

God's Plan of the Ages

Volume Two

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God's Plan of the Ages

Volume Two ~ Beginning of Time through Moses

A historical fiction epic imagining what it may have been like
to accompany the Creator of the universe
from the beginning to the end of time.

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Note: This is a “teaching” story, written primarily to help people understand the Bible. This volume begins the story, from the beginning of time. Volume One, *The Feasts of Israel: God's Plan of the Ages*, provides the theological, historical, scientific, and legendary backgrounds necessary to understand the story, presents an overview of the Catastrophic Era, and explains many of the rather surprising conditions faced by our early ancestors. Volumes Two through Four tell the story of the Old Testament, and Volume Five covers the story from the New Testament period and beyond, to the very end of time.

Be sure to see the back pages for the timeline, maps, diagrams, and index for this volume. I also include there a brief autobiography and some essays to let you, dear Reader, know where I'm coming from.

Note: Volume Three has some more-detailed maps of Canaan, the Middle East, and Egypt.

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While this volume is historical fiction and does not directly quote Scripture, it is firmly based on Scripture. My primary Scripture source and constant reference is the *New American Standard Bible* ® Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.

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The version I use was printed in 1971 by Regal Books, a division of Gospel Light Publications, Glendale, CA.

My secondary Scripture source is *The Interlinear Hebrew / Greek English Bible*, Copyright © 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1983 by Jay P. Green, Sr. and published in 1976 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. (Peabody, MA 01960), and the Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc. (Lafayette, IN 47903), edited by Jay P. Green, Sr.

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Preface

God's Plan of the Ages Volume Two – A Historical Fiction Epic

These volumes are written as historical fiction, to tell the story of the Bible as if we were there with the Creator throughout all the ages of time. The perspective can become a bit confusing at times, as you must bounce back and forth between the heavenly and earthly realms, and even into hell itself, to get the whole picture.

This story is exceedingly controversial, for which I do not apologize. Though I am well-grounded in the traditional doctrines of the church, I did not start there. Instead, I started by asking, "What does the inerrant (in its original languages) Word of God actually say?" I used that as the foundation for my story, even though it is at times surprisingly different from what most preachers preach.

The result is a remarkably fresh and radically new interpretation of the Word of God. I discovered that the traditional Bible story held many conflicts, and no one had ever really thought through the entire story before to discover those conflicts. Believing as I do that the Word of God is inerrant (because God is the author and there can be no conflicts in Him) I wrestled with these seeming discrepancies until I arrived at new ways of interpreting Scripture which (I believe) resolves them. Yes, the result is controversial, but no more so than teaching traditional doctrines of the church which contradict the clear words of Scripture!

I do not claim to be God, nor to have a corner on His Truth. Some of my conflict resolutions could be wrong. I believe this to be the best interpretation of Scripture that anyone has come up with so far, and I always pray and hope to be "inspired," but I know it still could be improved upon. I would enjoy a few good debates with some who perhaps know the Scriptures better than I, and can point out where I have failed to line up my story foursquare on the authoritative Word of God.

However, be careful before offering to debate me! We've been lied to, you and I. We've inherited false doctrines from the Catholic church of the Dark Ages which the Protestants of the Reformation never successfully protested, and they tend to color our thinking. The Catholic church is somewhat more biblical now, but in the Dark Ages their goal was not truth; it was power and control. They deliberately tried to hide truth from 'their' people, even banning the Bible in the common languages and torturing to death those who opposed them. Since then, some of that truth has been restored. I am trying to take a giant leap forward here and restore the rest, all of it, in one story.

This is actually a five volume, 1550 page work, though the story is only the four volumes of *God's Plan of the Ages*. Volume One is a Bible study titled, *The Feasts of Israel*. I wrote it first, to clarify the doctrines of the Bible that the church messed up so badly when they turned virulently anti-Semitic around the time of Constantine. You cannot hate the Jews and still be a Christian! We have a Jewish Messiah and we must be adopted into the Family of Israel to be saved. Once I wrote *The Feasts of Israel*, I found that it changes the whole story of the gospel! That is when I knew I needed to rewrite the Bible story, leaving out the perversions from the Dark Ages to just tell it like the Bible says.

So my story may be provocative. It may make you think. You may be delighted or angry with me, or even awed at how it all fits together. I've tried to make it entertaining as well as educational. But most of you will probably not understand it completely until you also read Volume One, *The Feasts of Israel*, and rediscover the doctrines behind it – doctrines which the leaders of the first century church understood well, but which were almost completely lost in the Dark Ages and only partly recovered during the Protestant Reformation and subsequent Great Awakenings.

Darwin's theory of Evolution of the Species is not just a side issue with me. With its need for billions of years of stability on a placid planet, it is the single most destructive lie ever successfully foisted upon any people. So I counter with a deliberate focus on the catastrophic nature of the Bible story, at least up until the times of King Hezekiah. My story of these cataclysms is carefully thought out, but it still involves a lot of guesswork and will probably cause even more controversy. So be it.

I have fun with my story; I hope you do too. I make up characters where I need them, and sometimes you may not realize they are made up until you try to find them in the Bible. (Though I'll often give them modern names as a clue.) Some of my made-up characters are even among our animal friends, such as the great red dragons. I probably use animals more than I ought, as I love them and hope to find them in heaven someday. But most of my made up characters are wives of the great men of old, whom I have named and given places of honor along with their husbands. I love being married, and I can hardly conceive of a man becoming great without a great wife supporting him. So here's to my beloved wife of forty-five years!

The Bible tells a true historical story. Any historical fiction writer must attempt to line up his story with actual history, and I am no exception. At first, nothing lined up, so I continued playing with my chronology until it did. Then suddenly, everything lined up! Dramatically so! Dates and events fell into place, often with startling relationships between secular history and the Bible story. I have probably spent more time on secular history than I ought, just because once everything lined up it was so fun exploring the historical settings of the Bible.

This is an adult work. I use big words, huge paragraphs, complex thoughts, run-on sentences, and way too many adjectives and adverbs. If you have been raised on that pathetic "fund-raiser letter" English (one-sentence paragraphs using a fourth grade vocabulary) you will have trouble with my story. I also tell details that should be left out of a children's book, with violence, depravity, and sexuality that a child should not have to bear, as well as deeper doctrines of the faith that go far beyond a child's understanding. I'm in good company; so does the Bible. So do not be shocked when I say the same things that the Bible says, except say it in such a way that it seems to jump out and slap you. Sometimes I think we all need our faces slapped once in a while to wake up and see what the Bible is really saying.

My Bible story is not written in the "King James English." I use the common modern vernacular and current American idioms throughout. I do show reverence to "The Holy," but I portray Him as a real Person. He is "the One Who Laughs," who enjoys a good joke, who loves to feast and dance, and who is startlingly emotional both in His love and compassion, and in His hatred of evil and grief for those trapped in it. Don't forget that we are made in God's image. Words we use for our own emotions originated in His. For example, we on earth can experience a limited measure of joy. But in His realm that word 'joy' is multiplied beyond our imagining.

In the first writing of this work I capitalized nearly everything that referred to the divine and His ways, nature, and character. For example, His Wisdom is far higher than our wisdom. But since I talk a lot about God, all the capitals became rather distracting. So in this later rewrite I have softened up a bit. I still capitalize the personal pronouns and proper names of God (including the "I AM," "The Holy," the "Light of the World," the "Lamb of God," the "Living Word," the "Word of Truth," and the "Spirit of Truth"). But most of the attributes of God I changed to lower case, such as His eternal nature, wisdom, righteousness, peace, joy, justice, goodness, love, and so on. I still capitalize the Bride of Christ (being many-membered, she has no one unique name), but no longer capitalize pronouns referring to her.

There are some notable exceptions, for which I will explain. Divine attributes are always higher than the human equivalent, but if it is just a matter of degree, I have used lower case. However, where the divine essence is inherently different from ours, I sometimes continue to use capitals. For example, the divine **Word** framed the universe; that is inherently different from our words. The divine **Law** is woven integrally into our universe, providing structure, holding it all together. It is inherently different from written laws. Divine **Life**, that Spirit Life from above, is very different from human life – different in its essence as well as its length! Divine **Truth** is not just getting your factual ducks in line; it is inherently different. Real Truth with a capital “T” rests only in the One who is Truth. Almighty God is the **King**; His rule is inherently different from human kings, as He is the King of kings. The **Kingdom** of Heaven / Kingdom of God is not people-control, forced servitude, or ownership, it is a heart-rule willingly given out of love; as such, it is inherently different from the kingdoms of men.

Note that throughout this story references will be made to directions and places using their current names, even though those names did not exist then. I do that for clarity of understanding for you, dear Reader. For example, at Creation the earth’s poles were about sixty degrees from where they are now, and in the early years they changed ten to twenty degrees per century, yet to avoid confusion I always refer to north and south from our present perspective. (Though the earth’s core has not shifted much on its spin axis, at one time its crust was floating over subterranean oceans, allowing it to easily shift with the regular close passes of the planets.) I use English dates and measures even though they could not have been used then. And I refer to mountains “from Somalia to Turkey” (for example) even though those nations did not exist then.

Naming is also a huge problem. Many names have changed over the years. I tried to be consistent if possible, even if it means I am sometimes anachronistic. For example, I call the area from Tyre to Ugarit by its later Greek name, Phoenicia, though they first called themselves Kena’ani, because I want to avoid confusion.

Because the Trinity is a mystery, the name of God can be confusing. He is one God in three aspects. In this book, I generally use the name ‘YHWH’ for Father God in eternity. I use ‘Logos’ for His only begotten Son, the fullest possible expression of YHWH into our space-time realm. The Holy Spirit bridges the two realms. However, at the time of Abram, Logos told His people to use His memorial name, YHWH, which many did. And then at the incarnation He was named Yashua ha-Mashiach (Jesus the Christ in English). Yet even when using these names on earth, I still call Him Logos when I skip up to view the scene from His perspective in the heavenlies, as I often do. Please don’t come unglued when Moses calls Him YHWH and the next second His angels are still calling Him Logos!

I use traditional BC (before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini – in the year of our Lord) dates. I also use AF (after the Fall of Adam) dates until the Flood. I rarely use AM dates (Anno Mundi – in the year of the world, or of Creation), as I don’t believe Adam kept track of time until after the Fall. I don’t use ‘politically correct’ BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) dates, which were invented by historical revisionists who are embarrassed to acknowledge the birth of Christ as the turning point of history.

In my fictionalized story the **year of Creation** is **5106 BC**. I believe it could be no later than that, though if one were to fully expand the history it probably would extend out to somewhere between 7,000 to 10,000 BC. But notice we’re still talking thousands, not millions. To presume sufficient stability of the solar system for life to survive for the millions or billions of years required by the evolutionist is ridiculous, as you will see when you read my story. My date for the **Flood**, **October 24, 3450**, is most likely within five hundred years. My date for the **Tower of Babel catastrophe**, **October 24, 3180**, is probably pretty close, as from then on we have a consistent line of historical links.

However, nobody knows any exact dates prior to 701 BC, as the great catastrophes then so changed the orbits of the planets that hours, days, months, and years had to be completely redefined. All dates I give prior to 701 BC are based on their own time, not ours. I'm pretty confident that from about 2700 BC to 701 BC we had an extremely precise 360 day year, 30 day month, and 25 hour day, with Earth locked in resonance with Mars. Any earlier than that is pure speculation. At the Creation I am guessing that we had a 350 day, 50 week year (with no month) and a 32 hour day. *The Feasts of Israel, Volume One* gives an overview of the catastrophes causing these timing changes.

Warning: This book tells life's story, often rather explicitly. It is intended for adult students of the Bible. While it can be read to children, parents may wish to tone down the more graphic descriptions of wickedness, sensuality, or violence.

Warning: This book is historical fiction. While I do attempt to align it with known historical facts, actual history is far more complex than any written work can fully cover. Therefore be forewarned that at times I deliberately simplified and generalized known history to enable me to fit it within four volumes – instead of forty or four hundred! In other words, the historical basis for this story is factually as accurate as I'm able to make it, but dramatically compressed, leaving out far more than is included.

We have been lied to. Especially in America, our entire public educational system is based on lies, and not just about our biological origins. Our history has been revised to take out God and the faith of our fathers. Our God-inspired culture and traditions have been dragged down to make them appear as morally equivalent to demonically inspired cultures which never had the truth of the Creator God. Marxist / communist / socialist cultures which enslaved their people and caused the deaths of millions are still held up as something to be emulated in our own government. And religions which encourage terrorism and murder are considered just as valid as the true faith in the God of love.

What's even worse, definitions of commonly understood terms have been radically changed to hide the agenda of those who hate God. Words such as love, hate, marriage, gay, tolerant, bigot, phobia, fundamentalist, and many others which had clearly defined meanings a few decades ago have been redefined to make the Christian worldview seem repugnant to the next generation. This is 'double-speak' at its finest. How can western civilization survive if the principles that built it are mocked by our own leaders? For example, changing the biblical definition of marriage has led to many young people refusing to make a lifetime commitment to a spouse and the children God gives them.

In their hearts everyone knows that the spontaneous generation of life from non-life is impossible, yet by calling it gradual evolution over billions of years, it is now being taught as fact. The term 'science' has been redefined to include wild flights of fancy and unscientific guesses of things from earlier ages which are untestable, unrepeatable, and require far more faith than just accepting the evidence we have from Scripture. Proven scientific principles such as the Second Law of Thermodynamics (that everything is running down and wearing out, tending from order towards randomness and chaos), are ignored, and we are told we must believe that the universe started itself with a 'big bang' and organized itself from chaos into the beautifully designed and orderly universe we see today. Yet when someone gently points out the obvious, that such incredibly complex and beautiful designs must imply an Intelligent Designer, the 'scientific' world has conniptions and screams, "Religion!" as if their evolutionary dogma were not a religion.

So in spite of the fact that the US Constitution unambiguously demands that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." we now have on the books a zillion laws establishing the state religions of atheism, secular humanism, and hedonism and prohibiting (in public) the one true religion of the God of love as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

As always, the battle is over the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God. I maintain that everything involves faith. Everything requires a choice to believe it or not, which is a religion of some sort. There really are only two religions: the one revealed by God in the Holy Scriptures, and those invented by people who hate (or don't know) the true God, for the purpose of soothing their conscience with a surrogate god. Public education in America has been taken over by the latter. They call their evolution religion 'science'. They redefine the word 'religion' to refer exclusively to faith in the Creator God, and prohibit it from their schools. But they have a god, too – one who has been re-made into their own image, according to their own desires. They assert that the claims of God in the Bible are 'unscientific' and implausible, evidenced by miracles and tales of mystical things that cannot be touched or measured. But let's examine that. Is their religion any better? Yes I know, life is marvelously adaptive, but I'm not talking about that. Have they ever seen one species evolve into another? Of course not. Thus their religion too is about things that cannot be touched or measured.

This book is my attempt to explain some of those miracles and to demonstrate that the spirit realm can indeed be seen, touched, and measured by those whose hearts are opened and whose senses are tuned to discern what God is saying in His Holy Word. Indeed, God's glorious realms of spirit are more real and more substantive than this physical realm which only dimly portrays it. My book is written to prepare us for living in that realm, for I believe we shall all be there much sooner than any of us can imagine.

This story is real. This book is fiction. Most of the dialogs are fiction. Some of my characters are fiction. But the story is real. It happened, very nearly like I have described it. Read it. Enjoy it. Learn from it. Let it teach you wisdom, impart faith, and repair your worldview to bring it in line with the inerrant Word of God. Let it arm you, to give you the ammunition you need to overcome the lies of those who deliberately distort history to try to justify their false faith in a universe which created itself out of nothing billions of years ago. Darwin's theory of evolution of the species has now finally collapsed under the weight of its own inconsistencies and impossibilities, and is exposed as a conspiracy by haters of God to blind you to the Truth of Holy Scripture. *Through these volumes the Truth will set you free.*

A few definitions to help you understand the story of the Catastrophic Era:

Orbit – the three-dimensional path that a planet (or comet) travels around the sun, or that a moon travels around its planet.

Ecliptic – an imaginary flat plane intersecting Earth’s orbit and the sun. It is called the ecliptic because lunar or solar eclipses can occur only when the moon is also on it.

Ellipse – a squashed circle. How badly squashed is indicated by its eccentricity.

Eccentricity – numerical deviation from circular. 0 is a perfect circle. 0.5 is a nice oval. 1.0 is totally flattened. Thus 0.95 is a long thin ellipse.

Caduceus –
from Greek
legend



Rod of Asclepius –
as used by the
medical profession



Cultural note. Though my story is written in modern English, I refer to many cultures whose customs are different from ours. For example, in America we always say “down south” or “up north” but in Egypt it is the opposite! The Nile River flows “down north,” so Egyptians would never say “up north.” That would be unthinkable. In Israel it is also different. In Israel, “up” is always toward the temple in Jerusalem, as no place can ever be higher in their minds. Also, in many cultures including ancient Hebrew, day begins at sundown. So when they say, “the next morning,” it remains the same day as the previous evening. Another example is the Hebrew pronunciation of words like Gabriel (Dan 8:16) or Tel-abib (Ezek 3:15). They would always say, “Gavriel” or “Tel-aviv.” They also do not pronounce the ‘J’ sound like we do – so on some words I will change it to their ‘Y’ sound, as in YHWH (Jehovah) and Yashua (Jesus). On most words, though, I’ve left it alone. I’m not trying to confuse anyone or make it difficult! Can you imagine trying to pronounce “Yerushalaim” instead of Jerusalem or “Yahoshua” instead of Joshua?

So all though my story you will notice little cultural differences, which I left in as clues to help you appreciate that these dear people were not like us. They didn’t talk the same, act the same, or even think the same as us. They had fears (like their fear of the planets) which we can’t even comprehend, and they also had ambitions, desires, or delights which to the modern hard-driving American might seem silly. Please, just accept these various cultures and don’t get upset when they seem perfectly comfortable doing things the opposite of the way we might do them. As you read, I trust that not only will my story broaden your horizons, but also it will teach you more about the one culture that really matters – God’s culture. Yes, it too is very different from ours, but as we learn about it, we will learn to know God’s nature – His ways – so we can appreciate Him more and prepare ourselves to live in His realm forever.

God's Plan of the Ages – A Historical Fiction Epic

Volume Two – Beginning of Time through Moses

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God's Plan of the Ages – Volume Two – Beginning through Moses

BEFORE TIME BEGAN there is God, dwelling in that mystic realm we call eternity. Nothing else. Only God exists, in infinite grandeur, wisdom, and knowledge, resplendent in infinite glory, majesty, and power, and needing nothing. No change is possible. He is perfect and complete in every way. Change cannot exist here. There is no time for change, only the eternal present – no time before, no time after.

But wait! God is love, and love must have a beloved! How can God, who cannot change, create a lover upon whom He can lavish all the goodness and grace of His infinitely loving character?

No trivial task for the God who cannot change, yet His infinite power and creativity finds a way. He forms a bubble within eternity, a discontinuity, a realm made for change. Then with a mighty shout, He expresses Himself as Logos, the eternal Word, into this bubble called time. From that first instant of created time, God's plan for time, His **Plan of the Ages**, is perfect and complete. It is totally successful, with not the tiniest trace of imperfection or flaw, from His perspective in eternity. He has His perfect **Bride**. She is glorious, without any spot or wrinkle, worthy of her Creator, ready and eager to receive and return the love of the God who Himself is love.

Yet we, from within our little bubble called time, do not see her so. We must struggle with a 'what has been' and a 'what will be'. We must wrestle with a 'what if' and a 'why' – an 'if only' and a 'could have been'. From eternity God smiles and lets us wrestle, knowing the end from the very beginning. He joyfully allows us the wrestling process to perfect us into all He has planned for us in His awesome Plan of the Ages.

And in the very act of creating this bubble called time, the God who cannot change has changed, for He is now known as **Father God**, with humankind His own children, created in His own image. My story is about this Father God and the countless children He has made. It tells of His work within this bubble realm of time to mature us and to unite us into one perfect, glorious, many-membered Bride for Himself, and then in union with this Bride, to bring forth and fill the universe with the family of God.

We know very little about Father God's realm called eternity. About all we really know is that we can never get there unless He brings us, for the ages of time never quite reach out to eternity, though eternity totally encompasses every second of all the ages of time. But we know quite a bit about time, and we can speculate as well. So I will try to tell the tale of time – God's Plan of the Ages – with a good deal of truth spoken by Logos, Word of the eternal Father, filled in with a good deal of speculation on how it may have been and how it may be throughout its remaining ages.

In that first instant of created time only three things exist in this realm: space (length, width, and depth), basal matter scattered randomly throughout space (if all of it were compressed into one mass it would be perhaps the volume of a beach ball), and... the next instant of time. There is no energy, no light or warmth. There are no laws or structure, no beauty, variety, or sense of purpose. There are no molecules or elements, even no atoms, electrons, protons, or neutrons, only sub-atomic basal matter, very cold and very dead. The universe is exceedingly dark; chaos in its very essence. **Logos**, filled with the **Holy Spirit** of **YHWH** the eternal Father, broods over this dark chaos, relishing the infinite possibilities of His new realm.

Who knows how many instants or eons pass by? There is nothing to mark the passage of time. So we will say after a brief time of contemplation, Father God through Logos His Son (who is the full expression of Himself into this bubble of time) spoke the first words. They rang out like a song, with fervent joy. "Let there be myriads of witnesses throughout the ages of time, to be My worshipful servants, My messengers, and the guardians of My universe!"

In that instant, myriads of stunningly beautiful spirit beings appeared, the first time-based creatures. Though they were a bit bewildered at first, they were fully mature. Logos quickly formed them into military style ranks and instructed them in their purpose and responsibilities. They were highly intelligent. They learned fast, eagerly bowing before Logos their Master and quick to do His will. He divided them into three groups of angels, led by three powerful and glorious generals called archangels.

"**Gavriel**," Logos said to the first archangel. "You and your third are in charge of ministering to Me. You shall stand before My throne always to attend to Me and do My bidding." He smiled warmly at Gavriel. "You are also My personal messenger, carrying my orders throughout the farthest reaches of My universe." [See note after Preface.]

"**Michael**," He said to the second archangel. "You and your third are in charge of ministering to My Bride, whom I shall create, grow, mature, and finally bring with Me to share in My glory when I return to My Father's dwelling place in eternity." He smiled joyfully at Michael. "You shall protect her, guide her, and test and discipline her when needed, until she becomes all the glorious beauty and perfection in My heart."

"**Lucifer**," He said to the final and brightest archangel. "You and your third are in charge of ministering to the universe I shall create, to the farthest reaches of its planets, stars, and galaxies." He smiled lovingly at Lucifer. "You shall rule the cosmos as My representative. I give you authority to manage it in beautiful and harmonious order, thus displaying My power and glory for all to see."

The archangels bowed to voice their agreement and delight at the assignments they had been given.

But one had lied. Lucifer was not at all happy with the assignment he had been given. Though he pretended to be so, from the very beginning horrid thoughts were going through his mind. Murderous thoughts. He was better than the other archangels – stronger, more beautiful, more intelligent – why should he only have a third-rate task of ruling the universe? He should rule the Bride, too. In fact, he should govern all the angels, as well. He will simply kill the other two archangels and take their place. And why should their worship focus on Logos? *When I rule them, they shall focus on me, the lord and master of the universe. I shall be as God, ruling all in my own glorious splendor while they bow before my vast authority and power!*

Thus did Lucifer rebel against his Creator from the beginning, before even the worlds were formed. Thus he plotted to leave his assigned station and take by force and cunning that which rightfully belongs to Logos. And thus from the very beginning, Lucifer deceived himself with an inflated view of his own glory and power. He was willfully ignorant of the simple fact that Logos surely has infinitely greater wisdom and power! How could the created ever be greater than his Creator? Of course Logos knew all about his murderous thoughts and deceptive character, and had already planned how He would use it for His own purposes and triumph over it in the end.

Once again the moments, or eons, passed, with nothing to mark their passing. The Spirit of God brooded over the dark, cold, dead universe while the angelic host looked on. Again Logos, the Word of the eternal Father, spoke, a vibrant song ringing across the void. **“Let there be light! Let My Light of Life energize this realm of time and space!”**

In that instant, Logos blazed out with an unimaginable fiery brilliance and the universe came alive. To the farthest reaches of the universe, nothing escaped the light, and everything it touched came alive. Where there had been only sub-atomic particles, now there were atomic nuclei with circling electrons in complex patterns that gave great variety to the newly formed atoms. These formed stable elements and became the building blocks of creation. A fourth item had been added to the created realm of time, space, and basal matter: energy! We call it atomic energy but it is really the incredible energy of Logos Himself.

That tiny bit of matter, energized by the Light of the Universe, thus expanded so that if it were all collected together in one place it would be, not the volume of a beach ball, but the volume of two hundred billion, billion suns. With the basal matter now filled with energy, there is structure, beauty, and variety filling the universe, in an ever-changing panoply of lights and shadows reflecting the glory of the Creator. The brightness of God and His **Law** displaced the chaos and darkness just as easily as the day displaces the night.

Logos paused. Pouring Himself into His universe was not difficult or tiring for Him, and He had no need of rest. He paused merely so that He, and all His ministering angels, could fully appreciate and enjoy what He had done. An instant to create, a full 32 hours (the very first day) to delight in the results. Logos proclaimed it, “Very good!” All the angels bowed to worship in astonished agreement. (Though once again, Lucifer lied. He was still pretending, biding his time when he would make his move.)

In that first 32 hour day, the awed, worshipping angels caught a glimpse of an incredible truth. The life of Logos, by the power of His eternal Word, was now permanently interwoven into the universe itself, so that it reflected aspects of His own nature and character: His wisdom and knowledge, His beauty and creativity, and His own eternal **Law** which we have come to know as natural law. So you see, dear Reader, the laws of electro-chemical reactions, of gravitational and geomagnetic forces, of mass and energy and momentum, of elemental structures and atomic and molecular bondings – all these and much more came into existence on that first day as a reflection of the immutable character of Logos: steadfast, faithful, and true – not a mere system of laws but the character of a life-form whose very nature is reflected in the universe He created.

But as yet nothing solid had been created. All matter existed as atoms dispersed throughout the universe in swirling gaseous / watery clouds in every glorious hue of the spectrum. Logos focused in on one insignificant spot in the middle of the universe. The angelic host looked on expectantly as Logos spoke again. As before, His words reverberated across the void with power and authority. “Let the watery matter here be gathered together into a ball, and let there be an expanse of air separating the watery matter in the ball from the watery matter in space.”

Instantly in obedience to His command, an immense cloud of loose atoms gathered together by molecular bonding and gravitational attraction into a ball, with the force of Logos’ Word aligning the newly formed molecules to create an immense geomagnetic field around it. Horrific electrical storms then wracked the surface of the ball, and natural electrolysis separated out oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen to form an expanse of air surrounding the ball, separating it from the watery clouds in space.

“This is the most precious spot in My universe,” Logos confided to His angelic host. “It is here that I shall form My Bride!” All the angelic host bowed low and worshiped, thrilled with the prospect of a Bride for their Lord and Master. (And once again Lucifer put on a good act, but hid his **rebellion** deep in his black heart.)

Logos paused another 32 hours to enjoy His creation. The angels sang and shouted for joy around His throne. The ball of water now had shape and substance. The air above it and the water above that formed a shield around it. It shone like fluorescent turquoise in the light of Logos.

The watery ball spun around, one full revolution, while the blazing light of Logos scanned every square inch of its surface. As the third day began Logos spoke again. “The ball is called Earth. The expanse above it is called heaven. And each rotation of the ball, evening and morning, is called one day. Now, let the waters in the earth be gathered together in one place and let the dry land appear.”

Even as Logos spoke, the intense energy from His Word streamed forth, igniting the elements at the core of the earth to start a controlled nuclear reaction warming the core, while a thick subcrust of hydrocarbon bitumen formed a mantle around the core to protect the waters above from the heat below. Above these waters, a layer of granite, with upper layers of mixed minerals, rocks, sands, clays, and soils, formed a solid but flexible crust around the surface of the earth. Surface waters collected into pools and seas, or evaporated into clouds as the earth rapidly warmed. Pores in the granite crust allowed fountains of heated waters from the great deep to burst forth in a dynamic hydro-cycle, warming the earth and watering it to prepare for plant growth. Both the surface waters and the subterranean waters were fresh and sweet – no salt water ocean existed anywhere on or under the earth.

Logos paused again, while the adoring angels bowed and worshiped, expecting another 32 hours to meditate in awe at what He had so easily accomplished. But no, as the dawn approached, Logos spoke again. “I will not allow My earth to remain naked, no, not even for one day. Let the earth sprout forth vegetation, plants and shrubs which shall yield seed, and fruit trees which shall bear fruits with their seed in them, to clothe the earth this very day and keep it clothed forevermore.” Instantly in obedience to the eternal Word, tiny plants sprang up all over the surface of the dry ground. The angels looked on in awe at the velvet spring-green fuzz growing rapidly across the surface of the single super-continent. At first the tiny plants all looked nearly the same, but even before the day came to an end, tremendous variation in the sizes and shapes of the foliage was beginning to show. Logos smiled and pronounced it, “Very good!” as the adoring angels shouted for joy.

Evening had come to begin the fourth day. The angelic host looked to Logos to see what He would say on this new day. Logos grinned, like a schoolboy with a tantalizing secret. “I will not always be here, to spread My light, My life, over the surface of My earth. Times will come when I must hide My face, so that My Bride will grow strong in endurance and steadfast faith. But if there is no light, the vegetation clothing the earth will die and all life will cease. Therefore, let there be lights in the heavens, to give light to the earth, to mark days and years, signs and seasons, and to separate day from night. Let there be a great sun to rule the day and a lesser sun to rule the night. And let there also be ten thousand billion trillion stars, formed into galaxies, spread out through the heavens. Let them all be arranged to show My glory and to display my Plan of the Ages.”

In instant obedience to His command, the watery matter which had been thinly scattered through space gathered into balls to form suns, stars, and galaxies. The Light of the Universe (who is Logos) blazed brilliantly, touching every ball, igniting the suns and setting each in its precise course through the heavens. It was like a wave of light stretching out across the sky. Everywhere the wave passed, it left twinkling lights from its passing. The Light of Logos moves at virtually infinite velocity in empty space, you know, so in mere moments the universe was filled with the glory of countless stars and galaxies.

Again Logos paused, while the breathless angels cheered, clapped, and screamed with joy at seeing the very glory of Logos now clearly reflected in all the starry host. But by this time Lucifer was having a rather tough time faking his delight. With each new display of Logos’ power and glory, he had hardened his heart even more, growing bitter that Logos was getting all this attention and worship while he was getting none, and plotting how he would use his position as ruler of the universe to change that.

At dawn Logos spoke again, excitedly telling the angels the names of the stars, constellations, and galaxies, and explaining how He had formed them into a storybook to describe to the universe His Plan of the Ages. As evening drew nigh to end the fourth day and begin the fifth, Logos again pronounced it all, “Very good!” The angel watchers grew quiet, anticipating what this new day might bring.

Logos focused intently on the earth. The land was now luxuriantly clothed in bright, spring green, and watered by the pull of the two suns drawing warm subterranean waters up through the pores in the flexible crust. Surface water collected in lovely streams, lakes, and fresh water seas. They were brilliant shades of blues and greens from algae and plankton, frothed with white from the strong breezes circling the earth. “Let the waters teem with living creatures of all sizes from tiny protozoa and swimming insects to great sea monsters. Let them feed on the algae and plankton, and reproduce each after its own kind.”

Logos had barely finished singing the words over the earth and it was so: the seas brought forth abundant living creatures with wondrous diversity and splendor. All the angels again applauded and bowed in worship – except Lucifer, who was already busy searching among the great sea monsters to see if any might be used by Logos to form His Bride. Logos saw, but let his rudeness pass, for now.

Early on the morning of the fifth day, Logos sang out, “Let myriads of birds and flying insects come forth, to fly above the earth and fill the heavens.” Immediately it was so, and the adoring angelic host gasped with delight at their incredible beauty and variety, as they had with the fish. As the fifth day drew to a close Logos pronounced it all, “Very good!” He blessed the new living creatures to be fruitful and multiply, each after its own kind, and to fill the earth, feeding on the plants He had provided.

The sixth day began with a spectacular fiery sunset. An excited hush fell on the angelic host. Logos was preparing to speak again. He smiled, His face a brilliance of fierceness and infinite love. His words rang out in a blend of resonant song and triumphant shout, "Let the dry land bring forth an abundance of life, crawling, walking, running, digging, climbing creatures of all kinds, each reproducing after its own kind." Immediately, it was so. The surpassing glory of the land animals and crawling insects in nearly infinite variety was breathtaking to the witnessing angelic host.

Lucifer was still searching for the special one that was to become the Bride. "Friend Lucifer," Logos called to him. "Be at peace. The one you seek has not yet been created." Lucifer's face burned in shame at being discovered. *How did Logos know?* Lucifer briefly wondered if Logos could read his thoughts. *No, of course not*, he deceived himself. *If Logos could read his thoughts He would already know his rebellious plans and would not be so friendly.*

Night gave way toward the dawn of the sixth morning. The angelic host looked to Logos to see if He would speak again, as on previous mornings. Yes. He swooped down to stand on the tallest hill, just now lit by the dawning. It was surrounded by young plants of all kinds, yet strangely brown on top, as if the top was too holy for a plant to grow. At the touch of His feet, a spring bubbled up into several small streams seeking a way down the hill. "Look." Logos had the attention of every living creature in the area. Even birds and beasts paused in anticipation. "Watch closely, My friends. Right here," Logos pointed down at the spring, "I shall form My Bride, My beloved..." Logos paused and raised His arms to the heavens, in deep communion with the eternal Father through His Holy Spirit.

The rising sun burst over the horizon in a blaze of glory. Logos' song rang out in compelling vibrancy, resonating and echoing throughout the surrounding hills, the most beautiful song of love the universe has ever heard. "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our own likeness, and let him rule over the fish of the seas, over the birds of the skies, over the beasts of the fields, and over the insects, reptiles, and other creeping things that fill the earth."

Logos lowered His head. His arms fell limply to His sides. His song died. Nothing happened, no wondrously beautiful creatures instantly appearing at His command. Logos fell to His knees on the bare soil beside the spring. *Had He failed?* Lucifer almost jumped with glee at the thought. *No Bride to worry about. A weak, fallible God to contend with, and the universe would soon be his. But wait...*

Logos was digging in the dirt beside the spring, making mud. His hands, which had so recently flung the stars into space, were mired in the clay. He was carefully, lovingly, forming a model, which looked to the eager watchers similar to some of the animals He had created the evening before. He worked on it for a long time, far longer than He had taken for all the rest of His creation put together.

The sixth day was nearing its end as Logos, with infinite patience and tenderness, put the finishing touches on His model. Finally He looked up to the wondering host with a big smile. "Behold, My Bride! From this humble beginning I shall transform and mature her, step-by-step, into such glory and holy perfection that she shall be worthy at the end of the ages to return with Me to YHWH, My Father in eternity." Logos lowered His head near His finished model and puffed gently into its lifeless nostrils. It was just a breath. No flash of glorious light. No shout of triumph or powerfully resonating song. Just a breath.

And the model came alive. His eyes opened and he stared, eyeball to eyeball, into the face of his Creator. Logos smiled warmly, and spoke softly and compellingly to His new creation. "Your name is **Adam**. You are the first in My own likeness. I am Logos, your Lord and Master, your Protector and Friend. I created you for Myself, and your joy and pleasure shall always be found in giving Me joy and pleasure, just as I also am for you. You shall be fruitful and multiply to cover the earth. You shall subdue the earth and rule over the fish of the seas, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the insects and creeping things, and every living thing that moves on the face of the earth. Now behold..." Logos lovingly lifted Adam to a standing position and, with one arm around him, supporting him, swept His other arm in a wide circle around them. Everywhere His arm pointed, lovely blossoms burst forth from the flowers He had planted on day three. "This is **Eden**, the garden I planted for you. Every green plant yielding seed shall be food for you, and the fruit of every tree which has its seed in its fruit. Also to the animals, beasts, fish, and birds, I give every green plant for food." The angelic host backed away respectfully. Some curious animals gathered around in their place. Adam looked at them all in wonder, awestruck, seeing everything in wide-eyed fascination yet understanding very little. It was all too new and strange.

The sun was setting, the sixth day was over. Logos made His final pronouncement of the day. "Behold all that I have made. Look and see, for it is all very good! But I understand, Adam, that it is too overwhelming for you. So I prepared a bed for you among the mosses and grasses. Lie here and sleep. Tomorrow I shall begin teaching you how to rule My world." *The date was March 22, 5106 BC.*

Thus on the beginning of the seventh day, Logos closed Adam's eyes and he fell into a deep sleep. The angelic host watched breathlessly, wondering what new things Logos would create on this new day. But no, Logos merely sat near His sleeping Adam, watching, guarding him. "My new creation, all My work, is finished," He sang softly, sweetly. "Therefore I sanctify this day. From now to the end of time each seventh day shall be a holy **Sabbath** unto Me. No work shall be done in it. The Sabbath shall be a day of rest, fellowship, and delight, and a day of rehearsing and remembering all that I have done. I offer My blessings throughout the ages on all who keep My Sabbath holy."

When Adam awoke to face the dawn of the very first Sabbath, Logos was still right beside him. The first sight Adam saw when he opened his eyes was the shining face of Logos smiling upon him. The first thing Adam learned was that Logos made him, Logos loved him, and Logos would care for him and teach him. They spent the day walking and talking together, about each other, about the created order, and about the plans Logos had for the future. Logos demonstrated how He wanted each Sabbath day to be kept, in rest and remembrance of the glorious things He had done. Adam, in the image of Logos, reflected His glory back to Him in praise and worship, in gratefulness, and in child-like eagerness to receive all that Logos was giving him. It was a beautiful and holy love relationship.

Though physically mature, Adam was a child mentally and emotionally. But he knew words, and his spirit and soul were open to the pictures behind the words. He was a fast learner. His mind was like a sponge absorbing everything he saw and heard. Over the next thirteen weeks, Logos described to him how He had created the universe founded upon His Law, and how everything worked, from the courses of stars in their galaxies down to the electrons circling their nucleus. Logos told him the names of the stars and constellations and taught him to read His picture book in the heavens showing God's Plan of the Ages.

The Garden of Eden is located on the holiest spot on earth, which we know as **Mount Moriah**. That spring on top of the hill became the headwaters of four great rivers, the **Pishon**, **Gihon**, **Tigris**, and **Euphrates**. [See maps at end.] Logos gave Adam detailed instructions on the plants in the garden: their names, how to cultivate and care for them, and what each flower, leaf, and fruit was good for – some just for beauty and others for food or for healing or other uses. “I made it all for you, my beloved Adam,” He said. “It is all yours to use as you please, except...” Logos pointed to a lovely young tree in the center of the garden. Its first fruits were just beginning to form. “... that tree. It is called the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. You shall not eat of it. Ever. It is deadly for you, more deadly than you could possibly understand. In the very day you eat of it, in dying you shall surely die the death.”

“Yes, Logos!” Adam responded quickly, shrinking back a bit at the tenor of the words. Though he had never heard the word ‘die’ before, the word picture it conveyed was awful beyond comprehension. *Lonely, sick, weak, abandoned, pain, horror, death, torment*: these words had never crossed his mind before, since he knew nothing of evil or its consequences. Now these concepts spun around in his mind like balls of a juggler. He looked up at Logos in terror. Logos was stern, so he knew those frightful word pictures in his mind were from Him in explanation of His command to never eat of that tree. “Thank you, Logos, for the warning. I had no idea any such things existed. I will stay away from that tree!” Logos smiled. All those horrid thoughts evaporated in the warmth of His smile.

“Now I have a special gift for you.” Logos laughed and Adam's heart surged with joy. They walked to the edge of the stream, where Logos showed him another young tree, also almost ready to bear fruit. “This is the **Tree of Life**. It will bear twelve different kinds of fruit each year. As long as you eat one of each kind when it gets ripe, you can live forever here with Me!” Logos gave Adam a warm hug. He felt very loved, the two contrasting trees settled in his mind. Logos continued, “Now, I have a job for you. Everything must have its name. I've already named the stars and constellations, the plants and insects. You shall name each bird and beast. You must learn of its character to name it, as I taught you the character of everything I named. As you do, you will be able to rule over it as I commissioned you.”

And so, day by day, six days a week, Logos would bring new pairs of animals or birds to Adam to see what he would name them. For the fish, dolphins, and whales, He took Adam swimming to experience their natural habitat. Adam took his job seriously, taking time to get to know each one before giving it a name. They responded to him the best they could with their limited intelligence. Though some were quite shy, they were obedient and friendly, never afraid or antagonistic. In those days, there was a rudimentary communication between the animals and man – not exactly verbal, though Adam used words, but more a sense of inner understanding achieved through the words, the tenor in which they were spoken, the body language accompanying them, and the spirit behind them.

After a few weeks of naming the animals, as they rested together on the Sabbath, Logos asked a simple question which later would have profound implications for Adam. “Well, Adam, have you found My birds and beasts to be good companions for you?”

“Oh yes, Logos, they are truly wonderful. Responsive, obedient – and such beauty and variety! Thank you for making them for me! It is great fun naming and getting to know them, I will never get tired of them.” Logos dropped it. But Adam's brilliant mind (which could not forget) pondered the question. The next week as he continued his job with the animals, he wondered why Logos would need to ask. *Surely Logos already knew the animals were good companions – He had made them so.*

In following weeks Adam found himself critically examining the animals, realizing that some would make better companions than others, and searching for those who would be the best. By the end of the eighth week, Adam had developed a mental list of the best companions – those he enjoyed having around him – animals who were the most intelligent and helpful. His list included twelve pairs: dogs, horses, parrots, dolphins, elephants, serpents, falcons, pigs, monkeys, tigers, dragons, and river otters.

He spent time with them, establishing a close rapport. As he taught them to understand him, he learned their strengths and weaknesses. He was delightedly content.

Adam completed his job of naming the animals by the end of the 25th week. As they rested together that Sabbath, Adam recalled the question Logos had asked. He looked around at his twelve pairs, his inner circle of friends. Then, with brows furrowed, he looked back at Logos. Logos smiled at him. "Is something troubling you, My friend?"

"Not really troubling me, Logos, my beloved Lord and Master. You have been so good to me. I am very happy and grateful for all You have done. Yet... there is one small thing..." Adam paused, wondering how to phrase it so it would not sound ungrateful.

Logos interrupted. "You need not be concerned how it sounds, Adam. I understand, for I made you. Just put it to words. I love to hear your words."

"Yes, Logos. When I first began naming the animals, You asked me if I had found them to be good companions. I said yes, and told You I would never get tired of them. But now that I have named them all and have studied these twelve at length, I have drawn some other conclusions."

Logos smiled warmly. He had been waiting, planning for this moment from the very beginning. His smile and nod encouraged Adam to continue.

"I look up to You, Logos. You're much more than just my friend. You are my God, my Creator, my sovereign Lord. My greatest joy is to worship You, to express my gratefulness to You, and to obey You the best that I'm able. I eagerly listen to Your wisdom and knowledge, for I love to learn from You. Our Sabbath fellowship is the highlight of my week. Your words are life to me, whether to teach me, encourage me, or discipline me. This is all very good, for this is the way You made me to respond to You.

"But compare my relationship with You to, say, dragon's relationship to me. They are the same. I'm as high above **dragon** as You are above me!" His eyes scanned his circle of closest companions. "It's the same with elephant, tiger, serpent, dog, monkey, dolphin, falcon, otter, horse, parrot, pig. They serve me, they love me, even worship me, but they are no more equal to me than I am to You. They look up to me just as I look up to You, and they love my teaching just as I love Yours. But they can only speak back to me in simple mental pictures. Even dragon, my most-intelligent, strongest, and closest friend, can't understand my deepest thoughts, my feelings and emotions. When I try to teach him things of soul and spirit, like beauty, grace, wisdom, joy, worship – well, he simply can't relate. He just doesn't have language to be able to communicate on anything but an earthly level. He can't comprehend ordinary words of spirit used by You and me. Among all You have made, is there no other creature with words?"

Suddenly, an overwhelming sense of loneliness swept over Adam. He started to cry. He wondered at the hot tears flooding his cheeks, for he had never known tears before. But he couldn't stop.

Logos let him cry for a long time, hugging him closely but not interrupting. Finally Adam looked up at Logos and said through his tears, "Each of my companions has a mate, a closest companion, an equal. As mates they can relate and understand each other. But between them and You, I find myself all alone... with no mate, no equal..."

"You are lonely," Logos stated simply.

"Yes, I am lonely. How could I be lonely when I have You? And so many companions and friends all around me? I don't understand, but I am lonely."

"I do understand, My beloved. For you are just like Me. And I too am lonely."

Adam's mouth fell open. He stopped crying abruptly. Rubbing the tears from his eyes with both fists, he shook his head. "No, Logos! How could You be lonely? You are infinite, complete, perfect in every way!"

"Nevertheless, I am lonely, for My nature is love, and love must have a beloved." Logos smiled at him.

"But... I thought I was Your beloved? You have been hugging me, pouring out Your love upon me, ever since You made me. Yet You are still lonely?"

"You are My beloved rather like these twelve pairs of animals are your beloved. I allowed you to find no mate among them so you could understand My loneliness. You said it yourself: I am as high above you as you are above the animals. Though you are My closest companion, yet it will take many years to perfect you in wisdom, knowledge, character, and beauty, and many more of you as well, all united together into one glorious body, to be My mate, My **Bride**, My heart companion worthy of My love."

Logos thankfully paused, giving Adam a little time to absorb the incredible implications of His statement. Finally Adam spoke, and his first words did him credit, for he was thinking not of himself and his own loneliness, but of Logos. "I am very sorry for You. From eternity You have been lonely, and I only today have tasted it. Do not concern Yourself about my loneliness, but rather, how can I help You? How can I hurry the completion of Your Bride?"

Logos laughed, a great belly laugh, that drew Adam and even the surrounding animals into His laughter. Again Adam felt his eyes brimming with tears, this time tears of joy. Where did they come from? He did not know. "Adam, my precious Adam. You cannot understand eternity, for I have placed you firmly within time and time can never reach eternity. But I assure you, in eternity I have My Bride already. She is perfect, spotless, complete, and gloriously beautiful beyond compare. You do not need to help – except just to be who I created you to be. You are My Bride, yet as a newly conceived baby. I created time, ages of it, because I want to enjoy the process of maturing My Bride, just as you enjoy training your twelve animal companions. I love you, just as you are!" He reached out for a hug.

Again Logos paused while the implications sank in. Then, trembling but leaning into His hug, Adam voiced his thoughts. “Does that mean, for me, that I shall not have an equal, a mate, until I have matured all these animals throughout the ages of time?” He swept an arm around his circle of animal friends. Sensing his consternation, they drew closer. Some whimpered slightly. Monkey joined their hug. Dragon blew a puff of smoke above their heads.

The sun was setting in glorious splendor, painting the skies every color from rich purples to golden yellows and deep reds. “That is a good question, Adam, my beloved.” Logos was still chuckling. “But no. Though to complete My Mate I shall bring you through that lengthy process throughout the ages, yet you are like Me in another way, which I shall use to bring your mate to you even now.”

Adam pondered that, as the sun vanished below the hills and the reds and golds faded to purples and blacks. The Sabbath was over; the first day of the week had begun. They sat together enjoying the evening sky as the stars appeared. Adam didn’t want to push it, but he certainly couldn’t just let the subject drop. Finally he ventured. “Logos, You said your creative work was finished in the first week. How now will You create my mate?”

“Yes, My creative work is finished. I created your mate when I created you, on the sixth day. She is here now, though not yet visible to you. I will introduce you to her in the morning after you sleep. Whenever you feel ready...”

Adam eagerly jumped up and went right to bed, but he couldn’t sleep. He was used to spending at least an hour or two with Logos studying the heavens before going to bed. He was excited. His mind raced over the astounding things Logos had told him. He tossed restlessly.

Finally Logos came to him with an herb which He crushed and gave to Adam to breathe the vapors. That allowed Adam to relax and fall into a deep sleep.

As always, Logos had dimmed His glory so Adam could sleep. The night sun, already high in the sky, cast a pale silvery glow over the earth. The fireflies danced in the bushes above. The crickets and frogs joined the symphony in the quiet night air. Logos worked quickly. First He dulled the pain sensors in Adam’s body, then He opened up his abdomen, removed the female organs, and closed up the flesh again. He sang softly to the organs removed from Adam, causing the living cells to multiply rapidly. They quickly grew into an entire body. Then, at first light, He breathed into her the breath of the life of His Spirit, and stood her upright before Adam. She bent down to look.

Adam, who usually awakened with the dawn, groaned and scrunched his eyes tightly shut. His body ached. *He must have had a tough night. What was that smelly herb that Logos had given him to breathe, anyway?* His dreams, for the first time, seemed perturbed, not peaceful, and he had not known pain before – not like this, anyway.

Suddenly Adam remembered Logos’ promise to show him his mate. His eyes popped open. There! At arm’s length above his face, he saw another face, staring down at him, studying him. Adam’s mind was quick, even when first awakened, and a lot of things went through it before his first blink. First he raced through a mental catalogue of all the animals he had named. *Nope, that face was not among them.* Then he wondered if Logos had solidified a bit to allow him to identify facial features that he had never seen before. *Nope again. There was Logos right behind, face shrouded in glory as always. This then must be the mate Logos had promised.* His eyes blinked, and his mouth uttered a sudden, involuntary, “Wow!”

Startled, the face moved back beside Logos. Adam sat up and turned so he could see the entire creature. It was breathtakingly lovely! It was much like him in the basics, yet softer, smaller, with long flowing hair and fuller features. Its body, like his own, was clothed with a gentle radiance. He had not realized how incredibly beautiful that was! It was not the same as Logos’ fiery bright glory covering, but neither was it like the golden fur-covering of the monkeys. Adam looked down at himself, then back at the creature, coming to his conclusion as Logos said, “This is your mate, of whom I told you. I created you one flesh. As you slept, I separated you for your companionship and delight, but in My mind you are and will always be one flesh. As I said, you are like Me. I also am one with YHWH the Father of eternity, yet I am separated so that I could enter into time and be here with you. As YHWH and I talk though We are one, so you and your mate may now talk though you are one with each other. I now pronounce you ‘husband and wife’. I bless your marriage and your family. Always love and care for each other as I do for you.”

“Thank You, Logos! My heart is overwhelmed with gratitude!” Still in the mode of naming animals, Adam proclaimed, “This time at last! Bone of my own bones and flesh of my own flesh! This is much more than an animal. It is fe-male, instead of male. I shall call her ‘wo-man’ for she was taken out of man. Does woman know words?”

Logos looked down at her with a twinkle in His eye, smiling broadly. She looked up at Him. He was really enjoying this. “Well, Adam. Why don’t you ask her?”

“Sure, Logos. Uh, woman?” She smiled at him. He spoke each word very slowly. “My name is man, Adam. Do you understand words? Can you talk like I am talking?”

“Yes, Adam. I understand you perfectly.”

“Wow! Logos, she does have words! Her words are like music to my heart! I have never heard anything so sweet! I understand now why You say You love to hear my words!”

“Adam, woman is a person, in My own image, like you. You have been talking around her. You can do that to an animal, but it is disrespectful to do it to a person. I will leave now, so you can talk directly to her.”

“Sorry Logos. I meant no disrespect.” Logos had abruptly disappeared, but Adam knew from experience that He could still hear him. “Woman, uh... well, uh... do you know where you came from?”

The woman grinned at Adam’s embarrassment. “Yes, Adam. I came from you. We were one. Logos just told us.”

Again Adam was surprised and delighted with the sweetness of her voice. “Logos, this is incredible! The most wonderful thing you’ve ever done for me! Thank You, my God! You are awesome!” he shouted.

“It is nice to know I’m a wonderful thing, but I think Logos just told you to talk to me.” The woman grinned again. “Why are you having so much trouble with that?” She squelched the grin and pretended to look stern, then broke up in giggles.

Her candor, as well as her brightness and sense of humor, startled Adam. She was really intelligent. And she was right. Her expressive smiling face spoke volumes. He looked into her lovely deep blue-green eyes, reflecting the blues of the sky and the greens of the garden. He saw there admiration, openness, and eagerness to get to know him. “I am sorry, woman. I guess you are a little overwhelming to me. Yes, you are a wonderful thing, the most wonderful thing I could ever even imagine, the most wonderful thing, er... person. Ahh... I’m sorry. I am only used to relating to Logos, who is much above me, or the animals, who are much below me. I do not know how to relate to a person, my equal. But please have patience with me. I will learn!”

The woman laughed, stepping closer. “You’re already learning. That was good! You needn’t be nervous about it. I’m just learning too, you know. So, introduce me to these animals of which you speak. I will get to know you better by meeting your friends.” She took another step nearer. Instinctively, Adam held out his arm. She quickly took it and drew herself close beside him. Yes, this is where she belongs, Adam thought. We are one flesh, husband and wife, Logos said. She belongs beside me, now and always.

They turned together to face the animals. “And Adam, I don’t mind if you call me a thing, or an it, or an animal, even a monkey, or whatever you wish to call me, as long as it is in love. As long as you are not displeased with me.” She was half a head shorter than him, and she used that to advantage as she rested her head lightly on his shoulder. She giggled again. “I enjoy hearing your words just as much as you enjoy hearing mine, maybe more! I’m not sure what ‘music to your heart’ means,” she whispered in his ear, “but it can’t be any sweeter than what I hear from your lips!” His whole being thrilled with the words.

“No, I will never call you a monkey. My friends the monkeys might hear and be upset.” Adam shot back his attempt at humor, instantly realized it sounded stupid, then knew it didn’t matter. She understood and loved him anyway. “Monkeys!” Adam called. They stepped forward.

“Meet woman, my mate. You will respond to her as to me, with respect and obedience. So, what do you think? Isn’t she beautiful?” The two monkeys took her hands, bowed, and indicated their agreement with Adam with vivid mental word pictures of acceptance and honor, while dancing up and down, grinning with delight, and jabbering in monkey talk.

[Note: It is half a year after Creation; September 22, 5106 BC using a modified Roman calendar with 50 weeks and 350 32 hour days in a year. But that is only for our convenience, as Adam didn’t yet keep track of time. Adam had no months, as there was no moon. Earth was then the center of the solar system, suspended between two suns, Sol and Nyx. For better understanding of the differences between his time and ours, see Volume One, The Feasts of Israel: God’s Plan of the Ages.]

[Similarly, though I use north, south, east, and west, and describe locations using modern countries and continents, that is also only for our convenience. At Creation there was no fixed north. Earth’s crust was one continuous continent, floating above a layer of fresh subterranean waters such that it easily drifted across Earth’s rotating core. Thus with each major catastrophe, the crust would spin and the equator would shift. The day and year also changed. After the Fall, there were 301 32-hour days in a 43 week year. After the Flood, there were 406 22-hour days in a 58 week year. After the moon was formed, there were 360 days of 25 hours each in a 51.4 week year, which lasted from 2715 to 701 BC.]

Adam spent the next few weeks introducing the woman to all the animals, teaching her about them, and showing her how to train them, starting with his closest friends. When he had finished he asked the woman which ones she liked the best.

“Oh, I totally agree with you on these twelve. They are wonderful! Especially strong **dragon** and elegant **serpent**. They are exciting to me! But there are many others, too. I would enjoy getting to know some of the other cats: the panther, lion, bobcat, and the little tabby cat. They are so responsive and affectionate, furry and cuddly! I also want to get to know mole better; he is shy, yet he tries so hard to be helpful in cultivating the garden. And raccoon... What a sense of humor! Deer, moose, and elk are so timid and sweet! And the majestic eagle and condor! What glory! And the whales; so huge yet so gentle! And the river otters; I love their playful ways...” She hugged Adam. “This world is perfect. Everything is so beautiful and fascinating. Thank you for letting me share it with you!”

Again, Adam silently thanked Logos for his mate, his helper, his companion, his ‘wife’. She continued right on, “But Adam, why do you avoid taking me into the center of the garden? You have taken me everywhere else. You’ve introduced me to all the animals, and taught me about the plants and trees. But every time I begin heading toward the center of the garden you gently steer me away. Are you hiding something there that you don’t want me to see?”

“Yes, woman. You are very perceptive. I wanted to keep you away from it as long as I could, because I don’t want to trouble you. But I see that you are far more intelligent than that, and I realize now that I can’t hide anything from you.” He smiled. “In fact, I don’t want to hide anything from you. It is too much fun sharing things with you.” Together they turned to walk toward the center of the garden, pausing about fifty yards from a lovely young tree with luscious-looking ripe red fruit. “Do you see that tree?”

“Yes, Adam. It looks delightful. Shall we...”

“Well, it isn’t. It’s bad. Stay away from it always. Logos said that if you eat of it, you will surely ‘die the death’. So I think that tree is just the opposite of the Tree of Life, which we eat to live forever with Logos. Do you understand?”

“No. I don’t understand. Everything Logos made is very good. He said so! How could Logos make something bad? That’s just silly. Did Logos say it was bad?”

“Well, no. He didn’t use those words. He just said, ‘It is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You shall not eat of it. Ever. It is deadly for you, more deadly than you could possibly understand. For in the very day you eat of it, in dying you shall surely die the death.’ And then He gave me this mental picture of what dying is. That was bad! You have no idea how bad it seemed! The picture He gave me was so horrible that I just assumed the tree was bad, too. I always stay away from it. You should, too. Whatever dying is, I sure don’t want it to happen to me or you! That is why I’ve kept you away. I love you, woman! You are as dear to me as life itself! I don’t want to risk losing you.”

“Thank you, dear Adam. I appreciate your caring for me and protecting me. I will stay away from it, too. Though you’re right, I don’t really understand what ‘dying the death’ is, or how a tree that Logos made can be bad.”

They walked away, with the woman’s normally bubbly happy self subdued in thought. Adam figured that would be the end of that, but the next morning when he awoke, the woman was nowhere in sight. On a hunch, Adam ran to the center of the garden, and there she was, staring at the tree, closer than he had ever been. She had no fear!

“Woman! What are you doing?” Adam cried.

“Oh, good morning, Adam.” She turned and faced him sweetly. “I was just wondering why the tree was so bad, and what ‘dying the death’ means.”

“You don’t need to know. It will hurt you! Just fear it and stay away from that tree. It is evil!”

“What is fear? What is hurt? What is evil?”

“When you are careless in the garden and bruise your finger, your finger hurts. The pain tells you that you need to be more careful. That tree will hurt. Fear just means being cautious to stay away from that which might hurt. Evil is, well, uh, bad.”

“Oh.” She walked back to Adam and put her arms around him. “Thank you, dear Adam. I know you’re right, I don’t need to understand. I’m just feeling very curious about it all. Aren’t you curious too? Maybe we should ask Logos to explain it to me.”

Adam nodded his assent. He should have done that already. Was he beginning to take Logos for granted? Or was he valuing his woman above Logos who made them? “Logos. We treasure Your presence and Your wisdom. How do I explain this to woman?”

Logos appeared instantly, His face wreathed in smiles. “I am glad that you come to Me. You both understand the concepts of evil, pain, and death well enough. I don’t want to trouble you further. Your focus should be on Me and on the life I renew to you through eating fruit from the Tree of Life. Just know for certain that eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil will result in more pain and death than you can possibly comprehend. It will bring a division between us and impair our fellowship. Do not eat it. You must trust Me in this, because you can’t really understand it. Just like pain cannot be understood without experiencing it, so evil and death cannot be understood without experiencing them. I want to protect you from that! You will live by believing My words even when you don’t understand. If you know Me and accept My words, you do not need to comprehend the realm of good or evil. Just know Me. I am your Good! Show Me you love Me by your obedience to My command. That is your protection.” He smiled. They savored His love, returning it in worship.

CHAPTER 2 – THE FALL

So the subject was dropped. For many years the woman stayed away from the tree and close to the man, and they were exquisitely happy. They both grew in wisdom and knowledge. They matured in their relationship with each other, their friendship with the animals, their dominion over the Creation, and their love and worship of Logos. All the while, Lucifer looked on secretly from the heavenlies, biding his time, plotting and planning.

Oh, he did his job very well. He managed the universe and kept everything in harmonious order, both enjoying and amplifying the glorious beauty of the Creation. It was easy for him, and he had many lesser angels who were eager and quick to do his bidding. But his focus was on that man and his woman, for he sensed that they were the key to his taking over the universe from Logos.

Adam took time in the late evenings, cuddling with the woman and teaching her Logos’ storybook in the stars and constellations. He appreciated the beauty and perfection of it all, but he did not really understand it, as it portrayed **sin** and the need for **redemption**, things of which he had no concept. But it was comforting to know that if anyone ever did ‘sin’ there would be a **Redeemer** to restore them.

Lucifer, knowing that he would be unable to directly harm the pair because of Michael and his angels, tried a spectacular display in the heavens. He used his authority over the universe to cause Bril, one of the nearest stars, to go supernova. Its beauty tempted them to worship the Creation more than the Creator. But you know, it didn't work. In everything they saw, they reflected the praise back to Logos where it belonged. Logos was very pleased.

In those days, celestial music reverberated throughout the universe. Not just the stars and their galaxies, but the earth / binary sun system as well. Though few today can even comprehend this, conditioned as we are to a fragile and even threatening solar system, back then it was all harmonious, robustly simple, natural and beautiful.

In Adam's day Earth's system had no moon; no planets; no dangerous comets, meteors, or asteroids; no space plasma or debris; only the two suns and the earth. This was an earth-centric system, with Earth suspended between the two suns. Thus God kept His 'most precious spot in the universe' always at the very center of the universe. The greater, closer, yellow-hot sun, Sol, ruled the day, orbiting 130 million miles from Earth at 73,000 miles per hour. The smaller, blue-white-hot sun, Nyx, ruled the night. It orbited Earth exactly opposite Sol, but moving at over 673,000 miles per hour, since it was 1.2 billion miles away. They took 350 days to orbit Earth, which set Earth's year. Earth's day was 32 of our hours. Earth's geomagnetic field was 100 times stronger than it is now, protecting Adam from all harmful cosmic radiation. Sol was bound to Earth by gravitational and magnetic forces. But Nyx was bound to Earth and Sol by powerful electrostatic forces. Nyx was about 2% the size of Sol. It was mostly gases and water vapor, yet dense enough to support a controlled fusion reaction at its core, giving considerable light. It looked tiny compared to our moon, but shone brighter than a full moon, lighting the earth with a soft, pale silver.

So our entire 'solar' system was simply Sol, Nyx, and Earth, locked together in beautiful stability and harmony. Their song was resonant, pure, and perfectly in tune.

Not understanding this, Lucifer decided to destroy the Bride by pushing Earth out of its place and into nearby Sol. With all his angels giving him unquestioned obedience, he thought it would be easy. This was his domain. He was just doing his job. He told them Earth's orbit just needed some modifications. *This was year 66 from Creation.*

Thus he deceived the angels under him into following in his rebellion. Logos, of course, caught them red handed. Lucifer's angels, all working together, had succeeded in putting Earth into what Lucifer calculated to be a fatal orbit. He told his angels what they had done. "We have defeated Logos!" Lucifer crowed. "We have destroyed his Bride! I have proven myself to be the most powerful being in the universe! And by participating with me you have all earned the right to forever worship me instead of Logos!"

And there was Logos, suddenly standing beside him, deeply saddened but not at all surprised at his rebellion. "Friend Lucifer. You were My smartest, My loveliest, My strongest and best in all the universe. Why then have you chosen to become My **adversary**?"

"Ha! You're too late! I've already destroyed Your Bride and their world. I tricked all my angels into following me – even worshipping me. Now I shall rule the universe my way! You think You're so great... well, now You have some competition! I shall ascend to the highest heavens and make myself like the Most High. I shall raise my throne above the hosts of heaven and they shall come to me for counsel on the mount of the assembly. For I too am a god!"

"Well, there are a few things that you do not yet realize, My friend, things that you very much need to know on your way to 'godhood'. First, though I have indeed given you power and authority to rule this universe of Mine, yet there are strict limits, laws that I have woven into the very fabric of the universe, beyond which you cannot go. You will find that My Law cannot be broken. If you try, you will only break yourself over it. Second, although I will grant you plenty of time to try to rule the universe 'your way', ultimately you shall find that your ways of trickery, force, self-centered **pride**, and arrogant **rebellion** do not work, and in fact inevitably end in misery, death, and destruction for you and all who follow you. And third, though you cannot believe it now, one day you shall bow before Me and acknowledge that My ways of self-giving love are best. Then you shall realize that all you have done throughout the ages has only served to increase My glory and power, expand My **Kingdom**, and benefit My Bride."

"Preposterous! I have already destroyed your Bride. Even as we speak, her world is spiraling down into Sol. You can't do anything about it, since according to Your own Word, I have power and authority over the universe, and I know that You cannot take back that which You gave."

"It is preposterous to you only because you do not yet realize your limitations. Don't forget, I gave to Michael the power and authority over My Bride. You have neither legal authority nor occasion against her. So you must obtain My permission if you wish to tempt or harm My Bride."

"I don't see how Michael can help Your Bride when her entire world goes spinning into Sol!" Lucifer was openly sneering, emboldened by Logos' friendliness.

"Well, Lucifer, you have a lot to learn in order to earn your **adversary badge**." Logos smiled at him, but rather than drawing him into **repentance**, it only angered him further. "The orbits of Sol and Nyx are locked together with Earth in bonds far stronger than you know. Even as we speak, natural law is restoring the earth to its rightful place. Allow Me to explain the laws of celestial mechanics to you..." Thus Logos patiently began teaching Lucifer.

[See the Volume One appendix for a primer on this topic.]

Logos continued His discourse with the principles of the electromagnetic spectrum and resonant frequencies, detailing how the resonant gravitational and electrostatic attractions which stabilized the system would restore the earth to its center no matter how hard he pushed.

Patience is not exactly one of Lucifer's strong points. He ground his teeth and finally interrupted Logos with a growl: "I knew it! You are just a proud deceiver!" (Those are two of his favorite subjects.) "You assigned me to do a job that was impossible, just so You could lord it over me!"

"Dear Lucifer. I have not taken away your power and authority over the universe, nor will I prevent you from your own freewill choices. But I warn you again. If you continue trying to break My Law, you will only break yourself, and lose your power and authority. Your job is not impossible. It is only escaping the boundaries of My Law that is impossible. You have the power to do your job very well if only you will learn to work in harmony with My Law, for it is the foundation of My entire creation."

"Free-will choices? Ha!" Lucifer sneered sarcastically. "What is a free will if I am bound to bow and scrape to You, and forced to obey Your Law?"

Logos smiled most lovingly. "I neither bind you nor force you to do anything, My beloved Lucifer. I simply remind you that working in harmony with My Law enables you to do the job I gave you. If you choose to do a different job, any job of your own choosing, there will be consequences. Every choice has consequences. They are woven into the very fabric of the universe. They are the essence of My Law. Far from being a bondage, My Law is just the way things are, for everything I have made reflects My own nature and character. I gave you life, dear Lucifer, but if you want to really live, you must learn of My Law and live within its boundaries. Any other way is not life but death. I did give you a free will, but every choice you make is either a choice leading to life, or a choice leading to death. There are good consequences for choosing..."

"That's not a free will!" Lucifer screamed. "That's just force! You are a proud deceiver, no better than me!"

The heavenly host shuddered in horror as they heard his vehement accusation. Even Lucifer's angels (now called demons) were shocked. There was silence in heaven, deathly silence. The previously smiling, loving, kind face of Logos grew... was it stern? Was it angry? Was He about to lash out at Lucifer in a well-deserved rebuke?

No. It was sad. Logos was crying softly, and for a long time the only sound in heaven was the sound of weeping. Lucifer stood tall, trying to make himself appear taller than Logos (which he was not), and stuck his nose in the air. He had obviously won this debate. The mighty angelic host surrounding the throne was obviously bowing to him. So Lucifer deceived himself once again, totally rejecting everything Logos had been trying to teach him.

Finally Logos spoke again, gently, yet with such power that every angel and demon in the heavenlies could hear. "I will teach you, dear Lucifer, of freewill choices and consequences. Here is your adversary badge. With it I give you permission to tempt My Bride – only tempt, not force. You may not touch her or harm her in any way. Though you may try to convince her of your ways, I have given her freedom of choice as well as you, and you must respect her freewill choice. Or, if you desire to bring harm to her world, you could try to force Nyx to nova as you did Bril. That is the only thing you might do to disrupt the earth-sun system. Go now. Do what you will."

Rather than being grateful for the education, Lucifer grabbed the badge and fled, determined to try out all he'd learned. Sure enough, Earth's orbit was already beginning to recover, and with his new knowledge of celestial mechanics, Lucifer realized it had never even been close to a fatal orbit. Logos was right. But Logos had told him what to do about it. 'Or' indeed! He would do both! He sent his host to Nyx, with instructions on forcing it to nova. Then he pinned on his new badge and descended to Eden, to watch the Bride and determine how to tempt her.

Michael and Gavriel came bowing before Logos. "What happened to Lucifer? Why has he turned against You? Aren't You going to stop him?"

"Lucifer has decided to become My adversary. He wants to destroy all that I have done, thinking he can do better. In his own pride and arrogance he imagines that he is equal to Me. I have tried to instruct him, but he has deceived himself and cannot hear Me. And no, I shall not stop him. I gave him a free will and I will not take it back. I do not force anyone to do My will. My way is truth in love; he has chosen deception and force. Someday he, and you, and all creation, will see that My truth in love is stronger and better than lies and force. But now, what about you? Which way do you choose?"

Thus began what is now universally known as 'the Great Controversy'. Michael and Gavriel, with their angelic hosts in agreement, bowed in worship, swearing their allegiance to Logos and declaring their commitment to His ways. A mighty chorus of praise swelled throughout the heavenlies. Finally Michael paused to ask, "Logos, I love Your wisdom and knowledge. Please instruct me in how I can safely protect Your Bride from the destruction that Lucifer is planning to Your universe."

"I am doing that, dear Michael. I have already given you all you need to do your job. But I do want to reassure you. Though Lucifer may labor throughout the ages as My adversary, doing his best to destroy My universe and slay My Bride, yet I want you to know that I have already won the victory. He cannot succeed against Me. My Plan of the Ages already accommodates anything he may attempt to do. Ultimately he and all creation shall bow to worship Me and acknowledge that My ways are best.

“However, for now dear Michael, do not underestimate Lucifer. He has great power and cunning, and is capable of causing much suffering and destruction. Be on your guard, and do not fall to his deceptions.”

“Thank you, Logos. I am reassured. And I will certainly be on guard. But tell me, how do you plan to overcome Lucifer and his host? A third of the angels followed him!”

Logos laughed. How could He laugh at such a serious matter? Michael and Gavriel’s eyes got big. “Watch My Bride,” Logos responded. “You cannot comprehend it yet, for Adam and his mate are weak and childlike now. But I shall mature, perfect, and glorify them, and use them to crush Lucifer’s rebellion under their own feet!”

Adam and his woman finished their day’s chores in the garden Logos had planted for them. They ate their evening meal of freshly picked raw vegetables. They said good night to their daytime animal friends and welcomed their nocturnal friends. The sunset faded and the stars blazed forth in all their glory, so the couple settled down for some quality cuddling and rereading of Logos’ storybook in the sky. Except for the Sabbath, this was their favorite time together. As they cuddled, they worshiped, knowing that Logos often came to them in their worship. Far from being an invasion of their privacy, they loved His appearing, and had come to expect and delight in His presence at any time of the day or night. And Logos likewise loved to respond. Their joy at His coming was only mirrored by His own.

As Logos had said on the first Sabbath, everything was ‘very good’. In fact, it was perfect. There were no steep, rugged mountains or deep valleys, no rushing torrential rivers or tempestuous oceans, no rain, snow, or wind storms, no summer or winter, no frozen wastelands or hot deserts. Instead, the whole earth was slightly hilly, fertile land, caressed by warm, gentle breezes. Springs of water created placid streams flowing into idyllic fresh-water lakes. About ten to fifteen miles into space a thick layer of transparent water vapor surrounded Earth. That and its huge magnetic field protected it from harmful radiation.

By now, the land was covered with a thick layer of lush foliage, with huge forests and meadows. An abundance of fruits, vegetables, trees, and flowers grew in gay profusion everywhere. The water vapor canopy kept the land at an even, tropical temperature, as if in a greenhouse. The atmospheric pressure was double ours, improving the breathing efficiency of all life. This dramatically increased their physical and mental capacities as well as their growth rates and potential sizes. The thick, warm air could hold vast amounts of clear water vapor without forming clouds. Rain was impossible, but the slight temperature drop at night caused a heavy mist to form, watering the plants. Also, the earth’s floating crust flexed in tides as it rotated between the powerful pull of its two suns, which recharged the aquifers and springs watering the earth. Their hilltop Garden of Eden was perfect in every way.

Adam and his woman, as king and queen of the earth, were giants by our standards – more than nine feet tall. In this oxygen-rich air, Adam’s physical strength was easily five times the strongest today. His mental capacity was an order of magnitude higher (using all his brain capacity rather than just 10%). Any injuries healed in hours rather than days or months. Logos had designed his physical body such that with the Tree of Life he could live forever.

Animals too were larger, stronger, smarter, and longer-lived than today, able to communicate with each other and, in a limited way, with the humans. Communication exists in four realms: verbal, nonverbal (facial expression and body language), empathic (emotional), and psychic (telepathic and, for humans, spiritual). Unlike today, empathic and psychic speech were then well developed, enabling effective communication even where verbal skills were limited or non-existent. So talk with animals, especially the more intelligent ones, was common.

Yes, Logos had made it all perfect in every way. He had assigned his smartest, most powerful and glorious angel, Lucifer, the task of ruling over the cosmos, with millions of angels to assist him. But now Lucifer wanted to destroy it all! In 66 years, the man and women had grown lax in their relationship with Logos, tending to take Him for granted and rely on their own intelligence. As king and queen over all life on earth, they were learning to rule. The stern command of Logos concerning the forbidden tree had faded somewhat from their consciousness.

Lucifer watched as they cuddled and worshiped. He could not touch them, he knew. He could barely get near them. Michael and his angelic host kept an impregnable covering over them. Logos came to them in their worship as Lucifer crouched in the shadows. Lucifer could not comprehend such joy, and his anger burned. *One day soon, they would be bowing to him, praising him, adoring him! He would see to it!* He studied the animals gathered around in the night. *Hmm... That black panther at the woman’s side – she totally trusted him. She petted him like a tabby cat. But he was powerful enough to crush her skull like a watermelon. As lord of the earth, Lucifer had the authority to teach that panther how to kill!*

You know, it didn’t work. There was no killing in all the earth, no death, no anger, hatred, malice, or jealousy, not even a need to eat meat for food. The animals ate grasses, herbs, fruits and vegetables. None had even the slightest inclination to kill. Whenever Lucifer tried to plant that suggestion in their mind, either there was no response at all, or they reacted against him. “But I love the humans. Why would I even think of harming them in any way?”

Lucifer reviewed in his mind what Logos had said about freewill choices and their consequences. To bring harm to the humans, he would have to convince them to make a freewill choice violating God’s command, and somehow make that choice look good.

Preparation Day arrived. Adam and his mate spent the morning cultivating the garden, to be sure all was ready for Logos to come that evening. Then after a lunch of fruits (including a newly ripened one from the Tree of Life), they went swimming with their dolphin friends. The high-pressure, oxygen-rich environment enabled them to hold their breath and remain underwater ten times longer than anyone can today. It is hard for us to comprehend their friendship, but trust me. With their great strength and agility they could nearly keep up with the dolphins. They always had a great time with all their underwater friends.

They returned from their swim refreshed, with an hour yet to tidy up the garden before Logos came. He always spent Sabbath with them, the highlight of their week. Many of their animal friends worked alongside them. They were all at peace, unaware that any evil could be near. They suspected nothing.

Lucifer entered the serpent. Serpent was second in intelligence and beauty only to the dragon, and was the woman's favorite animal. He stood ten feet tall and could level his gaze directly into her eyes. Though not capable of verbal speech, he could communicate with vivid mental pictures, and already had a close rapport with the humans. Through the serpent, Lucifer watched as they worked. Yes! They were moving toward the center of the garden. He waited until they were quite close to the forbidden tree. They had grown accustomed to it. Though they ignored it, they no longer feared it. The time was right. Michael stood close by as always, but was prohibited from interfering.

Lucifer positioned Serpent between the woman and the tree, so she couldn't help but see it when she looked at him. Then, through Serpent, he casually posed a question to the woman's mind. "Did Logos really say you shall not eat from any tree in the garden?"

Adam didn't hear and kept working, but the woman stopped her work and walked toward the serpent, of course seeing the beautiful tree right behind him. Sensing the serpent's mild criticism of Logos, she defended Him. "No, Serpent. Logos said we could eat from any tree in the garden, except that one." She pointed. "He told us if we eat from that one, or even if we touch it, we will surely die."

Adam heard his wife talking to the serpent, saw them close to the forbidden tree, and walked over to the woman's side just in time to hear the serpent's response, again planted in their minds using vivid word pictures. "No, you won't die. Everything Logos made is very good! Would He make anything bad? Of course not. He made this special tree the same as your Tree of Life. But Logos wanted to keep it from you – to frighten you away. He knows that in the day you eat of it you will 'die' only to your present limited knowledge. Your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God Himself, knowing all things, both good and evil. That is why He named it the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." He smiled sweetly.

Adam was startled. How did Serpent know these things? It never occurred to him that Serpent was lying – he had no concept of lying. But he had surely never taught Serpent that! Was Logos confiding in Serpent more than in himself? Why would Logos hide such important things? Logos had starkly contrasted this tree with the Tree of Life, but Serpent had turned that contrast upside down to make it even better than the Tree of Life. Something was wrong.

While Adam wrestled with these thoughts, the woman was looking at the tree. Again, with no concept of lying, she believed everything Serpent said, especially since he said it in the sweetest, kindest, most encouraging emotion. She had no real concept of death, anyway. There had never been a death among any of her animal friends. Maybe death really meant just graduation to some higher level of consciousness. Maybe this was just a shortcut to becoming the Bride of Logos, as He had said. Maybe eating of this tree was their next step to godhood. Imagine! Being just like Logos, knowing all things! That thought strangely excited her. The fruit of the tree certainly looked tasty enough. It was beautiful! Of course Logos never made anything bad. And if it would make them wise, too...! Without even thinking to call on Logos for His wisdom, she impulsively reached out and plucked a fruit, quickly taking a big bite, while Adam recoiled in horror.

It was incredibly sweet and juicy, staining her lips a brilliant red. Her eyes opened wide in astonished delight. "Adam, it is delicious! Here, try some. I don't know why we were so afraid of this tree. It doesn't hurt at all! It is not bad. It is really very good!" And she put it to Adam's lips.

As I said, Adam was brilliant. His mind was far quicker than we can comprehend. In that moment of decision, he thought of many things, in precise logical order. Yes, everything Serpent said seemed right – but, he had directly contradicted Logos. So one of them had to be wrong. Which one? The picture of death from Logos was horrible beyond belief. But the picture of death from Serpent was merely changing to become more like God. But, how could Serpent know? Logos had made him, and all things. Logos ought to know. Serpent must be the one who is wrong. *That means woman, my beloved, my mate, will die.* Logos had said, "in the day..." That's today. Lonely, sick, weak, abandoned, pain, horror, death; Logos' description flitted through his mind. He pictured them all applying to his woman. He could not let this happen. But how could he stop it? She had already eaten from the tree! His nights with Logos going over and over the picture-book in the stars telling the **story of redemption**, the eternal Father's **Plan of the Ages**, came to him. He had never understood redemption, nor even the need for it. But suddenly he understood. His mate had 'sinned'. Wherever it was she would go when she 'died', whatever it was she must suffer, whatever loneliness and despair she must go through, he must be right by her side to help her, to protect her, to 'redeem' her. Yes, he must join her in her 'sin'.

He could not, he would not, allow anything to take her away from him. Then, wherever they went when they 'died', they would still be together. For a brief moment he stared unblinking at her red, red lips, so seductive and compelling. Then again without asking Logos for wisdom, Adam received the fruit from his wife and took a bite.

And Logos, watching on though invisible, was pierced through the heart. He wept great sobs of agony, knowing full well the suffering that lay ahead of His Bride as a result of her disobedient choice. Yet He was neither surprised nor unprepared for this, the greatest of tragedies.

"Logos, shall we slay him?" Michael and Gavriel were right there begging to do battle with Lucifer.

"No, My friends. Lucifer has not broken My Law. He has but done My bidding. My Bride needed to be tested. Do not blame Lucifer that she so easily fell to his temptation. She is so young, so immature. I weep for the suffering she must now go through, but it is through the pain that she shall grow strong and learn to hate evil."

A wicked laugh shattered their private moment, and Lucifer appeared. Michael was startled at how quickly his great beauty had become twisted with evil. He cackled with glee at how easily he had recruited the humans to follow him. "Your so-called Bride is so weak and gullible! And now they are mine! That was too easy! You were a fool to let me tempt them. You should have allowed me to just kill them in collision with Sol. As it is now, I'm glad I wasn't able to destroy Earth. Now I can torment the humans for a thousand years before I kill them!"

Logos continued to weep, answering Lucifer not a word. Waiting and hearing no answer, Lucifer stalked off. He remembered Logos' earlier statements about everything working out for His glory and the benefit of His Bride. He ground his teeth in anger. It was no fun taunting Logos when He would not be taunted.

Then he remembered his demon host, still working to force Nyx to nova. He had to stop them. If Nyx went nova how could he torment the humans for a thousand years?

But when he got there, he found that he was too late. His three commanding generals had just completed their task and were re-grouping their demons to return. The controlled fusion reaction at the core of Nyx had been changed to an uncontrolled nuclear chain reaction.

Lucifer was furious! His generals couldn't understand why. "We have worked hard to do your bidding, sir! For a long time nothing happened. The core structure of Nyx was completely locked up. But suddenly, only minutes ago, it all fell apart, and we were able to do exactly as you had asked. So why are you upset?"

Lucifer realized it was his successful temptation that had loosed the nova. He angrily ordered his host to get back to work, this time to stop that chain reaction!

He then descended to earth to torment the humans, but Michael got there first and blocked his way. "Stand aside, Michael. The humans are mine. By their own free will they chose to follow me!"

"Lucifer! Shining One! How far you have fallen! Logos gave you the universe as your possession, to cherish and to guard. How is it now that you wish to destroy that which Logos gave you to enjoy?"

Lucifer stuck up his nose and sniffed. "Ha! Logos is a stuffed shirt, a love-sick wimp! His creation reflects His own weak nature. I only destroy it so I can recreate it to fit my strong nature, to show you and all creation that I am greater than He. Now I told you to stand aside!"

"You well know, Lucifer, that Logos gave to me the responsibility of guarding His Bride, and that you may not harm her or even tempt her without His permission. I will not stand aside unless Logos tells me to, for I have chosen to be faithful to Him and to the commission He gave me."

"Hmm... You have chosen... Have you really thought about your choice, Michael? Don't you want to be on the winning side here? Logos is so weak! He can't stop me. He can't even discipline me. Why don't you join me? Together we shall rule the universe in awesome power and glory!"

Michael, seeing no need to repeat himself, gave him no answer. His choice was not negotiable.

Waiting and getting no response, Lucifer flew into a rage. "Either join me, or stand aside! Or I shall slay you on the spot, for I am stronger than you!" he yelled, drawing his sword and waving it pompously over his head.

"You were indeed stronger than I, for you were the greatest and most beautiful in Logos' creation. But look closely at yourself. Your own wickedness has sapped your strength and twisted your beauty. In your blind wrath, I don't believe you have the strength anymore to slay me. Logos will protect me. You think He is weak, but that's not true. He merely wants to give you opportunity to repent so he can restore your strength, beauty, and..."

Not waiting for him to finish, Lucifer lunged forward, swinging his sword in a deadly, flaming arc at Michael's head. He was quick, and in his mind, his anger gave him added strength and agility. But somehow, Michael's sword was drawn and raised in time to parry. Lucifer continued to lash out in a lightning-fast sequence of ferocious strokes, but Michael stood firm and deflected each blow. Finally realizing the truth of Michael's statement, Lucifer turned and fled without another word.

Michael knelt and lifted his heart to Logos. "Thank you, my Master, for giving me added strength and the courage to stand firm. Lucifer is indeed very powerful. I rest in Your Word that he shall be defeated by Your Bride in Your perfect time." Then he returned, more cautious than ever, to his task of guarding the humans.

Adam and his mate, unaware of the battle going on around them, looked at each other in horror. The soft bright radiance that had covered them, that had made them look similar to Logos with His brilliant white glory covering, was gone. In its place they saw not the golden fur of the monkey, nor the beautiful scaly iridescent skin of the serpent, nor the soft down of the duckling, nor the light feathers covering the eagle, nor the tough velvet hide of the horse, nor the strong sandpaper gray skin of the dolphin, nor the silky long multi-colored hair of the dog. They were – Oh, God! – they were... naked!

The shame of their nakedness overwhelmed them, and doubly so when they looked around and saw the animals, their beloved friends, shrinking away from them in fear. Even Serpent, who so recently had been talking eagerly to them, was now slinking into the trees. They turned to each other and drew each other close, as they had many times before. But somehow, this hug was different. Every other hug had been only in purest love and oneness of heart, but in this hug there was sensuality, lust, selfish desire, and erotic passion mixed in equal parts with loathing, disgust, blaming, condemning, anger, hatred, fear – where were all these awful feelings coming from? They had never before experienced any of them. They whose glory covering had never before retained even the slightest speck of dust now felt dirty, exposed, and shamed. It was so overwhelming that they fled the garden in horror into the surrounding forest, searching for something to cover their nakedness. In their minds the words of the serpent echoed: “You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil... *good and evil...*!”

Finding fig leaves, Adam and his woman wove them together and stitched them with grass to make skirts to cover their loins. It didn’t help much. The animals still stayed away from them, and they still felt embarrassingly naked. Then they heard Logos calling them. The Sabbath had begun, and He had come for their regular Sabbath evening fellowship. They hid themselves, crouching low behind some bushes among the trees. They felt utterly filthy in mind and body, unable to face Logos.

“Adam, where are you? Can you not hear Me?” Logos sounded very sad, which shocked them as they had never heard Him sad before. They were even more shocked at their own decision not to answer, remembering all the happy times that they had so eagerly run to meet Him. But suddenly there He was, standing at their bush looking down on them.

“Er, yes, Logos. I... I mean we, er, we heard You calling us from the garden, b-but we were afraid because we just discovered that we are naked. So we hid ourselves.”

“Who told you that you were naked?” They looked at each other. No one had told them; it must have been that fruit. It had changed them somehow. “Have you eaten fruit from the tree which I commanded you to not eat?” Logos echoed their thoughts.

There was no getting out of it. Their nakedness was proof. “Well, uh... it was the woman You gave to me.” Adam immediately tried to justify himself. “She ate it, and then gave some to me. I only wanted to help her, to stay with her and save her, so I ate it, too.”

“Woman, what have you done?”

“Ah... it was that serpent You created, Logos.” The woman also tried to justify herself. “Serpent said it would make me wise, like You. He deceived me into thinking that the tree was good, like the Tree of Life, so I ate.”

“Serpent, come here,” Logos commanded. The serpent came from his hiding place among the trees. “I made you one of the most beautiful and intelligent of My creatures, just below the humans. You had the authority to resist the tempter. Yet you invited him in to possess and control you. Because of what you have done, an awful curse has fallen upon you. You shall be hated and feared by the woman and her children. You are cursed below all cattle and beasts of the field. You shall lose not only your great intelligence, but also your ability to walk. Upon your belly shall you crawl, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. One day, through one of the woman’s children, I shall send a **Redeemer**. Though you may succeed in crushing His heel, yet ultimately He shall crush your head.”

Serpent withered before their eyes, losing his legs and his beauty. He fell forward on his belly in a cloud of dust. He flicked his evil-looking forked tongue into the dust to taste it, then slithered off. The woman shrank back in horror. What Logos had said about her hating and fearing Serpent was already true. The serpent she had known and loved before, her favorite animal of them all, was no more.

But Logos was already talking to her. “Woman, because of your disobedience, you lost the ability to bring forth children directly from Spirit. That will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. Your desire shall be to dominate and manipulate your husband. But instead, he shall rule over you, because you let yourself so easily be deceived. He will guard you, guide you, provide for you, and bring you happiness when you discipline yourself to submit to him.”

Then, turning to Adam, “You were not deceived. You saw clearly what was happening. But instead of asking for My wisdom, you followed your wife in your own wisdom. You knowingly, willfully joined her in her disobedience. Therefore the ground is cursed because of you. In toil and sorrow shall you eat its produce all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles, weeds and bugs, moles and slugs will contend with you. By the sweat of your brow will you eat, until you return to the ground. From dust you were taken, dust you are, and to the dust you shall return.”

Adam was reminded of the curse on the serpent, who was commanded to eat the dust all the days of his life. *But God just said that he is dust. Does that mean the serpent will consume his own fallen nature?*

Adam and his woman were still crouched behind the bush, trying to maintain some dignity in their nakedness before Logos. But He made no attempt to expose them. Instead, He called over a male lamb. (They had multiplied abundantly in the 66 years since Creation.) “Lay your hands on the head of this ram. Confess your disobedience and rebellion upon its head,” Logos commanded. Then He turned, called a pair of gorillas, and instructed them how to gather stones and build an altar. Adam was surprised that Logos should be working, as the Sabbath had now begun. Logos had strictly forbidden work on the Sabbath.

Knowing his thoughts, Logos answered. “Adam, the law of redemption requires that the work of redemption take precedence over all other laws, including the law of **Sabbath Rest**. I must do this now, though it contravenes the Sabbath law, for if I do not, you would not live until morning. Your sin has far greater consequences than you know. I told you that in the day you disobey Me and eat of the fruit of that tree, in dying you shall surely die. Even now you are dying. An important part of you is already dead: that part which is most holy, which provided your covering of righteousness to enable you to come freely into My presence at any time. That is why you can now see your nakedness. We must work fast before more of you dies. Now send Me the ram on which you placed your sin.”

While the lamb trotted obediently over to Him, He commanded all the other animals to flee. “Do not observe what I do here, for it will be more than you can bear to see.” Then He quickly picked up a sharp stone at the foot of the altar and used it to slit the ram’s throat. The humans looked on in horror. Logos destroying His own creation? Unfathomable!

Lucifer, looking on though blocked from coming near, was ecstatic. He had been unable to teach the animals to kill, but now Logos was doing it for him. And He was even teaching the humans how to kill! *Tormenting them, and getting them to torment one another, will be so sweet! Just as he had figured, Logos was obviously weak and foolish – unable to prevent him from destroying the Bride.*

Now he had to make sure his demons had gotten that nova toned down. If the nuclear chain reaction was allowed to proceed to completion, Nyx would get so hot the earth could not survive, and he would have no more fun at all. Laughing at the ignorance and impotence of Logos and the way he had tricked Him into killing that lamb, Lucifer flew back to Nyx.

