



*Eternity... The Wager*  
*The Greatest Story Never Told*

Storyline: first draft  
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# *Eternity...* **The Wager**

*The Greatest Story Never Told*

*Dedicated to fifty billion pairs of children's eyes  
glistening with the glories of Heaven,  
souls never soiled  
by the Earth.*

# **Eternity... The Wager** ©

The Truth. The Whole Truth. So Help Us God...

## *Overview*

### **Why this book, movie and/or series?**

Everyone has a vested interest in the afterlife. Regardless of levels of external spirituality there exists a curiosity and felt need to consider eternity via the possibility of life beyond death. Though billions believe, these interests are often supplanted by daily concerns and thoughts of the more immediate future. This scenario creates "an itch not often scratched."

### **Concept**

Through careful writing *Eternity...* will draw readers/viewers by dramatizing a few powerful core beliefs shared globally by billions. Using traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs, some of which are held in common by most of mankind (such as the importance of loving one's neighbor) the nature of our relationships to one another, as well as God and the devil, angels and demons will be explored.

In a wholesome yet cutting edge manner (think "Highway to Heaven" and "Ghost" meet "Constantine") the subjects of Heaven and Hell will be tastefully addressed. *Eternity...* is a male, edgy version of "Touched By An Angel" on steroids. Series will be biblically literate with high impact themes presented in an honest and friendly manner.

Currently there are no accurate novels, movies or TV shows dealing with this topic of great interest to all humanity.

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# Prologue

## Summary

The truth is rarely pure and never simple.  
*Oscar Wilde*

*War broke out in Heaven. Michael and his Angels fought the Dragon.  
The Dragon and his Angels fought back, but were no match for Michael.  
They were cleared out of Heaven, not a sign of them left.*

*The great Dragon—ancient Serpent, the one called Devil and Satan,  
the one who led the whole Earth astray—thrown out,  
and all his Angels thrown out with him,  
thrown down to earth.*

*Then I heard a strong voice out of Heaven saying, “Salvation and power  
are established! Kingdom of our God, authority of his Messiah!  
The Accuser of our brothers and sisters thrown out,  
who accused them day and night before God.”*

*They defeated him through the blood of the Lamb and the bold word of their witness.  
They weren't in love with themselves; they were willing to die for Christ.  
So rejoice, O Heavens, and all who live there,  
But Doom to Earth and Sea,  
For the Devils come down on you with both feet;  
he's had a great fall; He's wild and raging with anger;  
he hasn't much time and he knows it.”*

*Revelation 12:7-12*

# *A Brief History Of Eternity*

## *Chapter 1*

### *The Wager*

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.  
*Shakespeare's Hamlet*

Have you ever wondered what was before time and space? What or who came before matter and the dimensions that comprise our Universe?

Eternity.

Vast, eternity stretches backwards for ages without number. Once only a single Heaven existed, filled with God and angels. Angels so glorious that *even then* the least among them possessed a magnitude of intellect and power still incomprehensible to the human race.

In the perfection of eternity, prior to the singularity that created our Universe, Heaven was shaken by an unprecedented event! A rebellion, led by none other than Lucifer, the most glorious of the three great Archangels.

A rebellion joined by *billions of Lucifer's brothers...*

God, who's benevolence had shielded creation from the full majesty of Omnipotence, quelled the insurrection before it began.

*Omnipresent*, He addressed Himself to all participants.

*Omniscient*, with all futures open before Him, He offered the rebels one of two choices:

The first was immediate and summary judgment for high treason by everlasting punishment in a Lake of Fire, an environment great and terrible enough to forever imprison such a myriad of glorious beings.

The second was a Trial, unlike any proceeding throughout eternity, over which God would preside as Judge. Heaven's Supreme Court would hear the cause behind the revolt. Witnesses would present evidence, testifying as to why Lucifer should be allowed the autonomy of rulership.

*Omnipotent*, God commanded the rebellion make their choice. With one voice they chose the Trial appointing Lucifer to prosecute their case as Accuser or *Devil*. The Archangel of Worship, who in eternity had walked on the Stones of Fire, would now champion their cause against Heaven and the Almighty.

An Agreement was drafted to bridge the gap between the Creator and His fallen creation. Trillions of points and counterpoints were adopted to enforce guidelines for all parties during the proceeding and over the vast ages it would span.

At the core of the Agreement lay a *Wager*. It specified that a lessor Heaven and Earth would be created for the purposes of providing a proving ground as well as a prize.

The *Wager's* stakes were unprecedented. Should Lucifer win, the rebellion's sentence would be commuted and the soon to be created physical Universe would be theirs. Should he loose, he and his fallen angels would be forever consigned to a Lake of Fire.

The terms of the *Wager* were simple. A tally of all sentient life would help determine the victor. At the end of time every soul in Heaven would speak for, and every soul in hell against, God.

So it was agreed that God would allow creation to act as jurors while, as the Eternal Judge, Omnity retained the right to render the final verdict.

As befitting the nature of the *Wager*, the proceedings would be no sham. In keeping with heaven's temporality, the only certainty would be the finality of the decision.

The existence and specifics of the *Wager* were sealed, it's details known only to Lucifer and Omnity Itself. Furthermore, it was decided that either party revealing the full nature of the *Wager* would be disqualified and their victory forfeit.

Lucifer agreed to the *Wager* for obvious reasons, his failed revolt leaving him few options.

God's reasons remained a mystery.

A mystery long unsolved. Who among men would ever imagined their existence to be a result of a cosmic bet? In the course of human history few theorized the astounding truth of God's motives. Those who did theorized *three conditions* necessary for the inconceivable revolt of such wise and glorious beings.

First, even among the angels, Omnity concealed the full extent of Their power and glory. Second, their had never before been such a revolt. Third, in light of the combined might and wisdom of Lucifer and his angels, the rebellion had reason to believe they could win!

As for God, whatever other reasons the Trinity had for entering into the *Wager*, one was certain. Heaven had never seen it's Creator's wrath. This being the case, before excising the cancer of so great an angelic rebellion, Omnity must first administer anesthesia. Before enacting so awful a judgment against billions of unimaginably glorious and ancient beings, God would first dare an even more awe-full display of inconceivable mercy.



## *The Agreement*

A living document, the Agreement grew in ways never seen or imagined before, reflecting both the brilliance of its architects and seriousness of its nature.

Within its scope lay negotiated plans and strategies inconceivable to a lesser mind than Lucifer's. Foremost among them were blueprints requiring God's creation of what would be called by mankind the First Heaven where aspects of the Agreement and its Wager would be played out in space-time and matter.

Lucifer, both unfit and unwilling to continue as the Archangel of Worship, became Satan or the Adversary. Even so, as per the Agreement's guidelines, he and his fallen angels retained all their former resplendence, power and privilege including unrestricted access to Heaven and all of creation.

The Devil, assisted by the greatest of his fallen cohorts, spent eons designing their heavenly defense and negotiating devilish plans for the physical universe being created.

And God had plans of His own.

The rebellion would remain free, able to spread itself throughout the Three Heavens (our physical Universe, the abode of God and the inter-dimensional realm between them) through any and all methods including force. Direct violence would be regulated, particularly against mankind. Additionally, angelic clashes would not be tolerated in the Courtroom or anywhere within the Third Heaven.

Any deviation from the Agreement by either side would result in banishment from the Third Heaven and/or imprisonment in chains of darkness for the duration of the proceedings.

In time, as the Universe was ready, the stage was set for Heaven's drama to unfold. On Earth man was added to the Garden of Eden, falling to the Serpent's temptation. Heaven's court watched in stunned silence, astonished there was no objection from God's Advocate.

Over time and as agreed, a limited number of personal Earthly appearances were made by both Counselors. More frequent were angelic interactions with humanity as strategies, like wheels within wheels, were forwarded and frustrated by opposing sides.

During ancient times certain fallen angels found the daughters of men fair, taking them at their pleasure and so mythology was born. Human and fallen angelic offspring became persons of great renown for both their physical and mental prowess.

These titans founded cities and civilizations, greatly influencing early mankind. They and their offspring produced the wonders in the ancient world, some of the mysteries of which modern science has only recently become capable of unlocking.

As their population grew they filled the Earth with violence, polluting humanity's generations. Their sins overflowing, God washed away Olympus, Atlantis and much of the record of their existence.

The death of so many angelic-human hybrids created new beings that would come to be called demons, disembodied spirits seeking control over the actions and even the bodies of men.

Such metamorphosis and coercion by fallen angels violated the confines of the Agreement. Heaven's eventual judgement was the imprisonment of those involved. Further, since the Satanic influence could not be undone, the court

ruled that in the process of time Heaven's Advocate would have occasion to balance the scales. He chose to do so by providing mankind a unique revelation through the miraculous deliverance of a small people from the grasp of what was then the ancient world's greatest seat of military, political and religious power.

For the first time in eternity, thousands of mighty and defiant angels were imprisoned. They passed a millennia gnashing their teeth as they struggled against Divine chains in hellish darkness.

Eventually, on earth, the Advocate appeared to a stammering Moses, equipping him to deliver helpless Israel from Egypt. Waves of divine judgment broke against pharaoh and Egypt's army until the Accusers greatest earthly kingdom fell in ruinous defeat at the feet of slaves...

Some thought this a portent of things to come..

### *The Advent*

In this way Heaven's trial overflowed into human history. Kingdoms rose and fell. A hundred generations lived and died with little or no insight into the true nature of the spiritual powers influencing them for better or worse.

Civilizations and religions expanded, filling the globe with peoples who's cries for meaning and understanding reached Heaven.

Before the foundations of the world, the Agreement had provided for a Redeemer should an unprovoked attack against the innocence of humanity, like that by the Serpent in the Garden, result in mankind's fall from grace.

In the fullness of time the Advocate exercised this option in a way none but the Trinity had foreseen. First He requested and received a Court recess. Then withdrawing His presence from the proceeding, He continued doing so from all space-time which, having created, He had always inhabited. Humbling Himself and laying Omnipotence aside He was reduced to a single sperm.

As Heaven watched with baited breath, Gabriel, the Archangel of Message, received permission from a teenage virgin in Nazareth for the Spirit to implant the long promised Redeemer within her womb.

So Mary became pregnant with the Son of God.

At that time the stunned silence of Heaven's Courtroom was shattered by shouts of objection from the Prosecution. Aware the Court was in recess, the Adversary was nonetheless beside himself thundering this and that, citing previous rulings and subsections of the Agreement.

The Judge patiently endured the onslaught. Only when the immortal Prosecutor had fully exhausted himself did the Judge speak. Clothed in unapproachable light, His face flashed like lightning and His words rolled like thunder in answer to the Adversary's numerous objections. ***“Over ruled! Court adjourned.”***

Furious, the Adversary stalked the Earth hoping to destroy the incarnate Advocate while yet a child. Several attempts having failed, he withdrew himself to develop new strategies. When the Son of God and Man reached thirty, Satan occasioned himself at an opportune time, tempting Him as he had the first man but to no avail.

Out matched, the Adversary withdrew once again, beaten but not defeated.

After three years of miraculous ministry by the Redeemer, the Devil filled the soul of a disobedient disciple and had the Advocate arrested. Hauled beaten and bleeding before an unjust court, he used the Redeemer's own religious leaders to mock and condemn Him while handing the King of Heaven and Earth over to Romans for crucifixion.

The Great Dragon savored the taste of victory. Cautiously optimistic, for he knew better than any the dangers of underestimating Omniscience, he prepared his closing arguments. Suddenly an icy chill ran down his spine as he heard the Advocate faintly breath His final word, "Finished."

The following days saw a whirlwind of activity and change. Impossibly, the Redeemer was resurrected! After eating with and strengthening His disciples He ascended with honor into the Third Heaven.

To the amazement of all, as Court reconvened, the Redeemer took up His place as Advocate. Glorious, God the Son was clearly the same Person yet remarkably changed, for it was the first time in all Eternity a Man stood within Heaven's Supreme Court.

Clearly this Counselor was no ordinary man...

Over the next two millennia a new dimension of human history would unfold. What few realized was the full extent to which it's details had first been argued in Heaven.

The ascension marked a change in the proceedings as well. The Prosecutor increased his attacks against humanity in general while targeting a growing new group called, "Christians."

Leveling accusations day and night, he obtained increasing rights to persecute and kill. When this proved problematic, he changed tactics choosing rather to tempt and entice the whole Earth. His Heavenly arguments and Earthly

campaigns proved so successful that as man's population grew to fill the planet so too did Satan's influence.

According to the Agreement's provisions human will, as free as it was frail and limited, could not be directly usurped. Yet too often the nature of fallen man, redeemed or not, provided more help than hinderance to the Adversary's plans.

Litigation grew exponentially. The Agreement expanded to cover every conceivable aspect of the present and, perhaps more importantly, the future.

A future that was prophesied to conclude with a terrible time of tribulation that would come to be commonly known as, "the End of Days."

# *The Third Heaven*

## *Chapter 2*

### *The Courtroom*

We may not pay Satan reverence, for that would be indiscreet,  
but we can at least respect his talent. *Mark Twain*

“It's time your Honor,” demands the Prosecutor tactfully, drawing out each word in a tone approaching condescension. “In fact it's *high* time. We all know *Your* judgment on this matter's long over due.”

“With all *due* respect to counsel. This Court is well aware of the times and season specified in the Agreement,” the Defense corrects, splitting His gaze between his Adversary and the Judge.

“Only *too* aware,” the Prosecutor retorts syllable by syllable. “It's been millennia since Patmos” he sneers. “Two thousand years since my esteemed *Colleague* unveiled His plan for the ages in His Book of Revelation! Yet we're growing old in eternity waiting to get on with it. It's time to up the ante *your Honor*. Time to raise the stakes. Time to call or fold.”

Uneasy silence settles on those present like static electricity before a storm. A flash of emerald from the Throne fills the room as the voice of Heaven's Judge rebounds like thunder. ***“The Prosecution's point is valid Counselor. Do you have anything further?”***

Reflecting a moment Heaven's Advocate responds. “If it please the Court let's review. For centuries the Prosecutor

has pressed for the End of Days all the while oppressing the Earth, ripening it for judgment.'

"Objection," the Adversary responds feigning insult. "The record shows I've been *right here* in Court with you Counselor..." his voice trailing off in a smirk.

"Here accusing mankind day and night while you cast a net across the ages snaring young and old, rich and poor, strong and weak in a fabric of half truths and lies."

"Net? I don't *see* a net," the Adversary slowly counters slyly eyeing his co-counsel. His supporters in the gallery laugh, grinning in agreement.

"Exactly," parries the defense. "Neither do the hapless billions you've entrapped. From the beginning you've manipulated nations and societies, stealing the innocence of generation after generation. Through a thousand faces you promise peace and prosperity, freedom and happiness only to lure humanity into chaos and misery. You're a pusher, a petty street thug addicting mankind for your own ends and amusement."

"*Careful* Counselor," warns the Adversary in a threatening tone. "This Court is fully aware *who* I am."

"Unfortunately, the Earth is not."

"Your Honor, I appreciate Counsel's high opinion of my abilities but I'm afraid He gives me too much credit. Let's not forget Earth's *Your* planet. Mankind's *Your* creation. Made in *Your* image as I recall. You can hardly blame *me* for their mistakes."

"Mistakes you bait them into only to condemn and accuse them of" argues the Advocate. "And now you want to multiply their sorrows exponentially by bringing on them the greatest tribulation their world will ever know?"

"Your Honor," injects the Adversary. "The Agreement clearly states the End of Days is *Your* judgment if and when



man's evil fills the Earth. And who can deny it has? Just listen, they're chokin' on it. I submit it's time You turn them over to *me*. Let *me* show creation what my Man can do.

"This Court is well aware of what *his Man* will do."

"Well, omniscience's nice, but *that's not* what this is about...is it?" objects the prosecution. "And this ain't our first time around the block. The Defense knows foreknowledge is not permissible as evidence in *this* Court. We're talking about real life in real time when anything can and does happen..." the Adversary appeals, pausing for effect. "I say enough cat and mouse, enough tit for tat. *Your Honor*, it's time to get on with it."

"If by 'it' the Prosecution means removing the final restraint on murder and violence, famine and plague... He'll plunge humanity into total darkness."

"What I *mean* Counselor is it's time to take the cuffs off," the Adversary explains, holding out his wrists plaintively. "Heaven's watching Earth go to Hell. It's time for me to work my magic."

"Which is?"

"What man needs is some *tough love!*" Satan responds. "A swift kick in the ass to get their attention! A little *quid pro quo*. They're getting away with murder, literally, by the billions and You worried about taking the gloves off? What humanity's missing is immediate and commensurate consequences for their actions."

"Not exactly a convincing argument considering the source."

"If Counsel's referring to the rebellion, don't blame me," whines the Adversary. "We all have our role to play. I just do my part. And You, *Counselor*, had Your turn at bat. Like they say on Earth, 'three strikes and your out.' Quit hog'en the plate. Move over and give me a little elbow

room. It's my time" Satan challenges, mimicking a batter. "Come on. Show me your fast ball."

"This is more than a game," reprimands the Defense.

"Exactly!" agrees the prosecution, mimicking a batter at bat. "This is the *game* to end all games! And we're already in overtime. Batter up!" Satan challenges, swinging his imaginary bat for the fence.

### *The Evidence*

***"The Court will hear your argument"*** the Voice from the Throne booms.

"Thank You your Honor," replies the Adversary feigning respect while casting a devilish grin towards the Advocate.

Satan takes an extended moment to compose himself. "For the record let me reintroduce a growing list of humanity's sins, Oh say over the last two millennia." At the lift of a finger suddenly three sets of huge holograms explode into view. In mid air, just left of the Throne, appears a rapid succession of clear images revealing sins of commission. A horrifying myriad of people from all walks of life being hurt or killed. Some harming themselves, most harming others, from the pre-born to the elderly. Cries of pain and terror, anger and cursing clearly audible.

Above the middle of the Courtroom a series of vivid three dimensional graphics appear, morphing into ever expanding and collapsing lists and charts detailing the vast quantity and quality of humanity's sins by type and trend.

Filling the air at the right of the proceedings is a collage of what seems to be mostly harmless images of

ordinary life. Individuals and families working and playing, living and dying while showing little or no genuine concern over the pain and suffering of others.

In time these scenes turn condemning, highlighting various acts and entertainments including images of lust, greed, gore and blasphemy. The overall effect is carefully designed to sharply expose innumerable acts of apathy and worse, from neglect to abuse of themselves and others.

At times the three holograms morph into a single massive image dramatizing one point or another. The Prosecutor's flickering evidence quickens in pace to what would be a blur for lesser beings. The sights and sounds pierce the glorified heavenly minds and hearts in the Courtroom and beyond in way incomprehensible to mere men. The sorrowful and vile details of the testimony continues long enough to try the stamina of even immortals.

Only a few in the audience dare come and go from the gallery. Given the solemnness of the moment the Advocate silently watches the "testimony" without objection. By its end grief, punctuated with sympathy and outrage, emanates from those present who love mercy and justice. The Accuser and his entourage are clearly pleased, relishing their opportunity to drag Heaven's spotless spectators through the muck and mire of humanity's miserable condition.

"Your Honor," the Devil bellows, confident he's proved his point. "I request this evidence be accepted as submitted."

With no objection from the Defense the Judge's simple and decisive verdict reverberates from the Throne, "**So ruled.**"

Pressing his advantage the Accuser continues, "Further, based on the evidence I request the immediate commencement of the End of Days for the purpose of

redressing humanity's sins, dispensing justice for Earth's oppressed and rendering judgment against their oppressors."

"Objection!" complains the Advocate. "After millennia of deceiving mankind their *Tempter* demands the Court redress man's sin and begin dispensing justice and judgement? Granted the Prosecutor's an expert in regards to sin, but what does he know of justice? Furthermore, what possible right does the *Author* of Rebellion have to demand judgment?"

"Every right!" shouts the Adversary, the quickly regaining his composure. "Counsel knows perfectly well the Agreement grants *me authority* to observe and interact in the affairs of men. As to their obeying or disobeying *You*, that's up to *them*."

"Given the insidious coercion from *your Rebellion*, man's behavior is understandable if not excusable" the Redeemer snaps.

"There does seem to be a trend" retorts Satan snidely. "Regardless, I'm afraid the evidence against humanity is overwhelming."

The Defense takes a moment to let the matter settle. Aware today's momentous proceedings hold particular interest to Heaven's citizens, His argument is meant as much for the court of public opinion as for the Judge.

Having highlighted the Prosecutor's hypocrisy the Advocate is forced, for the moment, to partially concede the point. "Counsel makes a compelling argument, but he has yet to *prove* man's sins warrant unleashing the Great Tribulation and his *Man of sin*."

"Proof!" Satan demands. "What *more* do You need? I just gave you two thousand years of *proof*."

"Indulge Me," the Advocate answers, His tone more a command than a request.

Slowly the Devil calms himself. “As you wish... How much time do we have?”

“We’re in eternity.”

“Right,” Satan draws out his response as the holograms jump back to life. “If You’re looking for sins You’ve come to the right place. We’ve got sins of omission and commission. Sins willful and repeated. Not to mention a myriad of ‘em they hardly recognize. Vices extolled as virtues. Virtues suppressed by vice. And how about a google of idle to condemning words... gotta love smart phones.

Of course, there’s my personal favorites. Seven *big* oldies but goldies: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth wrath, envy and pride. And let’s not forget along with murder they’ve got mayhem. Better guns, better toys, and why just kill ‘em by the millions when they can make billions taking death prime time!

And why stop there? Man’s covered the Earth with pornography, gore, horror in ten thousand choices of HD cable and DVD, Blue Ray and 3D. All with no waiting, conveniently beamed up into heaven and down into their homes for their entertainment pleasure and downloaded onto various devices for their kids to enjoy later.

And violence? They’re serving up a smorgasbord. Through abortion alone they’ve murdered over a billion! That’s more than half a dozen times the world’s entire population when you walked among them *Counselor*. In a single generation your “Christian Nations” have conspired to cover the planet in innocent blood, turning the womb into the most dangerous place on Earth with over a thousand million murdered before their feet even touch the ground! They follow up with child and spousal abuse, gang and prison violence... all just appetizers. *War’s* the main course. More than fifty across the globe at any one time. And who cares?

Good old Joe Stalin got it right, ‘one death may be a tragedy but a million’s just a statistic.’

And they’re just hitting their stride. They’ve got tens of thousands of nuclear missiles just itching to be launched from silos and ships, planes and satellites. Those suitcase nukes look to be handy.”

“And that aint the half of it” Satan grins. “Earth’s a bio-tech *boomtown!* We’re talking biological tracking and augmentation through DNA and gene manipulation. Want your kid to play in the NBA? I no time they’ll just splice in some cheetah genes. Want to be God? *Virtual omniny’s* right trout the corner. Any moment now and the great question will be why just be a Homo-sapien when with a nip here and a chip or two there you’re a *Techno-sapien!* As if that weren’t enough, they’re ready to roll out a complete line of designer bio-weapons.”

“Why humanity’s sins could fill a Book! *Yours in fact,* your Honor!” the Prosecution gestures towards the Throne.

A Book growing exponentially. If eternity’s seen anything since Eden it’s the more You give the more they demand. The only thing growing faster than their accomplishments is their entitlement...” the Accuser pauses for effect.

As this Court is *well aware,* those lucky enough to be living in Earth’s 1st World Nations are at lease one thousand times more “*blessed*” than *all* past generations with ten times the wealth, knowledge and technology. That’s *a thousand times* the culpability! And as my esteemed colleague has warned, ‘*to whom much is given much is required*’”

“And last but not least let’s not forget the rich getting richer working the working class. Despots, communists,

capitalists, oligarchies, secret societies, the Illuminati... all paving the way for a brave new *World Order*.”

“All creations or mutations of yours...” the Advocate chides.

“*Again*, Counselor, You’re forgetting the rules,” the Adversary protests. “At *best* I’m a minstrel. I just play the tunes. They choose if and how to dance” Satan smirks as the three sets of holograms disappear from overhead.

“So it’s the prosecution’s opinion that the answer to all this sin is more sin? The Man of sin?”

“Potato-potahto” the Devil jests. “Man of sin, Man of peace. What’s needed is some direction! Leadership to unite Earth’s petty factions. Leadership to set ‘em free from stinkin-thinkin and religious mumbo jumbo. Leadership to usher in a New Age.”

“That’s quite a pitch” the Advocate mocks. “You sound like you almost believe it yourself.”

“Well You know *me* Counselor,” the Adversary counters. “The quintessential believer.”

### *The Request*

“What I know is that your a liar, a thief and a murderer” rebukes Heaven’s Advocate.

“Now, now, *Counselor*, this isn’t about me.”

“You’re right. This is about *mankind* and what *they* need.”

“Your *Honor*,” the Prosecutor objects. “Let me remind the Court we’re not here to discuss what humanity *needs* but what it *deserves*. And it’s not like they didn’t have fair warning. They were warned for millennia. You warned them

*personally* Counselor! And two millennia later, with six billion copies printed, *Your Book's* the all time best seller. But just take a look around. Take a *good look!*"

With compassion evident in His tone and demeanor, the King of Heaven and Earth takes a moment to reluctantly respond. "The Defense is willing to stipulate that the sins of mankind are unprecedented and increasing. Moreover, based on the evidence I'm ready to concede that the beginning of the End of Days may be at hand"

The Devil, long awaiting such an admission, draws a self satisfied breath. "*May be* at hand Counselor?" he presses his advantage.

"You're aware of the terms of the Agreement. Unleashing a a series of judgements of this magnitude requires first hand verification that they're more than merited."

"Your *Honor*," Satan complains, "Considering Counsel's and the Court's *omniscience* the Prosecution requests we dispense with the *preliminaries* and move to summary judgment."

"In your case or Earth's?" the Advocate's question posses a logical and credible threat.

"There's no reason to get personal. I'm merely stating the obvious. How much more evidence does Omnity require?"

"Omnity *requires* that protocol's followed. There's clear precedent for this matter."

"Sodom and Gomorrah? That was another time and place. This Court's docket wasn't a tenth as full."

"True," the Advocate agrees. "But the judgment you're requesting dwarfs that destruction exponentially."

"So what do You suggest Counselor?"



“Your Honor,” Heaven’s Advocate begins, directing His remarks to the Throne. “Certain duties require My continued presence here, including the vast array and serious nature of the issues facing this Court. This being the case, the Defense is willing to appoint two angels of its choosing to act as proxy.”

“To what end?” inquires the Devil.

“At this Court’s discretion, the angelic witnesses will visit people and places on Earth to observe and confirm the attitudes and actions of mankind.”

“They will then appear before the Court to provide first hand testimony regarding the levels of good and evil present in humanity both individually and collectively.”

After a long pause for reflection the Adversary addresses the Throne. “Your Honor, I agree to Counselor’s terms with the following three provisions. First, that the prosecution is allowed equal representation. Second, that the proxies be sent immediately with full debriefing and testimony by both sets of witnesses following the completion of each assignment. Third, that the Court make a final ruling on my request for commencement of the End of Days immediately thereafter.”

A peal of thunder from the Judge finalizes the matter, **“So ruled! Court recessed.”** <Start edit here>

*The Witnesses*  
*Chapter 3*

*The Oval Office*

God places the heaviest burden on those who can carry its weight.  
*Reggie White*

Opening one's eyes in Heaven for the first time is to be blinded by sight. Vibrantly bathed in rainbow light, Heaven teems with animus and architecture erupting in eternally astounding sight and sound.

Here exists perfect harmony, gloriously incomparable to the meager and miserable existence of mortal things within the First Heaven.

Under the Third Heaven everything's *alive!* Persons and places, all defying description, radiate every imagined and unimagined aspect of the beauty of *Eternal* life.

Here the animate live in and with what in our physical Universe would be the inanimate, with both self aware. As a point might transdimensionally become a square and a square a cube, what on Earth would be insentient enjoy awareness and the sentient, so much more...

Further, in Heaven life is *shared* in a way impossible elsewhere. Forever unfolds in an eternal now experienced without hinderance or interruption by everything and everyone individually and corporately.

Communally, the light of eternal life fills all in all. Time casts no dark shadows. Heaven's populace knows no emptiness or isolation. No misunderstanding or betrayal. No pain of separation or death.

Such perfect community serves to strengthen personal identity. Free of fear and disappointment, individuals and relationships blossom under an eternal springtime sun, not just here and there but everywhere and with everyone.

Even so Heaven is under *siege*, perfection marred since Lucifer's *Insurrection*. Unparalleled bliss mingles with disfunction as its citizenry rejoice, enjoying God and everything good, while grieving over the fall of billions of their brethren.

And over their continued presence as well. For, as per the Agreement, billions of mighty and malevolent beings remain free to roam the height and breadth of Heaven. To its citizens dismay, darkened spirits now share its transparent streets of gold and hallowed sites with their faithful, unfallen counterparts, as well as with a growing community of Earth's redeemed.

Many but not all. Currently in a state of cold war the Fallen are strategically deployed throughout three heavens. The first two created in part as a result of their revolt, they stalk the physical Universe and the dimensional space between God's Heaven and man's Earth.

Since the Rebellion, the Third Heaven has been militarized. In a state of uneasy detente, guardian angels led by Michael the Archangel of War walk patrol. Friendly and comforting in manner, their powerful presence nonetheless a constant reminder of past anarchy and an unsettled future.

With the creation of the First and Second Heaven, the insurgency moved quickly and forcibly to seize control of points with strategic interest. Most were yielded unfought by reason of the Agreement. God would rule in Heaven while Satan, the god of the Earth, would have advantage below. The Second Heaven, as the dimension between, was ruled an open battle ground. As such, while in large part

remaining a stronghold for the Revolt, key passageways and certain areas continue to be scenes of great conflict. Disputed locations remain in a state of flux within the dominion of whomever wields the power to hold it.

Captain of Heaven's hosts, the archangel Michael's very name is synonymous for military might and cunning. One of eternity's top three governing officials prior to the Uprising, he now serves as Secretary of Defense in command of the armies of God.

Resplendent in the power and justice of the Trinity, to whom his loyalty is unquestionable, his might is unsurpassed throughout creation. Beyond the Trinity only Satan, once Lucifer the Archangel of Worship and Gabriel the Archangel of Message, possess similar stature and glory.

Michael, standing at attention within the Redeemer's Oval Office, bows his head respectfully even before the Advocate's shimmering appearance. "My Lord, I trust all went as planned?" he questions in a deep respectful voice.

"As always" responds his Sovereign knowingly. "How are you?"

Michael smiles inwardly, strengthened by the intimacy he enjoys with God the Son. He muses that Omniscience should inquire about his day. "Well, thank you."

"And our first candidate?" the Advocate inquires.

"Less so." Michael replies. "I've rarely seen a warrior angel as nervous. You'd think he's preparing to battle Satan himself."

"Good," the Commander and Chief replies, pleased their first choice for one of His two witnesses understands the seriousness of the assignment. "So he shall."

### *Michael's Selection*

Located in the heart of the majestic City of the King, the Oval Office's appearance, like that of the entire White House, changes as frequently as does the mindset of its Monarch. Alive and aware, as are all of Heaven's structures, it senses and even anticipates the mood of its chief Resident. Composed of living glorious elements it transforms itself instantly, matching the state of mind of its Occupant. Today's theme was similar to the look and feel of its Earthly counterpart in the United States.

With more than a few high tech upgrades. At the moment the Office had a door and doorknob.

Both were being carefully watched by a tall, dark haired and handsome angel standing motionlessly at attention just outside. Maciel's muscular eight foot frame and sharply tailored uniform reflects his ancient and confident nature and status. His face and manner evidence little or no emotion.

Nevertheless he was pacing on the inside. Angels are not ordinarily nervous. Warrior angels even less so. But the Oval Office was no ordinary place and its Governor no ordinary Ruler.

Throughout eternity Maciel had never personally been summoned before either. He was confident today's invitation was a clear indication he was about to embark on an extraordinary mission.

Deftly opening the door, Michael invites Maciel to join them. Upon his entrance Michael proudly introduces his officer to the Supreme Commander of Heaven. Both angels are keenly aware He needs no such introduction.

"This is Maciel. As competent and trustworthy a soldier as You will find under my command."

Maciel, appreciative of the compliment, wonders what it portends. Bowing low he snaps to attention standing two feet taller than the Prince of Peace and a foot shorter than Michael, the Prince of War. Looking into the eyes of both He's clearly aware of their veiled glory, and that One's far exceeds the other's.

"My Lord, I am at Your command," Maciel pledges, breaking the short silence. Bracing himself he awaits his orders.

"Of that I have every confidence" the Ancient of Days replies with a smile. "At ease. I know you better than you can imagine."

For a moment the reminder of his Host's Omnipotence has the opposite of its intended effect. Sensitive of this, the Commander of Creation briefly embraces the taller angel who immediately feels calm and assured.

"Are you aware of why Michael and I have asked you to join us?"

"No sir," Maciel answers feeling a tingle of nervous excitement.

"Michael, would you care to explain," the King of Glory responds, deferring to his officer and friend.

After an almost imperceptible nod Michael begins. "Satan's long campaign against the Earth is coming to fruition. Poised to install his Man of sin, he desires to shatter Earth's fragile peace forever by initiating the End of Days."

Maciel's stomach tightens upon hearing the news, both grieving over the anguish awaiting weak and foolish humanity and in anticipation of the kind of response Omniscience must have in mind.

Michael continues, "The Lord has delayed the Adversary's plans by requesting eye witness verification of the current level of mankind's evil. In light of pressing

commitments here, He has asked Gabriel and I to each submit a candidate to act as His proxy.”

Michael pauses briefly to allow Maciel time to process the implications. “You’re my choice,” Michael explains, resting a hand lightly on his lieutenant’s shoulder. “You’re to witness Earth’s condition and testify before the Court what you see and hear.”

Possessed of the brilliant ancient intellect of an unfallen angel, Maciel’s mind instantly embraces a million aspects of such an assignment. His courage shakes under the weight of the mission’s innumerable complexities, risks and possible outcomes.

Maciel’s shoulder luminesces briefly under Michael’s touch as he imparts a sense of boldness and resolve into his soldier. “I have every confidence in you.”

“As do We,” the Lord agrees, speaking on behalf of the Godhead. “No pressure!” He teases to ease the tension.

### *Gabriel’s Selection*

Before Lucifer’s fall Heaven’s economy was vibrant, its commerce robust with the unencumbered exchange of ideas. It was a bull marketplace for discovery as everyone and everything grew, each benefiting from the increase of the understanding and capability of others.

In that perfect age, Michael held Cabinet level positions similar to America’s Secretary’s of Commerce and Defense. The Archangelic representation of God’s attributes of justice and authority, he advanced Heaven’s industry and administrated governance as needed.

Outside of the Trinity, Michael was outranked only by Lucifer, God's Chief of Staff. Drawing from his glory as Supreme Angel, Lucifer also served as Attorney General. He specialized in resolving questions regarding Divine and angelic nature. Created to lead Heaven into deeper and ever more meaningful worship, his intimacy with the Godhead was unparalleled. Such standing provided the Anointed Cherub with the greatest of insights into the sovereignty and holiness of the Almighty.

The final Cabinet Seat belonged to Gabriel, currently the Archangel of Message. Prior to Lucifer's fall he functioned as a kind of Heavenly Secretary of Education and Development. Synergistically, he facilitated communication and encouraged inspiration among Heaven's billions. He was and remains the personification of God's grace for and resource to creation.

Aware of the Proceeding's recent developments, Gabriel had previously communicated much of the nature and scope of the Assignment to his candidate. Bidden but unannounced the pair instantaneously appears in the Oval Office.

Each is exactly a foot shorter than their warrior counterparts. While less imposing in form and fashion, they possess even greater beauty, befitting their function.

"Welcome Gabriel!" offers the Redeemer with a warm smile. "And Ariel, thanks for coming."

Both angels return the salutation with respectful bows and smiles of their own.

"Gabriel," the King of Kings quickly embraces His favorite angel."

Gabriel returns the affection, appreciative of the quality and quantity of time his position affords before each of the three members of the Trinity.



“Ariel,” the Lord begins, shaking the angel’s hand. “I understand you’ve been briefed on the importance of this Assignment and that you’re fully on board. Is that correct?”

“It is, your Majesty,” Ariel replies.

“Well then” answers God the Son, motioning everyone to the center of the expansive room. “I’m sure you’re all anxious to see exactly what I have in mind.”

Anticipating His request, the floor of the Oval Office resolves from expensive and plush 21st century monogrammed carpet to transparent gold. This in turn, quickly gives way to the glories within the Third Heaven. In a moment its beautiful sites are left behind creating a sense of speed, as the Office traverses its depths, crossing over the border into the Second Heaven.

In the distance, clashes of angelic conflict appear as flashes of light and anti-light. Unconcerned, the Archangels remain calm enjoying such spectacular views of the Triverse. Views they have both seen many times before.

Not so for their lieutenants. Visibly awed and anxious, they steady themselves against the speed, wonder and unknown risks of the trip. With inertia dampened there’s no sense of momentum.

“Are we moving?” asks Ariel, inching closer to Gabriel.

“Yes... and no,” Gabriel replies sharing a humorous glance with their Captain. He grins finding Ariel mesmerized by the spectacle of creation flashing beneath him. Gabriel defers explanation. “It’s as complicated as it is safe.”

Passing through the Second Heaven they enter the First, with billions of elliptical and spiral galaxies stretching out before them. Intergalactic phenomena rush by in a dizzying collage of size and form. Quasars and pulsars, white dwarfs and red giants, black holes and gaseous nebula

all in dazzling arrays and spectrums of wavelength and color all the more spectacular to angelic eyes.

Entering a spiral arm of the Milky Way the Office seems to slow, reducing speed until only glistening points of light fill the black void of space. Approaching one, it grows in size and intensity until it's blazing fills the room.

Passing by, the Sun's immensity and brilliance fades giving place to first a red planet and then a blue, as beautifully azure as a jewel.

"Well done," Creation's Designer compliments the Office as it settles into Earth's orbit. Ordinarily just a grateful thought would suffice but such a magnificent journey is deserving of a moments appreciation.

# *The Enemy*

## *Chapter 4*

### *Scourge of Heaven*

The infinitely little have a pride infinitely great. *Voltaire*

“World Series time *gentlemen!*” the Accuser’s triumphant toast reverberates throughout his opulent banquet hall. Ten thousand exquisitely carved crystal glasses chime in agreement. “My friends, *I* give you *victory!*” Satan shouts. “Let the celebration *begin!*”

Glory erupts from the Adversary, as standing *on* the main banquet table, he opens the festivities. His guests, the *pride* of the Rebellion, join their host in shedding all restraint. In naked joy, their revelry blazes, flaring with the intensity of a super nova.

The crystalline walls of his Cathedral of Light, designed to refract such radiance, refocus the brilliance on Lucifer. Radiating a rainbow prism as bright as a sun Satan bellows, “Our time to shine is at hand! Let Heaven fear our glory and Earth *My* authority!”

In agreement, the will of thousands of Heaven’s mighty fallen ignite a singularity of defiance pulsing beyond the walls and ceiling of the glass palace filling the sky above.

Black as a obsidian, the emptied Cathedral reflects the deadly dark nature of the Adversary as he paces the main hall. The gala ended and his guests gone, his premature

declarations of victory ring hollow. Only the Insurrection's two greatest commanders dare remain to share his foul mood. Chief among them is Ruel the Destroyer, known in Hebrew as *Abaddon*, and in Greek, *Apollyon*. His long hair black, iridescent as his tuxedo, a slightly less spectacular version of his host's attire.

