much beloved husband. Each one of his young children also wrote a note to Daddy. John has never testified to anyone what was written in that file, but it changed his life and made a believer of him. That night John asked Jesus Christ to forgive him and to come into his heart. A true miracle happened in John's life that night. He attacked being a Christian like he attacked everything he had ever done in his life. He began to seek out other believers and soon put together a nationwide network of tribulation saints. This group became responsible for the salvation of multitudes of people who use to believe like he did. He also put together the Christian Alliance group that would fund the escape and relocation of thousands of Jews to the United States.

Bobby and Jesse had prepared an old hunting lodge that belonged to Jesse. It was an inheritance from one of Jesse's uncles who died four years ago. This lodge sat nestled in the middle of two hundred acres of woods in the foothills of Virginia. It was composed of twelve two-bedroom cabins and a small living room wrapped around a central great room that had four fireplaces. There was a huge kitchen and dining area with a large laundry room with three washers and three dryers. There was a twenty foot by thirty foot attached garage with an industrial size generator, that could run all the power needs of the complex. Also, the area just off the right side yard had a forty-foot by sixty foot screened in pavilion equipped with two brick bar-b-que grills. There was a small Ford tractor for gardening and cutting the grass. A small lake, stocked with bass and catfish, and a fresh water stream topped off the amenities on this property.

Bobby and Jesse use to spend weeks at a time at the lodge just after they met. They had repaired all the facilities into great working shape. Jesse's uncle had built two very large bomb shelters underground capable of holding sixty people each. Jesse and Bobby stocked these shelters to the maximum with canned and dried foods and every kind of supplies you could ever need. Then they planted bushes over the openings to conceal them. They had prepared this place for such a time as this. John Clark and his foundation had supplied all the money needed to accomplish this vast undertaking. John also had one of his most trusted people live on the property as a caretaker.

Soon now, their plan to hide as many of the fleeing Jews as they could would be put into operation.

Chapter 12 **A Promise Kept**

Three weeks have past since the Antichrist was mortally wounded and then came back to life. Events in the Middle East have been deteriorating rapidly. The allies of the Antichrist have been falling away from him, and fighting amongst themselves was commonplace.

Lance was put in charge of scheduling the personnel to staff the shifts of the first precinct. He was assigned a Sergeant to assist him in his outside duties while Lance was confined to the precinct during his work hours. Sergeant Steven Alexander was hand-picked by Mr. Black to be the liaison officer for Lance. He was a State Department Internal Affairs officer before Mr. Black had him transferred to the police department. Sergeant Alexander reported to Mr. Black daily, in clandestine meetings. Lance was very much aware of his aid's and Mr. Black's surveillance of his every move. Lance had found a listening device in his new police car, as well as a small camera hidden in the dash. He discovered these on the day after he took the car home for the first time, three weeks ago. He knew that Mr. Black was suspicious of his activities and was out to nail him. The same day he found the bugs in his police car, he had Bobby, Barbara and Patricia go to the church location to stay. They would be safer there until Lance and they prepared the rest of their group to start the plan to receive the incoming Jews that had fled from the terror of the Antichrist.

Lance was late for a meeting with Bobby and the girls. He was in a hurry and failed to notice that he was being followed. As he rounded the corner onto the street that led to the church hideout, he caught a glimpse of a car in his side view mirror following him.

Lance drove passed the church and turned onto 48th street going away from the church. He kept looking for the car in his mirrors but it had disappeared. Lance turned around and retraced his route back towards the church. As he pulled into view of the church, he saw two unmarked police cars parked across the street from it. His heart beat like a racehorse. He pulled up beside the cars and jumped out and ran around to the two officers that were standing beside their cars. Again fear overtook him as he noticed that one of the officers was Sergeant Alexander.

“Sergeant, what is going on here?”

“Oh, I think you know, Lieutenant! This is the third time I’ve tracked you to this church. We could tell by your actions that you figured out we had you bugged, so I put a tracking device under your wheel-well several days ago. Funny how you keep winding up here at this old church, isn’t it, Lieutenant? We believe this church is a hiding place for a troublesome group of defectives. Soon there will be a squad of our best officers here to tear this place apart. And, by the way, you are relieved from duty and are under arrest. Officer Gold take the Lieutenant’s gun and handcuff him!”

“Wait just one minuet, Sergeant. Are you forgetting who has the rank here!”

“Not at all lieutenant.” With that, Sergeant Alexander pulled a badge from his wallet and showed it to Lance. “You see, Lieutenant, I’m not really a sergeant. I’m Major Alexander of the Internal Affairs Division. Mr. Black called it right. You are a traitor and a disgrace to the department! Now, Officer Gold, do as I told you while I check out the back of the church.”

Officer Gold took Lance’s gun and was about to handcuff him when Lance said, “Now is when I need your help, Josh. You know you and me know I’m not a bad guy. You once told me that if I ever needed your help, you would be there for me. Well, now is the time! There are three young people in there whose only crime is that they believe in Jesus. Believe what I say to you! Those kids and I will be tortured and killed for this crime if you don’t help us. All you have to do is let me handcuff you and gag you and put you in the trunk of my car. You can tell them I over-powered you and got away. Please, believe me, Josh. I hate to say this but you owe me!”

“Lieutenant, I have always believed in the back of my mind that this talk about people being defective is a lot of hot air. You are right; I owe you my life! Here’s your gun. Now do it fast because the troops are on the way!”

Lance handcuffed and gagged Officer Gold and put him in the trunk of his car. While he was doing this, Lance gave him a hurried up version of how to get saved and live eternally and then ran to the front door of the church. He retrieved the hidden key and went in. Pushing the altar aside and looking down into the hidden room, Lance shouted, “Everybody out, now! Don’t take anything with you just get up here now! They are on to us and will be here any second. Head for the van and I’ll join you there. I have to take care of one of them in the back of the church. I’ll explain later. Get going!”

Bobby, Barbara and Patricia didn’t utter a word. They did as Lance said as fast as they could.

Lance went to the back door and opened it slightly to observe Major Alexander poking around a window in the back of the church. Lance crepe quietly up behind him and hit him over the head with the butt of his gun. Major Alexander fell to the ground in a daze. Lance handcuffed his arms around a small tree and took his gun. As Lance was about to leave, Major Alexander came to and said, “You low life trader. You won’t get away with this! I’ll hunt you down like the mad dog you are. You will die a brutal death at my hands! Do you hear me, you traitor?”

Lance walked back to where the Major was handcuffed to the tree. “Yes, I hear you. You may catch up with me and kill my body, but you can never destroy my soul. It belongs to Jesus Christ!”

Major Alexander became livid with rage and started to curse Lance with a filthy, foul mouth.

Lance looked to the sky and said, “Forgive me, Father, for what I’m about to do!” Then Lance hit the Major over the head again, knocking him out. Lance mumbled, as he ran to the van, “Boy, is he going to have a mean headache when he comes to!”

As Lance jumped into the driver’s seat, he could hear the sounds of tires squealing and motors racing several blocks away. He drove the van across the back lawn of the church and came out on a road and went west, away from the approaching troops.

“Bobby, do you have any clothes in the van?”

“We sure do, Lance. We have extra gas, food, medical supplies, blankets and clothing already stored in the van for emergencies like this.”

“Okay, please find me some clothes to wear so I can get out of this uniform.”

While Bobby hunted up the clothes Barbara reached forward and hugged Lance around the neck and kissed him on his cheek and said, “You saved us again, Lance! God is so good to bless us with your presence and leadership. We love you so much!”

“Ah, stop slobbering all over me, you sweet baby! I love you guys, too. God gave me a family to love me when I was in my darkest hour. I was ready to give up on life before you kids come along. You led me to the Lord and filled my life with love, not to mention adventure! Now, tell me, who’s blessed the most?”

Patricia began to cry softly.

Lance said, “What’s a matter, pretty girl?”

“Oh, Lance, I am the one God has blessed the most. After what I did to Jesse and almost did to Bobby and Barbara, I should have been killed. All of you forgave me and even more you took me in and gave me love. I didn’t deserve that! Yet, in all my treachery, you treat me like family.”

“We are family, baby girl,” Lance replied. “Not one of us deserved God’s love but He gives it to us freely. Even after we killed His Son, Jesus, some two thousand years ago, God takes us in and gives us love. When we accepted Jesus, we became a part of His family. So, you see, we are the family of God. Not one greater than the other. All of us a blessing to each other!”

Bobby said, “Man, Lance, I can’t believe how much wisdom God has given you in such a short time. I stand in amazement at how God has taught you and used you!”

“We all do what we can Bobby. I’m going to pull over on the side of the road so you can drive while I change clothes.”

Bobby and Lance quickly changed places. Barbara took the right front passenger seat while Patricia sat in the middle seat. Lance got into the back and started to change clothes. He patted Patricia on the head and jokingly said, “No peeking, now.”

Patricia laughed and wrestled Lance to the floor before he changed. Lance held her in a fatherly embrace and said, “This is the first time I’ve seen you laugh and smile. You are so beautiful when you smile.”

“Well, in that case I had better smile a lot more. Beautiful, I bet you say that to all the girls!”

Everyone laughed as Patricia got back into the middle seat.

“Eyes front, everybody!” Lance barked.

After Lance changed into the street clothes, he climbed into the middle seat with Patricia and said, “Bobby, we need to warn the others. If Alexander put that tracking device under my car more than five days ago, he may have pinpointed the locations of the others. Remember when I contacted them after work about five days ago to warn them of a planned infiltration of the group? I overheard one of the dispatchers telling the Sergeant in zone ten about the planned surprise attack on the safe house in that precinct. It would take place just after dark. I had to finish my shift to keep from looking suspicious before I could leave. When I got off work at four p.m., I hightailed it there as fast as I could to alert our people. I went to the rest of the safe houses to warn them, also. I made sure to be well away from the police car when I talked to our people, but now I don’t know if the tracking device was already under my car or not.”

“We had better get there right away,” Bobby responded. “I’m real worried that we may be too late!”

Lance, rubbed his head in exasperation and said, “I never dreamed they were on to me. How could I be so reckless as to have used the police car to contact our people?”

Patricia put her arm around Lance and said, “Don’t be so hard on yourself. Maybe nothing went wrong. Maybe the tracking device wasn’t under your car at that time. Even if it was, we don’t know that they associated your stops with the locations of the safe houses.”

“If they figured me out about the church, they must have figured out my stops at the safe houses,” Lance replied.

Everybody in the van grew quiet as Bobby drove to the nearest safe house. He pulled the van to a stop about a hundred feet down the road from the safe house. Everyone looked over the area before he pulled the van closer. When the van pulled within sight of the safe house, Barbara let out a scream. She muffled her mouth with her hands and looked away from the house and cried. Everyone reacted with fright and horror to what they were seeing. On the front of the house was written in what appeared to be blood the words, “All Defectives will die! You are next!” On the front steps were two beheaded males lying beside each other. On the end pillars of the cement stair banisters sat the severed heads of Bill Garnet and Roger Myers.

Lance shouted, “Bobby keep going and don’t stop! It may be a trap! Some of Alexander’s troops may be lying in wait to apprehend anyone who approaches the bodies. They don’t know this van or your faces, so keep going and get us out of here. There isn’t anything we can do for them, now. Thank God, they are with Him for eternity!”

Sure enough, as Bobby continued on down the street he saw a black car parked on a side street within view of the safe house. There were four men in black uniforms sitting in the car. These men looked over Bobby and Barbara closely as they drove by. The side and back windows of the van were darkened so you couldn’t see in them. Lance tried to identify these men but, he had never seen them before or the type of black uniforms they wore. Bobby drove safely out of the area without arousing the suspicions of the men in the black car.

Lance said, “Those men were not from around here. I don’t recognize their uniforms, either. I’m afraid the rest of our brothers and sisters have come to the same end. God have mercy!”

Bobby, Barbara and Patricia broke down in an emotional fit! Lance felt almost numb as he stared straight ahead, in silence. He knew he had to think rationally to preserve their safety.

“Bobby, don’t drive to the next closest location!”

“But, Lance, we have to see if any of the rest of our people are left!”

“I know, but if we show up at the next location, they will pick us out. I know how it works! They have radioed ahead to all the other cars the description of every vehicle that has passed by here. If we are seen at another location, they will be on to us. We can't take the chance, Bobby. We have a responsibility to God to take in as many of His Chosen People as possible and keep them safe from the Antichrist's police. We can find a phone and call the farthest location and ring our code to see if anyone answers.”

“You are right, Lance. I'll pull over at that rest stop ahead and call.”

Bobby pulled next to the pay phone and made the call using the code of rings known by every group member. After the series of rings and hang-ups, Bobby let the phone continually ring. He knew if any one of his people were still there, they would answer. Bobby let the phone ring for over five minutes and was about to hang up when someone picked up the phone and screamed into the receiver, “Bobby is that you.”

“Yes, is this you, Aaron?”

“Yes, Bobby, I escaped from a murdering bunch of some kind of police in black uniforms. I had walked down the block to get a paper. On my way back I saw two black cars come speeding up to our safe house, and a bunch of police in those black uniforms knocked the front door down and ran inside. I hid behind a fence and watched what happened. Moments later two policemen came out, dragging my partner Laura out of the house with them. They were beating her and demanding that she tell them where the other defectives were. She just looked them in the eyes and said, ‘Thank you for sending me home to be with Jesus.’ They went berserk and beat her to death while I watched. I just froze; I couldn't move. I just watched in horror and didn't help her. I could hear some of the policemen talking amongst themselves that ‘This is the last safe house. I think we have destroyed them all now. Maybe one or two defectives got away but we will find them. Major Alexander will be pleased with what we have accomplished. He is really ticked about the leaders of this bunch getting away, along with that turncoat Lieutenant Carper. He said he would track him to the ends of the earth to get him.’ It was then that I retreated several blocks away and hid. After I saw the two cars leave, I went back to the house. They had left Laura's lifeless and bludgeoned body lying on the ground. I knelt down and wept over her body. The lowlife thugs had ripped off her shirt and wrote ‘you're next' in her own blood across her bare chest. It was then I heard the pay phone ring our code. I took off my shirt and covered Laura's body with it and ran to answer the phone. I can't believe they are all dead! Oh, dear Lord, Bobby, what am I going to do?”

“Listen, I want you to go to the gas station about five blocks from where you are and...” Aaron broke in, “Bobby, get away fast! They are coming back for me! Go now, please go...”

Aaron dropped the phone and tried to run away but the police overtook him. Bobby could hear screaming in the background as the police tortured Aaron to death. Bobby felt as if he was going to throw up his guts when he heard a calm voice on the other end of the phone say, “You are next, Fools. You can't hide much longer. Someone will give you up to us. We have our ways to influence people to do exactly what we want them to do.”

Bobby slammed the phone down on the hook and jumped into the back seat, telling Lance to drive. “I can't drive right now, Lance. I feel sick to my stomach. They are all dead now. They killed Aaron while I was on the phone with him. I heard it all while they tortured him to death.”

Bobby went on to tell them everything that Aaron told him.

Lance sobbed heavily, feeling this was his entire fault. All of them cried for the longest time as Lance drove towards the lodge and safety. He took alternating roads while constantly looking over his shoulder to see if they were being followed.

After the kids were able to pull themselves together they each in turn tried to comfort Lance. They knew what he must have been feeling. There was a lot of love pouring out of those kids for Lance.

Lance drove on, vowing to himself to protect Bobby, Barbara and Patricia with his life. “If they try to get to these kids, they will have to go through me first,” he vowed. The road was winding and night came upon them. The kids had long ago fallen asleep from exhaustion brought on by the entire trauma they had gone through. Lance continued on while his mind was racing. The burden he was carrying was a heavy load. He knew he couldn’t change anything that had happened. He had to turn the tragedy into strength. That was his training. That’s what he had to do. So be it!

Lance turned his thoughts to Officer Gold. He prayed and asked God to keep Officer Gold safe from the wrath of Mr. Black. Officer Gold had kept his word to help Lance; if he ever needed him, he would be there. Lance was very grateful for what Officer Gold had done for him and prayed that he would turn his life over to Jesus Christ so he too could have eternal life. Lance’s heart and mind were filled with so many mixed emotions. He had witnessed so much evil yet, at the same time, he had seen so much love and sacrifice. He wondered what life without being a cop would be like as he approached the lodge.

Chapter 13 Gathering at the Lodge

Lance made the turn onto a nearly invisible path that wound through a beautiful stand of pristine pine trees. Bobby had drawn a map and had given Lance directions before he fell asleep. He followed the overgrown path to the Lodge located in the center of the two hundred acres of land where Bobby and Jesse had spent so many happy days outfitting the place. Lance pulled up to the front door and stopped. He looked at his sleeping companions with great love and admiration for them. They were so young, yet they had seen more than anyone should have ever had to witness! Their youth and innocence brought tears to Lance's eyes. The bond between them transcended even that of parent and child; it was of a God-given nature that was stronger than natural bonds. This bond was supernatural, molded by trials and tested by faith that comes only from the love of God in one's life.

Lance said, "Here we are Gang. Time to wake up."

Bobby stretched and yawned as he sat up and looked around. He became overwhelmed with emotions as he remembered the good times he and Jesse spent at the Lodge. Now Jesse is gone!

A man came out of the front door of the Lodge and approached the drivers' side of the van. He looked in at all the people and said, "Howdy! My name is Larry Bear; I'm the caretaker here. May I be of any help to you?"

Bobby stepped out of the van and walked around to Larry and said, "Don't you recognize me? I'm Bobby Johnson."

"Bobby, I'm sorry; the light is poor and I didn't recognize any of the others, either." "That's all right, Larry. Let me introduce you to my friends. This is Lieutenant Lance Carper, a former police officer in our city. He has saved our bacon on several occasions. We wouldn't be here now, if God hadn't sent Lance to be one of us!"

Lance said, "I'm glad to meet you, Larry. I finally have someone my own age who may know some of the old songs I know. These kids keep making fun of my singing, 'You are my sunshine.' They don't know good music when they hear it."

Larry replied, "I'm glad to finally meet you, Lance. Your assistance to our cause is

spoken about throughout our nation whenever we gather for our planning sessions. You are an inspiration to all of us!”

Lance hanged his head, feeling unworthy of such a compliment.

Bobby spoke up, “Larry, I want you to meet Patricia. She is the youngest of us. This dear follower is just fifteen years old, yet she loves the Lord with all her heart and soul. I kinda think she has a crush on Lance, too.”