By working furiously, his demon host had managed to slow the nuclear chain reaction, but they couldn’t stop it. Lucifer worked with them. But he couldn’t stop it either. So he decided to just make Nyx explode. Once it broke into separate pieces, the chain reaction would cease. It would still become very hot – just hot enough to torment the humans but not fry them. *And just think what he might do with all those pieces of Nyx whizzing through space!*

Logos sprinkled the blood of the ram on the new altar. He then came back to Adam and his woman, His hands dripping with blood. He reached out over the bush and sprinkled some on Adam. “The ram has died in your place, and its blood sprinkled upon you has halted the process of death in you, extending your life. But it is only temporary. I appoint you as My **priest**. You must do this each Sabbath evening until Redeemer comes to permanently take away your sin. I will teach you how to shepherd the sheep and increase the flocks so you will always have enough male lambs for this sacrifice. If you miss it even one Sabbath, you will die more, get further from Me, and find it harder to come back into fellowship with Me.

“Now, go into the woods and make for yourselves a bed for the night. Tomorrow you shall find a pool in the woods where you can bathe privately. Return here in a few days after you are refreshed. I will be here preparing a better covering for your nakedness.” Logos turned back to the ram lying on the altar. Adam and his woman stared at it for another long moment, in fascinated horror at the death they knew they had caused. Then they turned and fled.

Logos called Lucifer into His presence. Lucifer came readily, with his three generals, and began to boast of their accomplishments. Logos listened to his boasting for a while, even smiling and nodding when Lucifer explained how they had decided to slow the process of the nova, so he could torment the humans for a thousand years before he killed them. At that, Logos interjected, “I called you here to thank you for halting the nova. You are learning to work within My Law and do My will. I am grateful. For I, too, wanted to spare the humans.”

“Spare them? I’m going to torment them! I will explode Nyx into a zillion pieces, then put the pieces in orbits that will threaten the earth and terrorize all its inhabitants. You made a big mistake giving me such power and authority over the universe! Now I shall have a billion pieces of Nyx to use as I please, and You can’t stop me. I can torment the humans as long as I wish, and then any time I choose I can force one of those pieces of Nyx into collision with Earth and destroy it!”

“You will find that more difficult than you think. You have much to learn about orbital resonance. My Plan of the Ages is big enough to make good use of your choices, dear Lucifer. What you call torment, I call testing, and My Bride shall only be stronger because of it. Do you see now how I gave you, and My Bride, a totally free will, yet still allow you both to experience the consequences of your choices either good or bad? I never force or coerce, but I...”

“You are so stupid!” Lucifer yelled, and all the angels shuddered in horror at his boldness. “Yes, I see now about freewill and consequences but I also see that You are a fool! You should have used force! You and Your wimpy love have been defeated, and I am now the strongest being in the universe!”

Logos shook His head sadly. “Your pride has blinded you, My friend. I would love to teach you, but you seem determined to learn the hard way. So be it. However...” Logos paused, a look of concern on His face. “There will be a powerful electrical discharge from Nyx to Earth, and then to Sol. I recommend great caution in your activities in the physical realm until it is passed.”

Not comprehending the warning, Lucifer strutted off. He could take care of himself. He was the strongest being in the universe! No electrical discharge could harm him! As a mighty creature of spirit, physical phenomena were his playthings, or at worst an inconvenience. He stepped back to earth and ordered his demons to enter the animals and begin teaching them to kill. *This would be fun!*

The woods were dense and dark. 66 years in those days was like 300 years of growth now, and the trees towered above them. Daylight was gone, but Nyx the night sun was high in the sky to light their way. Adam led his wife deeper and deeper, well beyond where they had ventured before. Finally they found a mossy place for a bed. They flung their bodies down, still weeping from the horror and shock of the death they had seen. “I’m sorry. So sorry! I didn’t know death would be like this. That poor lamb had to die for us. It was horrible! Serpent said we would become like God! I’m so sorry! I didn’t know what I was doing. I should have obeyed Logos. I should have obeyed you.” The woman blubbered on and on, while Adam held her close, stroked her soft hair and tender skin, and tried to comfort her.

Finally he spoke. “Woman, hush. Now we know what sin is: our direct disobedience to Logos’ command. And death—we saw the dead ram. It died for our sin. But we also have Logos’ promise of redemption. I understand it now! Remember, in the storybook in the stars? Logos promised to send a Redeemer! We will get through this. I will stay close beside you. I will protect you. I will take care of you. I’ll help you with the sacrifices. Together, we will make it. Hush. Stop your crying, my love. We shall sleep.”

But they could not sleep. For in their comforting one another, in their hugging, cuddling, caressing, there was a strange excitement they had not felt before. Nyx seemed unusually bright. Its light shone down on their nakedness. Everything that had been modestly covered before lay openly exposed before them. Their loving touches became exploring. Their purest love and respect for each other became more of a sensual, stimulating, passionate thing. Now they discovered the delight of the kiss. Then, lying together and smothering one another with kisses, they discovered **sexual union**. Their depths of horror and despair were turned to peaks of joyous ecstasy, until finally, satisfied in oneness of heart and body, they slept.

The next morning they found the pool as Logos had promised. It was radiantly beautiful in the early morning sun. It had a small waterfall plunging into it on one end, and a bubbling brook running out the other.

There they bathed and ate from the fruit trees around the pool. They spent the next two days enjoying each other in this new relationship. Even the beauty of the night was enhanced for them as Nyx continued to brighten, now nearly as bright as Sol, though still with that cool-white silvery glow. They rejoiced in its friendly light.

Finally they sat together by the pool to talk. “Is this sin, too? In our nakedness in the garden I felt so ashamed in front of the animals or when Logos was there, but here in the privacy of these woods I don’t feel ashamed with you. Just the opposite, I feel like in joining our bodies like this we are finally fulfilling what Logos told us on the day He separated us from each other, that we are one flesh.” The woman was smiling now. The horror of the death of the lamb had already dimmed from her consciousness.

Adam hesitated, now just a little over-cautious. “Let’s go back to the garden and ask Logos. I too have the feeling that this is not sin. But it may be related to the redemption process. After all, Logos told us the story of redemption in the stars before we could even comprehend our need for it. It seems to me that in joining our bodies as one flesh we comforted each other and helped each other to heal from our trauma a lot better and faster than otherwise would have been possible. Is not that redemption?”

So they arose, put on their fig leaf coverings, and headed arm in arm back toward the place they had last seen Logos. Sol indicated about noon when they arrived at the bush. They ducked beneath it and called to Logos.

He came, holding the lambskin which He had shorn and scraped and made into soft, lovely, modest clothing for each of them. The corpse of the lamb still lay, naked and stinking, on the altar, reminding them of the horror of the previous Sabbath. But when they tried on the clothes, they delighted at the comfort and modesty. *Why do horror and delight seem to run so close together?* Adam wondered.

Logos again answered his thoughts. “Before you sinned you were young and immature. I protected you, both from peaks of delight and depths of despair. But now you are growing up. Having disobeyed Me, I can no longer protect you from your choices. Knowing both good and evil, you shall experience even greater delights and worse horrors. And no, My beloved, your joining together in sexual union is not sin, though it could lead to sin if you are not careful. As you guessed, the union of a man and his wife is part of the redemption process. I allowed you to discover it after your sin to aid in your healing. Your sin has changed your very nature. Now you must join your bodies together like that to have children. This is right and good in My sight, for I made you one flesh and commanded you to multiply and fill the earth. Though that may be painful, ultimately, as I told Serpent, it shall lead to your benefit and My glory, for it is sexual union that binds you together into a family. You shall bring forth children for My Bride. In the ages to come My Bride shall be magnificent with many members.”

The woman, remembering what Logos had said about the pain in childbirth, was concerned. “Family? Children? Many members? Others in Your image?”

Logos smiled at them – the first smile they had seen from Him since their disobedience. Somehow that smile made their hearts leap with joy, even in the face of this tragedy. “The adversary intended it for evil. He is working hard to pervert it in you. But I have taken all that he has done and turned it around for good, for you, for all of My creation, and yes, for the many members of My Bride yet to come. The moment you sinned, you began to die, as I warned you. Your nature was changed, from one that lives in and loves righteousness, to a fallen nature with a bent toward sin. Even if you sacrifice each Sabbath as I showed you, you eventually will return to the dust from which I made you. But My Plan of the Ages for a perfect Bride shall not be thwarted! Out of death I create life! You will learn to hate your bent toward sin. In your struggle against it, you will mature quickly. Having tasted sin and death, now you will appreciate My nature of holiness and life.

“In your sin you uncovered your nakedness. In your sexual union you conceived a child. He is now growing within your womb, woman. Next year you will bear a son, also in My image, but also with a bent towards sin. In the years to come, you will bear many more, both sons and daughters. Train them, as I am training you. You are the mother of all living. And you, Adam, are the father of all living. It is your union with the woman that brings forth children. In this also you are like Me, for it is My union with the Father in eternity from whom I came that has enabled Me to bring forth My Bride.

“For this reason a son when he has grown into a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall become one flesh. They shall start their own family, as you have now started yours. This joining of a man and his wife is called marriage. It is holy and right in My eyes. I bless your marriage, and you shall bless the marriages of your children when they are grown. Let each marriage be sealed before God and man in a holy ceremony. What I join together let no one put asunder.”

“The mother of all living.” Adam looked at his woman. “I like that. Woman, I shall call you ‘Eve’ meaning ‘living’.” She smiled and nodded her agreement. Then turning back to Logos, Adam added. “So children are like baby animals – lambs, ducklings, bear cubs, or fox pups?”

“Be careful! You are much higher than animals. Each bears after its own kind, and you are of Me. Each animal is only one, but you and I are three in one: body, soul, and spirit. Do not think of yourself as an animal, and do not behave like them. I made you a king, to rule over them, as I am King over all. An animal does only what is natural, according to natural law. You must become supernatural. Learn to follow My higher laws of soul and spirit, which now in this age of sin may contend with natural law.

“An animal is limited in its desires, ambitions, or goals. But you have eternity in your heart. You have a touch of infinity, a taste of the divine, within you, that the animals cannot comprehend. Though your needs are limited, your wants, ambitions, and desires – your vision for the future and for all you could become – give you nearly infinite potential for either good or evil. You cannot rule over the animals rightly if you become like them.”

Adam and Eve rejoiced in heart when they heard that, for they were concerned that in their sin they had lost their right to rule over the animals. Logos responded to their thoughts. “No, you have not lost My commission to rule the animals, but you will find it more difficult to fulfill. They will not always work for you or obey you. The desire I gave you for dominance has become a pride in you, which will dull your effectiveness and your unity of purpose. The universe which I created to be very good has been terribly damaged, more than you can know. Your sin has loosed My adversary. It has given him legal occasion to tempt and harass you. He will work to plant wicked thoughts in your minds, to pervert what I gave you for good, and to damage your world. Do you not wonder why Nyx grows brighter?”

Adam had indeed wondered, and had planned to ask Logos about it. Not that he was worried. The cosmos was in such harmonious perfection he could not conceive of it becoming a problem. But Adam and Eve had seen the spectacular supernova of Bril that Lucifer had staged, and they wondered if Nyx’s nova could affect them. Evening had come. Nyx was rising. Adam and Eve were shocked that its dawning brightness now exceeded that of Sol! “Yes, Logos. Please, what is happening with Nyx?”

“Lucifer, My adversary, the one who turned the serpent against you, was the one who caused Nyx to nova. It will indeed affect you! Nyx will break into pieces, which will threaten Earth. The big ones will not impact Earth, for I have prevented it, but because of your sin they will come close and cause terrible harm. But first, a massive electrical discharge from Nyx will knock Earth from its perfect orbit. You must flee. I will station My angel here to guard and keep the garden. Be encouraged. I promise that in the ages to come, when My Bride is perfected, she shall return to this spot to eat of the Tree of Life to live forever with Me.”

“But...” Logos paused, sadness clouding His face. “... no one who has the taint of sin may eat of the Tree of Life. I am truly sorry for you. You must go now. Flee to the south as fast as you can. You will find a meadow in a small valley with a pool hidden in a grove of trees. There you may till the ground. There you will be safe.” Logos disappeared.

For a moment, the couple thought they saw a glorious, mighty giant of an angel with a huge sword standing just to the right of the altar and the bloody, dead, stinking lamb. Then the angel disappeared. The entire garden darkened, as if shrouded in a mist that their eyes could not penetrate. A sudden urgency filled them with icy fear. They fled.

Their skin began to prickle and the hairs on their arms stood on end. Terror filled them. They began running with all their might. They were strong, and could still run very fast. But soon they heard a crackling sound, which became a roar. The sky filled with swirling colors, iridescent reds, purples, and blues. They who had never known weakness before, felt faint. Their legs grew so weak they could no longer run. They flung their trembling bodies on the grass and looked up. Nyx was now high in the sky, unbearably bright, twice as bright and hot as Sol had ever been. Their long hair now stood straight out from their heads. Their muscles began jerking spasmodically. They heard screams and roars from their animal friends. The birds tumbled from the skies. Their dragon friend, ever the bold one, had also taken to the air and was belching great clouds of smoke and flames from his mouth; but even he fell to the earth with all his mighty muscles in spasms. Flowers all closed their blossoms; tender plants curled and wilted. The space plasma from Nyx's nova had reached earth. It was filled with charged particles. The static buildup in the air became disabling. Their tormented bodies jerked and twitched uncontrollably. They screamed in pain and fear.

Lucifer, watching and chortling with glee, suddenly remembered Logos' warning. He yelled to his generals, "Get your demons out of here! Back into the heavenlies. Now! Not a moment to lose!" They yelled to their captains and lieutenants, who yelled to their sergeants, who yelled to their demonic host. Lucifer did not wait to see if they made it. *He would save his own skin, if no one else. He knew full well that Logos, weak and narrow-minded though He may be, did not give idle warnings.*

Adam and Eve bowed their faces to the ground and cried out to Logos in terror, but He did not respond. *I must protect my wife!* Adam thought. He reached out to touch her, but great sparks flew between them, convulsing their muscles and buzzing their brains. Then Adam discovered that by clinging tightly to his wife, the sparks between them stopped and they both were strengthened. They were on a hill, exposed. They had to reach the valley Logos had told them about. They helped each other to stand.

"Adam! Look!" Eve screamed, and Adam spun his head back toward Eden. There was a huge flaming arc, like an immense sword, extending from Nyx down to Earth. Its nearest tip flickered over to the altar, which exploded in a brilliant flame, also vaporizing their garden. Its incredible roar was painful to their ears and made talk impossible. Their hair stood straight up from their heads. Even greater terror filled them. The earth shook violently sideways. The ground under them undulated wildly. Wind shrieked. Clinging together, struggling to remain on their feet, they fled toward the valley, not looking back again until they reached level ground. *It was about September 29, 5040 BC, using modern time for your convenience, dear Reader. This is the beginning of the Catastrophic Era, starting year zero AF (after the Fall). This era became known as the Age of Sin.*

Adam and Eve tumbled into a heap in the lush grasses of the high valley. Morning came. Fiery Nyx set, finally. The earth quieted and cooled. The strong winds faded into a gentle breeze. They called for Logos. He did not respond. They called for their animal friends. None of them came, either. They were alone. They crossed the grassy meadow and discovered a secluded spot in a grove of trees. Beyond that a spring of water poured over some rocks into a big pool, as Logos had said. It was perfect. They took off their lambskins, bathed, and comforted each other again. Then they spent the rest of the day building a shelter against Nyx's blazing heat. Their skin was beginning to blister. They could not survive another night without shelter.

At dusk Nyx rose, brighter and hotter than ever, but now they had shelter beside the cool stream. They were grateful. Though they had sinned, they were redeemed by the lamb sacrifice. Though driven out of the Garden of Eden, they had found their new home, and Logos had promised they would be safe here. They decided to name the valley **New Eden**. Here they would start a new garden – cultivate some vegetables and plant fruit-bearing trees, bushes, and vines. They lifted their hands in praise to Logos, then crawled into their new shelter and slept.

Lucifer, miffed that so many of his demons had fried when he had failed to warn them in time, came grumpily into the presence of Logos. "I don't understand what You're trying to pull," he began. "You gave me authority over the universe, and I set off that nova with ease just like with Bril. I am so strong I can withstand a nuclear chain reaction, which is the most powerful force in the universe. But when the electrical discharge hit the earth, a lot of my demons got fried while Your weak, puny humans are just fine. That's not fair! You're not keeping Your Word. You're changing the rules on me!"

This was a very serious accusation, but Logos never flinched. Again, that irritating smile – with a twinkle in His eye He responded, "I keep My Word. I never change the rules. Listen carefully, My beloved adversary, for this is the most important thing you can ever learn. My Law, which as I told you is woven into the very fabric of the universe, integral with every atom and every molecule, is far broader and deeper than you have imagined. You are still looking at things from your very limited perspective, thinking that you are just as great as I, thinking anything beyond your power and understanding can't exist. But in fact, I am greater than you. A good deal greater. And My Law is far deeper than you can comprehend, fully encompassing vast areas of which you have not the slightest awareness."

He said it humbly, quietly, without a trace of pride. He was just stating a fact. "I created you, Lucifer. I love you, and you are of great value to Me, either as My adversary or as My friend. I gave you immense power, and a great deal of freedom and authority, and I will not take those away.

“But for you to be effective, either as My adversary or as My friend, you must discover all you can about My Law and determine to work in harmony with it. I told you that before, but you have not yet heard. Having learned a little of My laws of celestial mechanics you thought you knew it all. In reality you have only begun. Though I made you a mighty spirit, when you enter a physical being, you enter into his weakness and subject yourself to his realm. You and your host entered those animals to teach them to kill. Killing begets killing; its consequence is death. You should have known that! Learn of Me. If you truly seek wisdom, I will not turn you away. When you learn of My Law and work strictly within it you will be successful in all you attempt.”

Lucifer fled, horrified that he had almost bowed the knee to Logos and asked for His wisdom, and enraged that Logos should consider Himself so much greater. His pride flared, and he swore that he would never again seek for information from Logos.

Awaking fully refreshed before dawn, Adam studied the setting Nyx. It had exploded while they had slept, as Logos had warned. Though still very hot, the blistering flames had extinguished and the pieces looked more like glistening coals from a dying campfire. Adam counted about six main pieces, and many smaller ones, flying apart like sparks above a fire. The electric arc was still there, now stretching not to the earth but to Sol. Again they praised Logos for their deliverance. Again He didn't respond.

They found a few nuts and berries for their breakfast, then went out together to clear some of the high, thick grasses for their new garden. It was strange grass, heavy with seed. They cut it with sharp bamboo blades and threw it in a pile for later experiments.

It was exhausting work. They began to see the effects of the curse. They kept looking around and calling, hoping to enlist some help from their animal friends, but none came. Perhaps they were all dead. Adam and Eve knew how to garden, having cared for the Garden of Eden for 66 years. But it had never seemed like this much work before. Eve grew tired, and went back to the grove to rest. Adam learned what Logos had meant by “the sweat of his brow.” He had yet to notice that the bugs, slugs, moles, weeds, and many others had turned against him. All he knew was, he wasn't getting much help. He found himself getting angry with his wife for walking out on him. But when he yelled for her and sensed his temper flaring, he was shocked and so ashamed he put his face to the ground and bawled.

Eve came running when she heard Adam's yell. When she saw him groveling on the ground sobbing, she rushed to him screaming, “Logos! Logos! Help us! Adam is hurt!” He looked up quickly, saying, “No, Eve. I'm not hurt. Just ashamed that I got angry with you. I don't know what has come over me. I think our sin has done more damage to us that we thought. Please forgive me for yelling at you.”

“Of course, Adam. I'm sorry that I don't seem to be as strong as I was. Please forgive me for not helping more.” So they hugged and made up. Adam wondered why Logos never came in response to Eve's frantic call. He had always responded to their calls before.

That afternoon they explored their high valley home. It was a mile from Eden but still within sight of the hilltop. They searched for vegetables and fruit-bearing plants to transplant to their new garden. For the next three days, they were busy transplanting and enlarging their garden. Finally, as Sol began to wane toward the Sabbath, they tidied up, bathed, and got ready for Logos to lead them in their Sabbath rest. They longed to see Him again. With a sinking feeling, Adam remembered what Logos had said. Their clothing of righteousness, which had enabled them to converse freely with Logos in His realm, was gone. Now the sacrifice of the lamb was needed every Sabbath. That explained why Logos was not responding to their calls.

So in the waning light, they worked together, dragging large stones from a nearby rocky cliff to build a new altar. They finished it as Nyx came up, but it was so dim, barely flickering cinders, they had no light to continue. By then all the sheep would be asleep anyway, and it would be impossible to find a perfect lamb for the sacrifice. They had seen animals in the woods surrounding the valley, so they knew that not all had been killed by the blast from Nyx. But it seemed like they were avoiding the humans, fleeing when they came near. With their love of animals, that was sad. They went to bed exhausted and discouraged and once again found comfort in each other's loving arms. No Logos, but at least they had each other.

Sabbath morning dawned fair and cool. Now that the nova was gone, the mist watered their garden as before. They were awakened with a bleating, and went out to find a young ram caught by his horns in their garden tools. “Thank you, Logos!” They both exclaimed together, tying him off with a vine. Then, putting off the moment while eating fruits they had gathered for breakfast, they sat together, talking about anything but killing the lamb.

Finally they could avoid it no longer. They went back to where the lamb was tied, inspected it for blemishes, and carried it to their altar. The young ram looked up at them with its big brown eyes, almost as if to plead for its life. Adam tied its legs together so it couldn't escape. Then they both put their hands on its head and in tears confessed their sin over it. Sensing their sorrow, the ram rubbed against their hands sympathetically. “You do it. I don't want to watch,” Eve said, seeing all her animal friends in the lamb's eyes. She felt like she would be breaking trust with the whole animal kingdom if she killed this lamb.

“Wait a minute. I can't do it alone. You've got to help,” Adam responded. And the full horror of the week before came back to them. They both had to face it. Lamb or no lamb, they simply couldn't live without Logos.

Finally, with Adam holding the knife and Eve holding the lamb, they slit its throat and sprinkled each other and the altar with its blood. They spent the next hour skinning the dead animal. It was terrible. It made a bloody mess, bringing back in full force the horror of their sin. They wept uncontrollably the whole time. Finally Adam cried out, "It is finished! Logos, please accept our sacrifice. Come back to talk with us! We miss You! We need You!"

At first there was no response. The couple felt deeply disappointed. What had they done wrong? But then they noticed a strange cloud forming over the altar. The base of the cloud burst into flame, and the whole cloud shone brightly. They stepped back, reminded of the powerful bolt of lightning from Nyx that had consumed the first sacrificial lamb. Sure enough, the flames soon consumed the carcass of the lamb, licking the altar clean. Then the flames died down, and within them appeared Logos, standing in the air high above the altar.

"Your sacrifice is acceptable. I am very pleased." Logos smiled at them. They wanted to run and hug Him as before, but now they could not. Why was He suspended in the air?

Answering their thoughts, Logos said, "You cannot touch Me again until Redeemer comes. The blood of the sacrifice temporarily covers your sin, but does not take it away. When Redeemer comes, He will take away your sin and restore the relationship we had before. But we can still have good fellowship. Put the lamb skin to soak under a rock in the stream. Then sit in the shade of that oak tree, and I will come down and sit with you. We can spend the rest of the Sabbath together." He said it like He had missed them as much as they had missed Him.

So that is what they did. They poured out their hearts to Logos, telling Him how much they missed Him, voicing their sorrow and repentance, wondering why He had not come when they had called, sharing how hard they had worked to develop their new home and garden, explaining their surprise at how difficult it all was, even admitting how they had to repent to each other for their anger and miscommunication.

Logos knew. He understood. He healed their hurts and explained their difficulties. He told them that the electrical discharges from Nyx had disrupted the nervous systems of all life. The animals had not recovered and most of them were unable to have the friendly relationship they had had before. "Most animals will be afraid of you now, as you noticed with the sheep. But they," He said, "and others like dog, dolphin, pig, horse, dragon, and elephant, could be your friends again if you worked to regain their trust. Lion, serpent, tiger, panther, eagle, and wolf have been so changed that they may never be your friends again. You must be on your guard against them, for at times they may try to harm you. They have become perverted, deranged. They are not satisfied with the diet I gave them, and have turned to killing other animals to eat. I am sorry..."

When Logos said 'killing', the couple looked down at their blood splattered bodies and cringed. Logos laughed. "Yes, you made a mess, didn't you. Why don't you go now and wash. When you return, I will teach you how to offer the sacrifice without making such a mess."

It was a very warm afternoon, and they were hot and sticky. The thought of a cool bath was suddenly the most delightful thing in the world. When they returned, refreshed, Logos explained. "Death is the consequence of sin, always. But the lamb died in your place. Confessing your sin over the lamb's head, then sprinkling its blood on the altar, signifies that you believe My Word that your sin is covered. That is a 'faith' thing. It is what you believe with your mind and receive in your heart. I grant you the faith through your obedience in offering the lamb sacrifice. Adam, I anointed you as priest for your family. Only the priest needs to touch the blood, because the real covering is in your hearts by faith. That will make it easier for you. You don't need to sprinkle your wife. I cannot come to you unless your sin is covered by the blood. But you don't have to wait until the Sabbath. Call to Me whenever you need Me. If I do not come, repent of any sin that you remember, recall the sacrifice from the last Sabbath, imagine the blood covering your sin, accept the sacrifice by faith, and know that you are clean and I will come to you. I do not expect you to sacrifice another lamb every time you sin, just to maintain your relationship with Me. I want you to keep in touch with Me continually. But you must make the choice to invite Me back each time. As you obey Me in the Sabbath sacrifice, I will give you grace to walk in righteousness the rest of the week, if you will accept it. That way we can still have sweet fellowship anytime you choose." Logos said it longingly, as if fellowship with the humans was the one thing He wanted most of all. Maybe it was.

Thus, their Sabbath fellowship was the best they had ever had. They finally knew the unconditional love of Logos, and they received it gratefully.

After the Sabbath Logos showed them how to protect their flocks at night from wolves and lions by building a corral hedged with thorn bushes. "You see, even thorns can be a blessing in disguise," He quipped. Adam thought it strange that Logos should make jokes about so serious a matter as thorns and predatory animals – the consequence of their sin. Logos responded to his thoughts. "Everything is a picture of something higher. It all has wisdom for you to learn. You can learn the easy way, from My words, or the hard way, by trial and error, but it will all work out for good. Even the thorns and thistles, though not part of My original plan, will work out for good. You paid a heavy price for the wisdom you learned about the consequences of disobedience. But look at the good your failures have done you. Now you are quick to obey, and eager to learn My **wisdom** the easy way. I am very pleased. Rejoice with Me! Do not live in the sorrow of past failures. Instead, live in the delight of wisdom to not repeat those failures.

“Wisdom is the principle thing. Always buy wisdom as cheaply as you can. Wisdom was My constant companion as I created the universe, and she shall guard you and restore you to all I have planned for you.”

“Thank You, Logos. You are so encouraging!” Eve bowed in reverence, longing to run and hug Him as before the Fall, though knowing she could not. “We will do our best...” Logos interrupted to answer her thoughts. “I, too, long to hug you. But because I am wholly righteous, I cannot allow anything with any taint of sin to touch Me. When Redeemer comes, He will take away your sin and restore our relationship. In the meantime, I urge you, look at your husband, who is created in My image. See My reflection in him, and hug him for Me. You too, Adam, see Me in the eyes of your wife. Hug her, love her, treasure her, for Me. In truly loving each other, you are loving Me as well, for I made you in My own image and likeness.”

Adam and Eve looked at each other, smiled, and embraced, rejoicing that something they enjoyed so much was encouraged by Logos, and grateful that He had given them each other. Sol had set; their day’s work was done. The skies were tinged with glory. Their hearts were overflowing with love.

Logos smiled at them. With sparkling eyes, He said, “I have something special to help you remember this lesson always. You are higher than the animals. Only you are made in My image. Go now. Rejoice in your love for Me and for each other. Meet Me here in the morning, for I will teach you just how different you are from the animals.”

The love they shared that night was so delightful, so satisfying, they both wondered that something so good could come as a result of their sin. *What if we had never sinned – we would never have known each other like this!* they thought as they finally drifted off to sleep in each other’s arms.

Early next morning, Logos was waiting for them. They were not surprised when He started right off by answering their question. “You can ask ‘What if?’ questions if you like, but I rarely will answer, as My Father’s Plan of the Ages accommodates all possible choices you make with the free will I gave you. Once something happens, like your first sin, then that is the only reality. ‘What ifs?’ are but an illusion. But sometimes asking ‘What if?’ is valuable to teach you wisdom and help you appreciate My plans for you, as in this case. If you had not sinned, you would have missed nothing. On the contrary, you would have enjoyed hugs more than you now can imagine. There would have been no need for sexual union and physical childbirth, with its pain and difficulty. Your hugs of righteousness – unity as I am in unity with My Father – would have born children directly from Spirit. They would have entered the physical realm already knowing words, just like you when I made you. They would have had no bent towards sin but only love and eagerness to learn wisdom and godliness.

“Due to your sin, you lost the ability to **procreate** through hugs of righteousness and unity. The pleasure of your sexual union is but a brief, dim picture, the barest taste, to help you long for that which you lost.”

Adam and Eve glanced in consternation at each other. “But You promised us a Redeemer! You said Your Plan of the Ages for a perfect Bride shall not be thwarted! You said all shall be restored one day!”

“It shall. But not as it would have been. I cannot change the past any more than you. I gave you the freedom to make your own choices, and every choice you make alters your destiny. However, because Our Plan of the Ages accommodates all possible choices, the end result, though it may be long, torturous, and filled with the suffering of painful consequences of wrong choices, will be even more glorious than before. Your children will be born in sin. They will be helpless and totally dependent upon you. In training them to obey you, you also will learn obedience.

“One day I will gather the obedient ones into one many-membered Bride, perfected by the blood sacrifice of My Redeemer and all the more glorious because of the pain she has been through.” Logos paused, a wistful faraway look in His eye. “Where you will see hundreds, thousands, millions, I see only one, My Adam, My precious one, made beautiful beyond words in the splendor of holiness.”

“When will that be? How many children? The obedient ones? What about the disobedient ones?” Adam and Eve were full of questions.

Logos smiled. “It depends upon your choices, doesn’t it. It may be soon if you and your children learn obedience and live your lives from now on in wholehearted love, trust, and righteousness. Or it may be many ages if you continue to rebel and disobey Me. The ones who choose wrongly, who rebel against Me and hate Me, will never be a part of My Bride. So choose rightly! Love and obey Me!”

“But we chose wrongly! We disobeyed You! Are we excluded from Your Bride? Are we forever lost?”

“Remember what I said. Do not live in the sorrow of past failures, but rather live in the delight of learning the wisdom to not repeat those failures. Yes, when you sinned, you stood condemned and in grave danger. But when you confessed and repented of your sin, and accepted by faith the blood sacrifice for sin, and then learned wisdom about guarding yourselves from falling into sin again, I forgave you, cleansed you, and restored your relationship to Me. You are no longer in danger.”

“So we, right now I mean, we will be, uh...?”

Logos laughed, a laugh full of love and joy, inviting Adam and Eve into His joy, dispelling their anxious fears and warming their troubled hearts. “Yes, yes! I am here, aren’t I? Do you think I would be enjoying our fellowship here if you were still under sin’s condemnation?

"If you had not received by faith the blood sacrifice unto yourselves, I could not bear to be in your presence. But I provided a way for you to be clean, because I love to be with you! Now, about that special gift I have for you. May I tell you how you are different from the animals?"

Adam and Eve recalled Logos' promise the evening before and nodded.

"As a **Master Craftsman** I developed a few efficient and beautiful basic designs and used them over and over with many variations to create the animals. I put together the best of those same designs to create you. Thus, you look similar to some of the animals. But their highest goal is to reproduce. You have higher goals. You are of Me. Tell Me, what good have you done that animals cannot do?"

"Well, we cultivated the Garden of Eden..."

"The animals assisted you."

"But they helped us in everything we did, back then."

"You created your own garden, after your own design! You transplanted many things for your own benefit and convenience. It is beautiful! I am pleased and impressed, for I see in your garden My image, My creativity in you."

Adam and Eve glanced around their new garden, still unfinished and in need of lots of work. They appreciated Logos' praise, but did not yet really see the significance.

"Next consider your clothes. The animals have no need of clothes, but you will need them from now until you are fully redeemed. Modest clothing is a symbol representing the covering of righteousness you lost. You cannot come into My presence unless your nakedness is covered. Get your sheepskin. I'll show you how to prepare it."

With Logos' help, they learned how to clean and tan the sheepskin, and how to cut and sew it into clothes, rugs, or blankets. "Do you see My creativity coming out? The animals can't do that. Now I have another example of how different you are from the animals. What do they eat?"

"Well, pretty much the same as what we eat."

Logos grinned at them. "Yes, they do. That will change. My creativity in you will become evident in that and every aspect of your lives. What are you doing here?"

Adam looked where Logos was pointing. "I had to clear off several kinds of grasses before I could plant our garden. I noticed this grass had already gone to seed, so I harvested the seeds. I tried eating them, but they were awfully chewy and not very tasty. I was planning to do some experiments to see if the seeds were useful for anything at all."

"You see? My creativity in you is finding expression! You will discover many uses for these grasses and seeds. In your experiments, on these and many other things, you will do something that the animals can never do. You will prepare foods in special ways just for your own enjoyment.

"Those seeds are wheat. Notice that the top ones are dried out by the sun, but the bottom ones have begun to sprout from the dew. Sprouted wheat seeds are the most nutritious, and easier to chew. I'll help you prepare it.

"But first, dig here and you will find some moist clay." His excitement was catching, like a kid with a new toy. Logos showed them how to knead the clay and form it into useful and decorative pots, bowls, cups, and plates, which they set out in the sun to dry.

Over the next few days, Logos helped them build an earthen oven. He showed them how to start a fire by the friction of two hardwood sticks. They built a fire in the base of their oven and put in the clay dishes. While they were being fired, He showed them how to thresh the wheat and how to throw the kernels into the breeze to blow off the chaff. He helped them make a stone mortar and pestle to grind the wheat into flour. By then the oven was cold, so they got out their new dishes, now hardened by the oven. They were beautiful! Logos complimented Adam and Eve, and again voiced His delight at the ways His creativity was being expressed in them. "You're higher than the animals! They have no capacity for art or beauty. You will find joy and satisfaction as you develop your creative talents."

They went exploring and found some salt, some honeycomb, and some ripe olives. Logos showed them how to crush the salt into tiny granules, how to take a single chunk of honeycomb quickly at night so they wouldn't be stung, how to crush it to extract the honey, and how to crush the olives and extract the oil. They cleaned off a flat rock and used it to mix the oil, honey, some water, and a little salt with the wheat flour. They formed it into flat cakes, then lit a small fire and baked them in the oven. While they were baking, they made candles with the bees' wax, using a dry stalk of flax for the wick. It was a busy, productive week, working with Logos.

Finally at Logos' direction they harvested several big bunches of grapes. Their wonderment grew. They had never picked more than a few at a time. Their paradise had such an abundance of fruits that they'd never taken more than they needed for the moment. He showed them how to squeeze the grapes into a bowl, using a woven grass mat as a strainer. "Don't taste it yet. We are preparing this for the Sabbath. The juice of squeezed grapes is called wine. Set it aside, with the grass mat over it to keep off the insects."

The week had gone by rapidly. They had learned so many new things, and so many new possibilities for future experiments. As the Sabbath approached, they felt they had earned their day of rest! Then the bleat of a lamb from their corral awakened them to their need for the weekly sacrifice. They grew solemn and looked at Logos. They had been so engrossed at learning from Him they didn't remember sinning or having to repent even once. "Logos, do we need the lamb sacrifice this week? You've been with us all week and we never sinned against You."

“The sacrifice is not just for sins, it is for sin. You always must offer it, to halt the death that is already within you. But I will help you this time,” Logos said cheerfully. “I am happy to be your high priest.” Adam and Eve were grateful that Logos took care of the killing and sprinkling of the blood as He had the first time.

When it was over, He bade them wait while He took the sacrifice to the Father. He stepped up over the top of the altar, just as if there were stairs in the air. As He stood there, lifting up His arms to the heavens, His appearance brightened like the sun, and He became as a fire burning up the sacrifice. The fragrant aroma of roast lamb filled the air and there was a bright cloud ascending from the flames. In a bit, Logos again materialized from the cloud, His face wreathed in smiles. He called victoriously. “It is finished! Your sacrifice is acceptable to Father. You are cleansed!” He came down beside them. “Go wash. Then we will have sweet **communion**.” Sol was setting, to begin the Sabbath.

When they returned, He had set their clay dishes out on a flat rock, with the bread and wine in them. They all reclined around the rock, while Logos lit the candles they had made from the bees’ wax. He then blessed them and the food. “Blessed are You, YHWH our Father. Holy is Your name forever and ever! And blessed are these our children. May Your Kingdom come and Your will be done through them, as it is in Me. Open their eyes to see and understand, and open their hearts to wisdom. Bless now this Sabbath Rest, and this bread and wine we share.”

The bread had risen nicely, due to the natural leavening effect of the sprouted wheat. Logos broke it, and served Adam and Eve bread and wine, all the while instructing them. “You are different from the animals. You are special unto Me, for you are made in My image. Animals cannot make bread and wine. Every time you eat of it, you shall remember. You are not animals; you are of Me. Remember Me. Remember our communion together. I will not always be here. Your sin has crushed Me more than you can know, for it all falls upon Me, crushing Me until I am dead.

“So especially when I’m not here, Remember Me in the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine. To make the bread, we crushed the wheat to make flour; we crushed the salt; we crushed the honeycomb to get honey; and we crushed the olives to get oil. Then we crushed it all into one loaf and put it into the fire. To get the wine we crushed the grapes. But from all that crushing and fire, something good has come, has it not?” Adam and Eve nodded. The bread and wine was by far the best meal they had ever had. “Even so, through the crushing of My own body and soul comes something good – your redemption back to Me.”

“You won’t always be here?” Eve began, but Adam was one step ahead of her. “Our sin crushes You and drives You away, doesn’t it? You know we will sin again, and drive You further away. We’re sorry! Isn’t there some way we can just... never sin again so You can stay with us always?”

Logos’ face was wreathed in smiles. “I am delighted to see that is your desire, for it is Mine as well. I assure you that as often as you ask Me, I will give you wisdom to help you overcome sin. If we work together on it every day, and if you are careful to hear Me and obey Me, you don’t have to ever sin again and we can always have sweet fellowship!”

Then His smile faded and He grew serious. “In one moment your eyes and hearts were opened to a vast realm of evil and **iniquity**. It will take years to deal with each aspect of this realm. You can gain maturity and learn the wisdom to overcome sin in one area of your life, but you may have to start all over and learn it again in another area. That will take time. I wish there was some shortcut, but every area of your life must be totally cleansed before I will have My perfect Bride. Then there is the son you carry, and the other children who will come after him. They will inherit your knowledge of good and evil, and they also must struggle to mature in wisdom to overcome it. Some may love wisdom – they will heed it quickly to avoid evil. Others may choose wrongly and suffer sin’s consequences before they can receive wisdom. I gave you all freedom of choice knowing that you could choose wrongly, but My Plan of the Ages is broad enough to accommodate any wrong choices and still bring you back to Myself. As your Creator I willingly risked My own life to give you free will. That was My freewill choice. Thus every sin ultimately falls upon Me, crushing Me until I am dead. Yet in My crushing, in My death, comes your redemption.”

This was the second time Logos had said those words. Again, it went over their heads. Adam and Eve looked down at the remaining bread and wine. *They symbolized the death of Logos?* They still didn’t understand death, even after seeing the lamb on the altar. They certainly could not comprehend Logos dying for their redemption.

Logos answered their unspoken question. “When we crushed the wheat and the grapes and baked the bread you had a new kind of food, different from the animals. You ate it, and drank the wine, and they gave you life. These are symbols – the crushing and the baking symbolize death, while the resulting bread and wine symbolize life. I am crushed by your sin, yet when you eat My words and drink My wisdom, they give you life. This is a ‘faith’ thing. When you take Me into yourself, you take My Life into you while I take your death into Me, so we can have sweet fellowship. Remember this every time you have the bread and wine.

“This is why I gave you the Sabbath: to give you time away from your daily labors to remember Me, take Me into yourself by faith, and recall the perfection from which you came, back when everything in the universe was still ‘very good’ and you perfectly reflected My righteousness.”

“Yes, Logos. We will do all that You say. Thank You for teaching us. Now that our eyes have been opened to the knowledge of good and evil, we promise to learn to hate the evil and strive to do only the good.”

“Be careful!” Logos warned, suddenly looking stern. “Even if you only do the good by your knowledge of good and evil, that is still sin! It is iniquity, even rebellion, for it is your own self-centered nature on the throne of your life making the choices. I did not create you this way, to live by your knowledge of good and evil. I created you to live by knowing Me, by obedience to My Word, and by being filled with My Life and led by My Spirit within you. Seek My face and learn My wisdom in all things, rather than trying to live by your own choices of good over evil. Living by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is bad, even if you could always choose the good!”

“Mmmm.” Adam’s quick mind was seeing the vast implications. “I guess we do have a lot to learn before we get our covering of righteousness back. I remember now, when I first took the fruit of that tree from Eve, I reasoned out for myself what I should do to help her. I should have asked for Your wisdom. So that was the first sin, our self-centered reasoning? Not just eating the fruit, but...”

“Actually,” Logos interrupted, “The first sin was the pride and rebellion of Lucifer, who inspired the serpent to tempt Eve. Your first sin was choosing to follow him in his rebellion. I gave you the capability of reasoning and the freedom of choice. That in itself is never a sin. Stop and think. If I had never told you not to eat of that tree, would your choice to eat of it be sin? Of course not. Your iniquity was to join Lucifer’s rebellion by ignoring My command and choosing your own path, as if you were your own god.

“Eve’s first sin was different. She didn’t know she was being deceived by the serpent. She didn’t know that the serpent was lying. She had no concept of falsehood. Her reasoning, evaluating the words of the serpent, was not sin. It was just ignorance, childish foolishness. But being young, ignorant, and foolish is not sin in itself. Her first sin was her choice to disobey My command and eat the fruit. Though a transgression of My Law, that is not iniquity.

“But your first sin, Adam, like Lucifer’s original sin, was rebellion and pride, which is the essence of iniquity. You were not deceived by the serpent. You knew he was lying. You knew what Eve had done was wrong. Yet in your pride you deliberately chose to help her your way, joining in her transgression, rather than asking Me for the right way. My way of redemption is straight, true, righteous altogether, and perfectly in harmony with My Law. To think that you could redeem Eve by breaking My Law is perverse, for you made My ways crooked and mixed truth with the lie.” Logos smiled at them to take the sting off His stern reproof. “I do not say this to condemn you, for you are both already forgiven and cleansed, but only to teach you wisdom.”

“Thank You, Logos!” Adam’s ears were burning but he responded to Logos’ smile. “I think we both were young, ignorant, and foolish.” He reached over to take Eve’s hand. “Thank you for teaching us wisdom. We do love wisdom. We will never again fall to Lucifer’s lies, I promise You!”

“Once again, I urge caution.” Logos grew stern again. “As soon as you think you’re strong enough, wise enough, or mature enough to withstand his lies and temptations, you will be deceived and fall in a way you never expected. He is no longer Lucifer, the light bearer. He is now **Satan**, the adversary. He is very strong and cunning. I will show you how to defeat him. You must learn meekness.”

“Please, teach us!” Adam and Eve said together.

“That is meekness. It is being teachable and wanting to learn from Me. It is the opposite of the pride and arrogance which feels self-sufficient, as if you were able to overcome Satan in yourself. Pride is deceptive, believing the lie that you shall be as God. Satan is many times stronger and wiser than you, yet when he thought he was great enough to become as God, he deceived himself. How can a created one ever be as great as the Creator? Yet he believed that lie, and thus became the father of lies. His lies are focused on self. He claims that you can be something all by yourself apart from Me. He wants you to forget that everything only exists by the Word of My Power. When you see that, you acknowledge Me in whatever you do or think. Pride can’t even see it, much less acknowledge My authority as God. Arrogance is acting as if you were the god of your realm. The self-assurance of pride and arrogance is false strength, an empty shell, for without Me you can do nothing.

“Meekness has a true strength, for in Me, through Me, by Me, in My wisdom and by My nature and character in you, you can do all things, even defeat Satan and overcome his lies. That is why meekness starts with being teachable. In your humble attitude of learning from Me, you gain My wisdom, My strength to overcome anything. So you see, the lie is very close to the truth. The lie says you can be as God, divine, all-knowing, all-powerful, in and of yourself. The truth is that in Me you are as God, all-knowing, all-powerful, but only because you dwell in Me and the divine Spirit dwells within you. That is how I created you to live, in meekness. No greater strength exists in the universe.”

Thus the Sabbath was spent in sweet fellowship and feasting together, as was every Sabbath for many years. Adam and Eve really did love Logos and His wisdom, and as far as we know, they never again allowed themselves to be deceived by Satan into gross rebellion or disobedience.

Lucifer (now called Satan) did his best. He succeeded in perverting most of the animals. He taught them to kill and turned them against Adam and Eve and their gardens, as Logos had warned. And he wrought great destruction in the heavenlies, as we shall see. But ultimately, he failed in his temptations of Adam and Eve, as they did truly learn to look to Logos in all things. They lived with His wisdom and guidance, under His protection. All creation could see the strength of meekness in them. However, as we shall also see, Satan did seem to achieve some notable successes in many of their children. From the very first one, his pride and self-centeredness found fertile ground.

Nyx was extinguished and even the largest piece could barely be seen from the earth. The electric arc went out. The static dissipated. The earth was not as pleasant as before. The animals were no longer so friendly, the plants were not so hardy (except for weeds), and many bugs and slugs had declared war against Adam. But the earth was still beautiful, with forests and meadows, gentle hills and valleys, crystal clear streams and lakes, and no rugged mountains, deep oceans, deserts, or wastelands. The high vapor barrier still protected the earth from radiation and kept it comfortably warm all over the globe. Earth's spin hadn't changed, nor its 32 hour day. But its new orbit was faster, closer to Sol, and just a tad elliptical. (It averaged 112 million miles away, with a 301 day year.) Afternoons became a bit hotter than before, but with no night sun the cooler nights compensated. That increased the evening mist to water the gardens, and brought pleasant afternoon breezes, to the delight of Adam and Eve.

One thing saddened them with Nyx gone – the dark nights. This was the era before there was a moon. The pleasant silvery glow of Nyx which used to light their way at night, was but a fond memory. But even there, they received something in return: the joy of more-brilliant stars in the night sky! They needed only six hours of sleep, which left ten hours of darkness to enjoy the stars. Still, Adam's brilliant mind soon invented oil lamps and torches so they could also work and play at night. In fact, God's creativity in the humans blossomed as they made all kinds of new tools, furniture, clothing, shelters, and other things to make life easier. So, life went on.

As Logos had told them, their firstborn was a son. They named him **Cain**, born in year 1 AF. At first they thought he might be the Redeemer Logos had promised, the one who would crush the serpent's head, but that thought quickly passed. Cain was headstrong and stubborn even as a baby. They could clearly see that he had inherited their own fallen nature. Now they understood what Logos had warned Eve about: the pain and toil of bearing and raising a helpless, squalling, demanding self-centered infant!

Though prevented from directly harming the humans, Satan was not idle. Besides fostering the war in the animal realm, he had managed to explode Nyx from its core into two major pieces. Adam named them Uranus and Titan.

Uranus, the smaller of the two, was blown away from Sol into deep space. It would not return for 1227 years. A lot of molten debris was also blown out of Nyx. It tended to gravitate together to form spheres. Some of these circled Uranus, including a large moon named **Aster**. Others went in other directions, such as the planet **Astra** and its moons **Pluto** and **Charis**. These outer planets all froze. The nova also released a lot of steam. It coalesced, cooled, and froze into many comets and ice moons of all sizes. A big blue ice moon, **Glacis**, slowly circled Uranus in a far distant orbit.

Titan, the larger piece of Nyx (twice the size of our present Jupiter), was blown toward Sol, also with a lot of space debris and many moons. Smaller chunks went flying off in other directions, including **Mars**, **Hygeia**, and a lovely trinary we now know as **Venus/Mercury/Phaeton**. These inner planets, orbiting close to Sol and interacting with each other, remained hot, and still are hot today. *[Refer to the orbital charts at the end of this volume.]*

In the third year after the Fall, **Abel** was born. He was very different from Cain. More easy-going and compliant, he rarely cried. As he grew, he took delight in finding ways he could help his parents, while his older brother Cain did everything but what his parent's wanted. Adam and Eve saw first-hand what Logos had meant by saying, "Some may love wisdom. They will heed it quickly to avoid evil. Others may choose wrongly and suffer sin's consequences before they can receive wisdom." It seemed that Cain had to try out for himself every wrong way, and suffer for it, before accepting the right way of doing anything. But Cain was strong! He grew quickly. By the time he was fifteen he was stronger than Adam. He planted his own garden next to Adam's, and soon he was outproducing his father. Cain took great pride in that. He was fiercely competitive. He simply had to win at everything he did.

Abel was not as strong as Cain. He grew tall and slender, with long fingers that loved to play the flute and a sensitive heart that reached out to the animals. He was a shepherd of the growing herds of sheep and goats. He learned to milk the goats to provide milk and cheese for the family. He adored his older brother. He loved to play games with him, and never seemed to mind that Cain always won.

In the seventh and twelfth years after the Fall, Eve bore two sisters, **Diana** and **Darla**. As they grew it soon became evident that Diana was strong-willed and contrary like Cain, while the youngest, **Darla**, was more like Abel. She was easy-going and submissive, and just more fun to be around. Abel loved both of his little sisters and helped to care for them. He was their protector from Cain's teasing.

Titan was very heavy and unwieldy. It quickly settled into a 120 year orbit which, though elliptical, remained well beyond Earth's orbit. Satan struggled to get its orbit more elliptical (because that is how you force collisions between planets) but he didn't totally understand about celestial mechanics and orbital resonance, and he refused to go to Logos for more instruction, so he finally had to give up on it. The Venus trinary was too far out and too far from the plane of the ecliptic (30 degrees) to be of any use.

However, Mars was light and easy to manipulate, and had been blown near the plane of the ecliptic at very high speed toward Sol. It was made to order! Satan merely used the immense gravitational field of Sol to slow it and aim it in the direction he wanted. Thus, 20 years after the Fall, Satan and his host succeeded in putting Mars in a 903 day orbit which would pass close to Earth every three years.

Satan was delighted. He paused in his work for a wild victory celebration. He now had the means to terrorize and torment the humans for many years before he destroyed them. He relished the thought.

Michael went to Logos. “Hasn’t Satan exceeded Your Law? He’s using broken pieces of Nyx to threaten Earth! How can I protect your Bride?” He bowed respectfully, though inwardly he was seething and indignant.

“Fret not, dear Michael. Satan will not come to Me for wisdom, so he has to learn the hard way. But as I told him, he is not strong enough to force Mars and Earth to collide. He thinks it will just take one more push when you aren’t looking, but in reality he will only lock the orbits of Earth and Mars into a resonance that will prove stable for many years. Satan does not yet understand the laws I wove into the universe to keep the planets in harmony. Mars will cross the orbit of Earth after Earth passes, such that their gravitational attraction will tighten their orbits. Then on its way outbound [away from Sol] Mars will again cross Earth’s orbit, this time before Earth gets there, again acting to tighten their orbits. With that, the two planets will be linked together. No collision will be possible.”

So Michael went back to guarding Adam and Eve and their growing family, while Satan planned his strategy. Now, it takes at least one orbit for a planet to get locked into an orbital resonance with another planet, but Satan didn’t know that. He actually could have forced Mars into collision with Earth on the first pass. But he thought he had total control, and he wanted to torment the humans for many years before destroying them. So he aimed for the first pass of Mars to just come within 40,000 miles.

Adam and Eve delighted in their children. They tried to love them equally, though Cain and Diana made it hard. Teenagers then, frankly, were still teenagers. Logos encouraged them to discipline with love. He too enjoyed His children, all of them. He came joyfully to fellowship with them after every Sabbath sacrifice.

However, one Sabbath evening, as their fellowship was drawing to a close, Logos got serious. The four children were then in their teens or early twenties. Logos gathered them all around Him. “When you were perfect before Me, My Law perfectly covered you and no harm could come to you or your world. With the first sin, you lost some of that protection, and Lucifer My adversary, now called Satan, gained an occasion against you. He now has legal access to entice you – to tempt you. If you choose his ways, he could harm or destroy you. It was he who caused Nyx to break into pieces. You have had no fear of these pieces yet, as they were so far away. Satan wants to use them to threaten you and make you afraid. Don’t do it. Never fear him, or pray to him, or fret about what he’s doing. Look to Me. Trust Me. Obey Me. I will keep you from harm. You will see the damage Satan causes, but he cannot harm you as long as you obey Me in this.” He smiled encouragingly.

“Remember, you now have two natures within. Turn away from that self-centered sin nature; it is Satan’s nature. If you give in to it, you are joining him in his rebellion.” Out of the corner of her eye, Eve saw guilty looks pass between Cain and Diana. But Logos never paused, and did not single them out, even with His eyes. “Instead, always look to Me. Feed My nature within you. Learn of Me, love and trust Me, and give Satan no occasion to harm you.”

A look of great sadness came over Logos, but again He didn’t accuse anyone. “Self-centered rebellion among you has allowed Satan to succeed in threatening the Earth with a big piece of Nyx. It is called Mars. Satan wants you to fear him as the god of war, strife, rebellion, and pride – the god of forces – by fearing His god Mars. In reality, there are no gods but Me. His god is not a god at all, only a reflection of his own perverted nature. I repeat, do not fear him, and do not fear Mars when it comes. You have seen Titan and Mars only as distant stars, but Satan has used the gravity of Sol as a slingshot to pull Mars into an orbit that threatens Earth. It will come very close, and cause considerable damage. But know that I will protect you, My beloved. Do not fear. Look to Me. I will see you through.” Then He was gone.

Night had already fallen. They all looked up to search the sky. There was Mars, just rising above the trees. It had gotten considerably larger and brighter already, and was now the brightest object in the sky. No longer just a distant star, it had become a reddish-yellow comet. They could see its long, sparkling tail. It was lovely! Why would they ever fear it? Why had Logos warned them?

The week went by, with Mars coming closer each night. They began to understand. Mars continued to grow. By the fourth night it was nearly the size of our half-moon, and they could see its many moons. Clouds of dust and space debris in its tail boiled off, blown away by Sol. The static electricity streaming out from its surface looked like a thousand menacing snakes, waving like Medusa hair. On the fifth night, Mars was startlingly large when it rose. They cried out to Logos for protection. He did not come.

By the sixth night, collision seemed to be certain! They were terror-stricken. They had forgotten Logos’ repeated command to not fear Mars. All they could think of was that growing fiery rock in the sky. It was no longer a smooth half-moon. It was jagged and scarred, full of mysterious images to terrify the imaginative mind. Its moons were sharp chunks of rock spinning alarmingly close. It looked like an evil flaming ogre, juggling great boulders to throw at them. The ground began to convulse. The frightened family stared open-mouthed, gasping in panic.

Then Mars slowly began to change phases. It had been nearly half lit by Sol, but as it approached, the illuminated portion began to thin. One of its moons entered its own shadow. Seeing that, Adam suddenly understood. Mars was crossing Earth’s orbit toward the sunward side. It set early that night, clinching it in Adam’s mind.

Recalling Logos' command, Adam told his family, "Eve. Children. We're doing exactly what Logos told us not to do. Don't fear Mars! He warned us! Only look to Logos and trust Him. Even when He doesn't answer our call, He hears us and protects us. Let's repent of fearing Mars and direct our attention back to Logos. He will come again after the Sabbath sacrifice; you'll see. Then all will be well again!"

Mars had been rising from the eastern horizon shortly after dark, but the next morning it rose four hours early. It had been moving slowly, deliberately, but now it seemed to rush at them, climbing into the sky toward the sun and changing rapidly from a half-Mars to a quarter, and finally to a thin, flaming crescent edging a dark disk. The static 'snakes' became visible even in the daylight, and the hair on the backs of their necks began to stand up as well.

Adam insisted that the worst was over. Mars had passed Earth without colliding and was now on the sunward side of Earth. "That's why its face is dark now," he insisted.

"Then why is it still getting bigger?" Cain wailed.

"We simply have to trust Logos!" Adam cried. "He said He'd see us through!" His family continued to huddle in stark terror. They had gotten little sleep all week; they got none that night. The next morning, Mars rose with the dawn. Its menacing face was slowly gobbling up the sun. Its gorgon hair blazed around it. Mars now filled a third of the sky, putting Earth into its shadow. Earth was passing through its tail, further darkening New Eden. A hail of meteors flashed through the blackened sky and the air turned cold. The earth responded with shivers and groans. Satan and his demons insistently urged their minds to fear Mars, bow to it, worship it, and pray to it.

Now the static electricity that Adam recognized from the electric arc from Nyx began to spark between them. "Hold each other tightly, and don't let go," he warned. "The static will not harm you as long as you don't try to move around and touch other things." Earthquakes began in earnest, so Adam had them move further from the house and lie on the ground. His taking charge was a comfort. Everyone quieted down enough for Eve to begin a prayer.

"Logos! Help us! We look to You! We have chosen to trust You! You promised to protect us. Please come to us. You promised to be with us. Remember Your promise!"

Logos did not come. It almost seemed like Eve's prayer was blown away in a gust of wind. Then an ear-shattering blast shook the earth. Even Eve's long hair flew straight out from her scalp. Everyone turned in the direction of the blast, toward that hill where the original Eden had been vaporized by the electric arc from Nyx. There it was again! A flaming sword from the magneto-head of Mars, arcing down to the same hill in a blinding blaze. It was almost noon. Mars was still getting closer! The earth was shaking violently. The ground cracked in furrows as with a plow, and undulated up and down like waves in a storm.

Adam and Eve remembered that first arc – how it had consumed the sacrifice. Suddenly they understood. The sacrifice covered their sin, and took their punishment. Logos had told them. He had explained about faith being granted to them through their obedience in the sacrifice. "This is a 'faith' thing," He had said about the bread and wine. They'd never really understood about faith before. Well, they sure needed it now. It was time they obeyed.

"Children, it's the lamb sacrifice! The lamb I kill each Sabbath – it has taken our punishment, so we don't have to die for our own sins. We will only die if we are not obedient to Logos! He didn't ask us to do some big, difficult thing. All He told us to do was not fear Mars, and instead put our trust in Him. We've got to obey, or we may all be slain! Now, let's do it! Put aside your fear. Think only about Logos and His promise to us. Pray with me now." But instead of lifting his eyes to the heavens as he usually did when he prayed, Adam deliberately closed his eyes and bowed his head so he could not see the nearness of Mars. He relaxed back on the ground next to his wife. His family bowed their heads too, following his example.

"Logos, forgive us for being so frightened. We choose to obey You now. We trust You. We love you. Even if You allow us to be slain like the lamb, we will die trusting You."

With that prayer, they conquered the spirit of fear. Satan left in disgust. He had hoped to use that fear to destroy them. He had put on his very best display of power. He had carefully calculated the exact time and location of the Mars flyby for the maximum visual impact. But once again, Adam had chosen to look to Logos, and Satan was required to accept his freewill choice in accord with God's Law. By that evening (beginning the Sabbath), Mars was receding toward Sol. The earth had quieted. Adam offered the Sabbath sacrifice with new fervor. Logos responded with joy at their victory, and all was well again.

Michael and his host were awed that they had not been needed in this battle. Satan had been defeated by a simple faith-choice of Adam. Michael began to understand what Logos had meant when He had promised that He would crush Satan's rebellion under Adam's feet.

Logos responded to his thoughts: "Yes, My beloved Michael, it is not force that wins this kind of battle. This battle is won by faith, truth, and love. Force, lies, and fear are Satan's tools. My tools are better."

"Yes, Logos." Michael bowed before Him. "But, what could I have done to help?"

"Always whisper Truth to My Bride. She shall overcome when she hears and receives the Truth. She is a child, weak, immature. She gets distracted by Satan's lies. She forgets easily. Satan's demons were down there shouting lies, and My Bride nearly believed them. She would have failed had she not remembered My Word, My promises. We must remind her. She shall not fail."

The date of that first catastrophic pass of Mars (on my modified Roman calendar) was September 24, 5019 BC, which was year 21 AF (after the Fall).

On April 21 Mars returned to cross Earth's orbit again, this time from the sunward side outbound. Everything that had happened in September, happened again, except in reverse order. But this time, the humans knew what to expect. They stayed focused on Logos and His promises. Besides, the closest approach in April was at midnight on the far side of Earth, instead of at noon overhead, and Mars didn't get quite as close, either, so it wasn't as scary.

Now Logos summoned his three archangels into His presence. The last thing Satan wanted to do was to obey Logos. Nevertheless, when the Creator of the universe calls, you come. They stood before Him. He smiled at them all. "First, Lucifer," Logos directed His gaze, and His smile, at Satan, surprisingly addressing him by his original name. "I thank you once again for choosing to spare the humans. They were in grave danger had you brought Mars any closer. Even as My adversary, some of My compassion and kindness remains in you, and I am grateful. Someday you will see the beauty and strength in that."

Satan ground his teeth in anger. Was he getting soft? Kindness? Compassion? Never again! He was through messing around. From now on his motto will be only, "Kill, steal, and destroy!" Nothing less. He glanced at Logos' smile and once again deceived himself, believing that Logos could not read his bitter thoughts.

Logos continued, "Thanks to Lucifer's efforts, Mars is now locked into orbital resonance with Earth, under the control of Titan's huge gravity field. Most of the time, this resonant orbit can come no closer than 500,000 miles from Earth where Mars will do no damage. But when Titan is opposite or adjacent to the long axis of the elliptical orbit of Mars, that is, in Leo or Aquarius, it will pull the ellipse tighter and force Mars closer to earth. This will happen in 38 years, and again every 60 years due to Titan's 120 year orbit. Though My adversary," He nodded to Satan, "is not strong enough to force it into collision, every 60 years he will do his best with it to torment and terrify the humans." The faces of Michael and Gavriel expressed their dismay, but neither presumed to interrupt Logos.

"Now you can see the benefit of having My beloved Lucifer working so hard as our adversary." He paused for effect, grinning as three pairs of eyes widened like saucers. "As I said, My Father's Plan of the Ages is flexible enough to accommodate every possible freewill choice, good or evil. I would never have chosen to torment My precious Bride, even after her sin. I would only woo her back with My unconditional love. But when she forgets Me, when she becomes complacent or self-focused as she certainly will each 60 years or so, our adversary here has accepted the important task of reminding her to look back to Me, and even chastising her for looking away. I am grateful."

"I will not!" Satan blurted out. "I will teach them to look to me, to fear and obey me, by making them fear the universe over which I have control." He stuck up his nose at Logos. "If it causes them to look to You, I will merely try something else. I have many options, other temptations, other pieces of Nyx I can use to destroy them. You are right that I love to terrify them, but You are utterly wrong that it will turn out for good!" He openly sneered. "Your wimpy love has made You soft! You shall see what real strength is!" He spun and fled the throne room.

Though saddened, Logos never stopped smiling. "I also thank you, beloved Gavriel and Michael, for your freewill choices to stand by Me. Satan is right about one thing: he is indeed very strong, and very dangerous. We must keep on our guard. But in everything else he is self-deceived. My unconditional love is the strongest power in the universe. No force, no fear, anger, hate, or bitterness, shall overcome it. Though it may take many years, Satan will someday come before Me to bow and acknowledge that truth, for so Father has promised." The archangels bowed in worship. Logos smiled at them and added, "Michael, Satan has made your job of protecting the Bride much more difficult, so I relieve you of the task of testing or disciplining her." He laughed. "Satan has volunteered to do that for you."

The next Sabbath, Logos came to Adam and his family and explained to them about the 60 year cycle of Mars in its new resonant orbit. As a serious student of the stars, Adam understood. And once again Logos urged them to only look to Him and never fear or worship any created thing.

The years went by. Adam and Eve didn't really know what to do about Cain and his fiery temper. They tried to love him and encourage him, but he was always accusing them of loving Abel best. They asked Logos about it. He told them the things Cain needed to learn and suggested ways of training him.

"He is trying to earn your love. He needs to learn that a father's love is unconditional, and even your training and discipline are love. True love must hate all that will harm him. His temper, and his driving need to best everyone, is harming him. When you discipline his bad attitudes he must know you do it because you love him and want his happiness. I gave you Diana and Darla to be wives for Cain and Abel. Cain must learn to be gentle and understanding, or his wife will come to fear him, or even despise him."

So Adam and Eve sat Cain down and explained to him all that Logos had taught them. Surprisingly, he heard and understood, especially that last part about his wife fearing him. "I'm sorry, Mom and Dad. Logos is right. I thought you hated me, because you always seemed to be favoring Abel and picking on me. I was trying to earn your love by being the best at everything. But now I understand that you really do want my happiness. I will try to control my temper and be more gentle with my brother and sisters. Thank you for helping me."

They saw an immediate change in Cain. It was amazing. He didn't exactly become compliant, but he at least started to be responsible and respectful, as well as more kind and considerate of his sisters. He had become a handsome and strong young man, and it soon became evident that he had already chosen his wife and was trying to impress her.

To Adam and Eve's shock, Cain had chosen Darla, the youngest sister. They had just assumed that Darla, being more like Abel, would be for him, and that strong-willed, feisty Diana was the perfect match for Cain.

More surprisingly, Darla seemed delighted with Cain's advances, and by year 60 after the Fall, they came to their parents and asked to be married. Worried about Diana and Abel, Adam and Eve went to Logos. He told them, "I gave your children the freedom of choice. They must choose, and they must live with their choices. Diana will not be ready to become a wife until she learns to be submissive, supportive, and respectful. Abel will not be ready to be a husband until he learns to be bold, firm, and decisive. Cain and Darla have already learned these things. As long as they remain faithful to each other, I will bless their union."

So, Cain and Darla married, half a year before Mars was due to return in its 3 year orbit. (Adam figured this would be the closest pass yet, as Titan was in Aquarius, tightening the orbit of Mars.) They were exquisitely happy together. Adam and Eve saw their own happiness multiplied in their children, and they were grateful. Cain worked harder than ever, with his adoring wife ever by his side. They built a small hut among the trees on the far side of their garden. Cain ruled over submissive Darla, ordering her around, but he had learned to be gentle and kind, and she seemed to enjoy having his strong authority-covering over her. Eve was amazed at how well they worked together.

Watching their happiness and trying not to be envious, Abel seemed sad and lonely. He spent much of his time alone with his flocks, playing his flute, praying, singing, and meditating, sometimes spending a week at a time in the fields, returning only for their Sabbath fellowship. Diana, on the other hand, became bitter and angry. "Have you no more sons for me?" she complained to her parents. "Abel is a wimp. I need a real man, like Cain!"

They repeated what Logos had said about her learning to be more submissive, supportive, and respectful, but it didn't seem to get through. "Logos! Help us!" They cried.

That Sabbath after the sacrifice, Logos came to them. "Now that Cain and Darla have started their own family, Cain must learn the function of priest. It is right for you to sacrifice the lamb for your children, but they will not always live nearby. They must learn to sacrifice for their own family, so when they (or their children) leave your home, they will not drift away from Me."

"But Logos, what about Diana? And what about Abel? How can we help them?"

"Abel is drawing closer to Me, allowing Me to develop and mature him. But now that he spends so much time away from home, he also should learn to offer the sacrifice. He will not always be with you on the Sabbath. But Diana is drawing further from Me. She has become self-focused and consumed with her own desires. So she should also witness the Sabbath sacrifice. Pray for her, that her eyes will be opened to the consequences of self-centeredness. And love her. Unconditional love can sometimes break through where nothing else can help."

Adam and Eve had prohibited their children from watching their Sabbath sacrifice, because they thought it was too bloody, too horrible for them. Now they must teach them. They gathered them all together next Sabbath evening and had them watch – for the first time. Sensitive Abel wept openly, but offered to help his parents. Cain and Darla looked on in horror, clinging to each other. Diana spat out, "That is disgusting and ridiculous! I'm not going to watch!" and deliberately looked behind them. But Abel noticed that when the fire that was Logos came to burn the lamb, Diana turned back and watched, open-mouthed. She even smiled – a beautiful smile! – when Logos called, "It is acceptable to Father. You are all cleansed!"

After Logos had gone, Diana spoke up. "Dad, when you first killed the lamb and sprinkled its blood on the altar, I felt dirty. It was all so ugly and repulsive. I wanted to run and hide. So why now do I feel so... so clean?"

That gave Adam the perfect opportunity to explain to them all about the dirtiness of sin, and how the lamb had died in their place so they wouldn't have to die for their sin. Abel asked, "Dad, why didn't you show us this before?"

"When you were children, living under our roof, our sacrifice covered you, too. We repented for you. You didn't need to see or understand. But now that you are grown, Logos says it is time for you to learn. When you go and have your own home and family, the patriarch is the priest. He will do this for everyone under his covering. Cain and Darla, Logos said if you're not with us you must do this every Sabbath for your family, or you will drift away from Him. And He said Abel and Diana should learn about it too, for when they are not at our home on the Sabbath."

The family enjoyed wonderful fellowship that Sabbath. They found they were closer than they had been for years. All four children were asking lots of questions now, and were open and receptive to the answers. Adam told the story of their first sin, that first lamb sacrifice, and the destruction caused by Nyx. He warned them that in only twelve weeks Mars would be coming exceptionally close by his calculations, and they must be prepared. So the next Sabbath, they split up to try the sacrifice on their own. Abel prepared in advance, picking the very best lamb from his rather extensive flocks. Surprisingly, Diana went with Abel. So when he confessed his sin on the head of the lamb, he confessed her sin as well – in a kind and respectful way.

Normally critical and verbally abusive, she kept her mouth shut and seemed to admire his taking charge like a priest. Again she was awed, when Abel called out, "It is finished!" and the fire of Logos swept the altar clean. When Logos called back, "It is acceptable to Father. You are cleansed!" Diana actually gave her brother a big hug, tears running down her face. "You did it! You did it! I am so proud of you! Thank you for including me. I do feel clean. Cleaner than I have ever felt. Your lamb died in my place! It took my sin, I know! I have been so awful to you, always criticizing you and yelling at you, even despising you in my heart. Please forgive me. I don't want to ever be that way again. It feels so good to be clean... clean of all that. Can we please just... just start over and be friends?"

"Of course I forgive you, Diana. I am sorry I could never live up to your expectations. Forgive me for not being the big brother you needed. I will try to be strong for you."

So the two of them spent the whole Sabbath making amends, apologizing, tearing down walls, and getting to know each other anew. In one day they went from hostility to becoming the best of friends, and it was all centered around the Sabbath sacrifice and their openness to repent and accept its cleansing by faith.

Cain and Darla, however, experienced a very different Sabbath. When it was time for the sacrifice, Darla urged Cain to take some of his garden produce to Abel and trade it for a lamb. But Cain was having second thoughts. "Darla, Dad said we have to do this every week. I don't want to be dependent on my wimpy brother every week for a lamb. Can you just see me bowing and pleading with Abel for one of his stupid lambs? There has got to be a different way."

Darla shut her mouth. Cain had this scheming look in his eye. She knew better than to interrupt. "You see, here is how I figure it. Abel wasn't strong enough to be a farmer, so he became a shepherd. But my produce is worth more than his silly sheep. All he does is sit around and watch them. I have to work hard for my produce. But he values his sheep more than my produce. He would make me trade many hours of labor for one lousy lamb that he worked very little for. It's not fair! All I have to offer is my produce. I'm sure Logos knows that. It would be silly for me to trade my produce every week for a lamb. But I can bypass the middleman. If I offer my produce directly to Logos, I won't have to go begging from my dingy brother."

So that is what they did. After building their altar, Cain selected the best of his garden produce, as calculated to be the equivalent value of a lamb. As the Sabbath began, Cain piled it all on their altar, confessed their sin over a big red beet, sliced it up, and cried out to Logos, "It is finished!" Nothing happened. He tried again with an apple and then a juicy red tomato, but Logos never came. Cain was miffed. He was doubly miffed the next day when he talked to Adam and heard that Abel's offering had been accepted, and that Abel and Diana were back on speaking terms.

"But Dad, it's not fair! I don't have sheep to offer. All I have is my produce! I offered more than the value of a lamb. Much more! I just cut out the middleman, that's all. Ask Logos to come so I can explain it to Him."

"I don't think you need to explain anything to Logos. He is the Creator. I think you just need to obey Him. But I will call Him and see what He says. Logos! Please come and help Cain understand."

Instantly Logos was there, standing above them, His body clothed in swirling flames and face shining in glory. Startled by His suddenness and nearness, Cain fell on his face to the ground. All thoughts of arguing with Logos were replaced by fear and awe. But in spite of His stern appearance, Logos spoke gently, entreatingly. "Cain, Cain. Why are you angry and discouraged? If you do well, I will accept you. I appreciate your labors and your garden produce, but your offering was not done in obedience. It was your own self-focused reasoning. I will accept you and your offering if you simply obey Me. If you cannot obey, if you must do it your own way, beware, for sin is crouching at your door. It desires to dominate and enslave you, so that your every thought becomes self-centered. You must master it, and keep your focus on Me. If you do not, you will give My adversary occasion against you."

Logos was gone. But Cain stayed there on the ground for a long time. Adam let him be, recognizing that the Spirit of Logos was dealing with him. He prayed silently that the love of Logos would break through to his firstborn son, and that Cain would be able to humble himself enough to receive it. But even as he was praying, Abel and Diana walked up. They were holding hands, and Abel was trying to squelch a big grin. "Dad, Cain, guess what?"

Cain looked up from the ground, and quickly stumbled to his feet, embarrassed that he had been caught in a moment of weakness. But Abel didn't even seem to notice. "Diana and I have decided that we want to be married. Logos has cleansed us, and made us one in heart and soul. We feel He has made us for each other, and we would honor and obey Him if we married. Before the Sabbath sacrifice, we only criticized each other's weaknesses, but now, since Logos cleansed us, we can see that He made each of us to have contrasting strengths to cover and aid each other's weaknesses. We really need each other! How soon can we be married? We want to do it before Mars returns in eight weeks."

Diana, who had been gazing up at her brother while he spoke, looked back to Adam and nodded silently, her face beaming with joy. Adam was amazed. Always before, Diana had done all the talking. To see her, really for the first time, agreeing with Abel instead of arguing, and to see Abel being so decisive – Adam knew something big had changed in them. "Well, Logos said you both needed to mature before you would be ready to marry. Could that have happened so soon? Let's ask Him."

But before he could call out to Logos, Cain spat out, “So my wimpy little brother is a man now? I don’t need to put up with this nonsense.” And he turned on his heel and stomped off, making it very clear that he was offended.

Abel, always the sensitive one, was very concerned. “Now what did I do to bug Cain?” he asked.

“Nothing, Abel, nothing. His offering yesterday wasn’t accepted. He didn’t offer a lamb, only some of his garden vegetables. Logos just told him he had to obey before he could be accepted, and he is still a bit angry about it. Give him time to cool off, then maybe you and he could develop some kind of agreement to trade his garden produce for one of your lambs each week. Would that work?”

“Well, sure Dad. Of course. I should have gone to him and offered. I will before next Sabbath. Now, can we ask Logos about our marriage?” He slipped his arm around Diana’s waist and drew her close.

“Logos, we need your wisdom,” Adam called, and again Logos appeared, in glorious flames, joyfully responding to their previous questions. “Yes. I made them for each other. I will be honored in their marriage, at any time they choose. I gave them freedom of choice and I am honored that they have chosen to seek My best for them. And yes, they are now cleansed, mature, and ready for marriage.”

“Thank you, Logos!” Abel and Diana were kneeling and bowing before Him. Again Adam was surprised at Diana. He had never seen her kneel to anyone before.

After Logos left, Abel asked, “How about today? Or tomorrow, to give us time to fix special foods like we did for Cain and Darla. Logos did say at any time we choose.”

“Yes, He did. I’ll ask your mom. But this is something really special, and I think she would like more time than that to prepare. How ’bout the end of the week, just before next Sabbath? ... Eve?” He called toward the house. “Eve, guess what happened to Abel and Diana?”

So they married at the end of the week. They spent the next eight weeks by themselves, roaming the surrounding hills with their flocks, and returning to the homestead only for the Sabbath sacrifice and fellowship. Once again, Adam was amazed at their happiness together and grateful that Logos had provided so well for his children. Though the opposite from what he had expected, he saw Logos’ wisdom in allowing Darla to marry Cain, and Diana to marry Abel. Both families were stronger by the differences in their personalities.

But Cain was still offended. He would not receive a lamb from his brother Abel, not even when it was offered free of charge. He no longer joined the Sabbath fellowship, and didn’t attempt to do any more sacrifices on his own. Instead of ‘cooling off’, his bitterness seemed to grow, and no amount of pleading or apologizing by either Adam or Abel helped. He nursed his grudge against his brother.

Darla was a huge help during this time, both standing by Cain, and keeping in communication with the rest of the family. She was so perfect for him! She struggled to get him past the bitterness.

Cain still worked hard. In fact, he expanded his garden clear over to the hill that Adam and Eve had tumbled down when they had first entered the valley. He also moved his home, to the far side of the valley, under a cliff. It seemed like he was trying to get as far as possible from his parents. Adam tried to warn him that the cliff (which had formed in the first earthquake before Cain was born) might fall, but he wouldn’t listen. He had seen Mars pass by thirteen times before, and the cliff had held up just fine. Adam told him that this would be a closer pass because of Titan, but he couldn’t hear it. Darla assured Adam that at least they would not be in it during the flyby.

It was year 60 AF (our September 24, 4980 BC). The appointed time had come. Mars rose with the dawn and rushed at them. The earth quaked and the ground began to writhe and heave. Adam had prepared the best he could. The family gathered in the middle of the meadow where Logos had first told him they would be safe. Cain was much subdued. It was the first time he was able to be in the presence of Abel without yelling angrily at him. Cain and Darla were sitting together hugging, with Abel and Diana together hugging and caressing next to them. Adam sat on the other side, hugged his wife Eve tightly, and waited.

Adam warned them about the static electricity – as long as they continued to hug, stayed low to the ground, and didn’t touch anything else, they were fine. The display was spectacular. Mars was really close! Adam, calculating how to put all that energy to use, noticed Cain looking up in fear and awe. He hoped this would be a means Logos would use to get rid of his anger. But as the earth buckled and heaved, a whole side of the cliff gave way just as Adam had warned, crushing Cain’s new home.

Cain yelled out in rage. Darla again came to the rescue. “Oh, Cain, it’s just a house. Aren’t you glad we weren’t in it? We can build another. Be grateful we are safe!” She encouraged him, never criticizing him for not listening to Adam. Abel tried to help, too. “I’ll be happy to help you build another, Cain.” But Cain mumbled something about not needing help, and settled back down with his wife.

The earth continued to shake. They all had to lie down now, to keep from being knocked down. The gravitational attraction from Mars was strong, pulling the hill that was the original Garden of Eden higher. When the shaking lessened enough for them to sit up again, they saw that the entire new garden Cain had worked so hard on the last eight weeks had become just a series of hills and furrows, with great cracks in the earth. Now Cain was really angry. He shook his fist at the sky, shouting, “Logos, why did You do this to me? I thought You said You loved me! You are being cruel and hateful!”

At that point the electrical discharge from the magnetotail of Mars swept past like a giant sword of lightning, again igniting trees and bushes on the hill. But one flicker jumped off the hill, vaporizing what little remained of Cain's home and the new garden, and even scorching some of his original garden.

Cain leapt to his feet, yelling. "Logos, that's not fair! Why..." Then the earth gave a mighty heave, throwing him down. Arms flailing angrily, he landed hard on his head and left shoulder. Darla reached out to comfort him, but as she touched him a bolt of static jumped between them, and they both gave an involuntary shriek. Then Cain fell sobbing into Darla's arms, utterly defeated and broken. If you could have seen into the heavenlies, you would have seen Satan dancing a victory jig with his host.

From that day on, Cain was never the same. Something inside him had snapped. He and Darla moved back into their old hut, and tended their original garden, but the fire, the drive to do better than everyone else, was gone. Cain didn't even seem interested in fixing up their old hut – it was Darla who managed to repair the roof and clean out the mess from the animals that had used it. When anyone tried to talk with Cain, he just looked down. His wife Darla, with her great love, was the only one who could get through to him. Adam and Eve pled with Logos for help, but for a long time He didn't answer. And in the heavenlies, Lucifer (now Satan the adversary) celebrated with glee.

"As you see, Logos, I win! Your miserably weak Bride has chosen my ways. Every one has violated Your Law. Even Darla, Your special one, has now chosen to love and support Cain in his wickedness rather than obey You. You have no one left to obey You. Every member of your Bride is, and shall always be, mine! I think I shall call them my bride. I no longer need Your permission to torment them!"

"That's not true, Satan. I admit you've gained occasion against them, but only to tempt, not to harm them or even touch them. You assume you have reached the end of the story, when the book has barely been opened. Adam and Eve have returned many times to call on Me. Though they failed, yet now they are growing and maturing – learning to love Me and to hate wickedness. I will give them time to see where their choices will lead them. Darla is supporting Cain in My love, not in wickedness. And have you noticed My beloved Abel? He and his new wife have turned wholeheartedly toward Me. Though at one time they did follow you in your self-centered pride, Diana in her rebellion and Abel in his fearful withdrawal, yet now they are eager to obey Me, learn of Me, love Me. Though they once served you, yet now they are becoming My servants. Haven't you even noticed them coming each Sabbath to seek My face? You are losing them, Satan. What will you do about it?"

Having no answer, Satan fled from the presence of Logos. He gathered his 'angel' generals together to plot a way to destroy Abel and Diana.

He knew by now that it was impossible for him to touch them. Michael and his host were guarding them 100% of the time. Michael had proven several times over that he could defeat Satan in battle. So... he would play one against the other. He knew Diana was strong-willed, with a sharp tongue and quick temper. Though she had repented and determined not to let it control her again, he knew he could trip her up. He waited until they were tired from a long day in the fields. Then he nudged a lovely clay pot over just as Abel was walking by, so that it got bumped. It shattered all over the floor. Satan was right there urging Diana to yell at Abel, and he had already instructed his demons to whisper in Abel's ear, "You're worthless. She doesn't really love you. She'll never forgive you. She hates you! Just run and hide. Flee, before she kills you!"

Yes! In the suddenness of the crash, Diana responded with rage, exactly as Satan had planned. *She was so easy to manipulate.* And Abel had a look of stark terror on his face, ready to flee. *This was too easy!* But then Diana cried out, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I didn't mean to yell at you! I am not that kind of person anymore. Logos changed me. I love you, Abel! I'll never let a little thing like a broken pot get in the way of our love. Please forgive me for yelling at you!" And she threw herself into his arms in a passionate hug.

"Sure, uh, I'm sorry I broke the pot. I don't know how it..." but she was smothering him with kisses. Satan went off disgusted. That didn't work at all. In fact, it backfired. They were now closer than ever. *He was going to have to be more careful. Maybe he could get at them through Cain, who was already his servant.* Satan smiled at the thought, and went off to stir up the hatred and bitterness that Cain already held for his brother.

Abel and Diana came to celebrate the Sabbath with Adam and Eve. Cain and Darla, though also invited, had not come. After their evening sacrifice, Logos joined their fellowship, looking sad. He told them that Cain was being sorely tempted, and they needed to intercede for him and be very cautious around him. He had some choices he needed to make, and should he choose wrongly, he could become very dangerous, even deadly.

"But Logos, can't You go to him and help him? Teach him wisdom? Give him grace and strength to overcome the temptation? You are his Creator, his Master!"

"I also gave Cain a free will. I cannot violate it. He has chosen to no longer come to Me, to no longer seek for My wisdom. I cannot force it upon him. It is the adversary whose ways are force – lies, deceit, control, manipulation – the adversary is trying to manipulate him to do great evil. Be on your guard."

"Can we go to him and try to talk him out of..."

"I told you, control is Satan's way. Cain has a free will. He must choose. You can help him only if he is willing to receive, even seek, for your help."

Abel looked at Diana. "He is my brother. I will go to him. Somehow he has got to be able to hear me." He turned back to Logos. "Isn't that okay, if I go to him and love him, and just be a friend to him? I won't try to control him. He'll want my help I know, after he sees how much I love him."

Logos' head bowed, and a look of pain crossed His face. "You may go, if that is your choice. Your love for your brother, your trying to be a friend when he needs you most, is not wrong at all, and I am honored that you should display My self-giving love to him. But be on your guard!"

"I want to go with you, Abel. He is my brother too!" Diana blurted out.

The tears rolled down Logos' face, tears of agony. But He smiled at her and repeated, "You may go too, if that is your choice. But be on your guard!"

So Abel and Diana went to talk with Cain, while Logos wept great sobs, torn between their love and their naïveté and immaturity. Cain was not home. Darla didn't know why he had left, but pointed them in the direction that he had gone. Watching them follow, Satan cackled with glee as everything was working out according to his plan. Michael, sensing what was about to happen, pled with Logos to intervene. Logos responded, "What will you do? You can prevent Satan from touching Cain, and you can keep him from touching Abel, but you cannot keep Cain from touching Abel! I gave them a free will and I cannot violate it. Would you have Me use force to stop force?"

Abel and Diana traveled for hours, following Cain's tracks. They finally caught up with him where he had stopped to rest in a small but steep valley formed by the last pass of Mars. It was an ugly valley, with no water and little vegetation, mostly rocks and sand and cracks in the earth.

Abel wondered why Cain had stopped here, instead of one of the many beautiful resting spots they had passed along the way. Little did he know of the intense battle going on around them. Satan's forces had deliberately blocked Cain here, and were crowded around him nursing his anger, whispering words of bitterness, jealousy, and hate in his ear. Michael and his forces, also crowded around him, were preventing the demons from touching him according to the Law of God, but were not permitted by Logos to force them away from him. All they could do is whisper words of encouragement, trying to counter the lies Satan was telling him.

"Hello, Cain! My brother!" Abel tried to greet him cheerily, but his words echoed hollowly off the valley walls. Abel suddenly felt the oppressive crush of the demonic presence there, but not recognizing what it was, he continued walking toward Cain. Still holding his arm, Diana lagged behind him, pulling him back, her woman's intuition shifting into high gear. "Abel, something is wrong! I sense horrible feelings of anger and hate here, and I think it's from the adversary. Let's stop and pray!"

"We can't stop now. Cain has seen us. Besides, we already prayed, and we have Logos' promise to care for us. He is stronger than the adversary." Abel pulled forward.

Diana tried again. "Remember, Logos told both of us to be on our guard. He said Cain was dangerous, even deadly. Maybe we should just talk to him at a distance." Ever the quick one to wade into a fight, this was not like Diana at all.

Nor was it at all like Abel to keep pulling her forward while taunting, "What's come over you, Diana? Scared?" Perhaps the swirling demons were affecting them as well.

When they reached Cain, Abel threw his arms around him, saying, "Logos told us you were going through a rough time, and we came to see how we could help. We care about you, Cain. You're our brother. Please talk to us. Tell us what's troubling you."

Cain sat back down dejectedly on a big rock. "I don't really know what's troubling me. And no, you can't help. You're part of the problem."

"Well, tell me what my problem is, and I'll try to fix it." Abel was eager, maybe too eager.

"I think Logos hates me. I'm not good enough. He wouldn't accept my sacrifice, and now He won't even come and talk with me. And the thing that bugs me is that He accepted your sacrifice the very first time, and He talks with you every week, and you didn't even put half the labor into your sacrifice that I put into mine. It's just not fair! He said I should have used one of your lambs instead of my vegetables, but why should I be dependent on you?"

"But Cain, I am dependent on you, too. I'm not strong like you. I can't grow good vegetables. I need to trade my lambs for your vegetables. Don't you see how valuable you are to me, to all of us?"

Diana, putting aside her fears, stepped up and gave Cain a hug. "We are all dependent on you, Cain. We need you, we love you, and Logos does love you, too. You'll see. Please, just take one of our lambs this Sabbath and cleanse yourself with its blood like Logos commanded us. Logos will come to you. I know He will!"

But as soon as she said it, Diana realized she'd said the wrong thing. Just like she had at first, Cain reacted with a grimace. "That whole thing is ghastly and ridiculous. It is nonsense – thinking you can be cleansed with the blood of a dead lamb. Then to actually be clean you've got to wash it off again. That is so stupid! I can't believe it. If Logos really loves me, He's got to think of a better way than that. I'm just not going to do it. He says the lamb has to die in my place, as if I am the one who's supposed to die. What have I ever done that is worthy of death? What? What? I work hard. I take care of my wife. Am I really such a bad person that I ought to die?" Cain was standing up and yelling now. "I'm as good as you are! I'm better than you are! Why should Logos love you and hate me? It's just not fair!"

Not recognizing the danger signals in Cain's anger, Abel tried to hug him again, saying, "Logos is our Creator! Doesn't He have the right to tell us..." But Cain violently pushed him back with a curse, so that he stumbled and almost fell backwards. Diana caught him. She pulled him straight and whispered in his ear, "We should leave, now!"

But she was too late. Dozens of demons with Satan at their center were urging Cain on and nursing his anger. It boiled over, and with a yell of pure rage, Cain charged the couple. A smashing blow with each fist sent them flying backwards, one right after the other, into a great crack in the earth. He then pelted them viciously with rocks and boulders, continuing until they were completely covered.

Taking a deep breath, he looked down at his hands. They were splattered with blood, as was the ground below him. He quickly scuffed the dirt around with his feet to cover up the blood, then ran to find water to wash his hands. Fear seized him. He didn't want Logos to see him like this! He ran like the wind, further and further from home. Each time he found a pool or stream, he scrubbed his hands or bathed, then ran some more. For three days he continued running, making a big circle around New Eden so no one would know where he had been, arriving home from almost the opposite direction.

"Oh Cain! Where have you been? I've been so worried! Did Abel and Diana find you? They left the same day that you left, looking for you, and nobody has seen them since. I'm so glad you made it back safely. I was afraid the wild animals..." Darla fell into his arms.

"No, I never saw them," Cain lied. "I was many, many miles from here, exploring other areas to see if there might be a better place for us to move. It's a vast world. Much bigger than our one little valley here. Abel and Diana were fools to think they could find me. Maybe the wild animals got them. They're not strong, like me."

Darla gave a little shriek. "Cain, you say that so casually as if you didn't care. They are your brother and sister! We've got to go looking for them!"

"Don't be silly. I told you this is a vast world. There is no chance at all we could ever find them. Now I'm famished. What do we have for dinner?"

The rest of the week, Cain seemed more cheerful than he had been since before his rejected sacrifice. He even consented to join Darla with their folks for their regular Sabbath fellowship. And he painted for Darla beautiful word pictures of grand new fertile valleys with lush growth, fruit trees already bearing, and crystal clear springs and streams of water. "I found one only a day's journey east of here," he said. "I'd like to take you there, build a new home, and start afresh. We'll be lower and farther from where Mars passes by, so it won't destroy my garden again." Darla quickly agreed, delighted more with the improvement in his attitude than with the move.

All the while, Satan and his demons celebrated in the heavenlies, knowing they had destroyed Cain and Darla as well as Abel and Diana.

At their Sabbath evening sacrifice, Adam and Eve pled with Logos to tell them where Abel and Diana were. Though He accepted their sacrifice, He would only say, "We'll talk about it when Cain is here for your Sabbath fellowship tomorrow."

They awoke early, troubled in soul and spirit. By the time Cain and Darla arrived, they had been praying for an hour. Welcoming them, they called on Logos to join them. He was instantly there.

"Where is Abel your brother?" Logos asked Cain.

"Huh? How should I know? Am I my brother's keeper? Ask Darla. She saw him last."