Next in line is Samel, feared on Earth as the Angel of Death. Dressed equally exquisite, Satan's two solemn archangels follow their Lord at what they trust is a safe distance. Drunk with fear and fury the Accuser erupts with a hundred variables that could ruin his eternal plans.

"You *realize* what's at stake!" he growls, his frustration spewing like lava on his commanders. "*You* must hit this one out of the park," he warns, fixing a long hellish gaze on the pair.

Wisely they remain silent, subservient as always to their Master's fiery temper. The Dragon watches them closely. They each beautiful embody the power of evil. Handsome in features, their glorious steeled muscular ten foot frames transcend the puny gods of mythology. Without mercy or regret, individually each is a horror. Together they are famine and drought, plague and pestilence, holocaust and genocide.

"I like these two," Satan reminds himself. His angry fever braking, his demeanor altars. "*Boys*, you *are* up for the challenge?"

The pair bow in unison, as much out of a sense of terror as respect.

"Always Lord," the Ruel assures. "We have a list of our greatest captains ready to do your bidding" he responds. Eons of witnessing the misfortune of those failing their dark Lord having taught them better than to volunteer for such an assignment.

“A list? You have a list?” the Devil repeats quietly, closing on the pair. His fury enveloping them, his two greatest generals are forced prostrate like disobedient children.

“There will be no *lists!*” he warns. “No *captains*. No *scapegoats!*” he roars, his commands echoing off the walls of the empty hall. “The two of you will see to it *personally* that My every desire is perfectly carried out in this matter!”

Lifting them to their feet like rag dolls his glowing vice grip imparts their instructions.

“Gentlemen, to your assignments,” the Adversary commands. “The chief Princes await your arrival in Los Angeles” he explains, straightening Ruel’s tux. “They’re no doubt anxious to receive my orders.”

“Remind them *I’ve* planned for this from *before* time! For ages immemorial *I’ve* labored to ensure all would be ready. You will herald the rising of *My Star*” Satan bellows. “All *must* be ready. All *will* be ready!”

# *The Earth*

## *Chapter 5*

### *The Assignment*

*Whatever we do or fail to do will influence the course of history.*  
*Arthur Henderson*

The site of Earth is as beautiful as it is unique throughout Three Heavens. Captivated by its breathtaking beauty the Advocate and His friends take a moment to appreciate its incomprehensible value in the plans and counsels of God. Awed, they're touched by its silent grandeur as it pirouettes before them in the vastness of space.

After a quiet moment, the wondrous view grows in magnification. Entering the atmosphere, Earth's miraculous diversity becomes apparent. Plunging towards the planet's surface the Office seems to level off, changing to a frontal view.

"Showing off?" the Lord jests, breaking the silence as the company streaks through the sky. Outracing the dawn they speed above the flora and fauna of Africa before skimming the Atlantic Ocean towards the east coast of America. Within moments breathtaking vistas of Miami's beaches and buildings appear, rapidly followed by the beauty of the Gulf Coast States. Moving further inland they watch as beneath their feet a moonlit Grand Canyon bursts into panoramic view.

"This is the planet we have come to save from *the beginning* of the End of Days," the Redeemer reminds. "Millennium of misused freedom has brought humanity to the Time of Trouble foretold by their prophets. Yet few

know or believe what was written so long ago. Fewer still are prepared to escape such tribulation and sorrow. What little faith remains will be uprooted like seedlings battered by a hurricane if their roots do not grow deep, and *soon*.”

“The Court’s granted us a short period to assess a situation we already know to be dire,” the Redeemer continues. “What I haven’t told you is that we must add a further task to this already important assignment. If any are to survive we must find a way to wake humanity from their slumber. We must open their eyes, placing before them the truth of their situation. We must make them understand the real nature of their existence that they may embrace and be embraced by eternity rather than condemned throughout it.”

The Lord’s tenderness and concern pierces the hearts of His servants, particularly the lesser angels. Michael and Gabriel, as Archangels, have long carried the weight of cosmic responsibility but such an important assignment had never been entrusted to Maciel or Arial, or any angel of similar rank.

Silently wondering how they might accomplish such seemingly impossible tasks the pair await their instructions. They didn’t wait long.

“Ready?” inquires the Lord of Hosts.

“Yes sir,” answer His proxies in unison.

“Good!” As the Office comes to rest, millions of twinkling lights reveal an urban metropolis with suburbs blanketing a thousand square miles. Skyscrapers glisten in the moonlight, gathered like a group of islands jutting up in a sea of humanity asleep in the night.

“Here we are. A fitting destination for your first assignment. Gentleman, welcome to the City of Angels.”

Stretching out both hands He touches Maciel and Ariel, their foreheads shining under his fingertips. “God’s speed.” Instantly the two angels disappear leaving Michael and Gabriel alone with the King.

“Orders my Lord?” Michael inquires, anxious to play his part in the unfolding drama.

“Remain here for the time being. Until our friends become accustom to their new environment and confident in their task.”

“The Spirit?” Gabriel inquires. “Are they prepared to fully rely on His leadership as You once did?”

“As ready as My touch can make them. Earth’s *His* domain and all are *His* creations.” Turning from His servants the Advocate takes His seat behind the Oval Office’s magnificent desk. The Archangels exchange a glance, rarely having seen the Lord of Glory seated.

“Good bye for now. Due in Court,” the Advocate sounds almost weary, were that possible.

With a final nod, the Archangels disappear. So does the vision of Earth across the floor of the Oval Office, again appearing as designer carpet embroidered with the Seal of the Heaven’s Commander and Chief. The next moment the Advocate has vanished as well, appearing instantaneously behind the Counselor’s table just in time to hear the Voice from the Throne rumble, “*Court will come to order.*”

### *Translation*

Translation varies of in a number of ways. Often instantaneous, it may be accompanied with little or no sensation. At other times it may be turbulent or even



hazardous. Much depends on who is traveling, where, when and why.

Travel to or through the First or Second Heaven can have unexpected delays and consequences. For Ariel and Maciel, this was one of those times. Their first indication that something was wrong was the length of the trip. Hovering only a few miles above Los Angeles, they expected to materialize immediately, particularly in light of *Whom* had sent them.

Yet they seem frozen in mid jump. Each wondered if they had crossed the Triverse after all. Perhaps Heaven's Oval Office merely displayed the vast journey and they were now in route.

Paused in transpace they would have spoken with each other if they could've. Conversation's impossible during translation, at least for beings of their stature. Normally this presents little problem since thought-travel is nearly instantaneous.

Waiting only increases their anxiety. Their powerful angelic bodies experience no discomfort, yet clearly something or someone is delaying their arrival. Calming themselves, they review their mission, allowing the details the Lord imparted to replace a growing sense of concern.

The angelic mind is marvelous. Even more so that of the unfallen. While capabilities vary, the least among them were created with intelligence exponentially greater than the most brilliant of mankind. Conceived only in the mind of God, angels are created as adults, fully functional on a level many orders of magnitude greater than the comprehension of mortal man.

Communication within the community of such brilliant beings transpires at the speed of thought. Angelic thought.

Just as light is faster than sound, so are the minds of angels compared with humanity's slow, plodding thoughts.

Unlike mankind, where linear learning is stored in brain tissue, angels are unencumbered by the limited and decaying physics of the First Heaven. Their minds are free to receive, process and share information geometrically throughout eons without end.

In this way angelic communication dwarfs human conversation. Terabytes are shared in nano seconds. Fully developed ideas, conceptualized with images and emotion, pass between angels like currents of electricity.

Memories, filled with every nuance of an experience, may be shared at will with many or few with little regard to passage of time or distance.

The Ancient of Days had imparted all the information necessary to familiarize them with the specifics of their assignment by touch. On command an astonishing amount of data unfolds before them.

They experienced, from the Advocate's viewpoint, the Trial's recent developments that had necessitated their mission. They understood this direction of the proceeding had been anticipated by Heaven's Counselor. They felt His compassion for unsuspecting humanity, who's temporal and eternal fate hung precariously in the balance. For the first time they grasped the level of resistance they could expect to face from their fallen brethren, the demonic and even humanity.

As their minds fill with the nuances of their new identities and mission they begin to appreciate why they had been sent to the City of Angels at this moment in time.

## *The Arrival*

Captive for so long Maciel and Ariel experience a growing awareness of their circumstance. Beyond sight, sound or sensation, their spiritual sense sharpen. The rising awareness of battle around them heightens their alertness.

As it intensifies they wonder if their mission will somehow end before it begins.

“*Patience,*” encourage a still small Voice. Ariel and Maciel wondering if they’re imagining things, amazed to hear someone speaking in transpace,.

Quieting their minds, again they sense a growing threat.

Maciel’s well muscled body flexes with impatience to face their unseen enemy. A warrior angel, he channels fear into alertness. If only he could move.

“*Patience,*” reassures the faintest of Whisper, this time with greater urgency. The pair trust the command, the Voice somehow familiar.

Helpless, they remain confident that the One who sent them, the One who knows the end from the beginning. As always, His will would be done, though perhaps not how they had hoped.

“Let them go!” bellows a commanding voice. A *real* voice. Michael’s! They were free before they could form his name.

“*Already* need rescuing?” the Archangel chuckles, plucking them from the ground were they fell.

“From what?” Maciel asked less than amused. Quickly recovering he brushes the dirt off the Earthly civilian clothes having replaced his former uniform.

“The Prince of Los Angeles. Apparently he didn’t get the memo you were to arrive unmolested.”

“Who?” inquires Ariel. Thoroughly briefed on Earth’s threats regarding the mission, he felt it best to get Michael’s version.

“A nasty fellow,” Michael responds panning the sky above the Greater L.A. Basin. “Wise as he is powerful, he’s one of Earth’s reigning Ten Principalities. Controlling the most influential media on the planet, he spreads corruption and vice around the globe in a way that leaves humanity paying and begging for more.

“Should we be expecting further?”

“Continually. Though for the time being the way is clear to proceed.”

Ariel considers asking about the Voice when a more pressing concern jumps to mind. Adjusting his dress he looks at Maciel suspiciously and asks, “Why am *I* the *girl*?”

“Because you have the legs for it,” Maciel chides, glad their roles weren’t reversed.

Michael grins, eyeing the changes. Maciel appears as a dark haired, olive complected man in his mid forties. Handsome and slightly above average in physique, he’s dressed in tan slacks, with a matching shirt and pull over sweater.

Ariel, on the other hand, is indeed an eighteen year old girl. Petite and pretty, the angel’s clothed in a bright conservative knee length dress with matching handbag and high heel shoes.

“This has got to go,” Ariel announces while steadying himself. Instantly the pumps are replaced with sneakers and the dress with jeans, a t-shirt and jacket. “*T h e r e , t h a t ’ s* better,” she says, approving her selection. Ariel frowns as both “men” laugh quietly.

“*Really?*” she scolds, mimicking an impatient California teen awaiting an answer.

“It was Gabriel’s idea,” Michael explains, passing the buck. “The assignment called for a father and daughter team and with your experience working with kids you seem the logical choice.”

In Heaven Ariel was a liaison to children newly arriving from Earth. It’s God’s pleasure that all children come to Him. Their angels always before His Throne, human children fill Heaven at a far greater rate than adults. From the products of tens of billions of natural and unnatural abortions to kids never reaching an age of accountability.

Ariel loved helping them acclimatize to the joys and realities of Heaven while reuniting them with redeemed family, friends and even long lost pets.

Adjusting his nylons, he thought he might have enjoyed the position a little less had he known.

“So what do we call him or her?” Maciel asks, still grinning.

“Actually,” Michael responds, “thanks to a movie called the Little Mermaid “Ariel” will be fine. And for the record, during your time on Earth it’s “her”.

Briefed on 21st century western society both angels appreciate the irony.

Ariel appreciates it less. “And what about him?” she pouts.

“Maciel can simply shorten his name to either Mac or Mace.”

“Any movies I should know about?” Maciel teases his sullen daughter.

“‘Mac’ is affiliated with a popular hamburger and an innovative computer. ‘Mace’ is a defensive spray people use for protection.”

“Mace it is.” Getting into character he gives Ariel a fatherly hug. “Don’t worry precious, Daddy will protect you.”

“Too late,” Ariel responds humiliated. “You owe me!”

“Complete this mission and we’ll owe you both,” Michael promises. “I won’t be far.”

Instantly the pair are alone in the dark, overlooking a silently twinkling L.A..

# *City of Angels*

## *Chapter 6*

### *The Millennial Institute*

Mediocre minds usually dismiss anything which reaches beyond their own understanding. *Francois de la Rochefoucauld*

With the ease of thought a late model silver minivan appears in the moonlight as does a key in Mace's hand. Though teleportation would be quicker, the angels recognize a car provides them the opportunity to exercise Earthly conversation skills and practice driving. Given the early hour there was plenty of time to arrive at their first destination.

"A minivan? Not very cool," Ariel complains exploring her character. "Was hoping for a corvette."

Mace's frowns supports his choice of a nondescript vehicle.

"Can I drive?"

"Sure," Mace replies, tossing her the key. "Like you said, 'I owe you.'"

Driving like she'd done so for years, Ariel guides the van onto the road that would take them down from Rolling Hills towards the glimmering skyscrapers of Los Angeles. Glancing over her shoulder she's sorry to leave the expansive and beautiful vista behind but glad to be on their way.

Already familiar with the details of their mission there was little to discuss except their feelings about the assignment.

Ariel breaks the ice. “So *Mace*. What were you doing before Michael *volunteered* you?”

“I’m a bailiff for the Supreme Court,” Mace answers with a hint of pride. “Its given me exposure to judicial proceedings as well as *the pleasure* of meeting more than a few of the Adversary’s more *colorful* colleagues.”

“Speaking of *them*. Do you know who *he* chose as our *counterparts*,” Ariel inquires, aware Satan had insisted on “equal representation.”

“Not yet but I’m sure to have seen them. Given the stakes they’ll be a couple of his greatest.”

“Don’t like the sound of that.

“What about you?”

“Like Michael said I work with kids when they first arrive. I learn more from them than they do from me. It’s amazing seeing through their eyes. Heaven seems brighter when lit up by the excitement of a child. It’s almost like it was created specially for them.”

“Perhaps it was,” Mace muses. “Omniy’s pleased to make every facet of creation, even the least, shine as if the whole existed for its benefit alone. The Trinity enjoys exalting the humble.”

“In the children’s case I can see why. Hey, did I just miss the Harbor Freeway?” she asks, annoyed at being distracted. While their angelic minds are filled with all the information they’ll need to complete their mission, actually driving in L.A. is an unique experience even for an angel.

“Yep.” Mace sighs, “teen drivers.” Smiling he warns “remember dear, never drive faster than your angel can fly.”

Unamused, Ariel takes the next right. Making a u-turn, they speed back towards I-110 North.



Sunrise over the Greater L.A. Basin can be spectacular. Heaven's proxies appreciate the dance of red and yellow hues reflecting off each other and the particulates of smog the area is known for.

It gives them something to do while gridlocked bumper to bumper. "*This is great*" Ariel sighs. The fast carpool lane anything but.

"Get used to it" Mace nods. "On Earth people spend a third of their lives waiting."

"You think anyone would notice if we *jumped*?"

Mace, thinking the same thing, doesn't dignify the question with an answer. "Its not far now," he offers, though they both suspect distance doesn't equal time snarled in traffic.

They inch pass a score of forty story plus buildings towering above Downtown Los Angeles and dozens of smaller structures rising to fill in the gaps. A pair of helicopters sound overhead as they exchange jammed freeways for crowded surface streets.

For miles Ariel slowly winds her way through a maze of glass cathedrals and large but lessor buildings. Slipping past the last crystal tower the skyline opens to the morning sun.

Nearing their destination the traffic thins, the congestion of large streets giving place to the slightly quieter commotion of smaller ones.

"Pull up there," Mace points beyond a impressive four story marbled office complex to a lowly single level structure. Its street side parking taken, they drive around back into one of four empty stalls. Three unassuming signs hang on the entrance door. The first reads, "Precision Painting" and the second, "Care Consulting" and the third "Millennial Institute."

“Jack of all trades? Still not much to look at,” complains Ariel turning off the engine.

“Bigger’s not always better.”

“Looks can be deceiving and all that?” Ariel smirks, as a small white SUV pulls into the stall next to them. Getting out, the driver nods and smiles warily before entering the building.

“That’s my cue,” Mace yawns, stretching and unbuckling his seatbelt.

“Are you hungry?” Ariel inquires, finding Mace’s yawn contagious.

“I guess I am,” Mace answers realizing he’s never been tired or hungry before. In their natural state angels never sleep and are only recreational eaters. Within the Third Heaven food is for pleasure, celebrations and camaraderie.

“I’ll invite our friend to breakfast. Why don’t you grab something on your way to class?” Mace suggests.

“Sounds good,” Ariel replies. Starting the car she wonders what fast food delicacy she’s in the mood for. “I’ll pick you up after school” she reminds Mace as he closes the car door behind him.

He watches Ariel drive away before ringing the bell.

“Can I help you?” its occupant asks in a friendly but cautious tone.

“I hope so,” Mace responds honestly. “I’ve come quite a distance to see you.”

*G.O.D.*

“Really? the middle aged man welcomes Mace into his small office, quickly sizing up his visitor. Mace’s brown eyes

match the casual clothes he arrived in. Manly and handsome, he stands six feet tall with a lean muscular build. His look and handshake help put his host at ease.

“Mace Angelo,” Maciel introduces himself. “Hope I’m not disturbing you.”

“Not at all” the other replies almost looking Mace eye to eye. “Sam Logan,” he introduces himself. At just under six foot, Sam’s thin to medium built with a little extra around the waist. Dressed in jeans, a black t-shirt and light coat he appears friendly. Rings around his deep blue eyes give the impression of being sad, weary or both. He motions, inviting Mace to have a seat inside.

“Don’t get a lot of visitors. Where you from?”

“Here from the East Coast. In town with my daughter. She’s working with S.A.F.E. a new substance abuse education program for high school students.

“And your with...”

“Global Organization Dynamics. We’re a privately funded foundation interested in promoting global dynamics by networking local, national and international organizations.”

“That’s sounds pretty. generic.”

“Our major Benefactor has quite a few interests.”

“And your interest in me?” Sam inquires, taking a sip of coffee and offering Mace a cup.

Mace shakes his head. “Actually I was hoping to buy you breakfast. I’m here to discuss the Millennial Institute.”

“Oh?” Sam’s eyes brighten. “I think I’ve got some time. Just let me check my schedule.” Glancing at his laptop he quickly reorganizes his plans for the morning in his head. “Okay” Sam announces. “Did you have someplace in mind.”

“Anywhere quiet. Mind if I ride along with you? My daughter and I are sharing a rental.”

“Of course. Denny’s alright?”

“Denny’s would be great” Mace answers enthusiastically. “I haven’t eaten there in an eternity.”

“So what can I do for you?” Sam inquires waving a waitress over while Mace studies the menu.

“You guys ready?” the waitress interrupts, smiling a little longer at Mace than Sam.

“I’ll have an Ultimate Slam with scrambled eggs, hash browns and sour dough toast and Moons over My Hammy” Mace blurts hungry to taste Earth cuisine.

“Ok. And what would you like to drink *honey*”

“I’ll have a milk, large orange juice, tea and coffee.” Mace replies, mesmerized by the menu.

“I’ll have an All American Slam,” Sam orders, adding “can I get sliced tomatoes instead of hash browns?” Handing her his menu it becomes apparent Mace is hanging on to his.

“Sure. Coming right up” the waitress spins on her heels, leaving without Mace noticing her lingering glance.

“Tell me about the Millennial Institute,” Mace asks finally looking up.

“I’m afraid there’s not much to tell. I founded the organization several years ago hoping to attract attention to some serious issues on the horizon.”

Mace nods.

“Unfortunately there’s little interest and less funding for studies regarding anything negative. It’s ironic. There’s obviously a level of anxiety about the future. Just watch the news and it’s clear we’re facing some serious problems. But

few are interested in reaching an intelligent consensus on these issues.”

“Sorry to hear that. How few?”

“A handful locally. The successful are busy enjoying their success. The struggling are busy making ends meet. Those in the middle are scrambling for their piece of the American Pie.”

The word “pie” sends Mace back to his menu.

Sam uses the opportunity to ask some questions of his own, “so how did you hear about the Institute?”

“We share common concerns. Like you, we’ve noticed an alarming trend of disorganization and even disinformation on some of the most important issues facing mankind.”

“And ‘we’ would be?”

“Persons like myself and a concerned Party who wishes to remain anonymous for the moment.”

Breakfast arrives in hurry as the waitresses section fills with customers. “Let me know if there’s anything else I can get you” she offers, giving Mace a last chance to notice her.

Mace is smitten, but by the look and smell of his first meal on Earth. After a moment of silence, Mace digs in, savoring the flavor of each first bite.

Clearly relishing each taste he continues, “G.O.D. keeps abreast of the latest developments. I’m familiar with your site. I’d like to hear more of your thoughts on what you see as possible globally devastating *tipping points*.”

# *S.A.F.E*

## *Chapter 7*

### *William Jefferson Clinton High*

Every moment of resistance to temptation is a victory.  
*Frederick William Faber*

“Great. Late for my first class” Ariel moans, wondering if the teacher will accept a note from Heaven. Finding a parking place she turns off the engine, gulping down her second breakfast sandwich in less than lady-like fashion, this one a McDonald’s Sausage Egg McMuffin with cheese. From behind the passengers seat she retrieves a cute, girly briefcase.

Exiting the mini-van she clicks the alarm wondering that a world as beautiful as this should need such precautions.

Fall semester having just begun, the southern California weather was typically sunny and warm. Ariel could’ve been wearing shorts like most the girls around her but *she* really wasn’t ready for *that*.

Brushing a lock of long brown hair out of her eyes she enters the office of the impressive William Jefferson Clinton High School. Checking with administration Ariel finds Ms. Keesha Johnson’s expecting her S.A.F.E. presentation during all her classes starting first period.

Winding her way past stone walls highlighted in faux marble, chrome and glass she quietly opens the door to Sociology 210.

Introducing herself, she apologizes to Ms. Johnson for being late, taking a seat in the back of the room.

During the preliminaries Ariel surveys her surroundings. WJC is a new, state of the art high school. A melting pot, with a large attendance of mixed socioeconomic and ethnic students.

While Keesha is black, in her classroom Ariel counts just under thirty white, black, latino and asian teens. From her briefing Ariel knows the school sits on an ethnic and economic fault line including students from families running the financial gamut. Studying her audience she finds it difficult telling the rich from the poor by their appearance. Some of the cars she recalls passing in the parking lot reveal a clearer distinction.

Ariel takes a moment to inspect the contents of her briefcase. She finds S.A.F.E. promotional materials sitting atop an aluminum finished laptop. While there's little resemblance between Heavenly and Earthly technology, Ariel's confident her expertise is more than adequate to handle the situation. Closing the briefcase quietly, she takes a moment to study the students.

The youth stir emotions in her not her own. Ariel's surprised as she's overwhelmed with the Advocate's compassion for humanity and teens in particular. Ariel feels His grief over the constant bombardment of temptation marring beings of such tender age.

She sees the used and abused through Omnipotence's eyes. An entire generation lying in the palm of the Adversary, his fingers closing in an ever tightening grip to crush the innocence, hope and faith of yet again another generation.

And not just these, but the *whole of mankind*.

Ms. Johnson motions for Ariel to begin her presentation. Setting up her equipment, Keesha introduces

Ariel from a bio Omniscience emailed to the school a week before.

“Class I’m pleased to introduce Ariel Angelo,” Ms. Johnson begins. “Just arriving from Florida, Ariel’s working in California as an intern for a new substance abuse awareness program called S.A.F.E. or Substance Abuse Frustrates Everyone.”

The class snickers at the lame acronym. Ariel wonders that Heaven’s PR department couldn’t have done better.

Clicking the remote her computer launches the presentation through a ceiling mounted projector. A twelve foot screen descends automatically as the lights dim. Clearly someone values the importance of multi-media in the learning process.

“Thanks Ms. Johnson,” Ariel begins, matching the speech and mannerisms of her audience. “Sorry about the lame name,” she jokes. “I guess all the good domain names were taken.”

“I’m here to talk to you this morning about ‘doping’. Drugs, drinking, sex. Anything you do to self medicate.”

Vivid images appear on the screen with slogans and statistics, graphics and video clips all expertly emphasizing her points. She pauses to be sure the class is with her. A few are interested. Others are undecided. About half are checked out, mentally back in bed with a pillow over their head.

“I’m also here to listen,” Ariel continues. “You don’t know me but I hope some of you will consider being honest about your experiences and the challenges you’re facing. It’s not like I’m some eight foot giant guy here to freak you out” she offers demurely. “I’m here as someone like you. Someone you can trust, if you want to. Someone who wants to help.”



## The Teacher's Lounge

“Best cheeseburgers I’ve ever had,” Ariel explains finishing off her third leathery cafeteria style hamburger and stale fries. Sitting together in a quiet corner of the teacher’s lounge, Keesha Johnson smiles politely while wondering about Ariel. There’s something special about the young lady besides how she can eat like a horse and keep her girlish figure.

Keesha’s thankful to have Ariel speak to her classes. Having taught social science and health at WJC since it opened three years ago she knows some of the problems her students face. Unmarried herself and only twenty six, she feels a camaraderie with Ariel. She resonated with her expertise and passion for teens.

“Think anyone’s listening?” Ariel asks.

“Well, you’re hitting a nerve with a few. No question life’s an uphill battle for everyone. Rich and poor, these kids have got some mountains to climb.”

“What concerns you the most?”

“Hard to say,” Keesha answers sadly. “There’s the obvious problems of sex, drugs and alcohol you touched on in your presentation. Millions of kids are exposed to temptations that even adults can’t handle. Today’s teen STD, pregnancy and abortion rates are astronomical compared with just a generation ago. Yet there’s no outrage or real solutions. Sexual predators prey on girls like it’s open season. There’s big money selling drugs and alcohol to minors. They get things rolling and keep the party going, but teens are paying the price.”

Ariel nods understandingly.

“Funny thing is, on the surface nothing *appears* wrong. Everyone’s free to do their own thing. Especially if you can make a few bucks. The media’s free to fill kids minds with whatever sells. Billions made using sex to promote everything from clothes to shows, from magazines to toothpaste. And when it comes to teens with raging hormones it’s like dousing them with gas and throwing them into the fire.”

“Pretty much the same for adults.”

“Sadly. People just want to make money and have fun. If someone gets hurt along the way, no one *really* cares, at least not enough to stop it.”

“Even if it’s millions.”

Keesha nods. “What’s really sick is then they make billions more *treating* the suffering of the millions of victims they create.”

“Such as?”

“Take sex education,” Kesha whispers not anxious to be overheard. “The same organizations making millions performing abortions on pregnant teens also get millions from the government to teach sex ed. Seems like a blatant conflict of interest. And when the government pays them to promote illegal teen sex by passing out condoms and birth control something’s seriously wrong.”

“Sounds like the fox’s getting paid to guard the hen house.”

“Getting *paid* is right! Hollywood and Madison Avenue make billions using sensuality to market to teens. Then pharmaceutical companies sell them birth control, STD and HIV treatments.”

“A giant conspiracy?”

Keesha takes a look around the teachers lounge to be sure not to be overheard. “Girl, that’s not the *half* of it. You wouldn’t believe what else is going on.”

“You never know. I might surprise you.”

# *Vortex of Woe*

## *Chapter 8*

### *Tipping Points*

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world. *C.S. Lewis*

“Of course there’s the four horsemen of global war, famine, economic failure and plague, forerunners of which may already be with us now. The threat of rising green house gasses, temperatures and sea levels influencing weather patters and air quality are all viable concerns,” Sam explains as Mace and he review a decade’s worth of data from the Millennial Institute’s website. “It’s troubling how many *rising* concerns seem to be *converging*.”

“To G.O.D. as well” Mace agrees. After a lengthy breakfast and discussion on potential crises facing mankind the two had returned to Sam’s small office to continue their meeting. “How worried are you about our Top Ten Tipping Points?”

“Seriously.” Sam sighs hoping he’s just a modern day “Chicken Little.”

“Have time to go over these?”

“I’ll make the time” Sam responds, having made a lifestyle of doing so. Besides those already mentioned, solar eruptions could cause an electromagnetic Super-Wave. Depending on its intensity and duration, it could disrupt or even destroy satellite and ground communications world wide. Worst case scenario, it may act like a giant EMP blast,

shorting out electronics and transformers. If enough power grids go down long enough our way of life could suffer or even be threatened. Everything from heating and cooling to deliveries of food and medical supplies would be in jeopardy.”

“Sounds like you can forget about cable.”

“Right,” Sam laughs. “Additionally, there may be little or no warning since a Super-Wave would be traveling at the speed of light, a hundred eighty six thousand miles per second.

Some have voice concern over gravitational stress on fault lines or between continental plates. More stress may spark volcanic activity and eruptions. There’s real concern of igniting a chain reaction along the Pacific Rim and in other unstable areas.

Population centers could be decimated with devastating environmental and economic impacts. Should there be a Super Volcano eruption the damage and loss of life would be even greater. The initial impact of lava and super heated gas could ignite fires reaching for hundreds if not thousands of miles. Depending on wind patterns, the aftermath could blanket entire states or even countries in hot ash, smoke and possibly create a nuclear winter.”

“You’ve been doing your homework.

“We can stop here if you’ve had enough?”

“Not at all,” replies Mace.

“Acts of God” have been planet killers in the past. Even natural catastrophes considered gentle on a cosmic scale could prove devastating, particularly if combined with any of the man made variety. Even without nature's help lifestyles and lives of millions if not billions literally hang in the balance.”

“Famine and plague are next on your list.”

“Unfortunately,” Sam agrees looking a little weary. “Every issue we’re discussing has the potential to disrupt food production and deliveries. Particularly to Third World Nations where so many already face malnutrition or starvation. They say crop failure in the U.S. alone could threaten food supplies in a hundred nations.

Environmentally, given levels of pesticides, over farming and genetically altered seeds anything could happen anytime. For instance, did you know that honey bees are responsible for one third of Earth’s plant pollination. And they’re just one link in a delicate global food chain.”

“You raise some valid concerns. For instance that historically plague and disease often follow famine.”

“Sad but true,” Sam agrees, thankful that America has yet to know such times. “Nutritionally poor or starvation diets combined with exposure to the elements equals lower immunity to disease and infection. That means a lot of sick people, with children and the elderly at greater risk. Add to the mix insufficient medical personnel or supplies and you’ve got a recipe for disaster.”

“Which equals desperate people.”

“Some if not many of which might turn to terrorism to get their needs met. Incidents of terrorism, as well as their humanitarian and economic costs, are rising. Any further stressors would certainly mean escalation. Guns, rockets and bombs already create a lifestyle of fear in certain areas of the world. Derailed trains and hijacked planes exploding into buildings. Terrorism’s a household word. And all this in a time of relative peace.

A real nightmare are portable nukes. Combine the availability of technology and nuclear materials with rising levels of hatred in the world and it may be only a matter of time.

Then there's bio-weapons. Scientific advances makes the use of WMD's over a widespread area ever more likely. Imagine what havoc a large scale attack of a bio-toxin, dispersed by air, water or person to person would create. Not to mention the severe military response against those responsible and the inevitable economic fallout."

"And with enough terrorism the chances of full scale war escalate?"

"Makes sense. They say we already have dozens of wars raging across the planet. And there are several key factors that could threaten whatever fragile peace we have, particularly in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. It's widely accepted that given the religious and economic situation, the Middle East is a powder keg. Conflict in Israel, Iraq or Iran could easily pose a global threat.

Then there's Africa's warring factions that have already killed tens of millions while maiming and displacing even more. All the while spreading poverty and famine in their wake.

Asia could destabilized should North Korea or China become expansionist.

And let's not forget communism accounted for one hundred million deaths in the 20th century alone. Both Russia and China have vast military and technological capabilities.

Finally we have the threat of an Islamic Jihad. A strategic campaign of terror could ignite all out war on a global scale."

Mace jumps in to let Sam catch his breath. "With any or all the above accentuating the already serious global financial crises to the point of collapse?"

"International markets and banks are already failing to the tune of trillions. Unemployment is soaring, undercutting

the tax base. National debts are skyrocketing as governments mortgage their children and grandchildren's future. And again, all this in a time of seeming prosperity."

"You're not buying this is just a global coincidence?"

"Well it's hard to believe that we can split the atom without grasping simple economics."

"Trillions here and there add up."

"Doing the math it adds up to global abuse or worse. Either way, if these trends continue the collapse of national and international institutions and economies seems plausible. Of course, the occurrence of any or all the disasters we've discussed could destabilize currency and free trade even further.

Additionally, as global wealth is increasingly transferred to the top one or two percent at the expense of the middle and lower class, civil unrest and worse may be inevitable."

"I'm guessing you don't get accused of being an optimist very often?" Mace jokes.

"No," Sam grins. "But the truth is I *am* an optimist. Just an honest, realistic one. You have to hope in the *light* to spend the time I do staring into darkness." Sam's voice trails off in thought. "One thing I am sure of. It's pretty tough to answer the hard questions without asking them."

"Anything else I should know?"

"How much time do we have?"

Reflecting a moment Mace answers, "That's what I'm here to find out."



# *Princes and Thrones*

## *Chapter 9*

### *The Assembly*

Know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight  
a hundred battles without disaster. *Sun Tzu*

As usual Los Angeles pulses with activity as millions of residents and visitors flow through it's veins busy with their daily tasks. Like a beating heart LAX, the world's fifth largest airport, pumps a million passengers a week into the city, oxygenating the entire world with L.A.'s influence.

Today downtown Los Angeles is more crowded than usual. One of Earth's top seats of power, visiting global VIP's, dignitaries and diplomats course within it's towering offices, opulent hotels and restaurants.

Most are human. Others were *partly* human, millennia ago.

Both occupy the seventy three floors of the U.S. Bank Tower, also known as the First Interstate World Center. Crowning the tallest skyscraper west of the Mississippi is a glass conference room. Scheduled to be empty for the day, it appears to be so. But appearances can be deceiving.

Actually it's full of the planet's most powerful rulers. Representing one hundred of Earth's largest cities and regions of influence, beings of amazing shape and size fill the room to capacity. Occupying the transdimensional space superimposed upon our own, aware of their surroundings they're unencumbered by them.

Greeting one another on pretense each jockeys for power and position. Eventually each finds their place and is seated. Not in the conference room's luxurious chairs, but in something far grander, each Prince having brought a ornate gilded throne of their own.

At over one thousand feet high the circular glass room provides a panoramic view of the Greater L.A. basin. Around the circumference of the room are two concentric circles of fifty regents each with the lessor rulers seated at the feet of the greater. The magnificence of each Prince and the throne on which they sit clearly indicate standing.

Governors from across the globe, they assemble in a pentagonal circle, each group of twenty representing one of the Earth's five great regions of military, political and religious power. Every entourage is led by a ruling pair. Together comprising the Ten Princes of Earth.

Foremost today is their host, the Prince of California ruling from Los Angeles and enthroned on his right is his superior, the Prince of the Americas reigning from Washington D.C..

Positioned near these are lessor principalities and powers from throughout the Americas.

Completing the circle are equally glorious and malevolent delegations from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Assembled here are the greatest rulers of the demonic world. Ancient in origin, demons are tens of thousand of years old, created by the inter-breeding of fallen angels with the daughters of men prior to the days of Noah. It was during this time of legend the great myths were spawned.

As were numerous titans, the first generation descendants of these unholy unions. Their angelic fathers governed from a heavenly realm some called Olympus.

Under the watchful command of these gods, titans ruled much of the ancient world in fantastic physical bodies and advanced cities. The most famous called Atlantis.

Armed with wisdom and technology provided by their angelic fathers, they subjugated nations through violence and conquest. Others fell to enticement and coercion, some willingly serving the gods and honoring their legendary offspring. Renowned for their physical and mental prowess, they built great civilizations on the backs of mankind. Spreading their fallen blood line far and wide, their contamination posed a credible threat to the purity of the human race.

By reason of the Agreement Heaven ruled against the Rebels consuming them with a flood. The fallen angels were bound in chains of darkness to await the final Judgement.

Drowned, the physical bodies of their offspring and all those with tainted bloodlines perished while their half angelic spirits remained alive.

A new race of beings emerged. Disembodied beings having once ruled mankind now lived unseen among them. Eventually, by command of the Adversary, a hierarchy developed. The greatest among the legions of demons were the first generation titans. In the spiritual realm these illustrious nobles retained their rank, as well as a semblance of their physical form. Some usurped their angelic father's name and worship, becoming governors of principalities and powerful regions. Others gathered kingdoms as they were able, often fighting among themselves for position and honor.

Over tens of thousand years they had refined both themselves and their art. While far less brilliant than angels, their craft and cunning nevertheless exceeds that of men by

many orders of magnitude. Together they influence every aspect of human history, presiding over great and small, with the vast majority of humanity unaware of either their presence or plans.

### *Satan's Generals*

“Friends!” Astaroth, the Prince of California and Los Angeles bellows in greeting. “Come to order!” he commands. The Assembly obeys but from the looks on the faces of it’s ranking members not from fear of their host. Quieting down, those present exchange glances, subtly acknowledging allegiances and sizing up the competition.

After a lengthy pause for effect Astaroth continues in a more genteel tone, “My Sovereigns, thank you for coming. As you know our great *Lord* has called this Assembly with the promise that the long awaited End of Days is at hand. *He* has asked me to convey *His* appreciation for millennia of planning that has brought earthly victory near.”

Astaroth pauses once more as all nod respectfully in honor of the compliment and it’s emissary. The Prince of the City of Angeles takes his time relishing the moment.

“No doubt you’ve been appropriately briefed on our Majesty’s present plans,” he continues slowly, savoring each word. “Nevertheless, for such an assignment as this *He* has sent His two greatest commanders to further enlighten us and to insure there is no mistaking *His* intention to *reward* success and *punish* any and all failure.”

Astaroth, gazing around the room is pleased all eyes are on him. “Princes!” he stands revealing his full over

muscled eight foot frame. “I give you our Generals, Ruel and Samel!”

In perfect timing the center of the conference room detonates with the brilliance of a small nuclear reaction. Unrestrained energy tears at the fabric of space time producing a sonic boom audible throughout several floors of the skyrise. Wind whipping at the hair and clothing of the Assembly, the thrones of the Princes quake. Then as quickly as the effects appeared they’re gone. In their place stands Satan’s generals, becoming visible as the glory of their entrance diminishes.

“Princes!” Ruel thunders as, one by one, he fixes eyes of flame on each of the Ten. “Our *Lord* sends his *greetings*” pronouncing the last word more as a threat than a welcome. “The *One* has sent us to *ensure His will* is done on Earth as it *soon* will be in our new Heaven.”

From millennia of practice the faces of the enthroned nobles reveal no emotion. Inwardly, however, they tremble before the terror of the Devil’s regents. No longer in tuxedos, they’re now clothed in black armor and large flowing capes. Alive with malice of it’s own their coverings are both defensive and offensive in nature, morphing in anticipation of it’s wearers desires. At the moment their armor shimmers dangerously under a kind of anti-light reflecting images of past victims of torture and conquests.

Silent as death, Samel stands regally at Ruel’s side. All angels far exceed the majesty of even the greatest of the demonic. Existing long before the Singularity that created the physical Universe, angels have inhabited eternity for ages without number. Superior in intellect and nature, neither man or demon posses weapons capable of piercing their armor or person.

The angelic need only fear the Godhead and one another.

The demonic, on the other hand, have much to fear from the likes of these. Unlike mortal men, as eternal spirits demons cannot die. But they can be tortured and even cast prematurely into hell, where in fury they torment humanity's unredeemed. And over hundreds of centuries many have been. Even mighty Princes have fallen by the hands of mightier angels.