Patricia shrieked and hit Bobby on the shoulder. “You’re silly, Bobby. I do love Lance. I love him like the Daddy I never had! I’m glad to meet you, Mr. Bear.”

Nice to meet you, young Lady. It will be a refreshing change to have such a beautiful young lady around here.”

Bobby held Barbara close to his side and looked lovingly into her eyes and said, “Larry, I want you to meet the reason I am so happy. This is Barbara Herbert; she is the daughter of my former pastor and she is the love of my life!”

Barbara blushed as she greeted Mr. Bear.

Larry said, “It looks like we may need a preacher around here pretty soon, what with the way you two are looking at each other.”

“I wish,” Bobby said, “but we have offered our bodies, as well as our souls, to God as a living sacrifice. Our lives are not ours, to know each other physically. We are aware that we may have to give our lives for our confession of faith in Christ Jesus. This makes it easier to face this possibility. I know it may be hard for some to understand, but for us to know each other physically and then face the possibility of seeing each other tortured and killed....Well, we may not be able to handle that. Our love is complete without the physical. God gives us the strength to crucify our flesh daily and to serve him in purity.”

Larry marveled and said, “Well shut my mouth! As I live and breathe, I’ve witnessed the real thing. You kids are something else. God has opened my eyes to a new realm of service to Him. Praise His name! Let’s get into the Lodge. I’ll bet you are plumb starved to death. I got a pot of opossum stew on the stove that will fill your guts up!”

Barbara looked at Patricia as they both wrinkled up their noses and made sick faces.

“Ha...Ha, just joking! If you girls could have seen your faces! Boy, it’s going to be fun around here. I can see it now, Larry said, with a big grin on his face. No, I’ve got beef stew and home made biscuits ready to eat.”

Lance’s ears perked up, “Did you say biscuits? I’m a happy man!”

Larry said, “Just leave all your stuff in the van. We can get it later after you have eaten and rested for awhile. I’ll fill you in on the latest news from the Christian Alliance right after we eat. You came at the right time. It’s going to get busy around here real soon! The first group of the fleeing Jews are due here two days from now. We can use all your help!”

Bobby said, “It’s amazing how God works. We had no choice but to come here now. We’re pleased to be here to help.”

Lance looked around the main room of the Lodge and said, “This is like Heaven to me. I’ve always loved the woods and always wanted to retire to a log cabin type living. This place is wonderful. I’m going to love it here!”

Larry responded, “That’s great, Lance; tomorrow I’ll show you around and give you a real taste of country living. You can cut a couple of cords of wood for us. It will be lots of fun for an old city boy.”

Lance laughed and showed Larry the bullet wound in his arm and the burn scar tissue on his hands from saving officers Gold and Mayfield. “It may be awhile before I can swing an ax

but I can certainly give a chain saw a go at it!”

Larry looked at the wounds on Lance and felt sorry for joking him.

“Gee, Lance, I had forgotten your wounds. It was on the news every where about your heroic deeds in saving your two fellow officers.”

Lance replied, “No problem, Larry. Actually, I can use my hands pretty good now. If you don’t believe me watch me man handle a couple of those biscuits.”

Everybody laughed and sat down at the table to enjoy a hot meal. Lance’s passion for a good home-cooked meal is well known among his fellow group members.

“No doubt about it,” Lance said,” as he devoured a hot bettered biscuit while grinning from ear to ear, “I’m going to love it here.”

Everyone ate a hearty meal and then retired to a sitting area to hear Larry give an update on what the Christian Alliance was doing.

Larry again welcomed his new arrivals and began to relate to them what was about to occur. “We are about to put into operation our plan to receive the Jews who are fleeing from the Antichrist and his demonic rule. Agents from our group are in-route from Washington D. C. as we speak, with some of these brave Jews. They should be here late tomorrow. I have already made ready three of the cabins to accommodate them. With your help, we can get the rest of the cabins ready to receive more of our friends as they show up. We need to clean up the dust that has settled since you have been here, Bobby. We also need to put in clean linens and make the cabins look fresh and homey. Bobby, do you remember where the underground bomb shelters with all the supplies are located?”

“I sure do,” Bobby replied. “I planted the shrubs over the openings myself.”

Larry went on, “Good, tomorrow we need to open one of the shelters and retrieve enough food and supplies to get us up to snuff here. I have been living on the supplies furnished by the Alliance up until now. After tomorrow we’ll have to rely on the hidden provisions until the Alliance gathers all the cash they can and buys fresh supplies. You may already know about the Mark of the Beast that is being implemented in the Ten Nation Confederation. It won’t be long before we are forced into this system in the United States. Our country won’t be able to trade with the rest of the world without being a part of this system! You know those ill contempt’s that run our government will jump on the band wagon like a dog on a bone. They will sell us down the river for a bowl of porridge. Cash will be done away with and to buy or sell you will have to have the mark. That’s why John Clark, the leader of the Christian Alliance, is soliciting all the cash he can get. This will purchase food and supplies to equip all the safe houses across our nation. Soon we won’t be able to use the money we have. If any one of you has any money, we could sure use it. John Clark will be here in two days with our new arrivals. We can turn over to him any cash we can raise at that time. I have a little over four thousand Euro dollars here. If any of you have any cash and can help, give it up.”

Lance had nearly twelve hundred dollars on him that he gave. He said, “I have over five thousand dollars in the bank, but I feel like they have a hold on it and will turn me over to the police if I try to retrieve it.”

Bobby, Barbara and Patricia only had a couple hundred dollars between them that they gladly gave.

Bobby addressed Larry, “Listen, we hid over thirty thousand dollars in cash in the church that Lance helped us to escaped from. We collected this cash from the homes of those who were raptured. I feel they would be glad to know how this cash was used. The only thing is, I need to go back to the church to get it.”

Larry said, “We can’t allow that! You would be captured and killed at once! Surely they have the church staked out or have taken it apart by now. It’s too risky to attempt!”

Lance spoke up, “Just a second; Bobby may be right. I know how the police think. Right now, they think we are long gone from there. They know I wouldn’t stay anywhere in the area because I am so recognizable. They know I have the kids with me, also. I placed the altar back in place after the kids got out. I believe that Major Alexander and Mr. Black will be in a rage trying to find me. People in a rage don’t think rationally. When the special troops discovered Officer Gold and Major Alexander, tied up like I left them, they probably radioed ahead to hit the other safe houses in an effort to get back at us by destroying our people. They probably thought we would rush to warn our group and they could trap us at one of the locations. We out-smarted them. They would never expect us to go back to the church. At least, not tonight!”

Larry said, “What are you saying? You want to go back tonight? It’s a three and a half-hour drive each way. It’s almost eight p.m. now! How could you get there and back before dawn?”

Bobby said, “Plan B, Lance!”

“You got it; Bobby, we use plan B.”

Larry asked, “What is plan B?”

Lance said, “We have a set of government license tags I got off one of the unused cars at the police garage. We also have two magnetic signs that read GOVERNMENTAL YOUTH DIVISION. We will put the signs on each front door and replace the tags on the van with the government tags. We also have two black T-shirts under the front seat that has the GYD logo on them. The van is dark blue. It can be mistaken as black during the night. We should be able to move about without drawing too much attention, this way.

Barbara had kept quiet until now. “No...Bobby, I’m afraid for you. Please don’t take that risk!”

Bobby kissed Barbara on the nose and said, “Don’t worry, Sweetheart. If God be for us, who can be against us?”

“But, Bobby, wasn’t that scripture for the people under grace who went in the Rapture?”

“It certainly was, Barbara, but remember what else the Bible said: Heaven and Earth may pass away, but His Word would never pass away. You see, Precious, God’s word is always with us....Today, tomorrow and forever. I believe in His word!”

“Oh...Bobby, you are always right. I will still worry for you and Lance, though.”

Bobby and Barbara walked to the back of the room to be father away from the others.

Barbara hugged Bobby and whispered in his ear, “I love you more than my life. My heart that you feel beating against your chest is yours until we go to be with the Lord.”

Tears come into both of their eyes as they just stood there and embraced, feeling the warmth and tenderness of the moment. Bobby kissed Barbara on her tear-stained lips ever so gently. Barbara responded with a rush of emotions that overwhelmed Bobby and sent his head spinning. His knees became weak and he wobbled on his feet, holding tightly to Barbara, lest he should lose his balance.

Larry and the rest were watching Bobby and Barbara with compassion for their unconsummated love for each other. They all had tears in their eyes as they witnessed this tender moment. It was refreshing in this world of horrors to see that Agape love, God’s love, could be manifested in these two young people.

Larry grunted and said, “Are you two sure you don’t want me to get a preacher over here right away?”

With that said, everybody began to laugh and wipe the tears from their eyes.

Lance said, "Larry, can you give me a hand unloading the van?"

"Sure I can. It's kinda hot in here, anyway! I can use the fresh air."

Bobby said, "Let me help you unload the van."

"Oh...No," Lance said, "we are pulling out of here in about an hour. I think Barbara needs you more than we do. You spend that time with your sweetheart. We'll do just fine without you."

Bobby smiled, "Well, if you don't need me, I will spend this hour with Barbara. Thank you, Guys."

"No thanks needed," Lance replied. As he walked out to the van with Larry, Lance couldn't help yearning for the kind of love and companionship that Bobby and Barbara shared. His whole adult life had been a mess. Lance was unable to keep a stable relationship with anybody. Being a cop had influenced everything he did in life, until several years ago when Lance began to realize what a jerk he really was. His job had hardened him. He didn't trust anyone and he became bitter at life because of all the crime and filth he was subjected to. It wasn't until he lost all the things in life that mattered to him that he realized he was his biggest problem. It was his attitude that sent him spiraling into self-arrogance and his self-serving ways, so much that he forgot who and what he used to be. Lance was grateful that Bobby and Barbara came into his life when they did. Not only did they lead him to the Lord and ensure him of eternal life, but they gave him a family that he so longed for. Someone to care for and someone who cared for him.

Larry and Lance unloaded the van and filled it with gas and put the tags and signs on. They left fifteen gallons of gas in the back of the van for the trip back as well as some food and water for them. Then, Lance went back inside and told Bobby it was time to go.

Barbara kissed Bobby good-bye and then kissed Lance. "Lance, take care of Bobby for me and take care of yourself. I need you both, so come back safely!"

Patricia hugged and kissed Bobby good-bye and then fell into Lance's arms. She looked up into Lance's eyes and said, "You are my Dad, the only man who ever loved me as his little girl. Please come back to me; I love you, Dad!"

Lance hugged Patricia with all his might and said, "Don't worry, Baby Girl; I'll be back! There is no way I'll ever let you be alone. I will be your dad and you will be my daughter until we go to be with our Heavenly Father. I love you, Pretty Girl. We will be back by the time you wake up tomorrow morning. Now don't you stay up late. That is my first fatherly advice to you."

Patricia gave Lance a big kiss and said, "I won't, Dad."

Larry cautioned Lance and Bobby to be careful and to abort their mission if anything looked out of place. "Don't worry about the girls! I'll take good care of them for you. Oh, by the way Lance, I have something for you." Larry handed Lance a bag with four biscuits in it.

Lance looked into the bag and grinned, "I'm a happy man, biscuits!"

Lance drove off the property and onto the main road and headed for the church, some three and a half-hours away. He and Bobby were savoring the memories of the last hour as they made their way in silence. The tires thumped on the uneven pavement as a light rain began to fall. The windshield wipers made a slapping sound that lulled Bobby to sleep. Lance was used to driving in all kinds of conditions. He was alert at all times. The sky was broken in places by clouds that floated passed the moon, giving off a red glow, as they did. Lance was in another time, another place, as he drove on. So much has happened, so much to reflect on.

Chapter 14 **Return to the Church**

As Lance approached the city limits, he woke Bobby up.

“Bobby, I’ve been mulling something over in my mind for the last hour or so. I feel sure that no one has discovered the room under the altar yet or the gas in the old underground oil tank. We can use all the food and supplies we can carry. We can also use the gas.”

“Lance, how in the world can we carry the gas?” Bobby laughed. “Even if we had a tanker truck, we couldn’t pump the gas into it with that little hand pump we have.”

“You’re right, Bobby, but what if we had a tanker truck that had its own suction fill hose and motor already built into it?”

Bobby asked, “What kind of truck would that be, Lance?”

“Well, earlier today as I drove passed the second precinct on the way to get you out of the church, I spotted it. I thought it was strange to see such a truck in the police compound, but there it was as big as life. It must have been towed there because of some serious traffic offense by the driver.”

“What kind of truck are you talking about, Lance?”

“Now don’t laugh, Bobby. It was a septic tank sewage removal truck.”

“A what?” Bobby rolled with laughter. “A honey dew wagon!”

“Okay,” Lance said. “Don’t laugh. It will be perfect for the job. These trucks have suction hoses that we can put down into the old oil tank and suck the gas into the truck.”

Bobby stopped laughing and said, “That sounds good but how are we going to get the truck out of the police compound?”

“I’ve been giving that a lot of thought. We can park in the vacant lot on the backside of the compound. That is where the truck is located. They probably parked it way back there because of the smell! It’s pulled up right against the fence facing that back lot. The fence is old and the chain link fabric is stretched and loose. I worked as a fence contractor helper when I was a kid. I know how to take the tension bar that holds the wire to the post clean out and pull back the wire to the line post. This will give me about ten feet to pull the truck through. The fence is eight feet tall so the truck will go under the top rail and razor wire with room to spare. The keys are always put under the front seat. I guess they think no one in their right mind would try to steal anything out of a police compound.”

Bobby said, “I can see why they would think that! Lance, this is real dangerous.”

“Not really, Bobby. At this time of night most officers on patrol are parked somewhere trying not to fall asleep. The others are already leaning on their elbows, asleep. The officers on duty inside the precinct are either watching some movie on television or they are asleep. They would never come outside because of the roving gangs just looking to take a trophy ear and badge. They will pretty much stay out of the area of the church, also because of the street gangs.”

“I can see where you are coming from, Lance. Just one thing, though; what if the truck is filled with sewage?”

Lance wrinkled up his nose and said, “If it is, we will dump it along the way. You ready, Bobby? We’re pulling up next to the vacant lot, one block from the fence. See it over there?”

“Yes, I do, and the truck is still there.”

“Bobby, you stay here with the lights off and the motor running. If you see anything...anything go wrong, get out of here fast. Go to the church and get the money and leave as fast as you can. Don’t worry about me. If anything goes wrong you must think of the others and get the money to them. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, but we are going to make it all right; I just know we will.”

“Pray for us, Bobby; I’m going now!”

Lance left Bobby in the van and quickly traversed the lot to the fenced-in compound. He pulled slack in the chain link wire so he could pull the tension bar out. This was a lot harder than he counted on because Lance forgot about his scar tissue hands. He was in agony as he used all his strength to pull the tension bar out. With several attempts, he finally removed the bar from the fence and slid the wire along the top rail until the opening was enough to pull the truck through. Lance looked at his hands and saw that they were bleeding. He ignored the pain and found the keys to the truck and jumped into the driver's seat. He looked around to see if anyone had noticed him. It was all quiet. Lance said to himself, “Well, it’s now or never.” He put the key into the ignition and turned it. The motor turned over for about two seconds and then roared to life. Lance put the shifter into first gear and drove through the fence, across the vacant lot then turned onto the main street leading to the church.

Bobby pulled in front of Lance and led the way. Both Bobby and Lance held their breath until they were several blocks away. Lance kept looking out his rear view mirrors but no cars appeared in sight. Things were looking good until they were about eight blocks from the church. Lance noticed a motorcycle pull out of a side street and pull in behind him. The motorcycle had two street gang members on it. They appeared to be intoxicated as the motorcycle wobbled in and out of the lane. They were waving a gun in the air, shouting for Lance to pull over. Lance knew that he needed to get rid of these creeps before they got to the church. He looked around at all the knobs and levers in the truck and saw a knob that said, *Discharge*. Right above it was a gauge that showed one quarter full. Lance pulled the knob and looked out the side mirrors. To his joy, he saw the creeps on the motorcycle being inundated with raw sewage. They swerved off the road, jumped a curve and hit a large trash can head on. The driver of the motorcycle was thrown over his handle bars and head first into the trash can. The guy on the back of the motorcycle was thrown sideways into some thorn bushes, next to a building. Lance grinned and thought to himself, ‘poetic justice!’

Bobby shut off his lights and pulled across the back lawn of the church, right up to the back door. Lance did the same, pulling up to the oil tank.

“Bobby, you go ahead and retrieve the money first, and then get all the food stock you can load in the van while I get the gas.”

Okay, Lance. “Do you know if the storage tank is empty or not?”

“It’s empty now. I’ll tell you about it later.”

Lance rigged the hose and put it into the oil tank. He found the lever that worked the suction hose and turned it on. The gas began to fill the truck’s storage tank. Lance went into the church to help Bobby load the van.

“Bobby, how’s it going?”

“Fine, Lance. I’ve got the money and a box full of food coming up now.”

Lance heard a slight muffled noise coming from somewhere outside the front of the church. “Bobby, I hear a noise out front. You take the money to the van while I check out the noise.”

“On my way,” Bobby replied, as he hustled out the back door with the money and the food.

Lance went to a window next to the front door and peeked out. He couldn’t see anything at first, but after a second or two he heard a moan again and looked in the direction it came from. He saw the figure of a man lying on the ground across the street from the church. The man tried to get to his knees but fell to the ground. Lance’s heart began to beat like a drum. He spoke out-loud, “Could this be a trap? No, they would have rushed us by now.” Lance’s face grew pale as he recalled the spot where he was parked when he put Officer Gold into the trunk of his car. “Oh...My Lord!” Lance almost shouted out. He opened the front door of the church and ran, crouched down, to the man lying on the ground. Lance turned the man over and gasped with surprise.

“Josh, it’s me, Lance. Can you hear me?”

Officer Gold was covered with blood. He had been shot in the side of his head with what appeared to be a glancing blow. He tried to open his eyes but they were caked with blood. Lance took out his handkerchief and wiped some of the blood out of Officer Gold’s eyes and off his face.

Lance broke out in tears as he said, “I’m sorry, Josh! They did this to you because of me. I’m so sorry...so sorry!”