"Cain, Cain, the voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. I created you, Cain. Do you think I don't know when you're lying? Do you think I didn't see when you murdered Abel and Diana? Satan is a murderer. You have now joined him in his rebellion. Therefore, you are cursed from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. You shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and you shall see My face no more."

There were shrieks from the others, and they all, even Darla, pulled away from Cain in horror. He fell to his knees before Logos. "My punishment is greater than I can bear. You have prohibited the one thing I can do best. I shall wander the earth as a vagabond. If anyone sees me they will try to kill me. Worst of all, I will no longer be able to come to You for help or comfort. Please have mercy!"

"Did you show mercy when Abel and Diana were trying so desperately to help you? Yet I shall show mercy, for I still love you, and still have hope that you shall return to Me someday in true **repentance**. Behold, here is My mark upon your forehead. Anyone seeing it shall know that My eye is upon you. If anyone should kill you, vengeance shall be taken upon him and his family sevenfold. Now go. Flee from My presence until you are able to repent."

"But Logos, I do repent! Please forgive me! Save me!" Weeping bitterly, Cain prostrated himself on the ground before Logos and reached out to His feet.

The fire of Logos' garments blazed out, singeing Cain's hands so that he yanked them back. "You do not know Me, Cain. You have no concept of My righteousness. You are neither repenting for nor hating your evil. You're just sorry that you are found out, and sorrier still that you are reaping the punishment of your evil deeds. You say you want to come to Me for help or comfort, yet even that desire is self-centered, for you do not care to obey or fellowship with Me. Now take what is yours and flee from My presence."

Cain stood, thoroughly exposed and shamed. With bowed head, he trudged home to gather his belongings. Adam, Eve, and Darla all burst into tears. “Is there nothing we can do for Cain? Must we lose all of our children in a single day?” Eve wailed.

“The bitter fruit of your knowledge of good and evil is borne anew in your children,” Logos said sadly. “Yet I am the God of hope and I shall show you hope. Lay back on the grass and look to Me.” As they did, He explained that His essence is Spirit, His home is a spiritual realm called the heavenlies, and He would give them a brief vision of what was now happening there. He then gently withdrew their spirits from their supine bodies, and ushered them into a lovely realm that looked like a thousand Gardens of Eden. It was spectacularly beautiful. In the center, they saw Abel and Diana, sitting and feasting at a table with Logos. They were smiling and laughing, and eagerly sharing together.

“This is **Paradise**. I am there always, as well as here with you, for I can be many places at the same time. Abel and Diana have triumphed over evil. They have finished their course. They willingly gave their lives to try to save their brother. They will always be happy with Me. Now we must return to your realm.” The vision faded, and they again found themselves on earth.

The three on the ground sat up, a bit dazed. “Was that real?” Adam asked. “Abel and Diana are alive, and back in the Garden of Eden?”

“Their bodies are dead, here on earth. But everything on earth is a picture of its reality in the heavenlies. The real Abel and Diana, of which their bodies were the physical picture, are very much alive, and are celebrating Life with Me in Paradise. And no, that was not the Garden of Eden. Paradise is the reality of which the garden I planted for you was a dim and tiny picture. Paradise is a vast and many-splendored place. I invite you all to join Me there someday. But even Paradise is just a picture of a greater reality – the Kingdom I am preparing for you. In fact, except for the damage due to sin, the entire universe is just a dim picture of My Kingdom, for it extends beyond the physical realms to the highest heavenly realms throughout all the ages.”

“Yes, but, Logos...” Darla shuddered. “To get there, do we have to d-die? Like... Abel and Diana?”

Logos smiled sadly at them. “No, you don’t have to die to enter My realms. Sin and its consequence, death, are not a part of My original design. If you are completely cleansed and freed from sin, if you learn to walk in My wisdom and righteousness, in fellowship with Me, learning of Me and My ways, I can take you directly to Paradise without the pain and suffering of death. But your bent toward sin is stronger than you know. True repentance is much harder than you know, and it will be quite a struggle for you.”

“Logos, what about Cain?” Eve asked softly, pleading. She wondered why Logos was avoiding that question.

“I don’t know, Eve. Only the Father knows. He knows all things throughout all time. When I left Him in eternity, I gave up My knowledge of the future. I must depend on the leading of Spirit, just like you. I only know that for now, Cain is terribly bent, unwilling to repent and allow Me to heal him. But his future still depends on his choices, just as with you all. That’s what time is for: to make your choices and prove whether you are of Me or of the evil one. What about you? How do you choose?”

“We choose to follow You,” Adam said firmly. Eve and Darla nodded their agreement.

“But Logos,” Darla added. She paused for a deep breath. “I still love Cain. He is my husband. I promised myself to him. Must I stop loving him to follow You? Can’t I go and be with him, and... and help him to come back to You?”

“Of course you can. As I told him, I still love him too. And I am delighted that you should make that choice. It will be hard. You must be strong in your faith, and you must nurture your love for Me. Cain has despised the lamb sacrifice, My means of cleansing and keeping you close to Me. So to keep from drifting away, you must participate in your parent’s sacrifices in your heart, even though you may be far away from them. If you love both Me and Cain enough to do all this, you may be able to draw him back to Me. But I urge you to visit your parents as often as you can to confess your sin and receive the sprinkling of the blood, that you not forget Me. And wherever you go with Cain, remember Me when you eat the bread and drink the wine.”

“Yes, Logos, I will. I promise.” Darla vowed. So she stayed with them as they shared the Sabbath bread and wine together, and then hurried home to help Cain pack.

When Cain saw her, he was surprised. “Don’t you want to stay with Adam and Eve? You heard Logos. I must be an outcast, a vagrant, a wanderer. My gardens won’t produce for me any more. You’ll be better off with your parents.”

“Our parents?” Darla corrected, laughing. “No, Cain. Though I am terribly sorry about Abel and Diana, yet you are still my husband, my lover, my friend. I made my choice to love and care for you, and nothing you could ever do can change that. Wherever you go, there I will go, wherever you make your home, there I will live. Whatever joys or difficulties you face, I will be there, standing beside you, sharing them with you. That was my promise when we married, remember? I keep my promises!”

Amazed, Cain reached out to hug his wife. Timid, docile Darla! Here he saw a strength he didn’t know she possessed. Just maybe, together, they could make it. “Thank you, Darla. That’s much more than I deserve. I’m surprised that you could ever forgive me, much less still love me and want to be with me. But what about your love for your... our folks? And your love for Logos? You heard Him – I can never see His face again. He doesn’t want me in His presence. I have to leave here and wander the earth.”

"I heard Logos say that you shall see His face no more, but I also heard Him say that He still loves you and hopes that you someday will return to Him in true repentance." Cain frowned, so Darla let it go. "Besides, He never said anything about staying away from our folks. We can visit them as often as you like. Being a wanderer doesn't mean you can't wander home sometimes!" She laughed, a silvery note that tugged at the strings of Cain's heart.

He sighed and drew her close. "You are a jewel. I don't deserve you. Thanks for sticking by me. I hope I can learn what true repentance is. I thought I was repenting, but Logos didn't seem to think so. I'm sorry I lost my temper at Abel and Diana. I did not intend to kill them, you know! I just got so angry I couldn't control myself. It was awful."

"Maybe," Darla hesitated. "Maybe repentance means obeying Logos and doing the sacrifice His way instead of your way." Then seeing the scowl cross his face again, Darla wisely dropped it.

So they left their parents, and lived east of Eden in a wide plain which has become known as the **land of Nod**, meaning the land of wanderings. The plain was fertile, with an abundance of many varieties of fruits, nuts, and grains growing naturally. Living as a nomad back then was a pretty easy life, a good life.

During the next two years Cain enjoyed his wife. She conceived and gave birth to their firstborn, a son. After a few weeks they journeyed back to New Eden to visit their folks. Darla wanted to show them their new grandson, and insisted that Cain come to witness his dedication.

They hadn't been visiting very often. Cain didn't want to go at all. He was still intensely ashamed, and couldn't get over the sense of condemnation he felt. Darla remembered Logos' words about 'drifting away' and realized that it was happening. They had been forgetting about the sacrifice. Their Sabbaths had become just another day of foraging for food. Darla was still determined to draw Cain back to Logos, though. Maybe their child would be a good start.

Their meeting was a bit strained. Eve was still grieving deeply and Adam had not quite gotten over his anger at Cain. But when they saw how crushed and condemned Cain still felt, they softened and welcomed him home. Soon Darla was chatting away happily with Eve about the baby, and Cain was left with Adam. It was time for that man-to-man talk.

"We miss you, Cain. You are my firstborn, and the only son we have left. Now that you also have a firstborn son, surely you can understand?"

"My firstborn never harmed me..."

"Cain, I'm just as sorry about Abel and Diana as you, but it is past, done. Please, Cain, join us in the Sabbath evening sacrifice. Allow the blood of the lamb to cleanse your sin so you can again have fellowship with us."

Again the scowl. "Dad, I told you, I don't believe that stuff. It's utterly gross. Killing a poor lamb and splattering its blood all over the altar..."

"I'm not asking you to believe it, Cain. I'll be your priest. Just let my faith cover you while you're here, so we can have fellowship – like when you were young, before we even told you about the sacrifice."

There was a long pause. Cain searched his dad's face. Finally, "Okay, if that's what you want. But you'll be sorry. Logos won't come. He told me I could never see His face again." Cain hung his head, the picture of a whipped pup.

Adam gave Cain a big hug. "Don't you understand, Son? I just want you to be happy. You can't be happy as long as you're weighed down with guilt. But if you repent, Logos will forgive and accept you again. He said so!"

"I tried. He said I don't know what repentance is."

"Logos will show you. Just obey Him, that's all. Join us in doing the sacrifice His way instead of your way."

Cain was startled. Darla had said exactly that same thing. His mind was in turmoil. It seemed to be screaming at him, "NO! Don't do it! It's stupid! You're too smart to fall for that! It's gross! You know better! You're a pretty good person..." But on impulse he ignored the turmoil, looked his dad in the eye and said, "Okay Dad, I will."

In the heavenlies there was a shriek of rage as Satan lashed out viciously at his own demons. Michael was shocked. "You know, Lucifer," he said respectfully. "If you injure your angelic host like that, they will flee from you and your kingdom will fall."

"Don't you understand, you miserable wretch? Cain is mine! Mine! All mine! I own him, fair and square! It's not fair for you to manipulate him using family ties like that. He doesn't believe in the sacrifice. You're cheating to get... to do that..." He was so furious he couldn't speak straight.

Michael answered softly. "I acknowledge that he is yours, Lucifer, by his own choice. But now he seems to be willing to choose differently. My encouraging that is not cheating. Logos has permitted neither one of us to violate his own free choice. I have not interfered with you and your host in telling your lies. I merely countered with a few whispers of truth. We shall see which he will choose."

Without answering, Satan left to see what he could do about the upcoming Sabbath. He commanded a group of demons to inspire a pride of lions to attack the sheepfold, which was a bit neglected now that Abel was gone. He had another group working to lure Cain to an area of cracks in the ground where, if they could get him angry enough, they might be able to lure him into an 'accident'.

And if anger didn't work, they could try despair. Maybe Satan could get him to commit suicide. Suicide is Satan's own specialty, using accusations and guilt feelings.

He assigned another group of demons to nurse Adam and Eve's anger against Cain, or even to make Darla angry with him. Satan's plague prince worked furiously to open them up to some kind of sickness so they would have to call off the sacrifice. Demonic lies and accusations were flying thick and fast, and it was all the angelic protectors could do to hold their own against the attacks.

But the angels were not permitted to block or counter-attack the demonic host. Michael flew to the heavenly throne. "Logos, Satan is desperate to prevent the Sabbath sacrifice. He knows Cain is near repentance. His demons have filled the area! He's tempting him again, without Your permission! Doesn't he need Your permission? It just doesn't seem right! May we attack?"

"You are doing fine, dear Michael. You are protecting my precious ones as I commissioned you. You have no need of attacking Satan. He has legal occasion to tempt Cain's family, though not to harm them. Their covering of righteousness was shredded by Cain's sin. Cain himself granted Satan the permission he needs. But so far, Satan is not exceeding My boundaries. If he breaks My Law and touches one of My precious ones, you may attack."

Not understanding why Cain would ever give Satan permission to tempt him, but unwilling to argue with the King of the Universe, Michael went back to Cain and Adam. Cain was telling his dad about his inner turmoil. "It's really weird, Dad. It's like I've got a million voices inside my head, some screaming one thing, some another. It's horrible! I've had no peace since... since I..."

"What are the voices saying, Son?"

Cain paused, concentrating hard. "Well, maybe it's just me. But one moment I feel angry and bitter and proud, like I'm better than any of you and don't have to put up with your nonsense. And the next moment I feel like a fool, no, worse, like a worthless criminal, and like you are all angry with me and hate me and want to kill me. One moment I feel humbled and thankful that you have forgiven me and accepted me back into the family, and oh, so blessed to have Darla as my wife. The next moment I feel horribly guilty, condemned; like I can never be forgiven, either by you or by Logos, or even by Darla. I feel like running away from all of you and maybe even, maybe even..."

"What, Son?" Adam put an arm around Cain and drew him close, speaking gently. Michael was encouraging him, but one inch away Satan himself was screaming at Cain, with his demons swirling all around. Michael was alert, ready to do battle if Satan should come any closer, but Satan knew it and stuck to the letter of the law.

"I can't stand it! I've got to go!" Cain tried to pull away, but Adam held on. "You didn't answer my question, Son. You're free to go if you want to. Logos gave you a free will. But please make your choice after we've talked about it. Don't let the accuser make your choice for you."

"Huh? The accuser?"

"Yes, Cain. I think he is behind all those voices, and he's urging you to flee because he wants to kill you. But he knows that according to God's Law, he can't, so he's trying to make you want to kill yourself. That is what you were about to say, isn't it? That you felt like killing yourself?"

There was a shriek of rage in the heavenlies, and Satan lashed out at his nearest demons, blaming them for the failure. Michael smiled. His plan had worked. The accuser was exposed. Recognizing his defeat, Satan gathered his demon host and fled the battleground.

"Yeah, Dad. How did you know? Have you ever had any feelings like that?" Cain was more peaceful now, eager to talk about it.

"Yes, Cain. When your mother and I first disobeyed Logos, I too had horrible feelings of guilt and despair. But Logos helped me, through the sacrifice. He said it would cover my guilt until the Redeemer comes to take it all away. I had to believe His promise, and I still do. If I didn't believe it I would feel just like you."

"But I don't believe that stuff about..." Cain began.

"Believing is a choice, Cain. Logos made you, but He never forces you to love Him or believe what He says. You must make the choice. I promise you, that once you make the choice to believe His words, He will give you the faith and encouragement to really believe Him."

"Okay, Dad, I'll do it." Cain's mind was much clearer now. "And thanks for sticking by me. I don't know why I would ever want to kill myself anyway."

They ran, together, to the sheepfold to take care of the commotion, easily facing down the lions and shooing them off. Then they went to calm the women and help them finish the preparations for the Sabbath. Finally at sundown, they offered the sacrifice. This was the first time Cain had ever actually participated in it.

And Logos appeared! In the flames above the altar. He was beaming with delight as He shouted out, "It is accepted! You are all cleansed!" All four of them fell on their knees in worship before Logos. He flew closer, stretching out His arms so that His hands were above their heads. "Thank you for coming to share this Sabbath with Me. I have so longed for this time of fellowship with you! Especially with you, my beloved Cain. I have missed you terribly. You have no idea of how much I missed you."

"But Logos, I thought You hated me! I thought You never wanted to see my face again. You said..."

"I hate the person that you became when you chose the adversary's anger and deceit. That son of Satan shall never see My face again, just as I told you. But that person is gone. You are a different person now. You have chosen to believe and obey Me. Now I can pour out My love upon you!"

“But how can You still love me, after what I did?”

“I am Love, Cain. It is My nature. I cannot cease to love you any more than I can cease to be the Creator.”

“You are love? But... But You hated me...”

“That was a false you; a lie spawned by the father of lies. The real you, the Cain that I created, was being smothered underneath the rebel who had joined Satan’s rebellion. How can I not hate that which is destroying My beloved?”

With no more arguments, Cain bowed in worship, awed at the infinite, unconditional love of Logos, Creator of the Universe and lover of his soul. For the first time in his life, he felt totally at peace. There was no more need to prove or justify himself – no more need to win. He was accepted and loved, just as he was.

Darla, kneeling next to him, slipped her arm around his waist. She understood. Adam, kneeling on the other side, put his hand on Cain’s shoulder. He, too, understood. Eve, who was cuddling the baby beside Darla, held her breath. This was the first time since Abel and Diana had died that they were a family again. She wanted the moment to last. The son she thought she had lost had come home. “Thank You, Logos! Thank You Logos!” she repeated in her heart.

The baby whimpered. Darla took him from Eve and put him to her breast. No one wanted to break the sacred silence. With tears of joy in his eyes, Cain looked over at his son, then back up at Logos, seeing his tears of joy reflected there, too. The universe was at peace.

The peace remained after Logos left for the night, and was still there when He returned the next morning for their Sabbath fellowship. “It is time for your Sabbath meal. I will delight in sharing it with you. But first, you wanted Me to consecrate your son. What will you name him?”

Cain and Darla had debated this at length, but had never reached agreement before. Now it was easy. “**Enoch**. It means consecrated.” Cain said, with Darla nodding.

Logos hovered over the three of them, His hands just above the heads of Enoch and his father. “Hear me Enoch, son of Cain, son of Adam, son of God,” He said. He spoke quietly, but with infinite power behind His words. “Your name means consecrated. I consecrate you now to Me. Never forget who you are; keep yourself from evil; guard yourself against temptation; seek My face; love Me; walk in My ways. Then the blessings of your parents’ choice this day shall cover and protect you, and you shall enjoy sweet fellowship with Me all the days of your life.”

“Does he hear? Can he understand? Will he do that?”

“He hears. His spirit understands and will remind him of My words as he matures. But whether he will do it is up to him. As with each of you, I give him free choice. I have encouraged him to make the best choices, which will bless him all his life. But he is free to accept or reject them.”

Feeling blessed to be a part of the family again, Cain and Darla shared the Sabbath meal with their parents, and with Logos floating at the head of the table. This was the first time Cain had celebrated the Sabbath since leaving home, so he peppered Logos with questions about it all day. Logos answered each one patiently, lovingly. As they ate together, Cain wanted to understand the significance of the bread and wine. Logos explained just as He had to Adam and Eve. Then Cain asked about the lamb sacrifice, about the Sabbath rest, about the original Creation before the Fall – the questions went on and on. But he had trouble voicing the main question that was bothering him.

“You seem to be skirting your real question,” Logos chuckled. “I can handle it. Go ahead. Ask.”

“Well, I don’t want to criticize You. I know now that all You do is righteous and good. But, well, You are so much stronger than Lucifer. Why didn’t You just kill him when he became Your adversary? You could have just squashed him like a bug, and then there wouldn’t have been all this destruction, all this pain and suffering, all the struggles, the temptations, the fighting with the animals...”

There were some snickers at the illustration of the squashed bug, but not from Logos. He looked at Cain with infinite tenderness. “Why didn’t I kill you when you became My adversary?” He asked quietly.

Dead silence, as the terrible implication sank in; then finally, “Well, You love me. That’s what You said. You love the real me, the one that was being smothered under the lies of the adversary. You wanted to set me free.”

“Yes. Very good. I also love Lucifer, My Shining One, My Star of the Morning, My Son of the Dawn. He was My wisest, My best, the most powerful and most beautiful of all My creation. He was the anointed covering cherub in My Garden of Eden, not just on earth, but the real Eden, of which that on earth was but a picture. He was perfect in all his ways until he was overcome with pride. I gave him a free will the same as you. He is responsible for his choices, whether to choose righteousness and reap the rewards or to choose evil and reap the consequences.

“I was deeply grieved, more than any of you can know, when he chose to become My adversary and compete with Me for My throne. My heart was crushed when he chose to plumb the depths of evil. He was so great that he is capable of very great evil. His self-centered ways of force, pride, covetousness, anger, and lies are the foundation of all evil. He is the first murderer, not you, for he is the father of it.

“Now that you have a taste of the consequences of his evil, the suffering and bondage that results, you want Me to reach down and ‘squash him like a bug’? That shows that you, like Lucifer, understand neither My own nature nor the nature of the realm into which I have created you. And that provides a perfect illustration of why I did not, indeed can not, ‘squash him like a bug’.

“As I told you, My Father’s Plan of the Ages is big enough to accommodate every possible choice you have made or will ever make. That includes Lucifer’s choice to become Satan, My adversary. Every choice, even evil ones, will ultimately fit perfectly into Our Plan of the Ages for My Father’s glory and for the good of all My precious ones.

“So, let us say for sake of illustration that whenever someone chooses evil I just ‘squash him like a bug’. Three important things are very wrong with that picture. First, that would make Me no better than My adversary – a god of forces, manipulation, and lies – in that though I claim to give you a free will, yet I manipulate you or force you to choose My ways or be annihilated. Second, then you would never learn to love good and hate evil because you would never see the consequences, the pain, bondage, and despair, that naturally result from evil. And you would never come to appreciate the contrasting goodness or the blessings of choosing Me and My ways.

“I have two other archangels who were created at the same time as Lucifer and are nearly equal to him. One is Michael, who with his host guards you day and night. The other is Gavriel, who with his host ministers to Me and acts as My messenger to My universe. They both have free wills, like Lucifer. But neither of them has chosen to do evil, and I assure you, they never will. How do I know? Do I force them to do good? No, no, that thought is abhorrent to My nature. They have chosen to do good, even to love Me and My ways, because seeing Me next to Satan, they can see the goodness – the righteousness – of My ways in contrast with the awfulness of evil and its consequences.

“There is a third thing wrong with the picture of My squashing evil whenever it appears, that is not quite so obvious. My nature is self-giving love. The nature which My adversary has chosen is just the opposite, self-centered at its core. He desires to usurp My throne and to control the universe as if he were god, but not for the good of his subjects; rather for his own self-satisfaction and pride.

“But herein lies the **Great Controversy**: his accusation against Me is that I also am self-centered, that I rule the universe only for My own glory and pride, and that My rule is no better than My adversary’s; therefore he has as much right to rule as I. That is a very serious accusation. My good name is at stake, as is the integrity of all My ways.

“If I were to lash out in wrath and squash evil whenever it appeared in My universe, Satan’s accusation would hold some credence. I would appear to be a totalitarian despot, forcing everyone to conform to My wishes. No one would know that My ways of ruling My universe will ultimately bring joy and blessings to all My precious ones. Therefore I cannot force or manipulate people to be good any more than I can just squash them when they are evil. It is not only against My nature and a slander against My good name, it is also harmful, even destructive, to My Father’s Plan of the Ages. It turns everyone into a slave to My will.

“The only way anyone can learn what I am really like and appreciate My plans and purposes for them is for Me to give them total freedom to choose as they please, either good or evil, and let them experience the natural lawful consequences of good and evil which I wove into the fabric of the universe at creation: the blessings and freedom of choosing the good, as well as the suffering and bondage of choosing the evil. Does that help you understand?”

“Yes, Logos.” Cain was somber. “But, what about those who, like me, are hard-hearted and angry with You, and get angrier every time they experience the consequence of their own choices? I was that way for a long time. I didn’t know You loved me. I really thought You hated me!”

“That’s a good question, Cain. Those who are ignorant and hard of heart are indeed difficult to reach. But I do have ways. That is one reason why I have allowed Lucifer to become Satan, so totally evil and so totally deceived by his own lies. No matter how evil you may become you can always look at him and be disgusted and fearful, and long to escape his road of distress, darkness, despair, and death.

“I have other ways, too. It is My goodness that draws people to repentance. Remember when you were fleeing from Me and under My curse? Even then I kept you strong and healthy. I protected you from wild animals, accident, or injury. I fed you from the abundance of the fields. I encouraged your wife to remain faithful and loving.”

“You did that? I was surprised when Darla stuck with me.” He put out his arm and drew her close. “She was incredible, serving me, encouraging me, loving me wholeheartedly, and never condemning me. I think that was what really got me through.”

“I made her that way, Cain, just for you. I love you through her. Then I gave you Enoch, My gift of joy to draw you back to your family and to illustrate how much your parents have loved you from birth. Your love for Enoch was what finally drew you back to your own parents.”

“But even there, Logos, I almost turned away. What if I had? Would You have given up on me?”

“Though I do allow you freewill choices, I do not walk away leaving you to face the consequences of your choice alone. Whatever your choice, Our Plan of the Ages is big enough to surround you with My love and ultimately turn your choice into a blessing. True love never gives up, Cain. Never. In the end, My mercy and compassion always triumph over My judgment of sin and hatred of evil. So if necessary, I would have pursued you to the farthest corners of the earth, even through death, to break the curse you chose and to demonstrate My love for you.”

“Death? Whose death?” Cain was reminded of the blood-splattered lamb. “My death?”

“Yes, or Mine.” Logos’ solemn face assured Cain He was not joking. “All that you suffer also falls on Me.”

“But... But You can’t die! You are the Creator!”

“Nevertheless, true love must be willing to give up its life for the beloved. Abel and Diana showed their love for you when they came, even at the risk of their own lives, to try to help you. Though I was very sad, yet I honored them in their choice. They are now feasting in Paradise with Me, and receiving rich rewards for their self-sacrificing love.”

“Feasting in Paradise? With You?”

“Yes. I told you that this life is a small, dim picture of the heavenly realm I have prepared for you. Your choices here will earn rewards or punishments in that realm. Abel and Diana are being richly rewarded for their choices. They freely gave their lives for you. Knowing that should be an encouragement to you to make wise, loving choices, too.”

“It sure is. Thank you, Logos!” Overwhelmed by love, Cain bowed in worship. He was finally at peace that his repentance had been accepted. And he remained in awe that this incredible, loving God had taken his horrible deed and turned it around for good. But that Logos’ love was so great He would even give His life for His beloved – that was way beyond Cain’s comprehension, so Logos graciously allowed him to forget it, for now.

The years went by. Cain stayed true to Logos, and used the passings of Mars every three years as reminders to draw even closer to Him. And Darla stayed true to Cain and bore him many children. She became like a stable anchor to his stormy personality. They prepared for Mars (though with Titan not lined up, it didn’t come as close), but placed their trust in Logos. Their firstborn, Enoch, grew up to be a shepherd. Cain bought lambs from him to sacrifice for himself and his large and growing family.

But after another 60 years had passed and Titan, on its 120 year orbit, again lined up with the long axis of Mars’ elliptical orbit, Cain’s family had gotten out of hand. He had never taught his children to sacrifice. Now many were married and having children of their own. His oldest grandson, **Irad** son of Enoch, was now 14 years old. Being nomads like their father, Cain’s children rarely visited him once they were grown and married. They had spread out all across the wide land of Nod. Cain found it harder and harder to locate Enoch in order to buy the weekly lamb, so sometimes he missed the sacrifice entirely.

That second close pass of Mars in 120 AF was horrible. Several small moons of Mars collided with Earth, causing a horrendous amount of damage. In addition, Mars raked across what is now Russia, raising the Ural mountains and causing colossal earthquakes. A crustal slide changed the spin axis of Earth by over 22 degrees. Many of Cain’s family who had gotten complacent were unprepared, and were injured. A few died. Satan was making good on his vow to torment the humans. Cain and Darla were appalled. They realized that they had been negligent with their children. *What could they do to draw them back together and to Logos?*

CHAPTER 5 – ENOCH and SETH

The fertile plains of Nod were wide enough for them all, yet Cain now knew they needed something to keep them from wandering. He remembered his own rebellion, and wanted to keep his children from going down that road. Three or four times a year they would travel back up the hill to New Eden to celebrate the Sabbath with their folks, but Cain never kept sheep and still resisted teaching the Sabbath sacrifice to his children. Talking it over with Darla, he had a great idea. He picked a lovely spot on a low hill overlooking the plains of Nod and built a city, with a short tower in the center of a large public square.

He named his city **Enoch** after his firstborn son. Every year he would call all his children back to Enoch, where they would gather for a family party. He first gave a big speech from the top of the tower. He taught them, so they wouldn’t repeat the hard lessons he had learned about rebellion, anger, stubbornness, and self-centeredness. Then they feasted the rest of the day and on into the night, while Cain went to offer the sacrifice for them.

His idea was a success, of sorts. Cain’s progeny loved the city and its shops and comforts. Some of them settled there, and all those who remained nomads loved to return for the party. They even listened to Cain’s speeches, and cheered for him as the honored patriarch of the clan.

The years went by. Enoch’s first son **Irad** grew up and married, and in time Cain’s great-grandson **Mehujael** was born. Once again complacency set in, and even Cain’s annual speeches failed to rouse his grandchildren. That 60 years seemed to go by so fast, and the third close pass of Mars (180 AF) was soon upon them. Cain realized that he needed to warn his family, somehow.

Cain and Darla’s visits to New Eden were now down to once a year. His children and grandchildren were prolific, now numbering in the hundreds. Being patriarch of a large culture was demanding on his time. Cain longed for the simpler life at Eden but felt responsible for his busy family.

Adam and Eve had borne but two, **Seth** (born two years after Enoch) and **Serena** (born 27 years later). But though they wondered why they could not have more, they were content, seeing in them a gift from Logos to replace Abel and Diana. Seth and Serena grew up, married, and had two young children of their own, **Enosh** and baby **Evita**. They lived in the old hut that Cain and Darla had left.

Cain recognized the seeds of his own sins growing in his children. Their parties were becoming drunken orgies. Contests of strength and skill sometimes degenerated into violent brawls. The city of Enoch had grown in prosperity and comfort, but also in immorality and sensuality. Cain’s speeches were becoming the butt of cruel jokes. Respect for wisdom or authority was scarce. Cain grew desperate. At the family gathering in 180 AF, to Darla’s horror, Cain cursed and yelled at his grandchildren in his anger.

They just laughed at him. But they weren't laughing when Mars approached. It came closer than ever before. Satan was learning how best to push it. Logos prevented Michael and his host from interfering. It seems that the wickedness of Cain's children had given Satan legal right to torment them, and torment them he did. Earthquakes were so great that lakes sloshed out of their basins. The city of Enoch was virtually leveled, except Cain's speech tower at the center of the city remained miraculously standing. Many were killed, and those who weren't, fled the city in terror. The earth's crust cracked at what is now the Red Sea. Mars raised the Hejaz and Asir mountains of western Arabia and the mountains along eastern Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sudan. The earth's crustal axis spun 25 degrees. (This is the great catastrophe at the time of Enosh that we now find described in ancient Jewish legends.)

Nearly half of Cain's descendants perished. When the survivors regathered after it was over, Cain berated them for rejecting his warning. He blamed them and called them fools. But anger begets anger. They still did not repent.

When Cain had cooled off, Darla encouraged him to repent of his anger and teach his children with more love. He snapped, "Why is it so hard for my children to repent? Don't they see that their immorality and self-centeredness is killing them?" Gentle Darla spoke softly, "Beloved Cain, why is it so hard for you to repent? Repentance is simply turning away from what is wrong and doing what is right. Did Logos ever yell angrily at you or curse and berate you when you were His enemy? Did He ever call you a fool?"

Once again, Cain couldn't receive it. He couldn't even see it. He (as is common with humanity) was so focused outwards he could not see his own heart. He could easily see the problems in others, and was quick to criticize, judge, and condemn. All the while he inwardly nursed his anger and held tightly to his bitterness and resentment. But he viewed himself as righteous since, outwardly, he kept the Sabbath and offered the sacrifice (some of the time anyway) as Logos had commanded. But gentle Darla wouldn't nag. She just loved him and prayed for him.

The years continued to flow by. Complacency set in once again. The city of Enoch was rebuilt, and the memory faded of the horrible destruction caused by that 3rd pass of Mars. **Lamech** was born to Mehujael son of Irad son of Enoch, in the 4th year after the tragedy. He grew up and, at age 35, he married the twins **Adah** and **Zillah**. Adah bore him Jubal and Jabal, while Zillah bore him the legendary **Tubal-cain** and his lovely and brilliant sister Naamah.

Cain's extended family numbered in the thousands now, and Cain no longer had time to go to Eden or keep the Sabbath, much less offer the weekly sacrifice. Satan had been very sly in his temptations. Cain didn't even realize he had drifted away from Logos. Satan chortled with glee at the thought of all the suffering, death, and destruction he would cause by Mars on its upcoming fourth flyby.

Then, in year 236 AF when Cain was 235, there was another murder. Lamech got into a brawl at the annual party, and angrily killed a young man who punched him. Cain was crushed to see his own murder repeated in his grandchildren. He talked it over with Darla. She, of course, reminded him of the neglected sacrifice, and Cain was finally desperate enough to hear her. They journeyed back up to New Eden to talk to Logos about it.

In the misty twilight, the old homestead looked just the same as they approached. The gardens, the two huts, the thorn-bush sheepfold – like they remembered from their last visit 50 years ago. They were welcomed with joy. Eve had big news to share. "Cain, Darla! I'm so glad you came. Logos said we're going to have another son. I'm pregnant!"

After they exchanged greetings and hugs and settled in a bit, Cain asked the obvious question. "Mom, we're really glad Logos promised you a son, but did He tell you why you've had so few over the years? Our family is huge!"

"He did, but I didn't understand. He told me He wanted to keep one person in each generation pure and unstained from the wickedness of the world. What do you think He was talking about?"

Cain knew immediately what He was referring to. "Well, Dad, you and Seth are isolated here in Eden. The wickedness in Nod, and especially in Enoch, has gotten pretty bad. As my family got bigger, the evil multiplied too. That is actually why we're here, to talk with you about it. You know that we've been having an annual party at Enoch, and I give a speech each year, trying to instruct my children in how they should live. But they don't really hear me anymore. They drink the wine after it ferments and make themselves silly. Then they lose all self-restraint and respectability, and do immoral deeds, and make jokes about shameful things, and get into drunken brawls, and ... and ..." Cain paused and stared at his feet in horror. "Remember my grandson in the fifth generation, Lamech, who married two wives? He even boasts of his immorality and makes poems and sings songs of the wicked things he has done. He is proud of being bad! Well, just two weeks ago at our annual party, there was this brawl, and everyone was fighting with everyone else. Somebody must have punched Lamech. It knocked him down, and he got really angry. He took a big stick and started beating him. We tried to stop him, but... it was like his anger gave him the strength of ten men. We couldn't hold him. He killed the young man who had injured him. I was shocked, horrified. I saw in Lamech my own anger when I killed Abel and Diana. Worse, then he laughed about it, boasted about it, even made up a song about it. What can I do?"

Adam didn't answer. He just stood there, head bowed, reliving the memory of his own sin and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Eve started to cry, thinking of her unborn son, and the wicked world into which he would be born. Serena and Darla hugged her and cried softly with her.

Finally, to break the silence, Cain said, “Seth, maybe you are the Redeemer that Logos promised. Maybe you can move to Nod and save us from all this wickedness.” But it sounded lame, and as soon as he said it he knew it was wrong. If Seth’s family mixed with his, he knew it would not be long before they became wicked too! He knew what the real problem was. He fell to his knees.

“I’m sorry. I have failed Logos. I have failed you all, and my own family. By not keeping the Sabbath and doing the sacrifice just as Logos instructed, and by not teaching it to my family, I have allowed all this wickedness to go unchecked. Is it too late for me?”

“No, Cain,” Adam said. “It’s never too late to repent. There is always the next Sabbath. I’m glad you’ve come to share it with us. I hope you can take it back to Nod with you when you return.”

Sure enough, after they offered the sacrifice the next Sabbath evening, Logos came to them. He spoke directly to Cain. “After all these years, you are finally learning to repent. It is not the simple thing you at first imagined, is it? I understand, I forgive you, and I receive you. But now, about your taking the sacrifice back with you to the land of Nod – the way things are now you cannot teach it to your descendants. They no longer hear you. However, you can teach it to Enoch. He is still mine, and he will hear you. He may be able to teach it to the rest of your family.”

“Yes, Logos, my Lord and my God. I will do that.” Cain had no more arguments, no more reasons why he had to do it his own way instead of God’s way. True repentance had finally broken his heart.

All the next day, as they rested on the Sabbath, Logos continued to encourage and challenge Cain. He reminded him of the consequences of evil and warned him that Satan had occasion, and would bring judgment on his extended family if they didn’t also repent and seek God’s face.

Cain and Darla decided to stay with their folks until after Eve’s baby was born. Cain wanted to get to know his brother Seth. His name meant ‘chosen substitute’, as it was clear that Logos had anointed him in place of Abel. He, too, was a shepherd. He had taken over the responsibilities of the sacrifice each Sabbath for the family. Each Sabbath, Logos would come to him. Cain saw that Seth and Logos had a long term relationship that was special and precious.

At first, Cain was tempted to be envious, but he was quickly reminded of the result of his jealousy of Abel so long ago. As Cain looked into Seth’s blue eyes, he could clearly see Abel, and again the thought came to him. Maybe this one will be the Redeemer! Echoing his thoughts, Eve confided in him. “I believe the Redeemer will come from the line of Seth.” Cain’s heart leapt with longing for that to be true. He determined that he wanted a relationship with Logos like Seth had, even if it meant doing things that he hated, like raising his own sheep.

Cain helped out in his parent’s gardens. To his delight, Seth’s son Enosh worked with him. It was the first time he had really worked a garden since Logos’ curse. This was work he loved and understood. He was worried that his presence would harm the garden, but it flourished under his strong and expert hands. When he asked Logos about it one Sabbath, Logos responded, “I said the ground would no longer yield its strength to you, Cain. However, you are no longer tilling the ground for your own gain. You are doing it for others. I love to bless such sacrificial labors. You will find many things that you can successfully do for others which would not be so blessed if you did them for selfish motives.” Cain understood, and was pleased.

Adam and Eve’s son was finally born. Logos came the next Sabbath to consecrate and encourage him to seek His face and obey His commands. They named him El’oth, meaning ‘marked by God’. Logos, all smiles, assured Eve that with Cain’s repentance He had opened her womb, and she would have many more. Then He looked at Cain and Darla. “You have done well here. I have blessed your visit. Now it is time to return to your children and teach them. The time is short, and the catastrophe facing them is huge if they do not repent.”

So Cain and Darla returned to Nod. They spent the next four weeks teaching Enoch, their firstborn son, about the sacrifice and its importance. As Logos had said, Enoch was open-hearted and eager to learn. He too had been troubled by the spread of wickedness in his city. They planned to introduce it to the people at their annual party, which coincided this year with the triennial approach of Mars. *(This was on our September 24, 4803 BC, year 237 AF.)*

At noon, with Mars directly (spectacularly) overhead, the people were gathered in the central square for Cain’s traditional speech. It was easy to see they weren’t really planning to listen. They were clumped in little groups, joking and laughing, pointing at Mars and telling stories of its tragic third flyby, 57 years before.

Cain stood on the tower and rang the bell for silence. Everyone pretty much ignored him. But at that point there was a minor earthquake and Cain fell backwards, right into the arms of his son Enoch. People pointed and laughed. They were used to earthquakes as Mars passed overhead. Cain stood again and grasped the rail firmly. “My sons and daughters, please hear me one last time,” he shouted out. There was a desperation in his voice. It got people’s attention and they quieted down a bit. “I know that I don’t really deserve to be listened to, as it was my sin that hurt all of you,” Cain shouted.

Now they really began to listen. They were intrigued by the sense of repentance in Cain’s voice, since they had not heard that before. “But there is a great tragedy coming, greater than anything that has ever befallen the earth before, which may destroy us all if we don’t do something about it. In three years Mars will...”

“Ahhh... We already know about Mars. You’re always warning us about Mars... We can take care of ourselves... You’re always talking to us about God’s judgment on our sins whenever Mars comes close...” And so the jeers and laughter began again. Cain quickly realized that what Logos had said about his children not hearing him was true. He looked to Enoch, who stood and came to the rail.

“Shut up and listen, you rebels. I’m only going to say this once!” Enoch’s deep, resonant shout cut through the hubbub, and there was sudden silence. “None of you has seen Logos, our Creator. A lot of you don’t even believe He exists. Some of you don’t even care. Well, Cain has seen Him. Talked with Him. Just five weeks ago. Logos gave him a warning that broke his heart. Since you can’t seem to listen to Cain, I’m going to tell you about it. If you can’t hear me either, then your blood be on your own heads.

“At this distance, Mars doesn’t do much damage. Just some earthquakes, lightning, static electricity, and so on. You’re used to it, and have lost your fear. But as you know, every 60 years Mars comes a lot closer, and does a lot more damage. That will be in three years when Titan lines up with the long axis of Mars. You know that too, and you’ve learned how to prepare for it.

“What you don’t know is that there is an evil adversary, called Satan, who wants to kill you all and destroy this planet. It is he who pushed Mars into this catastrophic orbit in the first place. The only reason he can’t force Mars into direct collision with Earth is that Logos loves you! Logos is much stronger than this evil adversary. Logos has so far prevented Satan from destroying you. But here is something you don’t seem to understand. Though Logos loves you, He hates your wickedness! Logos is so holy, so perfectly free from any taint of wickedness, that He cannot come to visit you in your sins. You have forced Him to flee from you. That is why none of you has ever seen Him. Logos told Cain that His patience with you has come to an end, and that He will allow Satan to destroy you all with the next pass of Mars, unless you repent. He’s serious!

“Cain and Darla would have been slain by that first close flyby of Mars [60 years after the Fall], if they had not gone to be close to their parents. Their house was crushed and their gardens destroyed. The second close flyby of Mars [120 years after the Fall], was even worse. Several small moons of Mars collided with Earth. Most of you remember the third close flyby 60 years ago. It was worse yet – so bad it almost destroyed our city. A lot of houses collapsed. Some of your own kin were killed. Lakes even sloshed out of their basins, drowning some who thought they were safe in the fields.

“The next close pass, in three years, is on that 60 year cycle. Even if Logos weren’t angry with us it could still be deadly. But if, because of our wickedness, Logos removes His protection and gives His adversary free reign, we could all be killed! Satan could make this the worst flyby ever!

“Cain is a sinner, too. So are Adam and Eve. Why did they get to see Logos while you did not? Ever ask yourself that question? Why does Logos talk with them, and not you?” Enoch paused, scanning the crowd. He could see he had their attention. The threat of destruction and death in three years clearly had them worried. Nobody dared to answer him, so he continued. “I’ll explain it. Logos gave us a way to be cleansed of our sin and return to Him, a way to get back under His protection and receive the blessings of His love. It starts with keeping the Sabbath as a holy day of rest unto Logos. But we haven’t been doing it!”

There were some renewed jeers. They all knew about the Sabbath, though by this time they considered good Sabbath-keeping as play and party time. But Enoch plunged right on. “Let’s put that into perspective. We set aside one day in seven to remember all that Logos our Creator has done for us. He returns to us the other six days full of His gracious mercy and blessings. The alternative is that we try to use all seven days only for our own selfish pursuits and in three years everything is destroyed and we die. Take your choice. It’s simple. Life, or death!”

The scoffing was turning into arguments, and Enoch could see he was about to lose the crowd. He rang the bell for silence, and made one last shouted effort. “Some of you don’t seem to care if you and your children die. Others clearly do care. My speech is over. Thank you for listening. Go enjoy your party. Those of you who do care about your life and the lives of your family, meet me here tomorrow at sunset, the beginning of the Sabbath, and I will teach you how to keep the Sabbath holy. Those who don’t care, just continue your party for the next three years, because that is all the time you will have.” Enoch turned for the stairs, with Cain following. There was shocked silence while they descended, and they knew the people had heard.

Sure enough, the next day a big crowd met them at the tower, nearly as many as were at the party. Some obviously came out of curiosity, but others came to learn. Many were even eager to meet Logos. Cain and Enoch had built an altar where everyone could see. Working together, they sacrificed two lambs, one for themselves, and the other over whose head they confessed the sins of all the people. When Enoch shouted, “It is finished!” Logos appeared in glorious flames above the altar. His brilliance consumed the lambs and wiped the altar clean. His face was wreathed in smiles as He called to the crowds, “Father has accepted your sacrifice. You are cleansed!” All the people, even the merely curious ones, fell down on their faces before Him, filled with reverential awe and holy fear. For a long time nobody dared to stand up. Pure worship and adoration was the only appropriate response. This was their Creator! All doubts and unbelief vanished and all scoffing was silenced. The sunset faded. With no moon, the night grew dark. Stars twinkled fiercely in a sparkling diadem around the earth. Still the fiery light that was Logos streamed from the altar bringing the Light of Life to every open heart.

Finally, still on his knees, Enoch dared to speak. “Oh! Thank You, Logos! Thank You! We worship You! You honor me by coming! How can I express my gratitude?”

“You express it as you seek My face each Sabbath.” He was speaking to the multitude as well as to Enoch. “I love you, each of you, and I have no greater delight than to come and fellowship with you when you are cleansed.”

Something in the way He said ‘cleansed’ made Cain speak up. “I, we all, repent of our wickedness, Logos. We turn our backs on it. We want to learn to hate it like You hate it, so we can have fellowship with You always. Right everyone?” He was speaking loudly to get a response from the crowd. Cain heard a chorus of affirmatives, which delighted his heart. He was grateful for Enoch and his ability to reach them at the party. That brought back fond memories of Enoch’s consecration, hundreds of years before. Logos Himself had come and consecrated him, and now, by his own choice, Enoch was responding to Logos and receiving His blessings. Cain knew that everyone in the whole world would benefit from Enoch’s choice.

So from that day forward they began to call on the name of Logos each Sabbath. It was glorious! Though there were still many who loved evil, yet as a culture evil was despised and condemned rather than tolerated and joked about. Laws were passed judging evildoers. Public leaders, even those who hid wickedness in their hearts, realized they’d better clean up their act if they wanted to be respected.

The three years passed. Logos returned one Sabbath in 240 AF to encourage them. “I have seen your repentance and your efforts to hate evil just as I hate it, and I am pleased. I have bound the adversary from destroying you as Mars returns. You shall feel the earth quake and see the lightning strike, but it will not harm you. I will keep you in the hollow of My hand and guard you as the treasure of My heart. But know this. Had you not repented, by this time next week you would have perished under the adversary’s merciless hand, for I cannot protect you when you choose his ways. I am well aware that many among you do still choose Satan’s ways in your hearts, for I see your hearts. You can deceive each other and even deceive yourselves, but you cannot deceive Me. Yet if you confess your sin and accept the blood sacrifice, I shall show mercy upon you all, for the sake of those who truly repent from the heart and seek My face each Sabbath.” Smiling, Logos vanished.

Mars did indeed come fearfully close. The earthquakes, lightning storms, and static electricity were incredible. Dozens of small moons of Mars collided with earth or burned up in the atmosphere, in spectacular fireworks. Mars raked across the earth at noon, raising what we know as the Apennine Mountains of Italy and Dinaric Alps of Yugoslavia. It shifted the poles by 18 degrees. It cracked the earth’s crust from what is now the Adriatic Sea clear across south of Turkey to connect with the previous crack at what is now the Red Sea.

[Note that at the time there were no seas in the area, just lakes. The Mediterranean Sea did not exist. The land from Turkey across the Balkan Peninsula through Italy was continuous, though ultimately these cracks would cause the crust to fail. See the maps at the end of this volume.]

Six hours after Mars had passed, another of her moons made one last collision. It was an irregular chunk of solid rock about 3 x 6 miles, left over from the breakup of Nyx many years ago. It came straight down over what we know as Australia, burning fiercely as it tumbled end over end on its way through the atmosphere. In an impact that shook the entire globe, it buried itself five miles deep in what we now know as the Australian Outback near the center of Australia. (Only a thousand feet remains visible today; the rest is buried deep in the sand. It is one of Earth’s largest monoliths. We know it as Ayers Rock, but it is known to the aborigines as the ancient sacred mountain Uluru.)

But the people and all their possessions were spared serious harm or injury. They acknowledged the miracle and gave the glory to God. This had a powerful effect on Cain’s descendants, so much that for about 600 years they continued to remember the Sabbath and offer the blood sacrifice for the people, thus keeping evil in check. Logos reciprocated and kept the adversary in check, preventing Mars from causing too much suffering and destruction.

CHAPTER 6 – ENOSH AND KENAN

During this time, Cain’s descendants multiplied, spreading east to what we now know as Persia. They became farmers, shepherds, carpenters, blacksmiths, musicians, builders, explorers, and more. They built thriving towns and cities, worked hard, and prospered.

Likewise, the little clan at New Eden now grew and prospered. As Logos had promised, Eve began having a new baby or two every other year. Seth and Serena had other children, too, and their son Enosh grew up, married his sister Evita, and began having children of his own. Logos insisted that they must forever remain separate from the line of Cain, so they prohibited their families’ intermarriage with Cain’s clan. Some stayed near Eden; others spread west over what is now the **Mediterranean Sea** and south into Arabia and Africa. They became known as the **Children of Seth**. That included Eve’s children too, except Cain. Even after that famous revival of Cain’s clan at Enoch, Logos insisted that the Children of Seth remain separate from the many descendants of Cain.

Seth, Serena, Enosh, and Evita continued living with Adam and Eve at Eden. Their children spread peacefully all across the land, in accord with Logo’s commission to “be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth.” However, Enosh and Evita’s 15th child, born in 259 AF, was a little dynamo from the start. His name was **Kenan**, ‘possessor’, and boy, did he ever have ambitions to possess!

When Kenan was 41 years old, still a youth, the entire world was busy with preparations for the next pass of Mars. *The appointed time was September 24th, 4740 BC, year 300 AF.* Adam's calculations indicated this would be a close, dangerous flyby. Kenan had a vivid dream just the week before the appointed time. He shared it with his parents. They took him east to Enoch, where he told Cain and the city elders. They called everyone together to the city square the very next day (which was the last day of preparation) and asked Kenan to relate his dream.

Young Kenan wasn't intimidated by the crowd. He stood and repeated his dream in great detail. He described a peaceful lake surrounded by low hills, and a lovely valley meadow covered by grasses and a few trees and bushes. He saw people streaming out of the city, hiking to the valley, and settling in little groups on the meadow, all looking upward as Mars approached. The earth shook violently, while everyone held to each other in fear. Then the hills on the far side of the lake collapsed into the lake, sending a mighty wall of water rushing up the valley. The people saw it coming, and tried frantically to run to the hills around the valley. But they were too slow. The wall of water crashed down upon them. As it retreated, it washed them back into the lake. They all drowned. Then Kenan awoke.

There was silence when Kenan finished his dream. The people looked at each other in shock. They knew those hills, that lake, that meadow. That is where they went to be safe from falling buildings during a Mars flyby!

Needless to say, the next day there was no one in that valley. They found other places to hide from the fury of Mars. This fifth close flyby of Mars was even worse than anyone had expected. It raked across what we know as ancient Persia, spinning Earth's crust around 18 degrees and pulling it together so that it bunched up in ugly ridges to become the rugged **Zagros** Mountains of Iran. When it was all over they surveyed the damage Mars had done (which was substantial). Many of them traveled out to the valley and found that everything in Kenan's dream had precisely come true – except because of Kenan's warning, nobody had been there and nobody had drowned.

Young Kenan was brought back to the city of Enoch in triumph, to be honored and praised by all the people. He was presented with gifts and acclaimed as the savior of the city. Kenan held his head up proudly and received the honors gladly, seeing great possibilities as to where this favor might take him. From then on, rumors spread that Kenan may have miraculous powers, even a supernatural connection with God Himself. He was destined to be a great leader – possibly even the Messiah that Logos had promised, the Redeemer of mankind!

Satan was delighted. His plan was working perfectly – by saving a few lives with his supernatural dream, he now had his crosslink between the cultures of Seth and Cain. *He would soon have the entire world under his control!*

As Kenan grew older, he was in to everything. He loved farming like his dad, Enosh, but took even greater delight in inventing new farming tools and methods. He also loved music, especially making musical instruments. He loved animals, powerful ones like horses, so he developed racing saddles and chariots. He loved people, and he loved being the center of attention. He was a natural born leader. There didn't seem to be any activity that he couldn't excel at. He was always finding better and faster ways of doing things.

Kenan married his younger sister Kate in 327 AF, at the age of 68. By 70, he had his firstborn, **Mahalalel**. But Kenan wasn't content to sit around raising a family. Oh no! He wanted to rule the world! He codified some laws, wrote a constitution, and organized the world's first governing system. By the time he was 90 (young in those days) he had the entire line of Seth looking to him as their leader from **Mehal**, his growing cultural center southwest of Enoch. Then he demonstrated the advantages of his system of laws to the **Cainites**. By the age of 100, with some brilliant political maneuvering, he had the entire populated world organized under a single government. Thus the first world empire resulted from leadership rather than conquest. Kenan was so charismatic, so brilliant, everyone naturally loved and trusted him. Whatever the problem, he always had the solution – no, several solutions. He gave people their choice, of course. But whichever they chose, it always seemed to work to his own advantage.

Enosh and Evita worried. Though they could see how much their son Kenan had benefited both clans, yet Logos had insisted that they remain separate from the line of Cain. Now Kenan was drawing them together under one government. When Enosh expressed his concerns, Kenan had a perfect solution, as always. "I'll have two capitals, Dad, one at Enoch in Nod for the Cainites, and the other at Mehal for the line of Seth. In each capital I'll appoint a governor, who will report to me, but they will be the ones their people will actually look to as their leader. That will keep the two lines separate. The only connection will be myself. I'll just go back and forth between the two cities to make sure everything is going okay."

Kenan's plan worked. He picked the best liked and most charismatic men to be his governors. He flattered the people by pretending that they were governing themselves, while behind the scenes he still held control and received tribute. Mahalalel, his firstborn, was his trusted governor at Mehal in the land of Kenan (which lay between the Euphrates and Pishon Rivers). Northeast of that, Tubal-cain, son of Lamech, by now an aged and respected merchant (having established a metalworking business in his younger years) became governor over the Cainites at Enoch in Nod. Prosperity was nearly universal; businesses sprang up all over. Inventions came at a rapid pace, making life easier. Luxurious big homes with indoor plumbing, flush toilets, glass windows, electric lights and fans, and evaporative air conditioning become common.

Trade flourished between Enoch and Mehal. Kenan, brilliant schemer that he was, recognized the need for a medium of trade. He quickly established a gold standard of monetary values. He planned and developed a network of well-built roads for high-speed stagecoaches and heavy carriages needed to support the burgeoning industries. Legal documents and written contracts became the proper way of doing business. Needing faster communications, Kenan invented the heliograph. He built towers along his roads so that reports could be telegraphed to him within minutes. His laws were few and fair, and with the people's support they were pretty well enforced merely by public opinion. The benign climate with its year-around summer, fertile fields, abundant resources, and the inventiveness and energy of the people all worked together to allow an incredible economic boom, almost beyond our imagining.

Kenan was wildly popular. Everyone recognized that their prosperity was the result of his wise and benevolent rule (and brilliant inventions), and they all loved him and his (now rather extended) family. Somehow, he managed to appoint his own sons and grandsons in key places throughout his empire. It grew to a thousand people reporting directly to him, who all trusted him and looked to him for the final decisions. He had absolute control.

And behind the scenes, Satan chortled with glee. By patiently cultivating Kenan, disguising his evil nature and presenting him to all the people as their benefactor, he had succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. He now had the trust and obedience of the entire world, the entire Bride of Logos. Satan had learned from his mistakes with Cain. Recognizing his own angry, bitter heart, Cain had hated it, and so had come to repentance. Satan would not make that mistake with Kenan. Kenan would always be a lovable 'good old boy', wanting everyone's best. Thus Satan schemed with his demon princes to use Kenan to pervert the entire race, cautiously, slowly, so that no one would realize it until it was too late.

Kenan, of course, was far too busy to keep the Sabbath. Oh, he encouraged everyone else to keep it – even had it codified into law. Anyone breaking the Sabbath was fined and shunned. But he and his own extended family, well, the government must go on, even on a Sabbath. So official functions were permitted, and even encouraged, on the Sabbath. When asked about it, Kenan laughed, "Of course I keep the Sabbath. What would life be without a day of rest? We in the government all relax around the table each Sabbath, tie up loose ends, and get our directions fresh from Logos for the week to come, as we enjoy our bread and wine. Without our Sabbath rest, we would have no government at all." And he would laugh again and slap you on the back. You would go away feeling that Kenan and his family were the most spiritual of all. Thus Satan kept the deception going while weaning Kenan's family away from any actual relationship with Logos. They were having too much fun ruling the world to want to know Logos.

Kenan's firstborn Mahalalel had also married young. When he was sixty-five Jared was born. He grew up to become a reflection of his grandfather's high-energy inventiveness and ambition. Kenan noticed, and by the time Jared was forty, he already had him heavily involved in politics. Up until this time, everyone had honored the command of Enosh (which he'd gotten directly from Logos) and had remained separate from the line of Cain. Though there was now extensive trade between them, yet laws and cultural taboos had prevented intermarriage.

But Jared was not trained in such things as morality or integrity. He was trained in politics and intrigue. Kenan made Jared his trusted spy within the Cainite branch of his government and had him settle at Enoch in Nod, marry a Cainite woman, and develop contacts among Tubal-cain's staff. Jared kept this secret from his family for many years.

This was earth's Golden Age. Historians would record it as the most peaceful and prosperous period earth has ever had, or would ever experience again. There were no wars, no walls, no weapons. Taxes were low. Laws were few and well-defined. Kenan's benevolent dictatorship kept evil at bay. The lands of Nod and Kenan had literally exploded with millions of happy and wealthy people. **Sethites** had spilled across the Pishon and were now filling the land of Havilah, west of Mehal. But with wealth comes self-indulgence. Oh, they still kept the Sabbath, but it was merely a ritual. They were seeking more for pleasure than for Logos. He never responded when they sacrificed the lamb. Pleasures and prosperity had become their god.

For many years Logos protected them anyway, for the sake of the revival at the time of Enoch. However, He did give them a stern warning in 540 AF at the 9th Mars flyby. The sprawling metropolis of Enoch was devastated and Tubal-cain, who was only 319, was tragically killed.

The city was rebuilt and the government restored mostly due to Jared's heroic efforts. In appreciation (and with a little surreptitious influence from Kenan) the men of Enoch elected Jared as their next governor to replace Tubal-cain. But in their zeal to rebuild, they didn't heed Logos' warning. There was no real repentance.

Jared's parents were proud of him and his efforts to help the devastated Cainites. But they wondered why he had remained a bachelor so long. Everyone knows a ruler must have a wife! So Mahalalel arranged a marriage between Jared and his younger sister Judith at Mehal in 546 AF, when Jared was 152. But nine years later, when Judith was pregnant with her firstborn, Jared let it slip that he already had four children by his secret Cainite wife in Enoch.

When his family found out, Enosh was furious. He called Kenan aside and grilled him. "Why have you allowed Jared to marry this Cainite woman? I told you Logos wants the two lines kept separate."

“But Dad, that was so long ago. The Cainites were pretty wicked back before your birth, but they have been faithfully keeping Sabbath now all these years, and really, they’re just fine now. There are some bad ones, but there are bad ones among our own family, too. All in all, I’d say the Cainites are just as good as the Sethites, and I really don’t see any reason to keep us separate any more. We need each other for trade, sharing inventions... You’ve no idea how much the Cainites contribute to our culture! Besides, I really need Jared to keep tabs on things for me at Enoch. But to live among the Cainites he has to be like one of them.” Thus Kenan justified his disobedience. And Satan rubbed his hands in glee.

Judith did her best to keep her vows and submit to her husband, but she was clearly unhappy with the situation. Who can blame her? Jared now spent most of his time ruling Nod with his Cainite wife and family, leaving Judith all alone at Mehal. She was alone when their first son was born in 556 AF. She was especially miffed when Jared returned and named their baby **Enoch** after the city he ruled. After he left again, she felt abandoned and betrayed. She saw through his city’s veneer of respectability. (And she was jealous of her Cainite competition!)

So she went to Nod to visit Jared. But he was furious with her for coming, afraid she might try to break up his first marriage, or worse, expose his Sethite lineage. He wouldn’t let her see his first wife or their children (now numbering five, with the new baby). He cursed at her, slapped her face cruelly, and sent her home crying. From then on, she never called the city of Enoch anything but ‘that wicked city’. But she couldn’t stay in Mehal, either. She just abandoned her beautiful big home, took Enoch, now a year and a half old, and fled to New Eden.

The clan at New Eden was glad to have them. As the Sabbath was approaching, Eve told Judith the story of Cain’s repentance and how Logos had accepted him and even consecrated his son Enoch. So Judith agreed to meet Logos and ask Him to consecrate her baby Enoch.

At the sacrifice, Adam explained that the lamb had to die so their sins could be covered. Judith knew what sin was. She clearly saw the sin of ‘that wicked city’ and of her husband. But she had never thought of herself as having any real sin. The public sacrifice at Mehal had been an impersonal thing, just a ritual, really. The few times she’d witnessed it she’d never seen the blood or even the dead lamb. She had heard the generic confession of sin over the head of the lamb and the traditional cry, “It is finished. You are all cleansed!” But she’d never seen anybody actually changed by it, least of all her own wicked husband.

Now as she saw the red blood sprinkled on the altar, all that changed. She felt dirty and worthless, finally seeing her angry, bitter, critical nature for what it was: sin. When Logos appeared in the flames of the altar, she fell on her face before Him, crying out to be forgiven and changed.

Logos paused, His face bowed in anguish, as if feeling a pain beyond our comprehension. Judith continued to plead with Him, while the others stood around, stunned. This was the first time in years that Logos had not come saying, “The sacrifice is acceptable. You are all cleansed!” What could have gone wrong?

Finally, as Judith’s pleading dissolved into sobbing, Logos lifted His head and spoke, “Judith.” She stopped weeping suddenly. “Judith.” She looked up at Him. His eyes penetrated deeply into her soul. Judith knew beyond any doubt that He could see everything she had ever been and done. “Judith, you have confessed and repented of your own sin, but there is one more thing I require of you. You are one flesh with Jared. He has become My bitter enemy, working to pervert My laws and turn My precious ones away from Me. Repent for him, too.” Logos again bowed and wept as if His heart were broken.

Now it was Judith’s turn to be stunned – and indignant. “Wait, Sir. I can’t repent for Jared. He’s gotta do his own repenting. I’m not responsible for his sins! I hate them just as much as You!” Instantly she was sorry that it had come out sounding so callous, but she couldn’t take it back.

Logos continued to weep, while Judith meditated on what He had just said. She knew Logos was right and she was wrong, but she didn’t know how, or how to fix it. She felt like she was being blamed for something over which she had no control. Finally Logos lifted His head and spoke again. “Judith, you were treated cruelly. I know, for every distress falls upon Me as well. Yet, you have a bond with your husband that is stronger than you realize. In being angry, critical, and bitter, and jealous of his first wife, you bind yourself to his sins – and to his judgment. Until you forgive him from your heart and love him purely, I cannot free you, or forgive you. If you repent for him and pray for him – yes, pray as if your own life depends on it – that will clear your soul of the chains that bind you to his sin. Then I can forgive and cleanse you. Will you do it?”

With that knowledge came an abundant stream of grace, melting Judith’s hard heart. She fell on her knees and cried out in repentance for her criticizing, judging, condemning, and even hating Jared. Then she earnestly repented for Jared and prayed for his redemption. When she finally finished, she looked up at Logos and found Him smiling. “It is done. The sacrifice is acceptable to Father,” He said softly. “You are cleansed. All of you. Now, Judith, My beloved. May I consecrate your baby Enoch?”

“Yes, Logos!” Judith wiped her eyes and looked around. There was Eve, holding her baby, with Adam’s arm wrapped around them. And there were Seth and Serena, and Enosh and Evita – all of them standing right behind her wiping tears from their eyes. Judith realized that they had been earnestly praying for her – repenting for her! “Thank you. Thank you all,” she humbly said as she took her baby and held him out to Logos.

The flame that was Logos blazed brightly as He stretched out His hands over little Enoch. Judith marveled that the flame could appear so white-hot, yet be so gentle and caressing in its warmth. “Hear Me Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mahalalel, son of Kenan, son of Enosh, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God. Your name means consecrated. Now I consecrate you to Me. Never forget who you are; keep yourself from evil; guard yourself against temptation; seek My face; love Me; love My ways, My wisdom, and My righteousness; enjoy sweet fellowship with Me all the days of your life. Walk with Me and I shall walk with you from this day on forever. I invite you to be the very first to enter into the glorious Kingdom I have prepared for you. Set your heart’s desire on nothing less.”

Their Sabbath fellowship that evening and the next morning involved many things. Two became especially significant to Judith. The first was that cryptic invitation Logos had given to her son, Enoch. “Logos,” she asked, “What is that glorious Kingdom You talked about, and why did You invite Enoch to be the first to enter?”

“That is a great question, Judith.” Logos beamed down upon them with such love and joy radiating from His face they could hardly stand it. “I created you all to manage My universe for Me, to rule My creation, but not apart from Me, for apart from Me you can do nothing. I am the King. As you dwell in Me and walk with Me, you rule by My authority in you. That is My Kingdom. You are all kings and queens, but only as I am King in and through you.

“However, sin destroyed that, for it broke the union, the fellowship we had. Except briefly after the Sabbath sacrifice, your lives have become filled with the labor, pain, and sorrow of making a living. You have little time or inclination to rule with Me. Your focus is primarily self-centered – your protection, your provision, your position. It all comes from your own plans and efforts, and for the most part, I am left out.” The sadness of His expression was felt by all, as they caught a glimpse of how much Logos desired their fellowship, and how great was His loss.

“But with your baby Enoch, I may have here a unique opportunity. I have in you, Judith, one who is learning to hate evil, since you have suffered such bitter sorrow, pain, and bondage because of it. Jared treated you brutally; yet seeing the evil and hating it, you were able to forgive him and love him enough to intercede for him. You cannot imagine how much I rejoice in you for that!

“If you keep those attitudes and remain faithful to the vows you spoke today, your influence will enable your baby to grow up hating evil and loving Me. Enoch will choose to set himself apart for Me. He will love My wisdom and My ways, and cherish My righteousness. He will walk with Me all the days of his life, and trust Me for all his needs. He thus could become the very first one to fully enter My kingdom. He, and you, would have no greater joy or fulfillment in life. Will you accept this gift I offer?”

“Yes, Logos!” Judith was fairly overwhelmed with the outpouring of love flowing down upon her, and she bowed her face to the ground in worship and adoration.

The other question especially significant for Judith was asked by Eve. “Logos, why was our sacrifice not acceptable to Father until Judith had repented for Jared’s sins? Our cleansing shouldn’t be dependent on their problems.”

“You are correct, Eve. Your cleansing does not depend on Judith. Each of you is cleansed based on your own heart of repentance and faith. But family bonds are stronger than you know. My waiting until I could pronounce all of you cleansed allowed you time to express your bond of love for Judith and intercede for her. Thus you all gained wisdom, and in your intercession for Judith, you all have a share in her victory. Even Jared has been touched by it! Judith could not be cleansed while holding a lie in her heart.”

Judith was startled. “I thought it was my unforgiveness of Jared that kept me from receiving Your forgiveness.”

“True, Judith. But unforgiveness is a symptom of a deeper sin. I am unconditional love, even to those whose sin I hate. When you saw Jared’s sin, you despised him in your heart, believing yourself better than him, thus more worthy of My forgiveness. That is a diabolical lie, for no sinner is at all worthy of My forgiveness. Not until you could love him enough to acknowledge your psychic bond with him, take his sin as your own and offer it to Me in true repentance, and fully forgive him, could you be cleansed.”

Then and there Judith’s life was changed. It was truly a miracle of grace. The words of Logos had a profound impact in her heart. They burned like a fire in her bones. She had seen her sin, and Jared’s sin, and she hated it. Now she was clean – but not because she was worthy – because of Logos’ unconditional love, mercy, and grace. Judith determined that from now on, whenever she saw sin in herself or anyone else, she would hate it and repent for it, yet still continue to love. Never again would she fall prey to the bitterness, anger, and judgmental attitudes that had bound her before. She looked down at her baby in her arms. He would not grow up with a bitter, critical mom! He would grow up with a mom who loves unconditionally, like Logos, and who repents and prays for everyone.

Judith lived in the peaceful high valley with Adam and Eve for two more weeks, strengthening her faith and her relationship with Logos. But then she realized she needed to return to her husband. She held no illusions about Jared being any different as a result of her conversion, but Logos had assured her that she was Jared’s true wife, and she knew she had to keep her vows before God.

So she took Enoch and returned to her lovely home in the bustling city of Mehal. Jared was not there; he now spent nearly all of his time at ‘that wicked city’ in Nod. But after her time at New Eden, Judith was shocked at how wicked the city of Mehal now seemed to her.

Though they outwardly kept the Sabbath, there was no meeting with Logos and no attempt to curb the lusts of the flesh. Everything in the city was focused on self-centered pleasures. All the affluence, opulence, and luxury – the sly seductiveness of the big city was a harsh contrast to the simple life she had lived at New Eden.

With horror Judith realized the city had not changed. The change was in herself. She had been comparing Mehal to ‘that wicked city’ at Nod. But in comparison to Eden, she could see how wicked Mehal actually was. *How could she protect baby Enoch from the evil culture around her? How could he learn to love Logos – His ways, His wisdom, His righteousness – as Logos had said at his consecration?*

She tried to privately see Kenan or Mahalalel to talk to them about truly seeking to meet with Logos at the public sacrifices in Mehal, but they brushed her off with a sneer and a, “What could you, a woman, possibly know about that? Go home and take care of your baby.”

There was nothing else to do. She was alone with Enoch in her big house. She bowed her head and heart in earnest prayer. For a solid week she never left the home. When the food ran out she refused to go shopping, determined to fast until Logos answered. She prayed fervently for Enoch, for Jared, for her relatives, for Mehal, and for deliverance from the wickedness of the culture around her.

Enoch was no longer just an infant. He had become an energetic toddler with a huge appetite. Without food, Judith grew faint trying to nurse him. But she remained determined to persist in prayer until she had an answer. That evening, as dizziness began to overwhelm her, she heard a knock on the door, and a tall rough man with a heavy beard and a big backpack stepped in. Judith drew Enoch close, fearful, helpless, aware of her weakness.

The adversary, seeing his chance for the kill on this one lonely holdout – this one repentant soul in a vast empire of his willing subjects – slipped past her covering of angels to whisper in her ear, “You know he’ll kill your baby, then rape and kill you. You have no defense. You are too weak to resist. The pain will be too much to bear. Just give up. Pass out. Unconsciousness will be so sweet!” He reached out his hand to push her when she fell, so she would hit her head on the marble floor tiles and die.

“Keep your filthy hands off her!” Michael was right there. “You know the law! I have permission from Logos to attack if you go even one inch beyond the law. By the strength of Logos I can defeat you!”

Michael whispered in her other ear, “Remember Logos. Remember His love for you. Remember His power, glory, and grace. Remember His promises, and His prophecy over your baby. You are the right mother, the only mother, who can raise Enoch to fulfill that prophecy, to teach him to walk with Logos. He said it Himself! Don’t give up just because you are weak. Look to Logos for strength.”

Judith prayed silently for strength, shook off the brief temptation to surrender to fear, took a deep breath and sat up straight. She held Enoch at her breast and looked the stranger in the eye. The recent memories of her glorious fellowship with Logos came flooding back to her, like a flow of pure energy. She spoke boldly. “Who are you, sir, and what is your business here?” Satan, recognizing his defeat once again, fled, disgusted that even such a weak, puny woman had found the strength to choose Logos.

“I have a message for you about your husband Jared, but first, you must eat.” The man smiled and bowed to her, then opened his pack and handed her bread, cheese, and a bottle of fresh wine. “Strength for your journey,” he said simply, then waited silently by the door while she ate.

After she had finished, the man spoke again. “Jared is badly injured. He needs you. There was a riot four weeks ago. He escaped by a miracle. His entire family was slain. His home is burned to the ground, and all his possessions at Enoch were destroyed or stolen. The people thought he was killed in the fire. They will kill him if they discover him alive. You must help him escape from Enoch secretly. Bring clothes for him. They may not recognize him in clothes from the Sethite culture. And bring a horse and cart. He is unable to walk. You will find him at the house of Fred and Kathy, two houses down from where his home once stood.” The stranger bowed, retreated backwards out the door, and was gone.

“Thank you. Wait!” Judith called out, hurrying to the door, but the sudden exertion made her almost collapse, and when she got to the door and looked out, the stranger was nowhere to be seen. “I don’t have a horse and cart,” she called to the wind, and turned back inside to get ready. Suddenly she felt strengthened. Perhaps it was the food; perhaps it was an awareness that Logos must be answering her prayers, and He would guide her. She got out a large amount of money, some clothes for her and the baby, and a change of clothes in the latest casual Sethite style for Jared. Then she set out to find a cart and some supplies.

Sure enough, she was soon able to negotiate a deal for a fine horse and cart. She bought food for the journey and immediately started out. As she sat there in the cart, her baby happily enjoying the beauty of the world around them after too long in the house, she thought about that stranger. *Who was he? And how did he get away so fast? Maybe he was an angel?* Suddenly her fears returned. *Maybe he was a spy from ‘that wicked city’, luring her into a trap?* She prayed for wisdom. Logos assured her heart that she was doing the right thing.

When she reached ‘that wicked city’ she saw that Jared’s magnificent mansion was just a pile of burned rubble. She drove on past, shaking her head in disbelief. It had been the largest, most lavish home in the city. “Destruction and death are the fruits of wickedness,” came to her mind, and she recognized the Spirit of Logos speaking to her.

She continued on down the road to the second house, the home of Fred, one of Jared's deputies. When she came to the gate, Fred's guards were kind to her, bringing her in quickly, taking care of her horse, and leading her inside. Fred and Kathy were there. They recognized her and thanked her for coming. "How did you know Jared was here?" they asked, taking her to a back bedroom.

"Your messenger found me at Mehal and told me what had happened. Thank you for caring for Jared."

"But I sent no messenger. Jared said you'd gone off to New Eden. None of us even knows where that is."

"Well," she whispered as they entered the bedroom, "Somebody's messenger found me!" Jared lay on the bed, injured but well cared for. She ran to his side and cradled his head in her arms. "Oh, Jared! I'm so sorry about your family and your house, but thank Logos you're okay! I've come to take you home. How are you? I've missed you so!"

"Well, I'm bruised all over, my legs are broken, some of my ribs got broken too, and..." Jared said hesitantly, then his face darkened. "How come you're so glad to see me? You sure were angry with me the last time you were here. How can you be sorry my home and family here are gone? You hated my wife and kids here at Enoch. You even hated me for naming our baby after 'this wicked city'." He spat it out and turned his head away, trembling in rage and pain.

Judith looked at Fred and Kathy, who backed out of the room, faces red. Judith took Jared's head again, pulling it gently toward her. "I was wrong, Jared. What I did to you was wrong. I am so sorry! Please forgive me!" She gently kissed him on the forehead. "But I never hated you. I love you! You are my husband! I was bitter and angry for some of the things you did. I was full of hatred and jealousy against your other wife. But honestly, I never hated you!"

She kissed him again, continuing in her sweetest tone. "I love you! I didn't realize how much I hurt you and drove you away by all my nagging and my anger, bitterness, and jealousy. Please forgive me. I will never be that way again!"

With her gentle words, Jared's temper cooled and the anger drained from his face. "Well, now there is no 'other wife' left to be jealous about, anyway. Besides," he paused, brow furrowed. "You're right. Enoch truly is a wicked city. I can't wait to get out of here and back to Mehal. You won't believe what they tried to do to me. I was just trying to help them! It's a miracle I'm alive at all! The stupid, beastly..."

"So will you forgive me, and be my husband again?" Judith pled softly.

"Uh, yes," Jared took a deep breath, wincing at the pain. "I will forgive you and be your husband again, but on one condition. That you forgive me for being such a jerk, and for being so unfaithful and insensitive to you and lying to you about my first wife, and for neglecting you and caring more about my job here than about you and your baby..."

A brief look of horror crossed his face. "Our baby! How is Enoch? He must be almost a year old by now. Can he walk yet? Where is he? Did you bring him?"

Judith laughed, suddenly bending forward and kissing Jared full on the mouth. "Yes, he is here, and he's fine. Uh... he's nearly two now, you know. No, he doesn't walk. He runs, everywhere he goes. He's out there entertaining Fred's guards. And of course I forgive you! You were never a jerk, just a bit preoccupied with important business matters. But I love you. I'm sorry I wasn't much help before, but I will try to be more help in your business."

"Well, that is kind of you, now that I have no business!" The lilt in his voice and the twinkle in his eyes told Judith he was joking. She hugged him, then ran to get the baby.

"Come, Enoch. Come see your father." She swept him up off the floor, where he had been running around the guard's legs and diving under their chairs. Suddenly Enoch decided to be shy, and buried himself in his mother's blouse. Judith brought him back to Jared's bed. "Enoch. This is your father. He is part of our family. We love him, don't we Enoch. Here, you tell him. Say, 'I love you, Dad.'" She sat him down on the bed.

Enoch said it, too fast, and bounced right back up in his mother's arms. "Tell him, Enoch, not me. Go give him a hug. He's been hurt. See his legs? He needs a hug."

That finally got through. Enoch really looked at Jared for the first time. Then he said, "I love you, Dad," for real, and crawled across the bed to give his dad a big hug.

"I've not been a very good father to you, my son," Jared said. "But I will do better, by Logos I will!"

Judith's eyes opened wide. "Jared! I didn't know that you knew Logos!"

"Oh. ... Well, I don't really. That is just an expression, an oath. Nobody really knows Logos. They just say that because... well... there are legends that..."

"I know Him."

"Well, yeah. We've all heard those stories – about His creating the world and protecting us from Mars when we do the sacrifice and all. But nobody knows Him personally. I mean, He can't really help us. We gotta help ourselves."

Judith prayed fervently for the right words. "I met Him, at New Eden with Adam and Eve. He helped me love you. He forgave my anger and bitterness and filled me with love instead. If you come with me, I'll introduce you to Him. He's very friendly, once you let Him deal with your sins..."

Jared's eyes were filled with wonder. "Serious? You really met Him? In person? I didn't think that you could... Ahh... No wonder you seem so different..."

Judith nodded. "He taught me how to repent. He knew me! He knew about all my sins, everything."

“Oh.” Jared thought about that for a moment. Enoch was playing with his beard. “Well, I’ve always been a pretty good person. Look at all the good I’ve done for people: combining the two cultures and helping Kenan rule the Cainites and establish a good stable world government. Oh I know, I treated you pretty rotten sometimes. I guess I’ll need to repent of that, but...”

Judith almost said that Logos didn’t want the cultures combined or the world government, and considered Jared His enemy, but she thought better of it and bit her tongue. “Thank you, Jared. He’ll let you know what you need to repent for. He sure did for me! You’ll go with me then?”

“What did He make you repent for?”

“Well, all my anger, bitterness, and jealousy, and my lack of love for you and your family here. And...”

“And...?”

“Well, it was really strange.” Judith sent up another prayer for wisdom. “He had me repent for you, as if your sins were my sins, too.” She hesitated. “I... I also prayed that Logos would open your eyes to see things the way He sees them. Logos showed me that my prayers for you help cover and protect us both, since we are bound together in marriage. Since then I’ve prayed for you every day.”

“Hmm...” Jared lay back, thinking. “When was that?”

“Uh...” She counted up. “Just four Sabbaths ago.”

“That’s what I thought.” Jared looked intently back at Judith. “When Tubal-cain died in the earthquake and I took over, no one here knew I was from the line of Seth. They all loved me, and they were glad to have me head the government and bring closer ties to our family at Mehal. I thought I was firmly in control here at Enoch. My family, my commanders and deputies, my spies and informers, were all totally loyal and working with me. But right after you left, it all fell apart. I couldn’t believe it. The word got out that I’m a son of Mahalalel, and rumors started to fly! At first I thought you had ratted on me! But then Fred said he had heard the rumors before you even came. Suddenly, overnight, everyone was suspicious, angry, and jealous of everyone else. The back stabbing, name-calling, jockeying for position... nobody trusted anyone anymore. I tried so hard to hold it together! There were riots. I had to turn my guards against my own people. And then my spy system was exposed. Everyone was accusing me of all sorts of things, only about half of ’em true. They put me on trial. Me! Their emperor! After I’d been so good to them!

“Many of my own men turned against me. I got word to Kenan at Mehal, and he sent soldiers to defend me. We put the city under martial law, suppressed everything, locked up everyone who even looked crosseyed at us, imposed curfews, the whole bit. It was ugly, but things quieted down. So I slowly started lifting the controls. They were stifling the economy and making everyone really hate me.

“But when I released the rabble-rousers, they went right back to making trouble. They didn’t appreciate the benefit of the unified world government Kenan and I had established. They kept chanting, ‘No, no, no! Sons of Seth have got to go!’ I couldn’t win! I finally rounded ’em all up and executed them – I had to! They wanted to destroy my government! But then the roof fell in, literally.”

Jared paused, wincing, as if reliving a horrid memory. “There was a riot. Everybody blamed me for the problems. This huge crowd surrounded my beautiful state-house – the domed capitol – and started pounding at it with sledge hammers. It was brick so I thought it would stand. But the riot went on for days; they were hoping for Mars to come and finish me off. It did. Even though this was an off-year, the weakened structure collapsed, killing some of my men. Part of the roof fell on me, breaking my legs and messing me up pretty badly. I was in agony. I expected them to kill me right there – even hoped they would.

“But instead, when they found me, they pulled me out of the ruins and carried me in a sort of a wild celebration parade down Main Street, all the way to my own home. You have no idea the torment I was in; by the time they dumped my mangled body on my front porch, I was screaming with pain and anger.

“My wife and kids came to the door and carried me in – laid me out on the couch and tended my wounds. I was just beginning to think I might live after all, when we realized the mob outside had set fire to our house, all around it! There was no escape! We huddled together in the great room, trying to breathe, and said our last good-byes. The heat was ferocious. One by one, I saw my wife and children succumbing to the flames. I knew I was a dead man. But suddenly, it was cool around me. I looked up to see this giant of a man filling our room. He said, ‘Your wife prayed for you. Come.’ I knew instantly he spoke of you, not the wife I saw in flames beside me. That was four Sabbaths ago! He picked me up, carried me right through the flames and the crowd as if they weren’t even there, and brought me here. The mob still thinks I burned up.”

“Oh, darling! I had no idea you went through so much! I’m so sorry! I didn’t pray soon enough, or hard enough! I thought my prayers would protect you.” Judith put her head down and sobbed. “Please forgive me.”

“Judith!” She stopped in the middle of a sob. “Your prayers did protect me! I’m here, aren’t I? And look at me. Not a single burn. I didn’t even have the smell of smoke on me. Other than the crushed legs, I’ve mostly healed up already. That man who carried me? He was not just a man. He was a god! It was a miracle! But just like you prayed, I do see things differently now. I look at the things I did to try to keep my government together, especially executing the ones trying to change it, and realize that I probably deserved their murderous anger. And I realize that you are my true wife, not the Cainite woman I married in Enoch.

"I didn't understand what was going on before, but when you came... When you forgave me and still wanted me and said you'd been praying for me, it all became clear. I do want to go with you to New Eden, to meet Logos!"

"Thank you, Jared. You won't regret it." Judith glanced out the window. Sol had just set. "Let's go right now. I have a cart. We'll drive all night. We can sleep; my horse already knows the highway to Mehal. By morning we'll be halfway there. There we'll get our things and head for New Eden."

"Sure. Let's do it. Hey, Fred!" The big man quickly came into the room; it was obvious he had been listening just outside the door. "Judith and I would like to escape the city tonight. Thank you so much for caring for me. And thank Kathy, too. She tended my wounds so gently and carefully! Give her a big hug from me. Now if your guards will carry me to Judith's cart, we'll be out of your hair and endanger you no longer. You know what would happen to you if they found me here!" He gave a mirthless chuckle.

But Fred wasn't ready to let him go. "Please, sir, uh, Your Royal Highness..."

"Aw, cut the accolades. I'm not an emperor any more. I'm just a fleeing refugee. Plain old Jared."

"Please, Jared. May we go with you? I know, at times I was critical of you, but when worst came to worst, I stood by you. My family and I, well, we want to see Logos too! We hate the wickedness here. I talked it over with Kathy and the kids. They're packing now. I have two carts..."

"You'd have to leave your lovely home behind. Besides, you're Cainites. You wouldn't be accepted among..."

"Kathy and I are Sethites! Kenan sent us to spy on you. So it wouldn't surprise me if they burned our home next! That mob is still in control. There's no government left. The whole city might burn. Please, may we go with you?"

Jared gave him a wry smile, asking half in jest, "Are you ready to repent of all your many sins, too?"

"Yes, sir! We want to meet Logos!" he repeated. He was dead serious. There were tears in his eyes.

So it was settled. After a flurry of activity packing up the carts and hitching the horses, they left just after midnight, with darkness as their covering. This was Nisan 14 (our April 24th), the first **Exodus**.

Besides Kathy and their five children, Fred had two male servants and three burly guards living at his house. They were all loyal, and eagerly responded when he asked who wanted to go. Fred's youngest three, aged one to six, rode in Judith's cart; they were too young to walk and Fred's two carts were loaded to the top with everyone's stuff. His older two children walked alongside, trying to be quiet but enjoying the adventure. Fred and Kathy drove the second cart, and a guard drove the third. The others walked behind, ready to defend Fred's family to the death.

I am sad to report that they didn't make it. Someone had seen Fred hitching up his horses, and knowing that he had been one of Jared's most loyal deputies, had woken up thirty others. They came running up behind, screaming bloody murder as they came through the gates of the city.

"Flee! Take my children! Head for the ford! We'll try to stop the mob, and catch up with you at Mehal." Fred yelled to Judith, who was driving the first cart. Judith had no choice. Jared couldn't fight, and she had to protect the children now all piled on her cart. After a breathless gallop down to the Euphrates River, they splashed across the shallows at the ford, then climbed the hill on the far side before looking back. There they saw Fred's two carts in flames, with the mob dancing triumphantly around them, dividing up all his worldly goods.

"Why, Logos, why? He was trying to help us! He wanted to meet You, to repent, to learn Your ways."

"Peace, My beloved." Logos stood in front of the cart. Jared gave a gasp. It was the same man who had carried him through the flames to Fred and Kathy's house. "Fred and his household gave their lives for yours. I have seen their deeds and their faith, and have counted it to them for righteousness. They shall dwell with Me always. But you have a task for Me, if you will. Take Fred's children as your own. You will find among them a pure mate for My special treasure Enoch when he is of age – Fred's youngest, Amy. Now, continue your journey. I have an appointment with you at Eden." With that, He was gone, like a breath of air.

The little group in the cart wept for Fred and Kathy and their servants. They waited until first light to see if there were survivors. There were none. "Your parents died to save us. They were very good, very brave. We all would have died if they had not stopped to defend us. Now we must be strong. We will be your parents from now on. We will love and care for you as if you were our own children."

So, with many hugs and tears, they journeyed on. Jared and Judith marveled that though Fred had been lost trying to bring all that stuff, his children had all been saved just because his overloaded carts had been too full for them.

They spent their travel time getting to know their five newest children. Jared was awed. He had lost five children from his Cainite wife, but had gained five children from Fred and Kathy, who had turned out to be Sethites after all!

Judith hurried to arrive in New Eden just before the Sabbath. She wanted Jared to be cleansed right away, so he would feel at home with the others there. Sure enough, there was Adam, preparing the sacrifice, with his wife Eve standing by Seth and Serena, and Enosh, Evita, and six of their children gathered around. Judith, Jared, and their six children were welcomed gladly into the fellowship. They all participated in the ceremony. Jared was especially eager to repent of his sins, as his eyes had been opened as to how brutishly he had treated Judith.

When Logos came and pronounced them all cleansed and acceptable to the Father, Jared was on his face weeping and worshiping, and thanking Logos for sparing his life. “You were My bitter enemy, Jared. You fought against Me all your life. Yet I am unconditional love, and when you were in trouble, I saved you. Now that you have repented, I am delighted to accept you as My beloved friend.”

“Thank You, thank You, Logos! Whatever can I do to show my thanks?”

“You show your thanks to Me by loving and caring for My precious ones. If you work to raise your children (including the five adopted from Fred and Kathy) to know and love Me, My blessing will cover you and your family. Seek My face each Sabbath. Always remember what I have done for you. I will respond with My protection and love, and give you wisdom and grace to follow in My ways.”

“I will, Lord. This family shall never cease to love and obey You. I swear it with all my heart!”

And behind him, Judith and all the others there echoed their fervent Amens. *The date, for those of you who care to track such things, is Nisan 21, 558 AF (After the Fall of Adam), or about May 1, 4482 BC on our calendar.*

CHAPTER 8 – ENOCH AND AMY, METHUSELAH AND MARION, LAMECH AND LEAH

Thus was established the most godly family since the Fall of Adam. Judith and Jared kept their vows, and took care to keep their children close to Logos and far from the wickedness they had escaped. Sure enough, at the tender age of 63, their firstborn son Enoch married Fred and Kathy’s youngest, beautiful Amy, thus starting a new family also dedicated to keeping Jared’s vow.

They settled at New Eden with Adam and Eve, living within view of the very hill where the flaming sword had vaporized the lamb and the altar, driving Adam and Eve from Eden. Every Sabbath when they offered the sacrifice, they looked up to the hill, and remembered the promise Logos had given of the Redeemer. Every time they shared the communion meal, they remembered that it was their sin that had crushed Him, yet He forgave and loved them.

Two years later **Methuselah** was born to Enoch and Amy, followed by other sons and daughters. Methuselah grew to manhood there in Eden. He married Marion, a young cousin, at the age of 185, and within two years they had a son, **Lamech**. Everyone would gather each Sabbath for fellowship. Adam would tell again the grand stories of Creation, the original Garden of Eden, the Fall, the ram sacrifice, and the promise of the Redeemer. Then Logos would come to bless and encourage them. With their now rapidly multiplying family, several hundred often showed up to listen to Adam, from the little cottages and farms springing up around New Eden. They all lived in peace.

But in the lands of Nod and Kenan, it had been 600 years since the great revival of Enoch son of Cain. All this time they had kept the Sabbath, so Logos had blessed and prospered them, protecting them from the worst of Satan’s torments from Mars. But Sabbath-keeping had become just a ritual. The lamb sacrifice had all but been forgotten. Logos had not come to them for many years. His name had become merely a legend, an oath, or a curse word. The 14th close pass of Mars, in 840 AF (4200 BC), raised the Kjolen Mountains of Norway and Sweden, shifted Earth’s spin axis 25 degrees, and knocked down buildings all over the globe. Few died, as Logos was just trying to warn them. He did not want them to be destroyed. But the warning had little effect; the people trusted in their ability to protect themselves, rather than seeking Logos.

Yet He continued to protect them for the sake of a few who remained faithful from the time of Enoch’s revival. They still loved Logos, and often returned to New Eden to seek His face and to learn wisdom from the patriarchs: Adam, Cain, Seth, Enosh, Jared, and Enoch.

When Lamech was 56 years old, still a child by ancient standards, he began to ask embarrassing questions. “Grandfather Adam,” he said. “Why do you and Grandma Eve look so old? Why are you so weak, and why do you no longer work out in the gardens along with the rest of us? Grandpa Seth and Grandma Serena are almost as old as you, and they still work hard out in the gardens.”

Of course to a 56-year-old, Adam’s 930 years was nearly the same as Seth’s 800 years. But the questions did cause Adam and Eve to consider. “Well, Lamech,” Adam said slowly. “Let’s ask Logos that question next Sabbath. I don’t have a good answer. I just... I feel tired all the time. And I’ve lost the pleasure I once had in working the garden.”