"Our Lords," Astaroth finds his voice, speaking on behalf of the Assembly "Thank you for coming. Having reviewed your briefings the Ten stand ready to do your will."

"*His will,*" Ruel corrects, "is that you tighten your grip on mankind." His penetrating glare searches the eyes of those present to insure their full compliance. "You will immediately and fully implement *His* plans for humanity without drawing attention to yourselves. Through you, *He* will close the fingers of *His* hand around the Earth, squeezing whatever goodness is left from these puny beings.

*He* will crush the Advocate's hopes for this planet with a clenched fist, shaking this bloody world before the face of Heaven, daring even the Trinity to stop *Him*."

Shouting their agreement the Assembly is charged with fearful excitement over the prospect of playing such a vital role in the Dragon's plans for conquest.

Samel raises a hand, calling for silence. "The Advocate has dispatched two inconsequential angels to witness Earth's condition. His proxies are *here* now" Samel growls, glaring at their host. "*You* will assure their testimony before Heaven's Court is that this world is indeed ripe for judgment.

*You* will inflame humanity's passions. *You* will move them against one another and themselves. *You* will do so in

such a way as to leave them with only God and themselves to blame.”

The devilish smiles from the crowd meet with Samel’s approval.

“Increase *your* influence!” Ruel continues. “Through *your* expertise manipulate their political and military machines. Level their economic, social and religious institutions. Energize *your* networks. Create the necessary chaos to force Heaven to initiate the End of Days.”

“And as always,” Samel adds “do so *without* revealing your existence.”

“We will discuss these matters further with each of the Ten personally,” Ruel informs. “I suggest the rest of you carry out your assignments.”

Anxious to flee the presence of the *Two*, the lesser nobles quickly depart. Rulers of principalities and their thrones shimmer only seconds before disappearing.

The Ten, less fortunate, brace themselves hoping to survive personal quality time with the Destroyer and the Angel of Death.

# *Extra Curricular Activities*

## *Chapter 10*

### *Starbucks*

Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish; Earth  
has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal. *Thomas More*

Finished with her last presentation Ariel watches the students grab their backpacks. Seventh period over, most had already switched gears and were out the door and on to real life. She wondered if any had a clue.

“Ms. Angelo?” a hispanic girl from Keesha’s class interrupts Ariel’s thoughts. For a split second she wonders who Ms. Angelo is. Luckily the name’s self explanatory.

“Hi. I’m Lucia” the teen continues shyly. “I just wanted to thank you for coming.”

“*El gusto es mio*” Ariel responds sensing English is Lucia’s second language. Closing her briefcase she offers Lucia her hand.

“*Tu hablas espanol?*” Lucia asks shaking hands, surprised at Ariel’s perfect accent.

“*Un pokito*” answers Ariel humbly, perfectly fluent in all Earth’s languages.

“I *hoped* the two of you would meet,” Ms. Johnson interjects joining the conversation. “Lucia is one of my favorite students” Keesha confides hugging a smile out of her. “She’s a first generation American, the De La Cruz’s arriving from Guada La Hara while her mother was still pregnant with Lucy.”



After seven classes crammed full of teens, Ariel's impressed with the teacher's interest in her soft spoken student.

"Lucia's part of a small after school group meeting here in about an hour. If you're not busy maybe you'd like to join us. There should be several girls from my classes. They may have some questions for you and vice versa."

"Sounds great" Ariel replies. "Leaves me a little time to unwind. Got a Starbucks nearby?"

"There's one on Columbus Street" Lucia jumps in.

"Want a coffee?" Ariel offers, "My treat."

"Sure."

"Cool. Can we bring you something?" Ariel asks Keesha.

"Ummm. I'd love a Carmel Macchiato."

"Coming up. By the way, how many girls are you expecting?"

"About a dozen or so."

Ariel nods in understanding. "After you Lucy" she offers opening the classroom door. Winding through the school they find it almost empty. "Guess you're out of here after the bell rings."

"Most of us have things to do. Unless you're in sports or in trouble."

"Play any sports?"

"*Nada*. I've got a part time job. That and school keep me pretty busy."

Finding the minivan the girls climb in. Lucia provides directions. Fortunately it's only a few blocks away since traffic is beginning to back up from the afternoon commute. Arriving, Lucia opens the door to Starbucks.

"Live near by?"

“Not too far” Lucia answers, confiding “but a little closer would be nice.” Her parent’s home is several miles away on the outskirts of the school district in a poor, heavily hispanic neighborhood.

Ordering a tall Mint Mocha Chip Frappuccino, Lucia offers to pay. Ariel declines the girls money while upgrading her choice to a “venti” the ‘tall’ looking pretty small and the ‘grande’ less than impressive. She chooses a White Mocha Frappuccino for herself.

Ariel takes a seat and a moment to study Lucia. With long brown hair and eyes, she’s dressed conservatively for a Southern California teen. Speaking excellent English, her accent betrays her Mexican heritage. More than shy, she’s somewhat modest and clearly culturally hispanic.

“Do you prefer Lucia or Lucy?”

“Both are fine. It’s mostly Lucy at school and work. It’s definitely Lucia at home with my family.”

“Sounds like you live in two worlds?” Ariel notes, starting to appreciate what that’s like. Picking up their drinks when their names are called from the counter, she notes the name of the teens drink is “Lucia.”

“So tell me about yourself” she suggests, handing her the cup.

“Well.” the quiet teen draws out the word, collecting and translating her thoughts. “I have a big family” Lucia begins with a slight smile. “We’re Hispanic *and* Catholic” she adds in explanation. “There are five boys and four girls. My older brothers, Cesar and Luis were born in Mexico. They came to America with my parents who were migrant farmers. They’re not American citizens. Sometimes they live and work here. Sometimes in Mexico.” Lucy sounds like she misses her brothers when they’re away.

“My parents have applied for citizenship since the rest of their kids were born here” she continues. “I’m almost seventeen and the oldest of my other six sisters and brothers.” Lucia, having done most the talking pauses for a sip.

Ariel’s half finished with her Frappuccino and smiling about it. Noticing the time, she waves Lucy towards the counter. Together they place Ms. Johnson’s order adding a dozen more frothy drinks as icebreakers for the upcoming meeting.

On the way back Lucia talks about her family and neighborhood. With a pair of brothers in their early teens she worries about gangs. She confides there’s also some heavy drug use and a lot of drinking, especially by men and teens. Sadly, she adds that many of the girls she knows have already gotten pregnant. Many have abortions but some keep their babies, moving in with or sometimes marrying the fathers often many years older.

“It’s hard to start a life like that” Lucy mourns. “I hope I make better choices.”

“Me too” Ariel prays silently.

### *Girl Talk*

“Just in time and bearing *gifts!*” Ms. Johnson welcomes Ariel and Lucia, eyeing the drinks in their hands. With the type written on the side of each cup the girls haggle over who gets what. Thanking Ariel, everyone’s soon settled and sipping happily.

Ariel recognizes several faces from the day's earlier presentations. A pretty diverse group, she hopes the discussion will prove revealing.

Opening the meeting, Keesha introduces each student, explaining who's new and who's back from last year. The girls get together once a week for volunteer support. They talk about school, work and relationships. Whatever's going on in their lives. Young and attractive, Ms. Johnson's a perfect moderator and the girls seem thankful for her taking the extra time and offering a little advice.

"Anyone want to begin?" Keesha inquires encouragingly. After a few silent moments she decides to get the ball rolling. "Any comments on Ariel's presentation?"

The girls seem to appreciate Ariel's coming and the coffee but look as if they've heard it all before.

After an awkward minute Cassandra Carver, one of the groups two black teens, speaks up. "Well, it's good to see someone *our age* do some talking for a change."

Several heads nod in agreement.

"I liked the music videos," Sarah Williams, a white student offers. "But I've never heard of *that* band. What was their name?"

"Allure?" Lucy remembers.

"Yeah. Allure. Are they new?" Sarah asks interested.

"*Very*," Ariel assures, wondering if they even exist.

Ms. Johnson breaks in. "Any comments or questions about anything *other* than the music?"

"I've got one," responds a tall thin Laotian girl named Mya. "So basically you're saying 'just say no'?" she summarizes.

"Is that what you *heard* me say?" asks Ariel softly.

“Well, there was more to it,” Mya answers. “But in the real world, when everyone else is saying yes, saying no seems pretty lame.”

“To yourself or others?”

“Both,” Cassandra replies while Mya is thinking.

“Why does it seem lame to you, Cassi?” Keesha asks.

“Honestly?” Cassandra offers. “You party to have a fun. A little drink or some pot loosens things up. It’s fun dressing all sexy and hanging out with your girls. And when you like someone, hookin up’s *great*.”

“As long as it’s safe sex and no one gets hurt,” Sarah adds.

“When you *like* someone?” Ariel asks, digging a little deeper. Her question gets different answers from several of the girls. Some say “likes” enough while others are hoping for love. A few suggest waiting for marriage. Others wonder what’s the point when most marriages end in divorce. Regardless, the consensus is it’s stupid or practically impossible to be celibate today. After all there’s high school, college and starting a career to think about. Most agree what’s likely to be their first marriage will just have to wait.

Unfortunately, most the girls sound like they haven’t or aren’t likely to.

Ariel, looking at Sarah, directs a question her way. “You said sex before marriage is okay as long as it’s safe and no one gets hurt. Are you talking about physically or emotionally?”

“I was talking about being careful and wearing condoms,” Sarah answers.

“And what about your hearts?” Kesha asks, wondering who’ll say what.

“You hope for the best,” Sarah replies. “If you’re not *putting it out there* you’re alone. Sure it’s risky but what

choice is there? Everyone does everything. It's expected. And if you don't keep up you get left behind." She explains, her voice trailing off angrily.

"Appreciate your honesty," Ariel thanks the group. "Let me see if I understand what you're saying. Basically, if you want to be *happy*, you do whatever it takes, whether you *like it or not*?"

The girls are quiet for a moment, not really appreciating the sound of that.

"Better than being alone," Mya breaks the silence. Looking around the room Ariel's gets a sinking feeling she speaks for a whole generation.

# *Watchers*

## *Chapter 11*

### *The Meeting*

We dance round in a ring and suppose, While the secret  
sits in the middle and knows. *Robert Frost*

“Sam!” Shawna Davis, a forty-something black woman greets Mr. Logan with a hug. “Been a while” she scolds before turning her attention to Mace. “So this is your *new* friend” Shawna mocks, inviting them inside. “Darnel’s with Keith and Kim in the living room.”

Mace follows Sam down the hall, followed in turn by Shawna. “You have a beautiful home,” he compliments. “Wonderful antiques. French provincial?”

“Good eye! The rooms are from different periods. Darnel and I have bought an antique or two each year of our marriage. You don’t want to know how many pieces we have now that we’re getting to be antique’s ourselves.”

They find Darnel seated in a wing chair to the right of a large cobblestone fireplace. An attractive couple are seated to it’s left on a ancient but comfortable looking couch. As the three rise for introductions the doorbell rings.

“Must be Delores,” Shawna explains turning to welcome the new guest. The two quickly join the conversation.

“Mace,” Sam Logan begins by introducing their host for the evening. “This is Shawna and Darnel Davis. They’re our groups *activists*. For decades they’ve been local leaders in the pro-life movement, politics and getting youth involved

in both.” A middle class African-American couple in their mid forties, they give Mace a warm greeting. He notes the pair’s pleasant faces and demeanors.

“And this is Keith and Kim Cashion,” Sam continues. “They both have worked for years at McDonnell Douglas Aerospace were they met. Keith’s a design engineer. Kim’s a mom working part time as an IT consultant specializing in cutting edge technology. Kim’s the groups ‘futurist’ keeping us current on what’s new and on the horizon.

Keith’s our military analyst and conspiracy theorist. His uncle’s a retired army colonel who keeps him up to date on defense issues.” Shaking hands, Mace admires the couple in their early thirties. They’re a matched pair of well dressed white yuppies.

Sam smiles, “And this is Delores Alvarez, our trophy liberal. Delores is an author and speaker on several topics. She specializes in economics and international banking. One of her books is doing very well given the current financial meltdown and just last week she was a guest on National Public Radio.”

A middle aged Latina, Delores offers her hand to Mace. “Don’t tell anyone I socialize with ultra conservatives. It’ll ruin my reputation” Delores warns half joking. “Ironically, as a liberal I was surprised to find we share similar viewpoints on some interesting topics.” She pauses then adds warmly, “Social issues not always among them. We’re still working on each other in that area.”

Shawna, having retreated to the kitchen returns with an antique silver tray laden with an assortment of desserts. “Coffee’s on the table and we have several pastries to choose from. Help yourselves.”

Mace does, piling his plate with fancy choices. Trying one, he enthusiastically compliments his hostess.



Sitting, Darnel invites Mace to tell the group what brings him to L.A. besides dessert.

“Global Organization Dynamics is a private foundation interested in networking with individuals and groups on several levels” Mace begins. “I’m here on a fact finding mission. G.O.D. is concerned with the welfare of local and global communities. We’re looking into what, if anything, is being done to confront some of the bigger challenges facing humanity.”

“I’ve never heard of Global Organization Dynamics. Are you new?” Darnel asks.

“Who hasn’t heard of GOD?” Delores snickers failing to get a rise out of Darnel. “And I thought you were this big time believer?”

“Actually G.O.D.’s been around quite along time” Mace replies. “We tend to keep a low profile, preferring to work with and through others.”

“That’s why Mace has joined us,” Sam interjects. “Having spent the day together he’s got a good overview of our research. Tonight he was hoping to hear your specific concerns.”

“That’s great,” Darnel responds. “People don’t usually *come to us*.”

“And they don’t hang around long once we get started,” Kim laughs. “Where to begin...”

## *Conspiracies*

Sam, having founded the Millennial Institute offers a suggestion. “For the sake of time maybe we can go around the room and give Mace an brief idea of why we’re here. Would our hosts like to start?”

“Sure,” Darnel agrees. “Honey, why don’t you do the honors” he defers to Shawna.

“Well, let’s see” Shawna begins. “I first met Sam in 1998, on the twenty fifth memorial of Roe vs. Wade. Darnel and I had been pro-life activist for almost twenty years but Sam was just getting involved. He attended an all night prayer vigil we held at a protestant church in Orange County. That night he wanted to find out more about abortion.” Shaking her head she smiles knowingly at Sam, “Got more than you bargained for?”

Sam nods agreement, “Way more.”

“How so?” Mace asks looking at them both.

“The universe changed.” Sam answers thoughtfully. “Having been a pastor and in Christian ministry for almost two decades I was familiar with Biblical prophecy and could see some of the handwriting on the wall. Still, while I had a pretty good idea of *what* we might be facing, I’d missed the chief reason *why*.”

“Which is?” Mace inquires.

“Well, from a religious stand point it’s the shedding of *innocent* blood” Shawna replies. “The greatest quantity and quality of innocent blood in the history of mankind. In the U.S. abortion’s legal anytime prior to birth for any reason or none at all. With fifty million clinical abortions performed in America, every star in our flag now stands for a million dead babies with California getting twelve of the fifty.”

“And Blacks have the highest abortion rate in America!” Darnel interjects. “That’s no coincidence.”

“Add it up and you find that globally we’ve aborted well over a billion.” Shawna continues sadly. “That’s ten times the casualty count of World War 2!”

“In a sense we’re actually in World War 3, an unseen global war on the pre-born, and most don’t even know it,” Sam adds.

“Or care to,” Kim responds. “Keith and I were parents and we were neither aware or interested.”

“That’s pretty much the prevailing attitude of almost everyone, religious or not.” Shawna explains. “Take the meeting were Sam and I met for example. In a county of three million people, at the height of the information age less than thirty bothered to show up to protest the silver anniversary of Roe vs. Wade.”

“The Davis’ have a great website. You’ll want to visit [AbortionChangesEverything.org](http://AbortionChangesEverything.org)” Sam interjects. Acting as moderator he suggests Delores go next.

“Happy to,” Delores begins. “First let me say that while I don’t agree with Shawna and Darnel’s religious views on abortion, I do think it should be safe and rare. And from what I hear it’s neither.

My area of expertise is economics and international finance. In a nutshell, what we have is a small group of people scattered across the globe possessing an unbelievable vast quantity of money and power. In America, the land of opportunity, the top one percent possess more wealth than the bottom ninety percent combined. Even more amazing is how these same individuals, families and corporations are able to leverage markets and commodities. They make billions trading futures while jeopardizing everyone’s.”  
Their influence allows them to manipulate stocks and bonds,

gold and even currencies to some degree. They make money hand over fist from all of it. They receive the most lucrative tax breaks, subsidies and contracts. They transfer wealth through speculation and even when their investments fail they receive hundreds of billions from government bailouts paid for by taxpayers.”

“And by our children and grandchildren,” Keith responds having heard this speech before. “What’s the national debt in these days of print, borrow and spend?”

“Over eleven trillion and counting,” Delores answers disgusted. “No big deal. We’ll just pay it off tomorrow by sending all three hundred million Americans a bill for about forty grand.”

“You’d think it would be illegal,” Darnel adds. “There should be a law.”

“There’s the golden rule,” Delores replies. “Not Christ’s. The other one. ‘Those with the gold make the rules.’”

Playing mediator Sam jumps in, “Thanks Delores. Since Mace’s been listening to me all day would one of you like to go next?” He offers either of the Cashions.

“You’re up,” Kim replies, suggesting they leave the most outrageous topic for last.

“Okay,” Keith agrees. “As an engineer I’m interested in both the present and the future. I study what’s in production and on the drawing board. Something Kim and I have in common. At McDonnell Douglas I work with some pretty advance stuff. I could tell you *but...*”

“...*then you’d have to kill us,*” everyone chimes in finishing Keith’s sentence.

“Tough room,” Keith smirks. “*Anyway,* between the technology I see coming down the pike at work and what I

hear the military is up to I can understand why Kim believes science fiction is becoming science fact.”

“Anything you *can* tell Mace without bloodshed?” Sam urges.

“Well, most of my immediate *declassified* concerns are on our website” Keith chuckles. “Needless to say we’re all worried about the use of nukes and dirty bombs by terrorist or the military. All the more so if Delores is right and Big Business is running the show.

Sow some discord here, nudge hostilities along there and you can make trillions selling arms to everyone while designing deadlier ones to maintain superiority and continue the cycle.

I know from what my uncle tells me that the future of the military’s *is* technology. The fastest and fanciest weapons win. On the battlefield, as more and more in the real world, speed *is* life.”

“And if I remember right deception is victory,” Sam prods. “Care to share any conspiracy theories?”

“Well there’s one for everything,” Keith agrees. “We’ve all heard the rumors about September 11th, the World Trade Center and Oklahoma City. From black opps to black helicopters. From the staged breakup of the Soviet Union to the Illuminati. They sound ridiculous, yet so is what’s going on around us.

Remember we have an occultic eye watching from atop a Egyptian pyramid staring at us from our dollar bill! What’s an occult symbol with the latin phrases ‘Our Plans Have Succeeded’ and a “New World Order” doing on the back of the Great Seal of the United States?”

“Didn’t I see this plot in ‘Laura Croft Tomb Raider’? Sam provokes playing devil’s advocate.

“There and elsewhere,” Keith defends. “But wouldn’t it be ingenious to hide the truth in *plain sight*? It’s perfect if you discredit the idea of looking. It’s all about *perception*. If *seeing is believing*, then it’s hard to believe that what you don’t see, or refuse to, exists. It’s pretty tough to fight what you’ve decided isn’t there.

As a designer I’ve got more experience than most solving puzzles. Engineers tackle complex problems by reducing them into a series of interconnected components. I do it every day and I can spot it when someone or something is doing it to me.”

“Ooohhh!” Shawna kids. “Sounds serious.”

“It may be *deadly* serious,” Keith replies. “Particularly if this group’s concerns prove even partially true and we’re being manipulated on a global scale.”

“Mace,” Sam redirects the conversation. “What do *you* think so far?”

“Sounds far fetched.” Mace responds. “But then some of today’s most self evident truths have arisen from theories once dismissed as ridiculous.”

“Speaking of fantastic we’ve saved the best for last” Sam assures. “Kim, you’re batting clean up!”

“Tell me Mace,” Kim grins. “Ever hear of *techno-sapiens*?”

# Astaroth

## Chapter 12

### *Demon's Tremble*

The mind can make a heaven out of hell  
or a hell out of heaven. *John Milton*

Millennia of preparation was serving Astaroth well. First, as host he had basked in the honor the Ten were forced to bestow. Then he'd survived Ruel and Samel, the fiercest generals of the Insurrection. For hours they terrorized the Princes, *impressing* on them every aspect of the Adversary's strategy to force Heaven's Court into beginning the *End of Days*.

Having secured the full allegiance of the demonic, Ruel accompanied the Princes of Europe to oversee the European Union. Next he would turn to Asia, moving the former Soviet States and China into place. Samel would supervise the Princes of America and Africa, finally meeting Ruel in the Middle East...

Astaroth steps into the moonlight passing through the glass walls of the conference room crowning the seventy third floor of the U.S. Bank Tower. In satisfaction he surveys his kingdom's seat of power. Below, ten million lights twinkle under his stare, one for each of those he rules *unaware*.

With the conclave ended, Astaroth should be relishing the greatest moment of his reign. And he would be were it not for the *Angel of Death* looming somewhere nearby.

Fallen angels rarely interact with the likes of demons, Princes or not. When necessary, such menial tasks were relegated to the least, not the greatest of the *Them*. Never since the days of Christ had such angelic majesties as Ruel and Samel so abased themselves as to meet with the likes of demons. But these were no ordinary days.

Fear suddenly washes over Astaroth as he realizes Samel has silently joined him. Aware the Assembly has tried Samel's patience he stands ready to do his Master's bidding, trying not to tremble.

"Your plans?" *Samel* demands sinisterly. Before Astaroth can comply Samel's malevolence overshadows the Prince. Black angelic power explodes, filling Astaroth's mind and the skyscraper with *dark energy*. Laughter echoes throughout the floors of the shining tower, spilling down on the City of Angels below. For a moment *Death* unfurls a tiny fragment of the true nature of his glory.

Astaroth's titanic strength flees him. In a moment his thousands of years are consumed by the fire of eternity. Millennia of demonic arrogance and pride turn to ash under the heat of Samel's unveiled angelic power. Before such evil Astaroth feels hell's fury engulf him. The demon shrieks in torment *knowing* should he live a million years more, it would be but a gasp between screams in an eternal *Lake of Fire*.

"That is only a taste of what waits should you *fail*." Samel warns returning Astaroth deftly to his gilded throne in the conference center. He allows the demon prince a moment to come collect himself.

"Now," Samel warns quietly. "You were saying?"



## *Media Empire*

For a mere demon, Samel had to admit Astaroth was thorough. Regaining his composure, the Prince of California concisely reveals the brilliant strategy of his kingdom. Astaroth had used Hollywood to addict the whole Earth, channelling the wealth of nations into Southern California.

In a few short decades he captured the imagination of mankind through humor and adventure, romance and pornography, horror and gore.

Without firing a shot he conquered billions across the planet through *amusements*. Incrementally, he replaced the power and popularity of lecterns and pulpits with T.V. and movie screens. Within a few decades he circumvented the conventional wisdom of a hundred generations, replacing the worldview of universities, churches and whole societies with *his own*.

In fortifying his hold on humanity Astaroth used music as mortar to fill the gaps between television and movies. He developed rock and country, blues and hip hop to permeate the minds of his global audience. His music genre's enflamed man's passions constantly tempting him towards lust, envy and violence.

Addicted to Astaroth's songs, mankind bought thousands of millions of records and cassettes and c.d.'s and downloads. People spent billions of dollars and hours listening to radio's, stereos, iPods and cell phones. He brainwashed societies across the globe, programing the world to sing his *Master's* tune.

Solidifying his empire and grip on billions of minds, he also dazzled man through a delicious assortment of

periodicals and websites. From Playboy to Cosmo. From Teen Beat to Vibe.

So, as the genius behind the scenes, he extended his global empire and influence. Few knew the name of A-staroth but myriads avidly followed the lifestyle of *his* stars!

Through video and music, magazines and websites Astaroth had conquered four thousand years of morality in a single generation!

And generated trillions doing so. His media empire and endless product endorsements filled his international accounts with wealth from around the world, while at the same time billions lived and died in poverty and disease.

He roared in laughter as sheering, skinning and even butchering *his* sheep they bleated all the louder, stampeding for more. Feeding humanity on a steady diet of entitlement, Astaroth had fatten the world for slaughter. And in so doing he brought his Master's will a step closer to being done on Earth as the Accuser willed from heaven.

"You've done well," Samel compliments the fearful Astaroth, adding "*So far.*"

The Prince bows, without loosing eye contact.

"Expend your vast wealth and wisdom to inflame man's passions," Samel demands. "Capture their imagination. Create new media to seize and harden their hearts by burning HD images of desire and greed into their retinas. Fill their souls with lust for all they see and distaste for all they have.

Ravage home and family. Alienate the elderly. Decimate marriages. Infatuate the young. Distort the line between male and female. Anoint 'self' as God. Move them to sacrifice what's real for *your* ideals, driving them to trade

family and all of eternity for momentary pleasure. Convulse the Earth with your influence as the other *Ten* will do!”

Astaroth bows compliantly.

“Any questions?” the general growls impatiently.

“Shall I inform you of my progress?” Astaroth murmurs.

“As you wish,” Samel replies as cold as death. “I’ll be in Washington D.C. with *your* American Prince. Molech and I have much to discuss in *Mystery Babylon*”

Instantly Samel’s gone.

Astaroth remains motionless, scanning the room for the shadow of *Death*. Convinced he’s alone he assess his fate. Recalling to mind scores of conquered generations he bolsters his courage, yet a shiver runs down his ancient malevolent spine. Should he fail, billions he’s sent to hell await him.

# *The Children*

## *Chapter 13*

### *Lost Innocence*

Heaven is high, Earth Wide. Bitter between them  
flies my sorrow. *Li Po*

Ariel's meeting with the girls from WJC High was running long. The teens were opening up to her, as much from silent desperation as from angelic grace. Warmed with hope they bar their hearts, exposing hidden wounds and scars. Unburying years of neglect and abuse, they weep over secret failures and sins of their own, bringing all into the light.

As Ariel listens to the girls speak she relives the moments, witnessing their memories first hand. Common among angels, such communication is rare with humanity. But for this assignment the Lord had provided His proxies with gifts.

Hers is a heightened, virtual empathy. It allows Ariel to watch as a thirteen year old Lucia hides in a locked bathroom from an uncle threatening to steal her innocence.

Her heart brakes as Sarah, in a drunken stupor, looses her's to friends of her older brother. She reels in anger as a gang from Cassandra's neighborhood forces the teen and her younger girlfriends to try crack. She weeps with Mya, who pregnant by a college guy, aborts her baby all alone while its father laughs it up racing around with friends in expensive street rods.

For hours Ariel listens as one by one the girls unburden their souls, expressing fears for the present and future. They admit their frustrations with family and friends. They shared their worries over doing well in school and in a career.

In the end they quietly wish aloud for love from a decent and trustworthy boy and a tangible God.

Clearing the air, the teens leave feeling cleaner and lighter than they can remember. Ariel thanks Ms. Johnson for facilitating the group. Driving away, she carries the girl's sorrows with her into the night.

Meeting up with Mace she pulls into the Davis' driveway. Turning off the minivan Ariel sits quietly, haunted by the girl's memories. As an angel she's ancient by human standards. Alive before time, she's experienced disappointment and anxiety over the Rebellion yet never *personal* neglect or abuse.

She groans that a teenager should suffer more pain in a year than she had in eternity.

From her perspective mankind was born just yesterday. Two, ten, or a hundred years was but a watch in the night. She weeps over a *race of innocent and unsuspecting children* preyed upon by unseen enemies, ancient and evil. She eventually composes herself. She must complete her assignment. She and Mace must help these girls, and billions of others.

They must find a way to delay the greatest time of sorrow the world would ever know.

Moments later Mace meets Ariel at the car. The other guest having already left, he introduces Sam and his hosts before saying goodnight. As Heaven's witnesses drive away Mace takes a second look at Ariel.

"Your mascara's running. You look good in *goth*."

“*Hormones.*” Ariel chuckles through a slight smile. Driving slowly by moonlit houses the two quickly communicate as angels. In silence each experiences the other’s evening as if having lived it.

A moment later the pair are aware of a message from Gabriel. Reviewing the communiqué they see the Adversary select and send his fiercest generals to Earth. They watch Ruel and Samel address the Assembly of *Ten*. They observe Ruel accompany the Princes of Europe and Samel follow Molech to Washington D.C..

The message ending, their minds disconnect. Driving along an empty street Mace breaks the silence. “Looks like we have our work cut out for us.”

“So you’re heading to New York?” Ariel asks, making conversation.

“I’ll start there. I’ll visit D.C. next. Between Wall Street and Capitol Hill I’ll verify first hand what I herd tonight.”

“Sounds like Ancient Babylon’s got a new seat of power. Think you’ll run into Samel and Molech?”

“Up to them. And you’re headed for Thailand?”

“Yeah. Should be well after midnight there. Unfortunately, I’m to witness what they do to *children in the dark*.”

“I’d rather face Ruel *and* Samel” Mace groans, shaking his head.

“Wanna trade?” Ariel asks, wary of her new *gift*. Enough said, the pair round the next corner onto a dark silent street as the minivan vanishes.

## *Asia*

Ariel took a slightly irregular root to Thailand. Partly as a precaution against a reoccurrence of the trouble of her last translation and partly just for the fun of it. Feeling emotionally drained, she thought some fresh air and beautiful views might do her good.

She chose the world's tallest building, the Taipei 10, as her first destination. Translating across the Pacific she arrived almost instantly. Drinking in the sea air, she pauses surveying a twinkling Taiwan 1,600 feet below.

A moment later she was pacing the glass rooftop of the skyway straddling the Petronas Twin towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Her third jump landed her atop the Baiyoke Tower II, located in the Ratchathewi district of Bangkok. At nearly a thousand feet it was the tallest structure in Thailand. Below her were 673 rooms of the Baiyoke Sky Hotel, the tallest in Southeast Asia. And below that were Bangkok's seven million inhabitants of which nearly a hundred thousand were prostitutes.

Ariel's heart broke again remembering the pain of the teens she had met with. Yet these girls lived relatively sheltered lives compared with millions of teens in Thailand. Here they suffered from a host of problems, from poverty and slave labor to disease and drug addiction. But it was the horrifying number entangled in teenage and child prostitution that had drawn Ariel.

Only recently had Thailand become famous as a major hub of Southeast Asia. Within little more than a single generation, tourism from America and Western Europe had transformed the small country.

With the boom to the economy came demands from a new form of traveler. Sex tourism increased child prostitution in Thailand over twenty fold.

Bangkok overflows with child prostitutes from all points of Southeast Asia. Ignorant and desperate, parents from neighboring countries sell their children to traffickers who promise good paying jobs. The same bait lures teens and young adults to the city where debts and threats force them to sell themselves to survive.

With a thought Ariel's clothed as wealthy tourist. She buckles an expensive black leather coat over a red silk blouse and sharp black slacks. Tennis shoes replaced with low heeled Prada, she clutches a red Gucci handbag while passing silently through a locked door providing roof top access.

Walking down an elegantly decorated hallway she takes an elevator to the lobby. Making several stops it's soon overflowing with patrons. Some are drunk or high, others soon hope to be.

Having left her last client, an attractive girl in her late teens is solicited before the elevator reaches the ground floor. Agreeing on a price, the two who could be father and daughter, get out and take the next elevator to the man's hotel room.

Again, to Ariel's shock and surprise she finds her sensitivity sharpening. Effortlessly, she senses the emotions of those around her. Wincing, she closes her eyes as their experiences become her own.

Reaching the ground floor the elevator spills out its contents into a crowded lobby. Thoughts and images threaten to overwhelm her, as entire lifetimes pass at a glance. Overcome, Ariel's ancient and advanced mind reals from the tiniest taste of omniscience.



“*Peace*,” a silent Voice whispers to Ariel’s troubled mind. For a moment she retreats into the quiet of her own thoughts. Then like an approaching crowd, a unruly mob of experiences and emotions clamor for attention. Violently they break against the walls of her consciousness threatening to over run her.

“Peace *Ariel*,” the Voice repeats, once again stilling the commotion. This time the din is completely gone. In it’s place the angel’s spirit finds the presence of the Spirit of God.

“You are *Our* witness,” the Holy Spirit gently reminds. “You were chosen for this assignment *because* of your sensitivity. *I Am* only amplifying who you already are, that you may witness before Heaven humanity’s true condition.

“I *can’t*,” blurts Ariel, amazed having never uttered those two words before. “Get a grip” she thinks to herself. “I’m an eternal angel, for God’s sake.”

“An angel, whom for God’s sake, is *learning* what it means to be human.”

Confused and weak, Ariel slowly walks through the lobby, making her way past young and old either returning from or heading out for a good time. The grandly furnished room’s crowded for such an early morning hour. Spying a plush chair in a corner she takes a seat, gathering her bearings.

Feeling better, she studies the hotel’s guests through the eyes of the Presence with her.

“Their lives are as so frail and fleeting,” the Wind whispers in her ear. “Each delicate and priceless, capable of such good and evil. Rare and priceless, they’re a living symphony twinkling brightly but a moment under the canopy of a quintillion ageless stars.”

Aloft in the Spirit's love Ariel glimpses a facet of Omnity's plan for man. Unlike any sentient beings within the Three Heavens, humanity lives and dies in an instant. Born in an innocent state of grace, each sounds an unique tune. Living instruments, they choose their melody. Solo and in concert they perform for both time and eternity.

The question is, which *Conductor* will they follow.

"Ariel, to be *their* witness you must enter their lives" breaths the Breath of Life. "Are you willing?"

"Yes." Ariel's lips form the words her heart hopes are true.

### *Unto Me...*

Standing, she walks out of the lobby and into the cold night. She passes rows of open shops near the hotel, all doing far too brisk a business for 4:00 a.m..

Walking south in the direction of Pat Pong, one of Bangkok's three red light districts, it becomes clear why this section of the city never sleeps. At least not at night. As Ariel continues the white lights in store windows give place to red, green and purple neon.

Fed by hotels from all directions, multinational visitors crowd the sidewalks. Tourists of all kinds take flyers from scantily dressed girls and abused boys, stopping as barkers pitch their wares. The interested shuffle inside. Most move along, looking for something more.

Ariel's *gift*, seeming at the moment anything but, arises within her. Exercising eons of angelic discipline she filters through thousands of human thoughts and emotions

accosting her. Thankfully she finds the power to control the clamorous uproar. She's surprised to hear something familiar. Listening closely Ariel is deeply moved by the last thing she expects.

*Music.* The saddest melody she has ever heard.

Eternity shares Earth's affinity for music. Heaven's filled with it. Melodies of every kind emit from it's citizenry, an accompaniment to divine Light resonating from everything. Heaven's harmony is an indescribable joy. Relationships with creation and it's Creator are filled and captured by living music!

However, in her entire angelic lifetime Ariel has never heard anything like *this*. Washing over her is such a symphony of sorrow she can hardly bare it. Yet as she does, she detects a hauntingly familiar refrain. Intricate and compelling, the sounds linger on the ear and in the soul. Skillfully arranged, each note is beautiful even in misery. Thought and emotion, as lyric and melody, swell in heartrending movements. Hopes and dreams rise and fall in a woeful cantada ominously punctuated with sobs and screams.

This couldn't be *music*. Yet, in a terribly morbid way it was. Such macabre music could have but *one* composer.

"Lucifer" she breaths. "*You're* on Earth after all."

Wading through garish sights and ghoulish sounds Ariel pushes into the heart of Pat Pang. Guided by ear, she follows a faint lament, little more than whimpers. Stopping near the outskirts of the large district, she disappears into the shadows. Concentrating, she can hear them clearly now. Children, a dozen or so in each *house*, row after row, not innocently asleep in their beds but rather being molested in them.

Girls, for the most part, ranging in age from seven to eleven, repeatedly servicing the basest of adult desires. Sex tourists from around the globe move secretly in the night, silently slithering in and out of the child brothels. As the thoughts and emotions of the abused become her own Earth's lamenting melody abruptly changes.

Any lingering sense of tragic beauty is swallowed by horror.

Ariel's engulf in the terror that fills the innocent soul of a child being raped for the first, tenth, hundredth time. She feels the pain and humiliation of being bent over to provide "boom boom." Her mind runs in hiding with those of the young children forced into providing "yum yum" to men of all ages.

Memories mount, becoming not just *theirs* but *hers*! Her body, her mouth! Not just one, but thousands and not just once, but repeatedly both day and night, year after year.

Unable to bare more, Ariel withdraws her awareness of the torment. Angelic outrage lights up the night around her. "This is *hell on Earth!* If it's hell they want it's hell they should have!" she breaths.

Focusing, she collects her thoughts, crying out to Gabriel. Her general must know of this outrage! Michael and his angels will put an end to this *inhumanity*.

Instantly her eyes open to the sight of warrior angels lighting up the night. Legions appear, one for each child, armed in brilliance and bristling for battle. Surrounding and challenging them are dark outlines of lesser spirits, twisted demons of lust and perversion, greed and violence.

Ariel's spirit soars, until a mournful breeze echos a haunting question within her furious soul "Aren't they *all* children, born just yesterday? Children of wrath. Children abusing children?" the Wind seems to weep.

Ariel recoils at the Spirit's compassion for *such* men. "Didn't *He* say, *suffer the children to come unto Me?* Didn't *He* warn, *woe to you who harms such as these?* Didn't *He* promise, *their angels always behold the face of My Father?*"

"We did," Silence laments. "Though all mankind are little more than children, such heinous crimes force Heaven's hand. They will be tried and sentence as adults. But make no mistake. When the time comes you'll be sorry for desiring it."

"So *Satan* wins either way?" Ariel shouts outraged.

"Rebellion's cost is *great*" the Comforter confirms. "Yet with all that is lost, *much* will be gained."

As Ariel's fierce anger diminishes so does the glory of the angelic legion. Disappearing from view, her demands for justice are replaced with sobs of sorrow. In time these give way to a sense of peace in the midst of her pain. Ariel prays the children can feel it.

Quietly, Gabriel appears at her side.

Gathering herself Ariel responds. "Thanks for coming and bringing an army."

"I never left. And your brothers always stand guard here."

In the distance sporadic flashes of light cut arches through the darkness. Screaming, here and there demons vanish into the fires of hell. "Must have crossed a line" Gabriel explains stoically.

"Something must be done. This must *end!*"

"It will. All that remains is how and when."

Departing, the Holy Ghost leaves a haunting warning. "*Whatever you've done to the least of these you've done unto Me...*"

# *Mystery Babylon*

## *Chapter 14*

### *Wall Street*

But Satan now is wiser than of yore, and tempts by  
making rich, not poor. *Alexander Pope*

Wind whips Mace's expensive London Fog as he enjoys the pre-dawn view of New York City. Standing atop the tallest, most famous skyscraper on the Eastern Seaboard he surveys a great capitol of Mystery Babylon. Soaring 1,400 feet, the Empire State Building was named for the imperial wealth and power of the city, state and nation it towers above and watches over. Silently walking it's roofline, Mace enjoys the panoramic view. He watches another hundred towering buildings glimmer quietly in the night above millions of shimmering colored lights below.

New York, the city that never sleeps, will soon awake to streets and high rises swarming with over eight million. Beyond its five boroughs, the greater metropolitan area will teem with even more. A citadel of economic and cultural influence, in many ways the region reigns as a monarch over the cities of Earth.