Lance gathered Officer Gold in his arms and carried him around to the back of the church and put him into the passenger’s seat of the truck. Bobby was sitting in the van with the motor running in case it was necessary for him to make a quick get away. When he saw Lance putting someone into the truck, he said, “Lance, who in the world is that?”

Lance replied, “This is the officer who saved our lives earlier today! They shot him because of me. He is alive and I’m going to keep him that way, Lord willing.”

Bobby said, “Can I help you with him?”

“No, you keep filling the van as quick as you can. I’ll attend to him while the gas is being loaded.”

“Okay Lance; if you need me just holler.”

Officer Gold finally got his eyes open and stared up at Lance. “What are you doing here? I thought you got away.”

Lance said, “Have you been laying there since I left?”

Officer Gold said, “I don’t know how long it’s been. I keep going in and out of consciousness.”

Lance asked, “Who did this to you?”

“Major Alexander did. When he was set free by his special troops, he sent them to try and find you. He came back to the car and heard me kicking the trunk. He let me out and took the

handcuffs off me. I told him the story you told me to tell him but he could see through it. He accused me of being one of you. I tried to refute him, but the more I denied it the more he went into a rage. He pulled out a gun from his car and shot me in the head. I can still see the rage on his face. He is a sick man.”

“It’s my fault. If you had died because of me and went to...”

“To Hell....Lance. While I was in the trunk of that car I thought about what you had told me. You know, about Jesus. I am a Jew, Lance. Nobody knows that but you, now. I realized that I was living a lie and most of all I began to see that Jesus is the true Messiah. I asked him to forgive me of my sins and I accepted Him as my Savior and Lord. I was ready to die, if it came to it. I just can’t believe you came back here!”

Lance replied, “It has to be the hand of God. We had no intentions of ever coming back here until Bobby told us of the money that was hidden here.....money we needed to finance our cause.”

“Lance, can you take me with you? If you leave me, I will die?”

“Leave you?” Lance cried out! “You saved our lives and almost gave your life for us! I would never leave you. You are one of us now and we will protect you with our lives. Now, let me get the first aid kit from the van and fix you up a little.”

Lance ran to the van and got the first aid kit. On his way back, he heard the hose, in the oil tank, sucking air. All the gas was loaded. He cleaned up and bandaged Officer Gold’s wounds and covered him with a blanket before he secured the hose and readied the truck to go. Just then Bobby came out with the last load of food and supplies and put them into the van.

Lance said, “Bobby, that’s it. Let’s get out of here. I’ll lead and you follow me. It will be easier for you to keep up with me than me to keep up with you. I don’t know how fast this truck will go!”

“You got it Lance. I’ll be right behind you. How is your friend doing?”

“He is going to be all right, Bobby. The great news is, he is a believer!”

“Praise God, Lance. Praise God!”

Lance drove across the back lawn and took the same route that he and the kids had taken just hours ago. Bobby was right behind him. Lance was able to get Officer Gold to eat something and drink some water. He gave Officer Gold one thousand milligrams of Ibuprofen from the first aid kit. After the painkillers took effect, Officer Gold fell into a restful sleep.

After a short distance, Lance heard the truck sputter and the motor cut off. He frantically looked over the dash gauges for some clue as to what was happening. The gas gauge light was burned out and Lance couldn’t see the needle in the gage. He turned on the overhead light and saw that the needle was on empty. Lance pulled the truck to the side of the road with Bobby doing the same.

Bobby got out and ran up to Lance and said, “What’s a matter? We are still in the city limits! We got to keep going.”

“This truck is out of gas, Bobby. We need to fill up the tank.”

Bobby replied, “Man, what bad timing.”

Lance rigged a hose from the discharge of the truck to the truck’s gas tank and began to fill it up. It didn’t take long before they were finished and got back into their vehicles to leave. Lance and Bobby were about to pull onto the road when a police car pulled in behind Bobby and cut on his blue lights. Lance and Bobby froze at their steering wheels.

A police officer came up to Bobby and said, “What is a member of the Governmental Youth Division doing out this late?”

Bobby tried to think fast as he replied, "I'm on the way to the state capital for a regional meeting we are having in the morning. Everything is all right, Officers. I had best be on my way. Don't want to be late for the meeting."

"No problem Son. What is that truck doing here with you?"

"Oh, I just stopped to give him a jump. His battery was dead, Officer. He's is okay now, though."

"Look Son, you wait right here while I talk to the driver."

The officer walked to the driver's side of the truck as Bobby slumped over his steering wheel, not knowing what to do.

Lance could see the officer approaching him. He stared at the officer's face in the side mirror and thought he might know who he was. The officer stepped up to the truck window and spotted his flashlight into Lance's face. The officer stepped back and pulled his service revolver and pointed it at Lance.

"You dirty cop killer. How could you show your face around here again after you killed Officer Gold? Get out of the truck. Everyone is looking for you."

"Tim, listen to me, I didn't kill Officer Gold. He is here in the truck with me. Major Alexander shot him in the head and left him for dead. Just look at him!" Lance shook Officer Gold awake and told him to show himself to Officer Mayfield.

Officer Gold leaned toward Lance's window and said, "Put your gun away, Tim. Lance didn't shoot me; Alexander did. Lance saved my life."

Officer Mayfield was totally confused. He put his gun away and walked back up to the drivers' window.

"Lance, Josh, what is going on. Major Alexander told all of us that you, Lieutenant Carper, killed Josh while they were raiding the hideout of a gang of defectives."

Lance spoke up, "Tim do you think I'm a defective?"

"Well, no, of course not. I've known you for years. You pulled me out of that fire and saved my life. You saved Josh's life at the save time. I couldn't believe that you would turn around and kill Josh after saving him before. Major Alexander was so convincing. We all believed him. I can't comprehend all this."

Lance said, "The less you know, Tim, the better off you will be."

Officer Gold spoke up, "Tim, I want to go with Lance. Can you forget that you ever saw us?"

"Tim shook his head and said, "I am so confused, but one thing I know, I never saw any of you tonight. Now, get out of here before someone comes by! Take care of yourselves. I'm so glad that you both are still alive."

Josh saluted Tim and fell back into his seat.

Lance grabbed Tim's hand and told him, "Tim, things with the department aren't the way they used to be. There is an evil that has taken over there. If you stay there, you will be required to take part in their evil deeds. Get out, Tim, before you become like them. You are a good man and I believe you really know the truth about Jesus. Accept him and live for eternity. Think about it, Tim. Look closely at everything that is going on in the department. Don't believe anything you hear. Trust your gut feelings. God be with you!"

With that said, Lance and Bobby pulled onto the highway leaving Officer Mayfield standing in the middle of the road pondering what he had just heard. Bobby was so shaken by the ordeal that it took many miles before he calmed down. He knew that he wouldn't find out what happened, for them to be set free, until they got back to the Lodge. One good thing about it, he reasoned....at least he wasn't sleepy after being up for so long.

Officer Gold had fallen back asleep. Lance was rerunning today's events over and over in his mind. He became convinced that God was the author of all the events that kept him and Bobby safe. He concluded that God sent them back to the church to rescue Josh as their primary mission. Retrieving the money, food and gas was a secondary blessing. Lance drove on in the darkness while humming "How Great Thy Art."

Chapter 15 God's Chosen People

The sun was coming up behind Lance and Bobby as they turned into the path leading to the lodge. Lance could see the smoke coming from the chimney of the cook-stove and he could smell the bacon frying as he pulled the sewage truck to a stop at the front door. Bobby pulled the van up to the garage door and ran over to the truck to help Lance get Josh inside the lodge. Larry Bear came rushing out the front door to assist Lance and Bobby with the wounded man.

"Oh...my goodness," Larry gulped out. "That's a cop you got there!"

Josh said, "I'm glad to meet you, too. Like Lance, I'm an ex-cop."

Larry said, "I guess that come out wrong. I'm extremely glad to meet you officer...urra...I mean...whoa...urra!"

Lance laughed and said, "Don't swallow your tongue there, Larry. His name is Joshua Gold. He is the officer who almost gave his life for the kids and me. He was shot and left for dead for helping us to get away. We found him still at the church, lying in his own blood, near death. I believe he is the reason God had us go back there. The money and supplies and, oh yeah, almost five hundred gallons of gas, those were the extra blessings!"

Larry looked at the sewage truck and replied, "That is the worst smelling gas I have ever smelled, but it will be a sweet addition to our supplies."

Bobby piped in, "The van is full of all the food and supplies we had left at the church. We can unload it later. I have the money with me."

Larry was delightfully surprised at the great windfall of money and supplies and the gas. He said, "Let's get this wounded soul inside and clean him up. I was hoping you two would return without any harm coming to you! I started to worry when it took you so long to get back. I can see now why it took you so long. God had His own agenda above what we had attempted to do. Praise God for going the extra mile when we only see the short distance!"

Bobby spoke up as they entered the Lodge, "Larry, where are the girls?"

"They're over there, still asleep, on the couches. I started breakfast for us without waking them. They looked so beat, I couldn't bear to disturb them. They stayed up most of the night, on their knees, praying for your safe return. Those two gals are real troopers. You guys should be real thankful for such dedicated ladies."

Bobby and Lance said in unison, "We are!"

They all put Josh in a recliner chair and Larry told Lance and Bobby, "Get cleaned up and ready to eat while I attend to Josh's needs. You can sleep after that!"

Bobby had to see Barbara first before he got cleaned up.

Lance smelled like a sewer from driving the septic tank truck, so he just went by Patricia where she was sleeping and stopped long enough to gaze upon her beautiful face. He said in a soft whisper, "My sweet baby girl, how beautiful you look lying there. Your dad is here for you."

Sleep tight, my beloved.” With that, Lance went to take a shower and change clothes.

Bobby knelt down beside Barbara and brushed her hair away from her face with his hand. He was awed, as always, by her beauty. Her long dark hair swirled down around her neck with the softness of a baby’s breath. Her light, olive, Indian-princess skin made her look angelic. Bobby caressed her lips with his, ever so lightly. He was so much in love with Barbara that it hurt.

He bowed his head and whispered a prayer to God; “My Dear Lord, why did I have to wait until this time in my life to find the girl I love more than anything, except you? I can hardly control the emotions I feel for Barbara. I want so much for her to be my wife....for us to raise children and have a long and happy life together. I know that time is past but, dear Lord, why can’t we be as one? Why must we burn so much to know each other’s body as our own? I’m afraid I will fail you, my Lord! Forgive me for my weaknesses. I need you to help me with this request, Lord. Please don’t let me fail you! Not in this hour lest I cause Barbara and me to miss heaven. Please give me the extra strength I need to keep our love pure and our places in heaven secure with You, Father. In Jesus name, I pray.”

Bobby slowly raised himself from the side of the couch and went to the second bathroom in the lodge and showered and changed clothes. He and Lance returned to the dining area of the lodge to find the girls awake and excited to see them back and safe. There was so much hugging and kissing going on that Josh didn’t know what to think. It had been a long time since he witnessed this kind of love and affection. Josh had lived alone. Most of his extended family lived in Israel. His dad and mom had died several years ago after immigrating to the United States. His dad had changed their last name from Goldburgh to Gold in an effort to escape the anti-Semitism that was quickly growing in the world. Being a police officer only brought the evil and hatred closer to Josh. It seemed like that was all there was left in this world to him. He marveled at the laughter and joy that filled the room.

Larry said, “Come on, you guys. Sit down and scoff up this grub; I’ve been slaving over this old cook-stove all morning. A labor of love, if I do say so myself! Josh, you sit right there in that recliner and old Larry Bearsie will bring you a tray full of chow.”

Joshua felt like he was already in heaven. He asked, “Do I smell fresh baked biscuits?”

“You sure do, old buddy,” Lance replied. “I’ll bring you over a couple of them, all buttered up with some grape jelly on the side. Urra...that is, as soon as I get mine going here! One thing you will get to know around here is...”

Everyone chimed in at the same time, “Lance loves biscuits!” Everyone rolled with laughter as Lance buttered the biscuits, and after taking some to Josh, he sat down and ate like a starved dog.

As soon as everyone had eaten breakfast, Larry said, “Bobby’ if you can show me where the underground bunkers are located; I’ll get the needed supplies and ready the cabins for our guest. Then you can get that much needed sleep!”

“Follow me, Larry, and I’ll show you where they’re located.” They went outside and Bobby showed Larry where both underground bunkers were located. They had to pull up the shrub that Bobby and Jesse had planted over the doorway several years ago to gain access to the first bunker. Bobby was amazed at how big the bush had grown. It took both of them to pull it up.

Larry said, “I can take it from here, Bobby. You go and get some sleep. The girls and me will equip the cabins. Our guest, should arrive in about ten hours, somewhere between seven and eight tonight.”

“Okay, Larry, I’ll take you up on that sleep. I can’t remember being so tired.”

Bobby went back into the lodge and took Barbara to a private place and held her in his arms. “Larry tells us that you and Patricia stayed up most of the night praying for us. Is that right Sweetheart?”

“Yes, Bobby, we prayed like we have never prayed before. God in his mercy brought you back to us. I don’t know how I could have gone on if something had happened to you. You are my breath, the life force within me that keeps me focused and able to face the day’s ahead. You know I mean the Lord is first in my life, but Bobby, you are so close to my love for the Lord that I feel I need you both to make it.” Barbara kissed Bobby with all the passion she had stored up in her heart. Again Bobby almost stumbled as his knees failed him from the surge of passion he had for her.

Bobby said, “You are like medicine to my tired body. Barbara, next to Jesus, you are the greatest gift God has ever given me. Would you lay down beside me and just hold me while I fall asleep?”

“Oh, yes, my love! I will hold you and comfort you with little sweet tender kisses all over your face while you drift off to sleep. Come on over to the couch I slept on last night and lie down where I dreamed of you. Maybe you will feel the love I felt for you in my dreams as you sleep there.”

Bobby fell onto the couch and Barbara placed a blanket over him and then lay down beside him and cradled him like a baby. Bobby was fast asleep within minutes dreaming a lover’s dream.

Barbara slowly got up from the couch, without disturbing Bobby and went to help Larry with the preparations of the cabins. She looked at Bobby as he slept and said, “Thank you, Jesus!”

In the meantime Lance and Patricia had helped Josh to a day bed where he fell right off to sleep. Patricia took Lance to the couch she had slept on and sat down beside him and cuddled up in his arms like a small child. “I was so afraid I would lose you, Dad. I did more crying than praying last night. I wish I were as strong as Barbara. She never wavered in her belief that God would deliver you both back here safely. I’m afraid I had less faith than she did. I could envision what the police did to our group members. I know how bad that Major Alexander wants to get you and torture you. He has a personal vendetta against you. I feel that if he ever gets his hands on you, your punishment would be far more harsh than the rest of us.” Patricia broke out in a flood of tears as Lance cuddled her closer in his arms.

“My beautiful baby girl. Don’t you worry your heart about me. I won’t leave here until I have completed what God has called me to do. When that time comes don’t be afraid for me. It doesn’t matter how they may destroy my body, they can’t destroy my soul! If I go before you or you go before me we must remember that we will see each other in Glory. We will know each other and our love and joy will be fulfilled beyond anything we can experience here on earth. Be brave my little one. We must die from this body only to receive a glorified body in heaven. I love you, little precious girl. Now, I need to sleep. I am getting too old to keep up with you young ones.”

Patricia kissed Lance on his lips and then on both his eyes. She said, “The kiss on the lips is from my heart and expresses my deep love for you. The kisses on the eyes are to seal them with the kiss of the angels that you may sleep in peace. I love you, Daddy!”

“I love you, Daughter. My sweet baby girl; God bless you.” Lance lay down and Patricia covered him with a blanket and kissed his forehead one more time and then went to help the

others.

The rest of the day was filled with Larry and the girls getting the cabins ready to house the Jews that would be there within several hours. No one dare disturb the men as they slept through the entire day. Larry and the girls unloaded the van's supplies into the garage. Larry drove the septic tank truck well behind the lodge and up wind from the cabins. It was getting close to time for the new arrivals to show up. Larry knew they would be tired and hungry. He decided to risk waking the sleeping men to prepare enough food to feed the anticipated number of guests. The girl's pitched in with the preparing of the meal. Larry wasn't sure of any dietary needs or traditions of the Jews so he prepared a variety of meats and vegetables that he felt would be diverse enough to fit any dietary needs. He had taken the meat out of the large freezer in the garage this morning to thaw out. There was a ham, a large round of roast beef, a leg of lamb, a roaster turkey and a large number of rainbow trout he had caught in the stream that runs through the property. The girl's had prepared boiled potatoes, fresh corn on the cob, canned green beans and turkey dressing and gravy. Of course there was a mound of fresh biscuits on the table.

Lance was the first to awaken. He was aroused by the smell of all the good food. At first he thought he was dreaming when he sat up and saw all the food. Then he remembered the company that was coming. He went over and woke Bobby up and said, "Get up, Boy; we've got people that will be here soon and a whole lot of food to admire."

Bobby sat up, holding his head. "Didn't I just lie down? Surely it can't be time to get up, yet."

Barbara came over to Bobby and hugged him. "You have been asleep almost ten hours Sweetheart. I've missed you while you were asleep."

"Well, in that case let me get up from here and keep you company," Bobby replied. They both giggled like school kids and did an impromptu slow dance while Bobby hummed the wedding march.

Joshua woke and sat up by himself for the first time since he had been shot. He had a terrific headache but felt his strength coming back.

"Hey, Everyone," Larry announced, "look who is back from the dead! Josh is sitting up on his own."

Everyone clapped and whistled as Joshua stood to his feet.

"All right, Everybody, I'm not a sideshow. If you could point me to a bathroom I would be grateful."

Lance took Josh's arm to steady him and showed him to the bathroom. "Josh, it is such a blessing to see you up and around," Lance said. "I'm indebted to you, old Buddy and I will never forget it!"

Josh replied, "Just don't eat all the biscuits and we will be even, okay?"

"You drive a hard bargain, Josh, but you got a deal," Lance replied.

While this was going on, Larry's attention was diverted to the noise he heard outside. Larry looked out the door and saw two vans coming up the path with their lights out. "They're here," he blurted out. "But we need to make sure. Everyone out the back door and into the woods until I check it out."

They all did as Larry said. Lance sent the others into the woods while he took a position at the side of the garage where he could keep an eye on the front of the Lodge. The two vans pulled up to where Larry was standing and came to a quiet stop.

"Shalom," replied the driver of the first van.

Larry said, "What do you mean, so long; you just got here!"