When they posed the question to Logos, tears came to His eyes. “Remember what I told you back in the Garden of Eden? ‘In the very day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in dying you shall surely die the death.’”

Adam and Eve remembered that fateful warning. “Yes, Logos. We died to You. We died to Your righteousness. We lost our glory covering. Now we can come into Your presence only through the blood sacrifice.”

“In eating the fruit, you ingested death into yourselves. The blood sacrifice can only slow the process. Your day is now drawing to a close. You are dying.”

The gathered group stared dumbly at Logos. They knew death. They faced it bravely each week when they slew the lamb. But Adam, their beloved patriarch? “It is good, Logos, my Redeemer, my beloved, my Friend. We have grown weary of the constant struggle against sin and its effects in this world. We are ready to die. Our only regret is that we have not yet seen the consequences of our sin erased, and the perfect restored. But we trust all will be accomplished in Your perfect time.”

Logos was openly weeping now. “Thank you, My friend. Yes, all shall indeed be restored, but you shall not see it in this life. According to your faith, you shall see the fulfillment of your hopes and dreams—in the ages to come. I allow your weakness to give your family time to prepare for your passing.” He turned and pointed to the distant hill. “Up there, where the flaming sword once struck the altar. Bury their bodies in a hole in the ground.” Then, tears still streaming down His face, Logos disappeared.

Within the week, His word was fulfilled. Eve died first, in her sleep. Adam awoke and immediately knew she was gone. Early the next morning, they buried her body up on the hill where they had first seen the flaming sword touch down. Adam never said a word. His grief was too great. He never ate, or even looked up, again. Within two days he died of a broken heart. After 930 years of faithful, loving marriage, the separation was more than he could bear. His grandchildren buried him beside his wife. The sole eye-witnesses to the perfection of the first Garden of Eden were gone. All of New Eden mourned.

Young Lamech was deeply affected by his grandfather’s death. He loved him, and he loved those grand stories of the original, sinless world. He vowed that he would not let them die. Many had never heard. In youthful zeal (and perfect memory) he spent his next few years writing into a book every story he had ever heard Adam tell.

57 years after Adam’s death, Lamech witnessed the most amazing event in the history of mankind. It was 300 years after the birth of Methuselah, while Enoch and Amy were yet quite young, a mere 365 years of age. Besides Lamech, there were Seth and Serena, Enosh and Evita, Jared and Judith and some of their children who had not yet left home. Cain and Darla, now over 900 years old, had also come for a visit and witnessed this historic event.

Throughout their Sabbath fellowship, Logos had been especially warm and joyous. As He prepared to leave toward the end of the Sabbath, Enoch and Amy bowed low, worshiping Him, thanking Him for their cleansing. The others were all gathered around in various attitudes of praise and rejoicing over the richness of their fellowship. Then Logos did something that He had never done before, at least not since the first disobedience of Adam and Eve. He reached out His arms and softly called, “Enoch and Amy, I love you so! Come! Please, give Me a hug!”

Everyone was stunned. They had never been permitted to touch Logos. Though they came near, yet Logos was of a different nature than they. The fire and light which was His covering dazzled them, exposing the darkness that was their own human nature and even burning them if they tried to get too close. They all loved Him, and they all desperately desired to go to Him and hug Him. But His was a consuming fire which kept them from Him, always reminding them of the covering of righteousness that Adam and Eve had lost when they had sinned.

Yet there were Enoch and Amy, stepping up to Logos, arms outstretched, enveloping themselves in His hug. The hug lasted a long time, with the fire and glory of Logos spreading over Enoch and Amy as well, so that their forms were barely visible through the brightness of the flames. The others all wanted to join them in that hug, but they could not. The radiance filled them with holy fear and awe. Most of them remained on their knees. They just stared, mouths open, eyes glistening with tears.

Finally the fire dimmed a bit, and out of the flames appeared two glorious beings. One, clearly, was Logos, beaming with delight. The other was a being just like Him, clothed in the same flaming robes of glory and light, yet with features somewhat similar to the Amy they all knew and loved... wait, also similar to the Enoch they all knew and loved. Those gathered around were stunned to realize the truth. This glorious new being was Amy and Enoch in one person; the two had truly been joined into one flesh, one glorious body. Logos answered their thoughts.

“Yes, My friends. This is Amy-Enoch, now joined fully in what the joining of marriage is but a shadowy picture. She has entered Paradise, My realm of spirit. Here we shall enjoy each other throughout the ages. I have done this now for two reasons. One, because My love is so great, and love must have a beloved. Amy-Enoch is My firstfruits, the first completed member of My Bride whom I am forming from among you My precious children. I will delight in My firstfruits while I await the rest of My Bride. And two, because I wanted you to see your own destiny. Each of you has also chosen to love and obey Me. In the ages to come each of you shall enter into My glorious Kingdom with us. I will ultimately join all My completed members together into one Bride and bring you to My Father in eternity.”

The group was reminded of the prophecy Logos had made over Enoch when he was but a baby, about him being invited to be the first to enter the glorious Kingdom Logos had prepared. They all wondered who would be next.

Again Logos answered their thoughts. His words were backed with joyous laughter. “I cannot say who shall be next, for it depends upon your individual choices. Jared and Judith, I thank you. Though not able to enter My Kingdom now because of your earlier choices, yet I could not have accomplished this without you. When I called you out of the land of Nod, you chose to obey Me. You cared for Fred’s children as I asked. You kept Enoch and Amy unstained from the world. You guided them unto Me. So because of your faithfulness, they found Me and I them. I bless you! Your lives, and the lives of your children to the fourth generation, shall prosper because of your efforts, as you shall see with Enoch’s firstborn son Methuselah. You cannot comprehend now how grateful I am to you, but one day, when you join us in glory, you shall.”

Jared and Judith beamed in the unaccustomed praise. “One day? How soon?”

“I do not know how soon. It depends on the choices of not only you but all the members of My Bride on earth. I gave you all a free will, and I will not violate it. After the revival that came with Cain’s firstborn son Enoch, I thought it might be soon, but that revival waned quickly. My Bride is even further from Me than before. It looks to Me like it will be a long time. But I am patient, and I can wait until My Bride has wholeheartedly chosen Me and learned to return My love. For now, I am exquisitely happy with the firstfruits, My beloved Amy-Enoch...”

He turned to face the glorious being beside Him. “I am ready to return to the heavenlies, to Paradise, with you. Voice your farewells now to your family. They will come to you some day, but you will not return here to them.”

Amy-Enoch looked as if she could barely tear her eyes away from her Master and King. She half-turned to shout triumphantly, “Good-bye! Farewell! Rejoice for me, my brothers! Now that I have entered this Kingdom of glory and light your world seems dark and bleak. I am complete, whole, satisfied, contented in a way that the old Enoch and Amy could not imagine in their most joyous and intimate moments. Whatever price you must pay to join me here, it is a million times worth it!” She looked back to Logos, and as the gathered group shouted their good-byes, she and Logos again enveloped each other in a flaming hug.

What happened next is indescribable, but I will do my best. Lamech and the others were looking at the flaming glory that was Logos and Amy-Enoch, when beyond them their garden, the bushes, the trees, the hill which the fiery sword had struck – it all began to shimmer and glisten. Lamech’s eyes opened wider in amazement. It was as if another world, a brighter world, a more colorful world, was superimposed upon the world he knew.

At first he could see both worlds. They occupied the same space, yet objects in one world did not collide or interfere with objects in the other. The new world was full of beautiful flowers, trees, animals, birds, and myriads of glorious beings similar to Amy-Enoch and Logos. Angels! Running, dancing, celebrating with glad shouts and songs, circling around Logos. As they came to items in Lamech’s world, they passed through them as if they weren’t even there. Lamech saw Adam and Eve, Abel and Diana, and some of Cain’s descendants who had already died – they were looking on joyously, eagerly awaiting the time when they too could be joined and perfected in this new glorious body Logos was forming. Excited to see Adam and Eve, Lamech called to get their attention, but like everyone there, they seemed unaware of the watching earthlings.

Finally the brightness of their realm overcame the dimness of the world Lamech knew. It faded from view altogether. Lamech sensed that the world he had just entered was far more substantial, more real, and more splendid than his own world. Even the smells and colors were ten times more vivid than any he had known.

Yet when the dancing angels came to Lamech, they ignored him and passed right through him as if he weren’t even there. Lamech looked at himself, pinched himself, to see if he had become a ghost. Nope, he was as solid as ever. He realized with dismay that he had not really entered this new heavenly realm at all. He had merely caught a glimpse, a vision, of it. He was overwhelmed with disappointment.

Even as he realized the truth, the grand vision faded. The light, the brilliant colors, the glorious music and smells, the graceful angels dancing around and through him, didn’t stop – it just dimmed. The world became dark. Lamech felt heavy, slow, lethargic, even dimwitted. He realized that his senses had exceeded ultimate overload, and he needed time to recover. He felt his arm around his father, Methuselah. They hugged and supported each other, blinking back the tears and struggling to see again. As their world slowly came back into focus, they realized the truth of what Enoch had said, that their world was dimly dark and bleak in comparison to that wondrous heavenly realm they had viewed. The Sabbath was nearly over. Sol was setting, but even the splendor of the glorious sunset was a dirty gray compared to where they had been. *The date was our October 2, 4119 BC, 987 years after the Creation (AM) and 921 years after the Fall (AF). It was Tishri 15, the Feast of Ingathering, the Feast of Tabernacles.*

The prophecy spoken by Logos came to pass. Jared and Judith did live a long and prosperous life together, as well as their many children and grandchildren. But though some of them chose to remain near the little clan at Eden, basking in the warmth of Logos’ presence each Sabbath, all too many chose to migrate down to the land of Havilah, where the children of Enosh were now trading with the wicked cities of Mehal and Enoch. A large group also set off west, to found what would later become an island in the Mediterranean. Their city was called **Athens**.

Lamech, Jared’s great-grandson, remained at Eden and clung to the faith of his fathers. He invented a printing press and made many copies of his book to give to the patriarch’s families, so all would remember Adam’s now legendary stories. Though his book was lost in the Flood, a few of its stories are retold in Moses’ first book, **Genesis**.

One by one over the years, they continued to bury the patriarchs. Cain and Darla died in 924 AF, three years after Enoch and Amy’s translation. Then they buried Seth and Serena in 976 AF, a year after Lamech married Enoch’s lovely daughter Leah.

Except for right around New Eden, moral corruption had spread all across the globe. The animals, birds, plants, and insects had mostly turned against them. The downward pull of sin was fierce. Lamech and Leah fought it bravely, trying to keep the families at Eden from turning away from Logos. They had seen paradise, and the call of Amy-Enoch still rang in their ears: “Whatever price you must pay to join me here, it is a million times worth it.”

Then in 990 AF a son was born to Lamech and Leah. Logos had smiled upon their efforts. Lamech held his newborn high and prophesied to him by the Spirit of Logos, "Your name is **Noah**, for you shall finally bring us rest from our struggles against the earth's curse!"

The little clan at Eden rejoiced and prospered. Lamech was a natural born leader, like his great-grandfather Jared. With the birth of Noah, he set up a training center (the first school) to teach the children. He had them memorize his book of Adam's stories. He trained them in Logos' ways. He told them about sin, the purpose of the sacrifice, and the promise of the Redeemer. He taught them the names of the constellations and how to read the story book in the stars, as Logos had taught Adam.

In the next eighty years Lamech and Leah had many children. Most of them stayed happily around New Eden. Methuselah saw the wisdom in the extensive discipline and training. Fewer of Lamech's children were migrating off to Athens or to the lands of Kenan and Nod as so many of his own children had done. Eden became an exciting and prosperous place to live. The people there, now known as the 'Children of Seth', built towns and roads, developed their own industries, and spread peacefully westward across the fertile land as Logos directed.

Satan ground his teeth and vowed he would find a way to put an end to the righteous family of Jared and Judith. He waited, impatiently, for the right time. But he simply could not get past the glory-covering over the clan as long as they were faithfully offering the sacrifice and rejoicing in their fellowship with Logos every Sabbath.

Then when Enosh died in 1074 AF, he saw his opening. Enosh had been the last of the famous patriarchs at Eden. (Kenan and Mahalalel weren't there. They were immersed in the wicked cultures of Enoch and Mehal.) So when Enosh died, Jared and Judith were heartbroken. They took Evita into their own home to care for her, but it was futile. She died within a few weeks of her husband. It seemed that after hundreds of years of faithful marriage, one spouse could not go on living without the other. Satan ordered his demons to spread discouragement and despair. A cloud of death closed in upon the clan around New Eden.

Leadership naturally fell to Jared, the oldest patriarch remaining alive. But Jared and Judith were so devastated by the loss of Enosh and Evita that they were in no position to lead. Perhaps it was the demons, but it seemed like they gave in to discouragement and depression and no longer wanted to go on living themselves. They moped around all day. They had struggled so hard, so long, to live godly lives and to instruct their children and grandchildren in the ways of Logos and the hope of the Redeemer, and now this. It all seemed so futile. Death overtook them all anyway. They forgot the promises of Logos for their family. They neglected the sacrifice, and didn't want to face Logos at the Sabbath fellowship. They didn't even work their gardens.

Their granddaughter Arlah, who was sixteen and still living with her parents nearby, caught their bad attitude. Arlah responded as teenagers often do when they see something wrong in adults; she lashed out in anger, as if her anger would somehow correct their depression. "Grandpa Jared, you're being a wet blanket on whatever we try to do! My parents told me to try and be like you, but I never want to be such an old sourpuss! I hate you!"

Then, her face burning with the shame of sassing her elders, she turned and ran from their house, heading for the hills. They called to her, even pled with her, but she hardened her heart and didn't listen.

Satan, of course, was quick to take advantage of his good luck. He had not had such an open door since Jared had ruled the city of Enoch. He flew alongside Arlah, encouraging her anger. When she tripped he pushed her, hard. There was nothing her guardian angel could do, since she was outside the faith covering of her parents.

Arlah's injuries were severe: a badly twisted ankle, a broken wrist, and a mild concussion. When she regained consciousness, she found herself lying among the rocks in a dry stream bed, unable to get up. Satan lost no time at all. Within minutes he had found a pack of wolves and was directing them to the spot. Keath, Arlah's guardian angel, of course, was rounding up her folks and a few others to help her. But they were too late. When they arrived, the wolves were already devouring her, amid horrible screams of fear and pain.

Keath fled up to the throne of the Almighty, weeping. "What did I do wrong?" he wailed. "I tried, but I couldn't prevent Satan from pushing her. And then the wolves... they wouldn't even listen to me!"

"You did nothing wrong, dear Keath," Logos assured him. "Arlah made her own choices. She placed herself under the power of the adversary, and discovered, too late, the consequences of her choice. This too, shall turn out for good, as many others wake up to the danger of choosing Satan's ways. Go back. I assign you a new infant to protect. You too, can learn wisdom from this tragedy."

Arlah's death had a profound effect on them all. Satan and his finest demons were busy nursing their depression, anger, guilt, and despair. But this time Jared ignored them. As Sol began to set for the Sabbath, Jared called everybody around New Eden together at Adam and Eve's old house.

"I was wrong," he began. "I'm sorry. I've been a poor leader, and I am the most to blame for Arlah's death. I was so distraught after Enosh and Evita's death, that I couldn't see Arlah's needs. Adam always said, 'We cannot afford to live in the regrets of past failures, but rather we must live in the hope of the Redeemer promised by Logos. Let's call on Logos now.'" So he prayed and offered the sacrificial lamb. Logos responded. His cry of 'You are all cleansed!' came as a ray of sunshine in the darkness.

The revival occurred so fast it left Satan in shock and bewilderment. “What the heaven happened?” he swore. “I was sure I had them! They seemed to be so discouraged and upset... I thought they would open themselves up to despair and anger and I could pick them all off, one by one.” He fled in rage back to the land of Nod to plot some other attack. Satan always enjoyed the lands of Nod and Kenan, where the lamb sacrifice had long since been dropped and the Sabbath was but a holiday of hedonistic pleasures. Satan appeased his wrath by tormenting them. Ten poor wretches died that day to mollify his anger.

Back in Eden, the revival was complete. “I guess every generation needs to be reminded of the importance of the sacrifice and keeping close to Logos,” Lamech said. His son Noah (84 years young) agreed. “Nothing on earth is worth losing the joy of the Sabbath and our fellowship with Logos. Even in a tragedy like this, we’ve got to trust that when the Redeemer comes all will be set right again.”

The ‘Children of Seth’ living around New Eden, now numbering in the thousands, agreed. Jared, the sole living patriarch after Enosh’s death, saw how important it was for the line of Seth (including Eve’s other children) to remain separate from the line of Cain as Enosh had requested. So for many years the **Sethites** expanded their own culture many miles west of New Eden, isolated from the **Cainites**.

Maybe a bit too isolated. They forgot that the Cainites already included a mixture of Sethites from Enosh and Kenan. Cain himself had been converted and brought back to Eden by the love of Darla. It was okay to hate their wickedness, but they should have cared more about the people! But no. The Cainites, if not enemies, were at least competitors. So their driving goal was to be more wealthy and advanced than the Cainites. A subtle pride settled over them. The revival waned. They maintained the outward form of the sacrifices, but Logos rarely came. Even Jared (at 820) took more pleasure in the prestige he got at the Sabbath ritual than in actually meeting with Logos.

Thus within only 140 years after Arlah’s death, the sons of God had pretty much forgotten about the Source of their prosperity. Along with that, they lost their hatred of the evil so rampant in the lands of Nod and Kenan. Once again they violated Logos’ command to keep their culture pure. They began visiting the Cainites. But not as missionaries! They desired the sensuous pleasures, the games, the wild nights and riotous living. They despised the pure maidens of Eden and sought the seductive beauty of the daughters of Cain. They gambled or fought fierce competitions for the fairest of the land. Now for the first time, intermarriage with the Cainites became commonplace.

Only in two houses were things different. Methuselah and Marion still lived at New Eden, and next door were Lamech, Leah, and their adult son Noah, who had never married. They still sought the face of Logos together every Sabbath, and He joined them for sweet fellowship.

You must understand, these were advanced cultures, in many ways more advanced than we. With their mental brilliance, high degree of inventiveness and creativity, long lives, benign environment, and fertile, mineral-rich lands, they moved in one generation through stages of development that took us many generations to rediscover. They had been expert metalworkers in the early days of Tubal-cain, a full thousand years earlier. During that thousand years they finished their industrial revolution and developed the tooling to make anything their minds imagined. Bypassing the internal combustion engine, they first harnessed the power of the sun, and later the energy within the atom. They converted it to electricity, which they used everywhere they needed power. Soon electricity was energizing not just power tools and appliances, but cars, boats, and fliers. It was ever springtime, ever warm. The days were long and cloudless. Energy was plentiful and free. Now they could create anything their little hearts desired. It was truly a golden age of technological progress.

Let’s step back for an overview of world civilizations around the start of the second millennium AF. Noah was born in 990 AF (4050 BC). During his youth there were seven major people groups on the earth. The first group was near Eden and the hill where that arc from Nyx had struck, now known as Mt. Moriah at Jerusalem. From the hill flowed a crystal stream, over a waterfall into the high valley called **New Eden**. The stream flowed past Adam’s gardens to meander on down into a huge lake to the south. For forty miles around the lake lay the cottages and farms of those who chose to stay close to Eden. It had become a sprawling city called the **City of Seth**, governed by Jared and Judith. After Enoch’s revival in 4800 BC, ‘The Lake’ was dubbed **Lake Redemption**. From its west end flowed the **Pishon River** circling around south to Arabia. It divided to its west to form the **Gihon River**, which also headed south to what is now Egypt and the Sudan. From the lake’s east end flowed another river, the **Tigris**, which circled to the north, then around east in a 300 mile arc, enclosing the land of Nod. From the Tigris the **Euphrates** branched off southeast to Enoch and the land of Shinar.

No one settled north of Eden. They were afraid to go beyond the place where the electric arc from Nyx had struck. It had become their burial ground. Unseen angels guarded the original Eden. Beyond it to the north, a great crack in the earth had opened up, penetrating the crust for several hundred miles north, then circling over to the west toward Athens. It was a fearful land – some said haunted. Visitors were few, and no one dared to build or live there.

East of Eden of course was the great civilization of the sons of Cain. Many of them lived at Enoch, but they had also migrated throughout the **land of Nod**. South of them was the even greater civilization of the sons of Kenan and Mahalalel. It had spread throughout the **land of Kenan**. Its capital, Mehal, was a powerful commercial/industrial center filling a huge island on the Pishon River.

Enosh and Evita had spoken out against what Kenan, Mahalalel, and Jared had done, and had moved back to Eden after seeing how wicked Kenan had become. From that day forth they had worked to keep the rest of their children separate. Many had gone southwest to settle in the **land of Havilah** between the Pishon and Gihon Rivers, where they developed a mighty civilization of their own.

After Jared and Judith repented and returned to Eden, they also kept their descendants separate. They still called themselves **Children of Seth** after their great-great-grandfather. Many settled in the City of Seth at Eden, but others migrated west over what is now the Mediterranean Sea.

Most of these Children of Seth were a pastoral people, with an easy-going civilization of farms and towns, and no dense cities. But the more ambitious from among them had gone farther west, 500 miles from Eden, to found the city of **Athens**. There they developed an advanced and powerful civilization all their own. They saw how Kenan ruled the world; they were determined that neither he nor anyone else would ever rule them. They were brilliant inventors. It was they who first developed electric cars and fliers, using a simple technology of extracting electricity directly from the atom, an infinite source of power using water for fuel. (Alas, that technology was lost in the Flood.) But in the end, they built weapons of war. Their proud independence was their downfall.

The land of Havilah, as established by Enosh and Evita, started out as a godly society. It was the most balanced of all the civilizations at the time. Their inventiveness and ambition was tempered by their love for the peace and joy they had found at Eden. Though they too had developed an advanced society (borrowing the technologies from Athens and adding some of their own), yet they used them for peaceful purposes, for the betterment of mankind.

With an infinite source of electric power, as well as many other natural resources, they became very wealthy and comfortable. Their homes were like palaces. They had every comfort we can imagine, and more. It was they who first really developed the classical arts and sciences. Their libraries, theaters, architecture, painting, and sculpture were amazing. Their land was rich in gold and silver, with which they made spectacular jewelry, crowns, and even glistening clothing with gold woven into the fibers.

The fliers from Athens were simple saucers. They were small, carrying up to four people. They needed no fuel, as a few molecules of water vapor collected from the air was sufficient to power them for miles. The nuclear reactor was only about the size of a big fist. It gave off no radiation. Its only waste products were oxygen (which was used for breathing at high altitudes) and ozone. The craft levitated and moved forward as the energy released from splitting apart hydrogen protons was used to blast electrons out the back. This developed a positive charge on the flier which repelled the positively charged earth.

The system had one major flaw. It depended upon static charges. The flier crashed when the static buildup from close passes of the planets unbalanced the static charges. Though instruments were made to warn of static buildup imbalance, crashes did occur. Many were afraid to fly. The men of Havilah solved the problem by adding wings to the saucer. Now when the reactor got blown by static, the flier could glide safely to earth for repairs. With that advance, large commercial fliers became feasible. A global network of flights was established over the next few hundred years.

Why would anyone want to leave the wondrous land of Havilah, you ask? Some people cannot be content with just peace, prosperity, and security. They also want freedom. Havilah had been well founded, but over the course of time its government got clogged with a zillion little regulations to keep people safe and make sure no one gets his toes stepped on – like what has happened in America today.

Of course Libertarians hated the oppressive laws and complicated ‘social engineering’ tax system. They fled to form a city of their own. They went 3000 miles west of Eden, taking all of their advanced technology with them. There they formed the first truly capitalistic society. It was based on freedom and productivity of the individual, with an absolute minimum of laws and no taxes at all. It was governed by a council of elected unpaid statesmen, who served one six year term concurrent with their regular jobs, meeting evenings to pass laws and deal with the problems. With such a system came universal prosperity. Unencumbered by taxes and red tape, business was free to blossom. Everyone who worked hard got rich. The lazy got no sympathy – you starve until you learn to work.

They called their city Freeport, better known now as **Atlantis**. For hundreds of years they grew in power and wealth, separate from other societies. They became the most advanced civilization known to man, before or since. Their technology was much simpler – for example they didn’t have (or need) computers. Their minds were quick, better than any computer. But they had every convenience we have, except more efficient, simpler, and more elegant.

But with the peaks of technology and prosperity came depths of depravity. They cared not for widows or orphans and despised the disabled. Released from much of the daily toil of making a living, they gave themselves to personal pleasures. By 1140 AF (3900 BC) travel and trade was so universal that the Children of Seth began to mix with the Cainites despite all their efforts to keep them separate.

Thus even many of the children of God violated their cultural taboos against intermarriage with the Cainites. They brought Cainite women right into the City of Seth. Soon the wickedness of the Cainites had infected every part of the globe. Days were filled with thrill seeking, nights with sensual pleasures. Violent sports and feats of prowess attracted big crowds. They forgot the patriarchs. Youth and strength were king. Violence filled the land.

Surprisingly though, the Cainites again began to offer a weekly Sabbath sacrifice. That was one influence that the children of God at Eden imposed on the children of Cain when they began to trade and intermarry with them. To justify their disobedience, they ‘converted’ the Cainites, which in their minds freed them from Logos’ command to remain separate. The Cainites, desiring their wealth and technology, agreed to a public ceremony every Sabbath eve at Enoch. They also agreed to cease their labors on the Sabbath. But not so they could draw near to Logos! Their sacrifice became just a traditional ritual. Since labor was prohibited, the Sabbath became completely given over to self-indulgent play and personal pleasures. Such Sabbath traditions became universal, even among those who migrated out to Athens and Atlantis.

Kenan died in 1169 AF (3871 BC) at the age of 910. His ‘good old boy’ dictatorship, with its well-enforced laws and veneer of respectability, perished with him. His sons, grandsons, and political cronies had no heart to follow Logos. They bickered among themselves for power and control. When the central government fell apart, all that remained was rule by competing gangster families who extended their ‘protection’ from each other for a price. Any who wouldn’t pay were tortured, forced into slavery, or slain. Life became cheap, and blood flowed freely.

So in 1227 AF (3813 BC), when **Noah** was 237, Logos commissioned him as His prophet and sent him on a tour of the land to warn people to repent or a great catastrophe would overtake them. He had a small personal flier, which carried him to the Children of Seth, the Lands of Nod, Kenan, and Havilah, and even out to Athens and Atlantis.

But there was little repentance; the people laughed at Noah and claimed to have the protection of Logos through their keeping of the Sabbath and the public lamb sacrifice. They were accustomed to triennial Mars flybys, and knew how to protect themselves. Besides, for many years Mars had done little damage. Its flyby was merely an exciting vacation. But with Noah’s warning, all that would change.

Logos called Satan into His presence. “Uranus will be returning soon,” He said without preamble. “You have My permission to make use of it as you will, but remember...”

“I don’t need Your permission, not any more!” Satan snapped back. His visage was now so marred by evil that he was hardly recognizable as the glorious archangel Lucifer he had once been. “I have occasion! Earth is mine! I will guide Uranus to smash into Earth and destroy all life.”

“You cannot do that, for it would kill My Bride in Eden. A few still serve Me. My Law protects them. You’ll always need My permission to harm My Bride. However, I admit that most of their children now follow you. They should not have allowed that. So I give you permission to use the planets as you wish to discipline My Bride, only...”

Satan brightened up. An opportunity to ‘discipline’ the Bride? And he now has permission? He quickly fled; he did not want to hear any conditions from Logos. Satan and his generals flew out to inspect Uranus, which had not yet entered the solar system. It was huge and exceptionally massive. It was a chunk of Nyx that had frozen, as it had not had any heating effects of the sun or of the interactions with other planets. It had numerous distant moons, some (such as Aster and Glacis) quite large, and all frozen solid from their 1227 years in deep space.

From what Logos had told him, Satan knew he could not force it to directly collide with Earth. So he hatched a new plan. He had had sensational success in tormenting the humans with Mars. What if he had five or ten planets like Mars to use? Titan and Uranus were far too large to manipulate. But if he could smash them together, he would have many toys to play with. He assigned all his demons to the task. Thus when Uranus entered the solar system in 1228 AF it was on a collision course with Titan.

Satan’s aim was dead on. Just before collision, Uranus (being frozen) shattered. But Titan was so huge that nearly every large piece of Uranus hit the surface, at over 100,000 mph. It was the biggest, highest energy, most spectacular collision in the history of the universe. The only things that did not collide were the moons of Uranus, including Aster and Glacis. They flew past Titan toward Sol.

At first, Satan almost thought he had failed. Titan was so much larger than Uranus that it looked like it might just absorb the impact. Then, yes! Satan screamed with delight. Tortured Titan exploded, breaking into what we now know as the planets **Jupiter**, **Saturn**, **Neptune**, and a smaller **Uranus** (the four Gas Giants) as well as many moons and billions of smaller fragments. But none of them were in placid circular orbits then, as they are today. Every one was in a dangerous, elliptical orbit. Satan gleefully considered the possibilities.

“Lord?” One of his arch-demons came to him on bended knee. “Remember Aster and Glacis? They are headed nearly toward Sol. You can easily direct their orbit anywhere you want if you slingshot them around it.”

“Yes. Of course.” Satan would never admit that he had forgotten them in his delight with the explosion of Titan. “Gather my host. We’ll see what we can do.” Surveying the inner planets and making orbital calculations (something he had gotten quite good at of late), Satan found that Logos was right – he could not directly collide Aster or Glacis with Earth. But Mars was another story. If he used Sol as a slingshot to throw Aster into the path of Mars, perhaps it would slow Mars enough to collide with Earth. He put his demons to work. At half the size of Mars, Aster was easy to manipulate. He pushed Glacis back towards deep space for now – he would use it later if there were any survivors. And if both Aster and Glacis failed to destroy Logos’ Bride, well... he now had lots to work with!

Aster whipped around the sun at 140,000 mph into a collision course with Mars. Repentance by those to whom Noah preached would have allowed God to do what He really wanted – that is, to use Aster to push Mars out of its catastrophic orbit. But there was very little repentance. So on August 1st, 3810 BC (1230 AF), at 160 million miles from Sol, Aster collided almost head-on with Mars. Still being frozen, gravitational stresses caused it to fragment before impact. About 25% of Aster hit the surface of Mars, including three huge chunks which caused the 1000 mile diameter craters we perceive as the eyes and nose of Mars. Millions of fragments, mostly small, missed impacting Mars, were flung beyond Mars' orbit, and fell into orbit around the sun in a ring of irregular chunks of rock at between 180 to 300 million miles from the sun, which we now know as the asteroid belt. But the biggest chunk of Aster just grazed the edge of Mars. Instead of forming an impact crater, it cut a gash in the crust of Mars, breaking through to its red, molten lava core at its closest approach. The gravitational attraction of Mars slowed it and bent its orbit around Mars, such that it left a 2600 mile scar now called Valles Marineris. Ancient Egyptians knew it as the *Eye of Ra*. Though not stopped, the chunk slowed enough in the collision so that it could not escape Mars. It broke into irregular pieces of rock and became what the ancients named **Deimos**, **Phobos**, and **Eris**, (Panic, Terror, and Strife) steeds pulling the chariot of Mars, the god of war.

At the impact, Mars gained mass from Aster, but lost a great deal of momentum and orbital speed, tightening its orbit to a perihelion (closest approach to the sun) of 75 million miles and an aphelion (farthest from the sun) of 218 million miles. Mars' spin rate also decreased by 50% and its spin axis shifted 30 degrees, such that the impact area of Aster now clusters within 40 degrees of the south pole. This new orbit was much smaller – at first about 2.2 earth years. It took another 120 years for it to lock into that precise two year 1:2 orbital resonance with Earth for which it became infamous around the time of the Flood.

We have come to a very sad part of our narrative. Satan had been successful in his calculations. Mars was slowed and its orbit tightened enough that collision with Earth was possible. In the heavenlies, Logos wept for many hours, with the heavenly host bowed in silence and sad reverence. Michael and Gavriel both knelt before Logos, daring to break the silence only to plead with Logos for permission to intervene.

Logos heard their pleas patiently, but in the end said, "No. I will not allow you to intervene. I gave Lucifer a free will; he has made his choice. I gave him permission to use the planets to harm My Bride. He is but doing My bidding. My Bride has soiled herself with lust and violence. She has disobeyed Me, and allowed wickedness to flood the land. She really needs to be disciplined. We shall see where their choices lead. My Father's Plan of the Ages is big enough to accommodate all their choices, even this tragedy.

"So have faith, dear Michael, dear Gavriel, have faith." He paused, meditating, then a sad smile broke through His countenance. "But don't forget My precious ones at Eden, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah. They remain faithful to Me, and I shall remain so to them, no matter what happens to the rest of the earth."

Michael considered reminding Logos that Methuselah and Lamech were nearly beyond having more children, and Noah at the age of 239 still had no wife to propagate the Bride. But no, surely Logos knew. "Have faith!" Logos had said. Michael determined in his heart to do exactly that. He returned to guarding the few at New Eden, ready even to whisk them into the heavenlies if necessary.

In the end, it was Satan's delight in tormenting the humans that saved them. He could have forced Mars to directly collide with Earth that October. Earth would have been destroyed, and all flesh would have been annihilated. But he decided that would be too good for them, too quick and easy. He pushed Mars aside just a little, calculating that it would crack up and sink much of earth's crust, but still allow plenty of survivors for him to torment.

So September 24, 3810 BC (1230 AF), on its 21st flyby, Mars came too close. It raised immense crustal tides and opened up the crack in the earth's crust around Athens, to create the beginnings of the Mediterranean Sea. The crust didn't actually sink, but the earth split wide open from the north coast of Africa (from our geographical perspective), across the south coasts of Sicily, Italy, Greece, Crete, and Turkey and down the western seaboard of the Middle East. Subterranean waters gushed up to fill the cracks, isolating those living in Athens from those to the south and east. For the first time, the earth had a real ocean, though it was warm, fresh water, not cold salt water like our oceans today. In most places it was only 20 to 50 miles wide, but it stretched over 3000 jagged miles from Atlantis to Eden.

Though many died in this terrible catastrophe, there were also many survivors – they all knew to move to the highlands until Mars had passed. They buried their dead, rebuilt their cities, and went back to their work and play. There was no real repentance or seeking after Logos.

The Libertarians who had settled in Freeport (which from now on I will call Atlantis) were devastated. They had developed a proud and violent culture, as usually happens when self-centered people are free from restraints of law. They were particularly proud of their 'earthquake-proof' city, built to withstand +10 on our Richter Scale. Being near the equator, they were directly under the flyby. Mars flattened every structure, even their strongest buildings, and raised the nearby mountains of eastern Venezuela. (Back then the Atlantic Ocean did not exist. The Americas were adjacent to Africa and Europe, so South America was just south of Atlantis, next to what is now the Ivory Coast.) Though their land was ruined, the Libertarian's response was anger and even more violence, instead of repentance.

Losing no time, Satan adjusted the elliptical 30 year orbit of Saturn so that it, too, would pass close to Earth. In 1245 AF (3795 BC) it made its first close pass, bringing even greater devastation than Mars, cracking Earth's crust further, and showering Earth with massive amounts of snow and ice. It was the first time humans had ever seen actual precipitation of any kind. Much to Satan's delight, it terrified them, and many were killed and injured. When it was past and the snow and ice melted, Earth had a new shallow fresh water ocean which I'll call the **Tethyan Sea**. This sea turned Atlantis into a huge island, cut off from Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Athens also became an island, next to its warm subterranean sea. Michael was shocked at the massive amount of damage and extensive loss of life due to the rearranged geography. But he still saw no repentance, only more anger and violence.

At first the Tethyan Sea was rather shallow. Now in the sunshine, it heated up and clogged with sargasso weed, making it impassable to navigation. Atlantis and Athens rebuilt, shaking their fists at Logos. In 1260 AF (3780 BC), Mars made an unexpectedly close pass due to its collision with Aster. That was followed by a second close flyby of Saturn in 1275 AF, raising the Himalaya Mountains between Tibet and north India, and shifting Earth's spin axis by 25 degrees. More snow and ice deepened and cooled the Tethyan Sea. Again, the damage was colossal. Again, there was no repentance. Furious at God and each other, the sons of God from both Atlantis and Athens begin arming themselves, preparing for world conquest.

Logos wept. How long would it be before His Bride woke up and saw her need? He sent Noah on a second warning trip in 1288 AF, to the Sethites at Athens. Noah told them that the earth's crust was broken, and that in two years at the next close pass of Mars, their island would sink. That, they could understand! There was a little local repentance and a return to the sacrifices and keeping the Sabbath. Although they didn't really turn back to Logos or repent of taking Cainite wives, they did know about the destructive power of the planets! Noah urged them to abandon their doomed city. Most of them listened, and headed northwest to what is now **Greece**, building there a New Athens. But not all had repented. The more violent of them migrated to Atlantis instead, taking their navy, their bombers, and their war machines. Others did not leave. At the 23rd close pass of Mars in 1290 AF (3750 BC), their mighty city sank into the depths at what is now called the **Mediterranean Sea**. They all perished. Mars raised the Hindu Mountains of India to the Tien Shan mountains of China, and shifted earth's crustal spin axis by 22 degrees.

That superficial revival was a lot more heartfelt when those who had obeyed Logos heard what had happened to their kin who had stayed behind. They never did give up their Cainite wives, but they did return to Logos in prayer and thanksgiving for their protection. Thus New Athens prospered with Logos' blessing for the next 90 years.

But Atlantis had a different story. They did not repent. Their cousins who had come from Athens reinforced their navy and their desire to conquer the world. The Tethyan Sea was now deep and clear enough for reliable navigation, so after Athens sank, Atlantis began regular raiding parties along the coasts of the new Mediterranean Sea. They conquered and plundered whole cultures, raping and stealing their women. Their wickedness knew no bounds. The Atlanteans determined to conquer every culture in the Mediterranean area within the next 90 years.

They would have succeeded too, had not the repentant Sethites at New Athens armed themselves to drive back the aggressive Atlanteans. Even so, it was very close. For many years, New Athens provided the only protection against the raiding parties from Atlantis. New Athens prospered and grew powerful. They began receiving tribute from other cultures who needed their protection.

The 3rd and 4th passes of Saturn (in 1305 and 1335 AF, both over the Himalayas) and the 24th close pass of Mars (which went over East Africa from Tanzania to Ethiopia) also caused huge catastrophes, but no repentance. The militaristic Atlanteans became savage in their blood lust. Their love of war resulted in more-advanced weapons, culminating in deadly Focused Electro-Magnetic Pulse (FEMP) ray guns for their warships, tanks, and fliers.

Remember, these were descendants of Seth through the godly line of Methuselah and Marion, Enoch and Amy, and Jared and Judith – the children of God. They had been blessed above every people. They knew the laws of God. They kept the Sabbath. They had grown very prosperous. But the greatest of all has the furthest to fall, just like Satan in the beginning. In their pride and rage they rebelled against God. The Atlanteans deliberately chose to enslave and rule the earth by the force of military arms.

So in 1349 AF Logos commissioned Noah (age 359) to warn them of a coming calamity (his third warning trip). He pled with them to consider the sinking of Athens. But they considered Atlantis too large and powerful to suffer the same fate, and they rejected Noah's warnings. After all, Atlantis was no piddling island in the Mediterranean. It was a small continent, twice the size of present-day Spain. They had built new earthquake-proof, flood-proof homes, and an early warning and communications system. With new battle saucers a hundred feet in diameter they could transport their armies very quickly anywhere in the globe. Their FEMP ray guns were able to disable an entire city in minutes. They were finally ready to conquer the earth!

So Noah proclaimed God's judgment against them. He strode into the forum just at their leaders were planning the final assault. He told them God would put His sign in the heavens as a witness against them, and if they did not repent, they would be destroyed at the flyby of Mars next year. He told them to look to Saturn for a sign that night. Then he left for Eden on the daily commercial flier.

They didn't really believe Noah, and they sure didn't care about Logos' warning, but the promise of a sign from Saturn, which they really feared, got to them. Saturn was in Aquarius, far from Earth, and could not be seen with the naked eye. It would not be close to Earth again for 16 years, on its resonant 30 year orbit. So millions of Atlanteans were out that night, staring at Saturn with their telescopes, and wondering what sort of a sign Noah meant. Four times Saturn had passed, showering them with ice and snow, raising the level of the Tethyan Sea and making their island smaller each time. They feared Saturn!

Satan had planned that night to use Hygeia, a rocky planet left over from the breakup of Nyx, to push Saturn into a tighter orbit, to cause even more destruction at each 30 year pass. Its first four flybys had been so terrifying to the whole earth that Satan was literally dancing with glee. But he had miscalculated. The people of Atlantis, waiting at their telescopes, were afraid. They began to pray. There was some repentance and renewed vows. A few turned their backs on their sins and promised to obey Logos. Not many, but just enough to turn the tide. Hygeia did indeed collide with Saturn, in a spectacular display of fireworks, bringing screams and gasps from every Atlantean. But it hit the wrong side of Saturn. Instead of tightening its orbit, it pushed it into a new slightly rounder orbit, such that it no longer came destructively close to Earth.

The Atlanteans saw it. They humbled themselves in widespread (though superficial) repentance. They didn't go so far as to seek the face of Logos, but at least they stopped their raiding parties and put an immediate halt on their ambitions to rule the world. They sent peace envoys to New Athens, vowing that they would never use their new FEMP ray guns for harm. (By now, every culture was dependent on electricity. Those FEMP weapons could have done as much damage as neutron bombs today.) So Logos had mercy, hoping for even more repentance. Mars finally locked into a precise 2 year orbit, in resonance with Earth. The 25th close pass the next year (1350 AF; 3690 BC) did not kill very many, though it raised the mountains in Africa from Ethiopia to Mozambique and Madagascar.

Lucifer was livid. He stormed into Logos' throne room, so furious he couldn't see straight. "They're mine! All mine!" he screamed. "You're a lying cheat! You've no right..." He stopped, tongue-tied. His thoughts were too vile to be expressed in the presence of The Holy.

"Choices, My friend! Yes, I admit they are yours, but they are still able to make other choices. We will give them time to see where their choices lead. Do you not think..."

But Satan had fled, unwilling to listen to the patient, loving tone of Logos' voice. In his rage, he cruised the streets of the City of Seth, determined he would make Logos pay big time for pushing aside Saturn. *These were the 'children of God'? Ha! They were as wicked as those in Atlantis. He had occasion. He would destroy them!*

The sprawling City of Seth around Lake Redemption had indeed grown prosperous and immoral. The sons of God had taken wives from the Cainites, and with them came their wicked culture. Only Noah had not married.

When asked why he had not taken a wife, though he was now 360 years old, Noah replied, "When Logos gives me a wife, I shall marry. But I love and serve only Logos. Even if He never gives me a wife, I am perfectly content."

Logos seemed genuinely pleased with Noah's attitude. Even when He didn't respond to Jared's lavish ceremony at the Sabbath evening sacrifice, He still would often come to Methuselah's house, where He would find the little group there bowed in joyous worship and fellowship.

Michael the archangel was concerned. "Logos, the sons of God around Eden are being foolish. Many have gone to marry the wicked daughters of Cain, and their wickedness is flooding into the City of Seth. They no longer trust You. They look to the mighty men among them to protect them, rather than to You and Your law. In their pride they do not realize that they are in danger of being attacked. Under the command of Satan, the sons of Cain have become violent and powerful. How can I protect Your Bride?"

"My beloved Michael, you are protecting her very well. But you cannot protect My people from their own choices. When in pride they choose their own strength over Me, you are rendered powerless to help them. Spirit tells me they will indeed be attacked. Then perhaps they will see their weakness and the foolishness of trusting their own strength, and call upon Me in truth.

"But have you seen My precious ones at the houses of Methuselah and Lamech? Have you seen how totally Noah trusts Me in everything, even to the choice of his wife? In that house is no pride. You and your host can cover them, even if the rest of the City of Seth be swept away."

"But Lord? There are no women left on Earth who've kept themselves pure. The entire human race is polluted with gross immorality and sexual perversions." Michael finally blurted it out, "What about a wife for Noah? Who is left to propagate Your Bride? Will she die out completely?" He and Gavriel had worried about that for a long time.

"That will be a surprise, dear Michael. Wait and see. My love shall gain the victory." With a cryptic smile, Logos sent Michael back to the front lines wondering what sort of surprise Logos had for Noah.

Just as Logos had warned, Satan did inspire the Cainites to attack the City of Seth, in massive force, with powerful and advanced weapons and armor. Michael was shocked at the fierceness of their anger and hatred against those who had never harmed them in any way, except to dare to be separate and different. They had no mercy, slaying old and young, male and female, patriarch and infant alike.

The date was 1356 AF (3684 BC). Jared and Judith were slain and their fine home was burned to the ground. The City of Seth had no weapons, no defenses. They had so totally misunderstood the Cainites that they had never prepared for war. They were just trading partners. Why should the Cainites ever want to attack them? Thus they had deceived themselves as to the true nature of evil. In only a matter of weeks the entire City of Seth was pillaged and burned. Everyone in it was slain. No one escaped.

Except in Adam's little high valley of New Eden. A thick covering of Michael's angels just, well, made it invisible to the attacking hoards. When Satan went crowing to the King of the Universe about having successfully wiped out His Bride, and now having total ownership over the souls of every living human being, he didn't even know that five souls were left, still faithful to Logos. Logos, weeping over the loss of so many precious ones, didn't bother to tell him, either. So Satan went off to celebrate and plan how he would torture and kill the rest of humanity. *War is so fun!* He decided to incite them to battle each other to the death.

When it was all over, Michael returned to Logos and they wept together for a long time. "I did my best," Michael sobbed. "Yes, I know you did," Logos reassured him.

"What should I do now?" Michael asked. "When Satan discovers them, You know he will incite another attack. The five You have left won't stand a chance!"

Logos wiped His eyes. "As long as they keep themselves pure before Me, Satan has no occasion. He cannot touch them without My permission. If he goes beyond My Law, I have empowered you to defeat his forces so badly he will think twice about ever trying it again. He was only able to attack the City of Seth because they had forsaken Me and lost My covering of love. He did have occasion against them according to My Law. They invited him in."

"Why does Satan seem to enjoy all the bloodshed?" Michael's eyes widened with the horror of it.

"The life is in the blood. Satan sees the sacrifice for sin, and the satisfaction of My Law resulting in abundant life rather than death for the sinner. Satan takes that principle and perverts it, thinking that the power is in the blood itself, and that if he slays My people and drinks their blood, he will become more powerful than I, and eventually be able to overthrow Me and rule the universe by himself."

"Logos, what about a wife for Noah? You said it would be a surprise. But there is no virgin left alive who has kept herself pure. No one!" This time it was Gavriel.

"Dear Gavriel, you too? Fret not. Both you and Michael are learning patience here, are you not?"

Except for the five in New Eden, everyone living had become exceedingly wicked. There was almost no proper government left, so everyone did as he pleased. The strong preyed on the weak. Human life was cheap.

There were mighty giants in the land in those days. They ruled by force and took whatever they wanted. No laws protected orphans, widows, or the handicapped. Violence and strength were the only laws. The lusts of the flesh filled the land. When Michael looked down, he could hardly see through the demonic darkness. He cringed as he returned to guarding the high valley of New Eden.

Slaying all the children of God in the City of Seth only increased Satan's appetite for blood. He and his demons went on a vicious rampage, instigating anger and conflict all over the globe. The superficial repentance at Atlantis was quickly forgotten when they heard false rumors that the Athenians were arming against them.

Soon everyone in the world had taken sides. They all began frantically making weapons and training for battle. But the Atlanteans had a big head start. Their military was the best in the world. They broke their vow to not use their FEMP ray guns. They were terrifying, almost like nuclear bombs, except they harmed only things (or people) which run on electricity, leaving the buildings and roads intact.

In 1374 AF Logos sent Noah on a fourth warning trip, the most extensive yet. In five years, he traveled across the entire inhabited world, bringing news of the love of Logos and His hatred of sin, and telling everyone of the great catastrophe to come if they did not repent.

After Noah's return, the 26th close pass of Mars did serious damage, and a lot of people were killed. There still was no repentance, only anger. Noah became the butt of jokes and mocking. Around the world he became known in derision as 'the doomsday prophet'.

By that time the Atlanteans had nearly gained their objective of ruling the world. For 30 years, every culture on earth was under their iron grip except New Athens (which had developed shielding to protect against EMP). There, fierce battles still raged, slaying many.

Tormenting his subjects, Satan was having more fun than ever. In 1410 AF Mars came by for its 27th close pass, raising the Himalayas of Central China. The island of Atlantis shook so hard that most of its cities were flattened. Its military was severely weakened. During the two years it took them to rebuild, the Sethites at New Athens managed to improve their military and go on the offensive against Atlantis, supported by nearly everyone else. By 1412 AF the Atlanteans were desperately trying to defend their empire against the ascendant warriors of New Athens.

Satan laughed as he urged his demons on. Hatred, fear, war, and violence filled the earth, and blood ran like water. Then the 28th close pass of Mars in 1440 AF, again over the Himalayas but at a different angle, cracked the earth's crust at the Burma plate and across India. More cracks began to spread. The outer crust was doomed! Though not daring to say it to His face, Satan shouted out in triumph, "Logos, consider Yourself paid back for Saturn!"

Methuselah was 735, and Lamech was 548, and both had stopped having children. Noah, at 466, had no wife. Michael worked at being patient, seeing no possibility of change, but trusting Logos. One day Logos called him to the throne room. "Michael, I am very pleased with you. You have demonstrated a great deal of patience and trust in Me. Look now at My beloved Noah. Have you ever seen such faith and trust among the sons of God?" *It is 1456 AF.*

Michael looked and smiled, suspecting, hoping.

Logos' eyes twinkled. "Look now, dear Michael, among the children of men. Do you see any light?"

Michael studied the swirling darkness. He knew Logos must have something going on down there, or He wouldn't have asked him to look. But no, there was nothing. Satan firmly ruled the earth, except for the home of Methuselah, which was still hidden by the angelic host. "No, Logos. I see no light down there. Not a glimmer. Not a spark."

Logos was patient. "Look again." He put His arm around Michael's shoulder, and pointed him to a small hovel in the middle of the very worst, darkest, most wicked ghetto in Mehal. "Look there."

Michael studied the home for a long time. It was bad. Really, really ba-a-a-ad. His skin crawled as he viewed the lust, the violence, the self-centeredness, and the total, complete lack of any virtue. There were five adults in the house, none married, but all in immoral relationships with each other. When they weren't satisfying their lusts upon one another they were fighting. It was horrible... wait! Was that a brief flash of light? It was an unmarried mother who still had a protective sense for her daughter. Michael studied them. Yes! That must be the one. It was tough to see, so clouded as it was with other evils, but it was there. She cared about someone other than herself. Her daughter **Fuchi**, (Fu-Xi) was only twelve years old. It is hard to read children, because their youthful innocence changes so rapidly even as it masks a deceitful and self-centered heart underneath. The light of even a sinless infant often cannot penetrate the dark cloud of the sins of her parents. Michael strained to look beneath the shell, and found... Pain. Agony. Prolonged suffering. Longing. Loneliness. A heavy burden of soul such as he had never seen in one so young. But look as hard as he might, Michael found no deceit or self-centered meanness hiding in her tortured heart. His eyes brightened. "Logos! Look! It is Fuchi! She is the one, isn't she! But... she is so young. Noah is 466 years old."

"When did I ever say that marriage had to be between people of the same age?" Logos laughed at Michael, as if this was a hilarious joke. "Now, fret not. Just take care of her for Me. She is My chosen one!"

Awed, Michael gladly accepted the assignment, though it was the hardest one he had ever had. To think that Logos was so mighty that He could save a person from the middle of such horrible wickedness!

Satan still didn't know about the five in Eden. He was quite sure that he now owned every soul on earth. He had beaten Logos at His own game! He spent much of his time crowing about his destruction of Logos' Bride and his total conquest over the earth. He was not about to let even one of his miserable subjects escape his dominion.

So when he saw Michael's host forming a protective covering over one house in Mehal, he went screaming to Logos in protest. "Logos, You liar! You cheater! You are breaking Your own Law! Your Kingdom is destroyed! Your ways are no better than mine, and now You are exposed for the filthy cheat You are! Everyone on earth has now fully, wholeheartedly chosen me and my ways. According to Your own Word You must honor their free-will choice. Look at that house Your angels are trying to protect. Everyone in it – why, they are the worst in Mehal! They are so wicked I can't believe Your angels will even come near them! They are all that way, every soul in Mehal, every soul on the whole planet! Mine, to torment and destroy until no one is left. But now You're trying to take some away, to force them to change their minds. Your love didn't work, so now You're competing with me in my realm, to deceive them, force them back to You. That's not fair! You lied! I am the deceiver, the god of forces..."

After ranting and raving for a long time, he finally ran down. It is rather awkward arguing with Someone who never argues back. Logos just looked at Satan, with a faint smile on His face, His eyes, as always, filled with love. It seemed like He wasn't even going to answer.

Patience is not one of Satan's strong points. He hated looking into those loving eyes. He almost turned to flee in disgust. But he was really curious about that particular home, and why the angels guarded it. Finally he started again, in a quieter tone. "Please, Logos. I really need to know why Your angels are guarding that house. Are You being true to Your Word, or have You given up and decided to fight me on my own turf?"

"Very good, my beloved Lucifer." Satan stepped back, startled at Logos' use of his original name. "Your pride hasn't yet totally corrupted your nature. You are still able to discuss things rationally. You know that is the only way you can get an answer from Me. My answer is this. Hear it well, for it will never change. Yes, I am still true to My Word. No, I have not given up My ways to fight you on your turf as the god of forces. Love is the only force I use, and it does not compel. It entreats, appealing to the divine nature within and using truth and wisdom to guide My precious ones toward right choices. And yes, My angels guard that house because one not yet yours lives there."

Satan almost jumped back into his arguing mode. But he is not stupid, and he really needed to know more. "Who is it, Logos? How could anyone live in that house without being fully committed to wickedness? It is impossible!" This time he kept his voice low.

“A valid question, deserving of a careful answer. Every child, as you well know, is born in sin and totally self-consumed. But that sin is not his own; it is inherited from his parents. An infant is not, as you put it, ‘fully committed to wickedness.’ An infant has no commitment at all, either to good or evil. As he grows, he eventually will commit himself, and yes, it is usually to the culture in which he is raised, for that is all he knows. But you made a mistake, dear Lucifer. You should have allowed at least a veneer of righteousness to remain, as you did with Kenan, to deceive those maturing children who had not yet made their choices. In that one house, the wickedness is so bad that there is one soul who has grown up hating it, longing for something else. The imprint of My nature is still on her, giving her hope that that ‘something else’ does exist. She has refused to make her choice for wickedness, holding out desperately for the righteousness that she has never seen, except in the brief tender touches of a mother who loves her. She has not yet chosen your ways, dear Lucifer. So I must come to her. Who knows? Perhaps she will choose Me and My ways?” Logos grinned.

Satan could not stand that smile. So he fled, violently shaking from the encounter and from his own rage. He was determined to destroy that house before Logos could reach whichever child He was talking about. But when he got there, the angelic covering was complete. He had no access. A direct attack could not succeed.

So Satan immediately started work on an indirect attack. Watching everyone going and coming, he assigned his best demons to work on each one, planting horrid thoughts of child molestation, child sacrifice, child abuse, anything that might destroy the child protected within.

Satan almost succeeded that very night. The five adults, spurred on by huge waves of temptations exciting their own well-developed vile lusts, agreed that this was the night to initiate Fuchi into ‘adulthood’. Even her mother agreed that she needed to be ‘educated’. But Satan again made a minor miscalculation. Fuchi’s mother still cared enough to explain to Fuchi what would happen to her.

Horrified, Fuchi fled the house. All five adults, with their dozens of personal demons, tried to stop her. But it is amazing what a determined little girl can do with a bit of angelic help. She fought them, not expecting to win but having no alternative. Demonically inspired, they grabbed her by both arms and her long hair, dragging her back. Michael roared out, “That’s it! They have gone beyond their lawful prey. Destroy!” He and his angels, released by the Word of God, instantly blasted the overly aggressive demons clear back to the pit of hell.

The five adults, bewildered and stunned by the sudden loss of their personal demons, partially relaxed their grip. Suddenly, struggling Fuchi broke free and fled into the gathering darkness, leaving wisps of her long hair still clutched in her mother’s hands.

Satan had prepared a backup plan. He’d figured this might not be easy. He had amassed his demons around the house, with orders to do whatever it took to stop her. The thick covering of angelic host over her had to fight for her every step of the way. But grace and supernatural power was available in abundance, and the demons were mowed down, rank after rank, blinded by the light and destroyed by the swords of Michael and his host.

Fuchi was unaware. Avoiding bridges and highways, she fled to the northernmost part of the island upon which Mehal was built. There the Pishon River split to go around the city. She had never been beyond it. Without hesitation she plunged right in, partly wading, partly swimming, to the other side. Then, without even turning back for a last look at the wicked city, she ran to the edge of the woods. There, she paused a moment, considering, still oblivious to the fierce battle in the heavenlies around her. She had been told of wild animals roaming these woods. She was afraid, feeling small and vulnerable. Then, setting her jaw with determination, she ran into the thickest, darkest part of the woods. She didn’t know about the animals in the woods, for she had never confronted them, but she knew about the animals in Mehal! She chose to face the animals in the woods. Death in their mouths was preferred to the living death she had experienced in her ‘family’.

She walked much of the night in peace. The victorious angels now completely surrounded her. She followed the sound of the river, heading northwest. She was aware that to the northeast lay Enoch in the land of Nod. She couldn’t go there, for she knew it was no better than Mehal. But her mother had told her tales of a long-ago land to the northwest, where a great king had ruled His kingdom with love. She desperately wanted to reach it, if it still existed. Her mother had claimed that the fabled kingdom had been wiped out a hundred years before. But there just had to be some people left, a few who understood the hunger in her heart for kindness, honesty, and faithful love.

Near dawn Fuchi found a cave. She was totally spent, exhausted, desperate for sleep. She crawled in and felt her way toward the back of the cave. But she heard a low growl and smelled warm animal fur. Then she heard the yipping of pups, or bear cubs – she couldn’t see which – whom she had awakened. She knelt on the ground, wishing she had some light. “I’m sorry.” Fuchi spoke softly and sweetly. “I’ve interrupted your sleep. But I’m tired, too. Do you mind if I sleep here beside you?” She crawled a little closer. “I promise I won’t be any bother to you.” A little closer. The low growl ended in a bark, like a wild dog, or a wolf! But her choice was already made. *Better to die here than return to Mehal.* “Please, Mother Wolf,” she entreated. “May I join your family? I swear I won’t harm your pups.”

With that she curled up right there on the dirt. Within seconds she was fast asleep, unknowingly comforted by the presence of angels all around her.

The animal was indeed a wolf. A very protective mother wolf, with six nursing pups. She would have made a quick feast out of any normal intruder. But the angels around her had carefully reminded her of her true nature, before it became perverted by the curse. She was created to guard and help humans, and this human pup was hers to protect. She circled warily, finally accepting the angel's word that Fuchi was harmless, and curled up next to her. Her pups rearranged themselves between her legs to finish their sleep. An hour later, she left the cave to hunt for breakfast, leaving her pups to the charge of the sleeping human 'pup'.

Satan had no access. The angelic guard was complete. He had to wait until those lazy humans finally woke up. It was late in the morning before he could even incite them to start out after her. After they finally finished sipping their morning coffee and ate their ham 'n eggs, he managed to get a small posse headed toward the gate. At first no one knew which direction to start looking for Fuchi, but Satan was right there whispering in her mother's ear. With his help, she led them slowly toward the cave.

Fuchi had awakened at noon, washed up in a nearby stream, and spent a hour gathering berries and herbs. She finished her breakfast with the wolf pups playing happily at her feet. Then she heard the posse coming. She quickly retreated back into the cave, but not before they saw her. The wolf pups scampered in behind her, and the mother wolf stood in front of the entrance with bared fangs.

"She's in there! I saw her go in. It's just one wolf. We'll kill it. It'll be easy. There's six of us, and only one of her. The wolf must be tame, or it never would have let Fuchi in her cave. We can make clubs from these saplings."

"No. Make spears by tying your knives to branches." Satan was still whispering in their ears. He wanted to make very sure they won this battle. Too much was at stake.

The battle was short. Normally, six spears to one set of teeth is not a fair match. But the wolf was smarter than that, and retreated into the cave. They all came together at the entrance to the cave, poking at her with their spears, but the wolf just retreated farther back. The cave was too narrow for more than one or two at a time.

Two spears to one set of teeth is more fair, and the canny wolf, who could see better in the darkness of the cave, lunged over the spear points and went for the throats of the two intruders, slaying them quickly. The other four were stabbing wildly with their spears, but an enraged wolf has much quicker responses than a human, and in just minutes all six humans were dead or dying.

The mother wolf lay down at the entrance to the cave, licking her wounds. Most were superficial, but she had a nasty cut in her side that had pierced her belly. The more she licked, the more her guts oozed out, and she knew that she would die. She laid her head down on her paws with a low moan.

Realizing that the battle was over, Fuchi peeked out of the cave. She saw her mother lying there in a pool of blood and ran out to her. "Momma! Momma! I'm so sorry. Oh, Momma!" She was still alive, but barely. "Forgive me! I didn't want to run away from you. Only, your friends... they wanted to do horrible things to me, to abuse me and hurt me like they always did to you!"

"Oh I know, honey. It's not your fault. I'm sorry too. We were just trying to teach you. You'll have to go back. You gotta grow up sometime. That's... life. It's all there is..." With a gurgle of blood, she died in her daughter's arms.

"No, Momma. No!" Fuchi whispered softly. "I'm not going back. That can't be all there is. If that is all there is, then I... I would rather die here with the wolves."

The angels crowding around rejoiced with a mighty cheer! Here was a girl committed to a righteousness she had never seen, even to the death. Michael zipped up to the throne. "Logos! She did it! She chose righteousness! And she got out of Mehal. All who sought to keep her there are dead. But she's all alone. May I reveal You to her?"

"Patience, dear Michael. Patience. Keep your guard over her. In time she will come to know Me." Michael bowed and returned to his charge.

Fuchi dragged her mother's body over to a grove of trees. She knew she had to bury her, but didn't know if she could. Coming back to the cave, she saw the mother wolf's plight and knelt to help her.

"Wait," Michael whispered in her ear. "Wash first." She looked at her hands. They were covered with blood and dirt. She went to the stream to scrub. Then she returned and knelt beside the mother wolf. "Please let me help you," she softly sang. "You saved my life, so let me save yours."

The wolf understood, or perhaps it was the angelic voices whispering to her mind. She lay back with her front paws in the air, which is wolf talk for submission. Fuchi went right to work. She stuffed the well-licked guts back into the hole, then closed it. She carefully gathered little tufts of hair at the edges of the wound and tied them together. It took her over an hour. When she finished, the cut was closed and tied shut by forty neat little knots. All the while the mother wolf lay still, with not a growl or a whimper. The angels had convinced her that this human was different from all the others.

Fuchi made a bowl of tightly woven grasses and brought water to the wolf. Her pups were crowding around nuzzling her for milk. She lapped up the water, recovering her strength, as her pups nursed.

Fuchi went back to her mother. She found a depression in a lovely spot above the stream, and dragged the body there. She spent the rest of the day saying her goodbyes while she wove a grass mat to cover the body, and then heaped a big pile of rocks on top to keep away the animals.

She washed again at the stream, this time immersing and scrubbing for a long time to try to erase the horrible memories. Finally she gathered and ate dinner, and came back to the cave. The mother wolf was up already, and was dining on the dead bodies scattered about the area. Fuchi noted with satisfaction that her 'stitches' were holding just fine. Fuchi also thought she would gain some satisfaction seeing the grisly end of her former tormentors, but found she could not hate them. She just felt pity and sorrow.

Fuchi gathered their knives and the few other things she thought might be important. Then she settled back at the entrance to the cave and gave in to her tears. She hid her eyes from the bloody mess they were making in front of the cave as the mother wolf taught her cubs to eat meat.

Dusk came early in the forest. By then her tears had run dry. The wolves retired into the cave for the night. Fuchi dragged away what remained of the bodies, washed again, then went in and curled up with the wolf pups. But it was a long time before she slept. There was a mixed joy knowing she was free, but at what a cost! Not just her mother, but everything she had ever known was now dead to her. She could never return to Mehal or the lands of Nod or Kenan. Where would she go? How could she survive? Was she destined to spend the rest of her life as an animal with the wolves? That didn't seem right somehow. It was not pride, just an inner suspicion that she had a higher calling than that. She finally drifted off, her life still upside down.

About this same time, Logos came to Noah in a dream. Noah dreamed he was standing at an altar, arms uplifted in worship to Logos, who appeared as flames over the altar. The fire coalesced into the form of a man. His robes dimmed into earthly clothes. Now looking just like a man except for His glowing face, Logos stepped down to stand in front of Noah. He put His hands on Noah's shoulders and smiled lovingly at him. Noah's body tingled with the unaccustomed touch. "Yes, Lord? How can I serve You?"

"You have served Me all your life, My beloved. I have delighted Myself in your worship, your faithfulness, and your trust. Now it is time for Me to serve you." Logos' eyes twinkled and His smile broadened. "I have made a wife for you. She is yet very young, and knows nothing of Me and My ways. She is now in need of your help. Care for her, cherish her, and train her, so she will learn to love and trust you. After she matures I will allow you to marry her, and she will faithfully serve you all the days of your life. Her name is Fuchi. Get up now. Go where I lead. Take your flier toward Mehal, where you will find her."

Noah awoke and rubbed his eyes. That was no ordinary dream! His body still tingled! He had to obey immediately. Gathering a cloak, staff, and some provisions, he set out, navigating toward Mehal by the stars. With no traffic on the main highway, the forest below grew very dark after leaving Eden. "Logos, please guide me now. Without You I would be lost in the darkness. I place my trust in You."

Morning dawned bright and clear. Logos led Noah to land his flier in a tiny meadow well north of Mehal. From there he walked rapidly for five hours through dense woods, heading south near the river.

Fuchi finally awoke and came to the mouth of the cave. The wolves had found what she had so carefully cleaned up the night before, and brought it all back. The full horror of the slaughter returned as she surveyed the carnage. She nearly lost her dinner. She was in a quandary. She knew she should travel on, but she felt young and vulnerable, scared of the unknown. One part of her wanted to try to find the tribe in the northwest that her mother had said was destroyed, but another part wanted to stay with the wolves where she was accepted and protected. But those dead bodies! Seeing them made her skin crawl, and she ran to the stream to bathe again. Coming back, she stopped at her mother's grave – she wasn't ready to leave that behind. The mother wolf walked to the top of her pile of rocks, and stood there motionless as if on guard duty. Fuchi forced herself to decide. She would stay. Surely the acceptance of the wolves was a sign she should stay. Besides, she had to stay to ensure the mother wolf's wound healed properly. She returned to the cave to dress and get breakfast.

Though Noah wasn't tired, a voice he recognized as Logos bade him rest beside a small stream that fed into the river. He opened his sack for a bite of breakfast, when he noticed a large wolf above him, standing motionless atop a pile of stones. His vision swam for a moment. He had seen this place before. But where? He couldn't place it. The wolf stood staring at him, neither barking nor growling.

"Go to her!" the voice whispered in his ear.

"The wolf? That's preposterous!" Noah thought, panic rising. "She is wild and could be dangerous!" He grabbed his staff and fumbled for the knife at his side. But then he recognized the voice. "Uh... Logos, is that You?"

"Yes, My beloved. She will take you to your new wife."

Noah froze, pondering. He knew Logos' voice, and he would obey. But what a strange request! And why was the wolf standing atop those freshly piled stones? He realized with a start that he had caught a flash of this scene in his dream. This must be the place. He took a step toward the wolf. She backed into the trees lining the stream.

Fuchi was eating some breakfast when the mother wolf trotted out of the trees by the stream. Fuchi knelt and hugged her, then laid her down and turned her over to inspect her wounds. The long cut seemed to be healing well. The wolf had obviously been licking it, keeping it clean, but her stitching was holding fine. Fuchi carefully went over the wolf's entire body once again. All the other wounds were looking good. She let the mother get up, and joyfully began to play with her pups. They were such fun! Yes, this was where she belonged. She would stay and grow up with the wolf pups. She picked up one to hug it.

At that point she saw a brown robe and sandals. Fuchi looked up and was shocked to see a man, standing there watching her. A quick glance to the mother wolf. *Why didn't you warn me? Why are you not concerned?* flicked through her mind. The wolf casually looked from her over to the strange man and back, as if she knew and trusted him. *Well, if she trusts him I guess I can too.* Fuchi smiled.

Noah surveyed the scene. He saw the cave, and the girl eating some fruit. Her long golden hair was dripping wet, making her look pretty wild. The wolf he had followed walked right up and lay down before her. Noah hid in the shadow of the trees, shocked at the sight of the girl treating a full-grown mother wolf like a house pet, grooming her and playing with her pups amidst a carnage of dead bodies.

"Logos? Is this the one?" Noah breathed. The instant response came back. "Yes, this is Fuchi. Go to her now. Care for her. I give her to you for a wife, with My love."

The girl saw him. He hesitated, seeing the shock in her face. She quickly glanced at the mother wolf. But then she turned and smiled up at him. His heart melted, and he broke into a welcoming smile. "Hello, Fuchi," he called, holding out his hands in greeting and stepping forward.

The wolf trotted over; the girl followed. "Hello, friend. You must be a friend, or the wolf would have torn you to pieces. How did you know my name? I don't know you."

Noah knelt, to bring his face down even with the girl's. "My name is Noah, Fuchi. Logos showed me your name. He has assigned me to, ah... well... to care for you and be your friend, always. If you will allow me."

Fuchi thought about that for a moment. Finally, "Who is Logos? How did He know my name? I've never met Him. I always thought that 'Logos' was just a curse word."

Noah's dream had prepared him. He knew just how to answer this most important of questions. "Logos is the King of the universe. He knows your name, for He made you. He made all things. He is the one you've been longing for all your life; the Righteous One, in whom there is only goodness. He loves you, for He is love, and joy, and peace. He wants you to come to Him, and to me. Will you?"

Fuchi gasped. Her heart leaped. Instantly she knew that all he said was true, and the longing in her heart was about to be fulfilled. Impetuous girl that she was, she hesitated only for a second before throwing herself into Noah's arms. "Yes! I want you to be my friend always. Yes, I want to go to Logos with you!" She clung tightly to Noah's chest, buried her face in his thick beard, and started to cry.

She sobbed for a long time, her body shuddering. Noah didn't try to stop her. Who knows what terrors and trauma she had been through? He just held her close and waited. Finally she stopped and wiped her eyes. "I'll say good-bye to the wolves and my mother; then I'll be ready to go. I just have a few knives and things in the back of the cave."

Noah's eyes widened. "Your mother?"

"Yes. She died yesterday, along with these wicked men who were trying to rape me. The wolf killed them. I buried my mother there beside the stream." She walked back through the trees to the rock pile to say a private good-bye.

While she was gone, Noah bent down to see the wound in the wolf's belly. He was amazed at the careful stitching together of her hairs, and more amazed that she had let Fuchi do it. This was obviously one special wolf, sent by God to care for Fuchi. And one very special little girl! "Thank you, Logos!" He breathed.

Fuchi returned and knelt down by her. "Good-bye, my friend." Softly, sweetly. Her voice was like a song. "I will never forget you. I must leave you now, but Logos, King of the universe, made you. He will make sure that you heal up so you can care for your pups. Thank you for saving my life. I love you." And she buried her face in the wolf's neck, crying again for a while.

Noah stepped back. This was a holy moment. He was awed that his one brief statement about Logos the Creator had been understood so perfectly, and believed so totally. Here was a woman of pure heart indeed.

After saying good-bye to each of the pups and gathering her things from the cave, Fuchi stood to go. She took Noah's hand and looked him in the eye. "I'm still a virgin," she started, and Noah blinked and gulped. "Wicked men have tried to rape me many times, but Logos protected me. Two nights ago these men had me in my home, but Logos gave me strength and I escaped. They chased me here, so Logos told the wolf to kill them." She smiled sweetly up at Noah. "I know now that Logos was saving me for you. He made me for you. I am yours. I give myself to you. Do with me whatever you want." She leaned her body up against his and put an arm around his waist with a contented sigh.

Noah was blushing furiously. How could this girl be so trusting to a perfect stranger, after being mistreated and abused by virtually all the men in her young life? "Uh, Fuchi, how did you know it was Logos protecting you?"

"Well," Fuchi stopped to think. "You said He made me and all things, and that He loves me, and that He assigned you to care for me. That means that He Himself must have been taking care of me before you came along, because there sure was no one else who cared. Except my mother, and even she didn't understand." They walked together to the stream, where Noah had left his sack. They shared each other's breakfast, and chatted happily as they ate together. Noah was amazed at her mature insights and openness to him. She wanted, needed, to talk. As she blithely unloaded her entire (brief) life history to him, abuse and all, Noah was amazed that she had survived, much less remained pure. Finally she ran down. "So when I escaped, I headed northwest, to try to find the tribe at Eden that my mother told me about. Do you have any idea if they still exist?"

“Yes, Fuchi. They do. I am from that tribe. We were almost wiped out by wicked Cainites from Nod. But there are five of us left – six now with you. You’ve found us.”

“Please tell me about them.” She was sitting very close, partly in his lap, with her arm tight around his chest and her face pushing up into his beard.

“Uh, okay Fuchi, I will, but we need to talk about something else first. Uh, I’m not sure how to say this, but you’re acting toward me almost as if you were my wife – hugging, cuddling, and rubbing your face up next to mine. That, well, it isn’t right. We’re not married, you know, and...”

Fuchi drew back in horrified consternation. “I’m sorry! I didn’t know... Whatever you want...”

“Yes, yes, I know you didn’t know. And I’m glad that you are a virgin. But my job is to care for you, and help you remain a virgin until you are married.”

“Oh.” Fuchi thought a moment. “I guess I don’t know what ‘married’ means to you. When I said I give myself to you and you can do whatever you want with me, I thought we were married. You said you would care for me always. Is that not what marriage is? Why do you want to keep me a virgin? Don’t you want me? Am I not beautiful enough for you? I gave myself to you!” She looked so concerned that Noah would have laughed had it not been so serious. Suddenly he realized that she had been raised in a culture where there was no true marriage – only co-habitation among consenting (or not so consenting) partners.

“I said I’d care for you and be your friend always, and I will. And you are very beautiful to me! But in my culture that’s not marriage. We do things differently. Trust me in this Fuchi. In my culture we try to do things according to the ways of Logos – the way that He made us to live. The culture you came from, well, you know it was perverted. That’s why you wanted to escape!” Fuchi nodded ruefully. “When you get to know Logos, you will understand. In your culture there was no real marriage, just a succession of empty promises and lustful relationships without any real commitment. But in my culture, actually the culture of Logos, marriage is a very high and sacred thing, a lifetime commitment, a joining in spirit and soul and emotions and, well, sex. We have a beautiful ceremony to celebrate it, and we make sacred vows, and everyone witnesses it all and agrees to help us keep our vows forever.”

Fuchi had backed away and was crouching at the end of the log with her arms around her knees. She looked so small, so vulnerable, so young. Way too young to be even having this conversation. But then Noah remembered what Logos had told him: *‘I give her to you for a wife, with My love.’* He made a sudden decision to meet her halfway. He reached out his hand to her and smiled. “You said that you gave yourself to me, Fuchi. Is that your commitment? Did you mean it? Can you give yourself to me completely? Forever? You hardly know me. Can you do that?”

“Yes... Yes.” She was still hesitant, but was encouraged by his smile. “You’re the only one I have left. All the others, everyone at Mehal, is dead to me now. I vowed that I would never return there, even if I died in the forest. So I gave myself to you... But... you said you didn’t want...”

“It’s all OK,” Noah interrupted her. “That was a simple misunderstanding because of the difference between our cultures. It just took me a little longer to figure out and believe what you were saying. Now that we understand each other, I accept you and take you to be my betrothed wife. And I promise to be your husband forever.”

Bewildered by Noah’s sudden change of attitude, Fuchi stayed where she was on the log, not knowing how to respond. There was a wall between them where there had been transparent openness. Noah had to think of something. He chuckled. “Besides, I’m a virgin too!”

“What... you are?” Fuchi couldn’t believe that anyone older than her could possibly still be a virgin.

“Yes. And I vow to keep us both virgins until Logos allows us to marry. He told me to care for you, help you get to know Him, and teach you about His wisdom and ways. I have to do that before we can actually be married. But as my betrothed wife, we are promised to each other, and our marriage is only a matter of time.”

“Uh, what is ‘betrothed’?”

“It means ‘promised’. It is a firm commitment to marry, but it gives us time to be joined together by Logos in spirit before joining together in... uh... the physical realm.”

“Okay. I think I understand.” She got up and stood in front of Noah. “So does that mean I have to... I’m not supposed to hug you or hold your hand?” She still looked sad and forlorn, melting poor Noah’s heart.

Logos, give me wisdom. Give me strength, he breathed. He held out a hand to her and smiled. “No, my beloved. You may hug me. You may hold my hand. I would like that. But do it as if you were my daughter, not like a wife for now. I will be strong, and I will see to it. For now, pretend that you have in me a father who loves you and wants to protect you. I’m old enough for that! At the right time, after you have finished growing up and have learned all that Logos wants me to teach you, then you can learn to love me like my wife.”

She flung herself into his arms and wrapped her small arms around his barrel chest. “Thank you, Noah. I feel safe here. Safer, and more loved, than I have ever felt before. Whatever you want to do with me, however you want to treat me, even if you want to keep me a virgin forever, I am perfectly content as long as I can stay close to you. I don’t understand what you mean by ‘pretend you are my father’ and ‘not like a wife for now’, but you just tell me whatever you want me to do and I’ll do it. I’ve always wanted a father. I never had one before, you know.”

Noah realized that in her culture, rape was common and even fathers were not safe. He knew he would have to be strong for both of them. "You are doing just fine, my daughter. It is I who need a few adjustments here." He wrapped his arms around her briefly and then gently disentangled himself. "Gather your things and say your last good-byes to your mother. It is time to go to Eden."

"Yes, Father!" Her eyes sparkled. She was catching on fast. She knelt one last time at her mother's grave. "Mother! I got a father! A real one, who loves me. And a husband all at the same time; except the husband part has to wait awhile. But it's okay. We promised ourselves to each other, forever. You don't have to worry about me any more. He will teach me to 'grow up'. And he will take care of me, forever! His name is Noah. He is gentle and kind, and understanding. He won't hurt me like all the men you ever knew. And Eden still exists! And I'm going to meet Logos, King of the universe! The One who created us all! He lives at Eden with Noah and his family. I wish you could come." She started to weep, but this time her tears blended with tears of joy. "Good-bye, Mother. I love you! You loved me the best you could. And for anything else, I forgive you. You did the best you could... May Logos..." she choked up. "May Logos have mercy on your soul."

Then, tears streaking her face, she waved goodbye to the wolves, grabbed her little bundle, and placed her other hand in Noah's. Together they turned toward Eden.

All afternoon they walked, on into the evening, pausing only briefly to finish the provisions Noah had brought and pick a few ripe fruits. Noah kept his promise and told Fuchi all about himself, the culture at Eden, and Logos. Fuchi turned out to be as good a listener as she was a talker, and a quick learner, too.

At dusk, Noah knew the plucky girl was tired, but they were almost back to his flier. He did not want to spend the night out in the wilds. "Fuchi, sometimes a good father will carry his daughter on his back. Would you like that?"

Fuchi thought that would be great fun. Jumping right up, she threw her arms about his neck. He hooked her legs with his strong arms and stepped up the pace, while she laid her head on his broad shoulder. She felt so safe and loved. The rhythmic pacing synchronized her breathing. By the time they reached the meadow she was fast asleep.

Darkness had fallen and the stars were bright when they flew into Eden a few hours later. His dogs, ever alert, quickly woke up Fuchi, as well as everyone at Eden. Noah walked Fuchi past his runway landing lights and down the path, watching lights blink on in the houses.

"Oh! It is beautiful!" Fuchi gasped. It was like a dream world, a faerie world, with the bright starlight casting eerie shadows across the gardens, orchards, and flower beds. The four huge dogs crowded around Fuchi, wagging their tails, sniffing her and yipping excitedly.

Noah grabbed for Fuchi, but she seemed to show no fear. He gently put her back down to introduce her to his dogs. "That one is Bruno. He is in charge, the alpha male. Beggar and Balto are his brothers. Brighty is his sister." She hugged and petted them all.

The dogs were fascinated by her wolf smells, but Noah had other things in mind. He had left by the command of Logos in the middle of the previous night. No one knew where or why he had gone. Here he was returning, again in the middle of the night, with a wife/daughter and some pretty tall explaining to do.

"Noah? Is that you?" Lamech was still wrapping his robe around himself as he and Leah came out of one house. "Did you find Fuchi okay? Is she safe? Is she with you?"

"How did they know about me?" Fuchi wondered.

"Logos must have told them, like He told me."

They gathered at Methuselah and Marion's house and swapped stories. Logos had come to both Lamech and Methuselah the night before, in dreams about the same time as Noah's dream. They had spent the day praying for him and Fuchi. Of course they all welcomed her, but they studiously avoided discussing her obvious youthfulness.

Noah decided to be blunt about it. "Lookit, guys. She's twelve years old, okay? Most girls in the culture she came from have already been raped many times by that age."

The others were all shocked, and doubly so that Noah should be talking like that right in front of the girl, but it didn't seem to bother her a bit. "I am very grateful that Logos got her out of that culture while still a virgin. We are betrothed, and committed to staying virgins until Logos marries us. That could be tomorrow, or it could be many years. We've already discussed it, and it doesn't matter to either of us; we both want whatever Logos wants. So for now we'll just treat Fuchi as my daughter. Okay?"

Everyone was happy with that arrangement, so that is the way it remained for many years, while Fuchi learned the wisdom and ways of Logos, and learned to love and worship Him just as Noah did. Fuchi grew up into a lovely and very desirable young woman. But Noah loved having a daughter, and Fuchi loved having a father, and neither was anxious about changing their relationship.

14 years later, 1470 AF, Fuchi was a mature 26 years old, delighted to help her 'father' (now 480) in everything he did. Thus she was with him gathering fruits one day when Logos appeared to him. It was not the Sabbath, and Logos was not smiling. Noah immediately knew this had to be serious. "Sit down, My friend," Logos said quietly. Noah sat on a log, a feeling of dread filling his heart. But Fuchi missed it totally. She sat next to him looking up at Logos, her eyes full of love and her heart overflowing with eager anticipation and worship. Logos began, "My Spirit shall not strive with humans forever..."

Fuchi jumped up in alarm. “What’s wrong? What did I do?” She grabbed Noah’s arm. “I thought – maybe You would say it was about time we were married? Did I do something wrong?” She glanced at Noah’s sad face and assumed the worst. “Noah! What did I do wrong? I’m sorry! Please forgive me! I’ll try harder!”

“No, Fuchi. You did nothing wrong. Only slow down a bit and listen.” Logos gave her a sad smile. “Fuchi, you are a trophy of My grace, a bright jewel in My crown. You are My highest joy and delight every day. You have done all that I asked and more, and are the greatest blessing to My precious ones here at Eden, as I am sure Noah will attest.” Noah nodded vigorously and gave her a side hug. “Your desire to join with Noah in marriage greatly honors Me, Fuchi. In fact, I am so pleased with you that I have decided to make you the mother of all living.” Logos bowed His head and tears came to His eyes.

Fuchi was standing there with her mouth open and her eyes wide. “Logos, that’s... that’s wonderful! Thank You! It is all due to Your own mercy and grace. But... but... why are You not happy for me?”

“I am happy for you, My beloved, both of you. But I am sad for your world. A terrible thing has just happened. Though My angels hid it from him for many years, My adversary has succeeded in discovering where you went, and thus has found Eden and My precious ones here.

“Satan’s sons have no occasion to attack you, therefore you have full protective covering by My angels and are in no danger. Yet they will keep trying until they find some opening, some flaw in one of you that gives them grounds to attack. They will send ‘scouting’ or ‘trading’ parties to deceive you, to beguile you to join in their wickedness. They will keep it up until you or your children fall to their temptations, until all humanity is destroyed and I have no one left. But My Spirit shall not strive with them forever. They are just flesh. Their nature is that of their father, the devil. Their lives shall all be cut off in 120 years.” Logos bowed, weeping. “I’m sorry that I have made them,” He whispered, so low they barely heard. “I must blot them out, man, woman, child, beast, fowl – all that have the breath of life. I must purge and purify the land, for every activity and ambition is vile, and even the thoughts and intentions of every man’s heart is only evil continually.”

He looked down at Noah and Fuchi, huddled together with shocked looks on their faces. “But you have found favor in My eyes. You keep yourselves pure. I shall start anew with you. You shall be father and mother of all living. For I have found you alone to be righteous in all the earth.”

“Surely, Lord, You mean all of us living here at New Eden. Methuselah and Lamech, Marion and Leah...”

“Yes, of course, My beloved. Except, know that there will be terrible trials in the years to come. Only those who overcome and endure to the end shall be saved.

“So rejoice in My promise. Prepare for your marriage. At the end of this year, after Mars passes [its 29th flyby], we will celebrate your wedding. But until then, Noah, if you’re willing, I would like you to take a fifth warning trip. There are some who have not yet heard. I want to give everyone a chance to repent. They do not yet know Me. They do not comprehend either My love for them or My hatred against their sin. Tell them about Me.”

“Yes, Logos. Thank You for permission to wed! I’m happy to do all You ask. I love to serve You.”

“I know you do. You please Me greatly. Listen now. You are not to fear. I have placed My angelic protection around you and nothing shall harm you. You are to go throughout the lands of Nod, Kenan, and Havilah, then fly across to New Athens and Atlantis where repentance and obedience has sadly waned. Go through their cities and towns and warn them of the coming catastrophe. If they do not repent and return to Me and My Law, I shall destroy them all in a great flood of waters. Remind them how I destroyed the island where Athens used to be. Tell them Mars will come especially close this year, but to demonstrate My great love and grace I will restrain the damage. I shall protect them all one last time. From then on, if they do not repent, every 30 years the pass of Mars will be increasingly deadly. Within 120 years it will bring an end to all life on earth, except for you, My beloved. Go. Warn them for Me.

“They will hate you, threaten you, revile you, and attempt to incite violence against you. They will imprison you, and the adversary within them will try to slay you. Do not fear them. I am far greater than the adversary. I will protect you and bring you back to your beloved Fuchi in time for your wedding. When things look darkest, think of that. You will be married on the Sabbath after the closest approach of Mars. And after that, I promise to give you twenty years of peace, joy, and prosperity with your new wife before I assign you another difficult task.”

Noah obeyed. All that Logos said came to pass. There was no repentance in the lands of Havilah, Nod, or Kenan. Noah was hated, reviled, tortured, even stoned and left for dead. God revived him, and he flew out to New Athens and then to Atlantis, where there had been some repentance 120 years before. But they had now become the worst of all. He shouted: “Repent of your sins and return to Logos! He loves you and wants to save you! He said Mars will come very close this year, but He has promised to protect you from harm just this one last time, in the hope that His goodness would lead you to repentance.” But they mocked and abused him.

“We can take care of ourselves,” they laughed as they threw him in their prison. “But if our city is flattened, you will be killed with it!” Then they left for the hills where they would sit out the flyby. They were tired of hearing Noah’s nagging prophecies of doom. They’d heard it all before. *They could protect themselves from Mars.*

Noah happily awaited Mars in his cell, trusting in Logos and delighting that he would soon be free to marry his beloved Fuchi. In accord with the word of Logos, the flyby did no damage. None at all. The returning people were amazed and pleased, even a little awed. They freed Noah to return home. He hailed a cab and returned to the airfield, where he caught the first commercial flight headed for the City of Seth (which had been taken over by the Cainites). Finally, just before the next Sabbath, he walked back into New Eden, to Logos, to his lovely young bride, and to enjoy the twenty years of peace Logos had promised.

In his arrogance, Satan had believed that it was his demons who had always succeeded in pushing Mars so close to Earth. But after Noah's last warning trip, Satan was disappointed. No one had died! They were used to regular Mars flybys. They all knew to go outside while it passed, so there were few injuries. It had been on the 30 year cycle, with Jupiter and Saturn aligned to aid him. Satan had put all his demons into the effort, but no blood! Especially at Atlantis with Noah trapped in the prison. Satan couldn't figure it out. Finally, he went again to the throne room to beg audience with Logos. Swallowing his pride, he asked, "Logos, I need information. Why was I not able to affect Mars this time? Every thirty years I get to destroy nearly all the buildings in the land. But this time, I put forth even more effort than ever, but it did nothing. Why? Jupiter and Saturn were perfectly lined up. What am I missing?"

"Destroy buildings? Your desire is to torment and kill my Bride. You had your eye on Noah. You are miffed that no blood was spilled. But I am grateful that you chose to merely torment her when you had your chance to destroy her entirely. Please accept My thanks, beloved Lucifer. However, you neglect one factor in your calculations: My Word. My Word is the essence of power and light which holds all things together. Every particle, every atom, every molecule in the universe responds to My Word. You have learned that you must work in strict obedience to My Law in order to succeed in anything. I'm pleased, dear Lucifer, that you have learned that much. But My Word is far more than just My Law. You can accomplish nothing unless you are working in harmony with My Word. If I pronounce judgment, I empower you to be My executor of judgment, to rain destruction upon My precious ones. But, when I pronounce peace and prosperity as I have for Noah these twenty years, why do you still try to execute judgment? What makes you think you can countermand My Word?"

"Rather, here is My suggestion to you. If you wish to harm My precious ones, listen to what I tell them and work within that. I have promised peace and prosperity. So if you would tempt them, give them so much peace and prosperity that they forget Me. Of course then I will have to proclaim judgment and you may be able to destroy them. See how easy it is? Just be careful to remain within the boundaries of My Law and work in harmony with My Word. Then anything shall be possible for you."

Open mouthed, Satan nodded, then fled from Logos' presence. Why was Logos so quick to give him the keys he needed to destroy Eden? Satan called a council of demons to announce his change of plans. "Until Logos changes His mind about those at Eden," he said, "we shall spoil them with prosperity and pleasures." Logos and His angels had a great laugh together. It was so good to see the adversary scurrying around trying to do the will of God. Did Satan realize that he had been doing the will of God all along? Whether knowingly, or attempting to thwart God's plan, God's will WILL be done! The angels bowed in worship, singing, "What a mighty God we serve!"

CHAPTER 11 – BUILDING THE ARK

The twenty years went by, too fast. Fuchi made a good wife. Having a husband over 450 years her elder bothered her not a bit. She thanked Logos every day for a man whose first priority was to love God and walk humbly and purely before Him, for she had learned to do the same. Though they had no children during this period, Noah was not anxious. He totally trusted Logos for his family.

As Logos had warned, trading parties from the lands of Nod, Kenan, and Havilah came, bringing their foolish wares and beguiling offers. They refilled the City of Seth around Lake Redemption with wicked people from their own cities. Yet the godly clan living in Adam's valley of New Eden remained safe and prosperous. They continued to look to Logos, living by His wisdom and His laws, and giving the adversary no occasion to harm them.