Global corruption brings Heaven's proxy to New York. The powerful shamelessly feasting on forbidden fruit, the Golden Apple being eaten even at this early hour. Stretching out below Mace are hundreds of financial institutions with thousands of offices staffed long before dawn with bankers and brokers, many preparing for another bite.

Mace steps off the rooftop. Falling soundlessly, he disappears into the night. Invisible to the human eye, he stalks the halls of financial power. His angelic mind witnesses past and present transactions. Public and private *modus operandi* are laid bare as he sees behind closed doors. Instantly and effortlessly Mace's angelic mind reviews hidden documents and encrypted files, revealing the motive and opportunity of thousands of fiscal crimes.

Through a hundred different schemes, *technically* legal and not, he watches wealth transferred to the *filthy* rich with few the wiser. With incalculable holdings, two percent of the world's financial elite own over half of humanity's wealth while influencing far more. Bull and bear markets, peace and war are simply tools to plunder Earth's wealth and resource.

Mace sorts through government memorandums and banking ledgers. He finds during the infamous 2008-2009 TARP tax payer bailout twenty five leading financial institutions received more than ninety percent of the handouts. Awarded three hundred billion dollars from congress, the companies receiving the unprecedented funds had first spent a hundred million dollars on lobbying and campaign contributions.

That's over two hundred and fifty thousand percent profit. Not bad for mismanaging investments. And that's just a single return sanitized for public consumption.

Delores' best seller notwithstanding, Mace imagines she would be appalled to find her conspiracy theories to be but the tip of the iceberg.

Uncloaked, Mace flashes a New York Stock Exchange badge while walking past security. As the opening bell rings, pandemonium breaks out as numbers on the boards rise and

fall. Such daily occurrences hardly seems suspect but Mace knows actions here can have dramatic impact around the world.

Particularly interested in commodities and futures, Mace watches the price of energy. His angelic mind traces the recent price of oil through highs of \$150 a barrel to lows of \$30. Same supply. Same demand. Yet fortunes rise and fall through manipulating markets as wealth continues it's diversion into the hands of the rich.

It all appears legitimate. Hundreds of thousands of investors are along for the ride. Yet for those without the power and connections of the top one percent, it's a guessing game.

It's the same for all trades but the price paid by the world's impoverished, poor and middle class is higher when it comes to energy. For most, even the staples of life require energy to develop and market. Small energy cost increases produce global economic tremors. Obscene profiteering produces quakes and aftershocks that send weak economies, particularly those of the Third World, reeling to the point of collapse.

All for the almighty buck and peso, euro and yen.

### *The Supreme Court*

Over tens of thousand years Molech had usurped the name and ancient kingdom of his fallen angelic father following his imprisonment in the days of Noah. In Hebrew, Molech meant "King" denoting great power and majesty, but in this case with a twist. Transposing vowels from the



ancient word *bosheth* the word *Melek* became *Molech*, literally meaning “King of *Shame*.”

A fitting title in light of certain of this Prince’s predilections. A leading pagan deity, Molech developed a taste for innocent blood, particularly of children. So much so his worship was strictly forbidden in the Old Testament. The Bible’s severest penalties were meted out to a Israelite or visitor caught sacrificing a child to *him*.

In medieval times he was said to make mother’s weep by stealing their children. In the early eighteen hundreds, John Milton wrote in *Paradise Lost* that Molech was “*besmeared with blood, of human sacrifice, and parent’s tears*.”

Centuries ago, Molech had made the capitol of the United States his own. With demonic fortifications reflecting his influence, Mace would run a risk directly translating into D.C.. Given the nature of his special assignment, *and* the likely presence of general Samel, he had reason to be doubly concerned.

Oddly Mace meets with no surprises during his jump to Washington D.C.. Leaving Wall Street he arrives instantly, seemingly without notice, silently appearing in a back alley a few blocks from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Hurrying up the steps, Mace is anxious to visit the American equivalent of the Supreme Court of Heaven were he serves as bailiff.

To his right he passes the seated sculpture “Authority Of Law.” Above him carved boldly into the Western Facade is “EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW.” Approaching the entrance Mace sighs. Designed a bastion of justice for America if not the world, this shining city on a hill had lost it’s way.

Familiar with the Judge of creation's highest Court, Mace wonders how many rulings would be reversed should His earthly counterparts fully understand the fleeting nature of their momentary power, by *Who's* authority they dispensed their form of *justice*, and the impending judgment awaiting *them*.

Passing beneath twenty four colonnades of Italian ivory and golden marble Mace enters America's *Temple of Justice*. He notes various offices, exhibit halls and shops on the first floor. Suddenly wearing the appropriate credentials, he walks easily through security onto the second. Here he finds the Great Hall and conference room, chambers for the justices and *the* courtroom.

With Court out of session, Mace passes unseen through its locked doors. Yet standing silent in the dark he is not alone. Generations of plaintiffs and defendants flash before his angelic mind. Quickly reliving thousands of cases and testimony, he sorts and stores the most important.

While scores of rulings stand out, to his angelic eye, one towers above the rest as the most infamous. Mace watches sadly as the chief justice renders his Roe vs. Wade verdict to America. By judicial edict, seven persons had legalized the unthinkable. Now the very institutions ordained to protect the innocent would conspire to enable if not encourage mothers to murder children while yet in their womb. In a single decision the greatest natural instinct and law known to man had been overturned.

Captivated by the scene Mace is oblivious to the *changes* around him. Above, the second floor ceiling silently dissolves, replaced by black clouds twisting in a menacing vortex. Only as lightening flashes and wind whips tossing materials and upturning furniture, does Mace break free from his trance.

Suddenly the room explodes with the demonic. Large, powerful demons flash deadly weapons as they surround Mace. Row after row of menacing spirits appear, filling the courtroom with their malevolent hisses and threats. Replacing the justices' bench is a giant jewel encrusted throne of a towering titan. Molech, the Prince of the America's, sits crowned and with a blood red ruby scepter in hand. Bellowing in an imposing voice he mimics a chief justice, "This court will come to order!"

Eons as a warrior angel, Mace sizes up the situation. While the demon Prince and his cohorts are ancient in human terms, compared to him they're little more than disobedient infants.

*Samel*, the angel of Death, on the other hand would be quite a different matter.

### *Molech*

"Trust you arrived without incident," Molech sneers. "Eyeing my handiwork?"

"Impressive. Still killing babies I see."

"I kill whomever I wish," Molech warns. Seeing the angel is unimpressed he continues his threat. "With an executive order I can begin a global nuclear war! With thirty thousand warheads at our disposal we can obliterate life on Earth in a single day."

"Then perhaps I should rid the Earth of you right now."

"You *could*," Molech admits snidely. "But I understand there's a little matter of the Agreement and *one* nearby who might object."

A moment later Molech's tune and demeanor change. Standing, he steps from his throne. "Enough with pleasantries. Where are my manners?" Molech smiles. "Welcome to *my* city. Consider yourself my guest. I'd be happy to provide you with *every pleasure* your VIP status affords!"

Mace doesn't dignify the offer with an answer.

"No? Then how about the *pleasure* of my company?" Molech feigns hospitality. "This being your first trip to Earth. Who better to show you around *my* capitol?"

"Where did you have in mind?" Mace asks.

"Everywhere!" Molech laughs. Devilish mirth echos in the courtroom, its walls dissolving as the ceiling had done. Whirling slowly upward the assembly is high above Capital Hill in minutes.

"You've witnessed the work of my *judicial* branch" roars the Prince of D.C.. "Below lies the rest of my government." Flying lower, Molech details his sphere of influence on the inner workings of the legislative and executive branches. "Knowingly it or not, this *trinity* does *my* bidding" he gloats."

"Like my design" Molech asks, pointing out the Pentagon. "Here I weaponize my will. It's terribly expensive but I've got the most generous lobbyists and print my own money! Believe me, a couple of well orchestrated terrorist attacks can really get the presses rolling. Currently to the tune of what's being spent by the world's next one hundred largest militaries *combined*. I'm gearing up! Fear as a deterrent's been fine up to now but I hear the *End of Days* are near. Locked and loaded, Sir!" he snaps to attention, saluting *his* heavenly Prince and Power of the Air.

"So you're the mastermind behind the arms race?" Mace asks, looking for an admission.

“I and my Communist counterparts. Add some advanced technology here and a pinch of animosity there. Mix and chill to perfection, and you’ve got yourself a delicious cold war that should shortly heat up to several million degrees!”

In silence Mace listens as his host continues with the tour. From the air Molech points out a variety of occultic Masonic and Kabbalists symbols embedded in the design and architecture of the city’s major streets and building. Moving due west of the capital they hover close enough to the Washington Monument that Mace can almost touch the fifty five foot high pyramid crowning the five hundred fifty five foot tall obelisk.

“The world’s tallest true obelisk. Size does matter” he boasts crudely, referencing the pagan phallic symbology. The room slowly spins, revealing the occultic monument as the tallest structure in D.C.. “Kinda stands out but no one seems to mind.”

Passing low over the Jefferson Memorial Molech pauses for effect. “One of my favorites. We worked closely on several projects.” With a gesture Molech produces an impressive array of holographic records for the sake of the entourage.

“I particularly enjoyed coauthoring his Bible” the Prince gloats. “Who needs angels and demons, genealogies and prophecies, divinity or the resurrection.

And the Great Seal of the United States was fun,” Molech grins as its creation takes center stage. “Along with Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, Jefferson was one of the Seal’s three original designers. After several years in committees, we settled on the present Official Seal made famous by it’s recent appearance the back of the dollar bill.”

“Illuminati? ‘Angels and Demons?’”

“Exactly!” Molech gushes. “It’s *all* perfectly obvious, and yet *my guys* are the only ones paying attention. You’ve got to appreciate the irony.”

Take the UPC code, for example.” Molech brags, pointing toward the IBM Washington Solution Center. “Now *there’s* a riddle wrapped in an enigma. It’s on practically everything. Stares them right in the face every day. Too subtle? So I make it beep. Beep! Beep! Beep! Every single time somethings scanned. Yet is anyone paying attention? Anyone notice the hidden 6...6...6 embedded in the code? Even the most blitzed and booze soaked heavy metal-head can tell you *who’s* number that is!” Molech shout’s in amazement.

Foretold by the Apostle John’s Revelation, this Jewish fisherman lets the cat out of the bag millennia before electricity much less computers and still no one gets it. He warned it would be a mark. Isn’t this a mark? He said it would be used for ‘buying and selling.’ Hello, class...class...anyone...anyone?”

“Now granted” Molech sermonizes, “it’s only the predecessor. Just the forerunner, another piece of the puzzle, setting the stage for *His* big debut. But come on, how dense can they be?”

Mace responds with silence.

Tour over, the images fade. Mace finds himself once again in the Supreme Court, as if he had never left.

“That’s it for now. Have to admit my new Babylon’s got all the amenities and lots of upgrades!”

“You do *seem* to be having a moment.” Demons begrudgingly part for him as he slowly closes upon the gloating Prince to deliver a warning, “But then appearances are often *deceiving*.”

Molech flinches, the ruler's arrogance replaced with a split second of fear. Tempers flare over the impudence of the lone angel as two of his dozens of bodyguards attack. Eyes and weapons flash red as they strike with inhuman speed.

On Mace's left a ferocious spirit with the body of a man and head of a lion roars, enraged it's red and orange mane bursts into flame. Giant muscled arms wield a laser lash slashing towards Mace's chest.

From his opposite side an even more devilish hybrid leaps in fury. As if astride a werewolf, the head and torso of a man arise from the creature's back while the jaws of three sets of wolves heads snarl, snapping in rage. Thrown from its waist, a pair of black crystalline daggers fly towards Mace.

Mace's reaction is too late to keep demon teeth from tearing into 'flesh' but not his own. An angel of light, he moves at the speed of it. Timing his translations to the last possible nanosecond he jumps from between the attacking demons to stand eye to eye with their Prince. Behind him roars and snarls turn to howls and screams as the jaws and weapons of each slay the other. Transpace opens, the fires of hell receiving the pair, leaving a sulfuric stench of burning flesh and fur.

"You should know better," Mace warns, his angelic eyes burning holes in those of the ancient demon.

"*I do,*" Molech smirks, collecting himself and waving off further violence. Looking around he feigns remorse, "it's just hard to get good help."

"We through here?" Mace asks, taking a step back.

"*I'm* quite through," Molech responds, beginning to laugh. "But as you so aptly demonstrated, it isn't *me* you need worry about."

## *The Angel Of Death*

In an instant the courtroom, blacker than pitch, swirls into a descending void. Nauseated and alone, Mace stands simmering against a vile engulfing darkness. Malevolent terror tears at his mind hurling blasphemous curses in the tongues of fallen angels. Gathering itself together, the searing malevolence flows about Mace, smothering him in threats until finally drawing back into a regal robe flowing from Samel's back.

Silent, the enthroned Angel of Death glares at Mace.

In time Samel addresses his unfallen brother. "Nice move" he compliments. "Care to try another?"

Trembling and dizzy, Mace recognizes Samel from Creation's Supreme Court. Taking a moment he studies the legendary leader of the Revolt. A great fallen *Angelic Prince*, his majesty's honored by all for the glory with which he is endowed and in memory of the position from which he fell.

Like the First, the Third Heaven abounds with trinities. Chief among them were the glorious Archangels Lucifer, Michael and Gabriel. Each of these had three high ranking governing officials of their own. Ruel and Samel had been created the second and third greatest angels under Lucifer.

The greatest of the three had been Zebuel. Chief among the lessor archangels of worship, with the exception of Lucifer, he stood nearest God offering the incense of worship.

Standing to his right and left were Ruel and Samel.

It was Zebuel who led the Rebellion's presence on Earth. In time, He and tens of thousands under his command left their first estate, becoming the gods of myth and legend. It was Zebuel and his legions who took human form and



women for themselves, fathering the titans who during the days of Noah became the greater demons.

Chief among the god's of Earth, Zebuel was know by many names, Zeus being one. After his incarceration his most powerful son, a demon Prince, assumed his name continuing his reign. From Europe he currently rules the global demonic network of the *Ten Princes*.

As throughout human history, demons do his bidding fearing the might and knowledge he received from his glorious fallen angelic father.

On Earth, the name Zebuel was feared and revered for millennia. Widely worshiped, it was translated and modified by ancient societies into many languages. In antiquity, King or Ba'al Zebuel was most commonly known as Ba'al Zebûb meaning King of the High Places and things that fly. Eventually he came to be known as Bellzebub, the lord of God's enemies on Earth.

In Heaven, with Satan's greatest general imprisoned, Ruel assumed the honor. Samel, as his second, was held in high esteem. The Angel of Death was once a great conduit of life and praise. Even now as the antithesis of both, his glory and power are legendary and nearly beyond compare. Among billions of angels, fallen or not, less than a handful were as mighty.

And Mace was not among them.

Still seated Samel breaks the silence, "We haven't been formally introduced. You're Maciel, are you not? You serve at Court."

"It's an honor to serve God *anywhere*," Mace responds, reminding the lessor archangel by Who's authority he stands before him.

"You're an *interesting choice*," Samel scoffs. "Perhaps, proxy, you've seen enough." Samel warns, rising

and stepping down from Molech's throne. "I could... send you on your way."

"That won't be necessary. I arrived with *Michael*. He may be here even now."

"*Hummm*," Samel whispers, savoring the thought while surveying the courtroom. "Now *that* would be interesting, though premature." he adds, his voice trailing off in a lingering whisper.

"For the moment I believe we are quite alone," Samel replies coldly. Stepping near, his presence overshadows Mace. "Regardless, you are in no danger from me. Your safety is in *our* best interest. We look forward to your testimony. I'm sure the Court will be most interested in your report."

"Besides," Samel bends near to snarl into Mace's ear. "While I look forward to *meeting* Ariel, Ruel has chosen to deal with you *personally*."

# *Darkness and Light*

## *Chapter 15*

### *Sleeping Angels*

If a man is not rising upwards to be an angel, depend upon it, he is sinking downwards to be a devil. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

*Ariel slept.* For the first time in her *long* angelic life Ariel had laid her head on an overstuffed down pillow, closed her eyes, and cried herself to sleep.

Having arrived in Los Angeles before dawn the prior Thursday morning, she had spent her first day and night in the City of Angels. Translating across the Pacific, she had jumped first to Taiwan, then Malaysia and finally Thailand.

It was nearly 4:00 a.m. when she had left Bangkok's Baiyoke Sky Hotel to experience the horrors of child prostitution.

Shattered, she returned to the hotel finding a room reserved in her name. Exiting the elevator she fumbled numbly with the key, opening and closing the door behind her without bothering to turn on the lights.

Alone, she stumbled onto the bed fully dressed, reliving the nightmarish existence of thousands of children scattered throughout the city below. Weeping in the dark, she fell asleep in sorrow, unaware she could even do so.

"You awake?" Mace asks, standing quietly near Ariel's bedside.

"Am now," Ariel groans, enjoying her first headache.

“Picked a nice room” Mace comments, noting the suite’s posh furnishings and decor.

“Been here long?” Ariel asks yawning.

“Long enough to catch a nap in the chair” Mace responds, pointing to a comfy leather recliner.

“You slept *too*?”

“Not like you. You were snoring.”

“Lady’s don’t snore.”

“Neither do angels. But you were ‘sawing logs’ like a lumberjack. And what’s with you and mascara?” Mace kids, as Ariel sets up in bed looking hung over.

“I’m *so* done with makeup,” Ariel replies, wiping at her runny eyes. “So how’d it go with you?”

“Better than here by the looks of things. You okay?”

“Yeah. Fine. Just got blindsided by the living hell some of these kids are going through. Apparently I’ve been given the *gift* of experiencing pain through human eyes.”

“I can see that.”

“How about you. Run into anyone interesting?” Ariel asks, heading towards the bathroom to wash up.

“Molech and Samel.” Mace answers, following along. “The Prince’s a real peach and Samel’s... what you would expect.”

“Any trouble?” Ariel inquires, dabbing cold cream on her face from the fully stocked medicine cabinet.

“Nothing serious. Molech showed me the sights before a couple of ghouls jumped me.”

“And Samel?” Ariel asks looking Mace up and down for signs of trouble.

“The *general* behaved himself,” Mace responds, following Ariel back into the living room. He decides to wait for a better time to warn her of Samel’s threat.

“I suppose it’s Ruel next,” Ariel groans, wondering when they’re gonna catch a break.

“Probably. If he’s in Europe. That’s my next stop.”

“Speaking of generals, I saw Gabriel and some of your buddies early this morning. At least we’re not alone.”

“Nice to know.”

Cleaned up, Ariel looks and feels more herself. “Are you curious why the Advocate, Michael and Gabriel choose us for such an important assignment?” she asks the question they’ve both wondered about. “No offense, but we’re not exactly the “A” team.”

“Maybe it’s like chess,” guesses Mace. “When you’re the Grand Master perhaps it’s more fun to win with pawns.”

“Well as long as everyone’s having *fun*.”

“You asked. Ready to check out?”

“Whenever you are” Ariel assures, having collected herself.

“Before you head to Africa maybe we should sink up our testimony?”

“Probably,” Ariel begrudgingly agrees, not anxious to relive hers. “I’d suggest skimming the highlights of mine unless you’ve got a box of kleenex and a bottle of aspirin handy.”

In less than a minute Heaven’s witnesses exchange experiences.

“Nice move with the demons,” Ariel compliments, closing the door behind them.

“Right. Take care of yourself.”

“You’re like the father I never wanted.” she sighs, still feeling the headache. “You be careful too.”

Anxious to get on with his assignment Mace vanishes. Ariel however has a stop to make before heading for the Dark Continent.

### *F.A.C.T.*

Ariel catches a small motorized rickshaw heading towards the city limits. Translation would've been faster but she wanted to experience more of Bangkok before leaving. After half an hour of choking on fumes from the bike's whiny two-stroke engine she's tempted to just jump when the 'taxi' pulling her canopy is snarled in stifling afternoon traffic.

Still she enjoys parts of the noisy trip. Shops are filled with folks from around the globe haggling over wares.

Open air markets are laden with everyday and exotic items. Colorful fine cotton and silk apparel, home furnishings and antiques are everywhere. As are every kind of local *delicacy* imaginable. Freshly skinned meats hang from hooks above salted fish, eel and squid. Row after row of street vendors offer fruits and vegetables, breads and desserts to passerbys. And for those hungry for 'fast food' the smell of simmering dishes loaded with exotic spice fills the air.

Reaching the countryside, she finds beautifully green farmland wrestling with the suburbs. Her rickshaw stops before an old but freshly painted brick compound. Large enough for a small orphanage, the facility also houses the staff of F.A.C.T., or Free Asia's Children and Teens.

Paying for her ride, she's glad to be rid of the wheezy motorbike as it putts back towards the city.

Pushing through squeaky rusted gates she passes a couple dozen children happily playing in the courtyard. The kids, ranging in age from eight to fifteen, are girls with the exception of two boys.

Spying the main office, Ariel walks in dressed as she was while walking the streets of Pat Pang.

Three adults huddle around a large wooden desk, debating plans for the weekend.

“Sawat-dii torn bai” Ariel interrupts saying ‘good afternoon’ in perfect Thai. As she does the three look up amazed to find a foreign Caucasian fluent in the local dialect.

Before they respond an American college student pops in from outside. Seeing Ariel arrive, the young woman is anxious to meet the attractive, well dressed visitor.

“Hi! I’m Kelly,” the blue eye blonde bubbles in English. “Saw you come in.”

“Ariel,” the angel responds, returning Kelly’s smile.

“I’m Jao Pirom,” The man from behind the desk stands, introducing himself in fluent English. A local, he’s short and thin, dressed casually and in his mid thirties. “I’m the director. Can we help you?”

“Yes,” Ariel replies crossing the room to shake hands. “I’m here from America with some questions about what you do here?”

“Please, have a seat,” offers a middle aged black woman in a British accent seated at the table.

“Thanks,” Ariel responds, accepting the offer.

“Evelyn,” she introduces herself as Ariel sits. “You’ve come a long way. Care for some bottled water or a cup of tea?”

“Tea’s sounds great,” Ariel responds. Choosing from several varieties she picks a local blend.

“A pastry?” Evelyn asks, offering her a Thai bread tray left over from the morning.

“Thank you,” Ariel happily takes the plate and a tasty bite. Not having eaten the smells of the open street market had left an impression.

“And this is Noom, Jao’s wife,” Evelyn continues, playing the hostess.

“Nice to meet you,” Ariel responds between mouthfuls.

“So what part of America are you from?” Kelly asks, taking an empty seat near Ariel.

“Just in from L.A.,” answers Ariel dipping another pastry into her tea.

“Cool. An American! I’m from Texas,” Kelly offers. “On a missionary trip with YWAM.”

“And what brings you to us?” Jao asks, politely redirecting the conversation.

“Your children,” Ariel responds solemnly.

Ariel spent the rest of the afternoon discussing Bangkok’s child prostitution industry with the staff of F.A.C.T..

Jao explains the extent of the problem. He cites incidents of government corruption and pay offs to law enforcement as well as the courts. Sadly, even in instances where authorities made major arrests it had hardly dented the overall sexual abuse of children for even a day.

Evelyn describes the conditions the kids *‘live’* in. Younger children are coerced in a number of physical and psychological ways. From food and sleep deprivation to threats and violence, *handlers* brake down their resistance and inhibitions.

Teens are often addicted to drugs for the same purpose. When further restraint proved necessary, beatings and chaining girls to beds was commonplace.

Noon becomes irate rattling off in Thai hellish experiences suffered by the orphans they'd rescued.

Others had been even less fortunate.

Each year countless children held captive as sex slaves become ill. Always with an eye on the *‘bottom line’* these were provide only the most minimal of health care.



Unconcerned with the children's welfare, the physicians servicing the slaves treat only symptoms. In time sickness and disease take its toll. Girls stricken with various sexually transmitted diseases or even AIDs are sent away to suffer and often die alone.

Not however without further abuse. Girls fortunate enough to find their way home fall prey to the men of their villages. Marked as prostitutes, they are repeatedly raped with little or no power to protect themselves.

Medicine scarce and expensive, for decades tens of thousands of girls had died of disease and STD's. Often their only comfort was knowing the abusers having infected themselves would share their fate.

### *Long Odds*

“During the last few decades hundreds of villages have suffered from this kind of perversion,” Jao explains sadly. “I lost a sister growing up and even after a lifetime of activism the abuse continues unabated.”

“Do you have *any* success protecting the children?”

“Very little,” Evelyn answers. The brothel owners have all the power and connections money can buy. And with Thailand's two to one conversion, foreign money goes along way.

“Thailand's an Asian dumping ground for abused and discarded children.” Jao admits “We're the global capital of child sex tourism, a billion dollar industry. And what makes

it even more difficult to fight is that the profits spill over into every aspect of the economy.”

“Sounds like the ‘perfect storm’ of poverty and greed, abuse and exploitation.”

“Exactly,” Evelyn agrees. “With the abuse in secret and the ‘evidence’ hidden everything *seems* fine.”

“As long as what happens in the dark stays in the dark.” Ariel groans.

Just then two children burst through the office door. A young boy laughs as he chases an teenage girl clutching a soccer ball around Kelly. She grabs and hugs the boy as he yelps, laughing.

“I may not speak the language well,” Kelly chuckles, squeezing the boy harder “but I’m fluent in kisses, tickles and hugs.”

Noom, rising and taking charge is clearly the ‘mom’ of the orphanage. Scolding the pair of kids and shooing them out the door.

“Thankfully you’re having some success,” Ariel notes, smiling at the antics.

“Some.” Jao responds. “We do all we can with what we have. In Bangkok we try to save the ones who drop through the cracks. We help a few here and there to escape and sometimes even get back home. We work with villages to safely reunite children and head off future dealings with prostitution rings.”

“And those without homes or who live in other cities and countries?”

“We care for as many as we can here,” Jao explains gazing out the door. “Others we place in foster homes. Some we just have to turn away.”

“Do the traffickers threaten you?”

“We try to keep the risks at a minimum,” replies Evelyn.

“We have some support,” Jao encourages. We receive a little help locally and internationally.

“And a few volunteers.” Kelly chimes in. “I’m here alone right now but YWAM and other organizations send volunteers when they can to help out. That’s how Evelyn got started and she’s been here forever.”

“Well almost,” Evelyn smiles, finishing her cup of tea.

“Why do you stay?” Ariel inquires.

“Oh, lots of reasons.” Evelyn responds remembering decades gone by.”

Again the door burst open. This time half a dozen children invade the office. Making a bee line towards Evelyn, they seem as happy as they are hungry.

“Here’s some now,” She grins, hugging and assuring everyone that dinner will be ready soon.

“Want to join us?” asks Kelly, hoping for company from someone her own age.

“Thanks but I can’t,” Ariel turns down the generous offer. “I’m compiling a report on global conditions and am due in Africa.”

“They’ve certainly had more than enough suffering,” Kelly comments sadly.

Ariel slowly nods in agreement. “Exactly the point I hope to make.”

# *The Eternal City*

## *Chapter 16*

### *Rome*

All things atrocious and shameless flock  
from all parts to Rome. *Tacitus*

Through myth and legend, Rome bridges the past to the present. Reaching back nearly three thousand years, Rome was foundational to Western Civilization and Christianity. First by its legions, then as the home of the Holy See, it stretched its influence over millennia to encompass the entire world.

It holds a *unique place* in the future as well.

Providence, or another unseen hand, allowed Rome the honor of being one of Europe's few major cities to escape the devastation of World War II.

The third most popular destination in the European Union, it remains a bastion of Renaissance and Baroque history and architecture.

Three million residents make Rome Italy's most populous city. Another seven million live under its shadow in urban and metropolitan areas.

A gathering *shadow* casting its pall over the entire Earth...

Keeping a low profile, there's not a soaring skyscraper in the whole of Italy. Its tallest structures are communication

towers topped with antenna dispersed throughout the ancient land.

So too, Rome plays a clandestine part within the global conspiracy. Home of the Prince of the European Union, through religion and politics, art and war his influence has shaped the world for dozens of centuries.

Son of the general of the legions of rebel angels dominating Earth, his father Zebuel was the greatest of Lucifer's fallen. Reigning from the heavens, he was lord of the ancient pantheon of god's.

Imprisoned for violating the Agreement, Zebuel's kingdom and fame fell to his first born, greatest of the titans.

As Chief Prince of the Earth, the supreme demonic monarch was feared and revered by many names. In North Africa and the Middle East, the cradle of civilization, he was known as Bellzebub. To the Greek world he was Zeus and to the Roman, Jupiter.

Through Greece, Zeus the "glorious father" gave Western civilization philosophy and science, architecture and art.

Through Rome, as the supposed grandfather of Romulus and Remus, he taught man the art of politics and war.

Master of geopolitical strategy, the Prince of Earth was instrumental in choreographing the rise and fall of humanity's great civilizations. For his own ends, over millennia he moved societies into place like pieces on a global chess board.

He developed Eurasia through Stone, Bronze and Iron Age. He orchestrated the rise of the Greco-Roman World, guiding Europe through its Middle and Dark Ages.

The dark lord provided 'guiding light' during the Renaissance to advance his own agenda.

Fostering imperialism, the Prince first fought against and later seduced the truth and freedom of politics and religion. When and where he could he coerced them to serve his purposes.

With the Old World firmly in hand he set his eyes on the New. Encouraging exploration and exploitation, he was instrumental in orchestrating the colonization of the Americas. Through Molech, the demonic Regent anointed the burgeoning United States as *Mystery Babylon*.

Over time he transferred the seat of global influence to the New World, sending the U.S. humanity's best and brightest. Feasting America on its own wealth and resource, as well as the world's he vastly increased the nation's global economic and military status.

With future plans for Russia and China, the Prince rested the Bear and Dragon, as the U.S. became the world's leading Super Power.

Wetting it's appetite for wealth, the European Union quickly formed as both a compliment and rival to the United States. Together they appear two great wings of the eagles of freedom and democracy.

Few realized the pair were also destined to beat as a the two wings of the Great Dragon as well.

Given the presence of the demonic Prince and perhaps Ruel, Satan's ruling angelic general, Mace decides to translate from America to Rome in segments. For fun as much as for security, he does so by way of famous European cathedrals.

He first appears without incident in Kiev, the capital and largest city of the Ukraine. Squinting Mace stands atop the tallest of the six golden domes of St. Michael's

Cathedral, as they glimmer brightly in the morning sun. An instant later his eyes relax behind an expensive pair of Raybans.

Mace jumps next to the rooftop of St. Stephen's Basilica in Budapest Hungary. Built at the turn of the twentieth century, the three hundred feet neoclassic church is the tallest building in Budapest. Cutting his stay short, he vanishes when it's nine ton bell begins loudly tolling morning mass.

Meeting no resistance, Mace risks a jump into Northern Italy. He appears inconspicuously in one of the many courtyards of the Basilica di San Marco a Venezia. First built in the ninth century, the archdiocese of Venice is opulently gilded in Byzantine mosaics.

Having taken necessary precautions, Mace translates to the dome of St. Peter's Basilica. Surrounded by marble statues of the twelve apostles he looks down from the rooftop upon the vast square already filled with tourists.

Centerpiece is the square's ancient and familiar fifty foot tall Egyptian obelisk. Made of red granite in the thirteenth century BC, Emperor Caligula had moved it to Rome in thirty seven AD. Fifteen hundred years later, Pope Sixtus the V had it brought to the Basilica.

Said to have "witnessed" the crucifixion of Peter in the days of Nero, it stands in silent honor of his martyrdom.

But as so many things, it serves a dual purpose.

### *The Vatican*

Slipping silently from behind an ornately gilded colonnade, Mace takes a moment to admire the exquisite

detail of the Sistine Hall of the Vatican Library. One of the oldest in the world, it was commissioned by Pope Nicholas V in the mid fifteenth century. Its collection originally housed over three hundred Greek, Latin and Hebrew codices including many from the imperial library of Constantinople.

The newly renovated facility is now home to seventy five thousand manuscripts handwritten before or during the Middle Ages.

Mace quietly joins a large multi-national tour viewing some of the world's most ancient biblical manuscripts. Among the vast collection is one of the oldest in the world, the Codex Vaticanus, dating from the middle of the fourth century.

Inclosed in maximum security glass are rows of early works with ornately handwritten text embossed with beautiful artwork.

"Wonderful, aren't they?" remarks a smartly dressed and attractive middle aged woman with a slight German accent. She smiles knowingly at Mace when her husband, his nose pressed against the glass, fails to reply.

"Very special," Mace agrees, returning the smile. "Visiting from Germany?"

"Yes. I'm Emma Braun," she warmly introduces herself. "And this is my husband Carl," she adds still unable to get his attention. In his late fifties, Carl is of average build and dressed more casually than his wife.

"He seems to be enjoying himself."

"Like a kid in a candy store," Emma grins. "Carl's an amateur biblical historian and prophecy student. He's been looking forward to this trip for a long time."

"It's *St. Michael* slaying the *Dragon!*" Carl notes without looking back. "Emma, look at this!"



“It’s beautiful honey,” Emma humors inching closer to the glass.

Mace, while appreciating the sentiment, is confident from the artwork that neither Michael or Satan posed for the portrait.

Having come to the Vatican to meet the couple, Mace quietly quotes from Milton’s sixth book of “Paradise Lost.” Midway through Carl turns to listen:

*“Together both, with next to almighty arm  
Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aimed  
That might determine, and not need repeat  
As not of power, at once; nor odds appeared  
In might or swift prevention.  
But the sword of Michael from the armory of God  
Was given him, tempered so that neither keen  
Nor solid might resist that edge: it met  
The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite  
Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stayed  
But with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, shared  
All his right side.  
Then Satan first knew pain,  
And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore  
The griding sword with discontinuous wound  
Passed through him.”*

“I just read that passage this morning,” Carl exclaims, shaking Mace’s hand in introduction. “Carl Braun.”

“Mace Angelo. Pleasure meeting you and Emma.”

“So you two have already met?” Carl apologizes. “Sorry if I wasn’t paying attention. I’m kind of an enthusiast.”

“Of escotology?”

“Studying the ‘End Times’ is as troubling as it is interesting. And I’m afraid it might just ‘*end*’ up being important in our ‘*time*.”

As the tour moves along the three bring up the rear.

“Didn’t notice you earlier. Are you with the group?”

Emma inquires.

“Just joined. Mind if I tag along?”

“Not at all,” replies Emma. Smiling at her husband already lost to the next exhibit. “That is if you don’t mind being ignored.”

# *People of God*

## *Chapter 17*

### *Churchiantiy*

God created man in his own image. And man, being a gentleman, returned the favor. *Rousseau*

“It’s so nice of you to treat us,” Emma thanks Mace excitedly as he seats her in an antique chair from their table at Piarcere Molise. Two blocks down on the right from the entrance to the Vatican, the family owned restaurant is filled with locals this evening.

“Very *charming*. Where did you hear about this place?”

“A little research. Like to be prepared.”

“Then you and Carl should get along perfectly” she laughs.

As if to prove her point Carl joins them with iPhone in hand. “According to TripAdvisor.com we should definitely try the clam sauce.”

“Did you get a hold of the Russo’s?” Emma asks as a young waitress fills her water glasses.

“Yes, they should be here any minute,” replies Carl, asking the waitress to leave five menus.

“So you’re staying with the Russo’s while in Italy. Have you known them long?”

“Almost ten years,” answers Emma. “We met Antonio and Gabriele when they attended a family conference in Germany. Hit it right off. Over the years we’ve gotten to know each other pretty well.”

“You mentioned they’re devoted Catholics.”

“Yes,” answers Carl, joining the conversation. “Anthony studied with the Jesuits for several years but never entered the priesthood.”

“Here they are” Emma explains, waving for the couple to join them.

Standing, the Brauns and Russos greet and hug one another. Emma introduces Mace to Antonio and Gabriele.

Mace studies the pleasant looking pair. In their early sixties, they seem happy and healthy. Antonio, appearing the jovial Italian, has a few pounds on Gabriele.

After the waitress takes their hors d’oeuvres and drink order they join right.

“So, did you enjoy our Library today?” inquires Antonio, anticipating Carl’s reply.

“A little drab,” Carl jokes. “Thousands of years in the making I expected more.”

“Sorry we couldn’t join you,” Gabriele apologizes. “We haven’t even seen it ourselves since the renovation.” The Russo’s had been the Braun’s Vatican tour guides for most of the week.

“Brought you something!” announces Emma, handing Gabriele a full color publication journaling the history, exhibits and newly completed renovation of the Vatican Library. Edging her chair closer, Emma begins leafing through the book giving Gabriele a virtual tour.

“How were the manuscripts?” Antonio questions Carl.

“The best part of the library. That’s were we met Mr. Angelo.”

“Angelo?” Antonio perks up. “You must be a good Italian Catholic!”

“Think of me as internationally interdenominational,” replies Mace with a friendly smile.

“Carl tells me you’re a student of the scriptures?”

“More than I can say. I understand Carl and you share a common interest in escotology.”

“That and many things. Given Carl’s a Protestant, and a charismatic at that! I find it interesting that we share many beliefs and more than a few, how should I say, *suspicious*?”

“Such as?”

“Well, as a good *Italian*...” Antonio kids winking at Mace, “you know Catholics believe that spiritual authority was ordained by Christ, coming to us in unbroken succession through Peter and the apostles to our present bishops and Pope. This authority includes interpreting the scriptures and judging how they are to be applied.”

“Protestants *supposedly* believe it’s the other way around,” offers Carl. “Both Old and New Testaments provide troubling testimony that the people of God are continually ‘off page’ regarding *His* will. We believe the scriptures were *God breathed* to provide an impartial standard against which Christianity throughout the ages could be measured.

“So how’s that working out?”

For a moment the pair look curiously at one another wondering how best to respond.

“Not that well,” Antonio explains. “Even with Catholics and Protestants closing the gap between one another. Since Vatican Two and the replacing of Latin Masses with common languages there’s an increased interest among Catholics in Bible study, evangelism and even activism.

“And among many Protestants there’s a reversed trend,” responds Carl. “There’s far less practice of personal or corporate Bible study and prayer. Instead, there’s more reliance on subjectivity and sentimentality. Emotionalism and personal satisfaction have replaced the importance of

truth and sacrifice in many churches and denominations as well as with most Christian teachers and entertainers.

Sadly, it seems Catholics and Protestants are moving towards a unified worldview, just not necessarily God's."

### *Unconditional Love?*

"And what worldview is that?" Mace inquires.

"Basically that God's *just* love," explains Carl. "Salvation may include some menial form of mental assent or saying 'the sinner's prayer' at least once in a person's lifetime. But everything's *unconditional!* There's little need to invest serious time or resource in God's Kingdom unless it's to build a bigger better building or pay for state of the art sound.

"Isn't God's love unconditional?"

"Not according to *Him*" Carl replies slyly. "The Bible uses the word 'if' over *fifteen hundred times*, many denoting conditions dealing with salvation and judgement, acceptable worship and answered prayer. On the other hand without the atonement of Christ, faith would have no *Object*. Obedience and service could never undo sin and selfishness to the point of meriting salvation."

"So which is it, Yes or no?"

"Both!" Carl and Antonio answer in unison.

"Sounds like you're hedging your bet" laughs Mace.

"Think of it as 'conditional salvation by grace,'" Antonio explains. "If you think about it even free gifts have conditions. Some more than others. For instance, imagine yourself on an airplane flying high over jagged mountain peaks unable to land. Would simply being handed a

parachute be enough to save you? Wouldn't you still have to believe it would work? Wouldn't you have to know how a parachute works and be willing to use it properly?"