John Clark laughed as he got out of the driver's seat and hugged Larry. "Still with the jokes, you old baldy, you," John shot back to Larry.

Lance waved for the others to come on out. He then went over to the vans to meet the new arrivals.

Larry seized Lance around the shoulders and presented him to John. "John, I want to introduce you to the man whose name is spoken of all over our organization. He is one of God's greatest gifts to us. Please meet the former policeman, Lieutenant Lance Carper."

John grabbed Lance's hand and shook it vigorously. "Lance, I don't think I've ever had a greater honor than to meet you and shake your hand! There is no one in the Christian Alliance who wouldn't want to be in my shoes right now. To be able to meet you face to face and thank you for your love and sacrifices to our organization and to our Lord. Brother, I embrace you with the love of the Lord and pray for your continued good works to come."

Lance became embarrassed at all the fuss John was making over him. "Thank you, John, for your comments. I couldn't have been any help to anyone if it hadn't been for my new family."

Everyone had gotten out of the two vans and was gathered around to hear what was being said.

"Bobby, Barbara, Patricia and Joshua come here. I want you to meet John," Lance beckoned to them. Lance said, "John here are your heroes. Please meet Bobby and Barbara; they are the ones who led a small band of Christians in my city. They and their group are responsible for leading a large number of people to eternal life in Christ Jesus. They personally led me to the Lord! At their tender young ages they had to witness the slaughter and mutilation of most of their followers. They are responsible for gathering and preserving most of the money and almost all of the food and supplies we have stocked up here."

John hugged Bobby and Barbara at the same time. "Yes, I know of Bobby from a previous meeting back when we first put together this plan for our Israeli brethren. I heard of his helpmate Barbara, also. You two are well known in our Alliance as great servants of our Lord and Savior. Bless you in your future service to our cause!"

Lance pulled Patricia to his side and said, "John, I want you to meet my gift from God! This is Patricia, my adopted daughter. She is a surviving member of our Cop-Out group. She is my helpmate and a large part of our success in serving the Lord."

Tears came into John's eyes as he took Patricia to hug. "You are the spitting image of one of my girls who are in Heaven now! God bless you, little one!"

Lance then had Josh come forward. He had been standing in the background in the dark. As he stepped forward many of the Jews began to moan and cower at the sight of a police officer in uniform. Lance raised his hands and said, "Do not fear the uniform on this man. He is a child of the living God. He offered up his life to save these kids and me. He was shot in the head by a government agent of the police department and was left for dead. God, in His mercy, spared his life and led us back to gather him up to be with us. He gave his life to Jesus and is saved now."

John shook his hand and said, "Blessed is he who would lay down his life for his fellow man. I am indeed glad to meet you, Sir."

"I'm honored to meet you, Mr. Clark," Josh replied. Josh turned to the Jews that were gathered around them and said with tears in his eyes, "My name is Joshua Yahuda Goldburgh! I am of the seed of Abraham and a believer that Jesus is the Messiah. I welcome my brothers and sisters with every fiber of my being. I feel complete in your presence."

Most of the Jews rushed in to embrace Josh and expressed their joy in meeting him. Some could not speak English, but Josh understood a lot of the Hebrew they spoke. He was overflowing with joy and pride and for the first time in his adult life he was among his blood brethren.

Larry ushered everyone inside and set them all down to the feast he and the girls had prepared. There was great fellowship and talking as everyone found plenty to eat and drink. Larry took a count of the new arrivals. He recorded five married couples, three single middle-aged men, two elderly single ladies and a teenage boy. One married couple had one small girl. One married couple had two teenage boys. One married couple had two girls, one teenager and one preteen. The two other couples were elderly and had no children. Larry totaled that there would be twenty-one guests.

John Clark and his other driver Kathy Clausen would be taking the vans back in a couple days. Kathy had been John's assistant from the beginning of the Christian Alliance. Most of her duties were to keep up with all the safe houses through cryptic code over the Internet. John called on her from time to time to help him ferry their precious cargo to the various safe houses. John trusted few people to know where the safe houses were located. Kathy was a thirty-one year old divorced lady. She had been on her own for ten years when she started to assist John at the Alliance.

Lance was eating his third biscuit when he let his eyes focus on Kathy. He was intrigued with her beauty and her petite frame. Kathy was only five feet tall and weighed about ninety-five pounds. Lance noticed that she had green eyes and was blessed with pretty pouty lips. She had high cheekbones and reddish brown hair. Lance felt that she must be of Irish and American-Indian descent. He couldn't seem to keep his eyes off her all through the dinner.

Patricia had noticed Lance's fascination with Kathy. She said, "Pretty lady isn't she, Dad?"

"Auw, what are you talking about, Baby Girl?"

"You know. Don't try to deny it. You are taken by that lady aren't you, dad?"

"Patricia, I was only looking for a little while. She is pretty and....well....men look at pretty women, don't they?"

"Not like that, dad, not unless they are goo-goo over them."

"Patricia, you are incorrigible. Don't you say anything to anyone about this. And how does a young girl like you know so much anyway?"

"It's built in, dad. Females have a second sense about things like that!"

"Yeah, Sweetheart, and men have no sense about things like that."

Patricia laughed so loud she had to cover her mouth with her hands to suppress the giggle. Lance turned red faced and gently kicked Patricia under the table, while making a face at her.

Larry had noticed Lance's attraction to Kathy also and figured Patricia was kidding Lance. He couldn't help adding to Lance's discomfort by saying, "Yep, before it's over with, I'm sure I'm going to have to get that preacher over here." Larry said that while looking at no one in particular. Only Patricia and Lance knew why he said it.

Lance excused himself from the table while Patricia keep her hands over her mouth and laughed until she couldn't stand it any longer.

After everyone had eaten John Clark stood up and addressed the group. "I want to thank all of you for making this refuge for our Israeli brethren such a success. It is apparent that God has used you in a mighty way. We thank you for being obedient to God and bringing Him

so much glory. We will be able to handle the great volume of Jews that God has delivered into our hands for safekeeping if the remaining safe houses are just half as prepared as you are. Already we have harbored over one million Jews throughout the United States. There are multitudes of Jews who are making their way to us as we speak. Satan has tried to destroy the fleeing Jews but God has supernaturally protected them. It would take hours to tell you just a small bit of how God has protected His Chosen People. Just believe me when I say, "God is good and God is great and His Word is real and awesome to behold!" I never would have believed what His hand has done if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. Now, the hard part for you! We will be bringing you as many of our guests as we can transport every other day or so, until you can't hold anymore. Our friends don't expect you to treat them like guests. Most of them are able-bodied and will do any chores you may delegate to them. They are extremely grateful for what you are doing for them and they will assist you in anyway you may need them. I should add that all of our brethren have donated what money and personal valuables they were able to bring with them to our cause. I can't tell you how much this has enabled us to make God's plan work. The Mark of the Beast is coming to the United States and the rest of the world within days. While I was in Washington D.C. a couple of days ago, I learned some bad news from a friend of mine who is a news reporter. Our government is in the process of implementing their plan to turn our banking system over to the World Bank. As you know, the World Bank uses the tiny silicon chip that stores all your banking, medical and personal history in it. They simply insert it into your right hand or your forehead and you can't buy or sell anything or even get medical treatment without it. We are busy buying up all the food and supplies we can before our government recalls all the currency and requires the Mark of the Beast system to replace it. If what my reporter friend tells me is right you will see this happen within the week. Remember....never....never take the Mark. Anyone buying into this satanic system will be cut off from God for eternity! God will supply all your needs to see you through to the end. We gentiles will probably be martyred before the end comes. If that is the case so be it. We will be in the Army of Jesus Christ when He returns in victory to bind Satan and destroy his entire host. Just think of that new and glorified body all clothed in white robes that have been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb. Whoa...I feel like dancing! What a day that will be!"

Everyone in the lodge clapped and cheered and cried at the same time.

Larry stood up and said, "Amen, let God be glorified in all things. Now I'm sure you all would like to settle into your rooms and get some rest. Barbara and Patricia will take you to your assigned cabins. If you will all gather by families and the single people by gender, they will see that you are made comfortable. If you need anything at all just ask one of us. We will be staying here in the Lodge and any of us will be more than glad to help you. Good night and God bless you all."

Barbara and Patricia started taking the guests to their cabins as Larry gathered the others to a sitting area next to a fireplace.

Larry asked John, "How many more people can we expect to house so we can make ready for them? I sensed a problem in your voice."

John looked around at Lance, Joshua and Kathy before he answered Larry. "My dear Brother let me be perfectly honest with you. We have lost many of our safe houses especially on the West Coast. Traitors and outsiders have given up a vast number of our locations. Thank God, we haven't lost any of our Israeli friends. The bad part is we will need to max. out the remaining facilities to accommodate our brethren. With the beefing up of the black uniformed World Governmental police troops we are finding it extremely more difficult to transport our brethren

for any long distances. That leaves you and the other safe places that are close to Washington D. C. taking on the burden.”

“Don’t say burden, John. We are happy to do whatever we can even if it means standing up to sleep because of lack of space!”

Lance and Joshua both agreed and reiterated that they were honored to be used of God in this way.

“Well,” Larry said, “coffee anyone?”

Larry, Josh and John got up and sat at the kitchen table to enjoy a hot cup of coffee. Lance sat nervously next to Kathy as the others left. He asked if Kathy would like him to get her some coffee, but she declined.

“No, I don’t drink much coffee, Lance. Thank you for asking though. Would you just sit here with me and talk for awhile. You are a very interesting person and I would like to get to know you better.”

Lance’s heart leaped for joy to hear this vivacious beautiful lady say these things. He felt like a schoolboy on his first date. Lance started talking and went on so much that he had to stop and apologize for dominating the conversation.

“I’m sorry for carrying on so much, Kathy. It’s just been so long since I had someone I felt I could relate to. I hope I haven’t offended you with my continual chatter!”

Kathy replied, “No....no...no, I find you fascinating to listen to. You are a remarkable man, Lance. You are a strong man. Strong of mind as well as body. What lady wouldn’t love to hear you talk?”

Lance felt like his head was swimming from the favorable response from Kathy. They sat there and talked for hours. Lance was gone hook, line and sinker! The girls had long ago settled the guests and retired for the evening. The men had turned in over two hours ago. Lance and Kathy never noticed the time. They were in that zone that knew no time or awareness of the thing’s or people around them. That special place that knew only the presence of each other. A warm and cozy place reserved for those who were falling in love. In this place they could hear each other’s heart beat. They were aware of each other’s breathing and could read between the lines of every word they were saying. After talking faded they looked into each other’s eyes, transfixed as if they were frozen in time.

Larry got up to go to the bathroom and disturbed the moment.

Lance looked at his watch, jumped up and said, “My goodness, it’s past three o’clock. I had better let you get to sleep. I didn’t mean to keep you up so late. You must be exhausted!”

“On the contrary, Lance, I feel like I have been rejuvenated. I could talk to you forever.” Kathy stood up and leaned against Lance, giving him a slight embrace. “Thank you for such a beautiful time, Lance.”

“Thank you, Kathy, I feel like you have given my heart a special gift. I hope you feel the same!”

“I must feel that way, Lance. I can hardly breathe. I’ll see you in the morning; Sweet dreams.”

“You too, sweet dreams, little Kathy, dear.”

They both went to their separate sleeping areas. Lance was on cloud nine. He never believed he would be able to love a woman again. His heart was on fire as he lay down to sleep. He whispered quietly, “Sweet dreams.”

Morning came and there was an enormous amount of activity as breakfast was cooked and eaten and various people grouped together sharing their stories and getting to know each

other. Lance had gathered Patricia and Kathy together on a couch to talk. Lance wanted Patricia to get to know Kathy and perhaps love her like he felt he did. They were natural together as they laughed and talked. They created a bond together like father, mother and daughter. They spent all day together sharing with each other and becoming like a family. As night approached John Clark announced that it was time for him and Kathy to get back to Washington D.C. where there would be another group of Israelites to transport back to the lodge. Lance wanted to volunteer to go back with them and help with transporting the next group.

John said, "That won't work, Lance. Your picture is pasted all over the East Coast as being wanted for murder of a fellow police officer. They must mean Joshua. You would surely be spotted and put the rest in danger. Remember that Mr. Black?"

Lance replied, "Sure I do."

"Well he has been promoted to Governor of the Eastern Coast of the United States. His second in command is the former Major Steven Alexander."

"No need to say any more, John. That man will stop at nothing to get to me. You are right I would jeopardize the rest of you."

Lance turned away with a heavy heart. He had just found true love in Kathy, and now he must stand by and watch her go. His heart was broken. Kathy came over to him and gave him a tender embrace.

"Don't worry for me, Lance. I'll be back with the next group in two days. I want to tell you something before I go." Kathy stood on her tiptoes so she could whisper into Lance's ear. "I'm falling in love with you and I want you, Patricia and me to be a family!"

Lance bear-hugged Kathy to him and kissed her for the first time. Tears rolled down both of their eyes as Patricia came running over to them. She had been watching them and when Lance kissed Kathy, she knew something wonderful had taken place. Lance and Kathy included Patricia into their group hug.

"Baby girl, Kathy has told me that she wants us to be a family. The three of us!" "Oh....Oh....Daddy, the three of us a family. Do you really mean it? I can have a new mother!"

Kathy said, "If you and Lance will have me, I'll make this my last trip and we can all get married!"

Patricia began to scream and jump up and down. "Yes...yes, oh....Daddy say yes, please!" Lance smiled from ear to ear as he hugged Patricia and Kathy. "Yes, I can't believe this. Thank you Jesus....thank you Jesus!"

Everyone turned to see what was going on.

Larry said, "I knew it....I knew it! We are going to have a wedding here."

John looked surprised as he said, "It looks as though I'm going to lose my best helper. I can't think of a better person to lose you to, Kathy. Congratulations."

"Thank you John," Kathy replied, "When we get back from the next load, it will be my last."

Bobby and Barbara came running up to Lance, Kathy and Patricia, and joined into their group hug. Both were crying and congratulating all three of them. Lance's heart went out to Bobby and Barbara. He knew how much they loved each other and the vow they had made to God. He admired their faithfulness to their vow. Surely they will be rewarded greatly in Heaven. Not just for keeping their vow to God, but for the testimony they were to others too. "I can do all things through Christ Jesus, who strengthens me." Lance recalled Bobby and Barbara often quoting this scripture.

Kathy and John got into their vans and after much hugging and tears they drove down the

long path to the main road and headed back to Washington.

Lance and Patricia stood in the driveway long after everybody else went inside. They held each other and stared at the path that led to the highway for the longest time. They would cry some and laugh some. Both were so happy at the impending wedding while, at the same time, both were apprehensive for Kathy's safety until she returned. Before going inside Lance and Patricia prayed for God to protect Kathy and the others that would be with her.

Chapter 16 **The Mark of the Beast**

The next two days for everyone at the lodge was spent in getting settled in and getting to know each other. Lance and Patricia spent a lot of time watching the news on television. They were worried for Kathy. On the morning of the night that Kathy was supposed to arrive back at the Lodge, Lance and Patricia heard bad news on the television. It was announced that “the Government is recalling all cash moneys and implementing the One World Government system that is presently being used in the Ten Nation European Confederation. The World Bank in Germany is ready to put this system into operation throughout the world. Our government will only allow one week for all currency to be brought back to your banks and the many other locations that have been set up for this undertaking. Your currency will be electronically transferred to your permanent account in the World Bank. To be able to access your account you must have the microchip inserted just under your skin on your right hand or your forehead. This chip will be updated with all your medical and personal history. You must have this chip inserted at the time you turn in your currency. It is a simple and painless procedure that only takes a few minutes. They will be able to program the chip and insert it while you are at the counter conducting your business. From that time on, all buying and selling can only be conducted if you have the chip. There will be no medical services or access to any public or government facilities without the chip.” In other words, the Mark of the Beast has come to America and the destruction of our society has been ensured because of it!

Lance and Patricia were heavy hearted at this news. They made sure that everyone at the lodge saw this report. The news station’s on television broadcast it every hour on the hour. The rest of the day was filled with cooking, cleaning, chopping wood and, in general any chore to keep all their minds on something constructive and off the bad news.

Around dark Lance and Patricia went outside to sit and look out for Kathy and the new group of Jews. They waited for a couple of hours without any sign of Kathy. Patricia went in for a short while to eat and refresh herself. Lance began to pace back and forth while wringing his hands and praying. He couldn’t make himself go in to eat or rest. Soon Patricia came out and hugged up to Lance.

“Dad, I’m so worried! Why are they so late? They should have been here at dark!”

Lance replied, “Have faith, little One. God didn’t lift us up just to let us down. We have got to believe that! There has to be a good reason for their delay. Don’t fret baby Girl. Kathy will come back to us; and, God willing, we will not be without her until God requires us to be martyred.”

Lance and Patricia sat clinging to each other on a bench while they listened for any sound of an approaching vehicle. It was getting to be around 10:00 p.m. when Lance made Patricia go inside out of the nippy cool air. He started to pace back and forth again until he was worn out.

Lance knelt at the bench and cried out to God with a great flood of tears, “Lord, please bring Kathy safely back to me and Patricia.” Lance was kneeling there with his head in his hands when he heard the rumbling of large motors coming quickly down the path toward the lodge. He saw no lights but the motor noise was so loud that Patricia and all those inside the lodge heard it

and they ran out and stood with Lance.

Within seconds two large school buses came to a stop in the driveway. Kathy jumped from the driver's seat of the front bus and ordered everyone off as fast as they could. The driver of the second bus did the same. Lance and Patricia ran to Kathy and grabbed her up like she was a rag doll and smothered her with kisses.

Kathy said, "I love you both. I've missed you so much!"

Lance kissed Kathy and said, "We almost lost hope for your safe return."

Patricia added, "What happened to you and why the two buses?"

Kathy held onto them both as she replied, "Have you heard about the Mark of the Beast being put into effect?"

Both Lance and Patricia answered, "Yes."

"Well, all Hell has broken out in the city. The new government troops are forcing people to turn in their money and take the Mark. They aren't waiting for people to volunteer to do it. They are going house to house and dragging people out of their homes, then taking them to the Transaction Centers to cash in their currency and take the Mark. John Clark said, "We must speed up the relocation of the Jews." He stayed in the city to see that everyone got out before the troops got to them. John is in deep trouble! I fear the government is on to him. We must all pray for his safety. He is using school buses to move the Jews in now. Time is our enemy! That's why we must get everyone off the buses and refuel them. We need to get the buses back as fast as we can so we can load another group and get them here. The government troops are preoccupied, right now, with getting people to the Transaction Centers. Soon they will turn their attention to the roads and highways to try and catch those who are fleeing from the Mark."