Satan, of course, was furious at his failure. Great anger begets great mistakes. He began to lash out in wrath at his demons, who in turn grew increasingly violent in humans they possessed. All remaining semblance of law and order broke down. Battles were fought continually between the various factions. Often neither side knew what they were even fighting about.

Satan forgot the advice of Logos to keep at least a veneer of respectability. So whenever he tried to send people up to the high valley of New Eden to tempt them into sin so he could gain access, his people were so disgustingly wicked that there was no real temptation left, no deception. His lies were not believable. His own people's miserable lives belied his lavish offers of pleasure, wealth, and happiness. Adam's valley remained prosperous and safe.

Satan got a real scare one day when he tried to seduce the children of God at Eden with a pretend family that he had made out to be in need of their help. They did help the family, but for some reason not understood to him, his demons were ineffective at Eden, and his family started to hate their own wickedness and yearn for what they were seeing at New Eden! Satan had to quickly change his plan. He sent another raiding party to do battle with them. Thus, he slew them all before they could actually repent.

But it was in the battles, which were Satan's specialty, that he seemed to be failing the most. After his 'prosperity' temptations had fizzled, He sent raiding parties to Eden to destroy them. But his own people were so full of anger and hate that they couldn't seem to stick together long enough to face their common 'enemy', particularly when their 'enemy' was no threat to them. Even if they made it to Eden (and often they did not, for they killed each other along the way), the sight of the peace-loving, gentle people there seemed to take all the fight out of them. Or perhaps their own personal demons couldn't get past the wall of angelic protection, and without them, people were less interested in fighting them than in discovering the secrets of Eden's now legendary peace and happiness.

Whatever the reasons, Satan nearly lost several groups of his finest. He finally stopped sending them, turning again to planetary disruptions to try to bring fear and thus destroy the faith of the children of God at Eden.

But the word had gotten out. Now people began to hike up to the valley at New Eden of their own accord, some out of curiosity, and others out of hatred of their own lot and longing for the fabled utopia at the center of the world.

Now Satan had to work frantically to stop them. These people could even repent and turn to Logos! He started spreading lies and slander about Eden: *Eden is a dangerous place. The people there have horrible chronic diseases! Noah is afflicted and it has made him mad! The men at Eden are all sterile, and it's contagious! Stay away, if you value your life!*

Far from being spoiled, the little clan at Eden was intensely grateful for the twenty years of special blessings. During one Sabbath fellowship, Logos came to them and received their thankfulness and worship. Finally Noah, with Fuchi nodding her agreement at his side, stood and held his arms out to Logos. "You promised me twenty years of peace and joy with my wife before You gave me another difficult task. You have abundantly fulfilled Your promise, I am ready to do whatever You ask of me."

"Whatever I ask? Anything?"

"Absolutely anything. I totally trust You, my Lord and my King. You have blessed us beyond words. I am ready to go even to the ends of the earth if You require it of me."

"I am very pleased with your response." Logos beamed His approval. "You shall indeed go to the ends of the earth. You alone have I found righteous in all the earth. All the rest are unspeakably wicked. They have polluted the land by their wickedness. They have filled the entire earth with cruelty. If I don't destroy them soon, their violence would reach and destroy you, and I would have no one left upon whom to pour out My love. Therefore, I will flood the whole earth with water. I will wash it clean and start over. Your task, My beloved Noah, is to build an ark for you and your family, and for the animals, so you can replenish the earth after I have washed it clean." Logos paused.

Noah nodded. "Yes, Logos. All that You ask, I will do. Thank You for allowing my family to help me."

"Your ark shall be made with laminated wood beams, glued and riveted for strength. It must be made totally watertight with pitch inside and out. It shall be 500 feet long, 83 feet wide, and 50 feet high, with three stories inside. It shall have a single window right near the top, and one big door in the side. They both must seal tightly when closed. You will have 100 years to finish it. The flood will be terribly violent, so its hull must be made exceedingly strong to withstand the force of the waters. Every person, every bird and beast, every creeping thing under heaven in which is the breath of life, will be destroyed. But in the ark, I shall preserve you, your family, and two of every kind of bird, beast, and creeping thing, to replenish the earth."

"Yes, my Lord. I will obey." Noah bowed in reverential fear, trembling as he became aware what a difficult task this would be. To his credit he did not balk in the slightest. "I trust that You will give me wisdom and strength day by day to complete this ark in time."

Logos laughed. It was good to see Him joyful in the midst of such solemnity. "Yes, dear Noah. I will. But I give you more than that. I give you three sons. Your firstborn, even now in Fuchi's womb, will be a great help in wood-working and construction. Your second-born will have skill in metallurgy, and a keen mind for problem-solving and inventions. Your third-born will be skilled in animal husbandry. You will find him invaluable in preparing for all the animals, as well as in harnessing them to aid in your construction efforts. You will have plenty of time. Take 15 years for the design and planning phase. I will guide you in every detail. By the time you begin construction, your sons will be strong, quick, and eager to assist their father."

So for the next 100 years Noah worked diligently on the task Logos had given him, with the help of his three sons. **Japheth** was born in 1490 AF (3550 BC). **Shem** was born three years later, and **Ham** the year after. Today it's hard to believe that they did it. But even such a huge task, when broken down into small steps, is not so difficult as it seems. Besides, people were smarter and stronger then, and their technology was highly advanced. Metallurgy had come a long way since Tubal-cain had invented the iron smelting process a thousand years before. And Adam himself had discovered many uses for electricity after realizing its potential in the bolt from Mars at the Fall. He had bypassed the internal combustion engine for being too complicated, too inefficient, and too smelly. Instead, he had spent his time harnessing electricity. During his own lifetime Adam had developed powerful generators and electric motors. Since then, use of electric power had become universal.

Mars returned for its 30th close pass in 1500 AF. Noah remembered the stern warning sent through him 30 years before, and wondered if Logos had seen any repentance. I'm sad to report that there was none.

As Logos had warned, this turned out to be the worst Mars flyby in history. With unprecedented earthquakes, incredible storms bathed in colossal electrical discharges, hailstones big enough to kill a cow, vast mountain ranges raised across central China, and cracks in the earth's crust all the way across Siberia, the globe shook like a rag doll. Every man-made structure came down. It was beyond our imagining. Blood flowed in streams from every hill where people had gone to be protected. Two-thirds of mankind was slain in the catastrophe. When it was over, mighty Atlantis, to this day the richest, most magnificent, most powerful, most technologically advanced culture the world has ever known, had sunk into the subterranean ocean and was no more. Its proud 'earthquake-proof' buildings now lie shattered, hidden beneath the Atlantic.

But massive angelic covering kept New Eden free of injuries. All of Noah's buildings remained standing. It was incredible! Even the storms and hailstones passed by on either side. They praised Logos and went back to work. Satan paused in his victory chant to stare, dumbfounded, down at New Eden. *What the heaven happened there?* He briefly considered going to Logos to complain, but knew it wouldn't help. They were righteous. He had no cause. And it was spoiling all his fun and souring his celebrations.

So did people remember Noah's warnings and finally repent? No. They shook their fists at God, swore at Logos, and cursed 'the doomsday prophet'. Noah redoubled his efforts on the ark, realizing for the first time that there really was no hope left for humanity.

As his three sons grew to manhood, Noah found them to be all that Logos had promised. Japheth, his eldest, loved working with wood. Shem was a mechanical and metallurgical genius. He made two 5 foot diameter high-carbon steel saw blades with chromium-titanium teeth. He and Japheth spent a year building a wonderful saw mill at the base of Eden's hill. The commercial power grid had failed in the catastrophe. So now the waterfall over the hill generated the electricity needed to power the sawmill. They began mass production of accurately cut boards, 8 inches wide, an inch thick, and 10 to 30 feet long.

When he was 15, Japheth and two elephants dug a big pit as Logos directed. They were rewarded with a hot spring, bubbling up and steaming over the top. Ham, at 12, was already strong and adept at riding a pony. He dragged the sawn boards to Noah, who put them in the hot springs to soak. When they got pliable, Noah inserted them into bending jigs he had made. His own trained horse named Buddy helped him bend them. Thus each board was warped to a precise curve to fit its specific place in the hull.

Shem also invented the glue, from sawdust resin. It was waterproof and flexible when cured. It made an incredibly strong bond between boards, for the big laminated beams. He soon was producing tons of his glue formula, storing it in a stone vat he dug beside the hot springs.

Shem worked with Japheth in building hundreds of huge clamps, as well as a roller jig for the glue lamination process. By the 18th year everything was ready to start. This was a bit tricky. They laid out 72 boards, labeled for their precise location. The four men all worked together. The pre-curved boards, 24 at a time and of various lengths, were slathered in glue and assembled into the roller jig, where they were slowly pulled through by Ham's trained elephants, Fern and Nando. The roller jig compressed them into one great laminated beam 8 inches wide and two feet thick. As it came through the jig and out onto rollers, Japheth clamped it every 6 inches, to keep the beam tightly together until the glue dried. They kept inserting boards whenever the length of one ran out, butting the next one right up to the last before it was pulled into the jig. When that day was over, Noah excitedly called Fuchi over to see the finished beam. It was perfect. The boards had held their curve through the lamination process. They now had their first main rib, a beautiful 58 foot long 8 x 24 inch glue-lam beam, weighing 2400 pounds, curved within two inches of Noah's design. They rejoiced at their success with the animals, as it had become painfully obvious that their commercial power would never be restored. New Eden had been deliberately cut off from the power grid.

The second rib only took four weeks. After the third, they had refined the process so they could almost finish one rib each week. By the end of the 28th year, they had completed the 274 ribs needed for the hull of the ark. With their skill at glue-lam beams, they were able in only two more years to complete the gigantic keel. It was 16 inches wide by 48 inches thick and a total of 550 feet long, curving gracefully up at each end. 1296 boards, one inch thick and averaging 20 feet long, went into that beam. It weighed 22.4 tons. It took a team of 40 elephants to pull it through the special roller jig made for it.

Shem's two-bladed sawmill now began mass producing the siding for the ark. These beams were a full five inches thick by 12 inches wide, 20 to 40 feet long. Ham was full grown and incredibly strong by then. He and his trained horses brought the logs and stacked the finished lumber.

Meanwhile, Noah and Japheth set to digging a huge pit right at the base of the hill, well above the level of the river. They used explosives for the rough digging. Then Ham got his team of 40 elephants, Fern and Nando at the lead, to smooth and shape it. The process took half a year of hard labor, but by the middle of the 31st year they completed their pit in the shape of the lower half of the completed ark's hull, but ten feet larger all around. It had a drainage channel at one end, so any water seeping into it would drain down to the river. Noah rented two big commercial fliers to hoist the 22 ton keel into place on blocks in the center of the pit. (Renting fliers to hoist the heavy beams was their biggest expense.) There it was leveled and braced. Noah and his right-hand man, Japheth, set to work measuring and notching the keel for insertion of the ribs.

Shem, his semi-automated sawmill going ten hours a day, six days a week, by means of his trained animals, now invested all his energies into making rivets. He made a drill bit capable of drilling holes two inches in diameter by two feet deep. So his rivets were the same diameter and up to four feet long, with large bulbous heads on one end. He forged them by smelting molybdenum and titanium alloyed with aluminum. They were incredibly strong yet light and easy to work with, as well as totally rust-proof. (Unfortunately for our post-modern age, his smelting technology is lost. Even today's high-speed jet aircraft do not have such good quality rivets.)

By the end of the 32nd year, all 274 ribs were riveted to the keel, 3 feet apart, staggered by a foot for insertion of the rivets. It now looked like a boat, with each rib supported in place by braces to the sides of the pit in which it was being built. In only one place, a rib did not reach for the sky; it stopped at ground level for a single 6 foot 8 inch wide door.

Noah had no idea of the strength of the violent waters, so Logos had to teach him about crossribs. These are heavy beams going from the prow and stern, around the sides just inside the ribs, and down to the keel. Logos assured Noah that without them, the ark would break up in the heavy seas. This was a big task Noah hadn't counted on. It took careful measurements of the shape of the hull to form them to fit. Once again they set up the glue-lam process to custom-make each beam for a good fit. They were 6 inches thick by a foot wide by nearly 200 feet long, riveted inside each rib along the way. When he finished, they looked so good he made four more, and installed them up across the sides to form 'Xs', so every rib was locked in place.

That took a total of four years for the eight crossribs. It was exhausting, but when they were done, Noah had to agree with Logos that they made a much stronger boat.

Noah decided to frame the inside three floors before sheathing the sides of the hull. Shem's sheathing lumber turned out to be perfect for making beams to support the flooring, as they didn't have to be curved. The 5 x 12 beams made perfect floor joists. They glued two of them together to make 10 x 12 beams for supporting the joists. They put aside the best, straightest, and longest boards for the hull sheathing and used up the knotty culls for the floor joists. It took Noah and Japheth another three years to complete the framing for the three floors, with Shem at his sawmill and big, brawny Ham logging, hauling trees, and stacking the lumber with his trained horses and elephants.

So by the end of the 39th year, the three floors were framed out, all ready to lay down the actual flooring. That part would be easy, so they saved it for later. Now Noah could start sheathing the hull. Sheathing was tricky; it would take a long time. The hull had to be strong enough to withstand bending, yet totally watertight. Noah and the boys spent most of the 40th year designing a system to do it, while recovering from the terrible 31st pass of Mars.

Shem invented a ring-nail with spiral threads at one end, which could be pounded through the sheathing and into each rib. It was one inch in diameter, with a flat head. He would drill a hole slightly smaller than his nail, so it would fit tightly. The spiral threads would keep it from working out. He began mass producing these ring nails. While waiting for Shem, Noah built the ramps between floors and framed the single door. But before he could start the roof joists, Logos came to him and encouraged him to re-design his roof. "You do not yet understand the power of the flood waters that will be crashing against that roof," Logos told him. "Make your roof as strong as your hull." He gave him a mental picture of a thousand feet of solid water pressing down upon the roof.

So once again Noah decided to postpone the sheathing of the hull. The roof was too complex, too difficult to do with the sheathing in the way. So they stopped production of sheathing boards, and again started up their glue-lam process for a 500 foot long, 16 x 48 inch, 20.5 ton crown beam and the 8 x 24 inch 46 foot long roof joists. Though bowed slightly upward for strength, they were a lot easier to make than ribs. But it still took 2 years to complete the crown beam and hoist it up into place with the two rented fliers, and 6 more years to complete the required 274 roof joists and rivet them in place from the crown beam to the ribs. At least it had no outside deck to complicate things.

Ham had been given the task of collecting pitch for waterproofing the hull. He had tapped all the smaller trees in the area, any too small for lumber. But his sap buckets seemed to take forever to fill. He knew they'd need tons of pitch, and it looked like they'd run short. Now 49 years had passed, and they still hadn't even started sheathing the hull. "Are we going to be in time, Logos?" Noah worried.

"Yes, of course. I will ensure that you're in time," Logos graciously responded. "So... I'll make this coming year a Sabbatical. It will be a vacation for you and your family. There will be no building, no gardening, no work at all, even for your animals. You shall eat what grows naturally. Just enjoy each other and enjoy Me the entire 50th year!"

"Yea!!!" Ham and Japheth threw their tools in the air, laughing and clapping each other on the back. Shem just stood there with his mouth open, a faint smile starting to curl up at the corners. Fuchi came to Noah and wrapped her arms around him. "Yes! Yes! I get my beloved hubby back for a whole year!" she whispered. "But Logos," Noah responded. "We don't need a vacation. We get a Sabbath rest every week. We're not tired. There's still so much to do. We're not even half finished. We..."

"Thank you, My friend, for your concern for My work. I respond with My concern for your well-being and for the well-being of your family. I assure you that if you do not take a year off, you will not finish the work in time. Play. Enjoy your family. Try not to even think about the ark until this time next year." And with that, Logos vanished.

That was that. They collected their tools, shut down the sawmill, and put their trained animals out to pasture. It seemed strange not to have the constant high-pitched buzz of the sawmill in the background. For a day or two they stood looking at each other, or puttered around Eden wondering what to do with themselves. They'd forgotten how to play! But Logos had commanded it, so Ham made a ball out of lambskin and he and Japheth began kicking it around the pasture. Shem made up some rules. Soon they had a pretty good game of soccer going. Everyone joined in, even Methuselah and Marion at the age of 919.

That year went faster than any of them had imagined. The soccer morphed into polo, with the whole group becoming expert riders, first on the horses, and then on the elephants. Then they developed other sports: discus, shotput, javelin competitions, racing, the high jump, the long jump. Huge, muscular Ham usually won the games of strength and speed, so they developed mental challenges, which Shem usually won. Eventually they combined all the different contests into one lengthy tournament, which Japheth won due to his ability to plan ahead. Thus each improved in strength and skill. Noah wondered if perhaps they were preparing for some kind of battle against the pagan cultures at Nod and Kenan, but (thanks to Michael and his host) there was no contact with them that year.

All too quickly the 50th year had passed. As they were getting ready to return to work, Noah hatched a brilliant inspiration for the sheathing. His revitalized mind had this strong impression that a single layer hull would not be strong enough, and would be hard to waterproof. But a double layer hull, separated by a quarter inch filled with pitch, would be strong and self-sealing. With that extra year they now had enough tree sap. He was ready to get his sons back into production when Logos came to him.

"Thank you, Logos," he bowed. "You were right. We really needed that vacation. We all feel encouraged and refreshed. We're ready to get back to work."

"I have one more task before you go back to work, My beloved. Though the world didn't heed your previous warnings, I do not give up on them so easily. I still love them, and long for them to return to Me so I do not have to destroy them. Please, take your personal flier and go for Me. Warn them again. Tell them that they only have fifty years more before the great flood comes. Tell them about your ark. Let them know that we are really serious."

Again Noah did as Logos requested, amazed at the love and longsuffering nature of Logos. And again, the people taunted and persecuted Noah, refusing to repent. One old man in particular, Josh, followed him around for ten weeks, politely debating him whenever he tried to preach his warnings. He was a leader in the wicked land of Kenan, a famous scholar and teacher, and he thought he knew it all. Every time Noah would shout out his warnings, he would be standing there, quietly waiting his turn.

"I am compelled to tell you," he would always begin, and Noah wondered who compelled him. "That this old man is deluded. Look how he rants and raves. He is clearly mad. He talks of rain to flood the mountains, and has even built a huge boat to protect himself. But I am a student of history and the natural realm since the world began, and I assure you that such a thing has never happened nor ever shall, for it is utterly impossible. There is not enough water on earth to cause such a flood. Even if water should fall from the heavens, it could flood the lowlands no worse than Saturn did. But Saturn's new orbit threatens Earth no longer. And as for Mars coming so close as to cause such a terrible cataclysm, I personally discussed this matter with Adam himself (may he rest in peace) and he assured me that Logos loves us too much to ever allow Mars to destroy us completely. Logos may discipline us, to cause us to fear Him, but He will always show mercy, for that is His true nature. He promised to protect you as long as you rest on the Sabbath and perform the public sacrifice each week." Thus did Josh quieten men's hearts and turn them away from hearing the message of God through Noah.

At least this time Noah didn't end up in prison. Some of the people even listened. But the result was not good. After forty weeks he finished his tour. When he got back to Eden he found a steady stream of curiosity seekers coming just to oogle his ark. He preached the Word of Logos to them, but they only laughed and made jokes, helped themselves from his gardens and orchards, and went their way.

Satan was watching on from the heavenlies, trying to figure it all out. Though he had discovered his limitations as far as harassing those living at Eden, he still couldn't quite see why he was unable to incite the visitors against them. He had brought his finest, his most wicked and cruel slaves, and the best he got out of them was a few scoffs and taunts. It seems that the covering of angels over New Eden put a damper on all his activities there. Then he had this constant fear that some of his servants could hear and respond to the message preached by Noah! No, no, there was just too much risk. Once again he resigned himself to staying within the boundaries set for him by Logos.

Noah and his sons went back to work. Sheathing the hull began in earnest, and the sawmill was put back into full-time operation. Every board had to be custom fit and checked for tightness before using Shem's beautiful ring nails to secure it. There could be no leaks. It was slow, painstaking work. A single layer of the hull would take 2822 boards, each 5 inches thick and 12 inches wide by 22 to 44 feet long. With all the fitting, cutting, and shaving, they found that they could only put on about two boards a day. It took seven years for the first layer. The second layer was even harder, as they had to fit each board, take it down, insert spacers, put it back up, nail it loosely, inject hot pitch between the boards until the crack filled up, then cinch it tight. With sticky tree sap oozing out all over the poor workers, it was a difficult, sticky, dirty job.

By now they had caught up with Shem's sawmill, for Ham and his animals had to roam farther afield to find trees big enough for lumber. This slowed them down. The second layer of sheathing took eleven years. With perfect weather in those days, trees grew fast, tall, and straight. But even the mightiest of forests could not keep up with the mind-boggling amount of timber they'd already used. All of the nearby forests had been logged and re-planted twice already, and the third harvest wasn't nearly ready.

The hull was complete by the 69th year. But half the next year (1560 AF) was wasted recovering from the 32nd flyby of Mars. (It was even worse than when Atlantis had sunk. It raised America's Rocky Mountains from Mexico around to Siberia and spun Earth's crust over 90 degrees.) Heeding Logos' warning, Noah continued with the same sheathing method for the roof. That took another 2584 boards and 15 years to install both layers. Next, they had to add ballast for stability. They put the slag from their rivet smelter into the bottom of the hull for ballast. Finally, they brought inside the remaining 5 x 12 planks and all the culls from the sheathing to finish the flooring. Again, it was a lot of lumber – another 3610 boards for the three floors. But now they were able to use the short ones and ones earlier rejected for splits or knotholes, since the floors didn't need to be watertight. It got rid of a lot of stacks of old boards.

Thus they finished the ark, and with ten years to spare. Logos came next Sabbath to express His approval. "You all did very well. I shall reward you. Shem, Ham, and Japheth, I am especially pleased with you. You stuck with your father through an extraordinarily difficult task. Without your strength, dedication, and skill, it could not have been accomplished. Your reward shall be great." They looked at each other, smiling and wondering what sort of reward it might be. Logos continued, "Have you noticed how much your parents have enjoyed and blessed each other all these years? The joy of intimate companionship is one of the greatest joys you can ever experience on this earth. That joy shall be yours as well, for I shall find for each of you a godly wife. You must not go out to find your own wife from among the wicked cultures around you. No, for at the right time I shall bring her to you, right here in New Eden, and introduce her to you Myself. Do not settle for anything less." They bowed and voiced their agreement and thanks.

The next week, Logos talked with Noah about finishing touches on the ark. He explained that it needed fins low along the outer hull, to damp the roll of the craft in heavy weather. It needed heavy stone drogue anchors, to keep the prow of the ark into the wind and to slow the ark when they approached land. And it still needed a final coat of pitch all over the outside. Logos also encouraged them to expand their garden. "You must grow much more than you need, and start storing grains, seeds, and nuts in the ark for the future. Grasses for the animals need to be dried, and straw for bedding. Foods for your family need to be dried, pickled, salted, or canned; enough for a whole year.

"You've been used to harvesting from your gardens every day, all year. After the Flood your growing season will no longer be year-round. More than half of each year will be winter, when you and the animals will have to rely on preserved foods. You must learn how to prepare for this winter. Also, the blankets and clothing that you now have will be insufficient. You must prepare for cold weather – colder than you have ever experienced – colder than you can even imagine." So in the next two years they expanded their gardens threefold. Ham took charge of learning what the animals ate and planning to stock food for them.

Noah's father Lamech weakened to the point he could no longer work with them. He was only 777 years old! When they asked Logos what was wrong and what they could do to renew his strength, Logos replied with a smile, "I allow him to get weak for your sakes, to give you time to say good-bye. I am about to take him home with Me."

Even ever-faithful Noah was shocked at this. He fully expected to take Lamech and Leah, as well as Methuselah and Marion, with them on the ark. But he would not voice his dismay. He would not criticize Logos, even in his heart. So he just bowed his head and said, "Yes, Logos."

"Good for you, Noah. You delight Me with your trust in My goodness. Lamech and Leah are special to Me. They are trophies of My grace in keeping them pure for Myself, uncontaminated by the wickedness of the world. Their job on earth is now done. It was their love, care, training, and prayers that have kept you so close to Me all these years. You do not need them anymore... but I still need them. May I take them to be with Me forever in My Kingdom? If I take them now, they won't have to endure the horrors of the Flood. There is no need for them to face that."

"Yes, Logos," Noah said again, finally beginning to understand. Then he thought about his grandfather and grandmother, Methuselah and Marion, and he recalled Logos' unexpected words to him and Fuchi, "I have found you alone to be righteous..."

Logos answered his thought before he could ask it. "Only you, Fuchi, and your children shall go on the ark. As I said, you will become the father and mother of all living, for you alone have I found righteous on all the earth.

"Methuselah and Marion may remain with you until the day of the Flood. Their covering prayers for you are more important than you know. But they also shall not accompany you in the ark. They could not endure the Flood. With the first drops of rain, their task is also done and I shall take them home."

So they said their last good-byes, praising Logos. Lamech and Leah died in 1585 AF, which was the 95th year since construction of the ark began. Logos took them peacefully in their sleep, as befits the greatest of the saints of the Kingdom. Their age was a perfect number, three sevens, as befits a perfectly completed life mission.

In the heavenlies, Satan was frustrated in his inability to disrupt the family at Eden. He had tried everything he knew, yet they remained faithful to Logos, praising Him in all things, good or bad, and trusting His promises. Satan came up to the throne room of the Most High pouting, wondering what to say to weasel more information out of Logos. But Logos spoke first. "Ahh, My beloved adversary! You seek information." Logos smiled at him.

Again Satan had the horrid feeling that Logos could read his mind. Again he rejected it. Logos was guessing. "No, no. I just stopped by for a little light entertainment. Seeing how You operate always gives me a kick. I'm sure glad I'm not forced to bow and scrape like these wimps You have serving You."

"None are forced, as you will understand someday when you also make the choice to bow to Me. But that is not why you came. You have been so focused on My little band at Eden that you are forgetting your other tasks. Remember the comet named Glacis? It was a large ice moon of Uranus which you casually tossed into space when you made use of its companion, Aster. It is now returning, and it may be of use to you, should you choose to exercise your authority over it."

Satan fled the throne room. He was shocked. Shocked that Logos was so free, even helpful, with information, shocked that Logos still called him 'beloved', and doubly shocked that he had almost bowed and said, "Thank You!" to Logos when he received the information he needed. *Was he getting soft? Was he starting to like Logos or His ways? No! Not a chance! He had just tricked Logos into talking. Logos was still hoping that He could win him back.* Thus Satan continued to deceive himself.

Sure enough, Satan found Glacis returning into the solar system. Its orbit would put it nowhere near Earth at any time, but that could easily be changed. He certainly had lots of 'toys' now to choose from, all in highly elliptical orbits and many threatening Earth. Satan studied the movements of the planets. *He could push Glacis closer toward Sol and sling-shot it around the sun right into Earth's orbit. No, wait. Glacis is ice. That close to Sol and it may thaw or even break up. Mars! If he slowed Glacis way down, it could catch the gravitational pull of Mars and become one of its moons. Then Mars would carry Glacis around to Earth.* An evil smile broadened Satan's face. *A perfect plan!*

Assigning his demons to begin slowing Glacis, Satan made lengthy calculations to determine how much. This would be his crowning achievement! It is tricky, you know, setting a moon into a specific orbit. It had to be the right speed and distance, and timed just right, too, to swing around just as Mars is passing Earth. I suggest you not try this at home. But Satan was successful. In two years Glacis would become a moon of Mars in a distant orbit of 194,000 mile radius. That new orbit was precisely timed to intersect Earth during the following pass three years later!

And Logos, watching from the highest heavens, wept in intense grief for His doomed world and all the precious souls who were so soon to be destroyed.

It had taken Noah's family four years to install the roll fins and carve the ten stone anchors (the largest weighing 3000 pounds) as Logos had asked. Now they all began to weave thick ropes to dangle them from the ark's prow. During that time, they stocked many tons of alfalfa hay, grains, seeds, and nuts. They made barrels for emergency drinking water, and packed them in the hull just above the slag ballast. Shem, the inventive one, built an electronic lighting system, powered by a pair of tiny nuclear reactors similar to what powered their personal fliers. However, knowing that during a Mars flyby the typically huge static discharges could zap the whole system, they also installed torches and oil lamps along the walls as backup.

Again Logos came to them. The three boys had been thinking about His promise and were eagerly anticipating their 'rewards'. Japheth was now 95 years old, Shem was 93, and Ham was 92, which was a good age to get married in those days. But Logos didn't even mention it. "Noah, I know that you have already warned them six times, but I am very sad at what is about to happen, so I want you to warn them one last time. Tell them that on its regular pass three years from now, Mars will come much closer than they expect for an 'off' year, and it will do a lot of damage. My adversary is now working to add a fourth major moon to Mars. Tell them, 'Beware the fourth moon!' That will be My final warning. If they fail to repent, five years from now when Mars returns for its 33rd close flyby, that fourth moon will shatter and fall to the earth. The earth will be destroyed. Only those in this ark will be saved. As before, you may be sorely mistreated but I will be with you and bring you back safely. Now is a good time to go, while the rest of your family finishes weaving the anchor lines."

So, bidding good-bye to his beloved Fuchi and his boys, Noah again set out on what had become his least favorite task: preaching to people who would not listen. Rather than fly, this time he used his tiny electric car. He drove slowly through the lands of Seth, Athens, Havilah, Kenan, Nod, and beyond, preaching wherever he could find an audience. As expected, he suffered a lot of persecution. He was reviled, laughed at, and spit upon. He had things thrown at him. He was forced out of villages to sleep under the stars. (This was not too great a hardship in those days, as the nights were uniformly mild and balmy, but there was a rather heavy morning dew that at times soaked him to the skin.) He had thought he might complete his task in a single year, but no chance. Civilization had expanded rather dramatically in the last hundred years. He traveled on, finding more and more towns as he went, as far south as Zimbabwe, as far west as Mexico, as far north as Poland, and as far east as China. Noah was impressed by Logos to express His warnings in every village, town, and city. Everyone must hear the message.

In the heavenlies, Satan crowed and celebrated his success with his demons. The addition of Glacis as the fourth moon of Mars had an added benefit for him. No, it would not collide with Earth on the first pass, yet Glacis was huge; the added mass in the system would result in Mars coming closer to Earth to cause even greater crustal tides and earthquakes. Satan delighted in tormenting his subjects before he destroyed them. Perhaps he would try to avoid the inevitable collision for several hundred years. He was thrilled to think of earthquakes strong enough to knock down everything that man had built. He might modify its orbit around Mars so that Glacis would come as close as possible without breaking up.

With the expansion of civilization, it took Noah a full three years to finish his warning trip. Mars was upon them as he reached the last city. His travels had taken him over 60,000 miles and through more than 5,000 cities, towns and villages. He'd seen no repentance. It was sad. At dusk on the last day he shouted his final warnings, including, "Beware the fourth moon!" as Logos had told him.

The earth began to tremble. Buildings began to fall. Everyone had laughed at him, knowing that Mars had but three major moons large enough to be dangerous to the earth. Besides, its closest pass wasn't due for two years. They knew the timing of the Mars flybys. But suddenly they weren't laughing. They were looking up, pointing, shouting in terror! There was indeed a new fourth moon of Mars! It was huge, and Mars was getting very close! Then towards evening Mars passed to the far side of Earth.

That night seemed icily demonic. Static flickered everywhere. Haunting winds screamed past their ears. All fliers either landed or crashed. Earthquakes grew in violence as dawn approached and Mars rose. The terrified screams of men and women blended with the shrieking of the wind. Noah didn't even try to sleep. He prayed instead. "O Logos, won't anyone repent, even with Your final warning?"

"Yes, Noah. Three have repented. Thank you for a job well done. Your task of warning is complete. I am very pleased with you, and I shall reward you greatly. I am with you. I will never leave you or forsake you. Be encouraged!"

Basking in His promise, Noah remained in prayer. By noon when Mars was closest, it had raked across Siberia, raising mountains from Kamchatka clear through Japan. 'Off-year' passes had never spun Earth's crust very much, but this one did. Mars shifted the equator by 70 degrees! The shaking subsided that afternoon. Noah looked up. Mars (with its deadly fourth moon) was a black face in front of the sun, static streaming out from it like a hundred writhing snakes, receding into the western horizon. The calamity was past. He scanned the city. Not one building remained standing. Not one tower, or fortress, or wall. The cries and moans of the wounded and dying filled the air. They had ignored Noah's warning and had not prepared. He felt compassion. *Surely now more will repent!*

Though it had been designed with static protection, the lightning had still zapped the circuits of Noah's electric car. He abandoned it and began working his way through the rubble toward Eden. Several times he tried to help the injured, but they screamed at him, yelling at him to get away. As he reached the city gates, which also had fallen, he saw a small crowd of belligerent young men. "There is that prophet who caused all this!" one yelled. "He claims to be the only one good enough for God to save. Let's kill him, so what he prophesied can't happen!"

Noah tried to run, but the men picked up stones and began to pelt him furiously. He was down. The stones got larger. He struggled up and tried to run again, calling out to Logos to save him. The men just laughed. "Logos can't save you now. Nobody can. You're a dead man. So now who is going to repopulate the earth after your precious Flood? I guess it will have to be me!"

The men were now throwing chunks of the city wall that had fallen. They had plenty of ammo. The stones were jagged. Noah was injured in the leg, in the side; a large one clipped the back of his head and he went down again. This time he didn't try to get up. "Logos, I belong to You. I trust in Your promise to see me through," he whispered.

At that moment a bolt of electricity from the magnetotail of Mars streaked down behind them all, vaporizing a part of the city. The wicked men were thrown forward by the blast. Some lay still where they fell. Some managed to get up. They started to stumble back toward the now totally destroyed city, mumbling, "What happened here?"

One strong young man – Noah recognized him as the leader in the attack – lay near Noah, his body convulsing. Noah tried to get up, but was unable. His leg was broken. His head was spinning from a concussion and loss of blood. So he just lay there and called out to the man. "You see, you can't fight Logos. He is the Creator of the universe, the King. But He loves you. He will help you if you repent."

The young man turned his head to fix his gaze on Noah. He said nothing, but Noah saw it in his eyes: dark hate, vile loathing, deadly rage. It was as if the devil himself blazed through those eyes. Finally, his body still twitching, he struggled back to his feet and fled. Noah suddenly sensed the sweet presence of Logos nearby. "He cannot repent. He is totally committed to evil and to the father of evil. He would have killed you if I had not intervened. I'm sorry. Your warning journeys are finished. Return to Eden. I am always with you." With that, Logos reached out one finger. A tiny spark jumped from it to Noah's body, just a slight tingle of electricity, then Logos disappeared. Noah stood. He discovered he was totally healed, strangely warmed by the shock and strengthened for the long trip home. He was content, walking in joyous expectation. As he walked, Noah wondered about those three Logos had said had repented. Would three souls be worth his three year trip? But he wasn't anxious. Logos always keeps His Word.

CHAPTER 12 – WIVES FOR NOAH’S SONS

Arriving at Eden weeks later, Noah found that the three had not yet come. Logos must be testing his faith. Only two years remained before the promised flood! He was a little disappointed, and his sons were, too. But he encouraged them. “Trust Logos! He said that He would bring your wives, and He will. Never doubt the Word of Logos!”

Indeed Logos had kept His Word. Three young ladies from the farthest reaches of civilization had repented in their hearts after hearing Noah’s warning. They were from different places and cultures, but all descendants of Seth. Each had left everything behind to follow Noah. But Logos had come to each one, telling her to follow Him instead.

Bear in mind that there were no ‘races’ in those days. Mankind’s gene set was still perfect. Any characteristic we might consider ‘racial’ could come from any set of parents. **Jill** would appear to us as Caucasian. She was from the sons of Kenan in what became east Persia. **Holly** looked like a lovely blend of Oriental and African. She was from the sons of Jared in Havilah, which had expanded far south by Lake Tanganyika in Africa. **Cherrie** would look to us more like a tall American Indian blended with a little Malaysian or Filipino, except spectacularly blonde and fair-skinned. She was from the Western Wilds past where Atlantis had sunk, which we call northern Mexico. Each was walking toward Eden through the worst wickedness and violence of her culture. Each would have terrifying horror stories to tell of persecution, attacks, and narrow escapes. Each was led by a Word from Logos and a yearning for goodness in her heart. None was aware of the massive covering of angelic beings over her, and of the terrible battle in the spirit realm for every step she took toward Eden.

Noah and his sons were adding the final coat of pitch all over the outside of the ark. They were pleased that it had withstood the earthquakes so well. Now they understood why God had inspired Noah to build the ark in a huge pit, with bracing all around the edges. If it had been on the surface, no amount of bracing would have kept it upright. And if it had toppled on its side, it was far too heavy to lift. Besides, the gangplank to the door, though it went to the second floor of the ark, was nearly level with the ground.

Weeks went by. Pitching the roof was in full swing. The four men were covered in tree sap. Japheth went for a drink of cool water in the stream. Kneeling to drink, he noticed how horrible he looked, all black and sticky. He laughed at himself as he stood up. There was Jill, from Persia, staring silently at him. She was filthy, her clothes tattered and sweaty, her bedraggled brown hair hanging in tangles around her face, her eyes sad and fearful. She looked more like a wild animal, but something in her dark eyes spoke of intelligence, of longing, of great need and intense desire, as well as extreme pain and suffering. Japheth’s tender heart melted at once. Here was a person, a person who needed help. “Hello,” he said pleasantly, with a nod and a smile.

She shrank back, clutching a small sapling.

“My name is Japheth. We’re building that big ark over there. That’s why I’m all covered in pitch.” He pointed, then felt silly because his statement was so obvious. He tried again. “You must have had a long trip. Please accept our hospitality. You’ll be happy to meet my mother. Her name is Fuchi. She is the friendliest, kindest person in the whole world. You’ll love her, I know.”

The woman slid down the sapling to her knees, put her face to the ground, and began to bawl. Poor Japheth felt awkward and foolish, wondering if he had said something to offend her. He wanted to go and hug her, comfort her, but dared not get her all sticky with pitch. Finally he called to her, “Just wait there. I’ll go get my mother. Just wait...”

Then he ran like the wind to his home, with love, joy, and hope stirring in his soul. *Was this the one? Was she the reward Logos had promised?*

Soon Fuchi and Marion were both there with the still-sobbing woman. They hugged her, boosted her up, and brought her to the house. They helped her bathe, brought her clean clothes, and brushed out her long matted hair. So by the time the men had finished work and cleaned up for the day, she was sitting at the table, head bowed. She had not yet spoken a single word, breaking into tears whenever anyone tried to talk with her.

Japheth had spent all afternoon praying as he worked. Logos had assured him in his spirit that she was the one. Logos had brought her from a far distance, just for him. “Logos, give me wisdom. Show me how to relate to her,” he prayed. When their day’s work was done, Japheth was the first to clean up. Running toward the house, he saw her sitting at the table, head bowed, hands over her face. Her hair had been just a dirty brown before. Now it glistened reddish gold in the evening sun. Again his heart melted.

When he reached her, there was Logos, standing between them. He was smiling. His eyes twinkled brightly. “What is your hurry, friend Japheth?”

He skidded to a stop. “Uh, well...” Japheth blushed. “You know, Logos!” His dad and brothers came pounding up behind him, eyes wide at the sight of a new face in Eden.

“Yes, Japheth. I know. But I want you to know as well, so you can receive what I put in your heart. I love you, Japheth. I am well-pleased at your faithful endurance.”

“Thank You, Logos!” Japheth bowed in worship.

When they had all gathered, Logos spoke again. “Jill!” She looked up through tear-filled eyes, seeing Him for the first time since that glad day in Persia a year ago when He had revealed Himself and directed her toward Eden.

“Yes, Logos!” Her first words. She bowed her head in worship, wiping her glistening emerald-green eyes on her sleeve. Japheth saw a shy smile creep over her face.

“You have pleased Me, Jill, with your faith, your heart of repentance, and your obedience through very difficult circumstances. This is the place and these are the people of which I spoke. When you confess your sin over the lamb, they will sprinkle its blood in sacrifice for your cleansing. You can trust them. They will care for you.”

“Yes, Logos!” She said again, this time looking up and beaming a glad and grateful smile to Him.

“One more thing, Jill. This is Japheth. If you will accept, I have commissioned him to be your helper, and you his, forever. You can trust him.”

“Yes, Logos...” she dared a glance at Japheth, now all cleaned up and not nearly the scary fellow she’d seen at the stream. “Yes, I accept!” she looked quickly back at Logos. Her beautiful blush matched her reddish-gold hair.

“Japheth!” Logos ordered. Japheth knelt before Him.

“I give her to you as I promised. My special gift to you, and you to her. Care for her and love her as I do, and she will be your blessing all the days of your life. Be gentle with her. I have brought her through much on her journey here. Now prepare for your wedding. We shall celebrate your marriage after the Sabbath sacrifice.” He vanished.

Japheth didn’t need any more encouragement. His heart was already overflowing with love. After the Sabbath sacrifice was completed that evening, Logos returned with His familiar and much coveted, “Father YHWH accepts your offering. You are all cleansed!” He then smiled and immediately added, “Japheth! Jill! Come to Me.”

They came and knelt before Him, still feeling awkward and shy about each other, but both trusting Logos.

“Japheth, I give you Jill as your wife. Jill, I give you Japheth as your husband. I join you now and forever in the bond of marriage that I have created. I shall use you to help repopulate the earth after the Flood. Rejoice in each other. Care for each other. Take the time to listen to each other and get to know and understand each other. This is your new task, Japheth. Your work on the ark is finished. Love your new wife with your whole heart as you love Me. Jill, respect and honor your husband as you honor Me. Do all this faithfully the rest of your days on earth and I shall reward you with the Crown of Life in My Kingdom. Will you do all this for Me? Will you each receive My gift?”

“Yes, Logos!” They both called as Logos vanished into the gathering twilight. The evening lamps were lit. The table was spread with the Sabbath meal, the finest meal of the week. Fuchi offered Japheth and Jill a place of honor at the head of the table, where she and Noah usually sat, but Japheth shook his head. “No, mother, please. You and Dad sit in your normal places. Please allow me to sit at Dad’s right hand, and Jill at your left, so I can face her across the table. We still need to talk. Uh... to get to know each other. Did you not hear what Logos said?”

Fuchi looked at Jill. She nodded gratefully, clutching Fuchi’s cloak as if trying to hide behind her. So that is how they sat. Fuchi blessed the food. Noah blessed the Sabbath evening and the newly married couple. They dished out the delicious foods and began to eat. But Japheth, strangely not hungry after a hard day’s work, sat looking across the table at his bride. Jill, also not hungry after many weeks of roughing it and nearly starving, looked down at her food.

Trying to think of something to break the ice, Japheth finally said, “Jill, Logos said you had been through much on your journey here. Would you care to tell me about it?”

Jill shuddered with the memory, and looked up. For the first time their eyes met and locked. Japheth saw longing, passion, fire, deep inner pain, and even deeper desire. Jill saw gentleness, compassion, healing, and caring. Finally she spoke, her very first words to her husband. “Japheth, it is past. I am home.” Again tears overflowed her pretty eyes and streamed down her face, but this time she held her head up and kept her gaze fixed on Japheth. “Thank you for welcoming me. This is the spot I’ve dreamed of. Thank you for accepting me into your life. Yours is the face I’ve dreamed of. Thank you. And thank Logos!”

The rest of the meal, and indeed the rest of the evening and on into the night, Japheth and Jill sat across the table from each other talking, building on the trust and caring that Logos had given them.

Shem and Ham were tempted to be jealous. Where were their promised wives? But they had known Logos too long to forget that His ways are not our ways. Shem determined to trust that Logos would keep His Word in His time. He decided to just be happy for his brother. Ham, who was a bit more outspoken and impatient, complained about how long it had been since Logos had promised to reward them – eight long years! Noah wisely responded, “Ham, would you prefer to find your own wife, and then be miserable with her the rest of your days? Logos always keeps His Word. Just trust Him and wait for Him. He’ll give you the best for your happiness. In His time, Ham, in His time!” Ham repented and submitted to Logos, who was pleased.

Indeed Logos was keeping His Word. Cherrie, Shem’s wife-to-be, was having a difficult time getting through. She was the farthest away. Even with a massive covering of angels, roving gangs of wicked men had accosted her many times. Only the direct intervention by Logos Himself had saved her from horrible abuse. Looking on the bright side, Cherrie was learning to love and trust Logos through the difficulties. But it was very slow going, especially since Atlantis had sunk and the Americas had partly cracked away from Africa. She had to detour far around to the north to get to Eden. With this latest catastrophe, electric cars and fliers had all been zapped. All forms of travel were in total chaos. She got some rides in horse-drawn vehicles, but mostly she had to walk. The 5000 miles she had to cover was to take her over a year and a half.

But Holly arrived at Eden the very next week. She had come from the country we now know as Zambia, in south central Africa. She was sharp, canny, worldly-wise, and a world-class athlete. She hid herself and slept during the times when evil men would be roaming about, and only traveled when they slept. She dressed as a man and kept her long black hair rolled up and tucked into a hat, to avoid attracting attention. When men tried to detain her, she simply ran like the wind, ignoring their calls. She was tall and strong. No one could outrun her! Her repentance and desire for cleansing were strong too, and drove her on. She covered the 4000 miles to Eden in about ten weeks.

When Holly saw the huge structure of the ark in the distance, she knew that she had arrived. She buried her men's clothes, bathed in the stream and brushed her hair, and put on the one lovely dress that she had brought for the occasion. Then she furtively stole over the hill and into the valley alongside Adam's gardens. There she hid among the tall stalks of corn, observing the occupants of Eden and planning her strategy. It was Preparation Day afternoon. The men were putting away their tools for the Sabbath. Holly waited until they finished and went down to the stream to wash up. Then she circled around to the homes and presented herself to the women preparing the Sabbath meal. "Hello, I'm Holly. Logos sent me. He said you know Him. He told me I could escape the wickedness of Havilah here." She stood tall and put on her air of self-confidence.

"Yes, Holly. We do, and you can. I'm glad you've come. We've been expecting you. Logos said you were coming. Especially Ham has been very anxious to see you..." Fuchi stopped, realizing she had said too much. She was being presumptuous about Ham. Maybe Holly was meant for Shem? He was the older of the two. But it was too late. The cat was already out of the bag, and Holly made a grab for it.

"Ham? Who is he? And why would he be anxious to see me?" Her heart already was leaping within her.

"I'm sorry, my dear. I spoke out of turn. Logos will tell you all about it when you see Him tonight. He comes here to talk with us almost every Sabbath."

"He does? Wow! I want so much to see Him again. I've only seen Him once, when He told me to come here. But I love Him. I worship Him. He made me; He made the whole world! But He made it clean and pure, not wicked like it has become. And I... I was no better. But Logos loves me! He promised me that I could be changed... cleansed from my wickedness and made beautiful again."

Fuchi, delighted that the subject had been changed so easily, put her arms around Holly. "It sounds to me like He has already changed you and made you beautiful."

Holly wiped away a tear. "I may look beautiful on the outside, but I'm not very beautiful on the inside." Then, looking past Fuchi to the men now coming in from work, she demanded, "Which one is Ham?"

Knowing where this was leading, Fuchi tried to change the subject again. "Well, dear, Logos will..."

"He's that big tall one on the right, isn't he?" Holly exclaimed triumphantly. "I know it. Logos showed me the one He said would care for me." Without another word, she flew from Fuchi's side and dashed toward the men, dress flapping and long black hair streaming behind her.

Halfway there, she slowed, having second thoughts. All her life she had been pushy, brash and brazen, used to getting her way. She was strong, and proud of her strength. But she was also startlingly beautiful and proud of that too. She'd always used her 'assets' to her advantage to control the men in her life. *Maybe he would not like her the way she was. Maybe this was a part of her that needed changing!* She slowed to a stop, looking only at the one she knew was Ham. *Would Ham like her? Could he accept her as she was? Or would he despise her and contend with her like all the other men she had tried to dominate?* Their eyes met. Suddenly Holly was overcome with the fear that she had overstepped her bounds. *Ham would hate her. She was unworthy. He was beautiful inside and out, while she was only a sham, a proud but empty shell.* Holly fell to her knees and bowed her head, her long black hair flopping over her head to flow over the grass in front of her. She began to cry.

Ham knew right away who she was. "Thank you, Logos!" he breathed as he knelt down beside her.

"You're welcome, Ham, my beloved." Suddenly Logos was there beside them, beaming with joy. "Yes, this is the reward I promised you, for I do indeed keep My promises. Her name is Holly. I made her just for you."

Ham hung his head at the gentle reprimand, sorry that he had ever doubted. "Yes, Logos. She's... Wow! She's beautiful! The loveliest woman I've ever seen!" He said it quietly, but Holly heard, and her hopes began to rise.

"Holly." Logos grew serious. "I hear your heart's cry to be beautiful inside, and I keep My promises to you as well. Lift up your face." Holly looked up, parting her hair to poke out a teary-eyed face. "Here is Ham," Logos went on. "He is the reward I promised you. Trust him. Love him. After you confess your sin over the head of the sacrificial lamb and its blood is shed for your cleansing, you will be beautiful, inside and out, just as I promised you. Then I will wed you and Ham so you can be together always. Now, take his hand. Ham, take her and go with her to guide her through the sacrifice." With that, Logos was gone.

Holly hesitantly reached out her hand. Ham took it as they stood. "I'm not really very beautiful..." Holly began but Ham interrupted. "Holly, it doesn't matter anymore. Whatever you were, all the awful things you've been through—I know about the wickedness of the sons of men! But you heard Logos. He promised to make you beautiful on the inside, too. Then you'll surely be the most beautiful woman in the world! Who could help but love you?"

Ham and Holly slowly walked to the house, clutching each other's hands and looking into each other's eyes. For the first time in her life, brazen Holly was speechless. Ham was saying, "I love you, Holly. I have loved you all my life. Logos made me to love you, and you to love me. You're perfect! The woman of my dreams!" and other such sweet nothings. It continued even while preparing the sacrifice.

Watching, Fuchi was amazed. "How did He do that?" She wondered out loud. "Talk about love at first sight! That must be the love of Logos poured out upon them."

Once again, the lamb sacrifice, the proclamation that it was acceptable to Father and they were all cleansed, the brief wedding ceremony, the festive Sabbath meal, and the talking across the table 'til midnight – as it had been with Japheth if not more so. Again Shem was disappointed, and inwardly miffed at being last. He should have come before Ham, for he was older. He said nothing, wrestling with intense feelings. Again he set his will to just be patient and continue trusting Logos, even though it was hard.

The next morning during their Sabbath fellowship, Logos came again. First He spoke to Ham. "Enjoy your wife these last two years before the Flood. But I cannot release you from your duties with the animals. Noah and Shem can finish the final pitching of the hull, but only you can guard and guide the animals, and organize them as they come into the ark. Will you do that for Me?"

"Of course, Logos! I am happy to continue taking care of the animals." It had never occurred to Ham to give that up. He loved caring for the animals.

"It will be a big job. There will be more animals than you can imagine. I am sorry. Your first years of marriage should be spent with your wife alone. But I have given Holly special skills with animals as well. She loves them too, and they love her. You will find her to be a big help."

"That's fine Logos. I'm happy to do it; I really am. If Holly can help me with them [she was nodding to him], we'll just enjoy each other that much more."

"That is a great attitude, Ham. Thank you. I shall reward you!" Ham basked in the praise. Somehow a thank you from Logos meant more to him than anything else in the world – except maybe his new wife.

Logos had already changed subjects. "Shem. I hear your heart cry. I am pleased that you should determine to place your faith in My promises even though it is hard. Please, turn that into a prayer. Cherrie, your wife-to-be, is having a rough time getting here. She has been traveling through the valley of the shadow of death for a long time, and still has a long way to go. Pray earnestly for her. Pray daily, hourly. She will not make it but for your prayers."

"Yes, I will! I have been praying. And I'll pray harder! But can I go to help her? Does she need help?" The longing in his heart was clearly evident in his voice.

"Thank you, Shem. Yes, she needs help. I must go to her now. At the right time I will send you to help her, too."

So Shem prayed furiously for Cherrie while he and Noah finished pitching the ark. His prayers were easier now that he knew her name. She was constantly on his lips and in his heart. He imagined her captured by evil men or threatened by wild animals. He prayed continually for Logos' protection and for wisdom and strength for her to get away. As he prayed, his love for her grew, and his trust in Logos' protection grew. The weeks cra-a-a-awled by.

Mars had been knocked out of its 3 year orbit by Aster in 1230 AF. It had locked into a 2 year orbit in 1350 AF (3690 BC). Its 'September' inbound flyby had changed to October 24, and its 'April' outbound flyby now came the following March 20. That outbound pass had always been less severe than the preceding inbound one. But this was the closest, deadliest outbound flyby in history. Mars raked the ground from Panama to Canada, raising the Rocky Mountains and stretching Earth's crust to the breaking point. It spun the equator 110 degrees and again flipped Earth's magnetic poles. Surely no one alive could now imagine that they had not been duly warned.

Meanwhile, Cherrie was indeed in trouble. Satan had figured out her importance to Logos' plan, and had massed all his demons in a last-ditch effort to stop her. She had succeeded in catching one of the few working commercial fliers to what is now Italy, and had landed at the big city of Mars. Logos, by His Spirit, had led her to escape the city through the hills to the north. But foolishly, she had not listened, choosing instead to go on the broad road through the center of the city. She wanted to be cleansed, yet she was from the Western Wilds. The sights and sounds of the big city excited her. She had never been to a city like this! So with Satan whispering seductive words to her heart, she decided to just walk quickly through the center of the city, and then continue her journey to Eden.

The city of Mars (built at the location of modern Rome) was the center of worship of the planet Mars. They had a huge temple there, where people from all over the earth came to placate the angry planet with their lewd worship. It was the most wicked city on the planet. Seeing a lovely maiden walking past, the priests of Mars captured her, planning to force her to become a temple prostitute. When she refused, they threw her into the dungeon, intending to starve her into submission. She would have starved, too, for she would not submit. But that terrible March flyby of Mars caused a huge earthquake that leveled their temple. The walls of their dungeon also collapsed, setting her free.

So 20 weeks after Noah returned to Eden from his three year trip, Cherrie was still in Italy after escaping from the dungeon at Mars. Dazed and scared, she had nothing but the clothes on her back. What little public transportation still worked was expensive. She was penniless. The priests of Mars had taken everything she had. She had to walk.

Worse, as a tall, slender, lovely, blue-eyed blonde with long flowing hair, she was very attractive to everyone she met along the way – attraction she did not need and which proved dangerous to her. At first she didn't understand why all the guys she met were so 'nice'. She was delayed more times than she could count by 'friends' who 'only wanted to help' her. She learned to refuse their gifts and reject their advances. But then they'd get vicious about it, and... well, let's just say that Cherrie learned to distrust and despise young men! The angels protecting her were kept very busy. After another narrow escape, Logos came to her again. "Cherrie, my beloved, I am with you always."

"Logos! Thank you for coming. I... I didn't know that You were still with me. I thought I was all alone. I am trying to obey You, but it has been so difficult. You see, lustful young men keep stopping me and trying to... uh..."

"I know, my beloved. Thank you for persisting. You will make it, for I will see to it.

"Am I still going the right way? It seems so long."

"Yes, you are going the right direction. But you have not always gone as My Spirit led you. Sometimes My Spirit leads you to detour around what I know will be problem areas, such as the city of Mars. You must learn to listen to My quiet voice to your heart, and follow Me even when you don't understand. I am Spirit. If you listen carefully to your spirit you will always find My guidance."

So Cherrie traveled on, much comforted, and growing more in love with Logos each day. Her longing for the peace and righteousness of Eden grew strong, and her desire for the gaudy pleasures of the wicked cities waned in proportion. Now more alert to the quiet voice within her, she was able to make better time. Periodically she would be led to take a detour, or to hide in the bushes for a while, or even to sleep in the middle of the day. She was learning. And as much as she feared the night, there were discoveries for her there, too. A night spent with the Spirit of Logos beneath a glorious panoply of stars became one of the highlights of her trip. "Oh, Logos! Thank You! Why have I always been so afraid of the dark? With You here, there is nothing to fear. I love You, Logos! I love You!"

Many weeks later she was finally nearing Eden. Logos appeared there. "Shem, I have an urgent task for you."

"Yes, Logos. I'm ready. It's Cherrie, isn't it? I've been praying for her every day. She needs my help?"

"Yes. Your prayers have borne fruit. Good fruit! It is time for you to go to her. She is in great danger. Deliver her and guide her here. But be careful to draw her only to Me. She distrusts young men right now. They have all, without exception, been abusive to her. Do not try to draw her to yourself yet, or she will fear you and run from you."

"What kind of danger is she in? Shall I bring weapons? Does she need food? Medicine? What..."

"Her danger is far more serious than if she just needed food or medicine. Cherrie needs only the Word of Truth, spoken in love. You need bring nothing else. Travel west. It's not far. I will lead you and speak through you."

Shem left immediately. He wanted to run, but the Spirit restrained him to a fast walk. He kept praying and listening for Logos, trusting that His timing would be right.

Cherrie was traveling east. Satan, becoming aware that he was about to lose her, tried one final, desperate effort. He inspired Josh, the same man who had challenged Noah over 8 years before, to pass that way. Josh was alone, an old man with a cane and a beard to his knees. Cherrie ignored him and tried to pass by on the other side of the road, but Josh turned to walk beside her. The Spirit bade her run from him, but she ignored His prompting. *After all, what danger can there be in such an old man? It might be nice to have a little company after such a long trip.*

Josh spoke first. "Hello, my friend. May I travel with you awhile?"

"You were going the other way."

"That matters not. For me, the delight is in the journey, not the destination. I am old. I have seen every place there is. There is no better place on earth than in the company of a good friend with some stimulating conversation."

"Good friend? Ha. I don't even know you."

"Ahh! A deficiency easily remedied. I am Josh, scholar, professor, philosopher, philanthropist, and friend of all I pass." He began to tell her all about himself, even intimate details that demonstrated an openness and trust.

Cherrie was softened by his tone, comforted by his offer of friendship. She was young; he was old. How could he possibly hurt her? It had been a lonely trip. She became glad for his company. In time they were indeed talking like old friends. She told him about all the young men who had accosted her. She began to share her deepest longings, for Logos, for Eden, for inner beauty and peace, for true love without all that lust and wickedness. Josh encouraged her to talk. He was a good listener. But when she began telling him about Eden, he raised his eyebrows in mock surprise, as if he didn't already know where this road was leading!

"Is there really a place such as you say, where the people never lust or hate? Cherrie, my friend, I'm afraid you are mistaken. I have traveled this road before, and this perfect Eden of which you speak – I'm sorry, it is just a myth. At the beginning of time there was indeed a perfect Garden of Eden this way, but the first inhabitants, Adam and Eve, sinned grievously against God. Eden has been a horrible place of perversion, sensuality, bestiality, and insanity ever since. I've personally been there. It was disgusting, the worst place I've ever been. Eight years ago I actually spent several years trying to help one poor deluded soul from there – his name was Noah, as I recall.

“This Noah fellow had concocted some wild tale about a worldwide flood, the judgment of an angry God against a wicked world. Everyone was going to drown. But Noah was building a huge boat – an ark, he called it – that was supposed to float above the flood to save only those who followed him. Of course nobody did. He was clearly crazy as a loon. In the first place, Logos is not angry! I know and love Him as a God of infinite love, who cares about His people. He’d never allow such a horrible catastrophe. Just think of all the suffering and death that a worldwide flood would cause! What a monster God would be, to cause all that! Could you love a God that angry? No. Of course not.”

Cherrie had to stop and think about that. *She loved Logos. She knew Him as the Creator God. He cared. He was kind and merciful. He loved her even when she was wicked. No, she couldn’t conceive of Him ever being so angry as to destroy the whole world. All those people – all their cities and towns... Josh was sure right about that.*

But Josh was continuing. “Besides, a worldwide flood is clearly impossible. As I told Noah, there is not enough water in the world to flood the land...” He waxed eloquent in his analysis of the impossibility of such a tragedy. His logic was inescapable and his manner impeccable. Thus without her even being aware of it, Josh began to plant seeds of doubt in Cherrie’s heart. Josh had successfully gained her confidence, and she found herself listening intently. Satan, hiding within him, laughed at how easy it was to deceive and seduce these foolish humans.

It was at this point that Shem, traveling west, came over a rise in the road and saw the travelers. His eyesight was keen, and he could immediately see that the one on his right was a tall, lovely lady with long golden hair. His heart leaped within – that must be her. And she was gorgeous! He knew right then that he would have a difficult time obeying the caution Logos had given him about not trying to draw her to himself. He deliberately put his emotions aside and strode toward them.

As they neared, Shem strained to hear what they were discussing, but they had lowered their voices. “Hello, my friends!” He called out to them.

Logos was speaking to Cherrie, but even after all her lessons, now that the crucial moment had arrived she wasn’t listening. It is easy to operate by the physical senses – hard to be led by the Spirit. “I’ve heard that before,” she muttered to Josh under her breath. “Now he’ll probably want to ‘help’ me. I may have to run. You distract him.”

“Okay, Cherrie. You’re right. He looks like he lusts after you. He’s probably one of those crazy men from Eden that I told you about.” Josh wasn’t guessing about that. He knew from Shem’s homespun clothes that he’d come from Eden.

“And hello to you!” he called out. “I am Josh; scholar, professor, philosopher, philanthropist, and friend of all. Who are you and from whence do you come?”

“My name is Shem, son of Noah.” He drew near and stopped in front of them, standing tall and praying to Logos for just the right words. “I am from Eden...” At that, Josh nudged Cherrie, who prepared to run behind him and try to escape. “... and I have come to you, Cherrie, with a message from Logos Himself!”

Cherrie gasped, leaving her mouth hanging open. Shem was surprised as well. He had not expected to say that, and he did not know that he actually had a message for her from Logos. He didn’t even know yet for sure that it was Cherrie. “Logos! Please give me wisdom,” he prayed silently. “I am with you always,” Logos responded.

Cherrie’s face hardened. “What if I am not Cherrie?” she demanded.

Again Shem spoke with a boldness he did not know he had. “If you are not Cherrie than I am a fool and Logos is a fraud, and you can totally trust this sly old philosopher. But I know better, for Logos, the creator and sustainer of the universe, has told me, and His Word is faithful and true. Will you hear His message to you, Cherrie?”

Cherrie paused, torn by her love of Logos and her fear and hatred of young men. Particularly this one! *He had even admitted he was from Eden – he had to be crazy! Josh knew; he had been there. They were all crazy in Eden.* But before she could decide, Josh came to her aid.

“I’m sorry, sir, but you are mistaken. She is not Cherrie. She is Marium. You’ve got the wrong lady. And while I don’t want to call you a fool, I know for certain that your Logos is indeed a fraud. The real Logos never leads or gives messages as you claim. So Marium can indeed believe this ‘sly old philosopher’ as you so quaintly put it. Now you’d best go. I hope you find this ‘Cherrie’ of whom you speak.”

That did it for Cherrie. Her decision suddenly made, she stepped away from the old man. He had miscalculated in calling Logos a fraud, for she still loved Him. Her eyes were opened, and she finally saw him for what he was. She pointed at Josh. “You, sir, are a liar! My name is Cherrie. Logos is my Lord. He certainly does lead and give me messages. He has led me this far, and He will lead me on, even if it is to an Eden full of crazy men.” She glared at Josh, realizing that all he had said about ‘knowing Logos as the God of infinite love’ were all lies. He didn’t know Logos at all! So she turned her back on him and nodded to Shem. “Yes. I do want to hear your message from Logos.”

“The message is this,” Shem paused, listening intently for the leading of Logos’ Spirit. “Eden is full of crazy and perverted people only in the eyes of those who are truly crazy and perverted. But in the eyes of Logos, who created the world, Eden is the only place where people are sane, where people live in true righteousness and peace. It is the place that you have longed for all your life. I have been sent by Logos to be your escort the rest of the way, to keep you from harm and deception, and to bring you... home.”

“Why would Logos send... How can I trust you? How do I know you won’t take advantage of me?” Cherrie was shrinking back toward the protection of her erstwhile friend Josh. Shem could see her fear, even hatred, of him. He saw her looking at his belt and glanced down. Oh, nuts! It was his knife! He always carried it as protection against the wild animals. Logos had told him to not bring any weapons, but he had unthinkingly left it in its belt sheath. He had a sudden inspiration.

“Here, Cherrie. Take my hunting knife. It’s my only weapon. If I ever try to take the slightest advantage of you, use it on me. Does that make you feel better about me?”

She looked down at the proffered knife, then back up at Shem, then at Josh, who was standing there with his arms crossed. For some reason, this was a tough decision for her. Once again, Josh tried to help her. “Tricky, tricky. Get her to trust you, then, when she’s comfortable... Y’know, Cherrie, you can trust me. I would not lead you astray or try to take advantage of you. But you can’t trust him. He’s from Eden!” He spat it out like a dirty word.

Shem responded once again with a boldness he didn’t know he had. “Cherrie, it is a question of trust, isn’t it. You have to decide whether to trust a young man, who loves and obeys Logos like yourself, or an old man who talks smooth, but who obviously hates Logos and is willing to lie to turn you away from Him. Your choice will show whether you really want to follow Logos, or whether you will go back to following the ways of the world.”

Josh gave a gasp of indignation and opened his mouth to defend his honor, but Cherrie had already made her choice. Refusing the knife, she held out her hand to Shem. “I choose to trust Logos. I love Him. He is my Lord, my King. If you say that He sent you, then I will go with you, and I will just trust Him to protect me from you.”

Shem slipped his knife back in its sheath and took her trembling hand. Then he turned his back on Josh, put her hand around his arm, and started back to Eden with her.

Josh, of course, tried to protest, but they just ignored him. He loudly reviewed all his arguments. But they both had heard it all before. They walked fast, only slowing down to talk after they had finally gotten out of earshot.

Then Shem began telling Cherrie about Logos and their fellowship. He told her about their Sabbath gatherings, the lamb sacrifice, and Logos’ triumphant pronouncement of forgiveness and cleansing. He talked about Logos’ Word, His promises, His faithfulness, and His goodness to them all at Eden. He remembered Logos’ warning to not try to draw her to himself, and he obeyed, though with such a lovely lady hanging off his arm it was tough. He told her how much he loved Logos, and of his years of obedience to Him in building the ark. She was finally beginning to relax. The trembling had nearly stopped. But at the mention of the ark, she interrupted him.

“Is Logos really going to destroy the whole world with a flood? Josh says that is utterly impossible, and besides, Logos loves us all, even the wicked, and He would never actually do such a terrible thing. His love is too great.”

“Cherrie, that’s a fair question. I’ll try to answer it, but it’s the sort of question Logos loves to answer for Himself at our Sabbath fellowship. I’ll take you there. You will see Him. You can ask Him yourself.” Cherrie nodded, smiling at the thought. Shem continued, “I’ve been working on the ark for nearly a hundred years, thinking about just such things. I think the ark is a challenge to mankind, a sermon, in its hugeness. It’s really big! Everyone in the world has heard of it. It is an invitation to come to Logos and be saved as well as a warning that the world will be destroyed. Logos does love the whole world. That is why He is giving this invitation. That is why He sent Noah out seven separate times to warn the world, and to invite them to repent and come to Eden to be saved. You heard His message, or you wouldn’t be here. Everyone else heard it, too. Yes, Logos loves them all, or He wouldn’t take all this time and effort to warn them. But, yes, there will indeed be a big flood.

“I don’t know where Logos will get all the water, but He said there will be a big flood, and I believe His Word. He is the Creator. He could just create more water. Or the water could come from outer space or from underground. He doesn’t want anyone to perish, but even He cannot protect men from their own freewill choices. If they choose to hate Him, to despise His warning, He will be sad, but the flood will come anyway, and they will perish. Not because Logos is angry, but because He always keeps His Word...”

Shem realized that his logic was beginning to go around in circles, so he stopped. “I’m sorry, Cherrie. I’m afraid that is what will happen to all who refuse to repent. I wish we could save your family...”

Cherrie did not like that answer, but she held her peace, determined to ask Logos Himself when she saw Him again. Josh’s words had affected her deeply and she had grown skeptical. Sensing her disbelief, Shem changed the subject back to Logos – all that He had done for them, prospering their gardens, protecting them from attacks from the lands of Kenan and Nod, bringing others to Eden...

Now that caught Cherrie’s interest. She wanted to know all about Shem’s family. She kept asking questions until she got the full picture. Suddenly the light dawned. Cherrie indignantly withdrew her hand from Shem’s arm. “So, now I get it! First Jill comes from the land of Kenan and marries your brother Japheth. Then Holly comes from Havilah and marries your brother Ham. And now I come from the Western Wilds and you, the only remaining unmarried brother, come out to meet me. I get it. I’m not stupid. Well, I’m not having any, thank you! I will never be married. I hate young men. They are all self-centered and rude and abusive and egotistical and angry and lecherous and domineering, and... and I hate them!”

She stood there, arms akimbo, defiantly daring him to try to say anything in his defense. Shem was sorely tempted, but he remembered Logos' warning.

"I'm sorry, Cherrie. You've been deeply hurt. I cannot heal your wounds, and I will not try to change your mind. All I can say is that I know Logos. He will heal you. He will calm your fears and repair the wounds. He will deliver you from the anger and hatred, soothe your soul, and cleanse you so you can love again."

That was the wrong thing to say. She got angrier. "You talk about love. I know what that means, you lustful cad! Well, you are not getting any from me! I'll take that knife of yours after all..." she grabbed for his waist. Surprisingly, he held back his hands and let her take it. She held it up to his throat, her hand trembling with the violence of her anger. He stood there in surrender, arms raised. For a long moment they just stood, looking into each other's eyes, the knife making a slight dent in Shem's throat. Shem made no attempt to defend himself, and did not return her anger. Finally, ashamed of her little outburst, she dropped the knife to her side and strode down the road, calling out behind her. "Let's get to Eden. I'll carry the knife until we get there. Then we will see if it is full of crazy people!"

The shadows were lengthening. The Sabbath was upon them. But there were no more delays. Cherrie was strong, and with her long legs she walked fast, trying to stay ahead of Shem. As soon as he came up beside her, she would stride faster, until they were almost running. They passed a nice grove of fruit trees, but didn't stop for dinner. There was no more conversation. Shem realized he had said too much and broken the fragile trust she had given. "I'm sorry, Logos!" He prayed. "I tried my best to obey You. Please forgive me and restore the trust."

"I am with you, Shem. Fret not. I make all things new. She shall be cleansed and restored. I will see to it. I keep My Word." The Spirit of Logos reassured him.

Finally, near sunset, they came over a slight rise and saw Noah's ark away off in the distance. It truly was huge, breathtakingly so. Cherrie stopped with a gasp. "Oh my God! It's true! You really have been building an ark!" And for the first time since her little outburst she looked at Shem, her eyes and mouth wide.

He shrugged, as if to say, "Now will you believe me?" but wisely didn't actually say it. Instead, he just pointed. "Look, Cherrie, up there by the grove beyond that big cornfield. That's my family. They're getting ready for the Sabbath sacrifice. If we hurry we can join them."

The miniature family looked quite normal from here. Cherrie studied them, then cried out, "I'll race you there!" and took off like a scalded cat. Shem hesitated a moment, wondering what it would look like – him chasing her into Eden. Then he ran behind her, glad that at least she was going, and trusting Logos to sort it out once they got there.

She beat him to the grove, by a good bit. Shem was weak from lack of fuel. Where did she get all her energy anyway? She must have done a lot of running away from men.

She ignored him puffing up behind and introduced herself. "My name is Cherrie. I'm from the Western Wilds. I heard Noah's warning and I repented just like he said to. Then Logos came to me. He sent me here. He said that He will cleanse me if you offer the lamb sacrifice for me." Suddenly she realized she was still holding Shem's knife. Without a glance at him, she plopped it down on the table in front of her, trying not to appear embarrassed by it.

Shem's family looked back and forth from her to Shem. Fuchi put her hand to her mouth to hide a snicker. It was quite obvious that it had not gone the same with Shem and Cherrie as it had with her other two sons. Methuselah spoke first, as was his right as the patriarch of the clan. "Welcome, Cherrie. We've been expecting you. Logos told us you were coming. We prepared the sacrifice to include you. But first I'll introduce my family. I am Methuselah... my wife Marion. My son Lamech and his wife Leah are passed on, God rest their souls, but his son Noah is my grandson, and this is his wife Fuchi. Their sons are Japheth and his wife Jill, Shem, behind you, and Ham and his wife Holly. We are all glad to see you. Here, come stand by me. We will offer the sacrifice for you. You shall be cleansed according to your faith. Noah, will you explain it for her?"

Cherrie listened. She was painfully aware of how strange it had looked that she had run away from Shem, carrying his knife. She ignored him, hoping her blush wouldn't give her away. Out of the corner of her eye she saw he was watching her, but she focused straight ahead, determined to give Shem no encouragement.

Noah was explaining about confession of sin and the meaning of the blood. He said, "If you aren't repentant in your heart, if you're hiding your sins, trying to keep them, then the sacrifice will do you no good. You cannot be cleansed of sins that you're not willing to confess, repent, and give up." He laid Cherrie's hand with his on the head of the lamb, and demonstrated by confessing his own sin.

A wave of understanding hit Cherrie. This was her sin. She was hanging on to her hatred and anger, her bitterness against all men, not just ones who had hurt her. Look how she was treating Shem. He had never done anything but try to help her. She bowed her head and began to cry. "Forgive me, Logos!" she sobbed. "Forgive all my bitterness and anger. Forgive the way I treated Shem. Cleanse me. Put your love into my heart..." This went on for a long time while more and more things tumbled out. Noah waited. They all waited. It was not unusual for the imminence of the sacrifice to bring about a flood of repentance. Finally she ran down, and Noah took the lamb on whose head they had confessed their sins, slew it, and sprinkled its blood on the altar. Wide-eyed, her face streaked with tears, she gladly accepted it, not knowing what to expect.

Logos appeared in flames above the altar, consuming the lamb and cleansing every drop of blood from the altar. "Father YHWH has accepted your repentance and your sacrifice." He shouted. "You are all cleansed!" Then He smiled at Cherrie, saying, "This altar portrays your heart. The blood represents your sin. My fire has taken it away."

Everyone cheered. Noah and Fuchi gave Cherrie a hug. "Welcome home, my dear. You are one of us now. We will care for you as our own daughter. You can trust us. We will never take advantage of you as men of the world did."

"How did you know...?" Cherrie began, but Logos had come down from above the altar. Now He stood before her. "You have some questions for Me?" He said, His eyes twinkling with overwhelming love and joy.

"Oh. Uh, yes, I guess I did. Uh... Thank You, Lord, for Your forgiveness and cleansing. I'm clean! Really clean. I can feel it! I'm a new person! Just like You told me I would be. Thank You! Now and always You are my King and my Lord. Uh... Sir? I don't need to ask my questions anymore. I trust You. I love You. I know You'll work all things out." She again bowed to the ground in worship before Him, flinging her long golden hair in a big circle on the grass at His feet, to the delight of Shem.

"Ask, My beloved. Your questions will trouble you until they are resolved, and I would rather you be at peace." Logos smiled in encouragement.

"Yes, Lord," she said with sudden determination. "I had three questions. First, how can You just destroy the world and all its people, even though You love them all? Second, where will You get all the water for the flood Noah warned about? And third," she risked a quick glance at Shem. "The one You sent to help me on the road, to save me from Josh's lies... Uh... Why did it have to be Shem?"

"Fair questions. Thank you. I will answer them, while you sit with the rest to dine. You are faint with hunger." They gathered at the table to the Sabbath feast prepared. Cherrie was glad to sit down. In all the excitement she had not realized how famished she was, having had nothing since breakfast. As they ate, Logos talked. The electric lanterns cast a soft yellow glow around the outdoor table, but most of the brightness came from Logos Himself.

"I do indeed love the world and all its people, for I made them," He began. "It is because I love them that I have put a bound, a limit, upon Myself, that I will not violate their freewill choices. They have chosen ways of great torment, self-inflicted suffering and abuse, which always end in death. If I were to force them to choose My ways, I would be but a petty tyrant. And were I to protect them from the consequences of their choices, I would only ensure their ultimate destruction. It is in My great mercy and love that I appoint an end to the wickedness on the earth in this age, for in their violence to one another they are only building up for themselves greater suffering in the ages to come."

"But look at yourself, Cherrie. You heeded the warning of the destruction to come. You repented. I have cleansed you and will save you. Any and all of the rest could have done the same, and I would gladly have welcomed them. But I must keep My Word to destroy those who will not repent, to protect you, My beloved, who have repented. For if I did not, they would eventually destroy you along with themselves, and I would wind up with no one at all."

"As for the water, there is more water here than you know. I have the equivalent of 280 million cubic miles of water stored under the crust of the earth, and another 80 million cubic miles of water in a vast canopy high above the earth. Besides, there is 1.3 billion cubic miles of ice in the fourth moon of Mars, much of which will fall down on the earth's poles. Trust Me, it will be plenty to wash the earth clean of all the wickedness, to give you a fresh new planet upon which to rebuild your lives. When Mars next passes by, unless I see widespread repentance, the fourth moon will shatter. The vapor canopy above will collapse due to seeding by its ice crystals. The earth's weakened crust will crack apart due to gravitational flux from Mars, causing the subterranean sea to burst forth. The resulting cataclysm will wash the earth entirely clean. I say this to warn you that you must be prepared to start over again when the flood recedes. There will be nothing left of your old life, nothing but what you take with you in the ark."

"Your third question is more delicate, Cherrie. I sent Shem because I made you for him, and him for you. I hope that in time you will accept his love and care. But I will not force you. This is your choice. I will only say that Shem is not like the men in your past, whom you feared and hated for good reason! I assure you that He is gentle and kind; his love is faithful and true. I know of your deep inner longing for true love, without the immorality and lust, for I created you that way. If you can accept him, I will give you your heart's desire through him. But I, and he, patiently await your choice." At that, Logos disappeared, leaving Cherrie breathless and speechless.

Cherrie closed her eyes and bowed her head into her hands, not daring to look around. Memories of how she had treated Shem came back to her, and she was ashamed. She searched her heart. Why had she been so angry with Shem, anyway? She remembered that she had hated and feared him, but couldn't for the life of her remember why.

Suddenly she stood up and opened her eyes wide. "It's gone! It's really gone! I'm free!" She blinked, and looked around, realizing that she needed to explain. "All my adult life I've been angry, hateful, fearful, and bitter, especially against men." She risked a glance at Shem, then found she couldn't draw her gaze away. "Especially... young men."

Shem nodded, understanding perfectly. "It's all gone, Shem. Logos took it all away. Now I am just... ashamed of myself. Will you forgive me for being so hateful to you? You did nothing to deserve that!"

“Of course, Cherrie. I’ve already forgiven you...” Shem stopped, with just a smile and a nod. Healing takes time.

Cherrie stayed that night with Noah and Fuchi. She had never felt so loved, so pampered. They awoke to a glorious sunrise. Cherrie fully entered into their Sabbath rest and fellowship, the first true rest she had ever experienced. Shem was there, but he said little and kept his distance the entire day. Cherrie realized he was waiting for her. He would not push her. She must decide.

The Sabbath ended with a glorious sunset. The evening meal was served. Cherrie felt an incredible peace, joy, and satisfaction as she ate. What a place this was – truly all she had longed for all her life! Some of her previous ‘friends’ had told her that people who kept the Sabbath were crazy, demented, perverted. Now she realized that those ‘friends’ were the ones who were perverted. *Where had she just heard that? Oh! Shem had told her that when he first met her.* She glanced at him, and his face broke into a smile. There was obvious admiration in his eyes. She realized he had been watching her. With a sudden resolve, she came over and sat beside him, facing the setting sun. “This has been the most beautiful, happy, glorious day of my entire life,” she began, then paused. *How could she tell him what was in her heart? She didn’t even know what was there!*

“Yes, mine too.” Shem smiled at her again, then fixed his gaze on the final glow of the setting sun.

“Thank you for forgiving me.” She tried again.

“Of course. But it was really Logos who forgave and cleansed you. Just like He did for me and all of us here. We all need forgiving sometimes.”

“Uh, yeah.” Cherrie realized that she was skirting the real issue, the one unresolved issue of the day. Being a practical person, she determined she was not going to let this opportunity pass without dealing with it. She couldn’t sleep until it was resolved. “Shem...?” Again she paused.

“Yes?” The pause lengthened. The sky was darkening. The lanterns clicked on. Shem was trying to be patient and not push, but somebody had to say something. Finally, “Yes, Cherrie? You don’t have to be afraid to talk to me. I’ll always be your friend, regardless of how you choose.”

So, he knew what she was struggling with. Well, all she could do now was plunge on and hope he understood. “Shem, what Logos said about making me for you and you for me... and about receiving my heart’s desire through you if I can... if I... if I choose to accept you...”

She knew he was looking at her, smiling at her, waiting for her to continue, but she stared furiously at the horizon, as if she could will the sun to rise again. It did not. So finally she turned back to Shem, his face a warm yellow in the light of the lanterns. “I’ve decided.” She shivered slightly, though the evening was not cold. “I choose to accept you. And to g-g-give myself to you...”

“Just because Logos said so, you understand. I’m not sure if I can ever really love you or open up my heart to you. But I love Logos. I choose to obey Him. That’s all.”

“Thank you, Cherrie. I also choose to accept you and give myself to you. But not just because Logos said it. I truly love you! I hope that as I show you faithful, unconditional love, you will in time learn to love and trust me, too.”

“Thank you, Shem. I hope so too.” She squeezed his hand, got up, and fled back to her little room at Noah’s house, the final matter resolved in her mind.

That is the way it remained the rest of that year. Cherrie stayed with Noah and Fuchi, helped with the cooking and the gardens, and made friends with Shem’s family. Shem was content to have her as a friend, trusting that love would come in time. Logos would let him know when it was time to ask her to be his wife. Meanwhile, they just had fun together. They cooperated in family picnics and hikes, they enjoyed each other’s presence and fellowship, and they both fully trusted Logos’ Word.

The ark was now complete. Ham and Holly were still busy making lists of the animals and planning where they would stay and how much food and water they’d need. Shem surprised the group one morning by saying, “I am not needed here for the next few days. I believe I’ll take a short break to pray and meditate.” With that, he kissed his mother, said good-bye to the others, and lastly smiled to Cherrie, giving her hand a quick squeeze. “I’ll be back before the Sabbath,” he assured them as he left.

But he was not home in time for the Sabbath. Everyone was worried. They asked Logos as soon as He appeared. “What has happened to Shem? Did you call him away? Where is he? Does he need our help?”

“I did not call him away. He chose to go, for reasons of his own, which he will tell you himself. And yes, he does need help, for he has fallen and is injured. He lies just beyond that grassy hill. He was hurrying to be home by the Sabbath when he fell.”

Cherrie gave an involuntary cry. She jumped up and was running up the hill before the others could even react. Noah hesitated. “Logos, what should we bring to help him?” Always the sensible one, Noah would rather delay a few minutes to learn the specifics.

Logos told them. They gathered some lanterns, poles, blankets, bandages, water, and antiseptic soap.

Meanwhile, Cherrie, running like the wind, her blonde hair flowing like a flag behind her, had gone over the hill in the direction Logos had pointed, and had found Shem. He had fallen when he had caught his foot in a small crack in the ground (caused by an earlier Mars flyby). His leg was badly broken, bent sideways at a sharp angle. A piece of leg bone was sticking through the skin. He was lying in pain. The fall was obviously very recent.

"Shem! Oh, Shem! I'm here!" Cherrie called out. Then, reaching him, "I'm so sorry! Help is coming! Logos told us where you were. Praise Logos that we got to you before the wild animals did!" She knelt beside him, taking hold of his injured leg. "Oh! That must really hurt. Look away. I will try to get your foot out of this crack." But it was tightly wedged. Cherrie carefully unlaced his sandal and gently removed his foot, straightening him out on the ground the best she could. Then she was able to work his sandal free. Finally she faced him, hands on his shoulders, her golden hair flowing down delightfully across his neck and chest.

"Help is coming, my beloved," she said softly, then was surprised at how easily it had come out.

"My beloved? Did you say that because that is what Logos calls us, or because you really mean it?"

Cherrie knew that she would not have time for long explanations. The others would be coming over the hill any second now. "When you left, I was shocked at how much I missed you. When I heard that you were injured it was like a knife into my own breast. I have grown to love you, deeply. I can no longer pretend, even to myself, that we are just casual friends. I never before knew that anyone could love so much! You really, truly, are my beloved." And she suddenly bent down and kissed him full on the mouth, his eyes still wide with surprise.

A big grin broadened his face. "That kiss is worth two broken legs!" He whispered, as lanterns shone over the hill in the deepening twilight. They soon had his leg cleaned, straightened, bandaged and set in splints. They made a stretcher with the poles and blankets. As they carried him home, Japheth casually asked why he had left and if his trip had been successful.

"Yes, it was successful," he said, taking Cherrie's hand as she held on to the side of the stretcher. "I know, it was kind of foolish. I... well... I just wanted to leave awhile to see if Cherrie would miss me. She did!" He quickly turned away while Cherrie swatted at him. "Why, you...!" she said in mock indignation, then bent over and kissed him again, on the forehead, nearly upsetting the stretcher.

"I see," said Ham and Japheth simultaneously. They were carrying the foot of the stretcher, and saw the kiss. Fuchi, on the other side of the stretcher, winked at her son and smiled. In front, Noah and Methuselah just silently praised Logos for keeping His promises to them all. Jill and Holly, carrying the lanterns, rejoiced in the knowledge that their friend Cherrie would soon be their sister.

So it was. When his broken leg had healed, which was soon in the high pressure, oxygen-rich atmosphere of the times, they were married. They had almost a year to enjoy each other before the cataclysm. At their wedding, Logos released Shem from his other responsibilities. That left only Ham and Holly to work with Noah and Fuchi on the final preparations for all the animals.

CHAPTER 13 – THE FLOOD

The dreaded time arrived. Everyone knew when Mars would return. It had passed by Earth twice every third year (at first) then (after collision with Aster) every other year, for 1410 years. During that time, the alignments of Saturn and Jupiter had pulled it much closer, dangerously so, every 30 or 60 years, for a total of 32 times. The October pass two years before had been far worse than expected for an 'off year' pass. It had been followed by the worst March flyby in history. Now this was the year that the planets all lined up on their deadly cycle, so everyone was certain it would be a royal dilly. *This was in 1590 AF, our 3450 BC.* The earth was abuzz with preparations. Noah was sure that some would get scared, repent, and beg for protection in the ark. He was ready to receive them. But he was wrong. They knew about the ark but had developed a mocking attitude about it all. It was a matter of pride, you know. They'd jeered and ridiculed him for a hundred years as he was building it. Now that the time had come, they just couldn't admit that he was right and they were wrong.

But the animals had no such pride, no such mocking attitudes. They also sensed something was wrong, and they were agitated. Many just milled about aimlessly, making pitiful noises. Logos used their agitation to direct some to Noah at the ark. Ham and Holly guided them across the gangplank into the ark, checked them off the list, and led them to their assigned stall. There, to Ham's great delight, they quieted down and went to sleep. Maybe they somehow sensed that the ark was a place of refuge.

For six days they came. Ham's list was nearly complete: animals, one mating pair of each, and birds (on the upper floor), seven mating pairs of each. Then the bugs came. Neither Ham nor Holly had wanted them but Logos did. He sent them flying or crawling to find their own places in the ark; spiders, moths, mosquitoes, roaches, flies, beetles, bees, grasshoppers, ants, and butterflies galore. Ham tried to stop them, but Logos bade him be at peace. "Food for the birds," He quipped. "You would have run out. And My spiders will keep the insects from multiplying too much."

So on preparation day one week before the fixed time, all were safely in the ark except the snakes, fire-breathing dragons, alligators, and thunder lizards. They had come, but Ham had shooed them away. They were feared and hated by all alike, so Ham and Holly had decided not to let them in. They didn't tell Logos of their decision. Bugs they could tolerate, but they had to draw the line somewhere.

That Sabbath, the last Sabbath before the dreaded time, Logos appeared at their lamb sacrifice. "Father accepts your offering. You are all cleansed," He said. "I am pleased with your obedience and all your labor in preparing the ark. I am with you always, and I will bless you, protect you, guide you, and give you wisdom. In all the world, you are my constant delight. Now, there is just this small matter of the snakes, the dragons, and the carnivorous reptiles."

Ham and Holly knew immediately what He meant, and started to make their excuses. But He stopped them with a wave of His hand. "Yes, I know. They are indeed sorely perverted from their original created nature. The curse of sin has damaged them as well as you. Yet My compassion and desire to save extends to all created kinds. Just as you, the very best of humankind, shall be saved to repopulate your race, so I have sent the very best of each animal kind to restock the earth. Do not despise what I have chosen."

"Yes, Logos." Ham and Holly bowed their heads.

"But I have heard your complaint about their size and ferocity. I will send gentler and smaller ones, mere babies. If you will humble yourselves with fasting and prayer for one day, the sixth day, I promise you they will not harm you or the other animals. Can you live with that?"

"Thank you, Logos. Yes, we can." He smiled at them.

Then He grew serious. "In seven days the rains will begin. They will not stop for forty days and nights. I will blot out from the face of the earth every living thing that I have made. Everything that is to be saved must be in the ark. It will be cold, colder than you can imagine. Bring all your furs, coats, hats, blankets, everything you have to keep you warm. All around the earth no more people have repented, so I've decided to take your flocks and herds in their place. Pick the best of your domestic animals and bring them also into the ark. Choose at least six more pairs of each kind of clean animal for a total of seven pairs. I care about them, and I want to save as many as we can."

Ham looked at Holly, then they both looked over at Noah. They had not counted on that. "Fret not, Ham. There is enough room," Logos assured him. "You have enough food already. I will command them to sleep, so they will be no trouble. When this is all behind you, I think that you will be glad for the additional clean animals, and even the dragons and thunder lizards."

So the next six days were spent loading six more pairs of all the clean animals, a very large number of animals. All the rooms except the great room on the middle deck were completely full. It was the last space available, and even it was now half full of the clean animals. "I was saving that for people," Ham confessed. I still have hopes that at the last minute, many will repent and come aboard. We could put as many as a thousand people there, or more if there are a lot of children." Ham looked wistful; clearly he loved children and wanted to save lots of them. He wanted to fill up that space, and was secretly hoping that Logos would forget to return the dragons, thunder lizards, and snakes.

It was early morning on the sixth day, the last day before the appointed time. Mars had not yet risen and the land seemed peaceful, but the peace was charged with anticipation. The clean animals were fenced off in the great room in two large corrals, fore and aft. Food and water were stocked. There was still room for many people.

Methuselah, Marion, and Noah's entire family (totaling ten souls) had finished packing their personal belongings on the ark, and had slept there for the first time that night. They were all fasting and praying as Logos had requested of them. Everything was ready. It was preparation day.

With the dawn, the dragons showed up; behind them, the thunder lizards; the land was littered with thousands of snakes and reptiles of all kinds, enough to make your skin crawl and the hair stiffen up on the back of your neck. It was a living nightmare right out of hell. How could the massive thunder lizards even get through the door? There was no room! And the dragons! You have no idea how intimidating a fire-breathing dragon can be; even a baby is huge! There was just no way! Holly saw it first. She ran screaming for Ham. Ham shrieked for Noah, who came sleepily to the door. If he had not been fasting, he would have lost his breakfast right there on the gangplank.