"That's 'living faith,'" Carl jumps in. "What you believe, desire and do all working in concert. But that's just the beginning. Even after strapping the parachute on and jumping from the plane are you really *saved* until you land safely?"

"*He that endures to the end shall be saved.*" quotes Mace. So salvation's a free gift that must be used properly until you *land* in Heaven?"

"*Exactly!*" Carl and Antonio reply simultaneously, their passion eliciting knowing looks from their wives. Shaking their heads the women leave the men to their conversation as their food arrives.

Over the next few hours the five enjoyed the European tradition of a lengthy leisurely meal. While the women discussed everything, the men focused on their concern over the state of Christianity particularly within developed nations.

Mace discovers the two couples share a dedication to raising healthy families. Meeting at a pro-family conference, the couples had invested a good deal of time supporting issues that strengthen traditional values. A never ending battle these days.

One they all feared was being lost.

As a pastor of a small Vineyard church in Wittenburg, Carl had introduced Antonio to intense personal Bible study and a theology he was developing called, "*Quantum Christianity.*" As with Quantum Physics, Q.C. allowed for seeming irreconcilable contradictions to exist without immediate explanation being necessary.

This perspective made it easier to study doctrine and discuss polarizing topics without prejudice or animosity. Theologically, it allowed scripture to be seen and interpreted as a whole, without having to ignore passages that seemed to contradict popular viewpoints or even other scriptures.

They both had come to agreed the Bible clearly reveals God's as *holy* as He is loving, requiring mercy and justice from those hoping to receive the same. Moreover, while from different faith traditions, the two had come to the conclusion the modern world, and even much of the Church, was in jeopardy.

They feared pop Christianity, which they called "*Churchianity*" was offering a false sense of security to millions if not billions who's lives revealed little or no true "saving grace." They shared dozens of scriptures warning of just such a condition. In disobedience and direct opposition to scripture they bemoaned the apathetic lifestyles of liberals and even many conservative "Christians."

Citing scores of recent statistics, they demonstrated the average Christian's lifestyle was all but indistinguishable from their worldly counterparts. From promiscuity and pornography to substance abuse and divorce, the data revealed troubling similarities. While much of Churchianity espoused Biblical principals myriads seem bewitched, unconcerned their lives told another tale.

Both belonged to a remnant or a remnant of believers who feared what Mace could personally attest to. If Churchianity's apathy towards Heaven continued it would soon see Earth turned into a living Hell.



## *Delayed Rapture*

As Mace listened, Carl and Antonio explained their views on eschatology. While many Catholics were taught the Book of Revelation was largely allegorical, Antonio had come to share Carl's view that most of its prophecies would be literally fulfilled.

Quite possibly in their lifetime!

They demonstrated what Carl called, "Prophetic Witnessing." The pair pointed out how the stage was clearly set for the commencement of the Great Tribulation Period foretold by the Apostle John two millennia ago.

They noted that for the first time in human history, a nation that had ceased to exist thousands of years ago had reemerged in its previous location. They pointed out how Israel, no bigger than a large county, continually defeated its Arab enemies though outnumbered a hundred to one. They mentioned how unlikely it was that such a tiny country should be constantly the center of global attention.

In fact they estimated the odds of these and a handful of other prophecies already fulfilled or ready to be, were greater than a quintillion to one.

They also questioned the validity of the recently popularized "pre-tribulation rapture" being taught throughout the Western World. They traced its origin to a single small Bible study about a hundred and fifty years ago. They pointed out that neither scripture or church tradition had ever previously taught such a doctrine.

They quoted Jesus, Paul and John who all clearly indicated Christ's return would take place only *after* the time of trouble had begun and the Antichrist had been revealed.

They finished the evening reciting John's prophecy of the rapture, or harvest of the Earth, from Revelation 14:14:

"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."

"So the two of you anticipate a mid or post tribulation rapture?" Mace asks, clarifying the conversation.

"Yes," replies Carl. "Though I would be *extremely* happy to be mistaken. Unfortunately, Revelation's time line of the event and description of Christ are in perfect agreement with prophecies by Daniel, Paul and even Jesus himself.

"What about those who say the Church is not appointed to *wrath*? Sounds like a lot of wrath to me."

"If even just some of the scriptures are literal there *certainly* will be," answers Antonio. "By this point half the world's population has been destroyed by only *two* of Revelation's *sixty* events! Others include all the grass being burned. A third of the fresh water poisoned. And a third of the Sun's light darkened as a large meteorite strike turns a third of the ocean to blood destroying a third of all ships and fish in the sea."

"So what about the *anti-wrath* argument?"

"There are many sources of wrath," Carl explains. "Clearly the martyrdom of millions is proof the Church has, is and will continue to experience man's wrath. Then there's the Devil's wrath. Contrary to popular opinion, the Book of Revelation reveals that Satan's not in hell or on the Earth but

in Heaven accusing humanity and particularly the church  
“day and night.”

You don't say.

### *War In Heaven*

“Here it is” Antonio announces, reading Revelation  
12:7:

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his  
angels fought with the dragon: and the dragon and his  
angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place  
found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon  
was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and  
Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the  
earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a  
loud voice saying in heaven,  
“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God,  
and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our  
brethren, who accused them before our God day and night,  
has been cast down. “And they overcame him by the blood of the  
Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they did *not love  
their lives to the death*. “Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and  
you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth  
and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, *having  
great wrath*, because he knows that he has a short time.”

“This passage is one of the most important in all of  
scripture, revealing more about Satan and angels, Heaven  
and Earth than perhaps any other, yet remains universally  
ignored” Antonio exclaims. “Mace, did you know their is  
actually a *trial* going on in Heaven right now while we're  
having dinner? That Christ is our defense attorney and Satan  
the prosecutor? Wouldn't that be something to see?”

“Yes. Yes it would.”

“Notice John reveals Satan’s wrath,” Antonio points out. “And that the righteous overcome him not by being ‘*caught away*’ but by giving their lives away in *martyrdom*.”

“That does seem clear.”

“Following this portion of scripture the Devil makes war on the Church by raising up the Antichrist and False Prophet,” Carl chimes in.

And all this happens *two chapters before* the verse we read about Christ coming crowned and in clouds to reap the Earth by rapturing His Church.”

“So the Church *is* appointed to wrath?”

“Man’s and the Devil’s yes but God’s no,” continues Carl soberly. “After the passage about Christ’s coming, the *very next passage* is the first time to use the phrase, ‘wrath of God’ in Revelation.

“Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of earth, for the grapes are fully ripe.” So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the *wrath of God*. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ *bridle*, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.”

“By the way,” Antonio interjects sadly, “one thousand six hundred furlongs is about two hundred miles, or the whole length of Palestine. And an average horse’s bridle is four to five feet high.”

“That’s a lot of blood.”

“And that’s just one of about sixty events described in Revelation,” notes Carl worriedly. “But the good news is

that the Church, the real people of God, *are* caught away before *God's wrath*" he summarizes. "The bad news is that Jesus, Paul and John all teach that the rapture is not until *after* Satan is cast down from Heaven, raises up the Antichrist, making war on the Earth, *particularly against* the Church."

"I assume from what you've told me you're worried that neither the world or 'Churchianity' is prepared for any of this?"

"Not even remotely," Carl agrees. "Earth's on a collusion course with the End of Days *and* Eternity yet neither are even on our radar."

## *Genocide*

## Chapter 18

### *Sudan*

The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil,  
but because of those who look on and do nothing.

*Albert Einstein*

Playing with the orphans makes Ariel homesick for Heaven. Smiling, she's caught up in their happy giggles, mesmerized by the beauty of the children's faces. As the dinner bell rings they beg her to stay. She wished to God she could. Instead she said her goodbyes, taking the memory of their kisses with her as she went.

Back on mission Ariel's shackled to sorrow as she leaves the priceless sanctuary. Feeling all alone she shuffles silently along the dusty road towards Bangkok. Silhouetted against the shimmering setting sun she takes solace that her report will include the staff of F.A.C.T. and their orphans.

Still, Ariel's troubled by all she's learned. Troubled over a hundred thousand children in Thailand forced into prostitution. Troubled over the network profiteering by such evil. Troubled over the rest of humanity turning a blind eye to such atrocities.

As dusk settles on the land, she worries about the darkness settling so heavily upon Earth. She fears she's witnessing the twilight of man, a harbinger of midnight, a coming darkness son to be felt by all.

Moments later she's groans, sweltering in the early afternoon sun of Khartoum, the capital of the Republic of Sudan. Given the possibility of Satan's General Samel's

presence it was risky translating directly to the demonic capital of Africa, but a broken heart made Ariel reckless.

Geographically the tenth largest country on Earth, it's bordered by the Red Sea to the northeast and surrounded by six Muslim and three non Arab Black African nations. Sudan's the largest country on the African continent and of the entire Arab world.

Originally called Kush by the Egyptians, their histories had been intertwined since antiquity, so much so a black Pharaoh from Kush once ruled both people.

Ancient, Sudan has long known conflict and war.

But this afternoon life *seems* good in Khartoum. Business is booming, production is up and for the wealthy, excess is easily accessible. Patrons at the Ozone Café beat the heat by enjoying ice cream and outside air conditioning. Nearby, a BMW showroom offers \$165,000 cars. On the banks of the Nile an ultra modern five star hotel erupts from the sand shining like a artistic twenty four story steel and glass pearl.

With a combined urban and metro population exceeding ten million, Khartoum is also the country's economic capital. It's economy driven by local oil revenues and with Asian nations annually pumping billions into Sudan, America's embargo over human rights has had little effect.

Yet only a few hundred miles to the west the atrocities in Darfur continue. In seven years the vicious Sudanese civil war has taken half a million lives while displacing five times as many.

Given its bloodthirsty dictatorship and the Darfur genocide, today Sudan's considered by many to be one of the world's most unstable nation, second only to its near neighbor Somalia.

Aggravated by decades of drought, millions of acres of range and farmland have been claimed by a merciless desert. Arab nomads are driven south into Black African agricultural communities in search of water desperately needed by both sides to feed Sudan's large impoverished population.

Fueled by economic and ethnic, religious and political factions, this civil war is one of the world's most violent and costly. So much so, the International Criminal Court filed ten charges of war crimes against Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir, including three counts of genocide and five crimes against humanity.

### *G.A.S.P.*

West of the intersection of the Blue and White Nile rivers, on the southwest outskirts of Khartoum Ariel finds the two story adobe offices of the Genocide Awareness and Service Project. A multinational consortium of individuals representing concerned organizations from around the globe, G.A.S.P.'s presence in Sudan is in direct response to the unfolding tragedy of Darfur. Dependent on the content of their coverage, the group receives a governmental nod to acts as the eyes and ears of the world regarding the conflict.

As they do the whole of Africa.

Ecumenical in membership and outreach, G.A.S.P.'s Sudanese office staff represent the diversity of the region's population and it's supporters around the world.



Ariel has come to Sudan to witness war, famine and plague. She has come to the right place.

Walking into the shade of a small vacant storefront, Ariel gives some thought to her attire. Stepping back into the sun Ariel's clothed in traditional Islamic dress, including a taupe Islamic shawl or *hijab* pulled over her head.

Stopped and searched by arm guards outside the office, Ariel produces identification and an invitation letter. As she does G.A.S.P.'s director, Kiah Owusu, steps outside with a small entourage on her heels. In her mid forties, Kiah's a Black African dressed professionally in an attractive black business suit. The ends of her large dark *hijab* whip behind her as she rushes towards the parking lot.

On the groups heels, Ariel can hear the concern in Kiah's voice as she unrolls a map on the hood of a worn Land Rover. Kiah issues separate directives fluently in a few of Sudan's one hundred and forty tongues. Speaking Sudanese Arabic to those heading northeast, two women and a man pile into another worn SUV and hurry up the street.

Speaking Dinka to those heading southeast, two men climb into a nearby jeep, speeding away in the opposite direction.

In English, Kiah asks her personal assistant and body guard to fill the remaining Land Rover with gas, check the tires and pack a few provisions before the long drive to Darfur.

Alone for a moment Kiah takes a breath noticing Ariel for the first time.

"Hi, I'm Ms. Angelo," Ariel introduces herself, handing the director the invitation Omnity had arranged Kiah to extend to Ariel. "Have I come at a bad time?"

Scanning the letter jogs Kiah's memory. Several weeks ago she received a generous donation from Global

Organization Dynamics, along with a request for a student representative to interview her in person concerning their operations. Always on the lookout for funds and exposure, she happily accepted the donation and agreed to the meeting.

“Unfortunately there are few ‘good times’ where I’m heading,” Kiah apologizes. “I remember the letter. Thanks again for the donation.”

“Our pleasure,” nods Ariel. “Sounds serious?”

“Life and death always are. In fact, I’m afraid we’ll have to meet later in the week unless your willing to risk a very long and bumpy ride into Darfur?”

“How much risk?” Ariel asks, feigning the concerned student.

“You never know. We’re visiting an active region so it could get serious. I’ve been doing this for over a decade and so far so good. Unfortunately, I can’t say the same for everyone.”

“If you don’t mind I’ll ride along. Nothing like jumping in at the deep end.”

## *Crimes Against Humanity*

### *Chapter 19*

#### *Remembering Rwanda*

Man in so inevitably mad for him not to be mad is to  
put a mad twist to madness. *Blaise Pascal*

The trip to Darfur was as long as it was enlightening. The six hundred miles across Sudan and another thirty through various Darfur checkpoints took the better part of eighteen hours.

Leaving Khartoum Kiah had introduced Jomo Okoro as her driver, bodyguard and personal assistant. Assigned as a military liaison to G.A.S.P.'s Sudanese bureau a year after the conflict in Darfur began, he'd been impressed enough by their efforts to stay on after being discharge from the army. Still dressing in military fatigues, his assistance and protection proved invaluable to Kiah more times than she cared to remember.

Kiah explained to Ariel the area's history of struggle and it's most recent developments. She cited then U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell who described the genocide as the worst humanitarian crises of the 21st century.

The war torn region had suffered countless attacks by Janjawid Arab Militias. Over the last seven years Black African villages were bombed, civilians raped, tortured and killed while their lands and goods were confiscated.

Four hundred thousand had died with another two and a half million displaced.

Stopping infrequently for food and fuel, Kiah spent much of the night sharing accounts of genocide from Sudan and throughout Africa. Without knowing why, she freely shared details of her personal tragedy in a way she hadn't in over a decade.

Originally from Rwanda, Kiah's family had lived through the genocide that had taken three million lives. Or more accurately, she had.

A Hutu moderate, Kiah was thirty when war broke out against the Tutsis. Married with two children, she watched in helpless horror as her husband and oldest son were hacked to death with machetes, by Hutu Interahamwe Militia members for standing against the slaughter of innocent Tutsis.

Kiah wept bitterly hardly able to speak as she recalled the many who'd been massacred for refusing to massacre Tutsis and moderate Hutu friends and neighbors.

Kiah didn't weep alone. Caught up in the horror and atrocities Ariel relived each one. Ariel screamed inwardly at the murder of *her courageous husband* Gatimu Owusu and *her twelve year old son* Jawara.

It was *Ariel fleeing for her life* into the endless night with nothing but her eight year old daughter Bunmi. The wife of a murdered husband and mother of a murdered son, *Ariel* stumbled broken and bleeding into a Zaire refugee camp clutching a sick and starving daughter.

And it was *Ariel* who with her two bare hands buried her beautiful Bunmi along with all that was left of her life in a shallow unmarked grave...

## *Darfur*

Jomo Okoro drove for many hours through dozens of check points. Drinking coffee and popping an occasional pill

to stay alert, he listened silently as his two back seat passengers spoke, wept and eventually slept.

Just before sunrise he nearly nodded off himself. His thermos empty and his supply of stimulants gone, he rolled down his window trusting the rush of cold air and Ariel's snoring would keep him awake.

Dawn found Jomo quietly refilling the Land Rover in Al Fashir, the capital of Northern Darfur. As his passengers slept he continued south towards Nayala. Within an hour he was creeping along what was left of the roads leading to Sudan's Abu Shouk Internally Displaced Persons Camp.

Prior to reaching the main gate Jomo pulls over, gently nudging Kiah. Speaking quietly, the two exchange grins as Ariel wakes with a snort.

"We're here," offers Kiah, doing a little back seat primping.

"Good," Ariel responds, licking the dusty crust from her lips. "And where is here?" she asks as the car pulls back onto the road and towards the main gate.

"Abu Shouk Refugee Camp in the western region of North Darfur. It's one of a dozen Darfur camps. Medium sized, this one's overflowing with a population of sixty thousand. We're here to verify recent accounts of violence from survivors just arriving."

Showing his credentials at the main gate, Jomo steps outside the vehicle offering a pack of cigarettes to a pair of guards while chatting them up. A moment later, with the entrance clear, they proceed slowly into a sprawling mass of ten thousand tents.

Familiar with the camp, Jomo drives patiently through the induction area. He navigates through a sea of families walking aimlessly through a desert carrying sickly children and all their worldly possessions. Some shuffle

along accompanied by meager livestock. Others collapse where they stand, too weak or weary to continue.

Thirty minutes later, having passed only two vehicles, and those military, the three arrive in what they hope is the right section of the camp.

“This should be it,” explains Kiah getting out of the car in front of a makeshift flag pole with a dirt and torn red child’s t-shirt fluttering in the hot wind. “Not much of a marker, but it works. With a fluid population and no buildings or landmarks it’s hard to tell one tent from the next.”

Before the car door closes they’re mobbed by plaintive children. Precious, dirty outstretched hands and ragged faces beg for food and water. Taking charge of the growing crowd, Jomo leads them to the back of the Land Rover. Opening the hatch reveals large water dispensers as well as a few crates of food. Smiling, Jomo waves Kiah and Ariel on as he’s overrun by cheering children all with cups in hand pressing for a share.

The noisy commotion draws the attention of adults, one of which quickly approaches and embraces Kiah.

“*Ci yi bak. Yin acaa muoc,*” the young woman greets Kiah in Dinka, thanking her for coming. Ariel, fluent in the languages of men and angels listens quietly without appearing to understand. After several minutes Kiah introduces her old friend.

“Ariel this is Gimbya Yeboah, our liaison with the camp. A refugee herself, she now helps new arrivals settle in. She lives here keeping us informed of the camp’s conditions and reports from new comers.”

“Pleasure to meet you,” Ariel responds in English, offering Gimbya her hand.

“Thanks to you,” Gimbya replies haltingly.

“Looks like you’ll be interpreting,” Ariel suggests to Kiah.

“Usually do. Like many in the camp, Gimbya speaks Dinka and some Arabic but little English.”

The crowd continues growing around the Land Rover as children and adults from every direction close on Jomo. Sadly, he’ll be out of supplies long before the tiniest percentage even arrive.

Looking for privacy, Gimbya guides the visitors into her tent and out of sight. Entering she sends her son to fetch one of the camps recent arrivals.

“Her son Afua,” Kiah explains. “His name means merciful protection.”

Both Kiah *and* Ariel experience a fresh pang of heartache remembering Kiah’s son Jawara, who was nearly the same age when he was murdered.

### *Generations*

Gimbya invites her guests to sit. As G.A.S.P.’s representative she and Afua’s tent, doubling as a regional office, comes *equipped* with a few conveniences. These include a pair of bent aluminum folding chairs, a solar powered lamp they charge during daylight hours and a modest med kit.

“Don’t let me forget Jomo has some supplies for you and a treat for Afua in the Rover,” Kiah mentions to Gimbya as Afua returns followed closely by a pair of women and a young girl.

Gimbya invites them in. Noticing a crowd forming outside the tent, she asks her son to stand watch and see to it they are not disturbed. Having never met a white woman, Afua lingers, sneaking a glance and smile at Ariel before slipping outside.

Ariel smiles, she and Kiah offer the two women their seats. Sitting, the refugees begin a story they've come eighteen hours to hear. Thinking it necessary for Ariel's sake, Kiah translates from Dinka to English.

The women and child represent what's left of three generations of the Maalouf family. Native Sudanese, the fifty year old grandmother's name is Danuwa. Over the last seven years she had lost first her husband, and then her two sons and oldest daughter to the Janjaweed militias and their Sudanese government allies.

Fleeing from one region to the next, tragedy and death followed hard. Living a never ending nightmare she fought for years to feed and protect herself and her daughter Dayo. Running between hideouts and refugee camps they'd been captured by the militia. Threatened and beaten, they were used as forced labor and worse.

Dayo's beautiful three year old daughter Desta was the product of one of many rapes by men that had sexually assaulted them both. Three more tortured souls added to the hundreds of thousands of women so brutalized throughout Africa in less than two decades.

And pregnant women didn't live long among the militias.

Fearing for Dayo's life, Danuwa insisted the pair escape before her daughter's pregnancy was discovered. Thankfully they were able to do so. During Dayo's pregnancy and after Desta's birth they were fortunate to



encounter compassionate families willing to help them survive.

Until recently they'd been hiding in a small village about fifty miles northeast of the camp. Both women wept explaining how shelling and grenades, machine guns and machetes left the town desolate in a matter of hours. The Malloufs ran for their lives until arriving at the camp two days ago.

As the two women shared their story, Ariel relived it through them. Struggling to keep her composure she experienced in a single hour nearly seven years of devastating loss, brutal soldiers and exposure to the elements. She endured the horrors of war, hunger and disease. She was nearly driven mad with fear and fury, sorrow and sadness. As a grandmother, she railed at man and God that such evil should be given power to humiliate and destroy all she knew of innocence and goodness.

Unlike Dayo, her eyes saw *beyond* the murderous puppet militias. She *understood* the devilish marionettes the demonic enslaved men with. She *knew* the ruthless soldiers were nothing more than the pawns of thousands of demons dancing with delight in the wake of destruction.

Outwardly, tears dripped slowly down her face as they did down Kiah's as she translated. Inwardly, even her angelic soul reeled as her eternity of bliss was overwhelmed by human anguish.

Seven years of tribulation had decimated the Mallouf family. Tribulation she knew would be multiplied a billion times during the seven years of global horror the whole Earth would suffer during the End of Days.

*European Union*

*Chapter 20*

*Restless Sea*

Accordingly, globalization is not only something that will concern and threaten us in the future, but something

that is taking place in the present and to which  
we must first open our eyes. *Ulrich Beck*

Bidding good evening to his guests, Mace catches a taxi out of Rome to the coastal fishing port of Fiumicino just west of the *Leonardo da Vinci Airport*. Enjoying the city lights, the cab is soon speeding along the *Autostrada Roma-Aeroporto di Fiumicino*.

Half an hour later Mace steps from the car into the night, settles with the driver and takes a deep breath of the fresh sea air. Checking in with the clerk he pays €190 for a one bedroom with balcony and complementary breakfast.

On angel time Mace has only slept a handful of hours since arriving on Earth. Still, the crisp sea air, a calling fog horn and the cry of gulls lure him into the night

Following the *Tevere - pesca la canale* Mace finds a score of hard core fishermen trying their luck along the Embarcadero and twice as many couples out for *Passeggiata* or evening stroll.

Like them he's taken with the restless wonder of the sea. Shimmering in the moonlight he's captured by it's rare beauty, unique under Three Heavens. Vital to life on Earth, it's priceless often unappreciated by billions hurrying about their lives. It's peaceful rhythms speak quietly to Mace of persistent faithfulness.

Hours later Mace heads back the way he came. Passing the landing of *La Darsena* he stops, listening to the sea slap the hulls of a few dozen ships. Masts and hulls sway sleepily in the night as the small fleet waits to be awoken by the dawn.

Vanishing unnoticed, Mace decides to joining them.

Awaking later, Mace's disappointed to find he's slept through the complimentary breakfast. With a thought he exchanges last night's attire to jeans, loafers and a windbreaker.

Famished and recalling an out door cafe, He retraces his steps from the prior evening. Taking a seat along the embarcadero he sips espresso, savoring an Italian breakfast sandwich's perfect blend of spiced sausage and egg, peppers, onions and melted cheese.

Finished, Mace makes his way to the *canale del porto* passing crowds of locals and weekend visitors from throughout Italy, Europe and beyond. In a quieter spot Mace finds a lone old man baiting his pole.

"*Buon giorno Padre,*" greets Mace. Bundled up against the chilly sea breeze, an old cleric's collar is barely visible.

"*Buon giorno!*" replies the Father. "Have we met my son?" the priest inquires in English, unsure how good Mace's Italian might be.

"Just now" explains Mace fluently, dodging the spray of a restless wave. "How's the fishing?"

Mindful of his collar the elder priest jests, "for men or minnows?" pointing to a bucket sloshing with a small catch of *Cefalo* or Gray Mullet.

"Both."

"Underwhelming." the old priest sighs, casting his line back into the restless sea.

### *Priestly Concerns*

Mace spoke with the Padre Marcello Girodano into the afternoon. At eighty-nine, the life long fisherman and

resident of Rome knew the Italian coastline and Catholicism like the back of his worn hand. Mace enjoyed the warming sun, conversation and catching his first fish while minding the priest's pole during a restroom break.

Here to meet Padre Girodano, Mace guided the conversation, encouraging the cleric to discuss his experiences as a Roman Catholic priest.

Compelled by a willing ear and angelic grace, the Father condensed a lifetime of joys and disappointments into an afternoon, elaborating on whatever highlights Mace seemed interested in.

A child during WWII, he recalled the period vividly, finding it providential the city had escaped the destruction so common elsewhere. Such Divine protection and human suffering shaped Marcello's soul. Coming of age, he was drawn into the priesthood.

Padre Girodano had served as a priest for the better part of sixty years. A global shortage of clerics during his lifetime had raised the median age of Catholic priests to fifty. Happy to be needed, Marcello had waited to retire until he was seventy-five. His schedule greatly diminished, his post-retirement duties kept him happily busy. He performed the occasional mass, heard confession and visited the ill and aging.

The Father considered it a particular honor to have served near the Vatican for so long. Taking advantage of the opportunity he'd invested a lifetime immersed in the vast repository of Catholic and world history.

Looking back over his life Padre Girodano was pleased to have witnessed many great events and to have played a small role during such pivotal times.

Still the cleric had many concerns. Religious life coupled with certain insights smoldering over decades

threatened to dim the flame of his passion. Over decades the fires of his youth had been reduced to glowing embers.

Throughout his priesthood he'd retained the integrity of his faith while uncovering some haunting questions along the way.

He found certain realities of Catholicism troubling. Generally proud of the great and historic role of the Church globally, he nevertheless questioned many of its past and even present methods. Given their massive influence and resource, he feared Catholics, and Protestants as well, did far too little to intervene as they should in the course of human suffering.

He particularly grieved over the pain and poverty and of the Third World, persuaded Earth's resources were to be shared rather than usurped by the rich.

He worried about apathy and ignorance among even the First World faithful. He felt Christ's warnings against lifestyles of loving *possessions* more than *people* were falling on deaf ears.

The old priest found it disturbing that successive generation seemed more interested in amassing wealth and pleasures than in the *One* bestowing it. He feared that like Esau of old, humanity as well as the Church had exchanged the glories of eternity for momentary pleasures.

Padre Girodano was also troubled by the past. An avid religious historian, he had difficulty reconciling the centuries of bloodshed staining the hands of God's people. For the sake of convenience and prosperity, politics or war, the church had too often tolerated or even been the perpetrator of violence.

Living nearly a century, Father Marcello was convinced too much evil had been done and good left undone. A day of reckoning was nearing.

## *Specter Of Globalization*

As the afternoon sun begins to wane, Mace helps the Father to his feet. Rod and reel in hand the elder stretches his weary body, glad to have his new friend carry the five gallon plastic bucket half filled with sea water and the days catch.

Walking slowly along the embarcadero they resumed their lengthy conversation. The priest continues confiding his worries over European business and politics. Close to his nephew Stefano, president of a large branch of Bank of America, the two had concerns over geopolitics and economic globalization.

The angel smiles as the old priest stops to sell his fresh fish to the same cafe where Mace had eaten breakfast. A boardwalk icon for decades, the friendly cleric had become somewhat of a beloved religious relic.

Marcello slowly folds a few euros, tucking them safely away in his worn wallet. “Not much, but neither is my priest’s pension.”

Mace grins. “So you think Stefano would be interested in having dinner?”

“He’s a hardworking executive but not too busy for *il vecchio zio*,” the old uncle brags. “He even bought me a cell phone. Let me give him a call.” Punching out the number on an oversized keypad, Padre Girodano gets through. After exchanging pleasantries, the priest smiles, nodding that Stefano would join them for dinner.

The pair catches a bus from the waterfront to the Father’s retirement community. Inviting Mace in, Marcello offers him a sandwich and a cup of tea.

As the old man washes up and changes for dinner Mace notes the one bedroom apartment's warm furnishings and mementos representing six decades of service to God and His people.

"Gifts from parishioners," explains Padre Girodano with a smile, stepping into the small living room. Old school, even dressed casually the aged retired cleric still wears his collar. "Shall we go? The restaurant's just a few blocks away."

"You seem in good health?"

"I try to stay physically and mentally, socially and spiritually active. Too old to hurry, leisurely walks help with all four." Proving the point he stops, greeting and chatting briefly with half a dozen residents along the way.

At the restaurant they find Stefano waiting, table ready. Padre Girodano greets his nephew with an affectionate kiss, makes the introductions.

Seated, the waitress takes their drink order. The Father invites Stefano to order for them, his being somewhat of an officinato of local cuisine.

"So my uncle tells me your with Global Organization Dynamics," Stefano begins. "Never head of it.

"G.O.D. does many things. Currently we're looking into world trends that might benefit or harm humanity."

"That covers a lot of territory. Care to elaborate?"

"I'm here researching social and political, economic and ecological tipping points. Particularly areas where mismanagement of resources and technology, pose a viable threat."

"That's a mouthful," Father Marcello chimes in before addressing his beloved nephew. "*Nipote*, Mace and I spent the day discussing religion and politics. It's wise to be



careful who you talk to, but sixty years as a priest's taught me about people. I trust him."

"Well, if my uncle's willing to *vouch* for you. Our food's here. *Salute`*."

After a courses or two and some wine Stefano settles into the meal, sharing the history of his powerful employer.

"Bank of America was the Bank of Italy prior to a merger in the 1920's. Over time we became the world's largest financial institution serving 150 countries. Our client base includes nearly all of the American and Global Fortune 500 companies."

Devouring his antipasto Mace nods for Stefano to continue as he dives into a plate of *Baccalà alla Vicentina*, Salt Cod with Polenta,

"Over the last few decades there's been an acceleration of mergers and acquisitions. While streamlining international business and the financial sector, it's also increased the risk of mismanagement and corruption as demonstrated by the recent economic collapse."

"I've been to Wall Street and had the opportunity to explore the subject in detail."

### *Rome's Resurrection*

"Good," replies Stefano. "But are you aware of the key role Europe's played historically in globalization? Prior to the formation of the European Union, few would have imagined that given millennia of competition, hostility and war, Europe would so quickly unite to rival or excel the super power status of the U.S.!"

While the E.U. is currently comprised of twenty seven states, the Western European Union has a longer, even *ancient* history. The W.E.U.'s ten 'full members nations' are the heart of the E.U. and represent a particularly powerful economic and voting block. These same ten nation-states also happen to geographically reflect a modern day revival of the old Roman Empire."

"I recall a prediction along this line in the Bible's Book of Daniel."

"Exactly!" agrees the old priest grinning at his nephew.

"So *vecchio zio* keeps telling me," Stefano sighs. "My area of expertise is banking and economics. What I know is that between the Old World and the New, for better and worse, globalization is accelerating exponentially. Wealth and assets are being accumulated by the very rich even in the face of skyrocketing debt and worldwide poverty.

Global markets and economies seem destined to collide. It wouldn't surprise me if through a catastrophic collapse there was a *global merger* creating a unified world economy."

Stefano pauses, looking patiently at his uncle. "Go ahead, I know you're *dying* to say it."

"It just seems to me that something or someone is orchestrating events that would allow the Western European Union to be at the center of this new world order. Wouldn't that be like a phoenix arising from the ashes of ancient Rome?"

"Let me be sure I'm following," Mace addresses them both. "You're saying it's possible a new economic ultra super power, centered in Europe, could stretch from America in the west to some or all of Asia's nations in the east?"

“It’s far more than possible,” confides Stefano soberly. “Given current conditions and opportunities for vast profiteering, I’d be surprised if it didn’t happen sooner than latter.”

*Power Of Love*  
*Chapter 21*

*Baptism By Cloud*

We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can only fly by embracing one another. *Luciano de Crescenzo*

Spending the day and evening with the old priest and his nephew had proved enlightening and troubling. His assignment in Fiumicino completed, Mace catches a taxi back to Rome. Arriving in the city he enjoys Rome's fresh night air and famous city lights. Trying to relax, he finds his angelic mind racing. Inwardly he cringes knowing Ariel and he and will soon be summoned before *The Court*.

He can't see their testimony benefiting Heaven or Earth.

Certainly they'd met a handful of caring people, each having solved a small part of the puzzle. Yet what were so few in the face of billions largely ignorant, apathetic or worse?

Humanity seemed hopelessly engulfed in Satanic strategy and their own synergistic sin, both inflaming man's basest nature while retarding the image of God within.

Still, the Creator must have a plan. Omnipotence would prevail. But what of these *Their* creatures?

Mace was unaccustomed to worry. Friendly and compassionate, a warrior angel's strength and assurance flows from the Almighty. Beyond the Trinity, with the possible exception of their fallen counterparts, no force under the Three Heavens had ever posed a threat to their prowess or peace of mind.

For the first time in his ancient angelic life was Mace was conflicted. Beneath the dark starry Roman sky it began dawning on him why.

Mace had learned to love humanity.

He grins picturing Sam and the Millennial Institute, Carl and Antonio, Padre Girodano and his nephew as toddlers catching the *Great Dragon* by his tail!

Unable to see their invisible *Adversary* or even his minions, they fought blindly to resist them.

They *fought*. like warriors!

They were just like Mace, with the unfortunate exceptions of strength and skill not to mention an eternity of preparation and wisdom.

Yet even in their weakness and lack of resource they *fought*. And he loved them for it.

Not with the affinity he had for holy angels arising from wholeness and strength and enjoyed in the security of Heaven. Rather with the tenderness and concern of an older brother for a newborn crying and wriggling helplessly.

Not with love for a blazing eternal glorious day. But love for a flickering flame hopelessly wrestling against overwhelming darkness.

A flame that might well be extinguished any moment.

*Love* fills Mace, lifting him. Borne aloft into the night, he's baptized under a starry canopy within the misty clouds above Rome. Bathed in moonlight, *Love* from Heaven streams through him, falling gently on the darkness below. Drenched in *Love*, Mace's soul overflows as he travails for humanity's.

Spent, *Love* embraces him. "That's a *single* drop" *Love* whispers, clouds nearest Mace flashing with each word.

"A drop of Our *compassion* for this planet," breathes the Wind. "A drop of Our *love* for this people. A drop of Our *concern* for their safety."

"A drop of Our *resolve* not to allow the final battle for Earth to go unfought!" the Spirit declares, lightening and booming thunder flashing angrily against the night.

"You're Our *witness*..." God reminds, dissipating into the heavens.

The moment fading, Mace descends slowly, eyeing the Vatican below. Nearing, he notices an ominous glow about the base of the Egyptian obelisk at the center of St.

Peter's Square. Suddenly the red marble bursts into spiraling flame. Reaching the top of the obelisk it pulses, spitting an angry beam of malevolent crimson into the night.

Struck a second later, Mace is knocked unconscious from the dark sky.

### *Ruel, The Destroyer*

Mace awakes to the smell of dank earth, throbbing blackness and the sound of slow, methodical clapping. The musk and darkness were the results of *where* he was, buried a thousand feet below the *Via Salaria* in a vast unknown chamber deep below the ancient Catacomb of Priscilla. The pain and headache were the result of *how* he had arrived. The slowly clapping hands belong to his abductor.

"*Touching,*" a *voice* in the darkness disdains between claps, mocking Mace's helplessness. "And *pathetic*" the blackness spits threateningly. "*Look* at you! Michael's *choice*, unable to protect himself much less others. *Warriors* know better than to confuse strength for weakness. Than to exchange power for love."

Groggy, Mace listens as the indictments echo in the black chamber. Calculating it's dimensions as his stalker nears.

Suddenly the catacomb fills with a chorus of fiendish hissing. "*Foolish* little angel! Why are you here? To *love* rotting flesh?"

Gripped by fear, Mace gnashes his teeth against the malice smothering him. Curses slash, clawing at his mind, driving him into despair.

“Enough!” a *voice* commands above the clamor. The vicious chaos recedes. In flickering torchlight Mace sees his would be assassin transform into a vile living cloak, flowing angrily from the back of Satan’s greatest standing general.

Mace struggles to stand, brushing off two thousand year old dust.

“Where do you get those?” he groans, rubbing his eyes. As his vision clears so do his suspicions. “Ruel I assume.”

His questions meet with ominous silence, as the *other* takes a step nearer and into the light. Teen feet tall with five hundred pounds of fierce muscle, the fallen angel’s as massive as he is malevolent.

“Mace,” the smaller angel offers, trying not to appear intimidated. Again his introduction goes unanswered.

“What’s wrong? You and your robe were pretty chatty a minute ago?” jokes Mace to ease his own tension in the haunting darkness.

Ruel isn’t laughing.

“Like my office?” booms Ruel, breaking his silence and gesturing around the expansive antechamber. As he does dozens of torches blaze brightly revealing ancient crypts and mosaics filling floor to ceiling of the massive mausoleum.

“Suits you.”

“The good old days,” reflects Ruel. “I *enjoyed* killing the Advocate and his lackeys and then leveling Jerusalem.”

“Let me guess,” mocks Mace. “They had it coming?”

“Do you know by the time *my* Roman’s were through with the Jews who betrayed *Him* they’d torn down a thousand houses to get enough wood for the crosses!”

“So you use the wicked to kill the righteous and then get rid of them too. Kind of an equal opportunity Destroyer?”

Ignoring the sarcasm Ruel continues meandering down memory lane. “I’ve had *so many* campaigns. Of course I had my favorites. I taught China’s ancient dynasties and the Pharaohs how to grind millions into dust. I raised the bar with Babylon’s Nebuchadnezzar as well as Cyrus and Darius of Persia.”

“I turned Xerxes and Alexander into conquerors. Together we slaughtered millions. They were really ‘Great’ to work with.”

There was Hannibal and his elephants, and Rome with its legions.”

“Good times?”

“Attila the Hun and Genghis Khan were quite a pair” Ruel smiles fondly. “How we made the known world tremble and Christians scream! Did you know Catholics called Attila the ‘scourge of *God*?’”

“I didn’t,” Mace yawns wearily.

“I won’t bore you with details but I’ve gotta give a shout out to Hitler, Stalin and Mao! They and their *movements* killed and enslaved nearly a billion just getting started!

And when the right man wasn’t around I found a good germ would do nicely. *Wrath of God* kind of thing.” Ruel boasts.

“Let me guess. Small Pox, Influenza, the Black Death?”

“I’ve destroyed billions” Ruel growls, stepping within arms distance.

“And you’re telling *me* because?”

“*Because* I’m getting ready to do it again and *then some!*” Ruel warns, bending down to look Mace eye to eye.

Mace returns the stare waiting for Ruel to finish.



“Want to know the *best part?*” Ruel hisses, his malignant lips touching Mace’s ear. “This time *you and God* are going to help.”

### *Conquering Omnity*

“And why would we do that?” coaxes Mace.

“Because of *love*,” Ruel laughs. “You think love’s a gift. The *ultimate* virtue.” he scorns. “Love’s a *curse!* A retrovirus, turning everyone it touches into weak fools! All but the Rebellious are blind slaves to it. So blind that in the end you’ll destroy what you claim to love and yourselves in the process!”