Patricia cried out, "Oh....mom." "Please say you aren't going back with them."

Lance looked at Kathy with great concern.

Kathy squeezed Patricia and said, "No, Baby, you and Lance are my ministry now. I've got to take care of you two softies."

Patricia said, "Thank you, God! Thank you, mom! I really need you and dad."

Lance said, "We need you too, baby Girl. We all need each other!"

Larry had heard Kathy tell Lance and Patricia about what was happening and he took over getting everyone off the buses and into the Lodge. Then he had the buses driven around back to the septic tank truck and their tanks filled full of gas.

Barbara and Bobby saw to it that the new arrivals were being fed while Joshua took everyone's name and numbered them in families and singles to make sleeping arrangements. To everyone's surprise there were one hundred and sixty-two men, women and children on the two buses.

Larry packed food and water for the two men who were taking the buses back to the city and they departed. He went back inside and conferred with Josh.

"Josh, how many people did we get this time?"

"Brace yourself, Larry. We just took in one hundred and sixty-two more people."

Larry quickly sat down on a chair and slumped over for a second. "Josh, if we just added one hundred and sixty-two people to the twenty-one we already have; that means we have one hundred and eighty-three guests plus the seven of us who will act as administrators! That is one hundred and ninety souls packed into this place already. We have to think about what to do with this situation. Oh...my, there are many more coming, also!"

Joshua said, "I'll get Lance and the other staff to meet with us over here and put our heads together. We will come up with something."

Josh quickly gathered Lance, Kathy, Patricia, Bobby, and Barbara. He took them over to where Larry was sitting and they all took a seat.

Larry said, "We are in deep water! We have more people than we can put up comfortably. We can stick twelve people in each of the twelve cabins. That will account for one hundred and forty-four people. Counting us, we total one hundred and ninety people. Now I know we can put the other forty-six of us in cots along the walls in here. We will be cramped but we can make it. The problem is many more are coming tomorrow night! How many I don't know."

Kathy spoke up, "Listen everybody, John is desperate to get our friends out of Washington D.C. as fast as he can. I know the two buses will be equally full tomorrow night. After that, I don't know!"

Bobby said, "That's another one hundred and eighty people! Man, we got it cut out for us."

Lance spoke up, "Hey, Bobby, what about the bomb shelters? Didn't you say they would hold sixty people plus a quantity of supplies? We can empty the shelters and put all the supplies we don't need right away in that large garage. If we put up all the three-person, military bunk beds we can in both shelters, we will be able to house at least one hundred and eighty to two hundred more people. They will be packed in like sardines but they will be housed!" Everyone cheered at Lance's idea.

Bobby said, "Sure, Lance, that will work perfectly. I'm glad Jesse talked me into obtaining all those surplus three-person bunk beds. I never believed we would need them. We may not have enough mattresses for all the bunks, though."

Barbara said, "We ladies can sew blankets together with clean pine straw in them to make up the difference we may need. We have a lot more surplus blankets than we need anyway."

"Boy, you all just took a load off my back. That will work perfectly well," Larry said.

Lance added, "We need to put together all the men and start on transferring the food and supplies from the bunkers now. Tomorrow the women can make the bedding out of the blankets and pine straw while the men clean out the bunkers and set up the bunk-beds."

Kathy said, "Praise the Lord. That will take care of tomorrow. I can't promise you what the next day will bring!"

Lance took Kathy into his arms and said, "I can, Honey. How about a wedding on the next day?"

Kathy replied, "That sure sounds good to me! How about you, Patricia?"

Patricia started crying and nestled up to Lance and Kathy and said, "Can I change my last name to Carper? I want to be one hundred percent part of this union. Will that be all right, mom and dad?"

Both Lance and Kathy indicated that they wouldn't have it any other way. Patricia would be their daughter in name as well as in their hearts.

Lance gave them a hug and then said, "We had better get the men together and start moving all those supplies before it gets any later. If you ladies could set up a housing list for our guests and make the ladies and children comfortable while we men take care of the supplies, that would be great!"

Barbara said, "Go ahead, we'll take care of that for you. We get the easy part."

Lance and Larry gathered all the able-bodied men and took them to the bunkers to transfer the supplies to the garage while Bobby and Joshua separated the bunks into several piles.

With all the helpers they had, Lance and Larry had all the food and supplies moved to the garage and neatly separated and stored within one hour. Bobby and Joshua had separated all the bunk frames and their mattresses in the same time. Everyone was so pleased that it went so fast that they decided to go ahead and clean up the bunkers and set up the bunks. They split up into two groups. Each group took one of the bunkers to work on. Some cleaned while others set up the bunk-bed frames and placed the available mattresses on the beds. Others took all the blankets and sheets to the laundry room for the women to wash and dry. After all the cleaning and setting up of the bunks, Bobby took a count of the number of mattresses they needed to fill out the beds. They would have to make thirty-two pine straw mattresses. Everyone was well pleased that they had accomplished so much in so little time.

Larry said, "I want to thank everyone for their help in getting these bunkers ready for our brethren who will be here tomorrow night. You have done a remarkable job! Working together we can handle anything that may come up in the future. The ladies will show you where you are being housed for tonight. Good night and God bless each and every one of you."

The work party went their separate ways while Larry, Lance, Bobby and Joshua lingered behind and surveyed what had been accomplished. They counted enough beds to sleep ninety-nine people in the first bunker and one hundred and five people in the second bunker.

Bobby said, "We can hang blankets between the bunks to partition off family sections and gender sections as needed. I know that is less than a desirable situation, but considering the situation I feel that is the best we can do."

Lance remarked, "Judging by the caliber of the guests we already have I'd say the new arrivals will be grateful for any accommodations we are able to put together for them. They are wonderful, good-hearted people. I for one am proud to be able to help them in any way I can!"

Larry replied, "Lance, I think that pretty much expresses all of our feelings. I need to address one other thing before we go in. When I was a little tike I was raised in the country. We didn't have running water or bathrooms. We had a well with a hand pump and an outside privy. Well, guess what? We don't have enough toilets to handle the people we have tonight. Tomorrow night will be a disaster if we don't head it off. I suggest that right after breakfast we get a crew of men digging holes and constructing privies in the far corner past the septic truck."

Bobby spoke up, "Man, that never crossed my mind. How many do you think we need to construct to handle all the people?"

"Perhaps twenty, Bobby, If we build them like my granddad did. He would build one house over the hole and one platform with two seat's back-to-back and then divide the house with a wall down the center between the two seats. He put a door on each side; one side was for the women and the other was for the men. It took less building material to construct the privy and only one hole to dig. If we did this twenty times we would have forty privies. That should do it what with the fourteen full baths we have between the cabins and the lodge. In the summer we can rig outside showers with hoses. Until then we just make do with showers we have."

"Do we have enough building materials to complete the job?" Lance asked Larry, "I've seen some material in the garage. Is there anymore?"

"Yes, Lance," Larry answered. "There is quite a lot of building material stored in the screened-in pavilion. More than enough to do the job."

Joshua said, "I love working with my hands. I'm a little weak still, but I look forward to helping."

"With all the men we have to help we can knock this project out in no time," Bobby added.

Lance looked at Larry with concern and said, "Larry, Kathy and I would like to get married tomorrow. Do you really know anyone who can perform the ceremony for us?"

"You are looking at him, Lance. Before the Rapture I had been ordained as a minister with an independent church. I use to marry people all the time. I have my personal reasons why I missed the Rapture, but I am a repentant sinner now. If you would have me officiate your wedding, I would be happy to do so."

"That's wonderful," Larry. "Kathy and I would be honored for you to join us in holy matrimony. We would like Patricia by our side and her name changed to ours on any document you can make up, even if it is only to be documented in Heaven. I know God will honor it."

Larry said, "I know we can't send documentation to the state, but they no longer represent us anyway. Your documents will be recorded here at the lodge in the presence of all our witnesses and in the presence of God."

"Great," Lance said. "How about five o'clock tomorrow evening?"

"That will be fine, Lance. That will give us time to complete our task and eat dinner. I'm looking forward to it!"

Lance went over to Bobby and asked, "Would you and Barbara stand in for me and Kathy as our best man and maid of honor?"

Bobby gave Lance a hug and with tears in his eyes said, "I will be more than honored to stand up with you and I know Barbara will be thrilled to stand up for Kathy. I can't tell you how happy Barbara and I are for the three of you. What you are giving Patricia is beyond words. She is a precious young lady and deserves to have such wonderful parents as you and Kathy."

Lance said, "Thank you so much, Bobby. We all know how much you and Barbara would like to get married. This must be a difficult thing for you to witness. God has a great....great reward for you two in Heaven. I can't say it enough. You have taught all of us what a real commitment to God is. My faith is much stronger because of your and Barbara's witness. I love you, Son!"

Bobby said, "Barbara and I love you too, Lance."

They all went inside and told Kathy, Patricia and Barbara about the plans for tomorrow's wedding. All were elated and shared hugs and kisses among themselves.

Kathy, Lance, and Patricia retired to a section of the lodge that was semi-private and found three cots to sleep on. They pulled the cots close together and tried to go to sleep. Occasionally Patricia would giggle and then she would cry. She was so happy to be a part of a real family again. Since her mother was taken into custody by the police and then died, Patricia had felt all alone in this world. She never knew her biological dad, but now she would have a mom and dad that she loved and admired more than life. Patricia was well aware that she had little time to live because they were in the last part of the Tribulation, but that didn't matter to her. She would be loved and have her love reciprocated by a real family until that time. This was more than she felt like she could ever hope for. She finally fell off to sleep dreaming about the wedding to take place the next evening.

Lance and Kathy just looked at each other for a while. No words had to be spoken. Their hearts were blending in a harmony of spiritual bless. Tomorrow would bring them into that special union that God had designed for His creation. Lance, Kathy, and Patricia would sleep well tonight. The whole world was in its death throws, but tonight in a little lodge in the foothills of Virginia three people were dreaming of their future.

Chapter 17 The Wedding

Morning came quickly with a little frost on the ground. Winter was coming on fast. Larry had turned over the cooking chores to a committee of the Jewish women. This turned out to be a blessing as the quality of the meals soared to new culinary highs. Breakfast was so good that Lance almost made himself sick from overeating.

Larry divided all the men into work parties to build the privies. Some were assigned to dig the holes while others carried and stacked the building supplies in the appropriate sites. Some men measured and cut the lumber and others nailed the structures together. It was like an assembly line. The Jewish men sang Hebrew songs while they worked making the event a joyous happening for all. The ladies brought a light lunch out to the men so they could eat while they continue to work. Everyone wanted to finish his or her projects as soon as possible. After all, there was going to be a wedding at five o'clock this evening. Everyone wanted to finish in time to get ready for the blessed event. They haven't seen much to be joyous about in the last couple of years. Most all the Jews had to flee Israel with only the clothes on their backs. Some were separated from their families and loved ones in the process. Many were reminded of the Holocaust when the Nazis killed over six million Jews. The Antichrist would make Hitler look like a choirboy in comparison!

Three o'clock came and all the work was completed. The men stood back and admired their work. They had successfully completed the twenty privies with the partition's in-between them making forty private privies in all. Everyone agreed that soon they would paint the structures in a brown and green camouflage color so that they would blend in with the scenery.

Barbara and Kathy had helped Patricia locate a beautiful gown from one of the Israeli ladies to wear for the wedding. Lance was offered a very expensive tux from one of the Jewish men who use to be a symphony orchestra conductor. It was a little tight, but, hey, who can be picky in this situation? Barbara gave Kathy a lovely white satin and lace gown that she had been saving for....well....her wedding day. She knew she wouldn't need it anymore. She would wear a yellow dress that hugged her slim frame and made her look radiant.

Promptly at 5:00 p.m. Larry called the wedding party together. Lance stood beside Larry, and Bobby stood beside Lance as they faced the back of the lodge from where Kathy, Barbara, and Patricia would come. A hush fell over the group as Barbara started down the center of the lodge toward the three men. She couldn't keep from crying as she slowly walked forward. She was followed by Patricia who was crying even harder than Barbara. Her tears clashed with the beautiful smile she had on her face. Barbara and Patricia took their place on the other side of Larry. Bobby was opened-mouthed at how beautiful Barbara looked. He wanted with all his heart to have Larry make it a double ceremony. He clenched his jaw and quietly prayed for strength to keep his vow to God.

Suddenly over one hundred and ninety voices started to hum the wedding march as Kathy started down the aisle on the arm of Joshua. Lance began to tremble at Kathy's overwhelming presence. She was the most beautiful bride Lance had ever seen. She was so petite and looked so grand that Lance felt like he would surely faint in her presence. Joshua handed Kathy to Lance and they both turned to face Larry.

Larry said: "We are gathered here in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony. At the same time we

bring into this union a daughter. This holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence in Cana of Galilee and the Apostle Paul commended as honorable among all men.”

“Lance, will you have this woman to be your wedded wife and this child to be your lawful daughter?”

Lance replied, “I will!”

“Kathy, will you have this man to be your wedded husband and this child to be your lawful daughter?”

Kathy replied, “I will!”

“Patricia, will you have this man and this woman to be your lawful parents?”

Patricia sobbed, “I will!”

“In as much as Lance and Kathy have consented together in holy wedlock and have taken unto them this child, and Patricia has consented to be the lawful daughter of Lance and Kathy, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, I pronounce that they are husband and wife and daughter, together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Amen. You may all smooch up on each other now.” Larry jumped into the middle of them and hugged and kissed everyone.

“Man,” Larry shouted, “I ain’t had so much sloppy face in years. I really love it!”

There was dancing and good times had by all. Some of the women had baked a wedding cake and prepared a buffet dinner for the occasion.

Bobby pulled Lance off to the side and said, “I have a wedding present for you. Barbara and I have turned the van into hotel honeymoon. There isn’t any privacy around here, but if you drive the van out by the pond you will find a beautiful full moon shining on the pond and it is quiet and private out there.”

Lance hugged Bobby and said, “How can I thank you? I tell you, Bobby, I’m as nervous as a schoolboy. I feel like I’m going to pass out.”

Bobby laughed and said, “Now don’t do that. Kathy would be lonesome on her wedding night.”

Lance rubbed Bobby’s head and went to get Kathy. They sneaked out of the lodge and took the van to the pond. It was as beautiful as Bobby described it. However, he forgot to tell Lance about the fireworks!

Back at the lodge, Larry had everyone clean up and get ready to greet the new guests that would be arriving soon.

Bobby held Barbara and asked, “How are you holding up, Sweetheart?”

“I’m doing fine, Bobby. I’m so happy for them! Look at Patricia over there. She looks as if she is glowing. How wonderful for her to get such great parents.”

“She sure is,” Bobby said. “Lance and Kathy are blessed to have that little sweet heart as their daughter, also.”

“Barbara, I want to thank you for being my girl. No man on earth is as blessed as I am. I love you so much that it actually hurts! I know you feel the same for me. I have this feeling that something is about to happen soon that will alter all our lives. I can’t shake this feeling. It’s as if God is trying to tell me to prepare for the end as we know it. We know what the Bible says about these times. It is just so strange to be living it. Whatever happens, remember I love you!”

Barbara replied, “Bobby, I am blessed to have you. I’m not afraid of what tomorrow may bring. I know we are soon to die. It may be a gruesome death; I don’t know. I just know that we will be in Heaven with our Jesus when we do die. The love we have for each other may be

devoid of sexual gratification here and in Heaven, but our love will be intensified by the glory of God for Him and all his saints. That will be a love that words can't explain. I look forward to that day when Jesus fulfills our love by taking us to be with him and the Father and the Holy Spirit."

"Barbara, you make me want to shout! You said that with true conviction, Sweetheart. I'm proud to be in your life. I too look forward to that day when we will be with our Lord. It will be very soon now. Very soon, Barbara, my love."

Most of the Jews were retired to their cabins and the rest were sitting around in the lodge when Larry said, "Here they come!"

Two school buses followed by two semi-tractor-trailers pulled up in front of the lodge. The people filed out of the buses and were greeted by Larry and the staff. They were directed into the lodge where they were counted and classified for housing arrangements. Joshua counted two hundred and ten men, women and children. They had been riding in the aisles and sitting on each other the whole trip, yet not one person complained about the discomfort. They were thankful to escape the city.

The driver in charge of the convoy met with Larry and the staff. He addressed them with the bad news:

"My name is Alex Green. I am the last of the staff of the Christian Alliance. John Clark has been taken in for questioning and hasn't been seen or heard from since. Our communication has been cut off with the other states. The World Police have tapped into our phones and we can't use the Internet for fear of being discovered. We have destroyed all our computer files and dismantled the hard drives so that nothing can be retrieved off them. Everywhere you go you are scanned for the Mark of the Beast. If you don't have it, they try to make you get it right then. If you refuse, they arrest you and haul you off. No one ever sees them again! We have to travel back roads to avoid the police. It makes our mission very difficult. We still have a lot of Jews to find a place for.

Larry interrupted, "When we settle this group of people you just delivered, we will be filled up. There is no more room or beds to put anyone in and certainly not enough food to last very long for the group we now have. I can't see how we can take on anymore people, if that is what you were getting to."

Alex put both his arms on Larry's shoulders and said, "You and your people have done so much for our cause. God bless you for all you have done. Surely you have been burdened far more than anyone could ever expect you to endure. No doubt God wouldn't put more on you than you can endure."

Larry stopped Alex there and said, "Don't go any further! I'm shamed enough. What more can we do to help?"

Alex embraced Larry and with a big smile on his face he said, "Bless you, my brother! God had already laid on my heart that you would help us to house the last of the souls we our charged with. The two tractor-trailers are filled with non-perishable foods that John Clark obtained before the Mark was put into effect. We will park the trailers here for you and take the trucks back with us. The food should last a long time for the multitudes you will have.

Larry said, "Now tell me the bad news. How many more people are you bringing?"

Alex replied, "Well, a lot."

"Okay, Alex, give it to me. I'm a big boy; I can take it."