"We've got to stop them! There's just no room!"

"No. We must obey Logos. He will make room."

"But what if more people repent? We'll have no space for them. The children! I was saving the great room for..."

"Ham, no more people will repent. Logos just told us. We must obey and trust Him. Allow them," he pointed, "on the ark. All of them." Noah shuddered as he said it.

So Ham stood aside and allowed them entrance. Two thousand kinds of snakes, crocodiles, lizards, and turtles. After them came the thunder lizards, some so large they scraped and heaved to get in, though they were babies.

Finally, patiently watching, awaiting their turn, two pairs of dragons approached, the great scaled red dragons and the smaller black dragons. Though youngsters, they were still huge. Their wings were folded, their heads bowed. At the door they stopped. The lead male looked down at Ham and Noah, right into their eyes. There was a long pause, a remembering...

"I understand. I am sorry for the reputation of my kind. We are grateful for your accommodation. We will be very careful not to ignite the straw with our breath. We will sleep, hibernate. We will eat none of your food. We will cause no trouble. You have my word." There was no sound, but in his unblinking stare they knew the thought had come from him. Ham and Noah glanced at each other. They had heard that the dragons were the most intelligent of the animals, but to hear one talking telepathically like that was a startlingly new experience for them.

They were still waiting at the door, their hot breath warming Ham's face. He realized they awaited a response. He spoke aloud. "Thank you for understanding. I accept your promise to cause no trouble and to be careful with your fiery breath. On that basis you are welcome here." Ham bowed to them briefly, amazed at the fearsome dragon's dignity and respect, and hoping it would last.

The great red dragon bowed in return, folded his wings a bit tighter, and squeezed in through the door, followed by his mate and the smaller dragons.

Thus in three hours the loading was complete, with but hours to spare. The ground was quivering. Mars had risen and was chasing the sun. Its closest approach would be at noon, but already it covered the southern horizon. Ham dreaded what he would see when he went back in. *None of those reptiles had assigned places. No doubt they had filled up the great room, and perhaps even taken 'people spaces'.* Ham was miffed. *After all his careful planning...*

"Look! There they are. I knew they would come." Methuselah pointed at the highways to Mehal and Enoch. The others ran to the door. They saw hundreds of people, streaming into their high valley toward the ark. "Praise Logos! They heard my warning. They've come to repent!" Noah was ecstatic, as hundreds became thousands.

"But where can we put them? There's no more room!" Holly cried, glancing back into the great room. It was now completely full. The floor crawled with ferocious reptiles, lizards, alligators, and snakes, giving her goosebumps.

"Logos said there would be enough room. Trust Him. We will welcome them all, all who will repent. This is why Logos sent me to warn them. He wants to save them! And we all want what He wants, don't we!"

As is his prerogative as the patriarch, Methuselah went out to meet the crowd, his beloved Marion beside him. The Sabbath had not yet begun, but this was an emergency. He quickly took two lambs from the remaining flock by the house. He offered the first for himself and Marion. As the people came close, he bellowed out for all to hear.

"Welcome everyone! You're just in time. Come confess your repentance for your sin over the head of this lamb. I'll sacrifice it and sprinkle the blood for you. Then you may go aboard the ark. Hurry! The cataclysm is upon us! Only those who confess their sin and accept the sprinkling of the blood can be saved. All the rest will perish! So line up here to put your hands over the head of the lamb." They understood the sacrifice. He expected no trouble.

Mars rushed closer. The land convulsed violently in its powerful pull. This would be its closest approach ever. Static electricity from the interaction between the planets made their hair fly and buzzed their nerves. Glacis, that terrifying fourth moon, came spinning ominously in front of Mars. It was huge! It was a brilliantly lit crescent, like a scimitar slicing down. Noah watched as it shattered into billions of ice shards, seeding Earth's vapor barrier. That quickly changed from a transparent protective covering to thick dark rain clouds. To make matters worse, the rim of Mars moved over the sun to cast a sinister shadow on the valley, which was now lit only by ghostly flickering static discharges. Then an immense electric arc ignited Eden's nearby hill. The midday sky turned an icy, spooky black.

Standing by the old stone altar, Methuselah was sure that the people now streaming across the gardens would be glad to repent and be saved. But Methuselah was wrong. The people were not glad at all. They were full of blind rage and hate. Satan, through his servants, had convinced them that the calamity would be halted only by killing Noah and his family. They didn't believe that there would be a flood, but they all certainly knew and feared the destructions that Mars could cause! And Josh was leading the attack! He had persuaded them that the crazy clan at Eden had angered their god Mars by refusing to worship him.

Noah and his little family watched in horror on the gangplank as Methuselah and Marion were quickly and mercilessly slain at the altar. The mob then turned toward the ark. Rain mixed with shards of ice, with static 'fire' dancing among the drops, began to hit them, slashing at their bare skin. After a lifetime of living in a constant 80° F all over the world, the sudden cold felt demonic. Noah's four big dogs, barking furiously, retreated to his side as they all backed into the doorway. "Logos! Help us!" cried Noah. Instantly, Logos was there.

"Peace!" He said softly. The dogs stopped barking. "I gladly receive My precious Methuselah into My Kingdom. His task on earth is done." He put out His right arm. There in His embrace stood a shimmering figure, smiling into His eyes – it was Methuselah and Marion joined together into one person. The vision quickly faded. Logos became serious again. The mob was rapidly closing in behind Him.

"They have been given every warning, every chance to repent. Now their wickedness has reached the full. Their violence covers the earth, as you have just borne witness here before you. I am sorry that I have made them."

He stood on the gangplank, which doubled as the door. His fiery robes shone brilliantly against the darkened sky, undampened by the first rain in the history of the universe. The screaming mob drew close, evidently not even seeing Logos standing there. Noah heard obscenities, threats, curses yelled out. A violent earth tremor threw them all to the ground, but they struggled back to their feet and charged up the earth berm circling the ark. The rain was now pouring down, as if heaven had opened its floodgates. The sky above was dark as night, but the static electricity flickering among the raindrops provided an eerie light. Noah suddenly realized that he should be taking action. He had to connect the two ropes to the sides of the ramp / door so they could use the block and tackle to hoist it into place. But somehow, with Logos standing there between them and the murderous mob, he felt no fear, no urgency. Logos was still facing them, His back to the mob. *Surely He knows they are coming up right behind Him? Doesn't He?*

"Peace," He said again, gently, just a whisper, yet clearly audible against the storm. "Fret not, My beloved, nor be dismayed. All is contained within My Plan of the Ages. I love you. I am with you always. Abide in Me."

Then lifting up His hands toward the heavens, He cried out as if in deep pain, "My Father, O My Father! It is done. There are no more. Shut the door." For a brief moment He blazed with an unspeakable brilliance, then He vanished.

Behind Him, the mob had reached the gangplank. The leaders began throwing rocks and spears ahead of them into the doorway. Noah and his family had no defense. There was nothing to do but back further into the ark. Noah saw the murder in their eyes. He heard Josh yelling, "There they are! Kill 'em before Mars destroys us all!"

But as they stepped up to the gangplank, it rose in their faces and slammed home into its frame. There was a moment's blissful silence, then muffled screams of rage. Noah's little family knelt, grasped each other's hands, and bowed in prayer, thankful for so timely a salvation. A lone oil lamp burned on the entry wall behind them. Shem's high-tech automated lighting system had already failed.

The mob began pounding on the hull with big rocks and timbers, trying to smash through and destroy the ark. But Noah had made it strong. It resisted all their efforts.

The storm raged more furiously than ever. The window in the roof, which Noah designed to close automatically with any force of solid water, actually closed just from the heavy rain. The ark heaved as the earth writhed beneath it. It was still an hour before the closest approach of Mars at noon and already the world had gone mad. *[The date was the first of Marchesvan 1590 AF, our October 24th, 3450 BC, using 360 day years. For the balance of the Flood story I will use days from this date. Month names (to aid the Reader) are anachronistic. There was no moon or months in those days. For an essay on Earth's crustal axis spin, see endnote two.]*

No physical description could do justice to the violence outside the ark. After crossing Antarctica, Mars raked up over South America at about 9,000 miles away, raising the Andes Mountain range in a few hours. At its closest approach, Earth's crust spun violently sideways (in accord with the laws of gravitation, electro-magnetic attraction, and gyroscopic precession), displacing Earth's crustal rotational axis 80 degrees, from the South Pacific to northern Alaska, within 10 degrees of where it is today. That is why the Andes take a sharp bend from Venezuela to Bolivia. During the flyby, Mars greatly recharged Earth's magnetosphere and flipped Earth's N-S magnetic poles. Crustal tides up to twelve thousand feet high rippled over the globe, permanently changing the earth's landscape. The tortured crust, already shattered by numerous passes of Mars, could stand no more. With thunderous noise, it split in colossal cracks into what we call continental plates, some tipping up and others dropping down. The enclosed subterranean waters spurted up in towering waterspouts thousands of feet high, and then surged forth in 300 foot waves over the previously benign landscape. Thankfully, the winds and tides followed Mars to the east, and not up toward the north pole. It was about to be covered in ice!

Earth's recharged magnetosphere produced lines of magnetic flux 60,000 times stronger than today. The ice shards from shattered Glacis had a static charge generated by the flyby. Most of them followed the powerful magnetic lines of flux down to Earth's poles. This space ice formed a super cold channel through the atmosphere to the poles, allowing it to fall rapidly without interference from Earth's atmosphere, creating the polar ice caps in a single day. Within three days after the flyby, six-mile high mountains of -250° F ice had already piled up on our new magnetic poles. The intense cold of the space ice falling upon these previously tropical areas quick-froze polar animals like woolly mammoths and sabertooth tigers. To this day we find them still frozen, vegetation fresh in their mouths.

Wind and currents exceeded 300 miles per hour. The force of the hot waters literally washed the land clean, uprooting every living thing and carrying with it immense amounts of sediment, sorting various types of mud, sand, clay, gravel, and rocks into layers. The rushing currents dissolved salt and minerals from the dirt, creating the first salt water oceans. Mercifully for the people of the lands of Nod, Kenan, Havilah and beyond, it was over very quickly as the massive waves crashed over them. Not a structure remained intact, not a bush or tree could withstand the scouring of the rushing waters, as it washed the earth clear down to the bedrock. Though many tried to escape the catastrophe in their fliers and boats, this was orders of magnitude beyond their design limits. If the closest approach had been directly above Israel instead of South America, no life at all could have survived.

The ark, nestled in its trench in the ground, was now violently twisted off its supports and crushed down under a million tons of solid water. Its mighty glue-lam beams creaked and groaned, bending under awesome stresses beyond what Noah had ever imagined. Suddenly he was glad he had listened to Logos and had added the crossribs, that he had redesigned his roof to be as strong as the hull, that he had doubled the siding boards to 10 inches thick, and that he had engineered his window to automatically close. His boat was now a submarine, its single window and door wedged tightly into their tapered frames.

But it was buoyant. After the first 300 foot wave crashed down on it, the little ark struggled bravely for the surface. For a long time it remained submerged, as wave after wave mounted above it. Noah and his family were carried up, up, faster than an elevator, as the hot subterranean waters which had spurted out from under the now sunken crustal plates surged over them. Thankfully, Noah's God-inspired design provided for stability even under water, for the ark did not flip over. Its ballast, shape, and roll fins kept it climbing on a fairly even keel. But it sure did not seem so to the occupants inside! For them it pitched and rolled so violently they wondered how they could survive. Noah's family was thrown to and fro like rag dolls. They clutched frantically to each other and anything else they could grab.

They found the ropes Noah had intended to use to close the door. They hung on for dear life, getting flopped about and more frightened by the second. The oil lamp fell and went out. Its oil sloshed across the deck. They were left in total darkness. The sounds of the storm ceased, but they could hear the big beams bending and straining all around. They never knew how close the ark was to being crushed like an eggshell as they lay in the darkness. In their mind's eye, their ark was huge and strong, but in comparison to the colossal waves crashing over them, it was tiny and frail. (Massive angelic assistance made up the difference.)

Trying to quell her panic, Fuchi began to pray out loud. "Logos, Save us! We need You! Help us!" she screamed.

Noah knew he needed to gain control, before hysteria overwhelmed them. "Thank You, Logos, for Your promise to be with us always. Thank You now for Your protection. We are in Your hands. We love and worship You. We trust You to see us through. You are more powerful than the storm. Deliver us now from fear and grant us Your peace." That brought a measure of peace, as they tried to meditate on the power and glory of Logos. Noah finally managed to get the heavy ropes tied in to the eyebolts on the door and cinched tightly to the entry wall so they'd have something more stable to hang on to. Then, fearing it might get worse, Noah took a smaller rope and tied everyone together onto the main door ropes. Then they put on the fur coats stowed in the entry closet, remembering the icy rain and what Logos had told them about it getting very cold.

It's a good thing he did, as they discovered when the ark finally broke the surface. They thought it had been rolling violently before! Little did they know that if Noah hadn't carefully followed the design Logos had given him, their precious ark might have rolled completely over with each wave and would have broken apart in the first hour.

On reaching the surface, their window sprung open. The door in the side opened partially as well, stretching the ropes to allow the air in the ark to whistle out. If the ropes or eye bolts holding the door in place had been any weaker, the door might have blown completely out. They were now 15,000 feet above the surface of the earth, and still rising. The icy rain caused temperatures in the ark to plummet. The thick atmosphere to which they had been accustomed under the heavy vapor canopy was gone. Deprived of air, all the creatures in the ark which weren't already hibernating soon lost consciousness.

Still the ark rose. With the subterranean ocean now released to the surface, the tide reached up toward Mars a total of over ten miles above Eden. The immense tide, along with hurricane force winds, surged eastward at nearly 300 miles per hour, carrying the ark completely over what we know as Asia before the tide finally passed it by and allowed it to settle back down. Then some fresh air began coming back in the window, sucking in rain water as well. The population of the ark started to revive.

The air was cold. They had never felt such cold. They were used to a constant tropical 80° F, due to the greenhouse atmosphere provided by the vapor canopy. But that was gone, and both the coldness of space and the coldness of the ice crystals which had seeded the vapor canopy fell on them. It is good that the water spurting up from below was a warm 90° F, or they all would have frozen to death.

The ark went down, down, deep into what is now the Philippine Sea, down nearly a mile below the surface of the earth, still swept along by the ferocious winds, waves, and currents. They were traveling almost due east, following the tide pulled up by Mars. It was fortunate that the violent wind circling the globe generally went the same direction as the currents or it might have ripped the heavy planks right off the roof, in spite of the strength of Shem's big ring nails. The thin, cold air whistled back in the window, reviving the humans lying in their fur coats by the door.

Noah correctly guessed that it was only a matter of time before the next huge tide would carry them up into the stratosphere. They needed to make use of their air while they had it. The ark was already rising. They had to reach the hammocks he had prepared on the third floor. Their lamps had no oil left, and their torches had rolled away on the deck. Shem's automated lighting system had been zapped by the static. Inside the ark was as dark as a cave.

After struggling for a bit to strike a light, Noah gave up. He knew this ark like the back of his hand. Surely he could navigate them across the great room to the ramp in the middle. He made sure they were roped up, then told them to hang on and follow. Staggering and falling but helping one another, they trailed Noah in the violently pitching darkness, clutching their furs about them.

The snakes. They were stepping on snakes and lizards. The nightmare that had faced them that morning was now underfoot. In the dark their imaginations ran wild. Holly grew hysterical. Strong, capable, practical Holly – who feared nothing – who always could take care of herself. Poor Holly. She began screaming, and fell to the deck in convulsions. She was hyperventilating. Ham hugged her tightly and tried to comfort her but it was no use. Noah knew that their time was running out. "Carry her!" he commanded. "We've got to make it up to the hammocks! Quickly! We'll be battered to pieces if we stay down here."

But he had lost his bearings on the pitching deck trying to negotiate around the reptiles at his feet. Instead of the ramp, they bumped into an unyielding body. Noah felt hot breath on his head. Then above him the faintest glimmer of flame revealed the mouth of the largest male dragon, awakened by their commotion and Holly's screams.

"Come to me. I can help you."

Was that the big dragon's thoughts? Or was Noah just imagining things? "How can you help us?" Noah shouted to be heard above Holly's screaming.

"I shall cover you – envelop you with my wing." Noah sensed, rather than saw, the mighty wing unfold and stretch out above their heads. Desperate, Noah urged the others close. "Thank you! We accept your help."

They heard their air shrieking back out the door. Soon it would be gone, and they would again be unconscious. They crowded together as the great dragon slowly closed his wing over them, much as a mother hen covers her chicks. The dragon was warm. They lay there together in their blankets with the strong wing closed firmly about them, providing a stability they had not known since the first wave hit. Holly's screaming died down. They relaxed, and drifted into a deep sleep. But the huge wing remained folded around them, locking them together with the dragons and thunder lizards who had lined up and packed themselves tightly together all across the great room.

Mars had broken its gravitational grip on Earth, but the mountainous tides madly circling the globe continued. For days the frail creatures in the ark clung precariously to life as the frosty air whistled out the window at the peaks of the tide and back in at the valleys. They all wavered in and out of consciousness in a state of semi-hibernation.

The eight humans remained under the dragon's wing. It was good that Logos had told them to fast the day before the storm, or they might have been seasick. Their bodily functions shut down to the bare minimum. They breathed when there was air, and went into blissful oblivion when there was none, but not much else.

Three days passed. The monster tides and hurricane winds calmed. But the heavy rains kept falling and the waters kept rising. The six-mile high mountains of deep-space ice at the magnetic poles were slowly cooling the hot new oceans, and their edges were melting in the process. If it had not been for rains cleansing the air, soot from ten thousand volcanoes would have been choking those in the ark, for molten lava and noxious gases spewed out beside the broken crustal plates in numerous places where the subcrust had also cracked down to the molten core. Most of these volcanoes were underwater, belching smoke in huge bubbles rising to the surface. But some had risen to mountainous size and were not yet covered with water.

Noah awoke. The air seemed very thin and cold, but breathable. The ark still pitched and rolled, but at least it no longer vibrated with the violence of the 300 mile per hour winds and the 300 foot waves that had assailed it. He realized with a start that his bodily functions had returned. He had to go. He struggled briefly, but found himself locked in the embrace of the dragon's wing. "Mr. Dragon! I've gotta go! Please open your wing." Nothing. He felt the interminably slow breathing of a hibernating animal. He punched the dragon in the side, in what he hoped would be a tender spot. It was like punching a rock. The armored plates, even on his belly, were unyielding. Fuchi, lying beside him, awakened, also realizing that she needed to go.

In their struggles, the others woke up too. They all tried punching together. Nothing. They shouted in unison. Nothing. They were weak from hunger and the thin air.

Holly called out, "Noah, why don't you ask Logos to wake him. He said He'd always be with us."

"Of course. Sorry, Holly, I forgot. Logos! Please wake the dragon for us. We've gotta go."

Immediately the dragon stirred. "Dragon, open your wing! We have got to go – now!" He sleepily responded, stretching his wing above them. Somehow they thought they'd be able to see once the dragon uncovered them, but the ark was still darker than the blackest cave. They had no clue as to which direction to go. "Thank you, Mr. Dragon." Holly was thinking more quickly than the others. "Now would you please breathe out just a little fire over our heads, so we could see where the ramp is?"

The great head raised high above them, and a long tongue of fire came from the dragon's mouth. Holly and the others ran for the ramp, but Noah spotted a loose torch between two big crocodiles and dove for it. He didn't have time to try to find his flint to light it; he just held it up to the dragon. "Please, one more flame on this torch." Then, the torch lit, he followed the rest to the ramp.

The restrooms were on the third floor. The ladies found it to be as dark and frightening as the great room, until Noah came up behind with his torch. No light came in the window above. The dark clouds and heavy rain totally obscured the sun. Both reactors for Shem's electronic lighting system had been blown by static. Of course he had replacements, but he couldn't find them in the darkness. Working by smoky torchlight, he jury-rigged the system using some batteries charged by a hand-crank generator he had brought for emergencies. Finally the lights came on, and everyone cheered. They extinguished the smoky torches and settled into their quarters.

"Dad," Ham said to Noah. "Do you realize the dragons saved our lives? We didn't want to let them on the ark!"

"You're right. And in my haste, I never even thanked them." Noah and Ham turned on the lights for the main deck and went back down. Looking around the great room from the ramp, Ham was startled to see it completely filled with animals. Where had they all come from? He didn't remember letting in this many that last day. His heart sank. He would never have enough food to feed them all.

They made their way through the crowd to the great red dragon. "Thank you, Mr. Dragon. I believe you saved our lives. We are very grateful." No response. The dragon had already gone back into hibernation.

All the other reptiles were hibernating, too. Ham had an inspiration. "Dad, maybe they'll hibernate the whole time. Maybe God will let all the animals hibernate. Then we won't have to feed them, and we'll have plenty of food."

“That’s what the dragon promised.” Noah agreed as they climbed the ramp. “We’ll turn off the lights for the lower decks.” The ladies had fixed breakfast. At least they wouldn’t be hibernating! Nor would the birds on their deck – they were already flying about catching insects.

“What day is it?” Everyone wondered. They knew there had to be two major high tides per day: one when they faced the gravitational attraction of Mars and another half a day later. Those same tides would continue for days after Mars was gone. So they counted up the number of times they had gone unconscious and then revived, and came up with three days under the dragon’s wing. Adding the four days that they had spent repairing the lighting and getting the boat shipshape, they were nearing the Sabbath.

“How do we offer the Sabbath sacrifice, Noah? How can we be cleansed so Logos can come fellowship with us?” They loved their times of sweet fellowship with Logos.

“I don’t know. It would be dangerous to try to burn the sacrifices in the ark. What if the straw and wood and pitch caught fire? And where would the smoke go? Besides, all the lambs seem to be sleeping, too. I don’t think that’s what Logos wants. But He said He would be with us always. Let’s just set a place for Him at the table, and trust that He is here in Spirit, even though we may not see Him.”

So that is what they did. Never was a Sabbath fellowship so satisfying, so intimate, so full of encouragement, renewed relationships, love, hope, commitment, and faith. When it was over, they agreed that truly Logos had been with them by His Spirit. “He said He would be with us always. He keeps His Word.” From then on they set His place at the head of the table at every Sabbath meal.

After forty days the rains ceased and the sky grew a bit lighter. But now dust clouds from thousands of volcanoes obscured the sun, as magma from Earth’s fractured sub-crust bubbled to the surface. The waters continued to rise as the polar ice melted. The seas got colder but calmer day by day as the winds and currents moderated. A steady west wind and easterly currents drove the ark rapidly east, nearly along the new equator. (It crossed Arabia at the time, about 10 degrees tipped from our present equator.)

If Noah’s ark had gone a bit farther north, or a bit farther south, the winds and currents could have driven it toward one of the poles and to certain death at the six-mile high mountains of super-cold ice from space. But, with angelic assistance, it maintained a careful balance in the middle.

However, the temperature of the ocean – indeed, that of the entire globe – was plummeting even as the flood waters continued to rise from the melting ice at the poles. The ice there would remain at 250° F below zero for a long time, acting like giant refrigerators. It would be many centuries before our previously tropical planet reached its new colder equilibrium. So the hot oceans slowly rose and cooled as the deep-space ice slowly melted.

By day fifty the noonday sky had grown light enough to see. Shem and Japheth had their heads sticking up out of the open window frame, staring at the steady waves rolling past. They spotted a trio of dolphins arcing through the waves, and they saw some great whales cavorting and spouting high. So they knew that at least some of the marine life had survived the tremendous tides, currents, and waves, and the dramatic change from their warm, fresh water lakes to this cold and salty ocean. Shem and Japheth breathed deeply of the briny ocean smells. The previously choking fumes from the volcanoes had begun to dissipate. Their water-world was utterly alien and foreboding, yet they began to see a glimmer of hope for the future. Logos had not abandoned them. They’d make it.

By day 100 the tides, winds, and currents, now much closer to what we call normal, had carried them more than halfway around the world. But the waters, still rising, were 20,000 feet above the land. A third of the six-mile high mountains of ice at the poles had melted. The oceans, previously at 90° F, had plunged near 40° F around the poles (though warm currents still circulated past the equator). The whole earth was cooling, and the melting of the polar ice was not nearly as rapid as at first.

Finally the waters stopped rising. As the ark drifted slowly across the South Pacific, the deep-space ice at the poles continued to melt, but the oceans now began to freeze. The freezing finally caught up with the melting, and by day 140 after the cataclysm began, glaciers began to form. The waters were now 25,000 feet above our present day sea level. Even the tallest mountains in the Andes range were nearly covered. Winds were now a placid 30 to 60 miles per hour, and currents had dwindled to a mere 20 knots or less. Wild waves no longer crashed violently against the ark’s hull. The sky had brightened up as the smoky haze from the many volcanoes began to thin. The rays of the sun filtered through, bringing welcome and desperately needed warmth to the ark. Noah and his family rejoiced. Now they knew they would make it.

Gazing out the window, Ham pointed, “Look! Land!” Everyone came running. They saw a line of islands, with waves crashing furiously upon them, sometimes washing completely over them. It was actually the tips of mountain peaks. The ark flowed with the currents around the peaks, slowed a few times by their drogue anchors scraping the mountains below. They were over what we know as the Andes, which had been thrust up by the close encounter with Mars. (Remember, South America then was 3500 miles east of where it is now. And since the earth’s crust had spun over 80 degrees during the cataclysm, the range which had formed along the earth’s equator now extended roughly perpendicular to their eastward travel.) They crossed Ecuador on the new equator, which went from there toward Saudi Arabia. For a week they drifted over Columbia and Venezuela, enjoying the relative peace and calm after the terrifying violence of the cataclysm.

March arrived. Scanning the horizon from their perch at the window, the brothers saw a horrifying sight. Mars was returning! It again would be very close. They prepared as well as they could, praying for Logos to protect them. By day 148 they were in their hammocks with warm blankets around them, fasting and praying. The tide again lifted them up into space, and the air, already very thin and cold, whistled out their window. They went unconscious.

They revived that afternoon, as their little craft was sucked rapidly across Venezuela and settled down into a low tide at the bottom of the sea south of where Atlantis had sunk. Knowing the high tide would come again, they stayed in their hammocks and prayed. Mars was coming in over the opposite side of the earth, raising the Himalaya Mountains higher than ever over what is now Nepal and Bhutan. Its closest approach was at 4:00 PM in Nepal, which for Noah was 8:00 AM of the 150th day.

This pass was different from all the others. There had been no real oceans before. Now oceans covered the earth to an average depth of over 28,000 feet! This time Mars approached within about 10,000 miles from Earth. The resulting oceanic tide exceeded the gravitational capacity of the Earth, flinging roughly a half billion cubic miles of ocean out into space. Again, if the ark had been on that side of the globe, no one could have survived.

Some of the earth's oceans actually rained down upon Mars, scouring out huge erosion areas which we can see through our telescopes today. However, with such a thin atmosphere Mars could not hold her water, so most of it has since evaporated out into space, giving Mars a lovely, long, iridescent vapor tail for several hundred years.

Once again Noah's ark was beset by unspeakable tides, waves, winds, and currents, stressed far beyond our ability to imagine or describe. She avoided being rolled over or crushed only by the intervention of ten thousand angels, as she was lashed by 350 mph winds and pounded by 250 foot waves. She was lifted into space, then dashed down to the depths of the sea, striking the ocean floor several times. Once again, the entire earth was scoured, the volcanoes belched forth, continents tipped, cracked, pulled apart, or thrust against each other, valleys were split open, and mountain ranges were flattened or thrust up.

Soft sedimentary layers deposited after the previous pass of Mars were tipped, folded, and cracked, and in some places split clear through, as we see in hardened form today. Earth's magnetic poles were recharged, flipped, and shifted toward Canada by 700 miles. The grounded crust broke free and spun back 20 degrees, so the crustal spin axis ended up about 30 degrees from where it is now. The new equator crossed Venezuela and Turkey. By day 151 the worst was over. The ark had been swept across North Africa and Turkey to northern Iran, above the newly formed mountains of Ararat. Noah had circled the globe and continued well beyond Eden, his starting place.

The violence of the waters began to abate. The waters settled down at their new level, about 7,000 feet lower than before. (This was still 18,000 feet above our current sea level.) At low tide one of the drogue anchors that Noah had strung out behind the ark hit bottom at what is now Ankara, Turkey. The ark lurched, then continued with the currents as the rope snapped. With the next low tide another anchor struck, and the lurch repeated. Over the next week this continued with the low tides, but each time either the rope snapped or the next rising tide pulled up the anchor so they continued on.

Then finally, three anchors hit bottom and held. The ark jerked and tipped to a stop, yanking against the ropes due to the heavy waves and the high winds and currents. They could hear the waters rushing past their hull and knew they had reached land. But looking out the window, they could see nothing. The currents continued to flow past and the winds blew fiercely around them, blowing clouds of smoke from the volcanoes. Noah couldn't stand the smoke, so he bade his sons close the window. They all prayed together that Logos would allow the anchor lines to hold, so their craft wouldn't be driven up to some rocky cliff to be smashed against it by the wind and the waves.

They waited. They had air to breathe, though it was still very thin and cold. A few of the animals began to awaken from their hibernation. The bug population of the ark had evidently expanded (or maybe it had started out larger than Ham had known) as the birds were having a field day flying around catching them. He made sure they still had plenty of bird seed in their feeders, and refilled their water containers. But thankfully, all of the reptiles and larger animals on the lower decks continued to hibernate.

The ark had grown very cold, especially the two lower floors. Their 80° F oceans were no more. Much of the time the currents swirling past were close to freezing, and the temperatures in the ark had plummeted at least 30° F, to about 50° F, far colder than these animals had ever known. Ham realized that the cold, thin air and darkness were blessings in disguise. Hibernating creatures don't need to eat or poop. He wondered briefly about all the food he had stored, then chuckled to himself. Once they got out of the ark, they would need it all. It could be a long time before the earth's vegetation could replenish itself.

Holly wondered whether their air would ever be thick and warm again. They had no way of knowing that when Mars had taken a quarter of Earth's oceans, a quarter of her air went with it, mostly lost into space. They'd have to get used to breathing harder and having less energy.

For fifty days they waited. The jerking of the ark against the anchor lines was a comforting thing. It meant land was nearby. They'd just have to wait until the waters receded. The winds continued strong, and sometimes at high tide they sensed their anchors dragging, but when they looked out, they could see nothing but water all around.

At the end of day 200 they still had not seen land. It was a bit discouraging. They could not hibernate like animals, and the days stretched out interminably. But at least they were able to leave their window open much of the time for fresh air, as the smoke from the volcanoes had dissipated in the constant high winds. They were grateful.

What they could not know was that the winds carried huge amounts of moisture from the oceans and blew it past the poles, where it was frozen out by the still super-cold mountains of ice from the fourth moon of Mars. This caused the water levels to drop, dramatically, but the water was turning into great glaciers which eventually would stretch halfway to the equator. No longer were the hot oceans melting the ice at the poles; now the ice at the poles was freezing the oceans. The global Ice Age had begun.

One by one, the three anchor lines frayed and broke, and the ark began to drift once again, now going southeast. It had no means of steering (its rudder had snapped off when that first wave had crashed down at Eden), so they prayed that Logos would direct it. A few hours later the last two drogue anchors hit bottom, and the ark once again yanked to a halt, with the strong currents swirling past. But stare as they might, they could not catch sight of land.

Day 223. At low tide Noah always ordered a complete survey of their surroundings, hoping to spot land. This was not a simple task, as the steady westerly winds had built up 150 foot rollers circling the globe. Shem, doing the survey this time, had to wait until the ark was at the top of a roller, brace himself against the window frame, and scan with his telescope as much of the horizon as he could before the ark dipped back into a trough. Shem had just settled himself in, starting toward the north, when he let out a big whoop. "Dad! Japheth! Ham! Land! I see land! And it's close! I see a big mountain peak about fifteen miles to the northeast. And look," as the others came running. "There's a bare mountain ridge right over there." By the time they arrived at the window, the ark was in a trough, and they had to wait for another roller to lift them up.

But yes, it was land, the tips of the mountains of Ararat, in northern Iran near the Soviet border. By day 250 they could see islands scattered around them. They clearly had come to rest within a range of rugged mountains. If their last two anchors had not held, they would surely have been dashed by the rollers onto the beach of one of these islands, which they knew were actually mountain peaks.

By day 263 the winds had nearly died and the rollers had dwindled to about fifty feet high. Looking out, they could see mighty waves crashing upon a shore to the east. The volcanic clouds were gone and the sun was shining through a high haze. More islands had appeared on all sides of them. The big mountain to the north (Mt. Ararat) was too far, but the ridge to the east was only a mile or two away. Noah decided to send out some birds, ravens and a dove, to see if any vegetation had yet sprouted for them.

The ravens, strong as they were, never came back. They must have made it to the far-off mountain. But the dove returned to the ark, having found no edible vegetation. The winds, waves, and tides continued to abate, so seven days later (day 270) Noah sent her out again. They watched her bravely fly toward the mountain ridge.

That evening she returned, bearing an olive leaf in her mouth. Then Noah knew that vegetation had survived the flood and was beginning to grow on the surrounding hills. On day 277 he sent her out again, with her mate. This time they did not return. They had found a home.

The sea continued to drop. The winds and waves died. No longer was the ark yanked about by strong currents or rocked by huge rollers. With no moon, even the tides ceased. The sun began to warm their shallow ocean bay. The temperatures in the ark started to rise. Now Ham was praying that it would stay cold until they could leave the ark, as it was so easy with all the animals still hibernating.

On day 312 the ark first grounded. Noah worried that it might tip, but the valley they were in was filled with silt and mud from the scouring action of the flood. The waves rocked the ark back and forth, creating a depression in the mud. Within a week she was stuck fast in mud up to her second floor. After nearly a year of constant pitching and rolling, everyone felt a little dizzy, lurching around and bracing for the next wave that never came.

The waters continued to decrease. By day 350 there was land and mud all around them except for the open sea to the southwest. Now the ark began warming up in earnest. The sun shone through the high volcanic haze, more brightly than at any time since the flood began. Each day the sun beat down and the steady westerly breezes drove off the mist rising from the slowly drying ground.

Temperatures in the ark soared. The animals woke up. Though they'd kept it dark on the lower two floors, Noah and his family heard the commotion. Ham wanted to turn on their lights and go right down to feed them. Noah prayed, "Logos, what shall we do?"

Instantly, Logos appeared – right there beside Noah as if He had been with them the whole time. (Maybe He had.) He was all smiles. "Peace, beloved! You have done well. My will is accomplished in you. I am very pleased! Now go out of the ark, you and your wife, your sons and your son's wives. Bring out the birds, animals, and creeping things with you, so that they may breed abundantly. And you, make homes for yourselves, be fruitful, and replenish the earth, for I have given it to you to rule for Me. I am with you always." With a joyous laugh He vanished from their sight.

They flipped on the lights for the lower decks and went down. The animals were raising a ruckus. They needed to get out. When their friend the dragon saw Noah, he blasted out a blood-curdling, ear-piercing battle scream, as only a great red dragon can do.

The commotion from the other animals instantly ceased. Not a creature alive dares to argue with an angry dragon. The humans picked their way across the crowded, littered deck. Noah and Shem untied the ropes and pushed the door open, where it fell to make a ramp to the ground. The humans jumped aside as the animals, drawn by the sunlight at the door, streamed out across the land. By now it was dry and mostly firm. Grass and shrubs were already sprouting, though it was still a bit sparse. *It was day 370 after the Flood began, our November 4, 3449 BC.*

"Please help me bring out the food," Ham called as the snakes slithered past him. He had a plan to stash the food at strategic places where the hungry animals could gather. Holly and Japheth helped him. Shem and Noah got to work on a sheepfold, moving the corral from the great room. The other ladies, glad to get out of their dank, dingy quarters on the third floor of the ark, found a grassy spot near a spring for a campsite, and began pitching tents.

Meanwhile, animals kept streaming out of the ark. For a whole day and a night they kept coming. Knowing they were feared and hated, the dragons held back, waiting until even the stragglers on the lower deck were out. The next morning they finally emerged and went to stand politely before Noah as he was finishing up his breakfast.

Noah and Ham jumped up to offer their thanks. "You saved our lives..." Noah began with a bow, but the dragon interrupted him. "Logos saved all our lives, through you. We are most grateful, to Him and to you. We will go now to make a home in the hills. But there is one last thing..."

"Yes, my friend?" Noah looked up into the great red dragon's eyes. "What can we do for you?"

"Those who perished were a wicked, violent people. They feared us because of our size and strength, and the fire from our mouths. But in their arrogance, rather than appealing to our intelligence, they thought it great sport to hunt us down and try to slay us with a proud show of courage and bravado. They would not listen to reason. Many of us, and even more of them, died as a result. So you see, our bad reputation is not entirely our fault.

"In generations to come it will happen again. I will teach our descendants to fear you and stay away from you. I urge you to do likewise for us. You called me friend. Friends we are, for friends help one another. Yet our descendants will not be friends, but will live in mortal fear of each other. I am sorry. But until the restoration when Logos sets all things right, that is how it must be. I long for that day. Until then, good-bye. We shall not meet again."

With that, the great dragon turned, spread his mighty wings to full width, and leaped into the sky, heading for the hills. His mate and the two black dragons followed, wings flapping frantically. In the thin, cold air they could barely fly. And because there was less oxygen in the air, the fearsome flame from their throats was mostly smoke.

Noah and his wife Fuchi were sad. They had hoped to establish permanent friendships with the dragons, and perhaps some of the other animals as well. Their four old dogs (animals too had long lives before the Flood), sensed their feelings and pressed up close to comfort them. "Yes, Bruno. Yes, I know, Beggar and Balto. Brighty, thank you too. I know. You'll always be our faithful friends. We're just sorry we don't have more friends among the animals."

The top priority for Noah was to re-establish their close relationship with Logos. The flood waters draining off the ground had cut some deep chasms in the soft sediment that covered the floor of the valley. Here and there rocks lay exposed. Noah gathered some big ones to build an altar to Logos. That evening, as the Sabbath was about to begin, Noah collected a male of each type of clean animal and bird from the ark, slew them, sprinkled their blood for himself and his family, and sacrificed them on his new altar.

Logos flamed hotly above the altar, searing the animals piled upon it. "Father YHWH accepts your offering!" He shouted triumphantly. "You are all cleansed!" Then lifting up His eyes and arms toward the heavens, He cried out, "My Father, it is past. The earth is cleansed. I will never again curse the ground on account of man, even though the intent of his heart is only evil from his youth. I will never again destroy every living thing as I have done. While the earth remains, planting and harvest, warmth and cold, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease, even to the end of the age."

He then looked down and beamed at Noah's gathered family, stretching out His arms toward them. "I bless you all with My love and care, with My wisdom and grace, with My protection and provision. Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth." He stepped down away from the top of the altar, turned, and gestured toward it. "Behold, here is your offering of roasted animals and birds. Take them and eat."

Noah was shocked. First, that their carcasses were not consumed. Second, that Logos was telling him to eat them. Humans had never before tasted meat of any kind. Logos was quick to explain. "When the air was thick with oxygen and the land was endless summer you did not need meat for strength. But now, with colder temperatures, thin air, and scanty provisions, you need the strength that meat provides. Now every living creature shall be food for you. Just as I first gave you the plants, I now give it all to you. Thus the fear of you, the terror of you, shall be on the birds, animals and creeping things, yes, even the dragons and the fish of the sea. Into your hand I give them, to rule, to use as you see fit, to take captive, harness, and train, or to kill and eat. Some will try to kill you. You must dominate them.

"But in this I must warn you: the life is in the blood. You shall never eat the flesh with its life, that is, with its blood, but shall pour out its blood upon the ground before you eat. Only after its life is properly poured out will the flesh of the beast become life and strength to you as you eat.

“This illustrates a principle. Your life-blood is precious to Me. It is holy, sacred, for you are of Me, made in My image according to My likeness, and My life is within you. Whoever sheds man’s blood, I require his own blood to be shed in repayment, whether man or beast. Thus the vile, the murderers, and the violent shall be purged out from among you.” He smiled, breaking the horror of it all. “Now, feast on the lamb. Then go to your beds satisfied and rejoicing in one another. For you are to be fruitful and multiply, and populate the earth abundantly once again.” With a twinkle in His eye, He vanished.

The roast lamb tasted better than anything they had ever eaten. After an evening of feasting and partying, they split up into four tents to enjoy their spouses. That night, four sons were conceived, **Elam** and **Asshur**, twins of Shem and Cherrie; **Cush**, of Ham and Holly; and **Gomer**, of Japheth and Jill. Surely, Logos’ blessing was upon them.

The next morning after they had refreshed themselves in the stream and had their breakfast, Logos again came to them, His eyes shining and His robes blazingly white. “Behold, it is new day!” Knowing about the new lives that had been conceived, He laughed joyously at the thought of new life. “A new day. A new world. A whole new creation! I establish My covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that came with you on the ark, the birds, the cattle, and the beasts of the earth—yes, My covenant extends to all flesh. I vow to you that I shall never again destroy all flesh by the waters of a flood as I have done. This shall be the sign of My covenant; behold.” He pointed.

And there, arcing above the mountain peaks to the northeast, was a beautiful rainbow, the very first they had ever seen. The morning sun shone down brightly upon them. But the winds, which had dwindled to a mere ten knots, had pushed a bank of clouds up against the wall of mountains, where they were sprinkling lightly, causing the rainbow to appear in the mist. Noah and his family all gasped and fell to their knees in worship.

Logos gladly received their worship. He went on to explain, “This bow in the rain is the sign of the covenant which I am making between you and Me and every living creature, for all succeeding generations throughout the age of sin. The bow will appear wherever the sunshine touches the rain. I will see it and remember My covenant. Then I will limit the rain so that the entire earth shall never again be inundated by water. Never again shall the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh. Thus the rainbow is sacred. Whenever or wherever you see it, remember Me and My covenant. Now, Noah, you have a question?”

“Yes, Logos. The meat last night was good! You said it would give us strength. But this morning we woke up still feeling weak. When You told us to eat meat, You called our land before the Flood a land of endless summer and thick air. So is this winter? Will the air always be thin and cold?”

“Winter is near. It will be colder than you expect. That is why I encouraged you to bring so much food aboard the ark. You will not be able to grow much food until summer returns after half a year. You no longer will have constant temperatures, sunshine every day, or ideal conditions for your gardens. There will be many weeks each year which will be too cold to grow much of anything at all.

“The earth has been sorely damaged by its encounter with Mars. The protective covering in the heavens has been lost. This will allow a harmful part of the sunshine through. You must now protect yourselves against too much sunshine. Much of the heat that accumulates in summer will radiate back into space in the winter, so you must prepare for the cold. A lot of earth’s air was lost to space. The thinner air will give less energy for you to work. It will be harder for you. The mountains will make it even harder, as some are steep, rugged, and washed down to the bare rock. I am sorry. The bitter fruit of sin remains even after the earth is wiped clean.”

“This looks like pretty rich soil right here.”

“Yes, Noah. I planned this valley for you to start again. It is good soil. There also are vast fertile plains to the south for you to expand as your families grow. They are covered by water now, but that will recede as you expand. Sadly though, much of the earth has become uninhabitable. Most of the fertile soil now lies useless at the bottom of the oceans. I am sorry. In an age to come, when My Bride is complete, I will reform the earth, level every mountain, fill every valley, put the oceans back below the earth’s crust where they belong, restore the atmosphere, and replace the sun with the Life-giving light of My Presence. Thus all the surface of the earth will become productive once again. It is My Father’s Plan of the Ages for you to fill the earth, the entire earth, and rule it as kings and priests unto Me.”

Earth’s orbit was substantially altered. Its orbital speed dropped from 73 to under 71 kmph. The spin of its now grounded crust increased from a 32 hour day to a 22 hour day, with 406 days per year. It was thankfully 12 million miles closer to Sol, or mankind would not have survived. That first winter was tough, until their bodies acclimated to the cold. They retreated into their apartments in the ark for shelter. A lot of animals returned, too, staying nearby as long as Ham was still laying out food for them.

By spring everyone was outside again, building sturdy houses with stone foundations and wood from the ark. Logos’ promise that there would never again be a world-wide flood gave them confidence in dismantling the ark. There was enough lumber in the ark to last for a thousand years. Within sixteen years after the flood, Noah and Fuchi had 33 grandchildren. Within fifty years a thriving town called **Naxuan** had grown up around the ark. Their valley was protected on the north and east by a crescent ridge of mountains, and to the south it sloped down to the sea. They named the area ‘**Mesha**’ meaning ‘the Landing Place’.

CHAPTER 14 – THE POST-DILUVIAN SOCIETY

Summers were hot on Mesha. As Logos had said, there was scant protection from Sol now that the vapor barrier was gone. But that turned out to be an advantage for some crops, especially grapes. They grew fast and sweet. Noah's vineyard produced abundantly, far more than they could possibly eat. Not wanting them to go to waste, Noah and Fuchi made fresh-squeezed wine from the excess, but with no refrigeration it soon fermented. Of course Noah did not want to waste it. He insisted that it was still good, perhaps better than ever! He imbibed more than was wise.

Well, you know the story. He wound up stone drunk. Fuchi tried to help him back to his bedroom, but he yelled at her and sent her running in tears to Cherrie's house. He then staggered up and down the main street, singing at the top of his lungs, and throwing off all his clothes as he went.

Ham heard, and came running out. At first he was shocked, then curious, then intrigued, and finally, looking around to see if anyone saw him, he followed his father into his bedroom. There Noah lay in a heap on the bed, passed out cold. Ham paused to gaze upon his nakedness, horrid thoughts going through his mind. Noises outside startled him. Fuchi had sent Shem and Japheth to help. Ham hurried out and told them of their father's condition. They respectfully covered him by walking backwards with a blanket across their shoulders so as to not shame him.

When Noah awoke from his drunkenness and found out what his sons had done, he called them all in. "Shem, Japheth, thank you for respecting your old father even in the time of my weakness and drunkenness. I am sorry to have put you in that position. Please forgive me. Learn the wisdom from my failure, and never allow yourselves to be so foolish as to let fermented wine gain control over you.

"Ham, what you did was wrong. You allowed the lusts of your sinful nature to take control of you. Those lusts, left unchecked, were one of the main reasons Logos had to destroy mankind in the flood. Don't you remember?"

"I'm sorry, Dad. I'm sorry. Please forgive me! I won't ever let lust control me again. Please? Can't I be forgiven and cleansed?"

"Yes, my son. I forgive you. And I believe that Logos will forgive you when you confess it to Him at the next Sabbath sacrifice. But I perceive by the Spirit of Prophecy that the evil spirit behind what you have done has passed through you to your sons, especially your fourth son, **Canaan**. In the age to come I see the descendants of Canaan falling under that same curse, that same lustful eye. They shall become a wicked nation. Therefore they shall be a nation of servants, serving in the houses of Shem and Japheth. These are consequences of your sin. I am sorry, Ham. May God have mercy." (Canaan was then 23 years old. This prophecy was literally fulfilled much later when the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan.)

Canaan had been a bit of a rebel anyway. He married three wives, and had many children by them. Most of them followed in his rebellion, amounting to little more than scum of the earth, the unremembered dregs of humanity. But a few founded nations who excelled – *in wickedness!* At the age of 47 Canaan had a son named **Heth**, who became even more a rebel against Logos. Much later, after the Tower of Babel incident, Heth founded the city Hattusa near the Halys River in central Turkey. His progeny grew numerous and very wicked. They were often a thorn in the side of their brothers. They were later known as **Hittites**. One daughter of Heth, **Semiramis**, born in 3336 BC when Heth was 58, has an important but tragic place in history, as we shall see when I get to her story.

It wasn't just Canaan. Ham's firstborn son Cush also turned against Logos. Cush too had numerous children, most of whom were wicked, but his sixth son became the worst. Born in 3391 BC when Cush was 57, young **Enmar** grew big and strong. He was a brilliant leader as well as a mighty hunter, but he became an egotistical tyrant. He also figures all too prominently into our story.

Naxuan, nestled in the natural valley next to the ark, had become a large, thriving town. But the sea level had dropped significantly. They now discovered that Mesha was not just a hill. It was near the top of a major mountain. Also, the 34th and 35th close passes of Mars had shifted the equator slightly to the south. Icy winter winds blew down from the north, where great glaciers were already stretching across the land. Though still hot in summer, winters became cruel. Clearly the mountaintop was not a desirable place to live. Then in 3360 BC, the 36th flyby of Mars caused an unusually heavy rainstorm, turning the slopes of Mount Mesha into mud. The combination of the rain and the typical earthquakes of a Mars flyby caused a huge mudslide. The entire side of the mountain gave way and flowed downhill, carrying the ark and most of the city of Naxuan. The ark traveled down a gradual slope about two miles, dropping from what is now the 7400 foot level to the 6200 foot level. There the ark impaled itself upon a large outcropping of rock and ground to a halt.

Their lovely homes were destroyed. A few simply built a new town called **Seron** at the lower level. Noah and the patriarchs rebuilt their altar and continued to meet Logos there every Sabbath. But that mudslide was the last straw for many of the people of Naxuan. Enmar, who by then was 31 and already famous for his strength and leadership, challenged the rest to go southeast down the mountain with him, and most of them did. In fact, all of Noah's grandchildren (except **Arphaxad** and his family) left with Enmar. They settled beyond the foothills on the **plains of Shinar** (Sumer), founding many towns along the drying seashore where the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers met the Persian Gulf. But Shem and Cherrie, their son Arphaxad and his wife Aimee, Ham and Holly, and Japheth and Jill remained near the ark for forty years with Noah and Fuchi.

Noah was sad that his extended family had split up. But when he questioned Logos about it next Sabbath, Logos responded, “Be happy for them. They are fulfilling My desire that they multiply, spread out across the land, and fill the earth. But teach them to take Me with them! Urge them to remember the Sabbath and to keep My words and My wisdom before them always. And intercede for them. For if they drift away from Me as they drift away from you, they will eventually fall under My adversary’s power and be destroyed.” Noah wholeheartedly agreed.

Shinar, a vast, almost-level plain, soon had a series of settlements filled with the many descendents of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. These villages sprawled all down the river valley, mostly depending on how far the seashore had dried at the time. The land was fertile and warm, so the towns between the two rivers grew rapidly. The various districts were named after their founders, such as the lands of **Acadia** (Accad), **Havilah**, **Elam**, **Asshur** (Assyria), **Calneh**, **Sabtah**, **Raamah**, **Sheba**, and **Dedan**. They spread out peacefully across the valley.

Young Enmar was their leader. His prowess in the hunt and challenges in combat had become legendary. He was nicknamed **Enmar-kar** (Enmar the Hunter). His district was **Uruk** (biblical Erech), at the mouth of the Euphrates at the time. Ambitious Enmar despised Logos in his heart. When he was 67 he devised a scheme to trick people into worshipping him instead. *He would found a new religion.*

The people of Shinar had already turned away from Logos and from the sacrifice. But they still got together each Sabbath for parties, contests of skill and strength, and speeches, just out of tradition. Enmar, who was a great orator, used these times to slowly turn the people away from any love of Logos. To summarize his many speeches: “Logos and Lucifer schemed together to cause the flood. Both were banished from the heavenlies by the almighty eternal God **Elohim**. That is why Logos never comes to us anymore. But almighty Belos [later also called **Bel**], who is the spirit of Elohim, is the true creator, life-giver, and great god of all the earth, and the sustainer and controller of the elements. Belos again had intercourse with **Ninhursag** [Mother Earth] who bore a new son with the divine right to rule. Ahem. It is I. Enmar-kar, the Mighty Hunter!”

Strangely, a small percentage of the apostate people of Shinar believed him. I guess if you make the lie bold and outrageous enough, you’ll always get a few suckers to fall for it. This was a real whopper. Satan, the father of lies, was dancing with glee at how he had taken bits of truth mixed with plausible sounding fantasy, and gained believers. This was the very first false religion. Satan decided to have fun with it. He worked for years to expand and refine it.

As it developed, Elohim was marginalized, and Belos and Ninhursag became the focus, as the god of the heavens and goddess of the earth. Enmar-kar was their spokesman, and their followers became known as the **Army of Bel**.

CHAPTER 15 – ENMAR-KAR AND SEMIRAMIS

Over the next twenty years the followers of Enmar did indeed conquer all the districts of Shinar, under the guise of protecting them from each other and unifying them into one strong nation. They accepted his rule – at first! But he made strict laws, which his army enforced on pain of death. His goal was not just control; he demanded tribute! Tribute became the measure of their worship. Too late, the people learned the sinister meaning of the word ‘tyrant’.

With his growing wealth, Enmar paid his army well. His officers thus stayed loyal to him. All who rejected his false religion kept quiet – or were slain. Thus Enmar-kar became the first emperor by conquest. This was not like Kenan’s ‘good-old-boy’ empire. As a combination king / priest, Enmar-kar took all power to himself. He ruled the world in arrogance and a barely concealed ruthlessness.

Noah was getting old and the winters at Seron were cruel. In 3319 BC Noah and the patriarchs moved with Arphaxad’s family from Seron down to the headwaters of the **Great Zab River**, where they founded a town later called **Aratta**. (They still vacationed up at Seron, and they used materials from the ark.) Aratta was in a warm valley, with a pristine stream and waterfall, a lovely lake, fertile lush gardens and dense forests, with minerals, gemstones, and gold in the ground. It was a veritable Garden of Eden.

When Enmar began demanding tribute from the rest of the world, Noah didn’t worry. Aratta was far away. Many rugged mountains lay between it and the plains of Shinar.

Enmar’s campaign of conquest reached the northernmost district on the Euphrates, which was called **Meskene** (Little Mesha) at the time. Many of the children of Canaan had settled there, including Heth’s family. They were all rebels anyway, from way back. They refused to submit to Enmar’s ‘protection’ or pay him tribute. He slaughtered their leaders and renamed their city Enmar after himself. Heth lost everything. He barely escaped with his life.

The Army of Bel had free rein to carouse, plunder, and rape for the next few days. But one of Enmar’s officers, a young man named **Onnes**, got way more than he expected. Chasing a voluptuous young girl in the center of town, she unexpectedly turned on him and threw herself into his arms, kissing and caressing him with surprising passion and fervor and telling him how much she loved him and wanted to go with him and be his only lover forever.

Yes, he was an idiot for believing it. Though only 23 she was obviously already very ‘experienced’. But when you’re in the middle of an affair, it’s hard to differentiate between wanting a relationship with a person, and just wanting sex. She was Semiramis, daughter of Heth. She was ravishingly beautiful, outwardly. Onnes took her, deserted the army, and fled south with her. Enmar and his campaign went east, crossing over to Nimrud on the Tigris. He went south from there, conquering every city and town on the Tigris.

Fifty miles below Uruk was a lovely new district named **Bactra**. Onnes and Semiramis settled there. They built a thriving business with their inn / brothel, at the mouth of the Euphrates River. It was on a lovely island in the center, and was one of the most beautiful vacation spots on earth. Semiramis entertained their patrons with her spectacular dancing ... and more! By the time Onnes learned that she was sharing her favors with their customers it was too late; their brothel had become famous all over Shinar for her 'services', making him very wealthy. So he let the matter slide. Satan laughed himself silly – it was so easy to get humans to tolerate immorality if it made them rich!

But our story has barely begun. Enmar subdued the Shemites in Assyria and finished his campaign. He now ruled the entire land of Shinar. He was raking in vast amounts of tribute. He decided to use it to further his new religion, by building temples all across the land. Where do you suppose his first temple was to be? Yep, you guessed it.

He and his army crossed the Euphrates to the landing at beautiful Bactra. He quickly rounded up the inhabitants and explained his plan to build his temple on their 'holy' district. This was a high place which overlooked the town, the island where Onnes' brothel was, and the Persian Gulf. Then, spotting his deserted officer in the crowd, Enmar ordered his general to arrest him and his family.

Onnes and Semiramis were caught and brought to Enmar. "Take him and slay him before all the men, as an example of one who deserts my army," Enmar ordered without batting an eye. "I'll keep the girl. I'll dispose of her when I'm finished with her." They knew what that meant!

Well, you know what happened. He expected a fight, and even looked forward to it, for he was a warrior. But instead, Semiramis threw herself into his arms, kissing and caressing him with surprising fervor and passion and telling him how much she loved him and wanted to go with him and be his only lover forever. Thus once again, she succeeded in snookering him into confusing sex with love. They lay together all evening and through the night, enjoying each other like he had never experienced with anyone else, and talking about their future together. He asked about her children. She lied and said she wasn't able to bear children, which suited Enmar just fine. Who wants to mess with kids when you're busy ruling the world? (In reality, she aborted all her children. Who wants to mess with kids when you live for sex?) Finally, overcome with 'love', Enmar swore to make her his queen and religious partner. They plotted together how to pull it off.

They agreed to change her name to **Ishtar** ('brightest star', which later came to mean 'first star of the east' or 'evening star'). She bobbed her hair and dyed it blood red, and sneaked off in the pre-dawn darkness to the river. There she buried her clothes, entered the water (which was warm at that time of year), and swam to the landing place, where she hid among the seaweeds and lily pads.

Enmar arose with the sun and excitedly called all the people together. "I've had a wondrous vision from Belos!" he exclaimed. "He is happy with our choice to build his temple here. He has rewarded me with a wife from the stars to be my queen. Her name is Ishtar, Queen of Heaven. She, like me, was born of a union between Bel and Ninhursag; thus she has the divine right to rule with me forever. Belos told me that Ishtar is at the bottom of the river – right now! I must go now to draw her out." So Enmar waded into the river at the landing, and Ishtar, ravishingly beautiful with seaweed draped seductively over her naked body and white lilies in her bright red hair, rose forth into his arms.

His people were stunned, and totally snookered. With a little help from Satan, they had pulled it off beyond their wildest imaginations. Everyone bowed in fervent worship, proclaiming Enmar and Ishtar as gods and swearing their eternal allegiance. Satan howled with glee. He had not had this much fun since the Flood! All that worship directed at Enmar and Ishtar actually came to him who indwelt them. *The date was September 25, 3302 BC. Ishtar was 34.*

Enmar renamed the town of Bactra **Eridu** ('Paradise'), and designated the 'holy' site he had picked for the temple **Nun-ki**. Construction began. This would be the most spectacular temple ever built. Enmar demanded materials from all the surrounding districts. Gold, silver, gemstones, exotic woods, glistening white stone, granite foundation – nothing was too good for Queen Ishtar.

While Enmar was focused on the temple, the people were focused on his beautiful young queen draped in gold and jewels. They wanted to know what it was like living with the star gods. A great storyteller (and excellent liar), Ishtar spun this load of poppycock about whirling around with the outer planets, kissing the sun, and bathing in the radiant glory of light from the farthest galaxies. All the while, Satan, the father of lies, grew ever-more bold within her, inspiring her to wax eloquent even beyond her own well-developed imagination. The people hung on every word, as she walked seductively among them.

"I am Ishtar, Goddess of Love and Fertility," she heard herself saying. "I inhabit the stars, I guide planets in their courses, and now I am come to you as the love-gift of Bel and Ninhursag. My glory in this frail, tiny body is but a small, dim reflection of my true glory in the heavenlies. Look skyward to Jupiter tonight, for there I shall display myself as I really am – as the Star Queen of Heaven!"

In a trance, Ishtar paused, then spun gracefully around and went to her chambers, wondering where that last thought had come from. But you and I know. Satan had been working to get the Venus / Mercury / Phaeton trinary closer to the plane of the ecliptic. It had been 30 degrees off, where it was almost impossible to arrange a close flyby with the other planets. But after years of effort he had brought it to within 13 degrees. Its orbit crossed that of Jupiter, and this was the night of their closest encounter.

With Satan's demons working frantically, they bent the trinary's orbit down close to Jupiter, and it flew past at about 125,000 miles. One of the four gas giants resulting from the breakup of Titan, Jupiter has an ocean of liquids and gases 15,000 miles thick. Pressures get so great in its depths that hydrogen liquefies or becomes a solid metal. The Venus/Mercury/Phaeton trinary passed by so close it raised colossal ocean tides. Some of Jupiter's ocean was flung out into space and captured by the trinary.

This was visually stunning to the watching Bactrians. They gazed intently as Jupiter, in beautiful slow motion, gave 'birth' to the most glorious star they had ever seen. The three pieces of the exploded night sun Nyx were still molten. They had not been able to cool, since their orbit was too close to Jupiter and Saturn. But at that distant orbit, they had been too small to be seen from earth. Their new oceans changed all that. Being airless, evaporation began immediately, and their long tails streamed out for millions of miles, driven away from Sol by the solar winds. Venus looked like a feathered snake. The smaller planets circling Venus (which we know as Mercury and Phaeton) also had tails which spiraled around Venus' tail, forming in the night sky what we know as the *Caduceus* (*twin snakes entwined around a staff* – see picture after the Preface).

Ishtar was also stunned. But it never occurred to her that she was being manipulated by Satan. Her arrogance knew no bounds. She raised her hands to loudly proclaim the new heavenly body as her own personal representation in the heavens. She declared herself to be *Astarte* (Venus), the middle planet with the longest, most beautiful tail, while those other two lesser heavenly bodies circling her were her jealous twin sisters *Ereshkigal* (Mercury) and *Allatu* (Phaeton). They had once tried to steal her glory in the heavenlies but were now destined to serve as her ladies in waiting. Many more now bowed to the new religion.

Enmar also was surprised, but the pair had begun believing their own lies. At Ishtar's insistence (with Satan's inspiration) the pair now claimed that Belos (singular) and Ninhursag were the spirit part of Elohim (plural), that Mars and Astarte were their heavenly representations, and that Enmar and Ishtar were their earthly counterparts.

Enmar sure fit the image of the mighty 'God of War'. And Ishtar was living up to her billing as the 'Mother Goddess of Love and Fertility'. From there it was but a small step for them to demand worship. Consequences of resisting would certainly be either another catastrophe from Mars or the loss of fertility from Astarte (Venus).

News of the new planet and its religious ramifications spread like wildfire over the plains of Shinar. Donations and work on the new temple grew more fervent than ever. Only one group contributed nothing. Aratta was simply too far away. To get there over the seven mountain passes from Shinar took 16 weeks. It was impassible much of the year, even in summer except for the bravest of souls.

(Remember, their high-tech cars and fliers had all been lost in the Flood.) Aratta was the wealthiest district of all, and to be getting no tribute, and now no contributions for his temple, was a continual aggravation to Enmar.

Ishtar, now secure in her position as his queen, actually stayed faithful to Enmar, for a while. When she conceived his child, she discovered that she really did want children after all. A faithful marriage does encourage family values! She told Enmar that Astarte had healed her womb because the gods wanted them to have children. "What is a fertility goddess with no sons?!" Enmar agreed, also transformed by a faithful relationship for the first time in his life.

Thus in 3298 BC *Ninyas* was born. He grew up to rule the conquered city of *Nineveh*. Two years later a second son came, named *Agade*, after the lavish jewelled crown that Enmar had made for Ishtar. He grew up to become ruler of *Accad* and the *Acadian* race. They then had two girls, *Ninlil* and *Ellil*. *Ninlil* was later worshiped as the consort to *Enlil* (god of the air), and *Ellil* was worshiped as the grain goddess of Ishtar's ever-evolving religion. Their third son was *Kalakh*, who became ruler of the *Chaldeans*. But their fourth son *Lugalbanda* became Enmar's favorite. He was born in 3289 BC when Enmar was 102. Enmar determined to groom Prince Lugalbanda as his successor, to become the emperor at his capital city of Uruk, fifty miles northwest of the so-called 'paradise' at Eridu.

Aratta was the real paradise. They had not wasted their efforts bickering amongst themselves as had the clans at Shinar, and they were exceedingly wealthy. In 3280 BC Enmar got tired of waiting for their tribute. He sent his envoy to Aratta with a decree demanding 'contributions' for the temple, 'or else'. They refused, laughing at Enmar's claim to godhood. Enmar demanded tribute again, more sternly, the next year. They continued to laugh at him.

After ten years of threatening notes to Aratta, Enmar was fed up. He needed gold, jewels, and exotic woods to finish the temple. They were scarce on the Plains of Shinar. He headed out with his army in 3270 BC. He brought Lugalbanda, though only 19, to learn the joy of conquest. They timed their offensive for the 39th close pass of Mars, as the 'god of war' loved to do. Enmar didn't mince words. He rode up to his great-grandfather Noah and made his demands: gold, silver, gemstones, exotic woods, and lots of it. He sat on his war-stallion trying to look ferocious and god-like, as Mars approached and the ground shook.

Old Man Noah chuckled. Behind him, Shem and Ham laughed out loud. Their fearlessness unnerved Enmar. He was about to order his army to begin the slaughter, when Noah began to speak. "Your fake religion holds no power here. And your false god Mars can do us no harm, but by Logos' command. For we know and serve Him here. He has bade us answer you thus: 'Freely take whatever you want, of anything you find here. But know that all you take will become a curse to you and those who serve you.'"

Noah and the patriarchs stood there, smiling, with Arphaxad's children watching on silently. Enmar tried to give the order for the slaughter, but he just couldn't get it out. *These peaceful, defenseless people are his own kin!* Now where did that thought come from? He was a warrior. He thought nothing of killing his own mother. He was the god of war. He would force these foolish people to bow to him. They would become his slaves and work the rest of their miserable lives bringing him tribute. Again he opened his mouth to give the order, but nothing came out. He finally realized the truth. He did indeed have no power here.

But he was beginning to lose face in front of his own army, and his son. He'd better cut his losses, take what he could get, and leave. *Hmm... He had already been given permission to take whatever he wanted.* His face red, he ordered Noah to tell his grandchildren to bring all their gold, silver, jewels, and hard-woods. He did, much to Enmar's surprise, and soon a big pile of riches was before him. "That's more like it!" he barked, as he ordered his army to pack it all up and start carting it away. "Every year at about this time, you shall provide an equal amount for my men to take, or you will all be destroyed."

He turned to go, but Noah called out after him, loud enough for his army to hear. "I have one more thing to give you, my brother, something of far more value than all you have taken." Enmar spun around. For a time dead silence reigned in the valley. Noah waited, praying. *Was Enmar ready to hear?* "Well, okay. What is it?" he spluttered.

"The Word of Logos." Noah's voice held an edge like fine steel. "Because you have valued worldly fame, power, riches, and pleasures before Logos and His precious ones, you will lose your wife, this your favorite son [he pointed at Lugalbanda], and finally, if you still will not repent, your own life." Lugalbanda, sitting on a white horse beside his father, shuddered. His face grew white, and everyone could see that at least he had heard and believed Noah.

"Poppycok! We can take care of ourselves. Come along, son. We've got a temple to build." Enmar hurried Prince Lugalbanda off before he had a chance to repent.

Enmar completed his spectacular temple at Nun-ki in Eridu in 3258 BC. It had taken forty-two years to build. He dubbed it **E-anna** (house of heaven). He also gave his wife Ishtar a new name: Inanna (born of the stars, great lady of An, god of heaven). He had a huge ceremony and celebration. More than ten thousand people came from all over Shinar and remained for weeks eating, drinking, and carousing. Finally, when they were satisfied, he sent them home with a solemn presentation. "I am your god of war. If you dare to disobey me, I shall send wrath and destruction upon you from Mars. But my wife, Ishtar Inanna, is your goddess of love, fertility, health, and prosperity. I bow to her..." he made a big show of bowing down to the ground in front of her. "And I pledge my life to protect and honor her." Here he stood again and faced the people.

"If you love and worship her and her children, I will protect you and you shall prosper. If you do not, you shall die, for she is the Queen of Heaven, and not even the rain can fall without her permission." He then presented the temple to her, saying, "Ishtar, I give you this temple as a token of my love and worship." And again he bowed.

Now, this was unthinkable. No one had ever seen big, arrogant, ruthless King Enmar bow to anyone before. But following his encounter with Noah at Aratta, Enmar had grown tired of Ishtar's religious charades and impossible sexual demands. His goal was to turn over their religion to her completely, so he could return to his headquarters in Uruk to renew his building campaign. Ishtar had become cold to Enmar anyway. All this worship and adoration just went to her head. She had no comprehension of the word 'love' and was no longer remaining faithful to Enmar. He was losing her, just as Noah had warned. Ishtar gladly accepted his worship, his temple, and his religion.

Enmar took their sons with him to begin his building program. Over the next fifty years he built a temple and a capitol building in each district he had conquered. He put his sons Kalakh and Ninyas in charge of the two largest Shemite cities in Assyria, which he renamed **Calah** and **Nineveh**. He assigned his oldest, Agade, to rule the sons of Japheth from **Tubal**, which he renamed **Accad**. The other cities in the land were governed by their own kings who had submitted to him. But his youngest son, Lugalbanda, stayed with him to become his successor. He would not lose his favorite son! He became his closest confidant and spy, even spying on Ishtar and reporting back to Enmar.

With Enmar gone, Queen Ishtar gathered a cadre of sex perverts around her as priests of her religion, and turned her new temple into little more than a tavern / brothel. So when her people came to 'worship', they also got liquor, psychedelic drugs, and sex with her temple prostitutes.

One of her early temple prostitutes was a little known man who is mentioned only once in the Bible (Luke 3:36). He was **Cainan**, son of Arphaxad son of Shem. (This is not Canaan, son of Ham.) The rest of Arphaxad's family were not fooled by Ishtar's religion. So they were shocked when Cainan left Aratta to join Ishtar in 3257 BC at the age of 55. They agreed to blot out his name from the family heritage. This becomes important later, since Cainan is in the line of Father Abraham. But the names of his descendants to the third generation are still missing from the family lineage. In the end, Cainan repented, and his fourth generation grandson **Shelah** was restored to the family tree.

Just before the 40th close pass of Mars, Ishtar called the people of Shinar together to sacrifice to Mars and Astarte for protection. The priests took a yearling ram (male lamb) and tore it limb from limb. Each priest ate a piece raw and drank some of its blood. Ishtar also drank its blood and poured some on her hair, again dying it blood red as when she had risen out of the water at the landing at Bactra.

This became an annual tradition at Nun-ki. For some reason, Ishtar loved to drink the fresh, raw blood. Logos' command to Noah to never eat the flesh with its blood was ignored. It was Satan the adversary within her, inspiring her. He, too, loves the blood. He overheard Logos say to Noah that the life is in the blood, and he now believes that the more blood he drinks, the more powerful he will get.

That 40th close pass of Mars in 3240 BC did no damage. All the people of Shinar were awed. Ishtar swore it was her blood sacrifice that protected them. Of course Satan and his demons howled with glee at the trick they had pulled on humanity. This false religion thing was even more fun than tormenting them with Mars. Although he still loved their terror, he enjoyed their willing worship even more.

In 3210 BC, the 41st flyby of Mars did a little damage. But Ishtar's temple at Nun-ki, like all of Enmar's buildings, was made to be earthquake-proof and survived unscathed.

However, Ham's son Canaan (not Cainan), one of Enmar's oldest and most ruthless generals, died in the quake. His city of **Mari** (dedicated to Mars), near the Urartu foothills on the Euphrates River, was filled with his extended family, arranged by clans for many miles around. They swore that Canaan was cursed because he had not gone down to Eridu for the annual sacrifice. At first they all lived near Mari. Much later they degenerated into rival tribes now called **Hittites, Hivites, Arkites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites** – all Canaanites, all bickering over the land and its resources. After Canaan's death, they became even more fervently committed to idolatry and to Ishtar's religion and her temple sacrifices at Eridu.

Enmar's building program was finally finished. He had earthquake-proof temples and capitol buildings in every district of Shinar. The entire inhabited world was under his control. Even Aratta was now paying tribute. But he was not satisfied. For one thing, his affair with Ishtar had turned sour. Unfaithfulness begets bitterness, distrust, and anger, as he now learned firsthand. Ishtar's wholesale plunge into immorality of all kinds had marred her beauty in his eyes. He lost all desire for her. Then there was his favorite son, Prince Lugalbanda. He had been visiting Nun-ki often, to spy on Ishtar for him. But now Ishtar was perverting him, too! He became immersed in her moral perversions. In 3208 BC Lugalbanda left Enmar for good, to join his mother at her temple.

Enmar finally realized what he should have known all along – that Ishtar had never loved him – she only loved herself and her own power and perverted pleasures. He never should have given her the temple. He thought briefly about just killing her, but no, they had worked too hard in building up their 'god and goddess' image. *Well, he could certainly compete with her on that score!* Astarte was still too far away to do anything but look pretty, but his planet Mars came close, terrifyingly close.

Thus Enmar-kar began his most ambitious building program of all, his monument to Mars. It would be huge, with an astronomical laboratory on top so he could predict exactly when, where, and how close Mars would next pass. It would be waterproof, with enough room inside to keep his loyal subjects safe in case of another flood. It would be a representation of the heavenly bodies, a temple to Mars (as E-anna at Nun-ki was a temple to Astarte) to give him more power and prestige over the people. He selected a nice site seven miles north of Eridu, east of the Euphrates. He called it **Bab-ilu**, Gate of God. It was farther from the Persian Gulf, on a hill of solid sandstone. *His temple will tower above Ishtar's!* He decided to announce his plans when he joined Ishtar at Nun-ki at her next annual festival.

The people were surprised and pleased to see Enmar there with Ishtar, for the first time since her ram sacrifices had begun. They joyfully shouted his praise, bowed, and worshiped the couple. Enmar stood regally and received their worship, surprised at how many people were there. With Ishtar, this religion stuff of his had really taken off! These people weren't being coerced; they really loved to come here to Nun-ki and worship. But the ram sacrifice disgusted him. Eating the meat raw, drinking the blood, and then Ishtar dunking her hair into it! He preferred his meat roasted over an open flame. Lugalbanda had warned him about this, but it was worse than he had imagined.

Finally his turn to speak came. He raised his hands for silence. "Your worship is acceptable to Bel and Ninhursag, to Mars and Astarte, and to myself and Ishtar," he began, pausing for dramatic effect. He was still a great orator. The people all bowed with their faces to the ground. "We in turn have kept you safe and prospered you these last 100 years. But we have another blessing for you, beyond anything you have ever known. This temple at Nun-ki to Astarte and Ishtar..." he turned and bowed to her with a flourish, "... has been your greatest joy and pleasure. Gathering here has unified your purpose and made you strong. It has taught you how to live and how to love. Now we shall build an even greater temple for you – a temple to the high god Belos! A temple where everyone can gather for protection in the event of storm or earthquake or flood. A temple where your worship shall reach to the heavens and control the courses of the planets. A temple where Mars the god of war will finally be satisfied and will harm you no more forever!" The shouts of all the people roared across the plains, and he knew he had reached them. Ishtar gave Enmar a steely glare, as if to ask, *Just what are you trying to pull here?* but he didn't care. The moment passed. They both put their smiling faces back on, gave each other a royal hug and kiss, and the charades went on.

I'm sorry to have to relate what follows, but it happened and it is crucial to our story. The depth of wickedness at Nun-ki had gotten worse than Enmar had ever imagined. As is always the case when a door is opened to immorality, Satan came in like a flood, catching Enmar unprepared.

The time arrived for the orgy. Enmar knew to expect it. Lugalbanda had described it in detail, but somehow he had not realized that he would have to participate. He had no more sexual desire for Ishtar. But she began her seductive dance, and he became entranced. She whirled around – he had no idea that she had gotten so good at this – throwing off her clothes one by one to the throbbing beat of the drums – the music swelled, the flutes trilled, the trumpets blared, and there she was, dressed in nothing but a crown and a few strings of jewels flashing around her, undulating sensuously in front of him. Her every move was designed to inflame his passions.

One part of him was disgusted – one part was fascinated – then all of him was swept away by... he knew not what. (We know it as demons of sensuality and seduction.) Enmar lost all self-control and found himself caught up in the mad dance, throwing off his own clothes and debasing himself right up there in front of the delighted crowds.

The people roared themselves into a frenzy, and soon they all were following the example in front of them. The fermented wine flowed freely. The drugs were available in abundance. The orgy continued through the night. When the sun arose it revealed the ‘worshippers’ lying naked all over the ground in heaps of sweaty bodies.

And there was Lugalbanda, his favorite son, right in the middle of it; why, he was one of the leaders! He expected to rule here at Nun-ki with his mother, instead of at Uruk. Enmar realized that the first two parts of Noah’s prophecy were now fulfilled. Finally awakened to what he had done, Enmar fled in embarrassment, disgust, and anger. *He would never again visit Ishtar’s temple!* He went to work on the new temple, focusing all his efforts on getting it built in 28 years, in time for the next close Mars flyby.

All the people worshiped him. They had loved his little exhibition at Nun-ki, and they worked willingly with him, sending a rotating delegation from each district so he had a constant supply of laborers. They really ate up this religion stuff, Enmar realized with chagrin. He probably shouldn’t be so bitter at Ishtar. She had done him a favor at that orgy. The people were unified in purpose as never before. They had believed his speech! They were actually expecting to be protected and blessed by this new temple. The only ones that never sent any people to work on his new temple were those renegades at Aratta, but at least now his annual envoy was bringing back their ‘contributions’ for it.

Satan came to the throne room of the Most High. He confronted Logos and crowed, “For almost 1900 years You have had Your little handful of people, while I have totally controlled the vast majority of humanity. Now You have Aratta, while I have the willing worship of the entire rest of the world. Looks like I have won. I don’t even have to force anyone to worship me – they love to serve me, gladly, bowing and shouting out my praises. I am the greatest god in the universe. Even Aratta pays me tribute!”

After letting him crow for a while, Logos spoke softly, “I am glad that you have decided to bless and prosper them instead of tormenting them with Mars. Thank you. My faithful saints at Aratta also appreciate the blessings. The tribute they are forced to give is small, in truth, worthless in comparison. I return far more than what you take.”

Satan was shocked, and fled the throne room. He was not blessing or prospering anyone. Or was he? He stopped and thought about it. Yes, he had kept Mars from coming too close these last two times, but not to bless them. He only wanted to trick them into believing that it was their sacrifice and worship to him that kept them safe. He was just making them all believe his new religion. He suddenly realized that in the eight close passes of Mars since the flood, there had been very little damage, anywhere. All of mankind had flourished abundantly as a result. He ground his teeth in anger. Bless them indeed! He would show Logos who was really in charge here!

Back at Nun-ki, things were not going so well for Ishtar. Lugalbanda was a spoiled brat, and now that he was of age, he wanted to run things. By the time he was 94, he had become a real problem for Ishtar. He was claiming to be **Chronos** (which we know as Saturn), most glorious of all the planets, director of the planetary symphony. He was the timekeeper, around which all events revolved. Even Mars and Astarte bowed to his wishes and moved only at his command. Ishtar was appalled! He was making these grandiose claims for himself at the public sacrifices, and without even consulting her. What would he claim next?

But ever-scheming, self-centered Ishtar was not to be outdone. She thought of a plan which would deal with Lugalbanda, get revenge at Enmar for deserting her, and further her own power and glory. Forty weeks before the winter solstice sacrifice, she picked a handsome young man, seduced him, and then had him killed, as she had often done before. (Cainan did the dirty work, for which he was made a high priest.) This time, she didn’t abort her baby. She was very large by the winter solstice, and didn’t come out in public, encouraging Lugalbanda to lead the whole thing (which he was happy to do, as his ego knew no bounds). The people loved him – he also had gotten very good at whipping everyone into a frenzy at the orgy.

Then when everyone was stinking drunk and stoned out of their gourds, lying in heaps all over the floor, Ishtar came out from her hiding place. She roused Cainan. “The sacrifice! The sacrifice! You forgot to do the sacrifice! Astarte will not be pleased if you don’t do the sacrifice.” She half led, half towed her new high priest over to where Lugalbanda had passed out on the floor. “Here is the ram. Tear him apart so we can all drink the blood!”

Those drug-crazed priests didn’t know the difference. They tore Lugalbanda’s naked body limb from limb, ate his flesh, and drank his blood. Ishtar snatched his royal robe and went back into hiding, awaiting her new baby’s birth.

Ishtar's baby came four days later, on our December 25, 3195 BC. (The world still celebrates his birth, but it is now called Christmas.) Ishtar named him **Damu** (from 'Dam', meaning blood, Ishtar's second-favorite word). She also used the endearing nickname **Dumuzi**. Ishtar kept herself hidden, enjoying mothering for a change (she was 141 and it had been over 90 years since she had last nursed a child). But she had big plans for the spring equinox (our Easter).

She proclaimed that Lugalbanda had ascended into Chronos as he had promised, and would return if everyone gathered together at the spring equinox to worship him. He had never actually said anything of the kind, but Ishtar had learned long before that if you make a lie bold enough most people will believe it.

Sure enough, they were all gathered at Nun-ki well before dawn on the appointed day. Ishtar had her priests organize them in ranks just outside the temple, facing east, to lead them in worship. It was a huge crowd, the biggest yet. They bowed and worshiped for over an hour, as the sun slowly rose behind the ancient Zagros Mountains. Then at the right moment, with the sun's rays streaming through a mountain pass, Cainan shouted, "Behold! Your god comes to you on the rays of the sun!" He pointed first to the sun, then traced the alleged 'pregnant' ray with his finger up overhead and around back to the temple.

The people all turned to look, and there at the top of the temple (the observatory / throne room), clothed in her very finest, with all her own jewels and the jewels and gold of the temple flashing the brilliance of the morning sun, was lovely Ishtar, holding up her new infant. Dumuzi was draped with the royal robe which Ishtar had rescued when Lugalbanda was slain. At twelve weeks old, Dumuzi was now a chubby bouncing baby. Ishtar held him high, then pulled apart her blouse to nurse him. He sucked with great gusto, holding Ishtar's breast with both hands. The pair was spectacularly beautiful, just like what you see in the ancient 'Madonna and Child' paintings.

The people all gasped and fell to their knees in worship. Ishtar had staged it well, and they were totally snookered. They knew instantly that Dumuzi was Lugalbanda, just reincarnated from Chronos through the rays of the sun.

Ishtar gave her speech anyway. She claimed to be the madonna, the mother goddess, now elevated to be forever a virgin by Astarte the goddess of love and fertility. This was her immaculate conception, direct from the high god Belos through the rays of the sun. Her son was the long-promised redeemer, the messiah, savior of the world, the creator incarnate, high god become flesh. He had humbled himself to become a baby so he could experience human weaknesses, identifying with our trials and sorrows in order to comfort us and lift us up. His new name, Dumuzi, spoke of his blood cleansing us from sin. She went on and on, until Satan, who was inspiring her, was laughing so hard he could no longer keep her going.

Enmar, of course, heard about his favorite son's so-called ascension to Chronos and reincarnation as Dumuzi, but he was too busy with his own temple to bother. He had begun to despise Ishtar in his heart, and nothing she did surprised him anymore. For sure he was not snookered. He knew where her babies came from. It certainly was not him. Nor was he surprised three years later when she had another 'immaculate conception'. She named this new bastard **Amalek** (founder of the infamous **Amalekites**), named after 'Amal', a word meaning toil or travail; Ishtar promised Amalek would take our travail upon himself.

Enmar was not deceived by this false religion nonsense. It was great for controlling the people; that was all he cared about. He still went through the charades, just to keep the people's allegiance. Once you become a god, it's a bit hard to escape. His temple at Bab-ilu proceeded rapidly toward its scheduled completion date of October 21, 3180 BC.

The appointed time came. Satan, still angry after his encounter with Logos, was determined to show he had not gotten soft. Blessing indeed! He would show Logos how he could achieve both the spread of his false religion and his favorite sport: tormenting his subjects! He had all his demons working hard to aim Mars directly over Enmar's new temple. This will be the closest pass since the Flood!

Enmar had long anticipated this moment. It was not just to dedicate his temple; it was to establish himself as the world's supreme emperor. He sent orders out all across the land: at the time of the annual ram sacrifice everyone, young or old, male or female, must come to his temple at Bab-ilu instead of to Nun-ki. The morning after the orgy he would instruct them on the worship he expected for himself, Mars, and the high god Belos. Even Ishtar herself was commanded to come and pay homage.

His gold-covered temple observatory at the top of the tower was not quite finished. He still had plans to lavishly adorn it with jewels, but those rebels at Aratta had denied him their last year's tribute. *He would deal with them later.* The morning after the orgy, Mars grew huge in the sky. Enmar donned his most resplendent robes and shouted to the crowds. He told them that Mars was pleased they had come. He would pass directly overhead. He was coming very close. He would shake the earth with a terrible quake to show his power and glory. He would slay all those who despised him in their hearts, and spare only those who truly worshiped him. This was their moment of decision. They must swear in their hearts to be forever true, forever loyal to Mars, and thus be spared from his wrath.

His speech went over pretty well, though it would have been better if Satan had not gotten into a laughing fit at seeing all of mankind kneeling in fear and worship before him. Ishtar was not fooled. She could see exactly what was going on, but there was not a blessed thing she could do about it. She put on a show of bowing to Mars, setting the example for her many admirers, but at some distance.

King Enmar stood regally, arms uplifted, as Mars approached. Fearless and filled with arrogance, he knew Mars could not, would not dare, harm him or his tower. (That's the trouble with being inspired by Satan; you begin to believe your own lies.) His temple was completely earthquake-proof. It was made of fire hardened brick, set in bitumen-based mortar to give it the flexibility and strength to withstand humongous quakes. It was a perfect pyramid, a 288 feet wide square base and 288 feet high.

Mars did indeed come directly over the temple. A huge bolt of lightning from the magneto-head of Mars went to the highest and most conductive point in the land: the golden observatory! Enmar was instantly fried, along with the entire top third of his fabulous tower. I guess he had not 'worshiped Mars in his heart' fervently enough.

The earth quaked violently for hours. Enmar had not fully understood the sandstone he had built on. It seemed solid enough, but it was just sediment from the Flood, compacted by 270 years of drying and settling. His tower was very heavy, and as the ground liquefied by the hours of shaking, the tower slowly sank nearly 100 feet into it. Only the middle 90 feet remained, a tilted and burned out shell, as a reminder of the consequences of serving Satan.

But Satan was not yet finished. All the people of the land lay facedown in front of the tower, crying in fear to Mars to spare them. This was Satan's greatest triumph! To have them love, worship, and pray to him even as he tormented and destroyed them! He had never had this much fun, no, not even at the Flood.

The air was warm and very dry. The static electricity got severe from the charging effects of the two planets passing so close to each other. Remember that the magnetic fields of the planets were much greater then than they are now. Nowadays a static buildup in the air is not particularly dangerous, but this was orders of magnitude beyond what we can even imagine. Everything began to flicker and glow. Sparks flew between things – and between people. Every brain began to buzz. Every nerve tingled. Every muscle twitched and convulsed. Terror, sheer stark terror, is a totally inadequate word to describe these poor people. They certainly would have committed suicide, to the last one, if they could have gotten their muscles to obey them. Every eye was filled with random multi-colored flashes of light. The screams from every throat went unheard, for the high-frequency squeals in every ear drowned out everything else. Their breathing became sporadic and jerky, if it happened at all. Every heart raced out of control as its internal pacemaker exceeded ultimate overload.

Even Ishtar was on her face, groveling in the dirt before Mars, with Cainan and her beloved 15-year-old Dumuzi both clawing the ground beside her. But nobody saw them, as each was consumed in his own private hell. Angels in the heavenlies held their breaths, watching the writhing bodies and wondering if anyone at all could survive.

But not at Aratta. God's saints there had disobeyed Enmar's direct orders. They had sent away his envoy empty-handed and flat refused to attend his grand temple dedication. They were calmly tending their gardens in their pristine valley, joyfully worshiping their Creator and thanking Him for finally being set free from the burden of supplying Enmar with all that stuff for his temple.

Mars passed. The ground lay still. The static electricity around Enmar's temple dissipated. Normal breathing and heartbeat was restored. Eyesight, hearing, and muscle function slowly returned. As the buzz in their brains reduced to a bearable level, people began to sit up and look around. They tried calling out to each other, but their brains' speech centers had been fried, and all that came out was a jumble of random noises. So they sadly went about the business of retraining their muscles to obey them, and finding their friends and relatives among the jumble of bodies at the base of the destroyed tower.

Many had died. But surprisingly, the majority had not. Satan was having way too much fun. This speech thing, for example. He had not anticipated that. He told his demons to inspire different kinds of sounds in each person so there would be no hope of communication. He himself could hardly contain his laughter as people called to each other but all that came out was unintelligible gobbledygook. It was a riot! They kept it up for weeks, as people found their surviving relatives and returned to their collapsed homes.

Of course this totally disrupted the entire culture – commerce and government are simply not possible with no communication. Organizations or gatherings of any kind couldn't happen. Life on the plains of Shinar got really scary for a while as any semblance of law and order broke down and the strong got whatever they wanted by preying on the weak.

Many families just left Shinar entirely, to rebuild their homes and relearn how to communicate elsewhere. Some of the families of **Shem** remained near the lands of Assyria and Shinar, intermixing with Japheth's descendants in the north or with **Ham**'s descendants in the west and south; the rest went east, spreading out into India, Indochina and on out to the Orient. The families of Ham traveled south-west or southeast, settling in Canaan, Arabia, South Egypt, North Africa, Ethiopia, as far south as the Congo Basin. They were the greatest travelers, eventually filling Africa and reaching the Americas. **Japheth's** son Madai traveled east to Persia. The rest of his sons went north and north-west into Europe and Russia, and west into Turkey. There they each settled to develop a new language and culture.

Noah, the patriarchs, and Arphaxad and Aimee and their family who had stayed at Aratta had grown numerous and prosperous, unharmed by the catastrophe. They alone had retained the original language, ancient **Hebrew**, the only language unaffected by the catastrophe. They stayed where they were, protected by a thick covering of angels.

Satan had the audacity to again approach the throne room of the Most High. He came laughing and taunting, boasting of his success in killing so many, and in confusing the languages of all the rest to basically wipe out all the gains that civilization had accomplished since the Flood. He laughed so hard that he nearly fell over while retelling of the terrors he caused, even while everyone was willingly worshiping himself! Then he gloated about how easy it was to split up all of mankind into competing language groups and send them fleeing off in every direction.

Logos patiently listened until he ran down, then spoke quietly. "Thank you, My beloved adversary, for sparing so many lives. You could have killed everyone at Bab-ilu. You had occasion, for they granted you permission at Enmar's orgy. I am grateful for those you chose to spare. Some may yet return to serve Me. And thank you also for splitting them up into language groups for Me. Unified under Enmar they were getting too arrogant, too self-sufficient – I was beginning to think that no evil would be beneath them. I am grateful for your service to Me in these things."

"You've got to be kidding! You wanted them split up?" Satan forgot to close his mouth.

"I don't kid, Lucifer. If they had remained unified like that they all may have died in their gross immorality."

"You thank me when I bless and prosper them. You thank me when I torment them and split them up. I don't understand You at all!" Satan fumed over his shoulder as he turned away. He was miffed, realizing that he had been tricked into doing what Logos had wanted all along. His victory taunt was spoiled. He never seemed to remember that it's impossible to taunt one who will not be taunted.

Arphaxad and Aimee prayed daily for their rebellious son Cainan. They didn't know whether he had lived or died in the catastrophe. In fact, he and his family had all lived; being still loyal to Ishtar, they had been well away when Enmar's tower was destroyed. Much subdued, they returned to Nun-ki and helped Ishtar restore her religion.

Ishtar had to do some quick thinking. Being the sharp schemer and brilliant leader that she was, it wasn't long before she had established her new tongue as the official language, developed a crude form of writing it, and taught it to those who still followed her. We know it as ancient **Sumerian**. (In the confusion, 'Shinar' became 'Sumer'.)