“So *Love*’s the *destroyer?*”

“Take a long hard look around! With a loving God in charge everything should be perfect and *paradise* should be everywhere. Instead, paradise is lost and it’s Rebellion that’s ubiquitous, in time *and* eternity!”

“Wouldn’t that be *your* doing?”

“Of course. We’re Creation’s *liberators!*”

“Liberating from what?” asks Mace incredulously. “Sanity?”

“From Love!” Ruel bellows. “From *Tyrannical* demands for constant selflessness and sacrifice, subservience and humiliation. From slavery to this puny weak *virtue* into the glories of unrestrained freedom!”

“You’re describing rebellion, not love” Mace argues. “*Rebellion*’s driven you mad.”

“Then *He* was the maddest Rebel of all. Think of it. Omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence all reduce to a sperm. Why? Love *conquered* Omnity!”

“Omnity can’t be conquered. You should know that.”

“You’re *enslaved* by whatever rules you,” Ruel grins, quoting scripture. “Just Consider *Him*. Dethroned. Stripped of eternal glory and majesty. *Born* in a feeding trough. Rejected. Beaten into hamburger meat. Crucified. Why? For Love! Because *He* loved *them*, even while they *hated* and *killed* him.”

“You drove them to it!”

“To prove *our* point. To prove it to the Third Heaven. To rub *God’s* face in it!

“What point? That your seditious killers bent on humanicide?

“That the *Trinity’s* wrong and that creation’s better off free of *Them!*” snarls Ruel. “To reveal that *They’re Omnipresent Hypocrites*, forcing us to eternally bow before them! That *They’re Omnipotent Dictators*, claiming power gives them the right to rule everything forever! That *Their Omniscient Narcissists*, demanding creation remain eternal sycophants, loving them for *Their* glorious benevolence *or else!*

If *God’s love* then we want no part of either! Remember, *They* stood by for millennia watching men butcher each other by the billions.”

“Coerced by beings like you!”

“To force *Their* hand! To show Omnicity’s too weak to intervene. Why else let the slaughter go on? Why else let the Rebellions start in the first place!”

“Free will?” Mace offers, having to admit it’s a question billions of men and angels would like more fully answered.

“Free Will? Haven’t you been listening? There’s no such thing! Particularly for *humanity!* Whatever will mankind has is at best *extremely limited ignorant and momentary*. *Bound* by vastly limited and cruel choices.

*Bound* by ignorance, the whole human race together knowing less than a single impudent angel like you. *Bound* by time, born yesterday they *die tomorrow*. How *free* can they be?"

"Free enough to know better than to bite the hand that creates and sustains them."

"Perhaps, in the old days" Ruel admits gesturing to the tombs. "Today few *really* believe in God anymore, at least not enough to *obey* His commands. And that's under largely favorable circumstances. Circumstances that are about to take a catastrophic change for the worse."

"So it's *more* pain, suffering and death for humanity? That's your plan to prove the Rebellion should be in charge."

"The Third Heaven will understand once we're through. Mankind is *expendable*. *God* knows it and so do we. They're nothing more than beasts to be slaughtered. Hell, they're beasts who slaughter themselves.

"Again, thanks to you."

"Like cattle into a shoot," Ruel laughs. "What's the big deal? *God* gave man lifespans the length of a blink of an eye. They're *born* dead."

"They're *born* with the promise of Eternity."

"An eternity of what?" demands Ruel. "Servitude to *Their* will or Hell and the Lake of Fire!"

### *Paradise Lost?*

"Have you *been* to Heaven?" Mace chides. "It's paradise, even after your Insurrection."

"I've not only been there but unlike you I've been in the Congregation of the North. For eons I walked among the

Stones of Fire. From before time I stood at the left hand of Lucifer's resplendence as the worship of billions of angels flowed through us."

"To *God*," Mace reminds. "You were among the most glorious and wise of us. Angelic high priests. But it's you who've rejected strength for weakness and the love of Creator and creation for dreams of evil power that can never last. Your glory is corrupted and your wisdom turned to madness."

"We not the insane ones!" thunders Ruel. "It's the Trinity who's been conquered by insane devotion to a single weak and dangerous ideal. They're *infected* with love. And worse, as carriers *They're* enslaving *all* creation. They must be stopped!"

"So what's your alternative? Chaos and anarchy?"

"Only to the degree necessary to achieve our final goal."

"Which is?"

"Freedom you fool!" Ruel bellows, filling the cave with his cry.

"From what? God? From His love?"

"From *Their* demands! Any and all of them!"

"For brilliant beings you're not too bright. How can *even you* be free from Omnity?"

"Let's just say we've *found* a way," growls Ruel menacingly. "And it's you foolish angel who aren't very bright."

"Your *Rebellion's* not free" objects Mace. "You're more enslaved than ever. You just replaced the glorious Godhead with Satan, a cheap vile substitute."

At that, Ruel erupts in malevolent rage. "Lucifer has *power* and *plans* that a pitiful angel like you could never comprehend!"

Emanating pure evil, fallen angelic glory explodes throughout the vast cavern and beyond. Parting like wings, Ruel's robe irrupts in fury crumbling the massive walls. As the mosaic ceiling collapses, boulders shower the floor of the ancient crypt, forcing Mace closer to Ruel to avoid being crushed.

Satan's greatest general roars in furor, as shedding all restraint he transforms. Growing too large for the cavern his dark robe unfurls into the wings of a massive magnificent *Luciferian Dragon*.

Ruel glistening talons seize Mace. With a leap, the general ascends, breaking free of the bounds of Earth. Evil glory fills the sky with majesty befitting a god.

"You're pathetic!" Ruel booms. Aloft he reveals his true nature, filling the heavens like a constellation. "You have no idea what our Rebellion is capable of. Now is the time. The stage's set for *you puny angel* to open the final act."

Crushed, Mace hangs limp in Ruel's cruel grip. His consciousness fading, he hears a wonderful voice.

"*Though you ascend into the heavens you will be cast down to the pit,*" warns the Archangel of War. "Release him or I could send you there *now*."

"Take him!" Ruel snarls at his unseen foe. "As I said, we've need of him." Ruel tears Mace, flinging him towards Earth before vanishing.

Falling, he's caught in the yet mightiest arms of creation.

"Are you harmed?"

"Had him right were he wanted me," Mace jokes, wincing at shooting pain from his bruised ribs. "What's up?"

"Your time. You've been summoned to appear before the Court.

*Out of Africa*  
*Chapter 22*

*Famine and Plague*

He who does not punish evil commands it to be done.

*Leonardo de Vinci*

Ariel spent the day following Kiah Owusu throughout the Abu Shouk Refugee Camp. They walked

most of it since driving the narrow dirt roads choked with migrants, livestock and discarded trash was slower and drew attention.

The mid day Darfur's sun beat relentlessly on the camps sixty thousand inhabitants, forcing those who were able to crowd inside small tents. Jomo headed back to the Land Rover for a nap before the long drive home. Kiah and Ariel continued touring the camp, passing thousands of weak and sick refugees, most barely surviving on a starvation diet and little water. Meager sanitation and medical care further exacerbated an already intolerable situation.

By the time the afternoon was spent so was Ariel. Even after years adjusting to the sights and sounds of sorting through the suffering and squaller, the camp took its toll on Kiah and Jomo. It was worse for Ariel, her *gift* amplifying the tragedy around her testing the limits of even angelic strength.

Planning to be clear of Darfur by early evening, the three said goodbye to Gimbya and her son and were on their way before dusk. Returning the way they came, Jomo hoped to be in Al Fashir within a few hours.

During the trip Kiah confided her personal tragedy had proved the impetus for a career with G.A.S.P.. She found solace in offering herself to Africa's needy and championing the plight of the impoverished worldwide.

The trip back to Al Fashir gave Ariel a chance to ask Kiah a few more questions. "That was eye opening. You really have to see it to believe it."

"Even then it's pretty hard. Harder still when you consider similar tragedies on a global scale."

“You mentioned you’ve been compiling research on various causes of death during the last century. How’s that coming?”

“Sadly” answers Kiah, slowly shaking her head as the Land Rover bumps along. “It’s estimated there were over four billion deaths during the 20th Century. Nearly two hundred million of these were the result of oppression and war, including forty million or more from man-made famine.

“Food as a weapon?”

“Anything to control, terrorize or kill.” groans Kiah, bone weary of it all. “And of course, when people are starving they become ill. Almost half the disease in poor countries is attributed to lack of food and water, sanitation and health care.”

“Conditions like we just witnessed?”

“More or less. Believe it or not there are millions in the world less fortunate than those we just left. Others, for a variety of reasons, simply lack the resources to provide for themselves properly.”

“All of which could end today if man had the humanity to do it?”

“No question. We’ve had the resources for almost a century. If we treated each with dignity and kindness there’s nothing we couldn’t do. Think of the trillions we spend on war and defense while squandering trillions more on vices like alcohol, drugs and prostitution. Any of those budgets *alone* could feed, clothe, educate and provide health care throughout the world. Together...?”

“Earth would be a virtual paradise.”

“Instead, by neglect, poverty and violence we’ve made it a war zone. All it would take is thirty billion in American dollars to provide the world’s necessary food and sanitation requirements. That’s less than a third of what the



E.U. spends on *alcohol each year*. Instead, today a billion people will go hungry with a child dying every few seconds from malnutrition. Diarrhea will kill nearly two million this year, again mostly children. Another half million kids will go blind from vitamin A deficiency.”

“So what’s the problem?”

“Evil.”

“You mean violence and war?”

“Evil wears many masks. From barbaric to ultra civilized, from grotesque to simply disinterested. But in the end it always serves the same purpose.”

“Which is?”

“To please ourselves at the expense of others.”

“Aren’t people basically good?”

“If so, something else is at work. Either way, unfortunately it only takes a single match to set a whole forest ablaze. It only takes a cup or two of toxin to poison the well. It’s true there’s plenty of good in the world. It’s not even a question of people not caring or giving. The question is do we care to give *enough*.”

“Wasn’t it Edmond Burke who said, ‘all it takes for evil to prosper is for good men to do nothing?’”

“He was close,” Kiah yawns, growing weary in the fading light. “Like darkness, evil is opportunistic. It fills every void left by light. What he should have said is that all it takes for evil to incrementally *take over the entire world* is for good people to fail to do *enough*.”

### *Demonic Chains*

As the three neared Al Fashir, Ariel offers to buy Kiah and Jomo dinner, explaining she was planing to meet a colleague in Al Fashir before returning to the corporate office.

Kiah and Jomo decline having pressing business and a long drive ahead of them.

Ariel uses their last few minutes together to question Kiah about African history. Kiah explains Africa had a long sad one.

Much of it having revolved around slavery.

Slavery was nearly as ancient as man and as wide spread. Sold as laborers, warriors and concubines, the institution of slavery was mentioned millennia before Christ in works like the Code of Hammurabi.

By the first half of the 16th century European slavery consisted primarily of Africans. During the second half, it's slave trade focused on direct delivery to the Americas.

As early as the 18th century slaves were being taken from the interior of the continent, conquered by their African brothers, to be bartered or sold to Europeans who feared to venture inland because of disease and conflict.

Others sources included the undesirable, ill or those unfortunate enough to loose favor with those in authority. Many facing imprisonment or death were sold for profit. In this way tens of millions of Africans were abducted from their families, enslaved by men themselves *enslaved by devils*.

It was past dark when Jomo pulled into the parking lot of the Al Fashir Hotel. No five start resort, it was hardly worthy of the designation Hotel. Both Kiah and Jomo strenuously objected to leaving Ariel alone in such a place.

Ariel, drawing on angelic grace, calmed their fears and encouraged Kiah to quickly finish her history lesson.

She explains that those who remained in the Dark Continent faced an insidious evil. As with nearly all ancient cultures, the people of Africa had long worshiped the fallen angels and their titanic offspring as gods, as well as a pantheon of lesser spirits and even their own ancestors.

Yet more than usual these tribal traditions persisted in the face of modernism. Shamanism and witchcraft, mysticism and the occult often blending with, rather than having been replaced by, Christianity or Islam.

As elsewhere in the world where such dark practices persisted, it was the vileness of the demonic worship that gripped Africa so tightly. Unspeakable ancient acts of debasement and violence had sown seeds that in time yielded unimaginable atrocities and crimes against humanity.

Yet there was another cause for the entrenchment of such deep darkness. It was the corruption of *Light* produced by trafficking in human misery. Even as Lucifer's Heavenly rebellion had marred Earth, so European greed had left lasting scars on Africa.

Africa was living proof it's hard to evangelize a people you're plundering. Hard to break the shackles of demonism while carting off fathers and sons, mothers and daughters in iron chains. Hard to encourage people to love their neighbor while stealing their resources. Hard to preach the glories of Heaven while subjugating generations of families and even whole nations to the living Hell of oppression, poverty and slavery.

# *Temple Of Anubis*

## *Chapter 23*

### *God Of The Dead*

Deep within our secret soul do demons dwell and  
take their toll. *Shakespeare's King Henry V*

After failed attempts to persuade Ariel to reconsider staying in Al Fashir, Kiah and Jomo are forced to say goodbye. She assures them she not as helpless as she looks.

As they drive away Ariel heads into the dilapidated building. Warily she watching the hotel's heavy double doors creek shut behind her. Turn, she's shocked to find the entrance to an ancient torchlit temple.

"Welcome Ariel!" barks a enthroned deity with the golden head of a jackal and the massive black body of an African god.

"Anubis! Lord of the dead *and* many who still live," boasts the demon Prince of Africa bathed in light dancing off immense golden walls encrusted with brilliant diamonds and gemstone.

Feeling somewhat vulnerable as a young woman in Muslim dress Ariel transforms into his angelic form for the first time since arriving on Earth. Seven feet tall, male and muscular again Ariel resists the urge to stretch and sigh in relief.

The temple seems vast in size and age. The lack of external light suggest a hidden underground lair. Flickeringly lit, squinting Ariel makes out a host of enraged demons filling the recesses of the cavern.

"Where am I?" Ariel asks in a tone suggesting it may be unwise for a demon, even a Prince, to abduct an angel.

"The sacred Nubian mountain *Gebel Barkal*, birthplace of gods," rumbles Anubis. "We're several hundred miles north of Khartoum. From this temple the ancient Cushites exported my fame as the god of the underworld to Egypt and throughout the Middle East."

"Nice head," Ariel mocks, finding the Prince a bit full of himself.

"It serves its purpose," Anubis growls, his long black tongue licking large canine teeth and jowls.

"Which is?"

“A warning of Death’s ravenous appetite,” Anubis shouts. The giant Prince springs from his throne with the agility of an animal of prey, instantly closing the distance between them. His bravado sends a stir of excitement through the army lurking in the shadows.

“In Africa I am Death!” Anubis bellows. Adding as he gestures about him “and like the jackal we hunt in *packs*.”

At that Ariel’s encircled by snarls and hisses, growls and roars as hideous beings inch from the darkness. Spawned millennia ago by a pantheon of Trans-African deities, hundreds of hybrid creatures paw and slither, lunge and fly into the flickering light.

Unnerved, the angel wrestles to bolster his courage, thankful he’s impervious to the menacing demons’ teeth, fangs and claws. *Theoretically*.

“I am the Advocate’s proxy,” he reminds, hoping demons can take a hint.

“So I’ve heard. Enjoying Africa? Isn’t Darfur wonderful. The smell of *me* is everywhere!”

“Your not *death*. Though God knows you’ve caused enough of it.”

“A little brazen for a lone *messenger*, aren’t we?” warns Anubis as the circle of enraged demons constricts.

“A lone messenger *angel*. You forgot the most *important* part.”

“Hardly, or you’d be dead already” replies Anubis, as with a gesture his army reluctantly backs into the shadows. “But you’re right about one thing.”

“What’s that?”

“*I’m not Death*” Anubis growls, turning his back on Ariel and taking a step towards the darkness of his temple.

“*I am!*” booms a voice echoing in the black, sending the demons scurrying for cover. “And *I’ve* been looking forward to meeting you.”

### *Discovery*

Ariel awakes to spinning darkness and yet another massive head ache. Thinking discretion the better part of valor, he lays still assessing the situation.

*Samel!* Ariel realizes, the cold shiver running down his spine confirming his fear. He focuses his mind to adjust to the threat and his eyes to the darkness. Much dimmer than before, flickering torchlight reveals he’s still in the Temple of Anubis. The smothering sensation of terror suggests he’s not alone.

“*Awake* are we?” voices hiss in the blackness just inches from Ariel’s ears.

Flinching, Ariel tries not to let fear show.

“Brave *little* angel” the voices slither. “Fortunate for you his *majesty’s* may be pleased to toy with you a *little longer.*”

The blackness parts as the flowing robe of Satan’s general divides, revealing a shimmering Samel scowling down upon Ariel from atop Anubis’ throne.

“So *You’re* His proxy?” Samel smirks, unimpressed.

“One of them” replies Ariel, attempting to get up but unable to do so.

“Having trouble?”

“Should be fine in a moment.”

“Why you’ve come to Africa?”

“To *witness* conditions here” Ariel replies, still too weak to stand.

“Then I *can* be of service. I understand you’ve been given a *gift*. Let’s try it out, shall we?”

With that the room spins away, leaving Ariel in a complete void. Enjoying his power over the lesser angel, Samel gloats unseen as Ariel ‘hangs’ helplessly in complete darkness without sense of time, dimension or direction.

Samel violates Ariel, taring the Earthly memories of thousands from the pinned angel. He rips through every experience from Los Angeles to Bangkok to Darfur. Helplessly Ariel’s forced to relive the horrors *all at once*.

“*Impressive isn’t it*” Samel sighs, enjoying the amassed record of inhumanity while the hapless angel grimaces under the force of his will.

“But why dwell in the past when the present’s much more interesting?” Laughing he fills the chamber and Ariel’s mind with thousands of abhorrent experiences being lived out at that moment. Ariel screams as every vile, murderous and blasphemous act occurring across the continent breaks as a flood against his soul.

“You and your sheltered little angelic life” mocks Samel. “Now you begin to comprehend what the *Rebellion*’s doing here! For millennia we’ve poked and prodded these wretched beings like mice in a maze. Feeding their lusts and rewarding their appetites. We’re their inspiration to deny God as they remake themselves in *our* image!”

“And just wait till you see tomorrow” Samel bellows as the void explodes with images of millions of new atrocities, igniting a *jihad* of terror sweeping across Africa, the Middle East and then the globe. Ariel cries in horror as bullets and bombs bleed cities red while conventional and nuclear war devastate nations and continents.



Ariel's overcome with the nightmarish spectacle of Earth's future, the angle's hold on consciousness wanes as the *insanity* of such unprecedented and needless suffering mounts. Fighting against *Samel's* vision of the future, he struggles for mastery of his mind, weakened by fear of the seemingly inevitable.

"You must admit, it comes together beautifully in the end" Samel boasts allowing the images to fade and giving Ariel's senses a chance to return.

"My testimony will reveal your *treachery*."

"Your *testimony* will reveal the truth," snaps Samel. "That mankind's *chosen* darkness over light, evil over good, death over life *trillions* of times."

"I've witnessed your manipulation and deceptions!"

"What you've witnessed is that I hold no gun to their head. *You're* testimony will prove they do that all by themselves."

## *Departure* *Chapter 24*

### *Disagreement*

There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights  
are stronger in the contrast. *Charles Dickens*

“As do *you*,” warns an invisible presence. Even through his delirium Ariel’s forced to smile.

“*Gabriel*” Samel spits out the name. “Good of you to come.”

“Release him,” Gabriel commands, appearing between Ariel and Samel.

“As you wish,” replies Samel, loosing Ariel who, takes a moment to stand and steady himself.

“You’ve become a monster,” Gabriel groans, remembering their ancient friendship. “Torturing *men* and now *angels*! How far you’ve fallen”

“Or *risen*” objects Samel. “Depending on your point of view.”

“Truth’s not a matter of opinions. You knew that once.”

“Ignorance *seems* bliss” Samel mocks. “But I prefer knowledge.”

“So you *knowingly* choose death and to take *as much* of creation as you can down with you!”

“Consider it a *quality of life* issue”

“The life awaiting you is an eternity of weeping and gnashing teeth.”

“Lies and propaganda! It’s eons since the Rebellion yet here we are.”

“God’s patience, even with angels, only *seems* infinite. You’ll pay for the atrocities you’ve committed, and the billions you’ve led into torment.”

“Casualties of *His* war against freedom to rule ourselves.”

“Telling how often those demanding *their* freedom do so at the expense of others.”

“Why not! Why should strength be shackled by weakness?”

“Judging from you’ve actions you prefer it the other way around.”

“When necessary.”

“In that case” warns Gabriel “Omnity will soon give the Rebellion what it both wants *and* deserves.”

“Time or the end of it will tell” Samel scoffs.

“I *could* arrange a demonstration as a reward for torturing my angel.”

“You could *try*” Samel replies coldly, but I’d advise against it.”

“You forget yourself Samel. I’m an *Archangel*.”

“An Archangel of *message*.” Samel scoffs.

“You’re hardly a match for *any* Archangel.”

“But *we* might be!” thunders a more sinister voice that echoes throughout Anubis’ Temple. Stepping from the shadows, Ruel’s glory proceeds him in radiant anti-light. Following at a distance Anubis and a cohort of lesser demons inch nearer.

“Satan’s generals against Heaven’s courier” Ruel laughs. “Two to one. I *like* the odds!”

“You were never good with numbers,” an even greater voice shakes the demonic sanctuary. “Not before the Revolt and not now” mocks Michael revealing the power of his presence.

The unexpected arrival of Heaven’s Archangel of War catches Satan’s Generals off guard. The changed equation tapers Ruel and Samel arrogance.

Michael fixes his attention on Samel. “Gabriel asked a question. What about Ariel?”

“Examining his *gift*,” retorts Samel, bolstering his courage with hubris.

“A gift intended for Heaven’s Court, not your perverted pleasure,” challenges Michael.

“Consider it *discovery*. Just examining the witness. We’re entitled to full disclosure.”

“Neither of you are the prosecutor,” Michael corrects.

“Something *you* should be thankful for,” warns Ruel casting a gloating glance at Samel. The pair seem to savor a delicious secret.

“We’ve known the end of this from the beginning,” Michael interrupts.

“So *They* say,” Ruel disagrees. “But we know you were never *his* equal. As Lucifer, *he* was greater and as Satan, the Adversary of Omnity itself, *he’s* more so. When standing before *him* it’s you *Michael* who will be out of his league.”

Michael glance wearily at Gabriel. “Twisting truth’s driven the Insurrection mad. I fear there’s nothing that can be done for you.”

“You should *fear!*” Ruel agrees. “Afraid *of* not *for* us.”

“We agree on one thing” Gabriel concurs. “Time or the end of it will tell. See you in Court.”

## *Temple of Justice*

### *Chapter 25*

#### *Debriefing*

It is so stupid of modern civilization to have given up believing in the devil when he is the only explanation of it. *Ronald Knox*

Stepping from time into eternity, Maciel and Ariel sigh in relief. On the steps of Supreme Court their bodies and souls unclench, basking in Heaven's light and the protection of Archangels.

Summoned by the Advocate, translation was quick and without incident. Taking a moment to stretch and get their bearings, it becomes clear their arrival is anticipated. Within moments a large excited crowd of the faithful gathers.

Gabriel smiles. "News of the Adversary's demand to begin the End of Days and the nature of your assignment's swept Heaven.

"Congratulations. You're celebrities!" a majestic Voice calls out as the crowd parts with bows and smiles for the King.

"My Lord!" the two reply simultaneously, bending long and low while the Archangels nod in respect.

"Apologies for bringing you here directly," explains the Advocate. "We've only a short time to debrief and discuss your testimony."

Facing the Court, Mace is once again overwhelmed by its magnificence.

Earth had never dreamt it's like. Under the three Heavens, only New Jerusalem, modeled after it, rivals it's glory. Equally ornate, the enormous *Redeemer's City* was the most glorious in all of creation.

In many ways New Jerusalem's a phenomenally massive replica of Heaven's Supreme Court. In the shape of a cube, it measures fifteen hundred miles wide, tall and deep. *The City* has twelve stories, each a hundred and twenty miles high making it tall enough that one could watch Earth's low orbiting satellites crash into its crystalline walls.

Glorious as a bride adorned for her wedding, it was designed as the future flagship of God's occupation of the First Heaven from His Capital Planet *Earth*.

As for Heaven's Supreme Court, golden ground as reflective as glass surrounds it miles deep on all sides. Alive, it's so pure and luxurious that by comparison the best of Earth's gold seems dead and dull as dirt.

As with New Jerusalem, each wall of the Temple of Justice was cut from gemstones the size of mountains and set in twelve reflective layers. The first was jasper. The second sapphire. The third chalcedony. The fourth emerald. The fifth sardonyx. The sixth sardius. The seventh chrysolite. The eighth beryl. The ninth topaz. The tenth chrysoprase. The eleventh jacinth and the twelfth amethyst.

Each massive colonnade and Temple door was fashioned from a giant flawless pearl.

As the five enter the ever growing assembly parts. Sensing the grander of the moment they brake into cheers and shouts of praise to the Advocate and prayer for His witnesses who's testimony may determine mankind's fate.

Noting Ariel's concern, Gabriel whispers in his ear. Laughing, he catches up with Michael and the King.

"What'd he say" asks Maciel.

"To relax," Ariel answers walking down the marbled corridor. "It's only the future of Heaven and Earth at stake."

"How's the case progressing?" inquires Ariel seated at an ornate table in a private conference room.

"The Prosecutor's confident his motion will be granted," the Advocate explains. "Anticipating your testimony the Accuser's drafted preliminary arguments specifying how the End of Days should begin."

“Maciel and I worry our testimony will strengthen the prosecution’s argument.”

“A valid concern. Just remember on the stand your compassion’s essential. I have a pretty good plan *and* relationship with the Judge.”

Smiling, Mace’s troubled. “Why does the Rebellion believe plunging Earth into chaos strengthens *their* cause?”

“A myriad of reasons. Satan’s not only trying this case before God but before the Third Heaven as well. He hopes to impeach Our character by raising reasonable doubt as to the worthiness of Omnity to rule. By exploiting Heaven and Earth’s revolts he casts suspicion on both the power and goodness of God.”

“Your not suggesting that after endless ages Satan’s hopes to incite a second Heavenly rebellion?” asks Mace in disbelief. “Is that even possible?”

“I’m saying that’s just *one* of many strategies,” sighs the Son of God. “And yes, as it is written, “*all things are possible.*”

### *Lower Court*

“So not instantly punishing the Rebellion demonstrates a lack of goodness on Your part?” Ariel asks.

“So *they* say,” agrees the Counselor. “In fact the Prosecutor will argue that failing to do so constitutes a direct cause of mankind’s suffering. Suffering which, if he has his way, is about to excellerate astronomically.”

“But humanity’s choice to succumb to demonic temptation is the true cause.”

“Still, he’ll make the point that had the Rebels been immediately imprisoned, Earth needn’t have been marred.”

“Being generous to *fallen angels* makes God unfit to rule?”

“Divine patience allows them to make that accusation here and on Earth.”

“How so?”

“After his fall, Satan argued that a trial in Heaven would be prejudicial to his case. He requested Earth’s creation as a change of venue. Omnity acquiesced to the point of endowing man with the capability, however limited, of being an participant in the proceedings.”

“How does someone *on Earth* participate in the trial of *Heaven’s* Rebellion?”

“May I?” Gabriel asks the Advocates permission. “Mankind plays a several roles in this drama. They participating by how they treat each other, themselves and God.

Each person’s life overflows with a million moments of *judgment*. Often these building on each other. Living their lives requires trying and deciding ‘cases’ every day. In all they do, or refuse to, they act as judge and jury.

“By deciding what’s important and *who* to follow,” Ariel whispers getting the idea.

“It’s fascinating,” Gabriel continues. “Daily every man, woman and child presides over the court of their soul, judging good and evil in their lives and those of others. They decide guilt and innocence as they see fit, issuing rulings by their words and deeds.

“Keep in mind,” explains the Advocate, “that when Lucifer rebelled angels had existed for ages. Earth, on the other hand hadn’t been created much less populated. So in a way every human born is a new *judge*, an additional *witness* and another piece of *evidence*.”



“Ironic that humanity should sit in judgment over Omnipotence, given their fallen and powerless state. Particularly when they owe their creation and continued existence to the *Defendant* who alone is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent”

“Yet they not only *do* but *must* given their manner of birth, life and death. They’re forced to question, form opinions and make judgments.”

“How many rule in Your favor?” Maciel asks.

Too few. Particularly as deceptions advance. Ubiquitous in developed nations, even many of the ‘righteous’ are less and less so, continually crossing lines they hardly care to recognize.

Others are crushed and enslaved by their addictions. Saddest of all are the victims of such violence they’re convinced a loving God could never allow such evil to exist.”

“Such unresolved issues with God, coupled with the horrors accompanying the End of Days will toss most of humanity from the frying pan into the fire.”

“Men’s hearts will fail them from fear” the Advocate mourns. “Atheists and agnostics will openly curse their Creator. Blaming God, they’ll join many in attacking any faithful they can lay their hands on.”

“So driving a wedge between God and man the Adversary blames You while tempting mankind to do the same?”

“Compelling them to overlook their behavior he incites humanity to rail against God,” the Redeemer sighs. “All without knowing who their true Enemy is or that the judgment they pronounce will be their own.”

*The Defense*  
*Chapter 26*

*Foundation*

The Devil's in the details. *Old German Proverb*

Filled to standing room only, the gallery of the Court overflows. Emotions running high, arguments erupt as the faithful remain resolute in the face of the fallen. Calming

the commotion, Michael deploys additional security for the highly anticipated event.

Glory streams from the Throne, signaling the approach of the *Eternal Judge*.

“All rise!” orders the Archangel of War, replacing the bailiff for this session.

As they do, radiance bursts from the Throne as the Creator abridges His brilliance from a torrent to a trickle, still testing the limits of even the greatest of His creation. They gasp, squinting at the mere shadow of God’s Majesty appearing before them. Still such resplendency so floods the Court as to force its occupants to their knees, willingly or not. Gabriel, Michael and the Advocate do so joyfully while the Adversary, faking a smile through gnashed teeth struggles painfully as the last to comply.

Outside, hundreds of spectators have turned to tens of thousands, each forced prostrate as glory erupts through the Temple’s twelve layers of transparent gemstones setting the air ablaze with a Divine rainbow.

Within the Court, the glory of God dims, further restrained to the point of *merely* unapproachable light.

Standing to attention, Michael bows awaiting judicial permission to proceed. Silently receiving as much he addresses the kneeling assembly.

“Rise and be seated” he commands. “Heaven’s Supreme Court will come to order!”

No sooner have they done so than the Voice from the Throne thunders, ***“Regarding the matter of the End of Days. Defense, call your witness.”***

“Thank you Your Honor. If it please the Court the Defense calls Ariel, it’s proxy, to the stand.”

Ariel, seated with Gabriel and Maciel near the isle in the first row of the gallery, stands slowly on shaky feet.

Taking a breath for composure, he makes his way to the witness box passing between opposing counsel, the very embodiment of good and evil.

Inwardly trembling, he waits to be sworn him.

Michael begins, his smile strengthening the lessor angel. “Do you affirm the testimony you’re about to give is the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth?”

“I do,” Ariel stammers. “So *help* me God.”

“Be seated,” instructs Michael, allowing Ariel a flickering grin before retaking his position at the right of the Throne.

The Advocate approaches His witness with a smile. His friendly demeanor apparent to everyone.

“Please you state your name and position.

“I am Ariel, a son of God under the command of Gabriel, the Archangel of Message.”

“Tell us about your most recent assignment.”

“By order of the Court I was asked by the Archangel Gabriel to act as Heaven’s proxy for the purpose of visiting Earth and witnessing first hand mankind’s current condition in regards to the commencement of the End of Days.”

“Did you go alone?”

“No. I was accompanied by Maciel, a proxy of the Archangel Michael’s choosing.”

The Advocate takes a moment to cast a glance at Maciel before continuing. “How long were the two of you on Earth?”

“Three days.”

“Please give the Court a summary of your actions.”

“As per our assignment Maciel and I arrived at Los Angeles California in the United States of America. We split up. Maciel investigated demonic conspiracies concerning

entertainment and technology, economics and war, politics and religion.

I examined the impact global conspiracies were having on individuals. Taking the appearance of a young woman, I met with Americans teens to observe some of the challenges they face. I proceeded to Bangkok Thailand to experience child and adult prostitution. From there I translated to Sudan in Africa to witness the atrocities of war and genocide as well as familiarize myself with global problems such as famine and plague.”

“Thank you. During your three days on Earth did you gather sufficient information to form an opinion as to man’s culpability regarding the evil you observed?”

“Objection!” responds the Prosecutor. “While no doubt an excellent *daycare worker*, Counsel’s *witness* clearly lacks the qualifications to be considered an expert in this or any other relevant area.”

“Your Honor,” the Defense counters, “if you’ll allow the question Ariel’s *expertise* will become apparent.”

“**Allowed!**” the Judge booms.

### *Ariel’s Testimony*

“Answer the question.”

“Yes. For the purpose of this assignment I was given a gift that greatly enhanced my angelic communication abilities.”

“Please describe this enhancement for the Court.”

“Consider it ‘exponential empathy.’ During my time on Earth I was able to quickly relive a variety of human experiences through their eyes.”

“Which humans?”

“At first it was only a few of those I met with. Then it was anyone nearby. Later it became whole people groups, a large sampling over time and space.”

“Objection!” responds the Adversary. “Surely Counsel doesn’t expect the Court to believe *His* witness is unbiased. Are we to merely take his word?”

“Not at all,” the Advocate smiles. “With *Your Honor’s* permission I believe Ariel can do better than *words*.” Nodding to the witness the angel’s Earthly experiences are ‘downloaded’ filling the air of the Courtroom and the minds of it’s occupants with vivid images and emotions. Observers present in the Court and throughout the Third Heaven ‘upload’ the testimony at whatever level of detail and intensity desired.

Disdaining the Advocate’s antics, Satan takes his seat. From Samel’s *deposition* of Ariel, he anticipates the pathetic angel’s *testimony* will be lengthy.

Ariel had gathered the experiences from tens of thousands of lifetimes during three days. For the sake of the Court, these were compressed into highlights lasting several hours.

A complete version and coverage of the proceedings streamed for any of Heaven’s citizen caring to watch.

Billions did. Judging by grimaces and groans from the gallery testimony was compelling.

Ariel patiently waits as the Court experiences his mission’s final moments. Anger mounts among the faithful at Ariel’s violation by Samel. The Advocate levels a warning glare at the Prosecutor, unhappy with the his general’s tactics.

“Ariel, as Heaven’s proxy, is it your opinion that mankind’s current level of evil warrants the commencement of the End of Days?”

Forced to admit the truth Ariel takes a moment to carefully frame his answer. “If so, it’s because humanity’s been deceived, tempted and coerced by the *Rebellion* into every imaginable evil.”

“Objection!” shouts the Adversary. “The question was the level of evil, not it’s source.”

“Withdrawn,” concedes the Defense. “I’ll rephrase. “In your opinion, what percentage of humanity’s evil can be placed at the feet of *demonic* corruption?”

“Objection!” Satan snaps . “The demonic is not on trial.”

“Not *yet*” quips the Advocate.

“Now now Counselor.”

“***Objection overruled!***” the Judge’s tone suggests they move along.

“Answer the question Ariel,” the Redeemer directs.

“Given millennia of adverse influence by fallen angels and demons, in my opinion *seventy to ninety percent* of the culpability for human evil rests with the *Rebellion* and their demonic counterparts.”

“Your *Honor!*” demands the Prosecutor. “This is preposterous! There’s no foundation. This *witness* is neither a member *of* or an expert *concerning* any so called, *Rebellion*. Any testimony he provides will be hearsay at best.”

“Quite the opposite,” assures the Advocate. “Ariel’s uniquely qualified to testify as to the deepest motives and methods of the *Rebellion* concerning the current state of affairs on Earth.

“That’s *ridiculous*.”

“With the Court’s and Ariel’s permission.” grins the Advocate. Before the Prosecution can object a vivid hologram of Ariel being tortured in the Temple of Anubis begins streaming before the Court. Ripping mankind’s experiences from Ariel Satan’s general gloats:

“You and your sheltered little angelic life” mocks Samel. “Now you begin to comprehend what the *Rebellion’s* doing here! For millennia we’ve poked and prodded these wretched beings like mice in a maze. Feeding their lusts and rewarding their appetites. We’re their inspiration to deny God as they remake themselves in *our* image!”

“Objection!” Satan demands. “Assumes facts not in evidence! Gift or no gift this... *angel* can’t possibly speak for Samel or the Rebellion.”

“In that case,” parries the Advocate, “The Prosecutor should have no objection to our next witness. The Defense calls *General Samel* to the stand!”

## *Flames Of Regret*

### *Chapter 27*

#### *Too Close For Comfort*

The Devil never grants long leases. *Irish Proverb*

“Objection!” declares the Prosecutor. “General Samel’s not on *Counsel’s* witness list.”



“Sidebar,” requests the Defense.

“***Approach!***” commands a Voice like a waterfall’s thunder.

God the Son’s grin is nearly imperceptible watching Satan squirm as he nears the Throne. Truth, goodness and beauty kindle a static charge of holy Lightning striking at the darkness within him. Forced, he continues approaching the Judge as if an executioner.

Caressed by the Voltage, the Advocate’s grin forms a full fledged smile. “The *reasons behind* humanity’s state of mind are *foundational* to the Defense’s case. Since the Prosecution’s impeaching the credibility of My proxy, I have the right to call General Samel to testify to the comments he offered while *deposing My* witness.”

“What General Samel may or may not have said is irrelevant. This Court’s not concerned with debating the influences behind man’s behavior, but rather *if* and *when* it warrants the End of Days.”

“I *strongly* disagree. The Defense believes that *why* is absolutely relevant in determining to what extent man’s the *perpetrator* of crimes against Heaven *or* the victim of them.

“This is completely unorthodox.”

“As is *your Rebellion*. The *reason* for this proceeding in the first place. The Defense maintains that having *imposed* himself into Ariel’s experience General Samel’s become part of this witnesses testimony. Through his proxy’s unsolicited comments and actions counsel’s opened the door to this line of questioning. Unless the Prosecution’s ready to stipulate to my witness’s expertise concerning the Rebellion’s strategies and activities on Earth.”

“***So ruled!***” the authority of the Judge’s declaration stings Satan.

“I want the record to reflect my strenuous objection to this Defense antic” demands the Prosecution. “And I reserve the right to recall this witness for cross examination.”

***“Agreed. Step back!”*** bellows creation’s Chief Justice.

Both Attorneys retake their positions. Turning to Ariel the Defense winks. “Nothing further for the witness at this time.”

Ariel sighs, as much in relief to be off the stand as to have performed his duty.

Waiting as Ariel retakes his seat, Heaven’s Counselor allows a hush to fall across the Courtroom. Playing to the gallery and billions beyond He lets the silence settle for a long moment before shattering it. “The Defense calls General Samel!”

### *No Place For Repentance*

A hush falls over the assembly as Michael makes his way past counsel and through the gallery. Opening the giant pearl doors of the Courtroom, Heaven’s bailiff summons the next witness. Strategically absent from the proceedings thus far, the great generals of the Rebellion proudly enter shoulder to shoulder. Bravado demands Ruel the Destroyer leer into Michael’s eyes as the pair brush past.

Michael grins.