"Actually about two hundred and twenty more people," Alex said. "Now before you say anything about where you're going to put them, let me finish. While I was here when we brought

the last load of people, I couldn't help but notice that large, screened-in pavilion you have. If the sides and ends were boarded up it would be weatherproof. You could burn wood in the two brick bar-b-que grills to take the chill off for the winter. Why, the body heat alone would make it tolerable. If you don't have the lumber to make the walls, you have men in this group that are carpenters and lumberjacks. They can cut down some of the pine trees and split the logs into sheathing and pack the cracks with mud and straw. It will work fine."

Larry rubbed his bald head and said, "Well, that settles it then! Bring them on. If they can live like that, we can too. God help us all!"

Alex replied, "Thank you so much! We will leave now and take the buses and trucks back for our final haul. I will load the seventy-five three-person bunk beds and mattresses you will need on another tractor-trailer, along with the pillows and bedding supplies. There is quite a lot of toilet paper, soap and laundry detergents still at our warehouse. I will bring everything I can load on the trailer that you can use."

"Now you're talking," Larry replied. "Thank God for those military surplus bunks."

Barbara and Patricia had packed food and water for the four drivers on their trip back to the city. Before they left, everyone in the lodge joined in a prayer for the safe return of Alex and all the souls who would be coming back with him.

Larry addressed Bobby, "What do you say we go down to the pond and fill Lance in on what's going on."

Bobby responded, "I say you are a crazy man. I wouldn't disturb Lance if the lodge was on fire."

Larry laughed, "I was only kidding. I'd like to live a little longer anyway, thank you!"

Soon all the commotion of settling the new arrivals was over and everyone was settled into bed.

Out on the pond the sky was bright and clear. The stars were twinkling as if coordinated by a conductor and every now and then the sky would light up with the brilliance of a shooting star. There was no thought of the world around them. Lance and Kathy were one.

Chapter 18 No Room at the Lodge

Daylight came with a flurry of light snowflakes. The sky had turned gray and the temperature had fallen to below freezing. Lance and Kathy had returned to the lodge around three o'clock in the morning because of the cold. They returned to their bunks beside Patricia. Before they went to sleep they kissed Patricia on the forehead and added an extra blanket on her like any parents would do when they tucked in their child.

The women in charge of cooking gathered at the kitchen area around five-thirty to start cooking breakfast for the four hundred people that presently were housed at the lodge. They had to feed them in shifts because of the limited seating area in the lodge. Everyone who slept in the lodge was awake by six o'clock because of all the noise.

Larry was busy adding firewood to the four fireplaces when Lance, Bobby and Josh came over to help him.

Lance said, "First, let me say how much I appreciate all of you making yesterday such a beautiful day for Kathy, Patricia, and myself. Next, there will be no jokes or kidding about the honeymoon. Does everyone understand this?"

Larry grinned and said, "Why, Lance, we don't have any idea what you are talking about! We always mind our own business and never mix into anyone else's affairs."

All the men laughed and agreed with Larry.

Larry somberly said, "We have a real problem today, Lance. Last night Alex informed us that John Clark was taken into custody by the police and hasn't been seen or heard from. We agreed to take the last of the Jews that the Christian Alliance has hidden in Washington D.C. and house them here."

Lance looked startled at the news of John Clark's capture and the added guests.

Larry continued, "There should be over two hundred more people coming soon. Alex said that the danger of getting the Jews out of the city is remarkably more difficult to pull off. He decided to load up immediately on their arrival back in the city and return here this morning. Alex said they should be here about seven. We need to turn the pavilion into a weatherproof facility to house the additional people. If this light snow gets any worse we will be greatly hampered!"

Bobby broke in and said, "Hey, we have about two hundred men here who would work in a blizzard to get the pavilion ready for our brothers and sisters. I suggest that we let all the men eat a quick breakfast and then we can all jump on this project while the women and children eat. Thank God the pavilion has a six-inch concrete floor and a brick, deep bottom bar-b-que grill at each end with brick chimneys all the way past the roofline. They should heat the pavilion adequately. The pavilion already has the sides sheathed up to four feet. All we need to do is sheath up the additional five feet all the way around. Make two log-cabin style doors and cut in several windows, which we can construct like shutters or hinge at the top like they do with the beach houses back home. There is a sixty-amp underground electrical wire connected to the pavilion with a breaker box and six receptacles on each side of the long walls. There is florescent lights overhead, also. Oh....and there is a waterline run to the inside corner with a small sink.

Larry said, "That's right, Bobby. We need to get at it just like you said. What do the rest of you say?"

Lance said, "I'll go out and get both fireplaces going before I eat. We can do it!"

Josh added, “Fine plan. I’ll tell the other men about our decision and get them ready to go. They will be more than glad to help.”

Alex is supposed to bring some building supplies and all the bunks and bedding we will need with him this morning,” Larry reported. “We should have enough lumber to get a lot of it completed ourselves.”

Lance went outside to build the fires while Josh went about informing the men of their task. Bobby and Larry told the women in the lodge what was planned while Kathy, Patricia and Barbara went to the cabins and bunkers to inform the rest of the guests.

All the men ate quickly and headed to their work areas Larry had assigned them. After one hour, all the framing was completed. There was a pile of three-quarter plywood behind the garage that was brought over to the pavilion by one work crew that was assigned to handle all the gathering of materials. Another work crew would measure and cut the lumber while still another crew would nail up the sheathing. They used every scrap of material they could find. When all the plywood was nailed up, they were pleasantly surprised to find that there was enough to enclose the entire pavilion, although not enough to make the doors. They were able to make all the windows out of one by six pressure-treated lumber that had been stored in the rafters of the pavilion.

Larry sent the men inside to wait for the truck of supplies to arrive. He gathered Lance, Bobby and Josh at one of the fireplaces to confide in them.

“It’s twelve o’clock and no sign of the trucks. Alex felt that they would be able to get here around seven this morning. I have a horrible feeling that something bad has happened to them!”

Bobby said, “The snow isn’t too heavy here, but when Barbara came out to see me earlier, she said the news on television reported a large snowstorm in the capital area. Maybe the road conditions have slowed them down or even stopped them.”

“I’m sure they will make it. They must,” Lance said.

“Well, we can’t do anymore out here so let’s stoke up these fireplaces and go inside for now,” Larry replied. “You know, it’s fairly warm in here with both these fireplaces going. When we get the doors on I believe it will be comfortable in here.”

As the men were about halfway to the lodge, Lance said, “Wait! Did anyone hear that noise? It sounds like a motor.”

All the men stopped and strained their ears to hear against the blowing snow.

Bobby said, “I hear it! I think they’re here.”

All the men ran down the driveway to see if it was true. Sure enough, there they were. The men could make out a school bus with other vehicles following it down the path that leads to the lodge. Bobby and Josh ran inside to give the others the good news and to have the present guests return to their cabins and bunkers to make room in the lodge to receive the new arrivals. Then they ran back outside to help get the new people inside so they could feed them and log them in.

The convoy pulled to a stop and Alex hurried off the bus and ran to greet Larry and his staff. There were two buses and one tractor-trailer that arrived. As Alex was talking with Larry and Lance, Bobby and Josh ushered all the people off the buses and took them inside the lodge. Alex counted two hundred and three new arrivals. With the four hundred people already there, that made a total of six hundred and three souls crammed into every structure, except the out-houses.

Alex, Larry, and Lance went into the pavilion to talk. They huddled by one of the

fireplaces while Alex filled them in on his mission. Alex was very emotional as he related his adventures to Lance and Larry.

“Fellows, we have been through hell and back to get here. The city is crawling with the special police. It’s a madhouse there. I saw people being shot down in the streets for refusing to take the Mark. Young girls and even older women were being raped and then killed, right in public view, for not taking the Mark. People who have taken the Mark roam the streets with evil in their hearts, beating and molesting people who openly denounce the system of the Antichrist. As we pulled out of the warehouse with our vehicles, some citizens who had the Mark spotted us. They turned us in to the special police. We had to race out of the city by all the side streets we could take to avoid the police, but when we reached the belt-way they caught up with us. There must have been fifteen police cars chasing after us. The snow was heavy and blinding as we raced along. Our buses and trucks were heavy and took the snow fairly well, but the police cars were slipping and sliding. Just when I thought we might get away from them, they put a roadblock at the off ramp that we needed to get off on. At least four police cars blocked the road. Troy Shelly was driving the tractor-trailer full of food in front of the rest of us. He slowed down for just a second and then sped up as fast as he could go. He slammed his truck into the police cars and scattered them everywhere. We were all able to get through the roadblock and head out of town. Troy pulled to the side of the road and waved the rest of us around him. His radiator was busted and the steam was coming out of it. The police cars that had been chasing us began to catch up with us. It looked like we would be overtaken. I looked out by rearview mirrors and saw Troy jackknife his rig right in front of the police cars. They were unable to stop on the snow and crashed into Troy’s rig. There was a bright flash of fire as several of the police cars exploded into an inferno. Troy’s rig was engulfed with flames and then exploded. He gave his life so the rest of us could get away. I’m sorry guys that we lost the truck with the food, but I’m more sorry that we lost Troy. Anyway, we split up and took the long way around in an effort not to draw attention to ourselves. We met up again at the foot of the hill that leads here. There was no traffic on the roads except us for the last thirty miles or so, because of the snow. It won’t take long for our tire tracks to be covered up if this snow keeps up the way it’s going.”

Larry and Lance hugged Alex in an effort to comfort him.

Lance said, “Alex, what a blessed person Troy is. He gave his life so the rest of you could live. Right now he is with the Lord and the angels are rejoicing for him. We will soon be with him and I for one will be honored to meet him.”

“Amen,” Larry responded. “I know you are upset to lose such a wonderful man like him, but rejoice in his victory.”

Alex said, “I’ll be fine, you guys. We had better get inside. I feel sick from hunger!”

The three of them went inside and got something to eat. Alex fell asleep at the table and Lance picked him up like a child and placed him on a cot to sleep.

Larry said, “Well, Lance, I can truly say that there is no more room at the lodge.”

The Jews who were already settled in cabins and bunkers came to the lodge and took the new arrivals back to their beds. They gave their places up to them so they could rest and sleep. Then they went back to the lodge and David Fine asked Larry, “Does the tractor-trailer that made it here have the bunks and building supplies on it?”

Larry said, “Yes, it does, but the weather is terrible out there now.”

“Thank you, Larry,” David replied. “We’ll take it from here. We owe our lives to so many people. No snow will keep us from finishing the pavilion!”

Larry stood there with tears in his eyes as he spoke to Lance, “Have you ever seen such

people. They endure hardships that would defeat most men and they never complain about their lot in life. I can see why they are God's chosen people. Bless the name of the Lord."

The Decision

It had been a week since Alex and the last of the Jews arrived at the lodge. The first group of Jews to settle at the lodge had completed the pavilion and made it ready to house the extra two hundred and three newcomers on the same day they arrived. They worked in a snowstorm until every last detail was completed to make the pavilion weather-tight and as comfortable as possible for those who would live in it. The lodge was now the home of six hundred and three refugees who fled from the satanic rule of the Antichrist.

Lance, Kathy, and Patricia were sitting in front of the television when the news station announced a special report from their home city by the ocean. The news report stated, "We are going live to the steps of the first police precinct where Chief of Police, Rob Laven, is about to make a startling statement."

Lance called for the room to get quiet and for everyone to listen to the news that was about to be broadcast from his old police department.

The news reporter said, "The Chief of Police is stepping up to the mike now. Let's listen to what he is about to say."

"Last night this department raided an illegal meeting of the outlawed Defectives who would try and destroy our way of life. We were successful in capturing all the nine members of this abominable cult, and we have them here to show the world how we take care of these misfits of our society."

The camera panned to its left and showed the nine Defectives on their knees, chained together. The cameraman panned the smiling peaceful faces of the Defectives as they shouted praises to Jesus and the living God who was about to avenge the saints.

Lance and Josh gasped as they exchanged horrified looks at each other while Chief Laven continued to speak.

"I am sorry to say that this misfit group was headed up by one of our own police officers, Tim Mayfield. We had thought that we were free of these traitors, but rest assured that we will do everything in our power to root out their kind and destroy them. To show the world how we won't tolerate these traitors among us, we will eliminate them so that all can witness the sure and swift justice of this department."

With that, Chief Laven waved to the officers in charge of the prisoners. While the prisoners knelt on the steps, a hooded officer stepped up to the first man and chopped off his head with a large sword. The results were shown over the television with nothing left to the imagination of the viewers.

Lance, Josh and all the people in the lodge screamed with terror as they witnessed the execution of eight of the nine prisoners in like fashion. Tim was the last to be executed.

Chief Laven said, "I have saved the last prisoner to execute myself. He was a trusted policeman until Lieutenant Carper who is still being hunted corrupted him. You can see why we must destroy these Defectives. They can deceive you with their talk of their false God and lead you to this end."

Chief Laven took his ceremonial sword from its sheath and sliced off one of Tim's ears. Tim looked up to Heaven and said, "If I have proven my faith to you, Lord Jesus, please take me home to be with you now."

Chief Laven was enraged at what officer Mayfield had said. His face turned red and the blood veins began to swell on his neck. He clenched his teeth and raised the sword with both hands. With lightning speed, Chief Laven swung the sword at Tim's neck and severed his head

in one blow. Tim's head rolled down the steep to the bottom as his body pitched forward onto the landing. Chief Laven raised the bloody sword above his head and yelled out a blood-curdling roar like the beast he was.

Back at the lodge, Lance and Josh were crying for their former friend who had let them go free just months ago. Lance had a hard time comprehending how his old best buddy, Ron Laven, could become so hardened and devoid of love and compassion.

Bobby said through raging tears, "Lance, Tim is the officer who set us free on our last trip here, isn't he?"

Lance replied, "Yes, he is, Bobby."

Bobby continued, "He risked his life for us then, but something wonderful happened to him after you talked to him. He must have given his life to Jesus and then he led others to the Lord. Did you see the smiling faces on all the martyred souls? They knew they were going to be with Jesus. They didn't show any fright. Their faith must have been unshakable. Tim brought them to that place just as you brought Tim to that place. In our loss and sorrow, let's not forget to give the glory to God for their redemption in these final hours. Remember, we carry the same fate. I pray that we can face it the way that they just faced it, with a smile on our faces and a song of praise on our lips."

"You are right, Bobby," Lance replied. "If I can show half as much courage and faith as Tim did, I'll be happy."

Lance raised his right hand into a salute as he looked up and said, "I salute you Officer Tim Mayfield. I look forward to the time when I can see you again in Heaven. Save a place next to you for me and your fellow officer Joshua Gold. Until then, my friend, rest in Jesus!"

Josh hugged Lance with tears streaming down his eyes and said, "Amen....Amen!"

Everyone in the lodge was in shock at the barbaric actions they had witnessed on the television. Most people were crying and wailing at what had just taken place. Kathy, Patricia, and Barbara were in the pavilion helping with some of the children when the news came on. As soon as they heard what had happened, they ran to Lance and Bobby to comfort them. While everyone was milling around sharing their sorrow, Alex hollered for everyone to quiet down. He turned the television's volume up as the news switched to the Capital for a broadcast by the Lieutenant Governor, Steven Alexander.

The cameras were on Alexander as he came to the stand of microphones. He said, "People of the Eastern Coast of the United States, you have witnessed the execution of nine Defectives in the eastern resort city of our providence. I am pleased that Chief Laven, a man that I personally trained, has eradicated a group of these Defectives. That group was led by a former police officer that was infected by another renegade former officer, Lieutenant Lance Carper. Carper is wanted for the cold-blooded killing of a fellow police officer. This man is indicative of the kind of people that are defective. He must be apprehended and put to his death. My office is offering five hundred thousand credits to your personal account for the arrest of this individual. We presently have the leader of the Christian Alliance, John Clark, in our custody. If any defective is listening I will personally trade John Clark to you for Lance Carper. I have set noon five days from today as the deadline for this offer. After that I will order a house to house search in every town and outlying property under my control. Anyone who is found to be harboring these Defectives will face the same fate that Carper and Clark will."

Alex turned the television off and sat down with his head bowed. Silence came over the room broken only by the sobs of Patricia and Kathy as they clenched Lance with all their might.

Patricia cried out, "No one would turn in my daddy, would they? He has done so much

for all of you. Please don't turn him in; I need him! He is my daddy!"

Patricia fell to the floor while hugging Lance's legs. Lance and Kathy gathered up Patricia and tried to console her.

Alex stated, "No one is turning in anyone around here." We must remain calm and think this thing out."

Larry said, "Alex is right! God has no place for someone who would give up his brother to Satan!"

Voices came from the group in the lodge: "We are all for one, no one will betray his brother." "If one is taken then we will all be taken." "We would die to protect our friend."

Lance was overcome by the responses he heard and clutched his family with all his might. He said, "I want to thank everyone for their support, but there is something bigger here that we need to consider. I know this man Alexander. He will stop at nothing to get to me. If he goes house to house and goes into every nook and cranny, he will find and kill many of our brothers who are in hiding. Everything we have tried to do for God will be torn down around us. In the end he will get me anyway. This man is relentlessly driven by Satan himself. He has even put John Clark out as a carrot to entice someone to turn me in. No, my friends, I know what I must do. I will pray to God and then let you know my plans. Thank you all for your support. I love you all."

Kathy pleaded, "Oh....Lance, isn't there any other way? Patricia and I need you. We will not let you go anywhere without us. We are a family!"

Patricia screamed, "No....Daddy....No! I won't stay here without you. Where you go I will go."

Lance said, "My beloved family, let's go to our private part of the lodge and pray to God as a family for His direction."

Barbara looked at Bobby with a calm expression and said, "That feeling you have had for a long time now, it's coming true, isn't it?"

"Yes, I think now is the time, Barbara. I know you feel the same way I do. Where Lance goes, we go. The Lord is waiting for us and I am ready to go."

"Me too," Barbara replied. "I am excited to at last be able to meet my Lord. I am even glad that those we love the most will go at the same time. Let's stay together with Lance, Kathy, and Patricia, no matter what."

"So be it, my love. Let's pray and ask God to release us from this ministry if it be his will," Bobby said. Then they went to their private spot and sought God.