But Ishtar had a problem. Everyone had seen Enmar zapped by Mars. Their joint religion was in jeopardy. As she was teaching her language to those who had remained loyal, she explained that Enmar was not dead – oh no! Gods don't die! He had merely ascended into Mars where he ruled from afar. Someday she, too, would return to the heavenlies, but in the meantime she must have the loyalty of all the people so that their civilization wouldn't be lost. Again, surprisingly, some people believed her and stayed in Shinar, continuing to worship her and Damu at E-Anna.

CHAPTER 16 – ISHTAR AND DUMUZI

Those who left Ishtar started their own language groups, but most of them retained more or less the form and imagery of her religion. This tended to spread Madonna and Child cults all around the world. About the only ones who did NOT take any form of her religion were the descendants of **Madai** son of Japheth who traveled to Persia and India, and **Seni** son of Canaan who went to the Far East. They rejected Ishtar's religion, substituting instead the veneration of Old Man Noah (who is **Vishnu** in the ancient Hindu religion and **Nu Wa** in Chinese.)

One group of Canaan's descendants migrated west. Two years after Enmar's temple catastrophe they founded **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** in the **Jordan River valley**, in what became known as the land of **Canaan**. They will figure into our story later. For now all you need to know is that they took with them all of Ishtar's immorality, and then some.

Ham's children **Cush**, **Mizraim**, and **Phut** built ships and took their families to Africa. Mizraim reached **Misru** (upper Egypt) in the fourth year after the catastrophe. Sea levels were much higher then, so lower (north) Egypt was still under water. There were no deserts in Egypt then; they found lush and fertile, well-watered land. By 3170 BC Mizraim's new civilization was flourishing with a new language and simple pictograph writing, which we know as ancient **Egyptian**. Cush moved farther south to found the **Nubian** race, and some of these traveled even farther south, reaching to Australia. Phut, on the other hand, sailed west with his family along the coast to found the **Pitu (Berber)** race. After the 44th flyby of Mars in 3120 BC the Pitu split up. One group sailed to North America. (It was closer then.) They settled on the Oklahoma seacoast in 3113 BC to found the **Tamoanchan (Olmec-Nahua)** culture. These families will figure into our story later.

Back in Shinar (Sumer, but I'll keep using Shinar to be consistent), Ishtar had successfully rallied the Sumerians around her. With Cainan's help, she re-established her Madonna and Child cult at Nun-ki. Surprisingly, her temple had withstood the earthquakes! Ishtar swore that was a vindication of her religion. The people believed her.

Everyone loved young Dumuzi, and he loved everyone. Especially his mother Ishtar. His relationship with her developed into a complex combination of love, worship, submission, and incestual desire, in which he supported her immoral games wholeheartedly. Damu loved to dance with Ishtar, especially at the annual orgy. He was more humble than Lugalbanda had been. He allowed Ishtar to make all the bold claims of god-hood for him while he just smiled and nodded happily. Now far more than just being Lugalbanda returned from Chronos, Ishtar claimed that Damu was a double reincarnation, a love gift from Enmar himself, Mars to Chronos! She finally had everything she wanted: an adoring son/consort, wealth, worship, control, and power. She loved it, as did Satan who inspired her.

Then on February 14, 3105 BC, disaster struck. Damu (who was only ninety years old) was out hunting wild boar, and got careless. He was invincible, but the boar who gored him didn't know that. Ishtar was beside herself with grief and rage. This was the first person in her life that she had ever actually loved, in the true sense of the word 'love'. But as I said, gods don't die, and Damu / Dumuzi now had top billing as the chief male god in her ever-growing pantheon. So she had to think of something.

It took her two weeks to dispose of the body and call all the people together. She finally had a plan. They gathered at the base of the temple at Nun-ki, a joyous, boisterous crowd. Visiting E-Anna was the highlight of their lives. Then Ishtar came out, dressed in black, without Dumuzi. No jewels sparkled, no gold shone, and no makeup accented her face with crimson. At the age of 231, for the first time in her life, Ishtar felt, and looked, old and tired.

The crowd grew silent. They were shocked. It was the first time they had ever seen the lighthearted, vivacious Ishtar weeping. Her head and shoulders were bowed and her hands folded tightly over her bosom. The silence grew until the sound of her sobs was all that could be heard. Even the birds and crickets seemed hushed for her.

Finally she spoke. "Thank you for coming to share my grief," she said. "You are true friends, every one. Dumuzi my beloved, my dearest treasure, is gone. He was too good, too perfect, too holy to remain among men, and the gods have called him back to Chronos." Here she paused to weep awhile before continuing. The crowd responded with weeping and wailing, for they all loved him too.

"Yes, weep with me for him, for I miss him so much my heart is breaking. But hear this, and hear it well." She paused for dramatic effect, her natural gift for oratory kicking in. "He spoke with me at length before he left..." In fact, Damu had died in Ishtar's arms a bloody mess, with nothing but screams and gurgles in his throat and the terror of death in his eyes. But Ishtar was an exceptionally good liar with centuries of experience. "And he told me that he is very aware of his responsibilities here as your god of prosperity and healthy births, your god of wine, drugs, and celebrations, your god of fishing, hunting, and sheep herding, your god of vegetation and a bountiful harvest, and now [this was the new one] your god of spring.

"His spirit now soars in the heavens with the gods, but will return here to you each year in the spring if you will do two things. First, weep and fast for him for forty days and nights. The fast must not be a heavy burden – just skip one meal a day, or fast from meats or desserts or from a favorite food. Then gather back here on the spring equinox just before dawn, and we shall welcome him back on the rays of the rising sun, bringing fresh new life to all things. He has now become Earth's Pangenitor! We will receive him with joyous worship and a grand celebration and feast, and all will be well again. Will you do that for Dumuzi?"

The people shouted their affirmative, and thus began what we know as the tradition of **Lent**, which has been held every year since 3105 BC. Following the forty day fast and weeping for Dumuzi, the people did gather together before the dawn on the vernal equinox (later called Ishtar's Son-god day), and welcomed him back on the rays of the rising sun into the spring greenery. They followed their dawn worship time with a celebration, feasting with wine, singing and dancing, and the finest of foods.

The centerpiece of the food was wild boar roasted over the flames on a spit, and served with a big red apple in his mouth; Ishtar's little revenge on the boar who had killed her precious son. (Thus our traditional Ishtar Son-god day [**Easter Sunday**] pork roast.) The feasting was followed by a grand orgy lasting the rest of the day and into the night.

And yes, as Ishtar had promised, the spring greenery returned and all was well. But Ishtar was not done. That fall, on October 24 at the time of the close pass of Mars, they held their annual sacrifice/orgy, with no competition now that Enmar was dead. The next day, as the people were recovering and preparing to return home, Ishtar bade them stay. She had some instruction she needed to give.

Ishtar spent the day teaching the people things of spirit: "The spirits of the gods come and go on the rays of the sun, coming at the dawning and leaving for the nether-realms at sunset. Therefore worship must always be with your face to the rising sun so your gods will come to you from the heavens. Worship should be one day a week, but not on the Sabbath, oh no! That is a day reserved for yourselves, for play, recreation, and merrymaking. From now on your worship shall be on the morning after the Sabbath, which henceforth shall be called **Sun-day** [or Son-day], in honor of my beloved son Dumuzi." Ishtar smiled at them.

Then she wove this glorious yarn about how Dumuzi was coming to her every Sun-day at dawn on the rays of the sun, and teaching her principles of the spirit realms. They did not have to come to E-Anna to worship. They could worship every week in their own towns and villages, wherever they could gather together to face the rising sun. *Son-day (or Sunday) worship, in direct opposition to Logos' command to keep the Sabbath holy, has been observed by pagans in at least some parts of the world ever since Ishtar proclaimed it in 3105 BC. It is still common in many nations.*

Ishtar concluded with instruction about the week after a Mars flyby, and 'All Spirits Eve'. "Though the Mars flyby was off the 30 year cycle and caused no damage or deaths this year, yet every pass of Mars will always be significant, for that is when the doors open linking the spirit realms with the realms of mortal men. The spirits of the departed return for a week to see how their relatives yet on earth are faring. They are sometimes happy and bring blessings, but sometimes they're disappointed or angry and bring curses. They make their decision on 'All Spirits Eve', which is the last evening of the week following a Mars flyby."

On that evening, Ishtar told the people to light candles, pray and mourn for the departed spirits, even dress up like them and give one another gifts in celebration of their deaths and departure to the spirit realms. If the spirits were satisfied, they would return that evening through the door to the spirit realms, to bother them no more until the next year. But if they were not satisfied, they may remain through the night and on into the next day (which she called All Spirits Day), causing mischief or trouble. This tradition, which Ishtar started in 3105 BC, has been kept in some form ever since. It is now known in the West as **Halloween**, beginning on the eve of October 31.

By the following February Ishtar had cooked up another foolish fable. As the date neared when Dumuzi had been slain by the boar, she realized that due to her two weeks delay in establishing the forty days of weeping and fasting for his death, she had nothing to commemorate the day of his death. So, being a great storyteller, she created this tale about Faunus, a grandson of Chronos (Dumuzi). Though a god, Faunus became enamored with a cute human shepherd girl. In punishment for his indiscretion, he was obliged by the gods to spend one day each year (February 14/15) sharing the gift of love with mankind. Ishtar told all who wished to participate to put their names into two large urns, one for the ladies and another for the men. Cainan, Ishtar's high priest, then drew out pairs of names as he prayed for divine guidance from Faunus. Ishtar insisted that each couple thus selected for marriage would be especially blessed by the gods.

This practice became widely popular. It came into our tradition as **Saint Valentine's Day**. Faunus later devolved into the ancient Akkadian god Pan, the Greek god Eros, and the Roman god Cupid. As the story propagated throughout various cultures it grew to include many tales of gods among men, including the fauns, satyrs, nymphs, dryads, naiads, and many other fanciful magical woodland creatures of ancient legend. It all started with Ishtar and her need to celebrate the death of Dumuzi. Now you know it is all a lie, inspired and encouraged by Satan to turn the people away from the worship of the true God Logos on His Sabbaths and His Feast days.

CHAPTER 17 – THE DEATH OF THE PATRIARCHS AND THE SPREAD OF CIVILIZATION

Old man Noah died in 3100 BC at the age of 950. Ham and Holly both died 10 years later during the 45th close flyby of Mars at the age of 456. Fuchi was heartbroken. She never re-married (though at only 496 she certainly could have). She went to live with Shem and Cherrie, and helped them care for their grandchildren. Japheth died in 2970 BC at the age of 580. His faithful wife Jill died the year after. Shem, Cherrie, Fuchi, and all of Aratta were devastated. Their 1000 year life-expectancy from before the Flood had clearly been dramatically shortened.

In 2948 BC Ishtar's profligate lifestyle finally caught up with her. She fell deathly sick in E-Anna at Nun-ki. She had been grooming Cainan son of Arphaxad to take over for her. He had faithfully served her for 300 years; 150 as her high priest. He had truly loved her and her religion, and had even fathered some of her children. She didn't abort them; she wanted an heir by Cainan! But every one of their children had grown up to be self-centered, angry, rebellious, spoiled brats – Ishtar couldn't figure out why. Being rich, she gave them all the pleasures and comforts life had to offer, but they all destroyed their lives in drugs, liquor, and immorality before they got old enough to rule with her. So when Ishtar lay on her deathbed, she insisted that Cainan carry on her life's work as her only successor. He nursed her lovingly. She was 388, only 24 years older than he. She died a lingering, agonizing death of venereal diseases. Immorality does have its consequences. For the first time in his life, Cainan awoke to the inevitable results of sin. Ishtar was a goddess! His goddess! Everyone knows that gods don't die! But here she lay, dead in his arms.

Cainan did not have the imagination of Ishtar, nor was he power hungry, a cunning strategist, or an accomplished liar. He never tried to make up stories of her ascending to Venus or any such thing. He just sadly gathered his things and walked away, leaving the fabulous temple of E-Anna to its self-consumed, bickering priests and prostitutes.

Cainan's family lived at Eridu. They worshiped at the temple at Nun-ki. They fully expected their patriarch Cainan to become one of the gods and live forever by Ishtar's side. He called them together and told them what had happened. Ishtar was dead. She was no goddess at all. Her whole religion was a sham. He swore he would never go back to her temple. His shocked family heard the words from his mouth but could not believe them.

Cainan wanted to return to Aratta to his father's family and their worship of Logos. But first he tried to convince his extended family that their lives had been wasted in immorality and idolatry, and in worshiping false gods and goddesses. After a year of futility with his family, he left for Aratta alone, determined to try to find repentance and restore his childhood relationship with Logos. Of course Satan was furious. First he tried to just kill him. When that failed, he came all in a rage before the Most High.

"Cainan is mine! He has been totally mine for over 300 years, and is the most wicked person now alive. There is no way in heaven he could ever find repentance!" he swore. "So why are You protecting him?!" (Heaven is a swear word to him, since it is the throne of the most high God.)

"You forget, dear Lucifer, that he was Mine for the first 55 years of his life, before you seduced him into following you. I did not contend with you for him when he chose you. I let his freewill choice stand. But now he has seen the consequences of his choice. So why do you contend with Me over the possibility that he may now choose Me?"

“But... but... it’s not fair!” Satan spluttered.

“I’ll tell you what is not fair. It is not fair that you should so confuse and blind the minds and hearts of your subjects that they cannot see clearly to make their choice. So I have prepared a way to break through your cloud of deception so they can see the truth. It is called intercessory prayer. It can expose your foulest and most perverse lies.”

“That’s cheating! You tell your so-called truth, and I tell mine, and if he chooses to believe me there is nothing You can do about it. He belongs to me. That is the law and You can’t change it on me now!”

“Dear Lucifer. Over 2000 years and you still have a lot to learn about My Law. The laws of which you speak are basic, yes, but every law has a higher principle to which it points. Arphaxad and Aimee understood that, and even though their son Cainan had fallen into sin, they did not give up on him. They continue to pray, even now as we speak, every day for him, interceding between him and his sin, between his choice and the blindness that results from his choice. It is their prayers that have opened his eyes to uncover your lies. They bore his burden and took his sin upon themselves, repenting of it and placing it upon Me. Until you understand these higher principles, you cannot really understand My Law. Allow me to teach you the foundational principles of intercession, substitutionary atonement, repentance and redemption, and the oil of My grace that makes it all...” But no, Satan was gone, refusing to listen to the patient instruction from the Most High.

So Cainan reached Aratta, truly repentant and crying out for forgiveness. He came at a bad time. Both Shem and Cherrie were on their deathbeds at the age of 600. They died in early 2947 BC, and Fuchi died a few weeks later of a broken heart. She was 649. Everyone was crushed at their loss. Then when Cainan presented his report of the awful wickedness of the land of Shinar, which had gotten even worse now that Ishtar was dead and there was no strong ruler in the land, a cloud of gloom settled over the clan.

But Logos always seems to have a man, and this time it was godly Arphaxad. After six days of intense prayer, he took upon himself the Sabbath evening task of offering the lamb sacrifice. As usual lately, Logos did not come. So Arphaxad got a second lamb and laid his hands on its head. First he confessed and repented of his own sins, then those of the group, then Cainan’s sins, and finally those of all of humanity, so recently described by Cainan. After nearly an hour of repentance, there were tears in every eye present. He knew he had reached down to their hearts. So he began to worship Logos as he was offering that lamb, expressing his faith instead of the discouragement and fear that everyone had felt. Finally he thanked Logos that Cainan had returned in answer to their prayers, and that Shem, Cherrie, and Fuchi were living in heavenly realms with Him. Aimee came up to stand with him while they praised Logos and sought His wisdom and guidance.

Suddenly there was Logos Himself, standing with them and receiving their praises as if He’d been there all along. Joy radiated from His countenance, and all gloom and despair were banished. “Your sacrifice is accepted by My Father. You are all cleansed!” He breathed. Then looking down at Cainan, Logos added, “Your family is in desperate danger. Pray for them as you have been prayed for.”

Now He spoke to Arphaxad. “Thank you for being true to Me and for remaining pure from the stains of the world. I have accepted your choice to remain here isolated from the pagan nations spreading over the rest of the earth. But if you choose to go down to Shinar, to the midst of their idolatry and perversity, I will also bless and protect you there, as long as you remain close to Me and observe My Sabbaths.” He smiled. “You could have a much-needed positive influence among your relatives.” He vanished.

“Of course!” Arphaxad shouted, and the rest agreed. Why had they not thought of that before? That is why Logos had taken all the patriarchs. It was time for them to move. So those remaining in Aratta, led by Arphaxad and his family, sadly left their pristine valley and migrated down to the plains of Shinar, right into the middle of the evil cultures there. Their secluded little valley paradise, their ‘Garden of Eden’, was uninhabited for many years.

They settled at Bab-ilu, between Uruk and Eridu, where Enmar had built his infamous temple to Mars. The other inhabitants of Shinar shunned the area. It was known to be cursed, haunted by the spirit of Enmar-kar, the ‘mighty hunter against Logos’. Seeing the sunken, burned out hulk of Enmar’s great temple, with the other shattered buildings around it, scared them. But Arphaxad, now the oldest of the remaining clan from Aratta, was a godly man who did not bow to either Enmar or his curses. He renamed the district Ur, meaning the Region of Light, after his grandson Ur son of his youngest son Kesed. It was indeed a light in a dark place. To him, the destroyed tower was just a reminder to remain close to Logos, which he did.

This of course was a direct affront to Ishtar’s religion, which still had virtually everyone else in Shinar in its grip. But with Ishtar and Enmar gone, there was no strong ruler in the land to contend with them. The other districts were still developing their own unique cultures and struggling with their disparate languages, and did not have time to fight with each other. Ur was left alone to grow strong, receiving the blessing of Logos, as He had promised.

By the time Arphaxad died in 2909 BC at the age of 538, his kin at Ur had expanded and prospered. They, of all the people remaining on earth, still knew how to read God’s storybook in the stars; they still longed for the Redeemer that Logos had promised; they still kept the Sabbath and met with Logos often, eager to hear His wisdom and do His will; and they still retained all that they had learned from Noah. From Kesed, they became known as the **Kasdim**. We know them as **Magi** (wise men, or astrologers).

People from all over the world, when they found themselves in trouble, would come to the Kasdim for counsel, for they had true wisdom from above. The Kasdim were the only ones who retained the original language of Adam, which was then known as **Kasdan** and later as Hebrew. Various people groups could not understand each other due to confusion of the languages at Bab-ilu, but they all understood the Kasdim. Thus Ur became famous for its wisdom and knowledge. Now at the center of civilization, the Kasdim became exceedingly wealthy and powerful.

But great wealth or power brings great temptations. This downward spiral actually began in 2909 BC when the patriarch of the clan, Arphaxad (and the next year, his wife Aimee), died. But it took a long time before the change became noticeable. Cainan, Arphaxad's oldest son, took over when his dad died. At first he ruled humbly, meeting with Logos every Sabbath, and instructing the people in God's ways of wisdom. (Most of which he had learned the hard way.) He married his cousin Carrie and settled down to become a family man. But in his character remained flaws left over from his many years with Ishtar, which were eventually to destroy him.

But at least Cainan did pray intensely for his family as Logos had told him, and finally (in 2870 BC) his third generation grandson (through Ishtar) repented and was reconciled with the family. We don't know his name, as it had been blotted out, but his son **Shelah** was born the year he was restored. He is important, being in the line of the coming Redeemer. This was the high point of Cainan's life.

I'm very sad to say that in his later years Cainan became proud. He enjoyed his role as the leader and chief of the Kasdim, and became presumptuous of his own wisdom and knowledge rather than just seeking for the wisdom of Logos. He still held secret sins, moral failures from his days with Ishtar. And as always when pride rears its ugly head, Satan was able to trip him up. He fell to temptation, cheated on his wife, and contracted a bad venereal disease. It became a huge scandal. His youngest brother, Kesed, demanded that he step down, and ruled in his place. Logos took Cainan home in disgrace in 2828 BC. Carrie, whom he had infected, died soon after. They had been childless.

This was a horrid blow to the integrity of the Kasdim. However, it was an open door for Satan, who had been looking for a way to destroy them, and he lost no time in coming in. But before I tell this story, I must present an overview of this period. You will not read this in your scholarly history books. Their authors don't understand the spread of civilizations after the Flood or the confusion of the languages at Enmar's temple in Bab-ilu. Just trust me. My history is correct and theirs is quite fanciful.

It has been 350 years since the confusion of the languages in 3180 BC, and 620 years since the Flood in 3450 BC. So far, I've only told one thread of civilization since then, but in reality many things were happening during this time.

Few people understand that the equator went above the northern tip of the Persian Gulf, about 30 degrees from where it is now. This was a good thing, or the people of **Mesopotamia** would have frozen. Also, the Americas were much closer to Africa and Europe; the continental plates had cracked during the Flood, but had not yet separated. There was a big ocean basin where Atlantis had sunk, but Newfoundland fit into the Bay of Biscay next to France, Brazil was still connected to the west coast of Africa, and Greenland was scrunched up right next to Norway. A vast continent I'll call **Pacifica** stretched around the globe from the Americas to the Far East. This land covered a far larger area than the Pacific Ocean does now.

This was the period of the **Ice Age**. Much of the water remaining from the Flood had frozen at the poles due to the super-cold deep-space ice that had fallen from Glacis. There was very little ocean water left by 2828 BC, and it was awfully salty. The sea level had fallen to well below its current level, though tides were huge when Mars came by. The Red Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Persian Gulf were navigable, as was the Atlantic (where Atlantis had sunk) between the Straits of Gibraltar and the Caribbean Islands. But massive glaciers covered all of North America, all of Europe north of the Alps, and all of Asia north of the northern Mongolia mountains. Huge glaciers also covered the southern halves of South America and Africa as well as Australia and Antarctica. Only those living within about 20 degrees from the equator could survive the cruel cold.

Yet within this narrow band, nations flourished. For example, the Egyptian civilization was 350 years old. They already had a mature language and pictography, culture, traditions, arts, and a vast pantheon of gods and goddesses including their own Madonna and Child cult in **Isis** and **Osiris**. Upper and Lower Egypt had been unified by **Menes** son of **Narmer** and Neith-hotep. **Memphis** was his capital. They even had a standing border guard to repel invaders who tried to cross from the Middle East.

Similarly, the Nubians (from Ham's son Cush) had flourished in what is now north Ethiopia and east Sudan, again with their own language, culture, arts, and gods. Other descendants of Cush settled in Arabia: **Seba** and **Sheba** in the south, **Havilah** in the east, **Dedan** in the west, **Sabtah** at **Shabwat**, and **Raamah** and **Sabteca** scattered as nomads. The **Berbers** (from Phut) and the **Lubim** (from Mizraim) flourished in North Africa (Algeria and Libya). The **Tamoanchan** (from Mizraim) fled across freezing Texas for Central America (which was much wider then, as **Pacifica** had not yet split off.) Their civilization actually dates to 3113 BC, only 67 years after the confusion of the languages. By the time Cainan died it was well developed, powerful, and prosperous. Mizraim's son **Caphtor** sailed north of Egypt to Crete to found what later became the powerful **Minoan** civilization. **Casloth** went up the coast east of Egypt to found what we now term the **Philistines**. All of these were quite advanced by about 2800 BC.

Ham's son Canaan had many sons, most of whom remained in the Middle East. The **Amorites** (the Amurru) began their kingdom at Mari and spread in all directions. Of the many western Canaanites: **Kena'ani** (from **Zidon**) founded Sidon; Arvadites, Arvad; Hamathites, Hamath; Zemarites, Simyra; **Giblites**, Gebal; Jebusites, **Jericho**; Girgashites, Sodom; and Hivites, **Shechem**. Heth had fled to central Turkey to found the infamous Hittite kingdom. Heth's son **Arba**, father of **Anak** the giant, stayed behind at **Kiriath-Arba** (Hebron). **Seni** went the farthest and was the most prolific. He fathered the **Sinites (Mongols)**, who had migrated northwest along the equator across Afghanistan to the Sin-kiang Valley (then a fertile paradise). They grew prosperous and strong, as always with their own unique language, culture, and religion. They later crossed what is now the Gobi Desert in Mongolia to the Huang Ho Valley in eastern China. They founded the **Chinese, Japanese, Malaysian, Korean, Eskimo, and Pacific Islander** races.

Of the sons of Shem, only Arphaxad remained true to Logos, founding Ur at Bab-ilu after Enmar died. **Lud** began the **Lydians** in western Turkey. Elam flourished at **Susa** in Persia. **Aram** founded the **Aramaeans** in Syria at Haran. Asshur began a powerful civilization on the north Tigris river, in competition with his brothers farther north at Calah and Nineveh. (Enmar had conquered and unified these cities, but now they were split apart by the language barriers into three important cultures, the **Ninevites**, the **Chaldeans**, and the **Assyrians**.)

Of the sons of Japheth, the **Hurrians** flourished in a high plain at the headwaters of the Tigris west of Aratta. The **Acadians** lived in central Mesopotamia. The **Subartu** (from **Tubal**) lived just north of them but south of Ashur; later, many of them intermarried with the Aramaeans. The **Kassites** (from Madaï's son **Chazoni**) prospered in the Zagros foothills between Subartu and Elam. The **Medes** (also from Madaï) flourished just north of them. Gomer and his sons had started in what is now northern Iran. Later they left the family of **Ashkenaz** behind and traveled north; Gomer settled north of the Black Sea to found the **Cimmerian** race; **Togarmah** and **Magog** settled first in western Turkey just south of where Tubal had founded the **Tubali**; later they moved north of the Caspian Sea where they became known as **Sythians**. **Riphat** and **Meshech** traveled west and established cultures in north and south Turkey respectively. **Javan** went farther west to settle in Peloponnesia; his son **Kittim** founded the **Kition** on Cyprus. **Tiras** began **Tyrrhenia** in northwest Turkey.

And that's just a very simplified description! I'm sorry to bore you, but you need to understand – all these people groups had already been founded when Cainan died in Ur in 2828 BC. Satan had split them up, and now he didn't know what to do about them. He was just furious that God's people were living in peace and prosperity right in the center of it all, with no one able to challenge their ascendancy. Now with Cainan dead he had his chance.

As I said, Ur was now the center of the world. It was the center of commerce, the center of wisdom and knowledge, even the center of spiritual guidance. All the people groups in the world looked up to and respected, even admired, the Kasdim. The Kasdim were the kingmakers and the court of final appeal for all the people. Their power and influence was legendary. Though other people groups had their own language and culture and false gods, the godly influence and shielding prayers of the Kasdim extended everywhere, preventing Satan from freely tormenting even his own people like he wanted. Truly the promise of Logos to Arphaxad at Aratta had come to pass.

But just as righteousness blocks all of Satan's efforts, wickedness frees him to work, and there was not a thing the mighty angels of Logos could do about it. Satan stirred up jealousy against the Kasdim in the other cultures in Mesopotamia. Before this time none of them were war-like, even the Assyrians. The sons of Enmar were all dead. (Ninyas and Kalakh had ruled the Shemetic Assyrians at Nineveh and Calah, and Agade had ruled the Japhethic Acadians and Subartu from Accad. But their immoral lifestyles didn't allow for long lifespans.) So when Cainan died, there were no strong rulers left in the land.

Arphaxad and Cainan had taught the surrounding nations that their problems and diseases were due not only to worshiping false gods, but also due to their immoral lifestyles, disobeying the laws of Logos. For many years, the Kasdim had lived what they preached. God had blessed and prospered them, giving them very long lifespans. Even Cainan lived to the age of 484! But Cainan's death of venereal disease was a terrible blow, and when his secret immortality was exposed it became a huge scandal. Others of the Kasdim were also brought to shame as their secret sins were exposed. Satan worked to inflame the hearts of men all over Mesopotamia.

Satan had occasion. He entered a strong young man named Chalden, a descendant of Kalakh (son of Enmar and Ishtar) five generations removed. Chalden decided to conquer the wealthy Kasdim and rule the plains of Shinar. He gathered a group of angry men around him at Calah, (in the spirit of his great-grandfather Enmar-kar), and taught them the art of war. We know them as Chaldeans.

The Kasdim, who preached peace and wisdom, were unarmed and unprepared. They offered little resistance when Chalden and his army reached Ur. The Chaldeans, inspired by Satan, killed any who did resist, and subdued the rest with harsh laws. By 2805 BC Ur, with its vast wealth and commerce, was ruled by Chalden.

It was renamed **Ur of the Chaldees**. Hebrew speakers were forced to learn the Chaldean language (mixed with early Aramaic). Thus developed the first caste system. Chalden and the descendants of Enmar were in charge. Shemites of Calah ruled under them, enforcing their laws. The Kasdim just worked for them, almost like slaves.

What was worse, the Chaldeans brought with them their complex system of gods and goddesses, including Ishtar Inanna, Dumuzi, and Enmar (whose name was now Nirgal) as well as Utu-Shamash (god of the sun) and Anu (god of the sky). The Kasdim were expected to worship these false gods every sun-day, and even bow to them. If they would not, they were outcast from society and stripped of their wealth. But any Kasdim who were willing to compromise with the Chaldeans were granted positions of power and prestige. These traitors taught the Chaldeans all their accumulated wisdom, including secrets of reading the stars and predicting the movements of the planets. In time, these apostate teachers and their students became an independent caste of astrologers, the Magi.

Remember Shelah, the fourth generation grandson of Cainan? Shelah had learned wisdom from the sins and repentance of his grandfather. Thus Shelah determined in his heart to follow Logos no matter what. So when the Chaldeans demanded they worship other gods, he was the first to stand up and just say no. He encouraged the other Kasdim to follow him, then he packed up and crossed over to the west side of the Euphrates with his wife Sherry and a few trusted servants. The Chaldeans were busy ruling Ur, at that time a mighty city between the rivers, and had no time or inclination to worry about Shelah's escape.

Shelah continued to keep the Sabbath and to offer the weekly lamb sacrifice. He desperately wanted to maintain the original (Kasdan) language and culture. Other Kasdim were mingling their words with Aramaic and Chaldean. Shelah felt strongly the need to keep their language pure. He and Sherry only spoke Kasdan in their home.

Sherry bore a son in 2740 BC. They named him **Heber**, 'one who crossed over'. They determined to consecrate their son to Logos. Visits from Logos were rare in those days. Wickedness and immorality had spread even throughout the Kasdim. Shelah told his household to fast and pray for three days while he confessed and repented of all their sins over the head of the lamb and cried out to Logos to consecrate his son. That Sabbath eve he sacrificed the lamb, sprinkling the altar with its blood.

And Logos came. (He always loved to come in response to such dedication to holiness.) "Father is pleased. You are all cleansed!" He shouted, smiles beaming from His face. "Come!" He spoke directly to Heber (though he was but a newborn baby) and held out His arms.

Shelah brought him close. Logos put His hands over his head and blessed him. The flames that enveloped Logos blazed brightly, but Heber didn't cry. "I have chosen you, Heber, just as your father has chosen Me," He said. "You are My light to the nations, and My testimony against those who hate Me. I shall make of you a great nation, and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." His voice was a shout of triumph! Shelah's household all gasped and fell on their faces in worship.

As I said, Satan never really did give up trying to taunt Logos. I guess taunting was just in his blood. He came before the throne with a smirk on his face. "Looks like even the Kasdim couldn't remain faithful to You or Your ways. And after all You blessed and prospered them... why, they have all chosen me, all but one! And that one has only moved across the river. It is but a matter of time before the culture of the Chaldeans overwhelms him, too. You've lost, Logos! You lose every time. They all turn aside to me, every one. Your ways are too weak. People need a strong ruler, like Enmar, Ishtar, or Chalden. Your wimpy love is too weak to capture their hearts or control their minds. But look at the strong tools I have: anger, greed, bitterness, lust, idolatry, ambition – every one of my tools is more powerful in controlling their hearts than Your despicable love." He spat it out like a swear word.

Then, screwing up courage, he stared Logos in the eye to deliver the zinger. "Have You even been keeping score? I have. And right now the score is more than a million to one in my favor! So now whose ways are stronger?"

Since he had actually paused for an answer, Logos responded. "That is not the right question, My beloved adversary. As the god of forces, your ways indeed seem stronger, since you force humanity to follow you by traps and lies. But the right question to ask is, whose ways are actually better, in the long run? How many of your people are living their lives in happiness, peace, freedom, joy..."

"Trash talk!" Satan snarled, rudely interrupting. He could not even comprehend the value of such things. They were signs of weakness, something he did not tolerate. "Face it, Logos," again he spat out His name like a curse. "You've lost! And You will continue to lose, all but maybe one or two in each generation whom You manage to trick into following You. That's it! That's all You can ever do! And someday even Your angels will realize who is more powerful, and will turn to serve me..."

Logos let him rant on, until finally, very red in the face, he ran out of steam. Then Logos spoke quietly. "You do not yet understand My Plan of the Ages, beloved Lucifer." Satan jerked back, startled at this use of his original name. "All I need is one in each generation, just one! Because from his descendants will come a single virtuous woman – a virgin – and to this virgin I will send My Redeemer. In the weakness of human flesh that One shall overcome all your temptations, all your 'strong tools', as you call them, and shall point the way for all of humanity to return unto Me. And once their eyes are opened to His beauty and grace, once they hear His truth and are freed from your deceptive traps, they will repent. They will all return to Me. Then at the end what will your precious 'score' be, My beloved adversary? Logos and His unconditional love – all! Satan and his powerful forces – none! Be patient and you..."

But, patience not being one of his strong points, Satan abruptly fled in disgust, pride blocking his understanding.

CHAPTER 18 – HEBER AND PELEG, AND THE GREAT DIVISION OF THE EARTH

Satan was sure right about one thing: the violence and wickedness of the Chaldeans would soon reach across the river to overwhelm Shelah's family. Logos knew this, so He worked fast. The Chaldeans feared that the Kasdim would grow to become too mighty for them, since the Chaldeans aborted most of their children in the tradition of Ishtar, while the Kasdim knew that abortion is evil and cherished their babies. So the Chaldeans ruled that their Kasdim slaves may only keep one child; any additional babies must be sacrificed to their river god, *Okeanos* ('crocodile'), on Ishtar Sun-god day at dawn. They decreed that any illegal (less than a year old) Kasdim babies must be cast into the Euphrates at their sunrise celebration, insisting that the gods would be pleased with the sacrificed innocents and would bless their lands and crops in the coming year.

Of course the Kasdim didn't want their infants to be eaten by crocodiles, so they cried out to Logos. He inspired them to put the illegal infants in tightly-woven baskets and float them down river the morning of the Sabbath just before Ishtar Sun-god day. They did it, hoping to retrieve them somehow after the sacrifice.

Sherry, taking her early morning walk on the other side of the river, saw them. It was just dawn, and few others were up. She ran back to the house. "Shelah! Shelah! Wake up! Come out and look!" The whole household quickly woke and came down to the river. Baby Heber was six at the time, running along-side his dad. Tender-hearted Sherry ran back with them, blubbering, "There are women over there, floating little things down the river. See them hugging each other? [She pointed.] And I heard cries – there it is again! It sounds like baby cries! Could it be... could those little dark things be their babies?"

They stood on the river's edge in horror. Yes, they could hear the wails from across the tranquil river. And they could still see the little black specs drifting downstream. "There's another!" They watched a woman with a bundle in her arms bend over. When she stood up, no bundle! It was gut-wrenching. They had to do something. Shelah ordered his servants to get their cart and meet him down river. He then jumped in his big rowboat (the one they had used to move) and started out toward the black specs.

It was a long row – the river was half a mile wide at that point. But it was pretty slow-moving, and Shelah, at the age of 130, was still very strong. He reached them only a few miles downstream, well before they reached the Persian Gulf (which had receded with the freezing of the oceans at the poles). He worked till after noon collecting the tiny baskets and rowing with them slowly upstream. Shelah figured he had them all and was about to start back across the river when he noticed someone hiding in the reeds at the river's edge, watching. Tears streaking her face identified her as one of the mothers who had lost her baby.

Shelah rowed closer. She waded out and related the news of the Chaldean's terrible law. "Don't fear, ma'am," Shelah responded. "We'll protect your babies for you. Tell all your friends to send them across the river. When it's safe, they can come over and get them. We'll be in that little house," he pointed upstream to his mud-brick home and its dock, "... and we'll nurse them as long as necessary." She bowed her thanks and returned to her hiding place.

Shelah reached the cart, exhausted, near dinner time, with 22 baskets in his boat. It had been a big day's work for a Sabbath Rest! They loaded them all on the cart, where Sherry, Heber, and the servants opened the baskets and comforted the crying babies on the trip back home. Shelah got back in his big empty boat for the long row upstream.

It was dark when he reached his dock. His wife had a light shining from their window. After tying up his boat, he got a lantern and put it at the end of the dock, too. Even as he returned, he noticed a second boat approaching in the blackness. It was followed by a third, then a fourth and fifth. Each carried a father, a mother, or both, and several babies. By dawn on Sun-god day, they had over fifty babies crammed into their tiny home. The unknown mother hiding in the reeds had gotten the message through.

That day was a nightmare for Shelah's family and their servants. They didn't have time to look across the river to see how many babies had been sacrificed to Okeanos. They couldn't take time to eat or sleep. All they could do is change and hug and feed squalling babies and desperately try to keep up with the mountains of soiled diapers. They ached for the night when the boats would return.

But that didn't happen. Their Chaldean overlords had come to do the sacrifice at dawn, and had found no babies, none at all! The word had spread like wildfire among the Kasdim. Every 'illegal' baby had made it across the river.

The Chaldeans were furious! They spent the entire day and on into the night searching throughout the Kasdim dwellings and terrorizing their families. In their efforts to find the babies, some parents were questioned, tortured, or even killed. But amazingly, no one gave away the secret.

So it wasn't until the next night at twilight that boats began to return. Shelah's family and servants had been awake for three full days. But the babies were all fine. The grateful parents pressed Shelah and Sherry with lavish gifts. "Any time," Shelah assured them. "Glad to do it. But next year I hope to have better facilities." He planned to build an addition, just for caring for the Kasdim babies.

Fortunately, the Chaldeans (who, like liberals today, rarely considered the consequences of their many laws) rescinded the law the next year so the Kasdim could keep their own babies. They realized that the Kasdim were too smart for that kind of harassment. If they ever got together on it, they just might be able to overthrow the entire government. But our story is not through.

Some of the parents had been killed, leaving their babies as orphans. Shelah and Sherry were glad to adopt them into their own family.

More importantly, as Logos had planned, some of the Kasdim saw the handwriting on the wall, and fled Ur of the Chaldees. The young mother who had talked to Shelah was the first. She, her husband, and their toddler came, not to pick up their baby, but to stay. They had spent the whole day packing, so they were among the last to come. They tied their overloaded boat to Shelah's dock. Then they walked up the hill to the house, clutching each other tightly with their firstborn, a son, wedged between them.

Totally exhausted but rejoicing, Shelah and Sherry welcomed them. "Come in! Come in! We have your babies and they are all fine!" they repeated for the umpteenth time. Shelah looked up. Recognition flashed across his face. He put down two babies and walked to the door, his tired face brightening into a broad smile.

The young mother spoke first. "Oh, thank you, sir. Thank you! You have saved our family. We shall always be grateful! We are your servants..." They bowed low.

Shelah put his hands on their shoulders and smiled down at the toddler between them. "You're welcome. And you are nobody's servant except for Logos. But I owe you a big thanks as well. It was you..." he nodded to the young mother, "who carried my message to all the other Kasdim, which enabled so many other babies to be saved. I shall always be grateful." She blushed, but then spotted her infant and ran with a small squeal of joy to pick her up.

"Thank you, sir." The man bowed again. "We now have a request. You have been so good, and we hate to impose, but we don't want to go back. We brought all our valuables with us in the boat, and we want to stay here with you and your family. We can help you care for the remaining babies until they are picked up, and I can start tomorrow making bricks to build our own home on this side of the river. May we... My name is Shad; my wife is Susan; this is Nate, and our daughter," he pointed toward his wife, who was already nursing their infant, "is Helene. May we..."

Shelah and Sherry glanced at each other and laughed, interrupting Shad. Shelah threw his arms around Shad and Nate, and Sherry stepped over to Susan and threw her arms around her and Helene. "We would love to have you live here with us!" Sherry responded, as Shelah told Shad, "We've been praying for a long time that more of the Kasdim would join us here across the river. I've already been making bricks. I have some good home sites chosen for you and any others who may follow."

Other Kasdim followed, and the little town across the river began to grow. As you may have guessed, Shad and Susan were a big help. Their daughter Helene eventually married Heber to continue the righteous line of Shelah. Heber's descendants became known as **Hebrews**.

But long before that, there was another incident that I must relate. Satan was disgusted with the Kasdim. Just when he thought he had them all trapped in his own wicked kingdom, some would escape. It was maddening. Rather than the evil culture of the Chaldeans swamping the one family across the river, now other families had crossed over. They all were completely under the covering of Michael and his host. Satan couldn't touch them. He was furious, and furious begets mistakes. He grew impatient with his work in Shinar. He'd had so much fun inciting Enmar-kar and Chalden to war, but they were both dead. Satan grew frustrated at his inability to get any of the other cultures around the world to fight and kill each other. Now that they were split apart into separate clans, they had plenty of land and resources. All they wanted to do was to live in peace and build their own society.

Rather than admit how badly he had screwed up in confusing their languages, Satan looked around for a new way to torment them. He found it in Saturn and Jupiter. They were still in dangerously elliptical orbits, and Saturn was coming dramatically close to Earth every 30 years. Jupiter's orbit had recently been altered slightly when the Venus trinary had passed close and pulled off some of its atmosphere and surface liquids. After some calculations, Satan realized he had a terrific opportunity. Saturn would pass near Jupiter in eight years. He immediately put to work every spare demon he had, guiding it closer.

Michael, of course, challenged him. "You know, Satan, that you must obtain permission from Logos before you attempt to harm the Bride."

"Harm the Bride? Whatever makes you think I want to harm the Bride?" Satan snarled. "All I want to do is to destroy all life on earth!" He deliberately turned his back on Michael and went back to work.

Michael hurried to the throne of the Most High. "Logos! Satan is attempting to change the orbits of Saturn and Jupiter to destroy the earth!" he gasped.

"But that would harm the Bride," Logos grinned.

"It sure would! But... but why are You smiling?"

"You know, dear Michael, that he cannot harm My Bride without My specific permission. He does not have My permission. Further, she has given him no occasion. Therefore he will fail." He winked at Michael, as if He was playing a great joke on Satan.

"What do I need to do to stop him?"

"Nothing at all. Just keep guarding My precious ones at Ur. My Law is written into every atom of the universe. If Satan tries to break My Law or exceed My Word, the very stones, even the very atoms themselves will oppose him. Even if he could cause Sol to nova it still would not harm My Bride unless he had permission from her or from Me. Fear not. Trust Me in this, dear Michael, and be at peace."

Sure enough, though the catastrophe was huge, few in Shinar died, and none at the tiny town across the river from Ur. I almost don't want to relate the details of this story, dear Reader, for I know you won't believe me, though I swear every word is true. All the evidences are still with us for anyone to see. Someday that mythical light bulb will turn on inside your bewildered head and you'll understand. Until then you will laugh skeptically at my story and continue to wonder if it could possibly be true.

When Heber was ten years old, Satan succeeded in bringing Jupiter and Saturn a little too close together. These are both massive planets, so their orbits were altered dramatically. Jupiter was spun further out, into a more circular orbit near where it is today. Saturn, already in a sharp elliptical orbit which passed near Earth, was pulled into an exceedingly dangerous orbit which would cross the orbit of Earth in fifteen years. Michael duplicated Satan's calculations and came up with the same answer. Collision was possible, and near collision was certain!

Michael fled toward the throne room, then stopped midway. Logos had commanded him to not fear, to be at peace, to trust Him in this. He dare not disobey! He knelt right there in the heavenlies and wept, trembling in the power of the temptation to become anxious. But finally, standing in resolute determination, he strode back to his charges on earth. Obedience to Logos' command was not optional with him. It was his very life.

The fifteen years passed all too rapidly. Saturn, or Chronos as it was then known, approached, as it had every thirty years since its first close pass in 3795 BC. But what was wrong? It was nearly a day early. And it kept coming closer. Chronos had kept perfect time before, down to the very hour. Something had thrown it off. The Magi had seen its close pass with Jupiter at Saturn's aphelion, and they warned of possible catastrophe. They all could see it coming closer than ever before. It was aimed right at the earth! Mankind was terrified!

Satan, always one to celebrate his successes before they are actually achieved, gathered his demon generals around him for his victory gloat. *Earth would be destroyed! Every soul on it would die! There was no possibility that any could survive. Logos had lost! Satan had gotten them all. He was the greatest god in the universe.* And so on.

The catastrophe was beyond description. Michael had amassed his host around the Bride, but it was all he could do to keep them from running berserk in terror. Saturn filled the sky, and yet grew larger. Earthquakes shook the globe, flattening every man-made structure and throwing things – and people – up into the air. Several feet of ice and snow fell in a hurricane of wind as Earth passed through Saturn's outer rings. And still Saturn came closer, until even the angels lay in fervent prayer next to the terrified Shad and Shelah and the others on the ground outside their already flattened town, all in despair of their lives.

Michael expected the earth to shatter. He'd seen frozen Aster shatter when it came too close to Mars – the asteroids were still circling Sol to remind him. *Surely it had reached the shattering point! How could it hold together a moment longer?* But though the surface was very cold due to the great glaciers covering the planet everywhere but around the equator, the inner core was still quite hot, molten, and flexible. It did not shatter. But you think you know what an earthquake is? You and your toy Richter Scale and ultra-sensitive measuring devices. Ha! These earthquakes were orders of magnitude over the top of your Richter Scale.

This was the Ice Age. Most of the water from the Flood was tied up in glaciers extending over half of the Earth. Any ocean that remained was simply too salty to freeze. Now every drop of liquid water fled toward the attraction of Saturn. Much of that salty ocean sprayed out into space to be forever lost. Earth's cracked crust buckled and tore, dragging toward the irresistible force. The crustal plates on each side of the earth pulled together toward Saturn, thrusting up a mountain ridge that reached up into space.

If you recall, just before and during the Flood, Mars had cracked through the crust all along the Americas, raising the Rocky and Andes mountain ranges. Now these cracks opened up as the tortured crust pulled apart completely. The continent I called Pacifica began to pull away from the molten lava core. As the earth turned, Pacifica continued to thrust up and peel off, like peeling an orange. From the Americas to Indonesia and the Orient, and from Alaska to Antarctica, Pacifica was flung out into space following the ocean. *That terrible day came on our June 15, 2715 BC.*

This was not just some small piece of Earth's crust. This was roughly 3/4 of the crust averaging seven miles thick, clear down to the molten core. It formed a Pacific Basin as voluminous as today's Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans put together. Great seamounts were left behind such as those at Polynesia and the Hawaiian Islands, where the molten lava stuck to the lifting crust like pulling taffy.

I know, you don't believe me. I told you you wouldn't. Well, look at a modern map of the ocean floors. Imagine what they looked like before the Americas slid west and Eurasia east to open up the Atlantic Ocean, and before Indonesia and Australia slid east to form the Indian Ocean.

Though the salty oceans were mostly gone, some water remained on the opposite side of the earth, such as in the Mediterranean and Persian Seas. Thus a lot of marine life survived. But some marine creatures became extinct, and are now only found in the fossil record from the time of the Flood. Other species are still struggling. The huge amount of ice and snow from the rings of Saturn did tend to refill the oceans, but utterly devastated the surviving people all around the world. With no shelter left, many perished from the cold that first night. Only those on the Pacific Basin rim were warm – the exposed lava core melted the snow and ice, blanketing them with steam.

Michael's general pled with him to go to Logos for help. "No one can survive this! The humans are too fragile!" He opened his mouth to speak again, then left it open as his eyes widened. "I don't think we can survive this if we stay here with the humans!"

Michael refused. "Logos told us to trust Him and not fear. We will do that, if it costs us our lives. Now stay by the Bride. Encourage her. Try to warm her. And worship in faith just as you will when it is all over and the Word of Logos has proven faithful."

But Satan had no such compulsion. He was already at the throne room, taunting. For a long time Logos remained silent, in deep intercession for His precious ones who were in such terrible danger. Finally Satan, trying to take the gloat and arrogance out of his voice, just asked a question. "So, Logos, do you concede me the victory, now that your precious 'Bride' is destroyed?"

"No, Satan." Logos was unusually blunt. "Have you forgotten? You must obtain permission before you harm My Bride. Go back and look again. The very elements, molecules, and atoms of creation are now aiding her in her moment of trial. You cannot harm a hair upon her head without My permission."

Satan started to argue, but who knows? Maybe he is finally learning that you just don't argue with Logos. He turned and left in disgust. *It is no fun taunting Logos*, he thought to himself for the umpteenth time. *Well, this time, He is wrong, as He will soon discover when He goes hunting for His precious Bride. And there is no way I'm going down there to look again. I'm not stupid!* He gazed idly down upon the tortured, shattered earth, where pieces of crust were flying off into space and steam already covered the surface from the snow and ice falling on the molten core. He noted with satisfaction that Earth's course had changed dramatically from the close encounter. Understanding the delicate balance between too hot and too cold, he figured that even if any humans survived the catastrophe, they would succumb from the change in Earth's orbit.

Surprisingly, though 90 percent of mankind perished, many cultures survived. As Logos had promised, the very atoms and elements of Earth conspired together to help them. Saturn's pass had warmed the earth. First, the ice and snow falling upon the huge bed of molten lava formed thick clouds of hot steam, which quickly circled the globe, bringing desperately needed warmth. This began melting the glaciers to refill the oceans. The glacier-melt was blocked by the super-cold ice at the poles, so it built up pressure in the temperate zones, pushing the Americas west and Eurasia and the (then continuous) Australia-Indonesia continent east over the hole left by Pacifica. This opened up the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Saturn had taken just enough earth and water so the melting glaciers did not flood the earth again. Thus heating effects from Saturn released the earth from its 700 year Ice Age.

And the 3/4 of Earth's crust which had been flung out into space? Well, none of it ever caught up with Saturn, which had flown past at over 20,000 miles per hour. The pieces of crust were left behind at about 300,000 miles from Earth, a perfect orbital distance. One of them was huge. Its gravity pulled the others together into a ball to form Earth's **Moon**. (The only time such matter in space does not gather together into a ball is when no piece is large enough for its gravity to overcome the static charges that keep them apart, as with the asteroids and planetary rings.) So now you know why we have a moon.

Though a significant portion of Earth's already-too-thin atmosphere had also been lost into space, another surprise turned up as the ice and snow from the rings of Saturn melted. When that ice had first formed after the nova of Nyx, it had encapsulated bubbles of gases, mostly oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide. Air! They replenished our air supply to what it is now.

The surviving marine life abundantly flourished in the restored oceans, which ever since the Flood had gotten almost too salty to support marine life.

Even the earthquakes turned out to be a blessing in disguise. They were so violent that the steepest mountain peaks and the deepest valleys and river gorges were shaken down to become far less dangerous. Yes, new mountains were raised at following passes of Mars, but you think the Andes, Rockies, Alps, and Himalayas are steep now? You should have seen them before!

Much to Satan's chagrin, Earth's new orbit also turned out to be an improvement. Its orbital radius decreased by 2.5 million miles and became a bit more circular. Its spin rate slowed to 25 hours per day (it had been 22 after the Flood), and its orbital speed increased from 406 days per year to a perfect 360 days per year, locked in resonance with the altered orbits of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Saturn had warmed the earth, but being closer to Sol helped to keep it warm, banishing the Ice Age. The steam partly restored the vapor barrier, creating a 'greenhouse effect' and beginning a tropical era allowing human expansion to within 40 degrees of the poles. So the steam kept them warm that winter and by the time it dissipated they really had summer, with a long, hot growing season, plenty of summer rains, and even a lovely moon to brighten their nights. It was fantastic! The survivors rebuilt their homes, planted their gardens, and prospered. Their world had been dramatically and forever changed – for the better! And following that one very close encounter with Earth, Saturn's orbit was also improved (circularized) so that Satan was never again able to use it to threaten Earth.

He was furious! You think he had been angry before? The universe had never known such unspeakable rage! All his efforts to destroy the Bride – and she was more blessed than ever. He swore that in 15 more years when Mars made its 58th close pass he would get even for losing Saturn.

But first I must tell of a few of the cultures that survived from the “time before there was a moon.” As I said, the lands of Shinar, Canaan, and Arabia, which were pretty level anyway, survived quite well, all things considered. Few died, though there were many injuries. The little clan and their growing village across the river from Ur actually survived with no casualties or injuries. Not a “hair on their heads” had been harmed, as Logos had promised. Their town was completely leveled, but even that turned into an advantage. When they rebuilt they planned ahead, with straight streets and room for growth. Indeed they grew. Most of the Kasdim jumped at the opportunity. They left the rubble (and wickedness) of Ur behind and crossed the river to rebuild their lives there. They called it **Ur Kasday**. Within 15 years Ur Kasday became more prosperous than Ur ever was. Logos was very pleased. He blessed them.

Other civilizations were not so well off. Egypt was rather a mess anyway. **Den Kenty** had ruled well, but he had no male heir. So **Anendjib** (in 2729 BC) became the next Pharaoh by marriage to Den Kenty’s young daughter, Betrest. Anendjib was inept, though Den Kenty really tried to help him. The northern Nomes rebelled, and he had civil wars on his hands most of his short, miserable, reign. Both he and his father-in-law Den Kenty died in 2715 BC at the close pass of Saturn, along with many who supported the royal family. The commander of Egypt’s armies, **Semerkheth**, saw his chance and took over by force. He was a foolish ruler, often given to tantrums. Uncaring and self-centered, Semerkheth did nothing to help rebuild Egypt after the catastrophe; he compounded the suffering. He only ruled 9 years, then thankfully was assassinated.

By this time **Qaa**, the son of Betrest and Anendjib, had grown up. He became Pharaoh at the age of 20, restoring the legitimate ruling family. He made a much better ruler, doing a lot to help Egypt rebuild. He ruled for 25 years. It was his caring attitudes that restored Egypt’s power and saved Egypt from total destruction in the 58th close pass of Mars in 2700 BC. I’ll talk about that after just a bit.

South of Egypt, Cush had advanced the mighty Nubian civilization to rival the power of Egypt. They were nearly wiped out, reduced back to the Stone Age. It took them over five hundred years to recover to the civilization that they had before Saturn passed by.

West of Egypt, the two major cultures (the Pitu and the Lubim) suffered horribly, again basically reduced to the Stone Age. 80 percent of their people died. They barely survived and have never really recovered.

Further west, the Tamoanchan in Central and South America (from whom came the Olmec and Nahua) were devastated, since all their cities were in the section of crust that became the moon. They were 95 percent destroyed and their advanced culture was lost forever. But the few survivors recovered quickly because of the warmth of the nearby lava, which made their land a tropical paradise.

The Minoans on Crete were nearly wiped out. They had grown into a center of world trade on the Mediterranean Sea, and had gotten very wealthy. But the survivors of the initial catastrophe had no source of livelihood, since there was little to no sea trade for almost a hundred years while the Mediterranean filled in and various cultures rebuilt. They struggled with small gardens on their rocky soil. They recovered to a modest civilization around 2600 BC.

The wicked children of Heth in central Turkey were also nearly wiped out. A giant tsunami had sloshed out of the Black Sea and washed over them, and the icy weeks that followed had devastated even the remnant. Of 50,000 people, less than one thousand survived. Their advanced civilization was reduced to the Stone Age, where they lived in caves and holes in the ground for protection from the cold. It took them several hundred years to recover, to become what we know as the mighty Hittite nation.

The Lydians in western Turkey fared little better, again struggling for over a hundred years before a semblance of modest civilization emerged.

The Hurrians in the highland plain east of Turkey were likewise crippled, as were the sons of Riphath, Meshech, Tiras, and others living in or around Turkey.

Javan’s proud clan on the Peloponnesian Peninsula, again, was ravaged to a mere handful of survivors. Javan’s son Kittim on Cyprus died, and the remnant of his large family was reduced to the level of ‘cave men’.

The Medes, Kassites, and the children of Gomer living in the Zagros foothills were likewise devastated. After the 58th close pass of Mars in 2700 BC the remnants of Gomer’s family called it quits and traveled north, to begin the Cimmerian and Scythian races around the Black Sea. Only Ashkenaz remained behind in Iran to rebuild.

The Sinites (from Seni, son of Canaan, son of Ham) in the Sin-kiang Valley were hit nearly as hard. Their valley paradise at least didn’t crack open, but great landslides fell on those living near the mountains surrounding them. Their high elevation proved to be a big disadvantage in the extreme cold following the disaster. They had been on the equator, but Saturn had shifted the crust and moved the equator south. More died from the cold than from the earthquakes. The survivors finally packed up and moved on in search of warmth on the plains of the Gobi Desert, which was closer to the new equator. We know their descendants as the Mongolian race.

Why am I spending so long on all these various races? Because you have been fed a false, made-up history from those who hate Logos and His Truth. They told you that all these races slowly evolved over thousands of years from ape-men, through the cave man and the hunter-gatherer stage, finally developing a language and writing skills to become fully human. They have lied to you. Their ‘history’ is no more than a sinister plot intended to deceive you.

But I am telling you the truth, for Logos and His Word is Truth. Mankind, though smarter, stronger, and longer-lived than we, almost didn't survive the worldwide Flood, the following Ice Age, the Tower of Bab-ilu catastrophe, and that last pass of Saturn which took so much of earth's crust. Every city and village was leveled, every written record lost, every civilization crushed, and every culture devastated back to the 'Stone Age'. They did live in caves, not because they were cave men evolving from ape-men, but because caves were their only shelter from the ice and snow. Yes, they were hunter-gatherers; what else could they do when their advanced industry and commerce were wiped out? And why did it take them more than a hundred years to recover, to build back up to modest civilizations and cultures? Because the catastrophes continued. Satan was furious that he'd failed to destroy humanity. Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn had all locked together in orbital resonance with Earth in 1:2:6:30 ratios, and Satan was not strong enough to push them out of their resonant orbits.

Now only Mars came close enough to do great damage (still on its 30 year cycle), so Satan made the best of it. He was determined to destroy us and our world. 2700 BC was Mars' 58th flyby, its closest and most destructive pass since the Flood. As I said, Satan was furious. He was tired of playing around, and frustrated that he couldn't directly harm the Bride, so he determined to just destroy all life on earth. He put everything he had into it, with every demon assigned to the task of getting Mars closer than ever before. Continents tilted, buckled, broke apart, and slid rapidly to fill the basin left by the moon. Tides washed clear over mountaintops. The Americas broke away from Europe and West Africa. India, Indonesia, and Australia split from East Africa. The flyby heated the earth even more, so the Atlantic and Indian Oceans began to fill from glacier melt. Madagascar broke off from Africa. The earthquakes were indescribable. The people, still stunned from that final terrible pass of Saturn, panicked and cried to their false gods to end their lives. Many died of fright or heart attack.

This continued every 30 years. Earthquakes flattened Bubastis when Mars flew directly over Egypt in 2670 BC. Struggling civilizations were decimated all over again. Many cultures became extinct and are erased from history. Of those who did survive, many have not recovered from the calamities to this day. There is almost no recorded history during this period. Even those who had achieved a crude form of writing after the confusion of languages were too busy struggling for survival to write history books. But don't you dare call these poor people 'pre-historic cave men', for I have just told you their history.

Only the little town of Ur Kasday continued to flourish. God's blessing was upon it as long as they continued to keep His laws, and His mighty angels protected it from the worst of the catastrophes. They rebuilt even better and stronger than before. Ur Kasday became the world center of civilization, far surpassing Ur of the Chaldees.

In 2610 BC, at the 61st close pass of Mars, a great rift opened up which extends from Syria in the north, through the **Jordan Valley** (the Dead Sea came later), the Red Sea, Sudan and the Ethiopian Highlands, through Kenya and Uganda, Tanganyika (Tanzania) and Malawi, and into Mozambique, a total distance of about 3300 miles. It also branched off across the south coast of Turkey, around Crete and Greece, creating the Adriatic Sea between the Peloponnesian and Italian peninsulas. This was the final major cleavage of the earth. **Peleg**, born in March, 2606 BC of Heber and Helene, was named to commemorate this final division of the earth. The Pacific Basin (made when Saturn took our crust to form the moon) was half filled in with ocean by this time. The movement of the continents was nearly complete, as you see them today. (Continental drift still occurs, but at inches instead of miles per year.)

Though many surviving cultures had recovered by 2600 BC, none had regained their former power and glory. Egypt was probably the first to do so, but that wasn't until young **Khasekhemwy** began to rule with his father (**Seth-Peribsen**) in 2549 BC. Khasekhemwy assassinated his father in 2543 BC. He built up a strong military, reunited north and south Egypt, and ruled with an iron hand, which is what they needed. Prosperity returned to Egypt. Khasekhemwy's two sons by his Queen Nemathap, **Senakhte** and **Djoser**, ruled with him as they got old enough (2519 BC). It was during their reign that the first pyramids (as we know them) were built, monuments to Egyptian greatness. By the time Khasekhemwy died in 2494 BC, Egypt was the most powerful nation on earth.

Ur of the Chaldees was struggling. With most of their wisest (the Kasdim) gone across the river to Ur Kasday, they never did regain their former power and influence. But instead of repenting and returning to Logos, they plunged even further into idolatry, claiming that **Nanna** (the moon) was the god who delivered them from the wrath of Dumuzi (Chronos). Huh. How stupid is that?

Ur Kasday was the hub of societal development, the center of wisdom and knowledge. It became exceedingly prosperous. Re-established trade routes naturally flowed through Ur Kasday. But I'm sorry to relate that though Peleg was a good man, he was not particularly godly. When he took over as head of the Kasdim from his father Heber, his focus (like liberals today) was helping people, rather than righteousness. He built a new bridge across the Euphrates, an arched stone span wide enough for two-way traffic. He encouraged commerce with the Chaldeans. Worse, he established the first democracy. (Before him, a patriarch, monarch, or dictator had ruled.) Initially this seemed to work well, but as always with democracy, when the people realized they could vote to legitimize their lusts and evil desires and vote for themselves benefits out of the public treasury, their culture began to go downhill. It took many years, but whenever human wisdom is chosen instead of God's wisdom, the results are always bad.

By the time **Reu** was born in 2476 BC (when his father **Peleg** was 130), the idolatry of the Chaldeans from east of the river had begun to infiltrate the Kasdim ruling class. Remember this had become a democracy, and the influx of Chaldeans flooding over the bridge overruled the wise voice of the Magi. Within a generation, the Law of Logos had been rewritten to suit the desires of the majority.

The worship of the Chaldeans' false gods on Sun-day was elevated above the worship of Logos on the Sabbath. They still performed the traditional ceremonial sacrifice to Logos every Sabbath, but He rarely came. Even the Magi stopped seeking His wisdom, to rely instead on their own accumulated knowledge, traditions, power, and prestige.

As a result, this was a dark time. The wisdom of God was scarce on the earth. The 66th close pass of Mars in 2460 BC should have been a stern warning, but the people weren't listening. That basically gave Satan a free hand in the 67th Mars flyby in 2430. The covering the Kasdim had provided for the other cultures of the world, as well as their own protective covering of righteousness, evaporated. The Kasdim were decimated, scattered, and bewildered, allowing Chaldeans to completely dominate Ur. The twin cities became one, known to the world now as **Ur of the Chaldees** (though the Kasdim still called it Ur Kasday).

Egypt also suffered. The **Early Kingdom** in Egypt ended when Pharaoh **Huni** and many of his family died during the 2430 BC Mars flyby. **Snefru** began the Old Kingdom (Dynasty 4) when he married Huni's remaining daughter Hetep-heres. Snefru was actually a pretty good Pharaoh. He tried hard to rebuild Egypt to its former greatness, especially working to improve their pyramid construction to become truly earthquake-proof. He strengthened their military defense, which turned out to be a wise move. He honored his father-in-law by rebuilding Huni's pyramid at Maidum, as it had crumbled in the last Mars flyby.

Then in honor of the birth of his firstborn son **Khufu**, Snefru determined to make the grandest pyramid of all, his Great Pyramid at Giza. It was to be mathematically perfect, demonstrating all the accumulated wisdom of the day. People today do not know how he did it, but it was not as difficult for him as you might think. People were stronger and smarter then. In addition, the stone they used was a bit softer and easier to quarry, since it had only been 1000 years since it was laid down as sediment in the waters of the Flood. They used not ramps but wooden lifting machines to get the heavy stones up course by course. Wood was plentiful, as this was the time before the deserts. Khufu co-ruled with his dad while they were finishing up his pyramid, from 2406 BC until Snefru died tragically in the 68th flyby of Mars in 2400.

Sadly, Snefru had spoiled Khufu. He was a self-centered brat. His rule was cruel and ruthless, as he was focused on preserving his own name and fame. Rather than helping his people to rebuild, he oppressed them for 22 years.

Many cultures in Turkey were also weakened. This allowed the Hatti (Hittites) to basically take over Asia Minor. Over the next 100 years, the Hittites grew very powerful. They re-developed their iron smelting process, and began mass producing crude iron weapons and tools.

Most of the cultures in the upper Euphrates were also weakened, such as the mixed Canaanites at Mari. Like the Hittites, the violent Amorites made iron weapons, trained for war, and conquered the other Canaanites around Mari.

The Assyrians similarly gained the ascendancy in the foothills of the upper Tigris, again, learning the art of war and beginning to develop better spears and swords.

Wicked King **Sargon** of Accad raised his own army and went to war. By 2334 BC he had conquered most of the city-states of Mesopotamia, ruling them with an iron fist.

The remnant of the Tamoanchan race in Meso-America was again decimated, but recovered quickly from the catastrophe. Like Egypt, they began building their temples as earthquake-proof pyramids, which are still standing. They also developed into a bloody and warlike people.

Yes, it was a very dark time. Reu continued in his father Peleg's compromising footsteps. His son **Serug** continued in his, 130 years later. It seemed there was no voice at all for Logos, and His prophecy for Shelah's infant son Heber seemed to have failed. Ur was no longer a bright place – just a rather wicked and filthy rich place. Idolatry was not only commonplace – it had become universal.

In 2376 BC wicked **Khafre** (son of Khufu) killed his own half-brother to become the Pharaoh of Egypt. He was more cruel and oppressive than his dad. Egypt suffered horribly. Khafre's first son **Bakare** ruled with him for six years from 2356, but then Khafre had him assassinated because he was too soft. His second son **Menkaure** took over. He survived his father in the 70th close pass of Mars in 2340 BC, to take over the throne after the catastrophe.

Then, as if to top it all off, godly Heber and his faithful wife Helene died in 2336 BC. He was 404. All his sons and grandsons had followed in the way of compromise. None righteous remained on earth. Not even one. Satan couldn't resist crowing about it all before the Almighty. "You see, Logos, I have won. You have none left. I've overwhelmed your precious Bride at Ur, just as I said I would. They are now among the most wicked on earth. I can now torment all of humanity anytime I wish and there isn't a blessed thing You can do about it, for I have occasion. I'm teaching the nations how to war. All who learn quickly are strong. Those who refuse to fight are defeated and wiped out. I am in total control of the universe. Your angels are blocked by Your own Word, and You swear You cannot go back on Your Word. Ha! You have defeated Yourself! Don't you see how lies are more powerful than truth, anger is more powerful than kindness, war is more powerful than peace, and hate is more powerful than love?"

When Satan finally ran down, Logos answered him softly, “You speak so much of power, my friend. Would you like Me to show you the most powerful thing in the universe?” He smiled broadly, as if in invitation.

At first, Satan just stood there with his mouth open. He could not believe what Logos was saying – first that there was anything more powerful than himself, and second that Logos would show it to him. Satan suspected a trick. But Logos was talking his language, and he was curious. He just had to find out what it was. “Okay...”

“You will have to look closely. It is very tiny.” Logos beckoned him near. Satan stepped as near as he dared and looked where Logos was pointing. He could see nothing. “Here, in My heart. I carry it with me always.” He dimmed His flaming glory for Satan’s sake, knowing that His brightness really disturbed His adversary.

Satan came even closer and looked intently into Logos’ heart. He saw a tiny bright seed there, like a spark. To Satan it looked weak and worthless. But before he could vent his disgust, Logos explained, “This is the seed of Heber’s intercession for his son. I promised him at his birth that I would make of him a great nation, and that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. He believed Me, so all his life he carried the burden of intercession with faith that it would come to pass. Though he died without seeing the promise, this seed has not, indeed cannot, die, for Heber planted it with true faith. This is the most powerful thing in the universe. Nothing, neither in heaven nor on the earth, can prevent this seed from growing up into all that Heber and Helene believed. Neither you nor I have the power to stop it. In due time it will bear fruit. Even if you destroyed the earth and all life on it, yet this seed would bear good fruit, for it was planted in the very heart of Father God in eternity, and nothing...”

But Satan had already stopped listening and fled. Most powerful thing in the universe indeed! He snorted with disgust. He would defeat that stupid seed with ease. So he set about to destroy all of Heber and Helene’s descendants. That should not be too difficult; they all belonged to him! There were already many children and grandchildren but Satan methodically traced them all down and arranged for their death, each and every one. This was almost too easy. It had always been easy for him to torment and kill his own! He was an expert, a master of the art of affliction.

But for some reason, he could not kill Peleg, son of Heber. And he could not kill Reu, his son, nor Serug, son of Reu. He arranged for ‘accidents’, and managed to devastate their families and even kill their wives and other children. He brought them great suffering and heartache. But he failed every attempt at actually killing them. He came in rage into the throne room, shouting, “It’s not fair! You are breaking Your own Word! These are mine! I can do to them whatever I wish. And You are blocking me from it! That’s not free will. It is pure force!”

“Satan!” Logos looked stern. “I block nothing. You have a free will to torment and kill any of your own as you see fit. But you seem to have forgotten Rule Number One: You may not harm My Bride without My permission. You do not have permission.”

“But... but these are not Your Bride. They are mine! They have made their choice. I have occasion! I don’t need Your permission; they gave me theirs!”

Again Logos spoke sternly. “The seed I carry in My heart shall bear My Bride through the children of Heber. This is the most powerful thing in the universe, as I said. The very fabric of the universe will conspire against you if you try to defeat it. It is My own Word sent out, combined with true faith, and returned to Me. It cannot fail to bring forth its fruit in proper season. Hear Me in this, Satan!” Logos radiated so brightly that Satan shrank back in fear. “This is the utter defeat of all your ways! The weakest of human flesh who believes My Word and returns it to Me in intercession, is stronger than all your wrath and power.” Logos paused, smiled, and sat back on His throne, as if inviting Satan to repent. “Someday, My beloved adversary, when you are ready to bow to Me, you will understand.”

Shaken to the core, Satan fled. He knew Logos was right, but he would not admit it, even to himself. But he had seen it! Even the elements and atoms of the earth seemed to conspire against him when he arranged to bring disease or accidents upon Heber’s descendants. Satan does not tolerate failure very well. He assigned the torment of Heber’s extended family to his top general and left for Egypt, where for pure revenge he arranged a major famine after the 74th flyby of Mars in 2220 BC. Pharaoh **Isesi Djedkare** of Egypt was killed, and Egypt was devastated during the reign of **Unas** his son. Unas himself died in the next flyby of Mars in 2190 BC.

Peleg died of old age (he was 339) in 2267 BC. Then **Nahor** was born of Serug in 2214. In 2137, Reu also died of old age at the age of 339. Though he was an idolater, Satan had failed to kill him. He finally gave up trying. Patience and persistence are not exactly his strong points. So for many years Satan focused on Egypt, where he worked to pervert the 4th Dynasty Pharaohs. **Teti** began peacefully but **Userkare** arranged for his murder in 2169 BC. From that day on Satan owned Egypt. **Pepi** was ambitious and cruel. His son **Pepi II** was totally committed to the selfish pleasures – a man after Satan’s own heart.

Nahor’s son **Terah** was born in 2035 BC. Satan was so busy destroying Egypt that he barely noticed the family of Nahor prospering in Ur Kasday. All Egypt was laid waste by Pepi II’s idolatry, indolence, and arrogance. Egypt never recovered from his wickedness. He died at the age of 100 in 2018 BC. His kingdom dissolved into political intrigues, plots, suicides, and assassinations. The **Old Kingdom**, the golden age of the pyramids, ended in 2010 BC at the 81st flyby of Mars. Chaos reigned in Egypt.

But in Ur Kasday, Nahor and his family grew very rich. Nahor had learned the fine art of compromise, and though he still worshiped Logos, he got along quite well with the Chaldeans too, thank you. He was a political chief as well as an esteemed religious leader, teacher, and peacemaker, truly one of the ‘good old boys’ of Ur Kasday. His son Terah was brought up to just ‘love everybody’. He was taught to tolerate, even embrace, just about anything in the name of peace and brotherhood. Yeah, they kept the Sabbath and attended the sacrifice along with the orthodox Kasdim, but they also worshiped with their face to the rising sun on Sun-day morning. Nahor even got a measure passed to build another major bridge across the Euphrates.

Michael and his angels were confused. Finally Michael went before the throne of the Almighty. “Logos, You have commissioned me to protect Heber’s family. We are doing our best, but so many times recently, we have failed You. Our charges have forgotten You and turned to idolatry. Your adversary has gained occasion to torment and even kill many of them. I am not questioning Your choice, Logos, for Your ways are always faithful and true. But of the few of Heber’s family left alive, not a single one seems at all interested in You or in true godliness. My host has no power to really cover them.” He bowed low, adding, “I’m surprised that any of Heber’s descendants are left.”

Logos smiled at him and lifted him up. “You are doing just fine, my faithful Michael. Fret not. My Bride has not perished from the earth; she just lies hidden within My heart for now. Watch and wait, and see what I will do with Terah and his family.”

“Yes, my King.” Michael bowed again and returned to his station. So, Terah was the one. Michael studied him closely. Yes, though an idolater, Terah had a tender heart. Maybe he would see the error of his father’s ways and repent. But how? Who would teach him? Could he ever leave the culture of his fathers? It seemed impossible.

It came about in a strange way. The Kasdim had made many compromises with the Chaldeans. One was their contract to contribute temple prostitutes to serve in the pagan temples to Ishtar and Dumuzi. Each year they would pick two lovely young virgin maidens to appease the lusts of the Chaldeans. Though it was a distasteful task, it had to be done to maintain the peace with the Sun-day worshipers. In 1965 BC, the special two chosen were **Tamara** and **Trisha**. They were 22 years old – beautiful, well-bred daughters of high-ranking Kasdim families.

Tender-hearted Terah was appalled. Knowing the vile abuse that would befall them, he had pity and helped them escape. He got his inheritance money and fled with them back across the river, to the farthest ghetto in Ur of the Chaldees. There Terah took them to be his own wives. (Having two or more wives was common in that culture.) He bought a humble cottage and began to raise a family, unknown to his father Nahor and the rest of the Kasdim.

The Chaldeans searched for months, and ended up punishing innocent Nahor, but they never found Terah. He loved Trisha and Tamara dearly, having risked his life for them. Now he was a changed man, no longer willing to compromise with the evil that would have destroyed his beloved brides. Trisha and Tamara got along very well together. They were grateful to have been spared, and eager to please Terah. Though young, they had been raised in the highest culture of the Kasdim, and wanted the best for their family. They spoke traditional Hebrew in their home, rejecting both the Aramaic and the idolatry of the Chaldeans. Though living among them, they celebrated only the Sabbath, hiding themselves from the boisterous and sensual sun-worshippers on Sun-day morning.

Logos doesn’t much care for polygamy, but He liked their attitudes. He sent His blessing to rest upon them. His mighty angels formed a wall about them day and night. Often on a Sabbath evening He would come among them, sometimes in the stillness of their minds, and sometimes visibly and audibly as well. Though they lived among the worst of the Chaldeans, Logos promised to be faithful to them as long as they remained faithful to Him. The year after their flight across the river, Logos came to Terah and his family after the Sabbath sacrifice. “Father YHWH accepts your sacrifice.” He said with great joy. “You are all cleansed! Of all the families of the earth, you alone have chosen to return to Me in righteousness. I am pleased. I shall bless you, and guide you, and guard you, and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed! Only stay close to Me, and do not follow in the ways of the Chaldeans.”

Thus in early 1964 BC Terah (who was just 70 years old) received a double blessing. Both of his young wives conceived. That fall Tamara gave birth to a son. They named him **Nahor**, in honor of his grandfather Nahor, Terah’s dad, who was 250 that year. Within a few weeks a son was also born to Terah and Trisha. They named him **Haran**. Five years later in 1959 BC Tamara bore another son, **Abram** (‘exalted father’), nicknamed Ram (‘high’).

In the fall of 1952 BC a daughter was born to Tamara. Her name was Ammi, and she was the loveliest girl in the world. Next spring a daughter was also born to Trisha. She called her Nina. She became even more lovely than Ammi. The following year Trisha bore another daughter, **Sarai**, who became the loveliest princess of them all. Terah had many other children also, but most grew up to join the Chaldean culture and are lost to our records.

Years go by, and children grow up. At the age of 40, Haran married Ammi and Nahor married Nina. That fall, Abram (at 35) married beautiful Sarai (who was then 25). No happier or more blessed couples existed on the face of the earth. (In those days it was common to marry your half-sister, though the problems of inbreeding were now surfacing as the gene pool deteriorated after the Flood.)

Terah was a very wise and careful man, and his business prospered greatly. (He was an inventor and developer.) Haran and Ammi also prospered, having a son, Lot, and two daughters, **Milcah** and **Iscah**, in the next three years. But Abram and Sarai, and Nahor and Nina, were barren. Logos no longer came to them at their Sabbath gatherings. Their pleas to Logos for children went unanswered. Logos seemed to be upset with them. They didn't know why.

Haran had started a business selling ceramic idols to the Chaldeans, who had many gods. He made them well, and they sold like hotcakes, doubling his wealth several times over in three years. When reprimanded by Terah, he would laugh and swear that they were not idols to him – just cheap trinkets which made him a lot of money. But soon he was burning incense to them and leaving a food offering before them just like any Chaldean idolater.

Confronted by his father, again Haran swore he didn't believe in them, and only put offerings before them to fool his customers. Besides, God was blessing his family!

Terah quietly reminded him of his own youth. "I didn't really believe in them either," he said. "But I lived among people who did, and I found it easy to just go along with it. I compromised, thinking that I could serve false gods and worship the true God at the same time. But Logos never came to our Sabbath gatherings. We slowly drifted further away from His wisdom and His truth. Then one day my eyes were opened. The Kasdim fathers were to present two maidens to the Chaldeans to become temple prostitutes and spend the rest of their lives in the temple of Ishtar being used and abused by every idol worshiper who came. When I saw them, I saw the end result of idol worship: the abuse, torment, and destruction of real people. I couldn't stand it! I broke in to the council chambers of the Kasdim in the middle of the last night before the presentation, unlocked their room, and ran away with the two maidens. They are your mother Trisha and your aunt Tamara. They love me so much because they know I saved their lives. I swore I never again would serve false gods. God is blessing your family, and all of us, because of that commitment. You are treading dangerous ground by breaking it!"

Haran didn't believe his father. He became even more fervent in his idol business. He was the one being blessed, certainly not Abram or Nahor. It must be because of his many idols. He would proudly show off his three babies (Lot was three at the time) and claim he had the blessing of the gods. He had become quite rich, and he actually began telling his customers that his prosperity was due to his worship of these very idols in his store. Neither his father nor his brothers Abram and Nahor could deter him.

One day he had to go into town for supplies. His wife Ammi was busy with her three babies, so he tried to get his father to mind the store, as this was the Sabbath, a big sales day before Sun-day. His father refused. Surprisingly, his little brother Abram volunteered to do it instead.

Now, Abram didn't intend him harm. He was a kind brother, and tender-hearted like their father. Early in the morning, just after Haran had left, a poor woman came in with a bowl of meal. With tears in her eyes, she told Abram that she had no money to buy an idol, so she had brought this bowl of meal instead, and would he please offer it to his idols for her so she could obtain a blessing for Sun-day. Abram was shocked, appalled! He couldn't do it. He never should have offered to take this job! He pled with the poor woman to take the meal to feed herself and her children. He told her that these idols were just made of clay and fired in the oven. They couldn't eat meal. It would just be wasted! He pushed the bowl back into her arms.

But she didn't understand. She really believed in this stuff! Haran had convinced her that Abram and Nahor's lack of faith in these idols had made their wives barren! Finally Abram could stand it no longer. He found a club and smashed it down upon a large idol, breaking it to pieces. "There, don't you see! It's just a piece of stone! It can't eat. It can't hear your prayers. It can't bless you. It can't even protect itself. Just look! It's no god at all!"

The woman shrank back in horror, dropping her bowl and spilling meal all over the floor. She was certain that lightning was about to fall from heaven and vaporize them. In disgust, Abram took his club to smash another idol, then a third. Still the woman could not understand. Finally she fled, wailing at the loss of what was so precious to her.

By then a crowd of potential buyers had gathered in her place. So Abram preached to them, punctuating each point with another smashed idol until there was only one (the largest one) left. "Now, how many of you understand what I am saying, that these idols are not gods at all, with no power to help or bless you?" He held out the club. "If you understand, I'll let you smash this last one. Here. They can't hurt you. They can't even protect themselves!"

He was saddened that no one took him up on his offer. They had come to buy those idols! They left, muttering angrily to themselves. Suddenly Abram realized that he could be in real trouble here. What would Haran think when he saw the mess? Thinking fast, he took the club and propped it up in the hands of the last remaining idol. He then grabbed his book and sat back in his chair to read.

When Haran returned, he was shocked at the carnage, as I'm sure you can imagine. "What happened here?" he bellowed. "How did all my idols get broken?"

Abram looked up casually. "Oh, they had an argument right after you left, and got to fighting. I couldn't stop 'em." He got up and slowly surveyed the chaos. "Hmm... looks like that big one over there won the brawl."

"You stupid fool! They're just idols! They can't argue or fight! Now what happened?" He came up and stood nose to nose with Abram, as if he was ready to fight him. He was shaking with anger.

To his credit, Abram didn't lose his temper. "You are rect, my brother. They can't argue or fight. Neither can they bless or answer prayers. All they can do is waste the people's money and push them further into depravity and despair." He walked over to the last remaining idol and picked up the club, holding it out to his brother. "Here, Haran. Take this club and finish the job, and I'll help you start a real business. One that will really bless and help people. We could... we could start mass producing some of our father's inventions, and make both him and us a lot of money!" A generous offer indeed.

Sadly, Haran refused. He took the club and threw it as hard as he could into the river. Then he knelt before his last idol, inspected it for damage, and lovingly carried it into his house for protection.

Satan had been in Egypt, but he returned to Ur the moment he heard what was happening there. He arrived in time to see Haran caring for the idol. He immediately got his general in command of Ur, and together they went to the throne room. "Did You see that?" He crowed to Logos. "I wasn't even there. My general here managed to deceive Your precious Bride into following me. So once again the score is zero for You, all for me! After all Your prophecies about 'in them shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' Indeed, they shall. Blessed to serve and worship me!"

Never one to interrupt, Logos waited until Satan ran down, then suggested he ask his general what had really happened – before he got there. His general reluctantly told him about Abram's stand against idolatry. Satan's anger boiled over. He was about to blast his general's head off, but Logos stopped him. "No, no! None of that in My presence. Your general did his best to serve you. If you assault those who serve you, your kingdom will certainly fall. And you still think your ways are better than Mine?"

Satan turned to leave, but Logos again stopped him. "Have you no comment for Me about Abram? In him resides the spirit of My Bride! His choice is beautiful beyond words. He has become zealous for My good name, My wisdom, and My holiness."

"Bah! He's still young, and he'll soon fall like all the rest. He is just one. Your prophecy to Heber has already failed! You promised to make of him a great nation, and all You have is one. Maybe one. And that's after six generations!"

"My Word to Heber was not prophecy, as you think of it. I was merely stating a fact, which in the eternity of My Father is already accomplished. It is Truth that cannot fail. I already told you that. When you see it you will believe. Then you will bow to concede that My Word is Truth."

"When I see it I will believe..." Satan mimicked Logos, then spat out, "That'll be a cold day in hell, You... You..." He had thought of a few choice cuss words to describe Logos, but somehow, here in the holiness of His presence, they just wouldn't come out. He fled.

Abram found Terah up on the flat roof of his home. He told him the whole sad story. They both bowed in prayer, asking Logos for mercy on Haran. Logos came to them, startling them, as the sun had already set and the Sabbath was past. They had not seen Logos in three years.

"Peace! Fear not!" Logos encouraged them, for they were frightened at His fiery presence. "You have no time to lose. Haran's choice has empowered My adversary. You are in great danger. Now take your family and possessions and flee from your country and your relatives, to a land that I will show you. I am with you always." He vanished.

Abram and Terah were left gasping for air. It was too sudden, too overwhelming. After a weak, "Yes, Logos," they helped each other down the stairs and called their families together to explain the situation.

Terah's two wives Tamara and Trisha were all for it. They hated Ur of the Chaldees anyway. Abram's wife Sarai agreed. But Nahor wasn't so sure. His wife Nina always preferred the prosperity and ease of the big city. And Haran and Ammi were flat out against it. They had three babies to care for, not to mention a thriving business (once they replaced Haran's stock of idols) and a good reputation in the city. There was just no way they were going to leave all this for some alleged "Word from Logos."

Abram and Terah pledged together with their wives that they would obey Logos, even if it meant leaving Haran and his family. They began packing that very night. They urged Nahor, at least, to join them, but he still waffled.

Logos had said 'now', so they planned to leave early the morning of the second day, giving them a full day to finish packing, as they had many possessions. They were too late. News of what Abram had done had spread across the city. After a long day packing, they had just fallen asleep when the Chaldeans came, furious at this threat to their culture.

The thugs seemed to only see two houses, Nahor's and Haran's. They came to Haran's first, through the open store front where all his idols still lay smashed. They stabbed Haran's sleeping body in the chest and throat, then ravished his lovely wife Ammi and took her to become a temple prostitute. Somehow they didn't see the three babies, asleep in the next room. After ransacking the house, they went to Nahor's home. Again, they stabbed him six times and left him for dead, and did to his beautiful young wife Nina the same as they had to Ammi. When they left, both homes were a shambles and everything valuable was taken, even the last remaining unbroken idol.

Now this was a tragedy of the first magnitude. It was the first time Terah or any of his family had really experienced the full wickedness and wrath of the Chaldeans. They had thought they could live among them in peace, hiding their true identity. When the assassins finally left, the survivors were utterly horrified, repentant, and eager to leave Ur, especially Nahor (who had been critically wounded).

Haran was dying. Terah cradled him close and cried out to Logos in anguish. He was too late. Haran died in his arms. His last words to his dad were, “I wish I’d listened.”

They should have obeyed Logos sooner. They should have left as soon as they were packed instead of sleeping in Ur one last night. But now they couldn’t go. Nahor was in no shape to travel. They pled with Logos for more time.

Logos appeared, again startling them with His fiery brilliance, so that they all fell to the ground except Nahor, who lay bed in great pain. “Peace. Fear not!” Logos greeted them cheerfully. He encouraged them to get up and stop weeping. “You have prayed the wrong prayer. I cannot grant you more time here, for My adversary has occasion and he will use it to destroy you. You must leave now. However...” He smiled invitingly to Nahor, “in your repentance, you may try a different prayer.”

“Yes, Logos, will You please heal Nahor so he can go with us!” Tamara blurted out, so quickly that Terah was startled at her boldness.

“Spoken like the loving mother that you are, My dear,” Logos responded with a broad grin. He then briefly held His hand out over Nahor and vanished.

Sure enough, Nahor was instantly well. Considering the possibilities, Trisha’s eyes got big. She too cried out, “Logos! Please don’t go. Have mercy! What about Haran and Ammi? What about Nina? Can’t You bring them back to us so we can all go together?” Everyone paused and joined in her prayer, but Logos didn’t respond, and even the air around them grew cold. Suddenly they knew in their hearts that Logos would not respond – that their loved ones had chosen the adversary and were beyond repentance. The thought propelled them to action.

Nahor grabbed what was left of his possessions (which wasn’t much). They woke Haran and Ammi’s babies and bundled them up. They loaded their camels and donkey carts. As the sun rose over the eastern hills they became just another caravan among the many heading north from Ur up the well-traveled road beside the Euphrates River. Above them flew their angelic covering, powerful though un-seen, Michael himself at the lead. Less than an hour after they had left, the thugs were again at their homes. This time they could see all four houses. They took whatever they wished and burned the rest. Then they left to continue doing unspeakable things to Ammi and Nina.

This was the second **Exodus**. (The first had been Jared and Judith’s escape from ‘that wicked city’ of Enoch.) As before, this pointed prophetically toward the great Exodus from Egypt. They were headed for some ‘**Promised Land**’ that Logos had told them He would show them. They had no clue where it was, or how far, or how long they would be on the road, or anything. Logos didn’t tell them, either. He was testing their faith. *Terah was 115 years old, and Abram was 39. The date was March 21, 1920 BC.*

It was tough. Try it sometime! Take an interminably long trip, on camels and donkey carts, with three crying babies and no wet-nurse; trying to sterilize bottles, mixing formula, and running out of baby powder; with no laundry facility, never enough clean diapers, and fearing for your lives all along the way. It was un-fun. Every city they reached seemed less friendly and more wicked than the last. They wept and cried out to Logos.

Everyone was getting edgy and crabby. Some began to doubt the wisdom of continuing until they knew where they were going. Finally Terah paused at an oasis and had a family chat. “I’ve been doing a lot of thinking,” he said slowly. “Logos told us to go, to leave our country and our relatives, and ‘go to a land that I will show you.’ I take that as a promise. He said He will show us, so He will. We’ve just got to believe Him and obey, that’s all. We’re moving. If we were going the wrong way He would turn us around. We’ve got to assume that He is leading us.”

Terah paused, while heads began to nod. Abram spoke up. “I agree, Dad. Thank you for standing firm in faith. You are a comfort to all of us. We do trust that Logos is leading, through you. We will follow you even through the valley of death.” Thus Abram honored his father. They went on, as the unseen angels covering them cheered their decision.

When they got past Accad they thought the worst was over, but they were wrong. The kingdom of Mari was even worse, especially now that it was ruled by the wicked and violent Amorites. If they had not had angelic protection, they certainly would have fallen prey to brigands along the way. They learned to travel in the early morning, and hide in the evening when the highway was filled with bands of robbers, rapists, and other carnal predators.

By the time they got through Mari, they were all ready to call it quits. The Spirit of Logos urged them to cross the Euphrates at the ford to head toward Canaan, but by then they weren’t listening. Instead they went north along the Balikh River into the foothills. A mile past the last town, they stopped and began to build their own town. Terah insisted on calling it **Haran**, in memory of his dead son. There they lived happily and prospered for many years.

Still barren, Abram and Sarai adopted Haran and Ammi’s babies, Lot, Milcah, and Iscah. They grew up, and at the age of 19, Milcah agreed to marry her uncle Nahor. She bore him many babies. We shall later hear from her eighth son, **Bethuel**. They were very happy together.

Iscah and Lot remained with Abram and Sarai. Long-standing tradition would have allowed them to marry, but they hid their desire for each other. From an early age they began having secret sexual relations. Logos closed Iscah’s womb so she could not have children. Abram and Sarai reprimanded them when they found out, but what else could they do? That was part of the culture they had fled.