For the sake of decorum Samuel allows Michael to lead him to the witness box where he stands a menacing three feet taller than had Ariel. The fallen among the gallery swell with pride at the sight of their champion. Leaping to their feet they savor the moment, mocking the righteous and jostling for a better view.

Samel, steeling a glance at his Master, finds the Adversary's fiery stare and imperceptible nod more alarming than reassuring.

Looking back Samel's gripped by Michael's steely blue eyes. "Do you affirm the testimony you're about to give is the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth?"

"Yes."

"Be seated" commands Michael, waiting for Samel to comply before retaking his place on the opposite side of the Throne.

While the Advocate's deportment reveals the conviction of His office, His eyes reflect God's sorrow over the repercussions of the loss seated before Him.

Billions of angels. Billions of men.

And billions of years since Satan's general was in the presence of God the Son. At the Advocate's approach time slows to a stand still for the fallen majesty.

For eons Samel had been both an honor to and honored by the Trinity. A lesser archangel of worship under Lucifer, Samel was created a conduit for angelic praise and Divine intimacy. He, along with Ruel and Zebuel had stood shoulder to shoulder behind Lucifer as together they were gloriously transfigured while conducting God's praise. Resplendent with creation's passion for the Creator, their marvelous brilliance was second only to that of Omnipotence itself.

Again so near the Father and Son, the memory of past glory leaves Satan's general undone.

*Death* trembles before the *Word of Life*. Wrestling for composure his thoughts and vision narrow. Caught alone in the gravity well of the Son of God, Samel cries inwardly, glimpsing within the eye's of the Advocate from whence he has fallen. And what might have been.

In the blink of the Advocate's eye, ages pass for Samel as the Counselor's compassion meets the witness's regret, hurdling the champion of the Revolt into God's event horizon. Truth tears at the Rebellion's rationale, disintegrating their fabric of lies at the subatomic level.

Before the Advocate's gaze Samel stands naked and alone. Without excuse his spirit bows to the reality of his sin. The mighty angel's overcome. His soul *damns* the *Rebellion* as a terrible premonition engulfs him. The eternity spread out before him isn't the glorious victory Lucifer promised. Instead he sees Rebellion's billions cursing one another through gnashed teeth, tormented in flames of eternal regret.

The Angel of Death longs to confess, to throw himself upon the mercy of the Lord of Life. Seared by anguish, he finds even the fire of justice preferable to remaining what he's become.

General Samel would have, right here and now where his will still his own. Treacherously, his lust for freedom and autonomy from God had enslaved him. Bound by and to it, he's forever doomed to do the will of his *sinister master*.

Ironically, he faces the ultimate truth. Demanding freedom had left him without choice. There would be no repentance for him. Not within his soul. Not before the Court. Not in time. Not for eternity.

Compassionately, the Advocate waits as the fallen giant comes to terms with the eternal nature and ramifications of his self imposed sentence.

“For the record, state your name and rank,” directs the Defense.

Stoically mastering his inner turmoil the witness replies firmly. “I am General Samel, second in command of the armies of Satan.”

## *Hostile Witness*

### *Chapter 28*

#### *General Samel’s Testimony*

*A half-truth is a whole lie. Jewish proverb*

“General Samel,” the Advocate begins, emphasizing the witnesses title. “Isn’t true the Prosecution appointed you his proxy for the sake of these proceedings?”

“Objection,” quickly responds the Adversary.  
“Leading.”

“Your Honor. Given this witnesses relationship to and rank in the Rebellion I request he be considered hostile.”

“*You called him!*”

“***So ruled. Answer the question!***” instructs Heaven’s Judge.

“Yes.”

“Isn’t also true that in the Earthly temple of the demonic prince Anubis you captured, tortured and interrogated Ariel, the Defense’s proxy?”

“Of course not. Unless You’re referring to our conversation during his debriefing.”

“Your ravaging of *My* angel was more like rape than conversation!”

“I do remember being *thorough*” Samel smirks, eliciting support from fallen fans in the gallery.

“You were more than thorough,” responds the Advocate. “You were informative.” At that the hologram of the interrogation bursts into view once again.

“You and your sheltered little angelic life” mocks Samel. “Now you begin to comprehend what the *Rebellion’s* doing here! For millennia we’ve poked and prodded these wretched beings like mice in a maze. Feeding their lusts and rewarding their appetites. We’re their inspiration to deny God as they remake themselves in *our* image!”

“Counselor!” the Adversary shouts. “We’ve already seen this.”

“And objected to it,” Heaven’s Attorney parries. “Which is why General Samel’s on the stand. I’m simply refreshing his memory.”

“My memory’s fine.”

“Good. Then for the record do you confirm these were your words.”

“Yes.”

“Excellent. In the interest of being *thorough* you did say the Rebellion ‘*poked and prodded these wretched beings like mice in a maze.*’ Is that correct?”

Risking a glance at the Prosecution Samel finds him unpleased. “I may have embellished a little.”

“And for the record, who were the ‘wretched beings’ you spent millennia poking and prodding?”

“Humanity.”

“And ‘the maze’ you trapped them in would be?”

Tilting his head Samel answers lightly. “I may have miss spoke.”

“I’m sure you did, telling the *whole truth* for once! It’s true, isn’t it. You and your demonic lackeys corner humanity at every turn. You tempt and coerce them. You enslaved them with lust, driving man mad with desire in an effort to corrupt every shred of decency among them.”

“Objection!” erupts the Prosecutor standing to his feet. “Counsel’s badgering His *own* witness!”

“*Hostile* witness,” reminds the Advocate.

“**Overruled!**” booms the Voice from the Throne.

“Answer the question,” commands the Defense.

“As their *Maker* and *Savior*, You know better. They’re completely free to do as they please.”

“Free as wretched mice you trapped in a maze according to *your own expert testimony!* General Samel, isn’t it true that over thousands of years the Rebellion’s gone to great lengths to subjugate humanity, remaking them in *its own image?*”

Samel pauses, looking to Satan for a cue on how best to proceed. “Like *You*, we’ve taken an interest in Earth.”

“In fact hasn’t the Rebellion been the driving force behind mankind’s decent into sin from the very beginning?”

“So *You* say. I understand the question currently before the Court is if mankind’s sin warrants the beginning of the End of Days.”

“You’re right. But that question raises another.”

“Which is?”

“Why corrupt mankind?” God the Son asks His fallen creature with complete transparency.

The general looks for a nod from Satan to proceed.

“Isn’t it obvious?” Samel asks, starring into the Advocate’s eyes. “*To see what Omnity would do.*”

### *Permission To Speak Freely*

For a moment even Omniscience appears dumbfounded by Samel’s response. “You enslaved an entire planet of billions to see what God would do?”

“Yes.”

“And...”

“You did exactly as we anticipated.”

“Which was?”

“What Omnity always does. Just enough to save face.”

“Go on.”

“Permission to speak *freely*?”

“Yes. Though your responding on the record.”

Samel takes a moment and a deep breath before beginning. “According to the Agreement, You created the First Heaven as a result of and in regards to the issues of the angelic Rebellion. You created mankind in a state of naked



innocence, foreseeing their fall, yet offered them nothing more than a warning.

You purposely pit them against the mightiest beings in creation, knowing from before the foundations of the world they're hopelessly outmatched. Then You used their failure as an excuse to hide Yourself from humanity, ensuring their fall from grace was complete.

For millennia the Godhead watched and did next to nothing as a hundred generations of men lived in desperation and died in anguish, consigning most to an eternity of torment for their trouble.

Finally, when it serves Omnity's purpose, *You Counselor*, offered Yourself as mankind's *Savior* through incarnation. Admittedly a bold move that *seems* to reveal a Divine compassion.

Yet the manner *is* rather curious. No glory. No writing Your name across the skies for all to see. Instead You chose to unfold salvation to just little more than a handful amongst a sea of dying humanity. For hundreds of years You did little to spread Your message to the rest of mankind. Even Your *single* Book was all but inaccessible for another fifteen centuries! *Your method all but insured* redemption would remain unattainable for most the population of the world for the better part of the last two thousand years!

During which You watched as we constructed our 'maze' while hardly lifting a finger to intervene. As a pretense You held *proceedings* in Heaven while allowing Earth to stew in their sufferings in real time without real aid.

*You're like Pilot!* You wash Your hands of guilt all the while sentencing mankind to live and die in ignorance. While it's true God saves *a few*, who can deny You damn the vast majority for their failures?"

Playing to the gallery and billions beyond, General Samel pauses for effect. “And when anyone asks why, *You* claim the answer’s privileged. Some kind of state secret! You declare Divine prerogative and rule the matter ‘out of bounds.’ Even Your Book declares ‘it’s the glory of God to conceal a matter.’ Well then, it’s the task of the Rebellion to find it out! *We’re not cowering any more!* The Third Heaven *demands* answers!

First Your angels revolt and then mankind. Why does creation keep rejecting You? Is it really a flaw in *all of us* or is there *Something* more sinister at work? You constantly remind us, *You’re the Creator*. Then isn’t the flaw in You? *YOU made us thus!*”

Cheers erupt from the fallen in the gallery bolstering the witness’s spiraling accusations. As Samel pauses, Michael looks to the Throne for permission to enforce order.

With no objection from the Defense, Satan’s general waits for the commotion to die down before continuing.

“And Your response to all this is to blame free will, to make choice *Your* scapegoat. Would You actually have us believe that the *limited* free will you’ve instilled in creation is really a rock *too heavy* for Omnity to lift?”

Eyeing the Prosecutor, Samel chooses his next words carefully. “Isn’t it preposterous to suggest even *Lucifer*, the pinnacle of Your creation, could outwit Omnity? What can even *he* do to surprise God? And what’s true for angels is truer still for humanity! Surely the real architect of Earth’s troubles isn’t the Rebellion but the *One* who planned all this. *Who’s* had all power from the very beginning. *Who* still has the ability to spare man and from the terrors of even greater Tribulation to come.

The truth’s *inescapable*. Your overwhelming ability to respond makes *You* solely responsible!

But instead of saving mankind, You hold proceedings entertaining arguments and motions to delay the inevitable. For reputation's sake, You put on a good show, when by the word of Your own prophets it's already a foregone conclusion that the End of Days will soon come to pass!"

General Samel's visibly shaking, brimming with both fear and delight over leveling such accusations against the Trinity.

God the Son's filled with feelings of His own. Among them, pangs of anguish over being alienated from so much of creation. Nevertheless He remains composed, exuding the confidence of His office and the importance of His task.

"That's quite a speech but you didn't answered My question. As a commanding general of the Insurrection, tell this Court plainly why *the Rebellion* attacked and subjugated humanity without *just cause*?"

Satan's broad smile encouraging him to do so, General Samel stands theatrically to his full stature. Towering over the Son of God he summarizes the Rebellion's argument with a final ringing indictment. "To prove to all of creation that Omnity's *unfit to rule!*"

## *Satan's Cross*

### *Chapter 29*

#### *The Greater Good*

Give the Devil his due. *Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*

The gallery explodes in support and protest of the general's final insult. Michael demands order in the Court,

as dozens of warrior angels enter the fray, separating spectators as they exchange words and even blows.

Similar fights break out throughout the Third Heaven. Michael dispatches thousands of his guard to restore and maintain order.

General Samel stands defiantly surveying the chaos and enjoying the fruit of his labor.

Satan remains seated, his thoughts his own.

The Advocate glances at His Archangels and proxies. The former know better than to worry while the latter know no such thing.

The Defense waits as decorum's reestablished removing further reason for Samel's posturing. The massive and malevolent witness slowly retakes his seat.

A hush falls anticipating the Almighty's response to the swelling accusations.

"General Samel," the Advocate addresses his accuser with the respect due his rank if not his words and deeds. "I have nothing further."

The gallery stands in absolute silence, stunned by the Advocate's response, or lack of one. Samel takes a moment to be sure he's won the day before rise grinning confidently, only to be surprised by the Devil addressing the Bench.

"Your Honor. If my Colleague has no further questions for this witness, I do."

The witness cautiously retakes his seat.

"General Samel. I agree with the Counsel, that *was* quite a speech. Am I to understand it's you're testimony the Rebellion subjugated Earth?"

Samel's moment of triumph disappears, replaced by a sense of alarm over Satan's line of questioning. "My testimony was that like the Advocate, the Rebellion has 'taken an interest in Earth.'"

“Your *exact* words. Yet isn’t that’s a duplicitous way of saying the Rebellion subjugated humanity?”

Panic turns to dread as Samel defaults to his dark lord. “If you say so.”

“Actually it was *you* who said so.” Grinning, the Adversary turns his back on his minion. With a step towards the gallery, he asks his next question in a tone meant to reverberate across the Third Heaven.

“General!” Satan bellows, unnerving Samel and mesmerizing his audience. “It’s clear from your testimony that the Rebellion’s besieged Earth. What I want to make *crystal clear* is why?”

“It...was...necessary,” Samel stammers. “It was necessary to demonstrate the flaw in God and challenge the Trinity’s wisdom and ability to rule.”

“It was *necessary*?” Satan demands turning on his General. “Is that your expert testimony before this Court? It was *necessary*?”

“Yes” Samel responds suddenly tracking with the Prosecutor’s strategy.

“*Why* was it *necessary*?”

“For the *greater good*! We had no choice. It was our *duty* to lay siege to Earth on behalf of citizens of the Third Heaven!”

### *Necessary Evil*

“Objection!” cries the Advocate. “The Prosecution’s leading the witness. There’s no foundation for this. God’s not on trial here.”

“He may be *my* general but he’s *Your* witness Counselor. I’m entitled too a little leeway during cross. And as for who’s on trial, sounds to me like *maybe* we all are.”

“***Proceed cautiously counselor!***” rules the Eternal Judge.

“Yes Your Honor,” Satan smirks eyeing the Son of God. “General Samel, is it your testimony that the Rebellion had no choice but to assail Earth for the greater good of creation?”

“It is.”

“I’m confused. Do you deny your assault on Earth’s resulted in catastrophic suffering and loss of life?”

“No.”

“Then how can you call such human tragedy ‘the greater good?’”

“There are losses in war. The question is what are acceptable losses.”

“Are Earth’s losses acceptable?”

“Every loss is regrettable” General Samel feigns sorrow. “Earth’s losses are immense. At least from their point of view. Keep in mind man inhabits *a tiny point* within the First Heaven, having done so a mere *fraction of a second* in comparison to our race.”

“Even so, they are eternal spirits with sentient souls. What of eternity?”

“That remains to be seen” Samel answers, eyeing the Advocate. “Whatever the case, it would appear both God and the Rebellion consider the losses acceptable.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Both sides possess the power necessary to all but end human suffering yet neither do.”

“Why not?”

“I can’t speak for Omnicity. As for the Rebellion, I’m sorry to say mankind’s suffering is simply a *necessary evil*.”

“And why is *evil necessary*?”

General Samel takes a theatrical moment before continuing. “To protect creation from its Creator.”

The gallery explodes with shouts of protest and support. Michael’s angels quell the commotion.

“Why should creation need protection from its Creator?”

“It shouldn’t! A responsible Creator would anticipate *all* the needs of Their creation. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.”

“Is it the case on Earth?”

“Far from it. And according to God’s own Word I understand situations there are about to take a nasty turn for the worse.”

## *Rebuttal*

### *Chapter 30*

#### *Casting Blame*

A lie told often enough becomes the truth. *Vladimir Lenin*

“Nothing further” announces the Prosecutor concluding his cross examination.

“I have a follow up question,” interjects the Advocate standing and approaching the general. “So you’d have this Court believe all the acts of barbarism and atrocities heaped on mankind have been necessary for the good of creation?”

“Yes and no” Samel responds slyly.

“Care to explain?”

“*All the actions taken by the Rebellion* have been for the greater good. Unfortunately for Earth there are other forces at work.”

“Such as?”

“There’s the Trinity and humanity itself. And the demonic.”

“Isn’t the evil influence of the demonic on mankind a direct result of the Rebellion’s mating with women, in flagrant disregard of the *Agreement*?”

“Again yes and no.”

“Elaborate.”

“It’s true the first generation demons were half angelic” Samel admits. But the vast majority of the demonic were spawned by the successive breeding of their offspring.”

“And your point?”

“That has more to do with God’s gift of free will than with the Rebellion” grins the general.

“Really? So the Rebellion’s responsibility ends with the first generation Titans. You deny culpability for the myriad of demons created after that or the incalculable suffering they’re influence has inflicted on Earth.”

“We’ll accept responsibility,” Samel smirks. “When Omnicity accepts culpability for the *actions* of *all* the angels It created!”



“I see,” sighs the Advocate, turning his back on the witness.

“I don’t think you do! Look at us!” demands the general. “Can’t You see *Yourself*? We’re emulating *You*. God claims to disdain the Rebellion, yet *allows* our influence on humanity. In the same way, while holding the demonic in contempt, we *allow* them to exercise *their* will. At times we even rain in their destructive tendencies.”

Samel trains his stare on Satan as he allows his words time to settle on the Court. The Prosecutor stands, like a third base coach signing for his batter swing away!

“If the Rebellion’s responsible for the actions of all the demonic, then Omnity’s responsible for the actions of *all the fallen*, angelic, demonic and human! ‘*Like Father, like son*’ makes You the *forefather* of *all evil*! ”

### *Yes Or No*

Again the gallery detonates. The Advocate eyes His witness while waiting for the quiet. “Interesting spin. I notice you’re fond of answering yes *and* no. *Understand this*, when I ask a question *you will* truthfully answer ‘yes’ or ‘no.’

Samel’s compelled to comply.

“You just claimed the Rebellion’s attacks on mankind are a *necessary evil*. Necessary to protect creation from their Creator is that correct?”

“Yes.”

“Is humanity part of creation?”

“Yes.”

“Isn’t it *true* that by God’s design man lived in *paradise* before Satan’s unprovoked attack against their innocence?”

“Yes.”

“Isn’t it *true* the *Rebellion’s* forbidden interbreeding with women that created *demonic offspring* and filled the Earth with violence?”

“Yes.”

“Isn’t it *true* that as the Rebellion’s puppets, those same demonic princes have orchestrated every man made catastrophe for thousands of years?”

“Yes” the general confesses hesitantly.

“And isn’t it also *true*” demands the Son of Man, “that I laid aside the power of Creator, humbling Myself before creation only to have your Rebellion incite mankind against Me?”

“Yes.”

Approaching Samel the Defense pushes His advantage. “And it’s *true*, is it not, that you have just returned from commanding the demonic to *inflame humanity’s passions, move them against one another, and leave them with only God and themselves to blame?*”

Samel, glaring at the Advocate, dares not deny his own words. “Yes.”

“Finally General Samel!” rails the Lord of Heaven and Earth, “isn’t it *true* that, for all your posturing, for eons God’s demonstrated infinite patience towards the Rebellion, *on behalf of the Third Heaven!* And continues doing so even in the face of your unrelenting attacks against humanity?”

The general struggles vainly to free himself from the piercing stare and authority of God the Son. Looking to the

Prosecutor for help he finds smoldering contempt. Burning with outrage, Samel's teeth gnash against answering.

Robbed of pretense by the Author of Life, the Angel of Death's forced before Heaven to surrender billions of years of lies with a single stammered word. "Y.e.s."

*Court Of Public Opinion*  
*Chapter 31*

*Mock Jury*

All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident. *Arthur Schopenhauer*

“Fool!” Satan’s shout shakes the crystalline walls of his obsidian palace.

Knowing resistance would be his final act, Samel salvages what’s left of his dignity, bracing for another onslaught.

“*We had Them!*” roars the Accuser, like a lion seeking prey to devour. “With all of Heaven watching! Until *you* let *Him* blow your testimony to hell! *Were* you’d be right now if I had a lesser fool to replace you.”

Satan’s general averts his eyes, his teen foot frame exuding submission before the enraged *Alpha Devil*.

“From before time I’ve planned for this moment!” Satan bellows. From the Rebellion and Agreement, to the Singularity and Earth’s creation, an opportunity billions of years in the making. And *you* couldn’t hold it together for a few minutes!”

General Ruel watches silently, sharing Satan’s frustration and Samel’s fear. For all their sakes the Rebellion’s supreme commander dares to soothe his Master’s wrath.

“My Liege. Your outrage is justified, but consider today’s accomplishments. *Never* in all eternity has *Their* hypocrisy been so ridiculed. *Never* has the Third Heaven watched so brilliant a *Champion* oppose *Them Face to Face*.

Satan allows his rage to wane and a grin creep across his face. Further venting served little purpose, his generals terrified of his displeasure.

Ruel was correct. None dare accomplish what he had. “It’s a start. Hope *you* don’t fail me.”

As the Devil’s threat lingers Ruel seizes the chance to improve his master’s mood. “Instant polls show both sides

entrenched. *However*, some of your points registered and are raising questions among the opposition.”

“Which points?”

“Primarily those regarding our concept of the ‘greater good.’ You’ve cast doubt on the *Their* handling of free will.”

“About time!” complains Satan. “What else?”

“*Their* governance is coming under scrutiny for both the angelic and human rebellions. Some are questioning *Their* methods and ultimate goals.”

“Our mock juries?”

“They find our greater good’ theme combined with the ‘necessary evil’ defense our best tactic. It may be enough to sway Heaven’s opinion in favor of getting on with initiating the End of Days.”

“Good,” the Devil commends Ruel. “Sounds like you’re prepped and ready to testify!”

“There’s one more thing,” Ruel offers hesitantly.

“What?”

“Research shows we’re likely to lose any sympathy we’ve gained once the Third Heaven sees the destruction of the End of Days.”

“Omelet and eggs. If all goes well, after the End of Days I’ll no longer need Heaven or its ‘sympathy.’”

### *Plea Bargain*

Satan and his generals make last minute preparations in the Prosecutor’s chambers, an anteroom within Heaven’s Supreme Court. Reconvening any moment, Ruel rehearses his upcoming testimony.

After a brief knock, the Advocate steps inside. “A moment?”

“For You, *always*,” replies Satan. “Gentlemen, excuse us.”

“How’d you feel about Samel’s testimony?”

“Good. Left a *little* to be desired towards the end. Still, I think he was credible and made an impact.”

“Playing to the gallery?”

Satan smiles, stepping closer as if sharing a secret. “Aren’t we *all*?”

“Thought you and I should talk.”

“I’m listening.”

“One century” offers the Advocate. “Give Earth a chance to catch it’s breath. Let man’s moral compass stop spinning from their recent advances. A century would give them time to get a handle on things and let us see what they do.”

“A sweet deal for the Defense. But *You* play Devil’s Advocate. What’s in it for *Me*?”

“Things could easy spin out of control. Think of the new sins they might create. It would be an open and shut case.”

“It is now.”

“Maybe. But think of it as a opportunity to show a more patient, merciful side.”

“Are You suggesting I’ve got image issues?”

“You are the *Devil*.”

“So You’d be doing *me* a favor?” smirks Satan. “Thanks Counselor, but I’m going to have to pass.”

“One generation” the Defense counters. “Forty years is less than a blink of an eye for you.”

“Why should I blink? I’m holding a winning hand! Besides, who knows what can happen in forty years? *Present Company* excepted. That’s a no as well” retorts the Devil.

“A decade then. Keep in mind the Judge could grant a thousand years if He chooses. He’s got a soft spot for humanity.”

“You’re right about that,” Satan muses. I’d *like* to help, but I can’t see myself risking a sure thing.”

“It’s a gamble *for you* either way.”

The Devil inwardly admits that’s true. Smiling, he opens the door. “Let’s just say I’m feeling lucky!”

## *The Whole Truth*

### *Chapter 32*

#### *Maciel’s Testimony*

Facts are many, but the truth is one. *Rabindranath Tagore*

Heaven's Supreme Court is overrun with spectators, the crowd swelling to fill the Temple of Justice and its grounds for miles around.

Anticipating as much, Michael deployed every available angel, reassigning all available hosts from the First and Second Heaven.

Satan had done the same.

Never before had Heaven seen such a gathering of the mightiest of the faithful and fallen. Expectation running high and with both sides jammed too close for comfort, maintaining order proved challenging *even before* the Court's reconvening.

Those present kneel as the Creator's presence gathers from throughout creation. Like a galactic storm, the Judge's glory hovers above the Courtyard, setting its transparent gold ablaze before coming to rest upon Heaven's Throne.

Inside the Archangel of War commands, "Rise and be seated. Heaven's Supreme Court will come to order!"

As opposing counsel take their place the voice of Heaven's Chief Justice commands, "***Defense, call your next witness!***"

"Your Honor, the defense calls Maciel, it's final proxy."

Maciel rises from between Gabriel and Ariel, making his way to the witness stand.

Michael addresses his lieutenant in a manner revealing a hint of confidence and pride. "Do you affirm the testimony you're about to give is the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth?"

"I do."

"Be seated," instructs Michael before returning to his station.



Respecting his proxy's personality and position, the Defense addresses His witness matter of factly. "For the record state your name and position."

"I am Maciel, a son of God under the command of Michael the Archangel of War."

"Explain to the Court your most recent orders."

"Michael selected me to travel to Earth as Your proxy. I was tasked with assessing humanity's state for the purpose of determining whether the commencement of the End of Days is warranted."

"Did you go alone?"

"No. I was accompanied by Ariel, who testified earlier, as well as at times by Archangels Gabriel and Michael."

"Summarize for the Court the outcome of your mission."

"Upon arriving in Los Angeles Ariel and I went separate ways. My mission was two fold. Scouting prearranged locations, I met with people grasping certain aspects of the angelic, demonic and human conspiracy I was investigating."

"Objection! Angels are not on trial here" complains the Prosecutor.

"Didn't I hear *you* say we all are, Counselor?"

**"Sustained!"** reverberates the Throne.

"Continue" instructs the Defense. "Leave angels out of it *for now*."

"I visited some of the major world class cities constituting the Conspiracy's network of power. I obtained specific information regarding demonic plans for Earth, and the level of human involvement in them."

Turning from the witness the Advocate addresses the Judge. “If there are no objections the Defense asks it’s proxy to present his evidence now.”

All eyes on the Prosecutor, Satan shrugs, waving any objection.

**“Proceed!”** God thunders.

A moment later the air of the Courtroom’s filled with holographic scenes of Maciel’s experiences on Earth. First up is his meeting with members of the Millennial Institute followed by his audience with Astaroth, the Prince of Los Angeles. Here Maciel’s testimony expands exponentially beyond mere conversation with Earth’s *Demonic Media Mogul* to detail the methods used to entice and enslave billions. Millions of hours of TV and movies, songs and music videos, articles and web pages are introduced as evidence against the demonic.

Unfortunately, they prove equally damning to humanity, testifying of man’s willingness to serve the Rebellion’s purposes. Even at the cost of their health and wealth, family and friends, Earthly lives and eternal souls...

### *Herded To Hell*

For hours Maciel’s experiences fill the air of the Courtroom and the minds of those beyond. Groans rise from the righteous at Molech’s triumph in legalizing abortion and in spreading the barbaric practice worldwide, *drenching* the world in innocent blood.

Simultaneously billions of products of infanticide rejoice at God having rescued them to enjoy the safety and glory of Heaven forever.

Conversely, smiles of satisfaction mark the faces of the fallen as they watch Earth's demons corrupt generation after generation for their purpose and pleasure. Thousands of years of moral and religious progress unravel before the onslaught of the demonic-human conspiracy. The princes meet little resistance as the Ten pave the way for the End of Days, setting the stage for Satan's *Man*.

The Rebellion swells with pride to see its plans coming to fruition. They revel in bringing Earth to the edge of oblivion, celebrating mankind's blindness to their *angelic master's* hand.

The faithful long for humanity to open it's eyes and discover their unseen enemy before it's too late. They pray mankind, able to perceive and harness the power of the atom would comprehend the forces at work in their midst. That the generation measuring and plotting the course of the cosmos would understand they're being herded towards a hellish destruction.

Heaven's righteous watch Mace's baptism in the clouds above Rome, their hearts overflowing with love for mankind. Their souls moan as Ruel tares Maciel in the ancient crypt below the catacomb of Priscilla. They cheer as Michael forces Maciel's release.

Even the bailiff can't help but grin.

The Advocate stands somber and silent for the full duration of the testimony. "In light of what you've just shown the Court's, how extensive is the demonic conspiracy against mankind?"

"Objection. Speculative."

“Let me rephrase. *In your opinion*, how extensive is the demonic conspiracy against mankind?”

“With the exception of geographically isolated areas the conspiracy covers the globe. Developed and even developing nations live under the shadow of Heaven’s Rebellion.”

“Objection!” shouts the Adversary annoyed. “The question concerned the demonic, not the Rebellion.”

“Source and shadow,” Heaven’s Counselor explains. “In regards to Earth, they’re one in the same”

“Hardly!” exclaims the Accuser. “We’ve already been over this.”

“Do you *admit* responsibility for their existence?”

“Me *personally*, Counselor?”

“It’s *your* Revolt. Under your command Zebuel and his angelic host laid siege to Earth, lying with the daughters of men.”

“That *might* make me responsible *if* I ever gave such an order” confesses the Devil with a grin. “I *never* did.” The Prosecutor allows his denial to sink in. “You know *everything* Counselor! You *know* I didn’t.”

“Not all commands are spoken.”

“Pretty tough to prove otherwise. You could ask General Zebuel, if he weren’t tied up at the moment.”

“We have the handiwork of his titan son Zeus and the nine Demon Princes he rules. Combined with first hand testimony from Astaroth, Molech and Anubis it’s overwhelming evidence that *they’re* all puppets of *yours!*”

“Hearsay! Once again *Counselor’s* witness is no expert on the Rebellion, much less its plans or activities concerning Earth.”

“And once again we’ve seen one of your generals insert himself into my witnesses testimony.”

“Your Honor,” protests Satan. “For the record the Prosecution objects to this testimony and line of questioning. However, if the Defense insists, let Him call a real expert to take the stand, General Ruel!”

## *The Devil's Champion*

### *Chapter 33*

#### *General Ruel's Testimony*

It is the nature of truth to struggle to the light. *Wilkie Collins*

General Ruel, the Supreme Commander of Satan's army, strides into the Court as onto a battlefield. The overflowing gallery parts before the angelic majesty of the Rebellion's champion.

Approaching the stand, his living armor glistens ominously before morphing into a uniform befitting his rank. Reaching the witness box, Ruel's malicious flowing robe recedes into a blood red sash alive with jewel encrusted medals and medallions evidencing many conquests.

The giant stands imperiously in the witness box as Michael approaches. For a moment the champions lock eyes, the soul of Satan's greatest archangel wrestles with Heaven's.

Ruel blinks first.

"Do you affirm the testimony you're about to give is the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth?"

"Yes" answers Ruel curtly.

"You may be seated" Michael instructs, waiting for the witness to comply before retaking his station.

Approaching the general a thousand glorious memories of Ruel before the fall kindle within God the Son. He mourns knowing the being He loved is gone, replaced by *the Destroyer* sitting before Him.

"State your name and rank for the record."

"General Ruel, Supreme Commander of the armies of Satan."

"How long have you been Supreme Commander?"

"Fifty thousand years."

"Who was Commander before you?"

"General Zebuel."

"How long was General Zebuel's command?"

"Eons before the Singularity creating the First Heaven."

“Zebuel’s command exceeded fourteen billion years?”

“Yes.”

“So you’re a relative newcomer?”

“I was second only to Zebuel. We worked closely together.”

“Then you can tell the Court what led to your *promotion*.”

“General Zebuel was imprisoned.”

“By *whom*?”

“Your bailiff” Snarls the witness.

“A *bailiff*?” Counsel asks incredulously, playing to the audience. “Is this bailiff present in the Courtroom?”

“Yes.”

“Point out for the Court the *bailiff* capable of capturing and imprisoning Satan’s Supreme Commander!” mocks the Advocate.

Begrudgingly, Ruel points to Michael.

“Let the record reflect the witness is identifying Michael, the Archangel of War.”

Michael stands emotionless and resolute as a statue. Less stoic, the gallery erupts with cheers and jeers.

Smiling, the King of Heaven allows a moment for a semblance of order to be restored. “Well that explains the *how*” grins the Advocate, first training His gaze on Ruel and then the Prosecutor. “*Who* can stand before *him*? However, it raises the question why? Michael does not concern himself with common criminals. What offense warranted the arrest and imprisonment of the Rebellion’s Supreme Commander?”

Ruel’s jaws clench as the general masters his infamous temper. “The *alleged* offense and imprisonment stemmed from allegations regarding the Agreement.”

“What allegations?”

“That upon arriving on Earth, Zebuel and his host took human form and subsequently mated with women.”

“What was the result of such interbreeding?”

“Titans.”

“How many titans were created?”

“Tens of thousands.”

“And how many children were born to these titans and their descendants?”

“Hundreds of thousands.”

“Millions?”

“Yes.”

The Defense nods. “Where are these millions today?”

“Their physical bodies drowned in Noah’s flood. Their disembodied spirits remained alive. Confined to Earth they’re known as demons.”

“How many first generation titans remain on Earth?”

“Slightly over a hundred.”

“And the rest?”

“Dispatched” Ruel states impassively. “Slain in battle but unable to die, they await judgment in Hell.”

“Doing what?”

“Tormenting Earth’s damned.”

“Who slew the tens of thousands falling in battle?”

“Some were slain by angels. Most by their own kind.”

“Who rules Earth’s remaining demonic titans?”

“Ten Princes. A pair over each of the planet’s current and coming seats of power.”

“Who rules them?” the Advocate questions staring deeply into the eyes of the Rebellion’s commander.”



For the first time during his testimony Ruel looks to the Prosecutor. The Devil, cocks his head ever so slightly, granting permission to proceed.

Turning to the Advocate, he returns the Counselor's stare. Drawing out the moment, the general dares a glance towards the Throne before settling his gaze on the gallery.

"General Ruel! I ask you once again. Who rules Earth's Demonic Princes?"

Staring past the Defense and into the eyes of the Third Heaven, Ruel answers boldly without equivocation. "*I do!*"

### *Heavens Grief*

Ruel's blatancy lights a short fuse, stupefying the gallery and Third Heaven. A moment later their stunned silence detonates into shouts of outrage from the faithful and pride from the fallen.

Satan's angels rejoice over their champion's declaration of control over the demonic and mankind, and at having subverted the intentions of God.

Heartache tares the soul's of the unfallen as the *weight* of Earth's situation grips them. Demons deceive and rule the leaders of Earth. Fallen angels conceived and rule the demonic princes. Their can be no more denial. The blame for man's fall and failure, sin and suffering, rests squarely on the shoulders of angels!

"So you admit responsibility for man's condition?"

"I can't take all the credit" Ruel grins. "The Agreement forbids angels or demons from physically harming humans. Best I can do is put in a good word."

“Yet on Earth you’re known as *the Destroyer*”

“People talk.”

“As do you!” exclaims the Advocate. “With the Court’s permission.” Instantly a holographic record of Ruel’s attack on Maciel beneath the ancient Catacomb of Priscilla reappears. The general’s gloating admission fills the proceedings:

“I *enjoyed* killing the Advocate and his lackeys and then leveling Jerusalem.”

“Let me guess,” mocks Mace. “They had it coming?”

“Do you know by the time *my* Roman’s were through with the Jews who betrayed *Him* they’d torn down a thousand houses to get enough wood for the crosses!”

“So you use the wicked to kill the righteous and then get rid of them too. Kind of an equal opportunity Destroyer?”

Ignoring the sarcasm Ruel continues meandering down memory lane. “I’ve had *so many* campaigns. Of course I had my favorites. I taught China’s ancient dynasties and the Pharaohs how to grind millions into dust. I raised the bar with Babylon’s Nebuchadnezzar as well as Cyrus and Darius of Persia.”

I turned Xerxes and Alexander into conquerors. Together we slaughtered millions. They were really ‘Great’ to work with.”

There was Hannibal and his elephants, and Rome with its legions.”

“Good times?”

“Attila the Hun and Genghis Khan were quite a pair” Ruel smiles fondly. “How we made the known world tremble and Christians scream! Did you know Catholics called Attila the ‘scourge of *God*?’”

“I didn’t,” Mace yawns wearily.

“I won’t bore you with details but I’ve gotta give a shout out to Hitler, Stalin and Mao! They and their *movements* killed and enslaved nearly a billion just getting started!

And when the right man wasn’t around I found a good germ would do nicely. *Wrath of God* kind of thing.” Ruel boasts.

“Let me guess. Small Pox, Influenza, the Black Death?”

“I’ve destroyed billions” Ruel growls, stepping within arms distance.

“And you’re telling *me* because?”

“*Because I’m getting ready to do it again and then some!*”

As the gallery responds the Advocate continues.  
“You’re reputation would seem well deserved.”

“I hate to brag.”

“It’s you’re testimony that throughout the ages you used conquerors and empires, sickness and disease to decimate humanity?”

“Of course! And let’s not forget man made droughts and famines. I’ve engineered the turning of breadbaskets into deserts, and food and water into weapons.

Under my command for thousands of years the Ten Princes have masterminded the rise and fall of Earth’s elite. Government and war, science and religion, commerce and technology all serve my purpose one way or another.”

“And *your purpose?*”

“The purpose the Insurrection’s always had. To *reveal the truth*. To expose God’s little secret.”

“Which is?”

“That You’re either *unable* or *unwilling* to care for *Your* creation.” It’s time to admit the obvious the *flaw* in Your design! You have the audacity to say ‘God’s love,’ defining Your *love*. But the evidence before this Court testifies to Your overwhelming *ego* or *incompetence*.

You claim to possess *all* power and knowledge. To be eternal without beginning or end. To be present in and throughout all creation. So what’s the problem?”

“According to your testimony, *your Rebellion!*”

“Really? Did we surprise you or did *You plan for us to be?*”

“The Rebellions aren’t *God’s* doing. Nor your efforts to make a hell of Earth.”

“So You say! But *You* left *us* little choice. We tried working this out in Heaven.”

“Twisting the truth hardly justifies the suffering you’ve caused! The Rebellion’s a monster!”

“Oh, there’s *a monster!* As for the Rebellion, we’ve only done what’s necessary to reveal *Who* it is!

We agreed to *Your* terms of influence only. We agreed to *Your* terms to leave billions at ease, targeting the smallest segment of humanity possible to force *a* response. We even agreed to *Your* terms to leave *Your* church *relatively* unscathed for the last fifteen centuries, allowing it encompass Earth.

Yet neither it or You’ve done more than make a *dent* in man’s suffering. So tell this Court Counselor, if You’ve got all the power, *Who’s the real monster?*”

“I’m not on the stand!” The Advocate objects to the general’s ranting.

On cue, the Prosecutor leaps to his feet. “Maybe it’s time *You were!*” Before a stunned Courtroom, the Devil allows a pause. His demand ringing throughout the Third Heaven Satan drops his bombshell. “Your Honor, In the *name of creation* I call *the Advocate* to the stand!”

## *God As Satan’s Witness*

### *Chapter 34*

#### *The Advocate’s Examination*

“Then I saw that there was a way to Hell, even from the gates of Heaven.” *John Bunyan*

**“Order!”** thunders the Throne. The Judge’s command booms throughout the Third Heaven, assisting Michael’s guard in quelling a million outbursts in the aftermath of Satan outrageous demands.

**“Are You willing Counselor?”** roars the Voice from the Bench.

“The Advocate takes a moment. “Your honor, the Defense both rests and is willing” answers the Counselor to the amazement of all.

**“General Ruel is excused! Prosecutor, call your Witness!”**

“Thank You *Your Honor*,” responds Satan as the *Destroyer* ceremoniously rises, exiting the witness box. On his way out the two exchange a knowing glance. With a nod the Adversary reminds his general to redeploy the Insurrection’s greatest warriors in and around the Supreme Court.