Larry was sitting at a kitchen table in deep thought. He was trying to examine all the possibilities left for them. He knew that if Lance stayed in seclusion that sooner or later the police would find them and all would be killed. Larry wasn't worried for his life, but for the Jews he vowed to keep safe. He knew that Alexander would never let John Clark be exchanged for Lance even if that was an option, which he reasoned it wasn't. Larry reached the only decision he could. He would go with Lance if Lance turned himself in. He felt that Alexander would sooner or later link all the known associates of John Clark and hunt them down. That would lead to the lodge and all the Jews. He recalled that Joshua and Alex were Jews. They could stay and see to the needs of the other Jews. That would work just fine. Larry knew without a doubt what course Lance would take because of the kind of godly man he was. He also knew that the *cop-out* gang would stick together. That meant that Bobby, Barbara, and Patricia would go with Lance. Now, Kathy, Lance's love of his life, she would never leave his side! There was nothing left for Larry to do but go out and gas up the van and put some extra gas and food and

water in the van. Tomorrow morning they could head for the city before Alexander got antsy and started his hunt early.

Lance, Kathy, and Patricia had come to the same conclusion that Larry did. They must go to the city to take the pressure off everyone concerned. They went to tell Bobby and Barbara what they decided. Bobby and Barbara had gone to the kitchen just as Larry got back from gassing up the van. They told Larry that they would be going with Lance. Just then Lance and his family came up and overheard what was being said.

Lance said, "No way we want the rest of you to go with us. They will kill us. You must live as long as you can."

Bobby said, "Too late, Lance. Barbara and I are ready to go. We want to be with Jesus. We feel we have done all we can here, and we asked God to release us from our ministry. We both feel that God has given us leave to come home to Him."

"Larry, try to talk some sense into them," Kathy uttered.

"Hey, don't look at me. I agree with them. I have already gassed up the van and loaded some supplies for our trip."

Lance said, "What do you mean, our trip?"

"Well, after Alexander puts together two-and-two he will associate me with John Clark and hunt me down until he finds me. Then what do you think will happen to our people here? Anyway, Josh and Alex can take good care of the Jews. I reckon we have all served our purpose in the grand scheme of things. I want to go home now. I'm worn out and look forward to peace with Jesus."

Lance sat down at the table and put his hands on his forehead. "I don't know what to say. I don't want any harm to come to any of you, but I realize that there isn't much time left on this earth anyway. Already the earthquakes, famines and plagues are devastating most of the world and all the wars are killing off much of the population. Soon the last of God's judgments will be poured out on the land and much more horror than we can imagine will engulf the earth. I don't want you to go through the last months of God's wrath on this earth, either."

Larry said, "Then it's settled for all! Tomorrow after breakfast we will bid our friends good-bye and be on our way. May God be praised and lifted up for the world to see!"

The gang decided to spend their last night at the lodge clustered together reminiscing about better times and all the things God had brought them through. Each one expressed their love and devotion for the others. They were able to laugh and kid each other as if there was no tomorrow to think about. After a long time of conversing they all fell off to sleep. They slept the sleep of the pure of heart. They had served God and run the good race. Now, they were ready to receive their rewards God had for them in Heaven. Peace was their sleep and their dreams were those of the children of God.

Chapter 20 The Last Trip

Morning came too soon. The smell of bacon frying woke Lance up first. He then

awakened the others and they all sat down to a special breakfast of all their favorite foods. The Jewish women who prepared and served the meal were singing and praising God in Hebrew. It was a very pleasant breakfast for the staff. After breakfast they changed into warm clothes and prepared to leave for the city. They all gave away their personal belongings to those whom they had become close to. Joshua and Alex wanted to go with them, but they convinced them that the Jews would need their guidance in surviving in this strange land.

Larry said, "Mount up, Gang. It's time to hit the road."

When they went outside the entire camp of guests met them. They had made a pathway between them that led to the van. As Larry, Lance, Bobby, Kathy, Barbara, and Patricia made their way between the lines of the grateful Jews, they were smothered with hugs and kisses. All were crying and expressing great sadness as the staff entered the van.

Larry rolled down the driver's window and yelled for Joshua and Alex to take good care of God's chosen people, "We will see you again soon!"

Josh wept and said, "I look forward to seeing you all in your glorified bodies. Don't worry about the rest of us. God will preserve us to the end!"

Alex said, "Shalom, my good friends."

Larry rolled the window back up and drove out of the driveway and down the path to the road and turned left toward the city. It would take about four hours to drive to Washington D.C. if the snow didn't block the roads. Larry settled into driving while his mind reviewed much of his life and his repentance of his sins. How he wished he would have been wise enough to have had a personal relationship with Jesus before the Rapture. He could have been in Heaven with the others in his family now, but he was grateful that he would soon be with them.

Lance, Kathy and Patricia were in the back seat all snuggled up together.

Lance looked at both his girls and said, "I wouldn't have missed these last few days with you two for anything. They have been the happiest days in my entire life. What a wonderful family I have. Listen....You both know we are going to our death. Be strong and be assured that after they kill us, we will be together again in Heaven. We will know each other and share a far greater love for each other as we love and worship our Lord."

Patricia said, "I'm not worried about that; I just don't know if my real mother will be there or not. I didn't know about how she stood with the Lord. She never talked much about her faith. I sure hope she made it though. That doesn't mean I love her more than I do you, Mom. I just don't want her to be cast into Hell!"

Kathy said, "My beautiful daughter. You don't have to explain it to me. I'll be elated for your mother to be there to greet us. I can never take the place of your biological mom. I'm just very grateful that I was able to share you for this short time. You have made Lance's life and mine complete.

Lance added, "We love you, baby girl! You are our sunshine."

Bobby and Barbara were cuddled in the middle seat. They overheard the conversation from the back seat and Bobby asked Barbara, "Are you ready for this, Sweetheart? Will you be able to face seeing me killed if they kill me first?"

"I won't like it, Bobby, but knowing we will reunite just after our death in the very presence of God gives me the strength to withstand whatever may happen. How about you, Bobby? How will you handle it if I am killed first?"

Bobby said, "I won't lie to you, Barbara. I will die a thousand deaths if that were to happen. I'm a wimp when it comes up, Sweetheart."

"You're no wimp, Bobby. You are the strongest man I have ever met in my short life. I

don't know anyone that could have kept their vow to God the way you have. That's what a real man is, Bobby. One who keeps his word and shows as much love and devotion as you do. If we had married, you would have never betrayed me with another woman. I could have trusted you in all you did and said. You would have been a perfect husband and....even a father.”

“Barbara, was there ever a time when you might have wished that I would have broken my vow to God?”

“Oh....Bobby, every day and every night! I longed to have you as my lover, but I am glad God gave me the strength not to tempt you to betray your vow. No woman could have been as complete as I have been with you, even without the physical part. You have given me the greatest love in the world. Now, let me ask you. Have you ever been tempted to brake your vow to God?”

Bobby replied, “I plead the fifth!”

“Oh, no, Bobby, you don't get off that easy. Give me your real answer.”

Bobby took Barbara's face in his hands and gave her a long and passionate kiss that left her breathless. “Does that answer your question, Sweetheart?”

“Oh yes, Bobby, but could you tell me one more time like that?”

“I'll tell you like that all the way to the city, if you want me to!” Bobby answered.

Without another word spoken, Bobby and Barbara had a lot to tell each other.

After about two hours, Patricia climbed into the front passenger seat to keep Larry company. She and Larry talked the rest of the trip to the city. Patricia found Larry to be quite amusing. It helped to keep their minds off what was to come.

The snow was getting deeper and coming down harder as Larry turned onto the capital belt-way and headed for the last safe house that Alex told them about. It was in a small mom-and-pop grocery store just five blocks from the street that the office of the Lieutenant Governor of the Eastern Coast of the United States, Steven Alexander, was located. There they could refresh themselves and make their plans to face Alexander. There was hardly any traffic in the city moving. The van had snow tires but was having a hard time making progress on the city streets.

Larry was grateful the van had government tags and the Government Youth Division signs on the sides. No one gave the van a second look. Not even the several Special Service Police cars that passed them on the city streets. Everyone's attention was on trying to make it through the icy roads.

Lance had observed the police cars pass and said, “God has blinded them to us to enable us to carry off our mission in a way that would better glorify Him! I don't know how we are to face Alexander, but it is clear to me that God has a plan and He will reveal it to us soon.”

Larry pulled the van into the back of the grocery store and parked where Alex had told him to. He went to the back door and knocked the special code to identify them as friends.

While Larry waited for a response, Patricia ask Lance, “Daddy, who are these people that we are about to meet?”

Lance replied, “Baby girl, these people are John Clark's sister and her daughter. John's sister was married a couple of times and has a different name than Clark. So far the government hasn't been able to connect their relationship to John. They closed the store when the Mark of the Beast started. They put a sign in the window that said, *Closed Due To Fire Damage, Will Re-open Soon!* No one has bothered them yet, but it's just a matter of time before they are found out. They know this, but they figure that it's useless to run. They will stay here until the government comes to drag them off to their death.

The back door opened just a crack and a woman's voice called out, "Who's there?"

Larry replied, "Larry Bear, friend of Alex and the *Cop-Out* gang. Lifelong friend of John Clark. You remember me, Cathy. I have Lance Carper and his friends with me. Alex said you would put us up until we were ready to give ourselves up to Lieutenant Alexander."

Cathy opened the door wider and said, "Hurry up and get everyone inside. There are patrols that go by often."

Larry signaled for everyone to come inside quickly. Everyone in the van made a mad dash through the snow to the back door and went inside the store. They found themselves inside a dark storage room in the back of the grocery store. It took a few seconds for their eyes to adjust to the darkness.

Cathy Thompson greeted everyone and apologized for the darkness. "We have to be very careful about anyone seeing us here at the store," Cathy said. "Anyone with the Mark will turn you in to the authorities without even thinking about it. Please follow me upstairs where we live. My daughter Robin is there. I made her hide until I found out who was at the door."

Robin had heard what was going on and she met the guests in the living room of the upstairs apartment. All the windows were covered with heavy cardboard and then the drapes were closed tightly over them. The only light came from a sixty-watt light bulb hanging from the ceiling in the center of the room.

Robin greeted everyone and had them sit down. She then went to prepare food and drinks for all.

Larry took this time to fill Cathy in on what they intended to do while in the city.

Cathy asked, "Is there any way you can get my brother John free? He is needed to run the Christian Alliance all over the United States."

Larry answered, "We will offer to trade Lance for John, but we don't think they will abide by any previous promises. Haven't you heard about the collapse of the Alliance because of the bugging of the phone lines and the inability to travel without the Mark of the Beast? Everyone who used to befriend the Christians before they took the mark has turned against us now. They hate us and will sell you out to the government for the fun of it. The Mark has brought evil and hatred into the hearts of people who used to be kind and loving. Satan has become the Lord of all who have taken the Mark. These people sold their souls to him without even knowing it. Those who never read the Bible or graced the steps of a Bible believing church didn't have the truth in them. They were easy prey for the false prophets of the New Age movement who believe men are gods within themselves. This lie has caused a lot of good people to be deceived and they will spend eternity in Hell. Tomorrow, when they parade John outside to appeal for the people to give over Lance into their hands, we will attempt to negotiate John's release, but don't look for it to happen. Alexander is filled with deception and hatred for the Christians. Look for him to take swift actions to eliminate us all. He will surely want the news to cover this capture so he can receive the glory for it."

Cathy said, "I guess that will be the end of John and all of you. How can I live knowing my brother is gone? He has been my inspiration all my life. My big brother who has looked out for me and protected me always."

Kathy walked over to Cathy and took her into her arms and said, "Don't be afraid and don't worry about John. Remember, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord for those who believe in Him. If they kill John...and the rest of us...tomorrow, we will be with the Lord. Take comfort in that!"

"Thank you, Kathy. I will remember that and try to be at peace with it."

Robin came back into the living room and asked everyone to come to the dining room to eat. She had prepared a fine meal fit for a king.

Lance took one look at the festive table and smiled and said, "I'm a happy man."

Patricia said, "Oh....Daddy, you are always a happy man when there is something good to eat. As a matter-of-fact the food doesn't even have to be good to make you happy!"

Barbara laughed and said, "As long as I've known Lance he has never turned down a cooked meal. He even ate the terrible stuff I used to make him and tell me it was great."

Bobby piped in, "Your cooking is great, Sweetheart. It truly is the best cooking I've ever eaten."

Larry spoke up, "Why, Bobby, you and Lance told me just the other day that my cooking was the best you ever ate!"

Bobby whispered, "Quiet! You trying to get me in trouble?"

Everyone laughed and sat down to the best home-cooked meal they would eat....today! After supper everyone sat in the living room and talked about how to turn themselves in and possibly negotiating John's release. After about two hours of discussing every possible scenario they could think of, it was decided that Larry would approach Alexander while he had John outside on the steps of his office building. The news reporters would be there with their cameras rolling. Lance and the rest of them would hide around the corner until Larry called for them. Larry hoped that Alexander would make the trade for Lance and give Cathy and Robin enough time to race out of the city with John while Alexander dealt with Lance and the rest of them. It was a long shot, but everyone wanted to give it their best try. Alexander had called for the news conference at ten o'clock the next morning. Everyone spent about three hours on their knees praying for all the people they would leave behind and for courage to face tomorrow. After that, Cathy and Robin made everyone comfortable for the night and they all went to bed. Sleep came hard for Lance. He knew his new bride and daughter along with his best friends would be slaughtered in front of him. Alexander would save him for last to torture him and reap revenge on him. He asked God to take his family and friends fast to save them and him from a long drawn-out death. His rest came in the wee hours of the morning when he fell asleep from fatigue.

Chapter 21 **Into Thy Hands Lord**

Cathy and Robin woke everyone up around 7:30 a.m. with the sounds of gospel music and the smell of fresh brewed coffee. They were singing gospel songs and were in a happy mood.

Lance marveled at their good spirits and said, “What has gotten into you two? Yesterday you were so down and today you are so up. Do you know something we don’t know?”

“No, Lance. We just decided that no matter what happens we are going to praise the Lord! We won’t let anyone steal our joy or our love and trust in our Savior. Jesus died for us and we are ready to die for Him.”

Barbara and Patricia began to dance around while singing along with the tape, *How Lovely On The Mountain Are The Feet Of Them Who Bring Good News, Our God reigns!* Everyone got into the song with all their heartfelt emotions. It was like an old-fashioned revival meeting. After the song ended the praising and worshipping went on for over thirty minutes. The breakfast that Cathy and Robin had prepared sat on the table getting cold. No one seemed to care. They were feeding their souls with the food of eternal life. Their apprehensions about today were turned into joyous expectations about going to be with the Lord. This kind of joy could only be experienced by those who had absolute faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and deliverer.

Kathy gathered Lance and Patricia to her and said, “This day we shall be with our Lord. We have had the privilege to be together for this short time to love each other and be loved by each other. I have no regrets! Don’t any one of you show any sorrow for the others or me when we are separated from this body. I want to hear shouts of praise to our Lord as my breath leaves my body. Do you two understand me?”

Lance and Patricia both agreed that they would all go to be with the Lord with a smile on their faces and praises on their lips for the Lord.

Bobby and Barbara came over to the group after making a similar pack with each other. Larry joined them and together they hugged and kissed each other for the last time. They were ready now. It was nine-thirty and time to go.

Cathy and Robin took the van and drove to a street corner two blocks away from Alexander’s office and waited for the possible release of John. Larry walked the five blocks to Alexander’s office to confront him while Lance and the rest walked a different route to a sunken doorway about a half block away. They could see the area where the news people had already gathered and where Alexander would make his appearance.

Promptly at 10:00 a.m. Alexander and a group of police appeared on the steps with John Clark in tow. John appeared to have been severely tortured and had to be steadied by two policemen. Lance was surprised to see that one of the policemen there was his old buddy, Chief Ron Laven. He was decked out in all his ribbons and wore his ceremonial sword on his side that he had killed Officer Tim Mayfield with.

Alexander stepped up to the group of mikes and started his speech, “As you can see we are here with the defective John Clark as I promised. My offer still stands. I will trade this worthless waste of flesh to any person or group that will turn over Lance Carper to me.”

Larry had made his way to the front of the crowd and took this opportunity to speak up, “Excuse me....Hey, can you hear me over here?”

Alexander stopped talking and looked at Larry with eyes that appeared to be like those of a dead man.

He asked, “Who are you and what do you want?”

“Well....you see....I’m really nobody, but I know where Lance Carper is if you will trade me John Clark for him like you said you would?”

Alexander became very excited and slurred his words as he told two policemen to bring that person to him. The two officers took Larry by the arms and practically drug him to Alexander and held him in front of him.

Alexander had a snarl on his face and his countenance was that of pure evil. He asked again, "Tell me who you are before I have your tongue cut out!"

Larry said, "Easy old fellow. You might have a heart attack if you don't calm down!"

Chief Laven stepped up and slapped Larry across the face with his open hand, "You infidel! How dare you talk to Lieutenant Governor Alexander like that? I ought to kill you right here where you stand for your insult!"

Larry responded, "Go ahead, Chief, but you will never see Lance if you do! Oh....and by the way, Lance said to tell you hello and to spit on you if I get the chance." With that, Larry spit in the face of Chief Laven. Chief Laven stepped back and in a rage pulled his gun and was about to shoot Larry when Alexander stepped in and made him stop.

Laven said, "Let me kill this fool for mocking you and contaminating me with his defective poison spit."

Alexander told Laven, "settle down; all things in due season. We need to let this go and make our promised deal with this man."

Alexander asked, "Now, you say you can hand over Lance Carper for John Clark?"

Larry replied, "Only if you make the trade right now and make your police go inside your office out of sight."

Alexander became excited again and asked, "You mean Lance is nearby now!"

"Maybe....maybe not," Larry responded. "Believe me that if you try to pull anything funny you will never see Lance again! I will give you Lance and the rest of his gang if you let John Clark start walking now. Why, as a special present to Chief Laven, I will even let you have me!"

Alexander turned to Laven and asked, "Can that sorry bag of bones walk?"

Chief Laven said, "Let me get my hands on that fool who spit on me and I'll make sure he can walk!"

Alexander ordered all the policemen to go into his office and to stay out of sight. Chief Laven was ordered to stay, which he did with a sinister grin on his face.

"Okay, you have what you want, now bring out Lance and his flunkies."

"Not so fast," Larry said. "I wasn't born yesterday! You let John Clark get two blocks down the street first, then I will produce my friends. If I lied to you, you could easily catch John in the shape he is in. I, of course, am here for the taking. You have nothing to lose."

Alexander looked at Chief Laven and Laven gave a nod indicating that he was for it. Alexander told John, "Get out of here before I change my mind."

John stumbled to where Larry was and said, "Don't do it, Larry. You know they won't honor this deal."

"That's what we are counting on, John. It's the only way to preserve our fruits."

John caught on immediately about saving the Jews, the fruit of their ministry, and smiled and said, "God be praised. I'll see you all in Glory."

John stumbled on down the street for two blocks where his sister grabbed him and took him to the van and headed away from there.

Alexander said, "I kept my end of the bargain, now you keep yours."

Larry yelled out, "Let God be praised and His enemy be scattered!"

With that Lance and his group came out from the sunken doorway and slogged through the snow. They took their place beside Larry.

Alexander pulled out a radio and called his troops back out. This time there was twice as many policemen as before. They took control of the gang and handcuffed them all. Alexander

also put out the description of the van and the direction they were going. Within minutes the van was apprehended and John and his family were brought back and put with the rest of them.

Captain Laven went over to Lance and spit in his face and said, "Good to see you old buddy. I just returned what you had delivered to me. What a shame you turned out to be a traitor. You had so much potential. Now you are just garbage that has to be eradicated from the face of the world."

"Ron, I want to apologize to you for not being a better witness to you about Jesus Christ," Lance said. "If I had, maybe you wouldn't have to spend eternity in Hell."

Ron blurted out, "You fool! You are the one who is going to die, not me."

Alexander said, "Enough of this chatter. I told you, Lance, I would get you no matter what it took! You are going to die a horrible death at my hands, but first you are going to watch the rest of your friends die."

Chief Laven said, "Yes, and the first one will be this fool who spit on me." Laven drug Larry to the middle of the steps and pushed him to his knees on the snow."

Larry said, "Thank you, Chief. I always wanted to be first at something." Then Larry shouted out, "Into thy hands, Lord, I commit my soul! Praise your name!"

Chief Laven was outraged at Larry's smart mouth. He took his sword and severed Larry's head from his body. Larry fell over on his side as blood quickly colored the snow.

John Clark yelled out, "Glory to God! Victory in Jesus!"

Lance and the rest of the gang began to sing *Victory in Jesus* and shout praises to the Lord! Everyone with the Mark of the Beast that witnessed this thought that these Defectives were crazy.

Next, Alexander had all the women brought forward and made them kneel down on the snow. All the women pushed together so they could be touching each other. They keep singing as a police officer came up behind each woman. At Chief Laven's command they each had their heads chopped off and their bodies crumpled to the snow in a mass of blood.

Lance and Bobby had to look away as their loved ones were butchered and hacked to pieces by the mob of bystanders that Alexander had ordered to come up and desecrate the bodies.

Alexander turned to Lance and asked, "Do you like what you have seen so far? That was just for you!"

Chief Laven then came and pulled Bobby and John to the center of the steps. He pushed them to their knees and said, "Where is your victory in Jesus now, John Clark? He doesn't seem to hear you, does He?"

John laughed and replied, "He hears us and He is gathering us up to be with Him right now. Lance, we'll be waiting for you with the rest of the martyred."

"You stupid fools," Laven said, as he swung his sword twice decapitating John and Bobby. Then he kicked their bodies down the steps to the mob for them to mutilate.

Lance was standing alone now. He was looking up with a giant grin on his face. This seemed to irritate Alexander and Chief Laven.

Alexander said, "What's a matter with you, Dummy? Why are you standing there with a stupid grin on your face and staring up at the sky?"

Lance said, "You couldn't even comprehend it if you saw it. God has allowed me to see the angels escort my loved ones into His presence. What a beautiful sight to behold. Thank you, Jesus, for this special present to me!"

Alexander looked perplexed. He told Chief Laven to, "go ahead and butcher Lance. He doesn't amuse me anymore."

Lance looked at Laven and said, “You will see me again but you won’t like it. I will be back soon with Jesus and the whole host of Heaven. We will destroy Satan and all his thugs. I’m truly sorry you have to be one of them!”

Chief Laven gave his sword to one of the policemen and told him to kill Lance. He didn’t want to get any more blood on his uniform was his excuse. The policeman cut off Lance’s head and then hacked off his members until Lance was a gory mass of bloody flesh and bones. Laven walked away from the killing steps and began to shake inside. For the first time he was afraid that what he had done would somehow come back to haunt him. He went inside Alexander’s office and looked out the window at the mob of people mutilating all the bodies on the steps. The blood turned the snow into a bright red slush. Laven’s blood ran cold! His mind flashed back to when he and Lance used to have so much fun together. He thought of how Lance began to change and eventually align himself with the Defectives. This made Chief Laven spout out a mouth full of profanities and he cursed God for deceiving his best friend.

The bodies of the *cop-out gang* lay dead on the snow in the presence of the man who swore to Satan that he would hunt them down and kill them. Alexander was devoid of emotions. He had envisioned great pleasure in what had taken place. Instead, he wasn’t able to feel any emotions except indifference. He couldn’t feel the victory that he so wanted to experience earlier.

The real victory was taking place in Heaven. The *cop-out gang* had been reunited with all their old members that had gone on before them. Patricia was met by her biological mom and they all gave thanks to Jesus for their redemption as all the angels sang praises to God and rejoiced for the new saints in Heaven.

Chapter 22 Hell on Earth

After Lance, Larry and the others left the lodge to go to Washington D.C., Alex and Joshua kept glued to the television for the news. They were watching the news when it broadcast the events that took place on the steps of the Lieutenant Governor’s office. They were horrified enough to see the beheading of their friends, but the mutilation of their bodies by the hordes of

people who joined in the killing frenzy was more than they could comprehend. The evil in the hearts of those who had taken the Mark of the Beast was beyond belief! This evil would not go unpunished by God. He had a plan and it had already started to be poured out on the earth.

Alex and Joshua got the large bible that was on the kitchen table and opened it to the book of Revelation. They wanted to refresh themselves on what God's plan for this time in history was. Alex began to read out loud so the others in the lodge could hear. He started in chapter six and began to read to the group:

In Heaven, God held a scroll in His right hand with writing on both sides and it was sealed with seven seals.

An angel shouted out, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"

No one in heaven or earth could open the scroll except the Lamb of God who was slain and whose blood purchased men for God. Jesus Christ took the scroll from the right hand of God. Then all the elders and angels and other living creatures sang praises and worshipped God and the Lamb.

The Lamb opened the *first seal* and a rider on a *white horse* rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. He was given a crown and he held a bow.

Then the Lamb opened the *second seal* and a *fiery red horse* came out. Its rider was given a large sword and the power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other.

When the Lamb opened the *third seal* a *black horse* came out. Its rider held a pair of scales in his hand. A voice called out, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

The Lamb opened the *fourth seal* and a *pale horse* came out. Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beast of the earth.

When the Lamb opened the *fifth seal*, from under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained, called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" They were given white robes and told to wait a little longer until their brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

Alex stopped reading to explain, "I believe these souls are all the Old Testament saints that died and were killed before Jesus and the dispensation of grace. They were to wait until the tribulation saints were martyred and joined them in heaven. Now to continue on."

When the Lamb opened the *sixth seal* there was a great earthquake and the sun turned black and the moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth. The sky receded like a scroll being rolled up and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and all the mighty men and the slaves and the free men hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains and begged them to fall on them and hide them from the face of God and the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come and who can stand?

After this there were four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or the sea. An angel came up from the East, having the seal of the living God. He told the four angels, "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the 144,000 servants of our God."

Alex interrupted his reading again to explain, "These 144,000 Jews were chosen from the twelve tribes of Israel. Twelve thousand from each tribe. These were purchased from among men and offered as the first fruits to God and the Lamb. They were pure and blameless. They

would stand with Jesus on Mount Zion and follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”

Then there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They were giving praise and glory to God and the Lamb. These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Alex paused with tears in his eyes and said, “Here is where we will find our beloved friends who just gave their lives to assure our safety. They are among the vast number of tribulation saints that stand before God and the Lamb and praise Him day and night. Never again will they hunger or thirst or have pain or sorrow. The Lamb is their shepherd and He will lead them to springs of living waters and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Alex continued reading:

When the Lamb opened the *seventh seal* there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then the seven angels who stand before God were given seven trumpets.

Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense and the prayers of the saints went up before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came thunder and lightning and an earthquake.

Joshua asked Alex, “What are the seven trumpets given to the seven angels? It seems like the earth has already been through a lot of misery. Is there more to come?”

Alex replied, “You haven’t seen anything yet! The seven angels with the seven seals reveal the entire seven year period and the seven angels with the seven trumpets seem to address the second half of this period, while the seven plagues or seven bowls of God’s wrath, seem to show the events that lead to Christ’s’ return. This will make what went before look like a Sunday school picnic. Let me continue.”

The *first angel sounded his trumpet*, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up along with a third of the trees and all of the green grass. The *first bowl* was poured out on the land and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshipped his image.

The *second angel sounded his trumpet*, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, [perhaps an asteroid] was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea (salt waters) turned into blood and a third of the living creatures in the sea died and a third of the ships were destroyed. The *second bowl* was poured into the sea and it turned into blood like a dead man and *every* living thing in the sea died.

The *third angel sounded his trumpet* and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood (bitter). A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters (fresh waters) that turned bitter. (Sounds like a nuclear or biological missile.) The *third bowl* was poured onto the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. The angel in charge of the waters said, “You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have give them blood to drink as they deserve.”

The *fourth angel sounded his trumpet*, and a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars turned dark. A third of the day and a third of the night was without light. (Sounds like a covering of volcanic ash and dust from earthquakes.) The *fourth bowl* was poured

out on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. They were seared by intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify Him.

Joshua asked Alex, "How can it get any worse than this? Surely the earth and its inhabitants can't take anymore!"

Alex replied, "There is a lot more to come. God is a righteous and a just God. His judgment is just starting. Listen!"

An eagle was flying in midair and called out in a loud voice, "*Woe! Woe! Woe* to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels."

Then the *fifth angel sounded his trumpet*, and an angel fell from the sky to earth with the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it and the sun and sky were darkened by the smoke. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffer was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.. The *fifth bowl* was poured out on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done. This was the *first Woe*.

The *sixth angel blew his trumpet*, and a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the river Euphrates." The four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and a day and a month and a year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. (I believe that the two hundred million-man army from the East is China with her allies.) The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the works of their hands or of their worshipping of demons or idols. The *sixth bowl* was poured out on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. (The Euphrates River can be dried up by turning off the flow of water at the Anshat Dam in Turkey.) Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet performed miraculous signs and they persuaded the kings of the earth to gather for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

Two witnesses will come from heaven and prophesy to the Jews for 1,260 days. (I believe these two witnesses to be Moses and Elijah.) If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city. For three and a half days men of every people, tribe, nation and language will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. They will be gloated over and their death will be celebrated. After three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. They were called up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the

earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second *Woe* has passed.

By now the lodge was packed full of people who wanted to hear the word of God read to them as it related to what was going on in the world at that time. Many of the Jews had never heard much about what was written in the book of Revelation. Being devout Jews, they mostly rejected the New Testament; but as Alex read from it, they could see the prophecies being fulfilled right before their eyes.

The *seventh angel sounded his trumpet*, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever." Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within His temple was seen the Ark of the Covenant. And there came lightning and thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The *seventh bowl* was poured out into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" Then came thunder and lightning and a severe earthquake like no earthquake that has ever occurred since man has been on earth. The city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. Every island and mountain disappeared. Huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

In heaven, Michael and his angels fought against Satan and his angels and Michael won. Satan and his angels lost their place in heaven. He and his angels were hurled down to the earth. But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows his time is short. This completes the *third Woe*.

Satan pursued Israel who had given birth to Jesus, but God prepared a place for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for three and a half years, out of the serpent's reach. Satan was unable to stop the fleeing Jews so he went off to make war against the rest of her offspring -- those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Alex addressed the Jews gathered around him, "I guess you can see a little bit clearer about how God has hidden you from the devil and his servants. He has prepared this place for you until he returns in victory over Satan and the earth. The blood of our Gentile friends is all over this place, but it is the blood of Jesus that has redeemed us from death. You know, Satan, along with his servants the Antichrist and the False Prophet who forced the mark of the beast on the world, are about to be brought to their end. God is about to harvest the earth. He has given the people of this earth plenty of notice to accept Jesus and receive eternal life. Even the plagues and natural disasters were designed to show God's wrath and to bring people into repentance.

Chapter 23

Triumphant Return

The earth was in its final death throws as the wrath of God was being poured out on it, but in heaven there was rejoicing and worshipping of God. The roar of a great multitude in heaven shouted, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!

Lance and his entire *cop-out* gang were standing before the throne of God singing praises and worshipping Him and the Lamb. They were robed in white and had a heavenly body like

Jesus. A new transformed heavenly body that was free from the sin and flesh of the earth. Lance, Kathy and Patricia, Bobby and Barbara, Larry and John and all their family and friends who had been martyred for their testimony of Jesus Christ, were all gathered together in a group. They recognized each other and their love for each other was different. It was far greater than any earthly love they had experienced. They were filled with the knowledge of God and all His wonders.

Suddenly the call came, "Mount up!" All the angels and all the saints mounted white horses. They were dressed in robes of fine linen, white and clean. Lance looked and saw Jesus, not as the slain Lamb, but as a fierce warrior riding a white horse. His name is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one but He Himself knows. He is dressed in a white robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. He is followed by the armies of heaven. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has the name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The World News was in Jerusalem filming the greatest war of all. It was broadcast for the entire world to see. Everyone at the lodge was watching television and saw Jesus and His armies appear from out of the heavens and destroy the enemy.

The beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war on Jesus and His Army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse (Jesus), and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The news cameras turned toward an angel that was coming down from heaven. He had the key to the Abyss and a great chain in his hands. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be set free for a short time.

The bride of Christ were given thrones and the authority to judge; and the souls of those who were beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God were also given thrones to rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

Alex, Josh and all the Jews they had kept safe with God's help were dancing and singing praises to God and their Savior and deliverer, Jesus. They could come out of hiding now and return to Israel without fear. Jesus and His church and his martyred were ruling the world now.

Some time passed before Joshua and Alex were able to travel to Jerusalem. They wanted to go for two special reasons: to see Jesus face to face and to praise and worship Him, but also to see Lance and their other friends.

When they arrived in Jerusalem they were overcome with the greatest peace they had ever experienced which was the presence of Jesus. They fell before the feet of Jesus and loved and worshipped Him for hours. Jesus told them to rise and go to the west wall of the temple. They did as they were told and as they approached the west wall they noticed that the heavenly ruler that sat on a throne was Lance. Lance looked up at them with a new smile. A look they had never seen before. It penetrated to their very soul and filled their hearts with joy. Lance beckoned them to come to him. He embraced them both and they fell to their knees in awe of his

presence. Lance took their hands and raised them to their feet.

Alex said, “Lance, I can’t believe how you have changed. You are so much like Jesus with your countenance.”

Lance replied, “My beloved friends! All of us who were martyred and those who make up the bride of Christ have His spirit and His presence within us always and forevermore. We were given transformed bodies like Him and we share in His being. I have anticipated your next question. Here are those who love you and have gone on before you.”

Out of thin air appeared Kathy, Patricia, Bobby, Barbara, Larry and John. They were great in their countenance like Lance and their presence overwhelmed Alex and Joshua so much that they couldn’t stand on their feet and fell to the ground like rag dolls. They felt an unspeakable love and warmth wash over them in waves.

All the heavenly friends brought Alex and Joshua to their feet and embraced them each in turn, expressing their love for them.

Joshua asked to see Tim Mayfield. As soon as the words were out of his mouth, Tim appeared and embraced his former fellow officer. Tim expressed his thanks to Joshua for his help in finding the Lord as his personal Savior and for being such a good friend while he was on earth.

They all stayed there for a while answering all the questions that Alex and Joshua wanted to ask. Alex and Joshua then departed to return to the United States and the lodge where they would enjoy a thousand years with Christ as the ruler of the world. From time to time they would go back to Israel to visit their old friends and to worship Jesus. Life was good! Jesus was the light of the world and His peace ruled over the whole world!

Amen....and....Amen!

Chapter 24 Invitation to Anyone

*Revelation 3:20-21....Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If **anyone** hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me.*

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Let me proclaim that I am an **anyone**! Over twenty-five years ago I made the decision to give my life to Christ. Since then I have made almost every blunder you can as a Christian. I have gone through the highs and the lows, even to the rock bottom. Whenever I tried to do things my way, in my own power, I usually fell on my face. I learned that when I consulted God and

listened for His answer, I was able to accomplish the task before me. Every day I learn to have more trust and absolute faith in Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior. It is my prayer that you will come to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter what you are doing or how bad or good you may be. Jesus stands at your heart's door, now. I know you can hear him knocking! Won't you be an *anyone* and open the door to eternal life with Jesus? Please read the following scriptures and give Jesus a chance to be your best friend and confidant, as well as your Lord and Savior!

From The New International Version

- Romans 3:23** *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
- Romans 6:23** *“For the wages of sin are death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
- Ephesians 2:8-9** *“For by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast.”*
- Luke 18:13** *“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”*
- St. John 3:16-17** *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”*
- 1 John 1:9** *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*
- 1 Corinthians 10:13** *“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*
- Romans 8:38-39** *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present or the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
- Romans 10:9-10** *“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”*
- 2 Corinthians 6:2** *“For He says, ‘In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”*
- Acts 2:37-38** *“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”*
- Ephesians 4:24** *“And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

St. John 11:25-26 *“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies: and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’*

Well, there you have it in short form. Everything you need to know to make a decision to either accept Jesus Christ or turn away. The decision is yours, alone!

If you want to accept Jesus Christ and receive eternal life with Him; please pray this simple prayer:

Father God, I confess that I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and I want to receive Him into my heart and I will live the rest of my life, with Jesus as the center. Come into my life, Lord Jesus, and forgive me of my sins and cleanse me of all unrighteousness and be the Lord of my life. Amen!

If you have just prayed this prayer, then your name is recorded in the Lamb’s book of life and I look forward to joining you in heaven with our Lord. He is coming to gather us to Himself very soon. Please...please, be ready!

To God be the glory for ever and ever, Amen!

If you would care to reach me with any comments or questions, **e-mail: *Revthomp@cox.net***. I look forward to hearing from you.