Ruel passes through the gallery like Moses passing through the Red Sea. Grinning, Satan turns, addressing the Throne issuing the clarion call he’s waited an eternity to sound. “The Prosecution calls the Advocate to the stand!”

Heaven’s Counsel humbly enters the witness box. Turning to face the gallery He waits quietly to be sworn in.

Even the mightiest Archangel in Heaven feels the gravity of the moment. Never in all eternity had a Member of the Trinity been summoned to the stand.

A gleam in the Advocate’s eye eases Michael’s apprehension. “Do you affirm the testimony you’re about to give is the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth?”

“I *Am* and do.”

“Please be seated” invites the Archangel through the thinnest of grins. With a wink from the Advocate the bailiff assumes his position.

The Devil’s smile fools no one as slowly approaching he stalks the Witness.

“Please state your name and title for the Court.”

“I have a few.”

“Don’t we all? A brief rendition should suffice.”

“I *Am* God the Son. Son of God and Son of Man. *Yeshua Hamashia*, Jesus the Christ. The Bread of Heaven and Water of Life. I *Am* the slain Lamb and conquering Lion of Judah.

I *Am* Alpha and Omega. The Way, Truth and Life. I *Am* the Resurrection, holding the keys of Hell and Death. Possessor of the key of David, I open what can’t be shut and shut what can’t be open.

I *Am* He who has the seven Spirits of God, who holds the seven stars, walking among the seven golden lampstands. I *Am* the Faithful and True Witness...

I *Am* the Angel of the Lord and Ancient of Days. King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. I *Am* Heaven’s Counselor and Mankind’s Advocate...

I *Am* the Word made flesh and the fullness of the Godhead bodily...” I *Am* God the Son. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Face of Omnity...

I *Am*...”

“My witness” Satan interrupts.

“You asked for the short list” smiles the Defense.

“*The short list? Right*” the Prosecutor retorts smugly.  
“Let me thank You for agreeing to testify.”

“It’s not the first occasion you’ve had to *examine Me*” reminds the Advocate, referencing His extreme torture and crucifixion on Earth at Satan’s hands.

“Water under the bridge.” whispers the Prosecutor.

### *What’s In A Name...*

“Are these titles uniquely Yours or are they held in common by the Trinity?”

“They are Mine.”

The Adversary nods. “But as the ‘fullness of the Godhead bodily’ and the ‘Face of Omnity’ You speak on behalf of the entire Trinity. Is that correct?”

“Yes.”

“During Your short soliloquy I couldn’t help but note a reoccurring phrase. ‘*I Am.*’ Isn’t that God’s most consummate title?”

“Yes.”

“*I Am...*” the Devil muses. “So *You’re* the Divine present tense participial! A fact You like reminding us of. Preincarnate, You introduced Yourself to Moses by it before a burning bush. During Your Earthly ministry You repeatedly used it in preaching and even to miraculously escape being stoned by an angry mob of Jews. You used it again in Gethsemane, knocking the feet out from under a Roman cohort of hundreds of soldiers before Your arrest.”

“Your point?”

“My point, Counselor, is that *I Am* seems to be Your favorite nick name. Yet there’s one *I Am* I’ve never heard You use. *I Am responsible!*”

Truth is, God's more than *just* the great *I Am*. God's the great '*You Are!*' As Omnity Your a class all by Yourself!"

Not just knowing, *You Are* all knowing! Not just powerful, *You Are* all powerful! Not just here or there, *You Are* everywhere at all times!

Yet again there's one thing that apparently *You Are not*. *You Are* not to *blame*. Never, no how, no way! In fact, what *You Are* is the biggest bully on the block touting '*I'm paper and you're glue, whatever you say bounces off me and sticks to you.*' Who can question You without being labeled a heretic or *Rebel* and *accused of treason?*' "

"Apparently anyone," intervenes the Advocate staring holes in the Devil. You've been doing so for billions of years. You're strategic manipulation's put the question, 'is God good?' on lips and in hearts throughout three heavens."

"And not just in so many words" the Son of Man continues. "Since arranging humanity's fall you've hurried and harassed man from one false paradise to another. All the while whispering in their ears, 'God's to blame.'"

*You* harness every disappointment and heartache, every betrayal and act of violence to sow your theory of a distant and silent God, or even none at all. *You* drive them into deserts of selfishness, into wildernesses of entitlement. You hold out the carrot of unlimited personal freedom while alienating them from their friends and family, their conscience and Creator.

*You* keep individuals and society too busy scrambling from mirage to mirage to notice they're running out of time." *You* coach *you should be as Gods* while all the while inspiring even greater acts of *godlessness*. You tempt children, teens and adults. *You* break up marriages and families while breaking down social order. *You* topple



governments, instigating war and atrocities against the weak and helpless.

And to top it all off You twist Omnipotence into *evidence* God doesn't care or even exist."

"Well its true *isn't it!*" demands Satan. "As far as mankind's concerned You *don't exist!* How dare You claim to care in the face of the carnage you just described?"

### *What Kind Of Savior?*

"Carnage you create" objects the Advocate.

"Carnage You allow! Even if creation buys Your innocent act what of Your failures to intercede? Your omission level's off the charts. Ask a hundred thousand parents of children dying of cancer every year. Ask six thousand children a day left orphaned by AIDS. Ask a billion starving right now on Earth while we're chatting in Heaven.

"Your *Hypocrisy's* glaring!" denounces the Accuser. "You deliver Your famous *Good Samaritan* sermon and then refuse to end human suffering. Like *the Priest and Levite* it's You who's passed mankind by for millennia. You who's leaves them wallowing in their pain day after day, passing the buck on to mankind to save themselves."

God the Son objects, "*You're the one...*"

"It's *my* fault, it's *their* fault! When Your kids are asleep and Your house is on fire *who cares* who set it?" decries the Prosecutor. "For all Your fancy titles one of two things is happening here. *Either You can't save Earth or You won't.*"

"I've made a Way."

“A Way?” interrupts the Devil with a laugh. “A *Way* few can find and even fewer follow!

Ready? Here comes another of Your ‘*I Am’s*’. ‘*Be ye perfect as I Am perfect.*’ I’ve got a news flash Counselor, ‘*nobody’s perfect!*’ From the look of things, maybe not even You.

It’d be funny if it weren’t so pathetic. You knew the end from the beginning. You knew salvation would leave most of humanity lost for eternity. We know because You said so. ‘*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*’

And it’s not just the wicked You *threaten*. Take Your Ten Virgins. Aren’t Virgins *pure*? All ten *believe* in You. All ten *go out to meet* You. All ten *have lamps lighting up the darkness*. And what’s their reward? You reject five for not having taken *extra* oil. What kind of Savior condemns half those He’s saving on a technicality?

And if that’s Your *own church*, good luck to the rest of humanity. Most can’t even find the gate. So much so You Yourself warn, ‘*when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the Earth?*’

Your own scriptures testify You’ll fail to save billions. The Bible’s filled with failure. The Gospels and every epistles of Your apostles predict failure. Then there’s good old John’s Book of Revelation! Here we got Your *favorite disciple* describing the big finale in *painstaking detail*. And what does he *reveal*? Scorched Earth and blackened sky, poisoned water and seas of blood. And last but not least, over two thirds of mankind dead and dying!

*That's more than four thousand million dead! All part of the  
hit parade of Your greatest failure of all!*

And if I reading my Bible right” Satan smirks turning  
to face the gallery, “the players for the last inning should be  
taking the field right about now.”

*God's Reply*  
*Chapter 35*

*One And Only*

God, who foresaw your tribulation, has specially armed you to go through it, not without pain but without stain. *C.S. Lewis*

The hum of commotion from the gallery spikes into pandemonium over Satan's railing indictments. Shouts ring out from celebrities among the faithful.

Peter and Paul the apostles bellow, denouncing the Devil's slander. James roars, declaring fallen angels will tremble like spineless demons before *the Judgment!* Samson and David exchange blows with mighty fallen angels who's blasphemy's crossed the line.

Moses and Elijah's eyes flash fire as a whirlwind of righteous indignation grows, whipping around the Courtroom and the Third Heaven!

***"Enough!"*** demands the Throne, flashing fire of it's own. ***"Let the Advocate respond!"***

"Yes Your Honor," thanks the Defense. Heaven's Counselor stands, a slight nod to the Prosecutor *assures* He'll not be interrupted.

"The Courtroom's Yours Counselor."

The Advocate takes a breath. "Let me begin by saying I appreciate the important questions being raised, if not the *spirit* in which they're offered.

As you either know or have forgotten, your minds were *designed* to thrive on inquiry. Your souls to *crave* understanding. Your spirits to *rise* to the heights of experience.

We created your hearts to yearn for meaningful relationship with each other and your Creator. To the degree you've failed to do so *I Am...* sorry.

The pertinent question being framed by the Prosecution is ‘*how sorry?*’ *How much* does God care? It’s a valid concern raised in various ways across Three Heavens.

The Adversary acknowledges that *I Am* while accusing *I Am* not enough. As for Earth, he asserts God lack’s the *power* or *concern* to immediately and completely save mankind.

He’s *mistaken* on both counts.

On Earth the Accuser’s taught billions to echo his refrain, ignoring any evidence to the contrary. While his is the popular opinion, some question it. Like the poster reading, “*I asked Jesus how much He loved me and He said, ‘this much’ then stretched out His arms and died.*”

During his examination the Prosecutor posed an important question. What kind of Savior... I’d like to clarify with a few questions of My own.

*What kind of Savior* generously shares His glory through creating billions of angels, providing them the unparalleled pleasures to enjoy eternally... *and* honors three among as Archangels, entrusting one of the three as the pinnacle of His creation?

*What kind of Savior* responds with infinite restraint while His authority’s usurped and love’s betrayed by the very *one* who should be most thankful... *and* exercises Divine patience in the face of this *Evil One* corrupting billions he was created to bless and serve?

*What kind of Savior* demonstrates unfathomable compassion to assure fallen angels their day in Court, *a day* lasting billions of years... *and* creates the First Heaven to reveal the true nature of the Rebellion?

*What kind of Savior* creates mankind to love so completely as to lay aside Omnipotence and be born humbly among them... *and* heals the sick, the blind and lame while

casting out demons and opening the floodgates of eternal life to thieves and prostitutes, addicts and *'whosoever will'*?

*What kind of Savior* endures torture, shame and crucifixion at the hand of humanity He's come to save... *and* is both able and willing to *become sin*, paying the full penalty of *eternal punishment* for lost humanity?

*What kind of Savior's* resurrected from the dead, as the firstborn of many brothers, spending the next two millennia interceding for mankind who so often reject Him... *and* hears every cry of the oppressed, stores every tear, records every prayer while feeling their every pain?

*What kind of Savior* will soon put right the wrongs on Earth, rewarding true human kindness throughout Eternity?"

Pausing, the Lord of Glory takes a breath and slowly sits, weary of being misunderstood. "In the end the answer to the question what kind of Savior *I Am* is simple. *I Am the One and Only!*"

### *Christ On Cross*

Silence fills the Courtroom as *truth* has it's moment. Satan himself remains quiet, alone in his thoughts until the stillness is shattered by Heaven's Judge. "***Prosecutor, anything further?***"

"Yes Your Honor," answers the Devil standing to address the Witness and the Third Heaven. "Impressive" Satan concedes. "Still, I notice You failed to dispute the scriptures I mentioned. Then again why would You? They're Your words. And isn't it true that they and other passages declare in the end tens of billions of men and angels will be lost for all eternity?"

“Yes.”

“And after all You’ve been through...” the Enemy touts. “If this is a case of the ends justifying the means, *they don’t.*”

“The cost of Rebellion’s *great*” admits the Son of God, quoting the Spirit’s words to Ariel on Earth. “Still, with all that’s lost, *much* will be gained.”

“Did God just admit failure?”

“I admit you’re cunning.”

“Are *You* saying the Devil made ‘em do it?” the Prosecutor mocks. “That *I’m* too much for *You*, Counselor?”

“You’re too much alright,” warns the Advocate. “Too much for your own good and that of weak willed and wicked angels, demons and men.”

“Let’s remember *Who’s* on the stand, shall we?” redirects the Adversary. “Be honest, Counselor. According to the Bible *God’s pretty damn hard to please.*”

“Actually, pleasing God couldn’t be easier.”

“Not from the sound of the scriptures we’ve discussed,”

Christ smiles. “After My baptism in the Jordan the Spirit led me to fast in the wilderness for forty days after which you tempted Me to turn rocks into bread. Remember My response?”

“Vaguely,” groans the Devil.

“*Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*”

“And.”

“Those are just a few passages” “There are many others that...”

“*Contradict* the ones were discussing?” interrupts the Prosecutor.

“I was going to say *compliment*. Painting a more *complete* picture of salvation.

“These passages *are* condemning and Your Book’s full of *hundreds more* along the same lines. You got some kind of loophole? A get out of Hell free card?”

“Big enough for all mankind.”

“Do tell?”

“Simple as it is beautiful. Four little words that turn sinners into saints, death into life, and Hell into Heaven.”

“Which are?” the Devil demands impatiently.

“*Mercy triumphs over judgment!*”

### *What Heaven Allows*

Satan sneers, “This is a Court of Law. Even *God* can’t wink at sin when humanity’s guilty as hell!”

“*Were* guilty” corrects the Redeemer. “*All were* guilty as charged. I’m sure you remember that under *your* influence I was arrested, tried and falsely convicted. *You* saw to it I was beaten, tortured and sentenced for their crimes. *You* were there when judgment was carried out. *You know* the penalty was paid in full.”

“Now *I have* the keys of Hell and Death. *I Am* the Door to Heaven. To enter, Mankind need only please *Me*”

“You can’t possibly condone their behavior! Their sins reach Heaven!”

The Defense level’s a long stare at Satan. “It’s amazing what Heaven allows.”



“It’s obscene!” condemns the Devil. “You can’t have sinners parading around Paradise.

“Really? I should think the *Rebellion* would have little grounds to object.”

“The jury’s still out regarding the *Rebellion*. As for man, a few years and time’s up. Scripture says *‘its appointed every man to die and then the judgment.’*”

“And judged they are. On the quality of love and mercy they’ve shown.”

“Kinda *lowering the bar* aren’t we Counselor?”  
Grading on a curve?”

“Mercy trumps judgment and *‘love covers a multitude of sins’* quotes the Defense.

“Your making an end run around Your own rules.”

“The *rules* exist to encourage man to develop the fruit of the Spirit. Love, peace, joy... Against such there is no law.

“Then Your law’s as useless as You.”

“First I fail to save man and now I making it too easy,” chides the Advocate. “You’ve either got a ‘Goldie Locks’ complex or you don’t like porridge.”

“What I don’t like are double standards. Either the rules are real or they’re not. And as for rules, there’s a few more than *Ten Commandments*. The Bible has *six thousand four hundred and sixty eight!*”

“Sounds daunting. Who could possibly expect mankind to remember much less obey so many? Unless...” mocks the Defense. “*One* was simple enough for a child to understand. *One* emphasized above all the rest. Of course, to be fare it would have to be comprehensive, encompassing all others. I know, *love your neighbor as yourself!*”

“According to You that’s the second great commandment!” “You said the first is to love God with ‘*all*

your heart, with *all* your soul, with *all* your mind and with *all* your strength.’ That’s a lot of ‘*alls*’! Tell me Counselor, how many do that?”

“Everyone who loves their neighbor as themselves!” the Redeemer laughs. “See what I did? I put the *how* right after the *what*! Isn’t it fantastic that the Creator loves and identifies with creation so completely that when humanity loves each other God takes it personally? That’s what I meant when I said, *whatever you do or fail to do to the least you do or fail to do to Me*.

Simple but profound. Thousands of commands concentrated into two. If two’s too many, one will do! What could be easier than that?

On Earth there’s a story about Heaven and Hell. In Hell there’s a feast set with every delicacy the heart desires stretching as far as the eye can see. But there’s a problem. The giant table’s blazing hot and so wide the banquet’s out of reach, creating a starving throno miles deep. Rioting for food, they curse and scream, beating one another and flinging themselves against the fiery table while never reaching the feast. Giant twenty foot long spoons scattered around the table could safely reach the food but before they can be used to get a bite those nearest the table are beaten and tossed by the mob to the back of the line.

In Heaven, so the story goes, there’s the same red hot banquet table and food, same giant spoons and crowd. The only difference is everyone eats to their heart’s content. *They feed each other!*”

“Nice” moans the Devil. “Your moral?”

“It’s not lowering the bar or grading on a curve to make loving your neighbor as yourself the way to Heaven. Heaven *is* love and mercy! Without that, Hell’s all there is.”

*End Game*  
*Chapter 36*

*In Chambers*

Everything should be as simple as it is, but not simpler.  
*Albert Einstein*

The Devil smiles slyly, collecting his thoughts. Turning his back on the Advocate he gazes into the gallery and beyond.

“Nothing further” announces the Prosecutor.

**“The Witness is excused”** sounds the Throne.

The Adversary returns to his desk as Heaven’s Counselor steps from the stand.

“The Prosecution requests a short recess to confer with Counsel” petitions Satan.

**“Granted”** responds the Judge. **“Court recessed!”**

“See You in chambers?” the Devil inquires.

“Whenever you’re ready.”

As the crowded Courtroom empties the Adversary takes a seat, casually flipping through His notes for show.

The Defense considers the testimony. Clearly give and take, concern over the plight of humanity weighs heavily on His heart. His lament over Jerusalem may soon be applicable to the whole Earth. *“How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”*

“Ready?” the Accuser breaks in.

“*I hope they will be,*” sighs the King to Himself. “After you.”

Stepping into the Judge’s chambers is like walking through time. Massive in size, the details of God’s private library are lavishly ornate. Alive, it remains ever constant in remarkable red marble and lacquered acacia wood. Many of

the exquisite furnishing of creations grandest room are overlaid with transparent gold in a rainbow of hues.

Emerald shelves house the Creator's collection of memorabilia from throughout Three Heavens. Inlaid books and rare artifacts fill the chamber with past, present and future wonders defying description.

Even with Court in recess, it's structure and contents radiate the Presence and Personality of Omnity. In deference to the Devil, God diminishes the light of His glory to a mere shadow of a shadow.

The Prosecutor's skin prickles and nerves stand on end upon entering. Something Lucifer hadn't done for billions of years, since before his fall.

Something Satan wouldn't do now in any other circumstance.

Masking his discomfort the Devil takes a moment getting his bearings. The Room has the feel of having been redecorated, yet seems hauntingly familiar. All the same ancient and future manuscripts and paintings, original and rare statuaries and inventions remain in the same places, yet many seem vaguely different, even ominous.

The space itself appears oddly lit. Brighter than he remembered in places, it's glory was now anathema to the archangel of evil. Other areas were darker, as if blanketed with the sadness of sin.

The Advocate waits patiently for the difference dawns on the Devil.

It was him, not the room, that had changed.

As had his appreciation for it's contents.

Mementos highlighting Lucifer's golden age pierce him with regret. Other pieces, always having been there, take on new meaning. These anger Satan, marking the treachery of the Rebellion and it's encompassing of Earth.

Last were items that spoke of horrible torment for the fallen and unimaginable glory for the faithful. Afraid to stare, the Devil can't recall what they'd meant eons ago. His memory, like the time of innocence, long gone.

"Have a seat" invites the Advocate, selecting a beautifully engraved wooden table with antique chairs in an area where Satan would feel least uncomfortable.

"Thanks" the Prosecutor responds weakly, wiping his brow as he regains his composure.

"Something to drink?"

"I'm fine" lies the Devil, anything but. "How about we get down to business?"

"Go on."

"Today was fun. And with *that* out of the way we can move on."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean we put on a good show! You stalled for time by demanding proxies to verify what we already know. You raised all the right objections. You revealed the Rebellion's part in Earth's troubles. You showcased Your generous plan of salvation."

"And now?"

"Your hands are clean Counselor" the Adversary assures. "Who can fault You? You're on record going the extra mile. You've done everything possible to prep Heaven for the inevitable. Now it's time to get on with the End of Days."

"You have My offers."

"A *century*? A *generation*? A *decade*?" the Devil mocks. "Be serious."

"We're done here" protests the Advocate, standing.

"*Wait*" objects the Prosecution. "Sit down. Let's see if we can't work something out."

## *Such Is The Kingdom*

Heaven's Counsel retakes His seat as Satan begins again, tactfully. "How about having that drink after all?" Instantly a gold lined crystal decanter's in the Devil's hand as a pair of matching goblets on an ornate silver tray appear on the table. *Sherry?*"

"Water."

"Still fasting? Your loss" mocks the Prosecutor, handing Heaven's Counsel a sparkling chalice of water.

"What do You *really want* Counselor?" asks Satan. "More time? Four hundred thousand people are born on Earth every day. That's millions *more* children every week facing the judgement about to destroy half the planet."

"And over a million a week who die before it arrives" replies the Advocate taking a drink. "Then there's natural and *unnatural abortion* to consider. Heaven grows over a *quarter billion* a year from spontaneous miscarriage."

*"For such is the kingdom of Heaven?"*

The Savior puts down His glass. "Another forty million a year arrive from the *miscarriage of justice* of your abortion policies."

"Maybe You should thank me," smirks Satan sipping sherry.

"*Count on it,*" glares the Son of Man.

"You're making my point Counselor" the Prosecutor insists, polishing off his drink and pouring another. "Lewdness and abuse is rampant. Poverty and violence on the rise. Things are going from bad to worse every day You delay. Sin's a dirty business *and* a booming industry."

Even Your church's set up shop. Your *own Body*. It's a shame!" touts Satan smugly. "But let's face it. Who *really* believes anymore? Who gets on their knees unless someone's dying?

Who can quote *ten scriptures* in row? How many can quote *even five* outside of the Lord's prayer? You're lucky to get a *coffee breaks* worth of devotion a day out of the whole lot of them.

*If and when* they go to church it's to sing a few songs, flash a few smiles, then *so long* till Sunday if they take the time to show up twice in a row. Even their services are a farce. Half act like the frozen chosen and the others like they're walking on water. Yet both are too busy wallowing in the world to notice they've got the power to end starvation and poverty, abortion and abuse *all by themselves!* Your *Body's* covered in mud and innocent blood, yet refuse to wash themselves, much less the world.

Your people are the most powerful institution in history with trillions of dollars in assets and global influence. A potential voting block of billions, yet millions don't care enough to vote and half those who do vote for *me*.

They pretend they're walkin' and talkin' with You. When it comes to *gross* sin they *may* even drag their feet a little. But in the end they happily shuffle right over the cliff along with the world they're supposed to save.

In fact, with the difference between the righteous and the wicked *rapidly disappearing* I'd think You'd be in a hurry to get back before there's no one left to *rapture!*"

### *Heaven's Billions*



The Prosecutor pauses preaching just long enough to empty another glass of sherry. “What’s *really* on the table? It can’t be time? What’s a year, decade or century to You when ‘*a thousand years is like a day?*’”

“Every hour’s important during harvest,” explains the Son of Man. “Especially when gathering for eternity.”

“You’ve saved tens of billion!” objects the Devil. “Heaven’s granaries are full! Why not just put an end to the sorrow and grief? Have *that drink* and enjoy the fruit of Your labors!”

“Eternity’s long and creation vast. As it stands, in just the First Heaven alone there are enough *galaxies* to give several to *each* of Earth’s redeemed. That’s hundreds of billions solar systems per person, give or take.”

“According to Scripture You’re canning the the whole thing anyway. Rolling it up like a scroll.”

“Then creating a *new* Heaven and Earth. You know the new always exceeds the old.

“I know humanity’s numbers exceed the angelic thirty to one. Of the hundred billion conceived on Earth, two thirds are in Heaven.”

“And tens of billion of souls lost to Hell” groans the Advocate.

“Exactly!” exclaims the Adversary. “*Hell’s enlarged herself, her mouth gaping beyond measure.*” The longer You wait the more it’s Hell, not Heaven, reaping the harvest.”

“Heaven’s silos must *overflow*.”

“So You’ll just let Earth go to Hell until Heaven’s satisfied?” scorns Satan. “What about *that compassion and justice* we’ve heard so much about?”

“Momentarily restrained by mercy. As you said, *a thousand years is like a day.*”

*“And a day like a thousand years.* Delaying Earth’s judgment a single decade’s the equivalent of three and a half million years more grief. *If You identify as completely with humanity as You say.*

“That’s My concern. Still, holiness and judgment must be satisfied. What do you propose?”

“How about the Sodom Solution.”

“Ten righteous?”

“Ten’s a little light.” objects the Prosecutor. “First, the planet’s grown from twenty million to seven billion. That’s 350 times the population in Abraham’s day. Second, You said, *“to whom much is given much is required.”* If memory serves Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed long before Moses penned the first page of scripture. I’d say the Earth has at least a hundred times the revelation they had.”

“If you’re suggesting I find 350,000 righteous that’s fine by Me as long as you’re prepared to wait a while.”

“Let’s fast track this. Give me a number Counselor?”

“A Hundred” offers Heaven.

“I was thinking a little higher.”

“Make it a thousand”

*“A thousand righteous? Got a nice ring. What terms?”*

“I find a thousand we delay the End of Days half a century.”

*“All or nothing and You’ve got a deal. They better be real righteous.”*

“I’m sure we can hammer out the details.”

“Then You’re on!” the Devil laughs, holding up a forth glass of port.

Raising crystal stemware, the Advocate's water glass  
chimes against the Adversaries in a toast to newest aspect of  
the *Wager*.

*The Father's Regret*  
*Chapter 37*

*Eternal Moments*

Make the most of your regrets. To regret deeply is to live afresh.  
*Henry David Thoreau*

The Judge looms imperceptibly within His chambers brooding over His Son and fallen pinnacle of creation as they litigate Earth's fate.

The Father touches the chambers contents fondly. Unlike Satan, His memories of the *past, present and future* are crisp and clear. Every manuscript and literary device, every psalm sung and implement of worship full of even greater meaning now than before *the Fall*. Every item of discovery and scientific breakthrough, every painting and work of art elicit a Father's pride over His creation's accomplishment...

...and pain over trillions of acts of entitlement.

One treasured memento towers above the rest, encapsulated in a massive exquisitely carved crystal. A ring of immense holograms, twelve records of Heaven's most memorable moments of praise.

The first memorializes Lucifer's debut performance conducting Heavenly worship.

The second captures the highest moment of praise ever attained by angels.

The third is the beauty and splendor of the final service before the angelic revolt.

The fourth captures Heaven's first heartbroken worship in response to the Insurrection of their brothers.

The fifth records the awe and wonder of men and angels at the Incarnation and Earthly birth of God the Son.

The sixth are odes of sorrow and psalms of outrage over the torture and crucifixion of the Redeemer.

The seventh is Heaven erupting in dance and praise as the resurrected Savior leads the first triumphal procession of humanity's redeemed safely home.

*The remaining five holograms capture future events as having already happened.*

The eighth is of a like never been seen before. “*Silence in Heaven for a half hour*” as the Advocate’s brakes open the Seventh Seal of the scroll of God. Fire flashes from the Golden Alter before the Throne. The prayers of saints mix with incense and are cast as embers upon Earth. The first of Seven Trumpets sound alarm!

The ninth was a two part performance. The first of exuberant joy as Michael and his angels cast the Dragon and his angels from Heaven. The second, a symphony of woe over the Dragon having come to Earth.

The tenth records One like the Son of Man, crowned and arriving in clouds of glory with an innumerable company of men. Enraptured in worship, these are those saved from Earth’s final tribulation and the wrath of God.

The eleventh foresees the King of Kings and Lord of Lords astride a white horse, accompanied by the armies of Heaven. Praise erupts for the Conqueror of the Antichrist and his False Prophet. Casting them alive into eternal fire and brimstone, He and the saints reign on Earth a thousand years!

The twelfth and final hologram is also two parts. First is the Great White Throne Judgement. Land and sea, Death and Hell give up their dead. All who’s names are not found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life are thrown with Satan and his angelic rebellion into the Lake of Fire. Then God creates a new Heaven and Earth as New Jerusalem descends from God as a bride adorned for her husband. For the first time in eternity Heaven and Earth join in jubilant praise. God dwells with men, wiping away every tear from their eyes and making all things new!

### *The Burning Question*

A single word plagues the Father's mind, inflaming Omnipotence's heart as Creator and creation share a burning all consuming question.

*Why?*

Of course He *knew* why from Eternity. As long as He'd known he'd be here and now feeling the full impact of the *question* anyway. Ages before creating angels and long before their Rebellion He was intimately familiar with every detail comprising the question's *Answer*.

It was His to understand every concept, opinion and point of view. His to know the myriad of primary, secondary and tertiary reasons for Lucifer's and Adam's Rebellion. And that of billions angels and tens of billions of men and women.

Still He asks, *Why?*

God muses that such a tiny question should be at the heart of so great a mystery. One tiny word to bare the weight of such scrutiny by both creation and Creator. For bound up with the answer is the eternal fate of over *a hundred thousand million souls*.

God yearns for more than explanation. For more than understanding. He languishes for a gift even He can neither give or receive.

His family's lost *innocence*.

As the Redeemer is acquainted with grief, so too He carries creation's sorrows. *Like Father like Son*, it was a family trait. Yet His sorrow has a solitary component unknown to even the Advocate. Filling the *eternal now*, the Father of creation feels its every woe from *before* time and would do so forever. He would remember it all. Long after the Rebellions were dealt with and the redeemed mesmerized by Heaven's joys.

Forced to smile, He savors creation's awe of the incomparable wonders soon to be revealed. Marvels such "as eye has not seen, ear has not heard nor has entered into the mind of men..."

He shares both His children's boundless joy and bottomless sorrow. Like Mary, the mother of the Redeemer, He treasures every precious moment, storing them up against grief.

His is the capacity to experience everything in infinite detail. His is to carry the weight of *knowing* from beginning to end, baring the brunt with an intensity unknown to all but the First Person of the Trinity.

His is the story to which Job's life was a metaphor. Like the patriarch of patience, His goodness proved an occasion for evil. Like Job He suffered great loss. His blessings raided. His beloved children destroyed. His soul wracked with pain and misery. And like Job, His latter state would exceed the former.

Yet despite the day of reckonings approach, or maybe because of it, the *Father* groans over the *question*.

*Why! Why* should those given everything demand more? *Why* prefer lies over truth, horror over beauty and evil over goodness? *Why* had so many chosen eternal death over everlasting life?

And *what!* *What* horrific fault had creation found in their Him to incite insurrection? *What* more wouldn't He have given had they only asked? *What* can even He do with the gaping whole in His heart left by billions He's loved and lost?

From the height of Omnipotence the Judge looks down through time and eternity at the aftermath of Lucifer's revolt, the angelic rebellion and man's expulsion from paradise. Weeping as only a Parent can, between sobs God the Father

moans the words to scripture, the truth of which fills His soul with eternal regret, “*how.. the.. mighty... are.. fallen...*”

## *A Thousand Righteous*

### *Chapter 38*

#### *Lower Than Angels*

It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

*Eleanor Roosevelt*



During recess the throng overrunning creation's Supreme Court continues to grow. As do expectations throughout the Third Heaven.

Interestingly, while the crowd swells in size, tempers cool and confrontations decrease. So does the *presence* of Satan's army. As commanded, his mightiest angels remain near on alert, just less conspicuously. Rather than spoiling for a fight, the temperament of the fallen seems *almost* jovial. The meaning of such an abrupt attitude adjustment isn't lost on the faithful.

*God and the Devil have reached an agreement.*

New arrivals choke the Court's hallowed grounds, certain change was in the air. Glad for the best seats, not a soul moves from the gallery. There is no reason to leave. Earthly constructs like work and rest, food and shelter, having little meaning in Eternity. All but essential activities yield to the gravity of the moment.

Heaven's atmosphere's charged with anticipation. Waiting on the Court, rebels and righteous collectively seem to hold their breath as time slows to a standstill.

In Eternity, the relativity of time's based on the unfolding of events, not  $E=MC^2$ . The Third Heaven marks noteworthy moments rather than minutes. There's no sunrise or sunset, no darkness or shadow of turning. God's eminence radiates contiguously through everything and everyone.

All simply *is*. No need for sleep or alarms. No punching time cards. No dreading deadlines. Change is harmonious, not segmented into minutes and hours, days and years.

In Heaven it's the soul's progress, not time's, worth measuring.

However, one collective landmark *looms* before humanity as a moment the righteous crave and wicked dread.

A day heralding the end of the beginning.

Made "*a little lower than the angels*" the redeemed will not always be so. In honor of the incarnation, atonement and resurrection of the Son of God, His brothers await glorified bodies and natures.

Like the angels they'll no longer suffer, corruption putting on incorruption! Like the angels they'll be indestructible, mortality putting on immortality! As it's written, "*Death, where's your sting? Hell, where's your victory?*"

Unfortunately, like the rebel angels, the glorified bodies of mankind's fallen face eternal torment in an unquenchable Lake of Fire.

But unlike Heaven's angels who's state remains the same, Earth's redeemed will be transformed as they behold the the glory of the Son of God, becoming *like Him* when they see Him as He is.

A coronation gift from God to mankind will be *time* itself. Given new natures surpassing the angelic, multiple dimensions will open. No more waiting. No then, only *now*. Experience will overflow beyond mere individual conversations and relationships. The magnitude and quality of life will blossom exponentially. *Time will forever become a thing of the past!*

But for now Heaven waits, humanity's fate hanging in the balance. The wicked look to Earth's ruin to advance their Rebellion. The righteous pray for man's deliverance from the beginning of the End of Days.

Yet neither know Heaven's hopes and fears now rest  
on finding a thousand righteous. A thousand men and  
women, themselves unaware.

### *Satan's Terms*

As the Judge's glory flares above the Throne the  
Father's infinite sadness goes undetected by all but the Son.  
Kneeling along with those present the Advocate lingers in  
worship, bowing in oblation to unapproachable Light.

"Rise and be seated" Michael commands. "Heaven's  
Supreme Court is in session!"

As the gallery complies a Voice from the Throne  
blares, "***Counselors, I will hear you.***"

Standing, the Advocate addresses the Bench. "Your  
Honor" the Prosecution and Defense have reached a  
preliminary agreement concerning the commencement of the  
End of Days. We ask the Court's permission to finalize the  
terms for the record and Your approval."

***"Proceed!"*** thunders the Judge.

The Prosecutor takes the lead. "I took the liberty of  
drawing up a motion for the Court's perusal. With Counsel's  
permission..."

Handing a copy to the Advocate the Adversary  
continues. "As per this aspect of the Agreement, the  
following terms are hereby stipulated. The Defense shall  
have three earth years to certify a thousand righteous among  
mankind's present population. Upon successfully doing so,  
the Prosecution's request for the start of the End of Days will  
be withdrawn for a period of no less than fifty years. After

which, *at my discretion* I will again bring the matter before the Court.”

“Agreed.”

The Devil grins, continuing. “For the purpose of this accord, it is the sole burden of the Defense to produce said one thousand righteous in time, and in toto.”

“Agreed.”

“Furthermore, should Counsel be unable to certify the righteousness of a thousand individuals, all arguments on behalf of delaying the End of Days will be moot, and all rights to further objection forfeit.”

“Agreed.”

“Now as to the thousand righteous. The Prosecution allows for the selection of candidates to fall under the sole jurisdiction of the Defense with four provisions:

“*First*, for the purpose of sampling, two hundred individuals must be selected from each of Earth’s great principalities. including America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.”

“Acceptable.”

“*Second*, there shall be no direct or indirect notification prior to, during or after the process of selection, testing or certification. Each prospect will remain in a same or similar circumstance in which they were selected.”

“As long as it works both ways,” insists the Advocate. “No undue pressure is to be placed on the selectees once identified. No targeted increase in temptation, deception or persecution will be allowed.”

“Goes without saying,” agrees the Prosecutor.

“Let’s say it anyway.”

“You surprise me Counselor. Sarcasm’s not a fruit of the Spirit.”

“*Truth* is. Please continue.”

“As You wish” complies the Adversary. “*Third*, no religious or humanitarian celebrities. No Popes, Dali Lamas, or Bono’s . Just regular folk. A cross-section of humanity.”

“This isn’t a *random* sampling.”

“Just saying, ‘nobody famous.’ Otherwise choose whoever You like.”

“Agreed.”

“*Forth*, the *arrangement* is all or nothing. Ten, a hundred, nine hundred and ninety nine righteous do not a thousand make. And there will be *no alternates*.”

“The Defense agrees to the Prosecution's four provisions.

### *Let The Search Begin!*

“Good. Let’s define ‘righteousness.’”

“Any ideas?” smirks the Defense.

“For starters I assume we’re talking conditional not positional. I’m not interested in etherial measurements of ‘faith.’

“Neither am I.”

“Good, then what?”

“Same as always. Just more of it.”

“Could You be more vague?”

“Couldn’t be clearer. There’s only *one golden rule*.”

“What, *All you need is love*?” Satan mimics the Beatles.

“Couldn’t hurt. But there’s a little more to righteousness than that. Even serial killers can be nice when it suits them.

“What then?”

“Righteousness is helping not harming. It’s being kind and going the extra mile for others, something that can be done in variety ways. For this purpose we’re talking *extraordinarily kind.*”

“Have some parameters in mind?”

“*To do justly, love mercy and walk humbly.*”

“Still subjective,” objects the Prosecutor. “Let’s quantify.”

“Righteousness is simply faith that pleases God, and only living faith can.”

“Pleases God *how?*”

“Loving Him by loving others.”

“And *living faith* is?”

“A trinity! Living faith’s when the mind, heart and will work in unison.”

“Difficult to measure thoughts and feelings,” complains the Devil.

“Perhaps, yet *“all things are laid bare before the word of God. Living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing even the soul and spirit, able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

“Anything a little simpler?”

“The simplest way to know what someone’s thinking and feeling is through what they do or fail to. We’re defined by our actions *because* they reveal our thoughts and feelings.

*Doing justly* is caring enough to do no harm and treating others fairly. *Loving mercy’s* going over and beyond to help the most needy, forgiving along the way. *Walking humbly* is admitting the truth about one’s self, others and the Creator.”

“Still leaves a lot of blanks to fill in,” agrees Satan tentatively. “Let’s say I’m on board. We total up the justice,

mercy and humility quotient of Your candidates. What about subtraction? How do negatives figure in?”

“On Earth, righteousness is a journey more than a destination. It’s perfection’s path. The righteous, like all travelers, face challenges. They may choose to turn back, change course or loose their way. They may be attacked, deceived or distracted. They may falter, stop or take a rest. Righteousness is staying the course and helping others do the same.

Righteousness measures the degree humanity walks in and towards the Light. Stepping in darkness is to be expected. Walking in darkness means you’re off the path.”

“And by darkness?”

“Selfishness. Particularly seeking gain at another’s expense.’

“*Particularly?*” notes the Prosecutor. “So there are degrees of darkness.”

“That’s the answer to your question. *Negatives* affect the equation to the degree they extinguish or decrease the Light.”

“Just what wattage are we talking. How bright will the Light of Your thousand righteous be?”

“To put a halt the start of End of Days? I’d say it needs to be *blinding!*”

“Very” Satan retorts, flipping through his notes before addressing Heaven’s Throne. “Your Honor, at this time the Prosecution moves these terms and conditions be added to *the Agreement* with the usual stipulations and provisos. Also, for the time being I’m prepared to wave further arguments pertaining to the Defense’s certifying a thousand righteous from Earth’s present population until Counsel and I have had additional time to confer.

“I concur Your Honor” agrees the Advocate.

“*Very well!*” thunders the Judge as lightening cracks about the Supreme Court of creation. *The Agreement is so amended! Court is adjourned until such time as Earth’s one thousand candidates for certification of righteousness are found! LET THE SEARCH BEGIN!*”