In 1900 BC four wicked kings from the land of Shinar, the kings of Ur, Uruk, Susa, and Opis, banded their armies together to rule the world. After subduing the cities of Mesopotamia, they conquered the Amorites in Mari, then all the Canaanites, and even the Amalekites in Arabia. They demanded tribute, with a system of annual taxation enforced by their armies. Terah and Nahor just paid the taxes. They were wealthy and could afford it. Besides, they enjoyed living at Haran and didn't want to make waves.

But Abram didn't like giving their hard-earned money to those evil kings. It irked his righteous soul to support their idolatry and immorality. Again they prayed to Logos for wisdom. Finally Logos responded. *This was in March 21, 1884 BC, 36 years from the time they had left Ur. Abram was 75 years old, and lovely Sarai, at 65, was still barren.*

Logos appeared in flames of fire atop the altar at the Sabbath evening sacrifice. He hadn't spoken to them since they had left Ur. They were startled and fell on their faces. "Peace! Fear not!" He called, encouraging them to sit up. Then He spoke sharply to Lot and Iscah. "You are living in an immoral relationship. I cannot cleanse willful sin."

"Oh, Logos! We'll stop! We repent! Please cleanse us! Forgive us! We were young and lonely. We didn't know it was wrong! After our parents died we had no one except each other to go to for comfort. We..."

Logos interrupted. "Your excuses hold no sway with Me. You did know it was wrong. Abram and Sarai told you. You could have gone to them for comfort and guidance. Instead, you tried to justify your actions by the standards of the pagan culture you left behind."

Lot and Iscah put their faces back to the ground and bawled. "We're sorry! We do repent! Forgive us! Just show us what to do and we will do it."

For a time, the only sound was that of their weeping. Finally, Logos spoke. "Your new attitude of repentance is pleasing to Me. I forgive you. Father forgives you. You are all cleansed. Lot and Iscah, you have made your choice for each other. I permit you to marry. Separate yourselves for tonight, and tomorrow you may be wed. I will bless your marriage from this day forth, and will open Iscah's womb."

Abram and Sarai gave a sigh of relief. They realized they had been holding their breath. Everyone smiled.

Logos continued. "You must realize that brother/sister marriages are no longer wise. That is called inbreeding. The damage sin has done to your bodies can now be passed on to your children, causing barrenness or birth defects. Now we have some unfinished business, do we not?"

Abram looked at Terah and then back to Logos. "Uh... do you mean about the taxes? I think Dad paid them for us. But I just don't feel right about giving money to those wicked Chaldean kings. We left Ur so we could be free from all that!" Abram was sure Logos would understand.

"But is it any more right for you to allow your father to pay for you?" Logos responded, smiling.

"Uh... No, Lord." Abram hung his head.

"You must make your choice, and live with it." Logos blazed brightly, coming down from on top of the altar to stand close to Abram and Sarai. "Though evil themselves, the Chaldeans are my weapon of judgment against the idolatry of the Amorites. The Chaldean kings are now the final authority in the land. You must either submit to their authority or leave, just as you left Ur. This is the choice you must make. Terah and Nahor have decided to submit to their law and pay their taxes, so they can remain a beacon of light and hope here. What is your choice, My friend?"

Abram and Sarai looked at each other, nodded, and looked back up to Logos. "We choose to follow You – to do whatever You want us to do." They knelt before Logos in total surrender. To have Logos call them "My friend," was all the encouragement they needed. They would follow Him to the ends of the earth if He called them.

Logos beamed, and the unseen angels crowding around gave a mighty cheer and shout of praise. "Thank you, My beloved." He held out His arms in love and acceptance. "Now, back to our unfinished business. Do you recall back in Ur when I asked you to flee to a land I would show you?"

"Oh. Is that what you meant? Yes, Lord."

"You have not yet reached that land. What I said before, I now say again. Go forth from your country, and from your relatives, and from this your father's house, to a land which I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. So you shall be a blessing to the nations. I will bless all who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you, and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The fire again blazed, bright and hot, filling Abram and Sarai with joy.

Sarai dared to speak. "A great nation? Does that mean that You will heal my barrenness and give me children?" She smiled up at Logos in hope.

Logos smiled back. "I gave you My Word. It will come to pass in My own time and way. Your job is only to hold My Word fast in your heart, and return it to Me in faith and intercession. Never let time or circumstance cause you to doubt, fear, or forget."

He looked back at Lot and Iscah, "It is time to get ready for your wedding tomorrow. I will give you a bridal week, then you too must choose whether to stay with Terah and Nahor, or to go where I am leading Abram and Sarai."

He smiled at them, and turned back to Abram. "Prepare to leave here in a week from tomorrow. I will lead you. I am with you always." He beamed at them, and disappeared.

"Yes, Lord!" Abram and Sarai again bowed their faces to the ground, and again the angels cheered.

CHAPTER 21 – ABRAM AND LOT LEAVE HARAN

After the wedding, Lot and Iscah made their choice to go with Abram. It was hard for Iscah to say good-bye to her sister and fifteen nephews and nieces. (Milcah and Nahor already had eight sons and seven daughters.) At that time baby Bethuel was a precocious, adorable three-year-old who loved to cuddle. But Lot and Iscah had seen Logos. Now they were committed to follow wherever He might lead. True repentance had done a beautiful work.

Abram and Sarai were glad to have them. They gathered their many possessions (they had become very wealthy), and prepared to leave. Their servants were also given the choice to stay or go with them. They all chose to remain with their master Abram, for he was a good and generous master. Thus the caravan that set out that Sun-day was over one hundred souls, along with over a thousand sheep, camels, donkeys, goats, and other animals.

They traveled slowly south, this time crossing the Euphrates at the ford and heading southwest. At each fork in the road, Abram waited silently in prayer for Logos' direction. He led him all the way to the Canaanite city of **Shechem**. There Abram stopped under a giant old oak tree, where he built an altar for the Sabbath sacrifice.

Logos appeared over the altar, blessing them. He was all smiles. "This is the good land of which I spoke. Walk the length and breadth of it. It is a spacious and fruitful land, though now it is cursed by its wicked inhabitants. Your presence here will begin to remove the curse. Unto your descendants I will give it – all the land you see. Then it will become fruitful again, blessed above all other lands."

The following Sabbath they built an altar on a ridge between **Luz** and **Ai**, in thanks to Logos for His promise. This place became known as **Bethel** (House of God).

After the Sabbath they continued their journey, sight-seeing as they walked slowly through the land and into the **Negev**. It had now been over four months since they had left Haran. Iscah was pregnant, having conceived right after their wedding. But this was no place to settle down. The grasslands were vast, but the grass was withered and covered in volcanic ash. Abram saw the effect of the curse!

October 24th 1890 BC, six years before, was the regular flyby of Mars on its 30 year cycle of close passes. It hadn't done a lot of damage, as people were well prepared for it, and in those days it wasn't coming close enough to cause the really big earthquakes. But it had set off a huge volcano in the Aegean Sea, on the island of **Thera** (north of Crete), which began spewing out a lot of dust and ash. Over the next seven years, this ash continued to fill the atmosphere, circling the globe and darkening the sun. The result was an extensive famine in the Middle East, which was hit the worst by the ash because of the prevailing westerly winds. By 1884 BC as Abram's caravan slowly traveled through Canaan, the famine was getting pretty severe.

So they kept moving, first west to the sea, then south along the coast highway. Traders from Egypt had good news: most of the ash had missed Egypt. They showed Abram their proof: a wealth of fresh produce which they planned to sell to the starving Canaanites. After prayer, Abram decided to live in Egypt until the famine was over.

But along the way, he had second thoughts. His barren wife Sarai was still one of the loveliest women on the planet, even though she was 67. With her slender, petite features, smiling eyes, lithe strong body, and spectacular blonde hair (like her mother Trisha) she didn't look a day over 35, with 'nary a wrinkle or crease on her lovely face. Abram worried. Egyptian officials are not known for their integrity. When he applied for permission to pasture his flocks there, they would surely notice his wife's beauty! They just might kill him and take her for themselves. Instead of asking Logos for protection, he plotted with Sarai to say she was his sister – not a lie, just a half-truth. (Their father was Terah, though Abram's mother was Tamara, while Sarai's mother was Trisha.)

Wrong choice. Logos was displeased. He doesn't seem to like half-truths any more than outright lies. So He decided to expose the sham. When Abram reached Egypt and asked for permission to pasture his flocks there, the local officials at Avaris took one look, saw the possibilities, and gladly welcomed him into Egypt. Abram only saw green fields, free of ash. They saw something else entirely. Abram was obviously very wealthy, a prince of the land. He must be of royal blood. They saw fresh breeding stock for their Pharaoh! *Iscah, though young and lovely, was already married to Lot. But Sarai, Abram's sister, was unmarried and beautiful, and still young enough to bear an heir for the Pharaoh!*

To understand this, you need to know that the line of Pharaohs was rather inbred at that time, since they had been marrying within the royal family for generations. (That was common back then. See my appendix on inbreeding.) But in time, certain recessive defects would become more pronounced, and of all people, Pharaohs had to be perfect! Their Pharaoh, **Mentuhotep II**, was 38 and married to his half-sister Neferu. But their offspring so far had all been imperfect, and were therefore secretly slain. Perhaps lovely Sarai could bear him a perfect heir.

Pharaoh's officials traveled up the **Nile River** to **Thebes** in Upper Egypt to tell Mentuhotep, in glowing terms. He liked what he heard. A lovely blonde princess from a far land! He sent for her at once, and ordered his officials to lavishly reward her 'brother' with livestock and servants.

Abram was shocked. Though he expected to have to argue (or even fight) with the local officials over Sarai, he had no idea that the Pharaoh would be interested! How did he find out? Abram was appalled, but there was nothing to do about it. The Pharaoh is not one with whom you argue. You just obey. So he sent Sarai off and fell on his knees.

Logos heard his prayers, and decided to show mercy. All of the women in Thebes began to miscarry. During the weeks it takes to travel from Avaris up the Nile River to Thebes, a distance of over 400 miles, not a live child was born, from the day the Pharaoh gave orders to take Sarai.

At first, he didn't recognize anything was wrong. He was delighted with Sarai. He took her into his household, and ordered his servants to teach her classical Egyptian (a very difficult language) and groom her to become his queen. Oh, he still liked Neferu, but he was exasperated with all her still-births and deformed babies. He grinned in eager anticipation of the perfect heir that this beautiful blonde princess from afar would give him.

But after a year of miscarriages, it became painfully obvious that something was very wrong. Even his servants were losing their babies. And none of them were inbred, for he prohibited it. He called Sarai, who by this time could speak Egyptian pretty well, to present herself before him. He didn't beat around the bush.

"Sarai. I've treated you and your brother very well. Yet ever since I brought you here, the gods have cursed me and my household. Can you think of any reason why?"

Sarai knew immediately why. She had obeyed Abram and told the officials that she was his sister, but she couldn't stand there and tell a direct lie to the Pharaoh's face! She bowed her head low, not in Pharaoh-worship (though he took it that way) but merely in shame at being discovered. "Yes, Your Majesty. I know why. I am Abram's wife. Logos our God has cursed you for taking me away from him." She fell to her knees on the floor and dissolved into weeping and pleading for forgiveness.

Mentuhotep ordered her away, and immediately told his officials to send for Abram. He came as fast as he could, leaving his servants in charge of all his possessions. Again, the Pharaoh did not mince words.

"What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me she was your wife? Why did you say she was your sister, so that I took her to become my wife? Your God Logos has put a curse on all my household on account of her. May He judge between me and you, that I have acted righteously toward you even though you tried to deceive me. I swear, I have never touched her. Not once! Now, pray to your God for me, that His curse be removed so that my household may again become fruitful, and that I may have an heir worthy to be called my son."

Again Abram was shocked – he had no idea that there was any fear of God in this place. He knelt on the floor before the throne and began to pray as the Pharaoh had asked. He poured out his heart to Logos, in repentance, in intercession for Egypt and the Pharaoh, and in worship. Finally he stood and promised, "Logos has heard, and He will remove the curse as you have asked. Your household shall again be fruitful. But..." he hesitated.

Mentuhotep urged him to continue. He even stepped down from the dais and stood near to Abram. "What did your God tell you? You must tell me all. I swear I will not treat you the worse if you tell me the truth now."

Abram bowed, his eyes downcast in shame. "Your Majesty, Sarai my wife is my sister, my half-sister. Logos told us that brothers and sisters should no longer marry. I should have asked Him first. For 38 years I suffered for my hasty, selfish choice. Though I love her, she is barren. Also Lot, my nephew, married his sister Iscah. Their marriage was cursed until they repented and Logos opened her womb. As I prayed, Logos showed me that you, too, have married your half-sister. Your marriage, too, is cursed." He stopped. He wanted to tell the Pharaoh that he had to repent, but he was afraid. You don't just tell a Pharaoh what to do! Besides, he wondered if he had ever repented.

But Mentuhotep was ahead of him. "You're right, I am married to my own half-sister Neferu, and our marriage has indeed been cursed. All our babies have been still-born or deformed. Your God must be very powerful to have told you that, for I have worked hard to keep our curse a secret, and have ordered my officials to tell no one. So... you said Lot and Iscah repented, and Logos opened her womb. What does 'repent' mean, and how do I do it?"

Amazing! Here was Abram sharing the good news of Logos and His righteousness, forgiveness, and love, with the mightiest ruler on earth. Mentuhotep received it gladly, repented (as best he knew how), and gained a measure of faith in Logos. True to his word, he sent Abram and Sarai away in peace, with all their possessions, even those he had given Abram as Sarai's dowry. However, Abram returned all the Egyptian servants except for one maid named **Hagar** whom Mentuhotep had given to Sarai.

Though he never received an heir through his first wife Neferu (who didn't repent), from then on Mentuhotep's reign was blessed. He took another wife named Tem, who gave him a perfect heir, Sankh-kara (**Mentuhotep III**). Logos gave him wisdom in the coming years. He became one of Egypt's best and most amazing rulers. He founded the **Middle Kingdom**, which ended the First Intermediate Period. Before him, competing Nomarchs ruled various districts and the 10th Dynasty ruled at **Herakleopolis**. Mentuhotep I (founder of the 11th Dynasty) and his sons (the Inyotef brothers) only ruled Upper Egypt at Thebes. Mentuhotep's grandson Mentuhotep II conquered and unified the entire land of Egypt by about 1874 BC. Though outwardly he still honored Egyptian gods such as his father's god **Montu**, the Theban god of war, yet secretly he worshiped Logos, the God of Abram and Sarai.

The terrible 1860 BC flyby of Mars which caused the Sodom and Gomorrah catastrophe devastated Egypt. I'll tell what happened to Abram later, but for Mentuhotep II it was the ultimate test, tearing Egypt apart into struggling factions fighting for survival.

Old Mentuhotep came through. By 1857 BC, in the 39th year of his long and illustrious reign, he had reunited the 'two lands' and restored peace and prosperity. His first son though Tem, **Sankh-kara**, ruled with him for 12 years until his demise in 1832 BC at the venerable age of 90. Mentuhotep II had ruled for a total of 64 years, and had helped Egypt to prosper through some very tough times.

CHAPTER 22 – THE BATTLE OF THE KINGS

Now, back to Abram and Lot. Shamed and chastened, yet blessed in spite of it all, Abram returned to the Negev. He settled at what was later called **Beersheba**. The ash had mostly dissipated, the sun was shining through, and grass had finally returned to cover the earth. There Abram and Lot prospered, now even more wealthy than before.

Lot's daughter, Lynn, had been born in Egypt. Lot had prospered right along with Abram. Their vast flocks and herds got too big for the land, and their servants began fighting over water and grazing rights. In addition, some Canaanites (mostly Perizzites) had moved into the grasslands of the Negev while they were gone, adding to the squabbles. Though Abram's household was large, with several hundred servants who could fight like trained soldiers, yet it troubled him to have to fight for the land.

When Lynn was a year old, it came to a head. Abram called in Lot and Iscah. "Sarai and I have loved you, and raised you as our own children. We have protected you, and you have prospered with us. We are very happy for you, and will always love you. But our herds are vast and this area cannot support us both any more. It is time for us to separate. You and your growing family will do well wherever you go. Choose now; whichever way you go, I will go the other. Thus there will no longer be strife between our herdsmen, for we are brothers."

At this time there was no Dead Sea. The Jordan River was well above sea level, meandering across a vast plain which stretched from the Judean Highlands to the Jordan Plateau, and from the hills of Lebanon to the Red Sea. This fertile plain was called the **Valley of the Plain (Shaveh)**. It was now clear of ash, and was green and well-watered.

So that is the area Lot chose. He saw vast grass-lands there, as well as prosperous cities and towns. Frankly, the cities attracted Lot as much as the grass-lands, for he had grown used to being wealthy and coveted their luxury.

Abram did not criticize Lot's choice, though he knew of the wickedness of those cities. He and Sarai had raised Lot and Iscah to love righteousness and hate evil; now they had to trust that their training would stick. They remained at Beersheba, and prayed for Lot's family more than ever.

The next summer, Logos came to Abram again, as the Sabbath began at sundown. The sky was a glorious flaming red all around, as there was still a little fine ash in the air.

"Peace, My beloved!" Logos called, as Abram and Sarai fell on their faces to the ground. "Stand and see." His left arm beckoned them up, while His right arm swung in a wide arc around the horizon. "All the land that you see..." He paused while Abram and Sarai looked in all directions, "I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as beyond counting as the dust of the earth. Arise and walk through the land, for I will give it all to you." He vanished, leaving Abram and Sarai gasping for air. They stood, arm in arm, and again swung their gaze in all directions. By the red glow they looked to the Great (Mediterranean) Sea, south to the Red Sea, east across the wide Valley of Shaveh to the Transjordan plateau, and north to the mountains of Judea as far as **Hebron** (then known as Kiriath-Arba). They stared that way until dark.

The next day, they packed up to move. Logos had told them to walk through the land. They obediently walked up into the Judean hills. They camped just north of Hebron by the great **Oaks of Mamre**, and built another altar to Logos.

Abram's family had continued to grow – though still childless, they now had over 300 servants and guards, which Abram kept in good military training as protection against marauding Canaanites.

As it turned out, he would need them. Five kings in the valley had rebelled against their conquerors (those four wicked kings from the land of Shinar), who came with their armies to punish them. They had a big battle down in the Valley of Shaveh. Abram didn't really care if they killed each other off – he well knew how wicked they all were.

Then news reached him at Hebron that the four kings from Shinar had successfully reconquered the valley and taken many captives, *including Lot and all he owned*. They were captives in a caravan heading north, right now!

The messenger was one of Lot's servants. He had barely escaped with his life! He pled with Abram for help, adding that Iscah now had two babies, the second only weeks old.

Abram took immediate action, organizing his trained servants into two companies of troops. That evening he sent Company B with 98 armed men, straight down the road from Hebron to the Jordan River. They were to turn north and attack the caravan from behind. He led his remaining 220 armed men at double time directly north to Shechem. There they turned down toward the river valley, hoping to reach the river road in front of the caravan.

They marched on through the night without stopping to rest or sleep. Sure enough, the enemy caravan was still in the Valley of Shaveh. Everyone was fast asleep after a big victory celebration. Abram prayed for strength, sounded his ram's horn trumpet as the signal for Company B to attack the rear, and waded into them, swords swinging. Still groggy with hangovers, some still naked from the night's carousing, they fled in panic toward Shinar, leaving behind all the booty and even most of their weapons.

As planned, Company B stayed to free the captives, while Abram led Company A to chase the fleeing warriors. He pursued them through **Jabesh-Gilead** and into the land of **Zobah** (north of Damascus) from whence they had come. All who stopped to fight him were slain. Those who escaped only succeeded by leaving everything behind.

The next day Company A returned south, triumphant, gathering all the stuff that had been dropped along the way. A big celebration was going on when they got back to the Valley of Shaveh. Everyone had heard the good news and had come for their freed relatives, whom they'd been sure they would never see again. They were also hopeful to reclaim at least some of their stolen possessions.

The king of **Sodom**, the largest of the attacked cities, came up to meet Abram, bowing low before him. "Thank you, sir! You have saved our city from a most humiliating defeat. I and my people are eternally grateful. Please, take all the spoils, only return the captives of my people."

Abram looked at him strangely, a half-smile on his face, and shook his head. "No, my friend. I will take nothing that is yours, not so much as a shoelace, lest you claim that you are the one who made Abram rich. For I serve Adonai El-Elyon, God Most High, the Creator and Ruler of the heavens and the earth. He abundantly meets all my needs. I have a sworn covenant with Him, and I look to no other. My men will take their pay from what they ate and from all the booty we took from the kings of Shinar." He laughed. "In their haste to flee, they left behind everything they had. So we have plenty. You take all that is yours and go."

After talking with the city-kings, Abram met with Lot and Iscah and their babies. They did indeed have two! Lynn was two, and tiny Lyra was only three weeks old. It was so good to see them. Abram rejoiced to find them safe.

"Y'know, Lot," Abram confided. "I think you are living a little too close to those wicked cities. The valley is lovely and all, but you might want to move a bit farther south. Logos always judges wickedness, and you don't want to be where He is judging!"

"But Abram, remember what Logos said about Terah and Nahor, choosing to stay at Haran to be a beacon of light in a dark place? That's what we are here in the valley, a beacon of light! Why, we already have another family down in Sodom who has come to the light. They worship Logos with us almost every Sabbath."

"And they have two young sons, whom we have agreed to betroth to our daughters," Iscah chimed in.

"Oh, I see. And have they given up their idolatry?"

"Well, uh, not totally... not yet. They still go up to the heathen temple on Sun-day. But they're learning. And we're reaching out to others as well. It takes time, you know, but I really believe that Logos wants us down there. We are the only righteous testimony they have!"

Abram was encouraged. Maybe he had been overly fearful. Logos could certainly look after Lot, even in that wicked valley. But teaching those pagans to worship Logos? He didn't think that was possible! "I'm sorry, Lot and Iscah. I didn't know. Yes, by all means you must go where Logos leads you, and He will make you a blessing. Just be sure it is Logos leading and not your own desires." He hugged them all and sent them off with his blessing, praying over them that Logos would guard them from evil.

A tall, swarthy man was waiting nearby. He was dressed in royal robes and his hair and beard were long and white. Abram, assuming he was another king of one of the wicked cities of the valley, had no desire to talk to him. He turned to go, but the strange man moved to stand in front of him. "What more do you want from me?" Abram was a bit short.

"I want to bless you," the strange man said.

"Who are you?" Now Abram was curious. He expected thanks, but none of the wicked people of this land had the slightest concept of the blessing.

"I am **Melchizedek**, king of Salem and high priest of Adonai El-Elyon, God Most High, the Creator and Ruler of the heavens and the earth. I serve only Him. It is His son Logos who told me to bless you. I brought bread and wine consecrated to Him. Eat this with me in remembrance of Logos, for it is He who gave you the victory this day."

They ate together in silence, Abram's heart burning within him. As they finished, Abram asked, "Are you one of the Kasdim? Whose son are you? Where are you from?"

"I am son of Adonai El-Elyon, sent by Him to be a light in a dark place and to preserve for Himself a name in His **Holy City**, His chosen habitation on earth."

"Holy City?" Abram's heart leapt within. He thought all the cities of the land were wicked, through and through. "Where is this Holy City?"

Melchizedek gave him a wry half-smile, as if he knew what Abram was thinking. "There is no city among the habitations of men that can be called holy. I speak of a city built by God Himself, where He rules in the matchless splendor of His own holiness. There I, too, dwell."

Melchizedek then reached up, placed both hands on Abram's head, and prophesied over him, saying, "Blessed is Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed is God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. You are a mighty prince before Him. Your prayers, faith, and good deeds prevail with God and men. I see a great nation yet within you, a strong people as numerous as the dust of the earth. In the fullness of time your descendants will own this entire land as far as your eyes can see. The Redeemer of mankind shall come from them – the Savior of the World – the One for whom all men of goodwill have longed, even groaned and travailed, ever since Adam's first sin."

Exactly what Logos had promised! Melchizedek's claim to be high priest of Adonai El-Elyon was true! Abram sank to his knees. But rather than accepting Abram's worship, Melchizedek just turned to leave. "Wait!" Abram cried out. "As priest of the Most High, you are entitled to a tenth of the increase."

"I'm entitled to nothing. I'm not your priest. I serve only Logos, the Son of Adonai El-Elyon. I am His priest. Now, I have done all that He told me to do, so I must go."

"Just the same, I must insist that you take the priestly portion, for in this moment you have become my priest." Quickly calculating the value of the plunder that he and his men had gotten from the kings of Shinar, he offered the tenth to Melchizedek in gold and jewels. Again he refused, but Abram insisted. "You blessed me, and I have received your blessing. Now I shall bless you. If you cannot receive it, then your blessing to me also hangs in the balance."

"You must take that up with Logos Himself. I will not take so much as a shoelace from you, lest you say, 'I have made Melchizedek rich.'" Again he turned to leave.

Realizing that arguing was futile, Abram gave orders to his men to follow at a distance, as by now they had finished dividing up the spoil from the kings of Shinar. Then he ran after Melchizedek. Catching up, he walked beside him in silence for a while. Finally Melchizedek asked, "I am only going home. So why do you and your men follow me?"

"I shall never allow you out of my sight until you have received your priestly portion. Besides, I want to see the Holy City. For I have longed for such a city ever since the day of my birth."

Melchizedek seemed pleased with his answer, though he warned, "Not all have the eyes to see it."

"I have the eyes to see, and the heart to believe. There is no one here who loves holiness as much as I do. And I have the faith to know that you are my priest. Your portion of my increase still burns in my pockets. I cannot be blessed unless I give it, and you shall be burdened with me and my men until you receive it." Abram was adamant.

Melchizedek laughed, just as adamant, but now a bit more congenial. He was getting to really like this guy, and was grateful that Logos had sent him. "You and your men are no burden. I welcome your company." They were now ascending the hills to the west of the Valley of Shaveh. When they reached the top, they headed south, Abram's 318 men trailing along behind. They passed several towns along the way, but did not stop.

Finally, over a little rise, Abram beheld a small walled village ahead, situated on the far side of a ridge in between two other hills. Pointing from right to left, Melchizedek said, "That is **Mount Zion**, the middle ridge is **Mount Moriah**, and that big one is **Mount Olivet**. Just beyond Mount Moriah is **Salem**, where I am king and priest."

They followed the Kidron Valley between Mt. Moriah and Mt. Olivet, until they came to the village. It was small, but full of happy, contented people. They welcomed their king with joy, and likewise welcomed Abram and his men, bringing them refreshments. When they had eaten, Abram sat back and surveyed the town. "So, this is the Holy City. It is beautiful. I would like to live here with you always. Which I shall, unless you accept your priestly portion."

Again Melchizedek laughed. "No, this is not the Holy City, though we do try here to live according to El-Elyon's wisdom and His ways. There," he pointed up to the top of Mount Moriah, now to their north, "... is the Holy City where Adonai El-Elyon (bless His holy name) dwells in infinite majesty and splendor."

Abram looked, but saw nothing. Scrub brush, a few trees, rocks, a top of a small mountain, one among many. He looked questioningly back at Melchizedek.

He shrugged. "I told you, not all have eyes to see."

Bitterly disappointed, Abram looked long and hard. Finally, he bowed his head into his hands and sobbed. Melchizedek let him weep awhile, then put his hand on a shoulder. "My brother, you have won. I will receive your gift so you may return to your family with my blessing."

"Huh? What changed your mind?" He wiped his eyes.

"I saw your heart. You shall indeed see the Holy City, for I see it already growing within you. Go now, in peace. Take my blessing to your family as well."

"I cannot go until I have worshiped Logos in His Holy City. Please, tell your people I will repay them for all their hospitality to my men." He turned toward Mt. Moriah, then stopped abruptly and turned back. "I must relieve my burden before I can climb. Here is your tenth. I bless and thank you for receiving it in the name of Adonai El-Elyon."

The next day he returned, face aglow. "I have seen the Holy City and met its King," he told Melchizedek simply.

Melchizedek raised his eyebrows. "What did the King tell you?" He was more than curious.

"He received my worship," Abram responded, as if that was the most important thing of all. "And He gave me a glimpse of the fullness of His Kingdom, when He shall rule the earth from right up there," he pointed, "... in awesome power and glory." His body trembled with the memory.

Melchizedek prodded him to continue, "Surely there is more. You were gone a full day."

"Yes." Abram closed his eyes. "He promised to be my protection and my great reward. He promised me a son, an heir, from my own body though it is old. He showed me the glory of the stars last night, and asked if I could count them. He told me I would have that many descendants."

"And you believe Him?" Melchizedek's eyes widened.

“Yes.” The two men smiled at each other in silence. They both knew exactly what that meant. True faith was a rare and precious commodity in those days.

After reimbursing the good people of Salem for their hospitality, Abram and his men returned to Hebron where his lovely wife awaited him by the Oaks of Mamre. From there he moved his clan far south, to **Kadesh** in the Negev.

And as for Lot and his family? They went back to their tents, which were but an easy walk from Sodom. They had hardly cleaned up the mess and stowed their reclaimed stuff when they had visitors. The kings and leading men of Sodom and Gomorrah had come, bearing gifts! “We tried to reward your uncle, but he wouldn’t accept anything.” The king of Sodom was their spokesman. “So we beg you to accept our gifts for your uncle Abram’s valiant rescue.” He bowed, the others following his lead.

“Why thank you. I am grateful...” Lot began.

“We also have one more gift, but it’s too big to carry.” Lot’s arms were already weighted down with rich gifts. “Please, come with us to Sodom, and we’ll show you.”

When they got there, they were ushered into a large, expensive, mud-brick home next to the town square. “This is yours. Here are the keys. And we want you to be one of the town fathers and join our council of elders.”

“Why do you do all this? You know that I worship only Logos, and not your gods. Why do you want me here?”

“We want to learn about Logos!” the king of Gomorrah lied. “Clearly, He is more powerful than all our gods. We want to elevate Him as the chief god in our pantheon.”

“We owe you and your uncle our lives!” the king of Sodom added. “The kings of Shinar captured not only many of us, they also took our food supply for the winter. Your uncle returned it all to us, every last kernel of grain. We are eternally grateful!”

“And besides, with you and your powerful uncle living here, those cruel kings from Shinar will think twice about ever attacking again,” an elder admitted.

“I understand...” Lot was beginning to see the light. But Iscah interrupted him. “Lot, look, right behind the house. Isn’t that the home of that family who comes to worship Logos with us?”

“It sure is. What a coincidence!”

“It’s confirmation from Logos that we’re supposed to accept their offer and live here. Won’t it be nice to live in a real house instead of those tents? Your servants can take care of your scruffy sheep and goats. You can live here with our babies and me, and be a leader at the city gates. We’ll really have an impact for Logos in this community!”

Iscah gushed on and on, and pretty soon there was no way out of it. They resettled in downtown Sodom.

Though it doesn’t enter into this story much, Abram’s battle of the kings did have serious ramifications. All of Shinar had been conquered by those four powerful kings, **Amraphel** of Eridu at Ur of the Chaldees; **Chedorlaomer** of Elam at Susa; **Arioch** of Uruk at Larsa; and **Tidal** of Opis (in Gutium). With their armies unified, they had subdued the Kassites, the Acadians (but not the Assyrians), the Amalekites in Paran, the Amorites of Mari, and all the tribes of the Canaanites. It was a big empire for that time period, and they were collecting vast amounts of tribute.

Abram had slain those four kings and devastated their armies. He had taken a great deal of booty, including all the tribute money they had collected that year. The weakened armies returned to Shinar weaponless, impoverished, and despondent. Of course the oppressed king of the Amorites quickly realized his good fortune! He rebuilt his own army and swept into the land of Shinar the next year (1880 BC), completely conquering it in less than two years. Amorite king **Sumuaburn** ruled Shinar for many years, restoring stability and prosperity. Sadly, King Sumuaburn was even worse than the wicked kings he succeeded. Freed from oppression, he became the oppressor, demanding tribute all the way to the fertile, prosperous Valley of Shaveh.

Back to our story; on May 11, 1881 BC a life-changing encounter occurred, for it was then that Logos made His first binding covenant with Abram. Abram had finished the Sabbath lamb sacrifice. He was resting and worshipping with his family when Logos appeared to him as a flaming torch. Abram and Sarai fell down on their faces before Him in holy fear, but He spoke kindly to them. “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am **YHWH**, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to possess it.”

“Who are You, Adonai YHWH? And how may I know that I will possess it? Abram was still afraid.

The torch laughed. “I am Logos, your God. But from this day forth you shall also know Me by the name of YHWH My Father, who from eternity makes everlasting covenants!” He told him to prepare an animal sacrifice and cut each animal in half. Eastern tradition to seal covenants was for both parties to walk between the halves. Abram prepared the sacrifice and divided the animals, but when he finished, Logos was not there. Abram spent the rest of the day and on into the night waiting for Him, trying to keep the vultures from eating his sacrifice. Finally he fell asleep. Then Logos appeared to him in a fearful apparition, a towering inferno, walking alone between the halves of the sacrifice. This signified that He alone was responsible for keeping the covenant. “To your descendants I have given all this land, from the Nile to the Euphrates Rivers. However, first they will be aliens in Egypt, enslaved and oppressed. I will discipline Egypt severely and set your descendants free in 430 years. Thus the fourth generation will come out a mighty nation with many possessions.”

“430 years? Will I live that long? Why not now?”

“No, my friend. I don’t wish to make you suffer through all that. You will be buried at a ripe old age, and return to your fathers in peace. I cannot give you the land right now because the wickedness of the Canaanites is not yet total. Their destiny is tied to the Amorites, who are preparing to attack and conquer the land of Shinar. Their rule will be good at first, and all Shinar will prosper. But in the end their wickedness will prevail, so they will be driven out of Shinar by the Hittites in 287 years. After that they will move here, where they will rule Canaan with an iron fist. The iniquity of the Canaanites will feed on the iniquity of the Amorites, until both are utterly corrupt. Then I will bring your descendants to be My judgment on them all.”

Abram believed Logos. He interceded for his yet unborn children that it all come to pass as Logos had spoken. Logos took that intercession, added it to the growing seed within His heart, and guarded it with His own intercession before His Father YHWH in eternity. The tiny bright seed of Heber’s intercession for his children, which Logos had called the mightiest power in the universe, grew ever more powerful in accord with the infallible Word of Logos.

But the years grew long. Sarai was now 76 years old, beyond childbearing age. As was the custom in those days, Sarai gave her young Egyptian maid, **Hagar**, to be a wife for Abram, swearing, “The child you bear through Hagar, born on my knee, I will account as my own child.” Neither Sarai nor Abram consulted with Logos on this; they just assumed. Back in those days, everybody did it.

In 1873 BC when Hagar did bear Abram’s son, **Ishmael**, it turned rather sour, as you know. Logos forgave them, and even promised to make of Ishmael a great nation too. But He clearly wasn’t happy with Abram’s effort to fulfill their sacred covenant through his own schemes.

Ishmael turned 13 in the fall of 1860 BC. Abram was 99 years old, and Sarai was 89. Logos appeared to them above the altar at a Sabbath evening sacrifice. “I am **El-Shaddai** [God Almighty]. Walk blameless before Me!”

Abram and Sarai fell on their faces in fervent worship. It had been a long time since they had seen Him. Their hearts rejoiced that He had come.

Logos was pleased. “Today I confirm My covenant between Me and you. I will multiply you greatly, as I have promised. For you shall be no longer just Abram, ‘Exalted Father’, but **Abraham**, ‘Father of a Multitude’ of nations.” Logos then reiterated the promises of their covenant, and added a new sign of the covenant: male **circumcision**. Then, “Your wife Sarai shall also be called by a new name: **Sarah**, ‘princess’, for I will bless her, and give you a son by her. Nations and kings shall come forth from her!”

Abram (now Abraham), fell on his face before Logos again, but this time it was not from holy fear and worship – this time it was only to hide his laughter. Just think – his beloved old Sarai / Sarah bearing a child!

Logos patiently waited, giving no indication that He had heard his secret thoughts. Finally Abram / Abraham recovered enough to say, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You, to fulfill Your promises!”

“No. Sarah your wife will bear you a son. You shall call him **Isaac**, ‘he laughs’. My covenant that I made with you, I shall establish with him and his descendants after him, as an everlasting covenant. But I have heard your prayers for Ishmael. I will bless him also, and make him fruitful. He shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make of him twelve nations. Yet My promise to you shall be fulfilled in Isaac your son, who will be born one year from now.”

Logos disappeared. Abraham immediately obeyed His command regarding circumcision. He, his son Ishmael, and every male servant in his house were circumcised that very day. After they had healed, they packed up and went back north. Abraham wanted to visit Salem again, to talk about this to Melchizedek. On their way, they camped in their favorite spot just north of Hebron under the Oaks of Mamre, which was an easy half-day walk from Salem. They had just finished setting up their tents and were relaxing in the heat of the afternoon, when three visitors came by, headed down toward the lush Valley of the Plain (Shaveh).

One reason Abraham loved this campsite is that it overlooked the valley. They could see all the way to Sodom. Seeing the three men, his intuition told him that they were on their way to visit Lot. He hurried out to stop them, and offered them hospitality, which they accepted. As they sat and ate, one of them casually asked, “Where is your wife?”

“My wife Sarah is in the tent.”

“I will surely return to you at this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son,” the man stated, as matter-of-fact as if he was commenting on the weather. Abraham was stunned, suddenly realizing that this was no ordinary man. It was Logos Himself, taking human form.

But before he could react, Logos called out, “Sarah! Why did you laugh? Is anything too difficult for YHWH?”

A startled Sarah popped out her head from the entrance to the tent. “No, kind Sir. I did not laugh.”

Logos looked into her eyes, and she melted before Him. “Yes, you did laugh, at least in your heart.” He chuckled. “Frankly, in your place I probably would have laughed even more than you. That is why we must name your son Isaac, meaning ‘laughter’.” Now Sarah recognized Logos, and bowed her face to touch the ground.

They finished their meal and rose to leave. Abraham walked with them toward the valley, praying intently for Lot and hoping that Logos would hear his prayer. At the top of the path into the valley, Logos stopped to talk with Abraham, while the two angels went on ahead. “My friend, I hear your intercession for your nephew Lot. I am pleased. So I will tell you what I am about to do.”

CHAPTER 23 – SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Logos paused. For a while they both watched the angels descend toward Sodom, and gazed across the valley. It was a lovely, wide plain, fertile and green, with charming lakes and towns along the slow, meandering Jordan River. “Abraham,” Logos looked at him ever so lovingly. “You are a prince with God and men. You will become a great and mighty nation. Through you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. I chose you, that you might teach your descendants to keep My ways of righteousness and justice, that it might go well with them from now on forever.”

“Thank you, Logos,” Abraham bowed low, wondering what this might have to do with Lot.

Logos sadly answered his unspoken question. “You have taught My ways to Lot and Iscah, and I am honored in them. I do not hold you responsible for some choices that they have made in opposition to Me and My ways. The wickedness of Sodom has become so great that I can no longer forebear. The few righteous remaining cry out to Me in anguish of soul. I must go down. If their sin is truly as bad as the cry I hear, I must destroy their cities.”

Abraham cried out and fell to his knees at Logos’ feet. “O Lord, remember justice! Surely You would not sweep away the righteous with the wicked! Lot and Iscah have been witnessing of You there in Sodom. They have won many families to faith in You – one has even betrothed their two sons to Lot’s daughters! They have the whole town now celebrating the lamb sacrifice on the Sabbath! The city fathers look to Lot for wisdom at the city gates. Why, he even hosts public Sabbath worship in his home! Far be it from You to slay the righteous with the wicked! There must be 50 righteous there by now. Won’t You spare it for the sake of the 50? Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” Abraham was starting to hyperventilate.

Logos smiled at him. He dearly loved this man who cared so much. “If I find but 50 righteous in Sodom I will spare the entire valley on their account.”

Abraham, still kneeling, bowed his face to the ground. “I have ventured to speak, though I am but dust and ashes. But suppose the 50 lack only 5?”

“I will not destroy it if I find 45 righteous there.”

“What if there are only 40?”

“I will not destroy it if I find 40 righteous.”

“Please don’t be angry. What if there are but 30?”

“I will not destroy it if I find 30 righteous.”

“What if there are only 20?”

“I will not destroy it if I find 20 righteous.”

“Please, Logos, don’t be angry with me. I shall speak only once more. What if there are only 10?”

Here was truly a man after His own heart. Logos rejoiced. “I will not destroy it if I find 10 righteous.”

Abraham remained there, bowed to the ground, deep in intercession. Logos vanished.

The two angels reached Sodom at dusk, just before the city gates were closed for the night. There was Lot, seated in a place of honor with the city elders. Recognizing that the visitors were newcomers, Lot jumped up and ran to meet them, bowing and spreading out his arms in greeting. He secretly considered it his mission to warn strangers of the wickedness of the city, and to protect them if possible. He invited them to spend the night at his beautiful large home. But they refused, preferring to spend the night in the town square, for it was a mild fall evening.

Knowing what typically went on in that town square at night, Lot urged them strongly, until they finally agreed and came to his house. Lot and Iscah treated them to a lovely dinner and showed them their room for the night – their big new home was wonderful for entertaining. But before they could go to bed, there was a clamor at the door.

Now, this is a sad story, and I’m sorry to have to tell it, but I must remain honest to the historical account. Queer men of Sodom had gathered around the big house. When Lot answered the door, they demanded that he give them his two visitors to sodomize. When he refused, they came near to breaking down the door in the violence of their lust. The two angels reached out, grabbed Lot from their clutches, and struck them blind so they could no longer find the door, though they kept trying.

“This confirms our worst fears!” the two men said. “Lot, whom do you have that you care about in this place? You must warn them immediately, and get them and your family out of Sodom. We are ministers of Logos. He sent us to destroy not just this city but the entire valley and all its wicked cities. By noon tomorrow, they will be flattened by an earthquake and burned up by a volcanic blast.”

Lot now recognized the two men as angels, and realized that they were dead serious. “Yes, Lord!” He bowed his agreement, and went to tell his wife and daughters to start packing; they would leave at dawn. He then ran out to their friend’s house to warn the young men betrothed to his daughters. But when he told them of the earthquake and volcanic blast, they laughed and called him a worry-wart!

Though tomorrow was on the 30 year cycle of close Mars flybys, it had not come near enough to do any serious damage for 150 years. Thus nobody feared Mars anymore. The city had planned a big party for the next day. They were going out to the fields to spend the day celebrating and offering their worship to Mars as it passed by.

Lot finally had to return. He helped his family pack, but he was clearly not happy. Why had his sons-in-law not believed? He realized that if he couldn’t convince his sons-in-law, there would be no one else in the city, either. So it was just his own family. Discouraged, he dragged his feet. He had so much to pack, so much stuff he wanted to save.

An hour before dawn, the two angels urged Lot to finish packing and get moving. He was still too upset about his sons-in-law and all the valuables he'd have to leave behind. Finally, the angels grabbed Lot's family and vigorously ushered them out, taking only what they'd already packed.

The angels told them to flee to the Judean hills (where Abraham was), and not look back. But Lot was ashamed to face Abraham. He wheedled them into promising to spare the town of Zoar for his sake, and he headed there instead. As they walked, Mars rose in the east, already on the day side of Earth. It was huge! And still coming closer!

The earth beneath them began to writhe and shake, making walking difficult. Perhaps he had made the wrong choice here. This was far worse than he remembered from 30 years ago, and there were still 4 hours 'til noon. Maybe he should have listened to the angels and headed for the hills. He had nearly reached Zoar when the earth gave a mighty heave and split, right up the middle of the valley!

Lot and his family fell facedown at the gate to Zoar. They were shielded by a small hill from the main impact of the fiery blast. But Lot's wife and sister, beloved Iscah, was curious as to what might have happened to their lovely home. She went back and climbed the hill to get a better look. She was hit with the full force of a blast of super-heated air from the great crack which had opened in the earth. She died instantly. Her body quickly dehydrated down to a small pile of salts and chemicals.

Watching Iscah die, Lot and his two daughters were horrified beyond words. They thought no more of the safety of Zoar. They abandoned their cart piled high with stuff, and ran for the nearby hills east of the valley (later called the land of Moab). There they found a protected cave which became their home. Wealthy, powerful Lot, counselor at the city gate, reduced to a lowly... caveman.

Poor Lot was terribly discouraged and depressed, especially since his beloved Iscah was dead. They found a place to look across the valley – it was gone. All the fertile grass-lands, their flocks and herds, the prosperous cities, the lovely river, nothing at all was left, as far as the eye could see. The valley there had sunk more than 1500 feet. All he could see was fire, smoke, and bubbling lava pits.

Lot's daughters were also appalled and frightened. Lynn (who was 24) was sure it was the end of the world, and they were the only survivors. She convinced Lyra (22) to go in with her on a plot to get their father drunk and seduce him, so they could begin by incest to repopulate the human race. The wicked **Moabites** and **Ammonites** were the result. I'm sorry. It is so sad.

This is nearly the last we hear of righteous Lot. He was indeed vexed by the sins of Sodom, but he just lived a little too close to it all. He never really got Sodom out of his heart. He was saved, but at what cost? He lost everything, even his wife and daughters, to the immorality of Sodom.

Abraham had gone to bed in great agitation after his meeting with Logos. He arose early the next morning, walked to the spot where they had talked, and surveyed the valley. Would Logos find the 10 righteous in Sodom? Of course He would. Lot's family and his sons-in-law's family would account for the ten. Abraham was relieved to see the valley still peaceful in the early morning mist.

Sunlight washed across the valley. There was Sodom. Abraham could just see Lot's large home there by the town square. The valley was a verdant green, dotted here and there by quietly grazing animals. Abraham relaxed.

Then the earth began to shake. Mars rose rapidly in the east. It was far closer than he remembered! Fear clutched Abraham's heart. He fell to his knees, but his prayers sounded more like scared squeals for mercy. Suddenly the earth gave a mighty heave and to his horror the valley split wide open like an overripe watermelon, clear down to the molten core. Within seconds the entire valley was filled with lava, fire, and smoke, just like a blast furnace. Sodom and Gomorrah – completely gone. Every other village within sight – gone. Every green thing, the flocks and herds – gone. Abraham was filled with terror. He rushed back to his tent, yelling for everyone to clear out. He ripped up the tent pegs and kicked down the tent poles as people scrambled out from under it in all directions. They packed in record time and headed back south.

Abraham was crushed to consider the deaths of Lot and Iscah and their beautiful daughters. *He had thought Logos would spare them. He was so sure there would be at least 10 righteous in the city!* All the way down the road to the Negev he berated himself for not negotiating down to 4. *Why had he assumed Lot's sons-in-law to be righteous? Logos obviously hadn't considered them righteous.* They reached Beersheba, but even there it was too close to the furnace from the valley, so they headed west toward the Great Sea where the air was clear. They settled near **Gerar** in the country of the Philistines, southeast of **Gaza**.

Here we have a repeat of the story of Abram and Sarai in Egypt. This time it was **Abimelech**, the Philistine king of Gerar, who took the still-lovely Sarah to be his wife after Abraham said she was his sister. But God warned him in a dream before he molested her, and he returned her to Abraham with many gifts. Then Abraham prayed for Abimelech and his city. God heard and healed their wombs again, and Abraham was sent away. Just like what happened down in Egypt 21 years before. Sarah, at 89 years old, was still lovely enough to make kings want her!

Longsuffering Logos forgave Abraham again, and kept His promises anyway, as we shall see. But faithlessness has its punishment. For many years Logos didn't tell Abraham that Lot's family had been rescued (though Iscah had died looking back), or about the incest of Lot's daughters. Just one bright spot came much later with **Ruth** the Moabitess, born in the eleventh generation from Lot.

CHAPTER 24 – ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

The heat and smoke from the Jordan Valley had become more tolerable, so Abraham took his family back to Beersheba. They were there when Sarah, at the age of 90, bore Isaac to Abraham, who was 100. *The year was 1859 BC.* The world was struggling with poor crops, devastated from the smoke which circled the globe from the Sodom and Gomorrah catastrophe. But Michael and his host of angels put a thick covering over their precious charges. Thus in the midst of it all, Abraham and Sarah prospered. Their happiness and gratefulness to Logos for Isaac knew no bounds. The protective angels celebrated the victory of Abraham's well-tested faith in Logos' promises.

So Satan tried a different tack. There was still jealousy between Sarah and her maid, Hagar, over Abraham's first son, Ishmael. Satan used that as an open door to whisper awful things to Hagar. At first she ignored him. She had returned and submitted to her mistress after their little tiff when she got pregnant with Ishmael. But Sarah still treated her a bit harshly, so it wasn't surprising that Hagar began having wicked thoughts about getting even. *Oh, she would never actually do anything bad,* she assured herself, but she enjoyed nursing those secret daydreams just the same.

On Isaac's third birthday, after he had been weaned, Abraham threw a big party for the entire household. As they were preparing for the feast, Hagar was assigned the task of getting Isaac ready, and was left alone with him for a short time. As she played with him, the strongest urge came over her – *how easy it would be to just strangle his little neck, or better yet, lift him up by his legs and smash him down on the ground, crushing his skull. She would just say he fell, and what could they do? He was an active three-year-old boy, and little boys do crazy things!*

Then Ishmael came in, and her thoughts took a new tack. He was a strong seventeen-year-old. "Ishmael, here. You 'play' with Isaac," she whispered with an evil look in her eye. "Don't forget, if this little brat grows up, you will get no inheritance from your Father Abraham!" Also inspired by Satan, Ishmael understood. He lifted Isaac, threw him high in the air a few times, and then began to twirl the little shaver around by his ankles. His head was nearly hitting the ground at the bottom of each swing. Isaac was playful and trusting and didn't suspect a thing.

But Michael, who was taking personal charge of little Isaac, recognized what was going on. He whispered an urgent message in Sarah's inner ear. Sarah came running, and saw Isaac with Ishmael, a sinister gleam in his eyes! The look instantly turned to fear, and Ishmael quickly put Isaac down gently, as if he had just been playing with him. But Sarah knew! She snatched Isaac away and carried him to Abraham, where she told what she had seen. "Drive out Ishmael and Hagar. Her son shall not be an heir with my Isaac! She hates me, and if Ishmael is also your heir, they may conspire to kill Isaac to increase his inheritance!"

The party continued on, but in a more subdued tone. Abraham was extremely distressed by Sarah's accusation. He deeply loved Hagar and Ishmael, for he was a man of very great love. So what was he to do? He also loved Sarah and Isaac! After the party he went to Logos in intense prayer, seeking wisdom and interceding for his family.

Logos appeared to him that Sabbath evening right after the sacrifice. It had been three years since Logos had come, back when Isaac had been circumcised. Abraham fell on his face before Him in grateful worship.

"Do not be distressed about Hagar and Ishmael," Logos told him. "I will protect them. I will make Ishmael great also, as I said. But you must listen to your wife Sarah and do as she asked, for in Isaac shall your descendants be named and through Isaac shall My covenant be fulfilled."

So Abraham was comforted. He obeyed Logos, and sent Hagar and Ishmael away as Sarah had demanded, trusting that Logos would care for them. That He did, miraculously providing water for them in the desert. Ishmael grew up in the **Wilderness of Paran**. Hagar found a wife for him from her native Egypt. He did not see Isaac again for many years, when it was time to help him bury their father Abraham.

The 86th close flyby of Mars in 1860 BC, the year of Isaac's conception, had devastated the whole earth when the Great Rift Valley had split open to swallow Sodom and Gomorrah. Ash circled the globe and killed the vegetation. Even mighty Egypt was brought to its knees, with three years of civil war over the land. Famines were even more severe in Canaan. Bitter water began filling the ugly hole in the Jordan Valley. It became known as the Dead Sea. Only in the Negev where Abraham lived was good water and grass for his livestock. As Logos had promised, Abraham's presence had begun to remove the curse from the land.

The Philistine king in Gerar, Abimelech, couldn't help but notice. He and Phicol, his army commander, paid Abraham a visit. "Surely, God is with you!" He exclaimed. "We have all been devastated by this catastrophe, yet the grasslands flourish around you. You've not lost a single lamb from your flocks! I cared for you when you fled to escape the Jordan Valley. So please remember us now in our time of need, and swear to us that you will not take advantage of our weakness, but will deal fairly with us."

"Yes, of course. I swear it." Abraham was glad to help out the Philistines. "The lands here are fertile and the grass is plentiful. Your people may send their flocks and herds here to graze, and I will not send them away. Only, please, tell them to dig their own well. They've taken my well, which my own servants dug, and are keeping us away."

Abimelech was horrified. He did not want to offend this powerful prince! He immediately took care of the matter. He and Abraham then made a solemn covenant to live in peace, sharing the land and its resources. This peace lasted for many years. Logos was pleased, and blessed them all.

Egypt, as I said before, survived the catastrophe only by the strong hand of godly Mentuhotep II. At the age of 65 (the 39th year of his reign) he managed to pull the nation back together, quell the civil wars, and begin to restore Egypt's greatness. That much is common knowledge; but few historians realize that it was due to Abram's testimony in Mentuhotep's court 30 years before, when he returned Sarai, and Abram prayed for him and blessed him.

When Isaac was 25, 22 years from the day Abraham had sent Hagar and Ishmael away, Logos came to Abraham and Sarah at the Sabbath evening sacrifice. He burned in silent flames over the altar for a long time as they worshiped, faces to the ground. Finally He called out, "Abraham!"

"I am here, my Lord and my King."

"My friend, you have come through severe testing, yet you trust Me and love Me. I am pleased. I shall reward you, and shall make of you a great nation, as I have promised."

"Yes, my Lord and my God. I do believe and receive Your promises. I hide them in my heart and intercede every day for them to come to pass."

"I know you do. And that faith honors Me greatly. Now, I have one more test for you, a hard test. Will you do it?"

"Yes, Logos my God. For You and for YHWH Your Father in eternity I will do anything."

"Anything?"

"Yes, anything. I believe Father YHWH's covenant."

"Then take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go up to the land of Moriah. Offer Isaac up as a sacrifice to Me on the north peak of My holy mountain." Logos vanished. Suddenly the evening was dark and cold.

Abraham and Sarah wept together there for a long time. But there was no mistaking the words of Logos. He was very clear, leaving no possibility of a misunderstanding. They finally sat up and faced each other. "He said it was a test, a hard test. Do you suppose He'll really let Isaac die?"

"But He promised to fulfill His covenant through Isaac!" Abraham said through his tears. "How..."

"Maybe He will resurrect him from the dead. He can do that, you know. He's God! He's able to do anything!"

"I... I know, but..." Abraham knew that God was able, but wasn't sure about himself! Maybe that's what made it a test. He steeled his resolve. "All I can do is obey, and trust Logos to work it out. We'll leave for Moriah tomorrow."

Sarah caught her breath, then put her face in her hands and wept again. But she did not say one word to dissuade him. Logos, looking on from the heavenlies, was pleased. The angels cheered at this new victory of Abraham's faith.

Satan, however, was mystified. Sure, he inspired his own slaves to human sacrifice, but Logos? Unthinkable.

Two days later, they passed to the west of Salem and Mount Zion, and reached the foot of Mount Moriah. There Abraham left his servants and donkey behind while he and Isaac climbed up the north side of the ridge. Logos led him to the place where he had spent the night in worship after his battle with the four kings of Shinar. *Something was especially holy about that spot. He knew it! The Holy City! God was building His Holy City there. This sacrifice must somehow be a foundation for God's Holy City.*

Abraham was deep in meditation, struggling with his conflicting emotions about wanting the blessing of Logos, wanting to be obedient and faithful, loving Him, loving the Holy City, trusting Logos, yet dearly loving his only son, and not wanting to give him up. He was startled when Isaac asked, "Father, I have the wood, and you have the fire and the knife, but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?"

He hesitated. What could he tell his son? Isaac was now a young man, not an animal, and he had a right to know! Abraham stared into his son's loving, trusting eyes. "Logos will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering..." he began. Isaac smiled at him and started climbing again, totally satisfied, though Abraham was not. He needed to say more, but what? He wrestled intently with Logos in prayer. "My Lord and my God! I chose to obey, and give up my son to You, for I love and trust You, and believe Your Word. But my son is 25. He is a person, not an unthinking animal. How can I make Isaac give up his life for You? I'm not strong enough to force him. He is as strong as I! Even stronger! Do I trick him? Do I lie to him?"

"No!" the answer came back swiftly and boldly. "My adversary uses force, lies, and deceit. I use only love and truth. Tell Isaac the truth in love, and if he is not willing then you are free from My request."

They neared the top. "Thank you, Logos. Truly, Your ways are wise and wonderful! I will do all that you have asked." He had Isaac put down the wood and help him gather stones to repair the ancient altar they found there. Then they arranged the wood on top and stood, facing each other, on either side of it.

"Isaac, my only son whom I love more than life itself..."

"Yes, Father! What more do you wish that I do?"

"This is the hardest thing that I have ever done, my son. I cannot do it without your help and total agreement." Thus he told him the whole story.

There was silence for a time. The sun had risen to high noon. Abraham realized that this was precisely the time, to the very day and hour, that he had sent Hagar and Ishmael into the desert 22 years before. Was he now to lose his other son? He bowed his head to weep, but no tears came.

"Yes, Father. I, too, trust Logos to keep His promises. You've taught me that. Here, bind my hands before I lose my nerve." And Isaac held out his hands across the altar.

Abraham's mouth dropped open in shock. He was beginning to think that Isaac wouldn't agree, so he would be free of Logos' command. Now the tears came, and flowed in abundance as he took a rope and bound his son, hand and foot, and laid him on top of the wood on the altar. He hesitated, but the dread moment could be postponed no longer. Abraham fumbled for his knife. Before he could light the fire, he had to slay his son and drain his blood for the sprinkling. His eyes never left his son's face as he raised the knife. Isaac met his gaze, unflinching, trusting, neither fearful nor struggling. "I commit Isaac to You, Logos my God. Have mercy! Remember Your promises!" He reached out his hand with the knife to slice Isaac's jugular vein.

"Abraham! Abraham!" It was a powerful, urgent call; almost like a trumpet call; rich, resonant, compelling, and joyous. Abraham spun around, but no one was there.

"Here I am, Lord." He called back. Could it be Logos?

"Do not stretch out your hand against Isaac your son! Do him no harm..." Yes! It was Logos, now using His more-familiar voice. He sounded pleased. "For now I know that you truly fear God, since you have not withheld your son – your only son Isaac – from Me."

Myriads of angels were cheering wildly all around, but Abraham did not hear them. He knelt at the altar, his son still bound, and poured out his heart in grateful worship. Then he heard the bleat of a ram from just behind the altar, caught in the thicket by his horns. Isaac began to laugh. Tears still flowing, Abraham joined his laughter as he untied his son and tied the ram in his place.

"You said God would provide, Father. I believed you, and He did! He provided that ram. It was here all along! Why didn't we notice it before?" Isaac was still laughing.

"Yes, my son, you did believe. I affirm before God and men that you are no longer just a boy. Today you are a man. A man of faith! We didn't notice it before because Logos hid it from our eyes to test our faith; yours as well as mine."

They completed the ram sacrifice together. Then Logos appeared to them in the flames on top of the altar with His triumphant shout, "Father YHWH accepts your offering. You are cleansed!" They bowed to the ground in worship.

"Abraham! Because you have not withheld from Me your only son Isaac, I swear this oath as YHWH your God. I will bless you and Isaac abundantly. I will multiply your descendants to be uncountable as the stars of the heavens and as the sand of the seashore. Your descendants will gain control over the gates of all their enemies, and in your descendants shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. Go now, in peace. I am with you always." He vanished, like a warm breath of air.

"Wow!" was all Isaac could say. He had never before actually seen Logos. He would never be the same again. They continued there in worship for a long time.

The joyous celebration in the heavenlies was in full swing when Satan dared approach. "Logos, what was that all about? I can't believe you asked him to sacrifice his son! That's my territory! You're trying to imitate me! I'm the expert at tormenting these foolish humans. And then You stopped him at the last second. That sounds like trickery to me. You are finally beginning to learn my ways! Force, manipulation, lies – I noticed You used a little of all that. He didn't really want to sacrifice his son. You just twisted his arm by making him a bunch of empty promises. Why? I really don't understand." He finally paused for an answer.

"No, Satan, you do not and indeed cannot understand. For you would give your son, you would give your own mother, to die just for the pleasure of seeing them squirm. You love the sight of humans, even those who serve you, writhing in anguish in their own blood. I am not like you, and I am not learning your ways. My love – even for you – is beyond your comprehension. How much more My love for my Bride, whom I am forming in Abraham and Isaac!"

"Then why? Why the faked human sacrifice?"

"First, it was not faked. It was just as real as if he had done it, for I judge according to the heart, and in his heart he had given Isaac to Me. I did it because I am developing My own nature and character in My Bride, and My nature is self-giving love. I am willing to give My life for My Bride. The only remaining question was, is she willing to give her life for Me? That question has now been settled."

"Poppycock!" (Satan knew that was about the worst oath he could utter in Logos' presence. All his favorite imprecations simply would not come out.) "You? Willing to give Your life for Your Bride? What a load of bull manure! Go ahead, do it! When I see it, even I will believe! I promise! When you die, I will bow over Your dead body and... and... laugh like heaven!" He thought that was a great joke. 'Heaven' was one swear word he could use here.

Logos didn't seem to appreciate his humor. "When I die for My Bride, will you believe?" Logos spoke earnestly, as if that was His deepest desire. "I tell you truly, you shall indeed see it. I urge you to remember your promise."

"Promises, promises. No one keeps his promises. Even You... all those promises You made to Heber? And now You're giving Abraham and Isaac that same glib sales pitch. But it's all snake oil. Promises are merely a convenient tool to manipulate the naïve..." Suddenly Satan heard what Logos had said, "When You die...?! No, You wouldn't. You couldn't! I'll get to see it? When?"

"In the fullness of time. And you will not only see it, you will volunteer to be My tool to bring it to pass. How else do you think I can redeem My precious Bride back to Myself? You may laugh at keeping promises, but I do keep My promises, even though I must die to do it. You will see it. Will you finally believe? For I assure you, when I die My ways of self-giving love will have the victory."

“Victory? By Your death? I guess I can handle that kind of victory. Sure, I’ll believe. I believe I will go have a party! A grand victory celebration!” Satan sauntered off, his nose in the air, chuckling at his own wittiness.

Gavriel, ever by Logos’ side, observed respectfully, “You were right, Logos. Satan really cannot understand. He doesn’t have a clue!”

“But you do understand, my beloved Gavriel. In that, Satan has done his job, illustrating to the universe the awful blindness of those who will not believe.”

Gavriel did understand about the self-giving love and about Logos keeping His promises, regardless of the cost. But he wasn’t so sure about the need for Logos to die to redeem the Bride. Logos looked into his eyes and smiled. Suddenly it became clear that Isaac is a type, a picture of Messiah. It is Messiah’s death, His blood, that will redeem the Bride. *But... surely... YHWH will provide an animal substitute just as He provide the ram substitute for Isaac.*

Abraham and Isaac returned to Beersheba. From that day forth, the ancient altar on the north peak of Mount Moriah became known as ‘YHWH will provide’.

The years passed. Abraham and Isaac prospered. One day he heard sad news from a servant of his brother Nahor in Haran. His children by Lot’s sister Milcah were well. But their father Terah was old, and his health was flagging. Could Terah see Abraham’s family before he died?

Abraham packed up and left immediately, arriving in Haran in June of 1830 BC. It was a busy town by then. Everyone was preparing for the 87th close flyby of Mars, due in four months. After that terrible 86th pass, they were scared. Terah was scared. He had been through too many of these. Abraham brought his family to sit at his bedside. “I’m sorry you’re sick, Father. We came as soon as we heard. What can we do to help you get better?”

“I will not get better, my son. I am 205 years old, and it is time for me to die. I have tried to serve Logos here, but it is so difficult. There is so much unbelief and idolatry. And now Mars is coming back and it will shake down our town again, and... and I’m just tired of it all. I can’t believe they worship Mars and pray to it. It is all so discouraging.”

“I have something to encourage you. Or rather, some one!” He motioned to the tall young man beside Sarah.

“Hi Grandfather. My name is Isaac. It is so good to finally meet you! My father has told me a lot about you and about our family here in Haran.”

“Isaac! Are you...?”

“Yes, he’s our son!” Abraham pulled Sarah close to him. “Logos has taken the promises He gave you and me and passed them along to Isaac. He has become a man of faith! He will become the great nation Logos promised, the one in whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed.”

Terah relaxed back into bed, a broad smile brightening his face. Sarah had been barren for too long! Doubts had crept into his faith – even a bit of cynicism. Now all that was gone. Logos would keep His promises. “Praise Logos! I have the honor of giving you my blessing before I die.”

That he did, several times. Then, two months before the expected close flyby of Mars, he passed away peacefully in his sleep, an old man, full of good years, respected, loved, and honored by everyone who knew him.

After the burial, Abraham took his family back down to Canaan. But in his absence, that ancient curse had again descended upon the land. He heard news that volcanic ash and smoke again clouded the sky and stunted the grass all over the Negev. So he stopped at Hebron in the highlands above the still-devastated Jordan Valley. Immediately on his arrival the air cleared and they found some pasture for their flocks. Abraham set up his tents just north of Hebron, at his favorite spot under the great Oaks of Mamre.

It was there, alas, that lovely Sarah died. Still beautiful at the age of 127, and still strong as well, yet her desire for Lot and Iscah proved her undoing. She had never heard that Lot had survived and now lived with his daughters and grandsons, Ben-Ammi and Moab, across the Jordan Valley, east of the smoking pit that was now the Dead Sea. She was still a little bitter at Logos for not sparing them, and after they had prayed so hard! They had been her adopted children all the years that she had been barren. She just couldn’t give them up. She stood on a sharp cliff overlooking the chasm, on the promontory where Logos had negotiated with Abraham about sparing Sodom.

The catastrophe had made the place dangerous. The valley there had sunk 1500 feet, and the cliffs were steep. She should not have been standing so near the edge. No one really knows what happened. Perhaps she got dizzy with the height. Perhaps the unstable ground merely gave way under her feet. Perhaps she was pushed; by whom or what, I do not know. Or, perhaps in her bitterness and anger at Logos, Satan discovered an open door to her mind, and induced her to throw herself off the cliff. Regardless, Abraham found her body that evening, down on the rocks below, her face still turned toward Sodom.

It was a crushing blow. Abraham had had no warning, no time to prepare for her death. He wept bitterly for her for three days, crying out to Logos, and accepting neither food nor drink. Logos did not respond. Finally Abraham purchased a field from Ephron (son of Zohar son of Anak son of Arba son of Heth son of Canaan) for a cemetery, and laid his beloved Sarah down to rest in peace. The field was named **Machpelah**, for the large double cave that was on it. It faced the Oaks of Mamre where he had pitched his tents. It has been Abraham’s family burial ground ever since. This was the first piece of ground that Abraham actually owned in the land of Canaan – the firstfruits of God’s promise that his descendants would own the entire land.

CHAPTER 25 – ABRAHAM AND KETURAH

Abraham was inconsolable. Isaac did everything he could, including offering to get Abraham another wife, but all was in vain. Abraham just continued to mourn under the giant Oaks of Mamre. Even the descendants of Heth living in Hebron (then Kiriath-Arba), tried to console him. They visited him with generous offers of any of their finest young maidens that peaked his fancy, but he would not consider it. Their immorality and idolatry were distasteful to him regardless of how beautiful their form or face.

Logos was pleased. Here was a man after his own heart, who truly loved righteousness and hated evil. The next time Satan came into His presence, Logos commented on that. Satan responded, “Abraham lives in a land of lovely allurements. Eventually he will fall to one of them. Or he will die, like Sarah, and his son will fall to temptation. Everyone does. It is so easy. Why, I can even use love, Your main tool, to make people jealous or angry or bitter.”

“As with Sarah, I know.” Logos nodded. “I am aware of what you did to her, but I forgive you. You didn’t know what you were doing. In time you will see. But look at how beautifully Abraham has passed the test. He trusts Me! Even in the midst of such a great tragedy yet he trusts Me totally and refuses to compromise with the Canaanites.”

“Hmm. I think I can fix that. I shall help him find a wife that he likes. A wife from the Canaanites. For Abraham, and one for Isaac, too! Maybe several. And every one of their children will be mine from the beginning. I own those Canaanites!” He wandered off rubbing his hands with glee at the thought.

Satan is not stupid. He learned long ago that a woman who openly loves her sin can never really please a man who truly loves Logos and His wisdom. So he searched among the Canaanites for a woman who appeared to hate idolatry and love righteousness like Abraham did.

He found **Keturah**, a lovely, dark blend of Hittite and Cushite. She was 52 and had never married. She had been horribly abused all her life, and she hated it. Satan planted thoughts in her mind about Abraham, the foreign prince who’d recently lost his wife and was lonely. *He would take care of her! Protect her from the abuse! And besides, he was very rich. All she needed to do is learn his language.*

Isaac was still trying to find a wife for his father. So far none had been acceptable, but he had not given up hope. He even attempted to find Hagar, whom Abraham had sent away with Ishmael 35 years before, but he couldn’t locate her. Abraham was so depressed, Isaac was afraid that he might not recover. He wasn’t eating well, he couldn’t sleep, he wasn’t taking care of the affairs of his household, and he hardly ever spoke to his servants as they went about his business. Isaac was desperate for something to snap him out of it. Then one gloomy night they all were awakened with screams – a woman’s screams!

By the time Abraham got outside, it was all over. His alert servants had already chased the intruders away. But here was this woman, weeping in the sand outside his tent, and crying out – in Hebrew! – for protection and mercy. She even knew his name, saying it with the proper Hebrew pronunciation as she pled to “come under his covering.”

Abraham knelt beside her, and Satan howled in glee, knowing he had already won. These humans are too easy! Even their love and compassion is weak, like putty in his hand. But having her words come out in Hebrew was his crowning touch. It had been a lot of work to teach her mind to think in Hebrew, (taking a whole year) but it was worth it, just to see the look on Abraham’s startled face.

“I’m here, my child. You’re safe here with me. I accept your plea to come under my covering. I will protect you. Come into my tent and tell me what happened.” It never occurred to him to ask how she had learned Hebrew. Her accent was good. It was obvious she must be of the Kasdim.

So with Satan right there coaching her, she spun this yarn about leaving wicked Ur with her family a few years ago, in search of a more righteous place to live. They had wandered here and there, but each place was more wicked than the last – she always emphasized how much she hated the wickedness and longed for a place where Logos and His ways were honored. And now this! Her family had just been slain by the Canaanites, every last one, and she had barely escaped with her life! But she’d heard that Abraham served Logos. Would he please take her in?

As I’m sure you guessed, Abraham and Isaac were totally snookered. They swallowed Keturah’s entire line, and welcomed her into their home. Abraham promised her a place at his table by his side, and swore that he would become her family, now that hers was gone. She snuggled up close to him and wept for a long time, her head on his chest and her arms wrapped tightly about him. It was a superb show, partly because there was some truth in it. Though the part about her family all being slain by the Canaanites was carefully-crafted poppycock, she really did hate the wickedness and idolatry of Canaan; all it had ever been to her was pain and abuse. She really did long for the tenderness, compassion, peace, righteousness, and love that she sensed here, right now, with Abraham. She didn’t care that he was 86 years older than her. She fell in love with him instantly. Especially when she discovered that he had no other wives or concubines to compete with, ever since Sarah’s death. She poured out her sympathy and understanding of his terrible loss... the crocodile tears... She laid it on thick! Her big brown eyes and long black eyelashes went into overtime. She really turned on the charm.

It didn’t take long to realize the possibilities here. For Isaac, she was a natural, a lovely answer to his prayers for a wife for his father. But for Abraham – well, let’s just say he was quickly distracted from his grief over losing Sarah, and his protective instincts quickly became loving instincts.

There is no denying that Keturah was a remarkable young woman. She was alert, witty, eager to please, strong and willing to serve, talented, quick to learn and understand, and responsive – oh, so responsive! She had learned her skills the hard way, and it was amazing how quickly she took over the managing of the household chores. She could make do with anything, or nothing, but now she had everything imaginable at her disposal and she was in hog heaven. She whipped up special pastries that made the servants bug-eyed, and she treated Abraham as if he were the king of the universe, the master of all creation.

You must understand, at the beginning it was all an act, for Keturah was an idolater. She was totally self-centered at the core. Everything she did was for self-preservation and her own selfish pleasures. But you've got to hand it to her; she was a class actress. Keturah put on just the right mixture of sadness and pain at the loss of Abraham's wife and the 'loss' of her own family, gratefulness for being accepted into a new family, bubbly joy and excitement at all her new friends and all the new things around her, eagerness to love and serve her new master, and even "longing to worship Logos her God" the next Sabbath. Besides, she was beautiful! She had smooth dark skin and jet black hair. She was athletic, perfect of form and face, lithe, slender yet full figured, always moving in graceful arcs as mistress of the dance. Abraham was overwhelmed. He decided to ask Logos for permission to marry her.

But good acting, done long enough and sincerely enough, becomes the new reality. Keturah had decided by the next Sabbath that she really enjoyed her new persona, and had mentally thrown out the old hateful, egotistical self. She bounced around singing or humming to herself, smiling at everyone, laughing at life's little trials instead of indulging her temper, and looking for ways to be helpful and kind. Already she had won everyone's heart.

She was quick to hand Abraham his coat or slippers, or a cool drink, or some grapes – sensitive to his every need. When he went out, she hugged him like she never wanted to let him go. Then when he returned, she knelt at his feet to wet them with her tears and wipe them with her hair. Why, Satan developed a new motto, just watching her act. "Kill 'em with kindness!" He loved the ring of it in his ear, and drove his own generals batty repeating it. Being an oxymoron, it fit his contrary nature perfectly.

However, Logos was not so easily fooled. He came that Sabbath evening at the lamb sacrifice, but not with His much-coveted, "The sacrifice is acceptable to Father. You are all cleansed!" Instead, He waited in silence, until finally one of the servants lifted his head from the ground before the altar, saw Him there, and nudged Abraham.

Startled, Abraham glanced up, saw Logos there, and fell back on his face before Him. "My Lord and my God! We worship You. Thank you for coming, for cleansing us, and for inviting us into Your presence."

"You are cleansed, my friend, but not all. Who is this you have brought into My holy presence?"

"Oh! Lord, this is Keturah. She's one of the Kasdim. Her family was slain by the Canaanites. I rescued her. I vowed to protect and cover her. I'm the only family she has left. Uh, now that Sarah is gone..." Abraham was about to ask then and there for permission to marry Keturah, but he suddenly realized what Logos had meant about not all being cleansed. "Uh... what can I do for Keturah to..."

"You can start with truth." Logos spoke sternly.

"Yes, Logos!" Abraham bowed his head, wondering what it was he hadn't been truthful about. "I have been unbearably lonely since Sarah died. Have I dishonored You by excessively grieving after You took her?"

"I did not take her. Satan, my adversary, took her from you. She herself opened the door to him when she judged Me wrongly for killing Lot. I did not kill Lot. I sent My angels to Sodom to rescue Lot and his family. They escaped and are living east of the Jordan. Only Iscah, who foolishly disobeyed Me, was lost in the cataclysm."

"Oh! My Lord! I'm sorry. We did not know."

"You did not ask."

"But Lord, I was afraid to ask. I did not want to be guilty of judging You! I tried so hard to just trust You, for You are the just and righteous Judge of all the earth." He again bowed himself to the ground in worship, weeping.

"I know, My friend. You have done well. It was Sarah who should have asked instead of judging Me in her heart. Now, ask, that truth may prevail!"

"Yes, Logos!" Abraham paused, comforted to know that Lot was still alive. *Now what was left to ask about? Oh.*

Keturah still had not been cleansed. "Logos, what must I know about Keturah, that she may live in Your sight?"

"That is indeed the right question. Keturah!" For the first time He looked directly at her. "Keturah, answer it!"

Satan, of course, was right there, though none of the humans saw or heard him. "She can't answer it. She is mine! She wouldn't know the truth if it jumped up and bit her on the nose. She can't tell anything but lies, for she is of me and has chosen me and my ways. Now Abraham has chosen her, so I've got him trapped. Tomorrow I'll begin finding a Canaanite wife for Isaac, too. And there is not a blessed thing You can do about it, Logos, because You've foolishly bound Yourself by Your own Word!" He began dancing a little jig around Logos, singing his annoying ditty, "Kill 'em with kindness! Kill 'em with kindness!"

Logos chuckled momentarily at this unbelievable rudeness that Satan had intended would taunt Him, then spoke softly. "Get behind Me, Satan! You know nothing of the power of truth... or of true repentance!"

All this time, poor Keturah had been weeping, her body prone, her face in the dirt, and her hands outstretched toward the altar. There was something about the presence of Logos that exposed the lies in her heart, and she was filled with shame. As Satan had said, she could answer not a word. Finally Logos spoke again, with the power of His command, “Keturah, answer it, I say! What does Abraham need to know about you, that truth may prevail?”

Looking over, Abraham saw her agony and began to pray intensely for her. Logos too was interceding, then Isaac, and even Abraham’s servant Eliezer of Damascus joined in. The battle was fierce. Suddenly Satan was not so sure he had her, and he joined her personal demons in whispering lies in her ears. *She didn’t dare tell the truth. Why, Abraham would hate her, and then all would be lost! She had to maintain the façade and keep her true self hidden. She was nearly there. He was already seduced! All she had to do was keep her cool and reel him in, like a fish on a hook.*

For the first time in her life, the grace of God flowed in torrents in, around, and through Keturah, fueled by the prayers and intercession of those beside her who loved her. Of course grace does not force anyone to change, but it does do several things; it exposes any lies and deception for what they are, allowing a choice to be made based on a more realistic assessment of oneself; more importantly, it actually grants one the power to make a fresh choice, even after a lifetime of wrong choices. Satan has never really understood this, and he missed it here as well.

Thus he was utterly shocked when Keturah blurted out, “It was all a lie, Sir, everything that I told Abraham. Everything I’ve ever been or done has been a lie. I’m sorry, Sir. I hate it! I would rather die than go back to it. I hate my life – I hate everything I’ve ever been and done! Except...” Here she paused, and the tears began to dry on her cheeks. She lifted her body to a kneeling position. “Except this last week with Abraham. I don’t hate that.” She dared to look up at Logos. “Please, kind Sir, God of Abraham and Isaac, don’t slay me! You’re not like all the other gods I worship.” Abraham gasped. *He had allowed himself to fall in love with an idolater?* “But I don’t love them. I hate them! I hate every one! Please, kind Sir, may I worship You instead?”

“Keturah, My worship always starts with truth – then obedience. Tell Abraham the truth about yourself.”

Satan was right there urging her to hide the worst of it – whispering that Abraham would surely despise her if he knew the whole sordid truth. But, brave girl that Keturah was, she ignored him, faced Abraham, and began her story. “My father was a Hittite and my mother a Cushite.” Logos blazed on the altar the whole time, giving them light, as the story got rather long. Taking seriously Logos’ command, she unloaded everything she could think of. She finished with, “So, I’m really sorry I lied to you. I don’t deserve to stay here. But, please, may I stay just as your servant? Here with you, for the first time in my life, I am... happy!”

Abraham took both of her hands in his and looked into her big brown eyes. “I forgive you. I do not hold your past against you. Thank you for now telling me the truth. I was wrong to make promises to you without verifying the truth of your story with Logos. So now, I must ask Logos what to do with you, for I do worship and serve Him.” Her eyes got wide as he talked, for due to Satan’s lies she was sure Abraham would hate her and toss her out on her ear.

Abraham then turned to Logos. “I repent, my Lord. Please forgive my presumption. Tell me what You want me to do with Keturah. Whatever it is, I will do it.”

Satan had given up and left in disgust. There were so many right attitudes around that he just couldn’t handle it. But Logos blazed in a glorious smile, “Your humility and repentance please Me, My friend. However, Keturah needs to be made right before I can tell you what to do. She has repented of her past, both to you and to Me. Now, take the blood of the lamb and sprinkle it for her.”

“Again? But we already... Yes, Lord.” Abraham did not expect to find any blood, as by this time the lamb ought to be thoroughly roasted in the fire of Logos. He was wrong. The lamb was still totally raw. He picked up one of the pieces and sprinkled the blood for Keturah. She was used to this. Her pagan culture did blood sacrifices all the time. But this time it was different somehow. When he started sprinkling, she felt dirty, unworthy, wicked. She put her head back on the ground and began to bawl.

Abraham finished and laid the piece of lamb back on the altar. The fire of Logos blazed brightly, and out rang His beloved and familiar (to Abraham) refrain, “Father accepts your offering. You are all cleansed!” Suddenly Keturah no longer felt dirty. It was like a weight had dropped from her shoulders. She felt lighter than air. She got back up on her knees and flung her arms toward Logos shouting, “I’m clean! I’m forgiven! Thank You Logos! My Lord and my God. I worship and serve only You forever. How may I serve You? I will do anything You say!”

Logos shone like the sun, receiving and enjoying her worship. Finally, when she ran down, He said. “You both just told Me that you would do whatever I asked you to do. Well, I keep My promises. I would have you keep yours, even those promises which you made this week while you were under the cloud of deception.”

Abraham and Keturah looked at Him, then at each other, and then back to Logos. Too much had happened too fast, and they didn’t quite understand.

So He reminded them. “Abraham, you promised to love and care for Keturah, to let her eat at your table and to always have a place for her at your side. You said you would be her family forever. You promised to provide for her, protect her, and cover her always.” Abraham nodded. He had taken a lot more words to say it, but that was a pretty good summary of all that he had told her.

“Keturah, you vowed to love, serve, and obey Abraham as your lord and master. You promised to dedicate your life to managing his household. You promised to give yourself to him, body and soul, and to meet his needs, pleasing him, and satisfying him mentally, emotionally, physically, and sexually. You told him you would raise for him any children he might give you.”

Keturah grew red in the face. She really didn’t want to contradict Logos, but when He paused and nodded to her, she couldn’t help saying, “But good Sir, uh... I don’t remember saying any of those things.”

Logos grinned at her. “Your lips didn’t say any of those things, but your actions did, and your heart certainly did. I am the God who sees into hearts.”

Keturah bowed her head, overwhelmed. This was a powerful God indeed! She was glad He was on her side. Then her head snapped up. “Those are the promises you want us to keep? But... but Sir, don’t we have to be married to keep those promises? I thought I was only going to be Abraham’s servant! I don’t deserve to be his wife.”

“Do you not want to be his wife?”

“Oh, I do, Lord! I want that more than I’ve ever wanted anything else in the world... except, maybe when I felt so dirty and wanted to be cleansed. But that went by so fast, and I’ve wanted a man like Abraham... all my life I’ve longed for... he’s so kind and gentle! And compassionate—he listens and understands. He cares. He...” She paused, realizing that Logos only awaited a decision. “Yes, Lord!”

“And you, Abraham?”

“Yes, Lord. If it meets with Your approval, I accept her as my wife, and I will keep my promises.”

“But do you want her? Can you leave Sarah in your past and love Keturah in your present?”

Again, Logos only awaited his decision. “Yes, Lord.”

At that moment, the sun rose from behind the hills in a blaze of glory. They had talked all night, so intently that they had not even noticed the brightening sky. The sunrise was breathtaking, filling the sky with flaming glory.

Logos held his hands skyward for a long moment, in deep communion with the Father. Then He held them out to Abraham and Keturah. “You have said your vows. Keep them. I now pronounce you husband and wife. Let no man tear asunder that which God has joined together.

“Now, it is My Sabbath. I command you to celebrate together. Enjoy each other as I enjoy you. Feast joyfully together. Be fruitful and multiply, Abraham, for I have made you to be the father of many nations.”

Logos disappeared. At that moment they smelled the lamb, now roasted to perfection. Suddenly they were all very hungry. They celebrated!

Abraham and Keturah were very happy together. Almost too happy. They did indeed keep their vows, as well as Logos’ command to enjoy each other and to be fruitful and multiply. Their very first month together Keturah became pregnant. I assure you that there was no happier woman on the face of the earth.

As for Abraham, at the age of 138 he was acting like he was 38. One month earlier, he had looked, and felt, like he already had one foot in the grave. But now he was young again. He behaved as if he didn’t have a care in the world—like he would live forever. The months flew joyously by.

At first Isaac was content to see his father happy and thankful that his depression over Sarah’s death was finally past. But they were so exquisitely happy together... and of course they had eyes only for each other. It seemed to Isaac that he was forgotten entirely. Now he grew lonely and a little depressed. He knew he should still be rejoicing for his father, but slowly the loneliness became unbearable. He missed Sarah! How she had loved and cared for him! *He was 38 years old, for heaven’s sake – he didn’t need a mother anymore*, he kept telling himself. Suddenly Isaac realized he couldn’t bring his mother back but maybe it was about time for him to get a wife, too. Still he kept his thoughts to himself. He didn’t want to spoil his father’s joy.

Around this time another woman entered the picture: Abraham’s mother-in-law. This is a sad part of the story. I’m sorry to tell it, but if I don’t you’ll never know why they left Hebron. Keturah was so happy with Abraham that she longed to share her joy with her family, who actually lived in the nearby town of Ziph. But they were wicked and Abraham did not want them in his home; nor did he want Keturah to go to visit them for fear he would lose her. This was the cause of their first argument, with spirited Keturah appealing to all the goodness of Abraham in her defense. *They were her ‘family’. Surely Abraham cared about her family. They needed to see what a good life she had here. Maybe they too could be converted. Didn’t he care about evangelizing the pagans?* And so on and on.

Abraham did care. But he also wanted to obey Logos who had told him to not mix with the heathen of the land. Keturah assured him it would not be mixing, just a visit. He cautiously asked about her family, and his worst fears were confirmed. All told, about 30 people were involved—none really married—all in various immoral relationships with each other and others outside the family. Abraham wondered how that could even be called a family, but wisely held his tongue. Keturah didn’t; she went on and on blithely describing the way they lived and the torments she had endured from them. When she reached the part about the attempted rapes like the one from which she had fled when she had run screaming to Abraham’s tent, he gently shut her down. “Please, my dear. I can’t take any more. May we just leave your past in the past and not discuss it?”

“Yes, my lord.” She bowed respectfully, and then wrapped her arms around his chest and began to cry, just as she had when they had first met. She cried for a long time, reliving the horrible memories for the first time since that fateful night. Abraham’s tender heart melted. Finally he relented, against his better judgment, to a compromise. Only her mother would be permitted a visit, and then only for one week. Eliezer, his most trusted servant, would go to fetch her, and would take her home the next week.

This compromise turned out to be quite acceptable to Keturah. Her Cushite mother, Hazelle, was one of the few who had not abused her, very much, and the one among her family whom she loved the most. She brightened up and began to prepare joyfully for the visit. Her baby was due in another month, and she would love to have her mother share in the birth, but hey... a week was sure better than nothing and she would make the most of it.

Hazelle came as invited. She seemed to be quite content to follow Abraham’s house rules. But then little things began to happen. Candles, incense, small idols hidden among her things, an idol on Keturah’s dresser. Abraham gently confronted Hazelle. “Please, Ma’am. I told you no idols. I can’t tolerate idols in my home. I serve Logos, the one true God, Creator and Sustainer of the heavens and earth. All other gods are an abomination to Him.”

Hazelle was shocked. “Holy cow! Your God seems awfully tight! Are you sure He’s any good? He sounds intolerant, jealous, and angry. I’d ditch Him and get some better gods. Why, I’ve got one here that...”

“No! No thank you,” Abraham quickly interjected. “You don’t understand. You see, I am wealthy and blessed because of Logos. He cares for me, protects me, feeds me, heals me...”

“Oh, I see. A health, wealth, and prosperity god. Yeah, I’ve got one of them too. Let me see. I think it’s around here somewhere. No, not this one – this is my fertility goddess. Ya gotta get yourself one of these! Hmm. No, maybe you don’t need her. You’re sure movin’ fast with Keturah.”

This went on for half an hour, with Abraham all the while getting more confused and frustrated with Hazelle. It was like a dark cloud covered his soul, and he could no longer see the light. Finally he went outside and cried out to Logos, who answered him not a word. Worse, He didn’t show up that Sabbath at the sacrifice, even though Hazelle accepted the sprinkling of the blood with the others.

She really got into the blood sprinkling, though she was a little surprised that they only sprinkled it, and didn’t drink the rest. She seemed to feel right at home. She even took some of the blood to sprinkle on her favorite idols. Abraham was disgusted with her, and regretted letting her come. But he had invited her, and he felt obliged to keep his word. Surely she would be gone in a few days, and he would again be at peace with Logos.

Unfortunately, the Eastern concept of time is not quite like ours. In Hazelle’s mind, a week was not a fixed time, and she was fully prepared to stay until Keturah’s baby was born – or longer. When the time came for her to leave, she begged and pleaded for just one more week, and looked so forlorn and offended that Abraham hardly had the heart to tell her no. But he had to do it. He had felt not a moment’s real peace in his soul since she had entered his home. So he and Eliezer screwed up their courage and went to confront her. But their timing could not have been worse.

She was in the bedchamber with her daughter Keturah, who had just finished having her first contractions. They were chattering away a mile a minute, and before Abraham could interrupt, Hazelle gushed, “Your son is nearly ready. He’ll be a boy, I know. Aren’t you excited! The first real contractions! He could come any day now! Here, sir, feel her belly, right here. The contractions are over, but feel him kick! He’s going to be a strong one! What will you name him? Just think, Abraham, your son is my grandson, yet I am younger than you. Isn’t this just thrilling?”

Confusion reigned in Abraham’s soul. He really didn’t know how Logos was leading him. He wanted to throw her out on her ear, but no, it just didn’t seem right, especially now. It wouldn’t be kind. This really was her grandson.

Ultimately he decided to compromise. He confronted Hazelle later that same day. “Listen, today was the day you were supposed to leave.” She got ready to argue, but he plunged right on. “I have decided to let you stay until the baby is born, on one condition. You must get rid of the idols, every single one. I don’t care how you do it – you can burn them, or throw them into the river, or even bury them out in the wilderness – you just can’t bring them back here. They are a terrible offense to me and to Logos my God.”

Abraham could see the anger rising on her face, and he realized he had touched something very precious to her, so he quickly backtracked. “If you don’t want to destroy them, wrap them up and bury them; then you can dig them back up when you leave. But you may not have them here.”

Hazelle shut her mouth and pondered. Abraham tried to look firm but kindly. Then her face softened and she turned to gather her idols. “Okay, sir. I’ll let you wrap them up and bury them. But take care that...”

“No!” Abraham responded, almost shouting. “If you give them to me, or to my servants, we will destroy them, for we hate idols and idolatry. If you want to protect them, then you must do it yourself. I take no responsibility for their safety, now or ever.”

Hazelle bit her lip, turned away, and began putting her idols into a pile. Abraham realized he had spoken harshly, so in his defense, he told her what had happened when he had watched his brother Haran’s idol shop. When he got to the part about his smashing the idols in front of the woman with the bowl of meal, her eyes grew big.

But then when he told about putting the big stick into the arms of the last remaining idol and insisting that the big idol had fought and smashed all the others, Hazelle laughed out loud. “Of course not; that’s silly. Haran should have known that the idols themselves aren’t alive. They’re just carved wood or stone – or cast metal, like this one.” She lovingly fingered a tiny gold cow.

Abraham’s ears perked up. This from an idolater! Maybe there was hope for her. “It’s the spirit behind them, the spirit that fills them. Surely you know that. There are lots of spirits, good ones and bad ones. These idols,” she pointed at her pile, “are just contacts, like open doors, for the spirits to enter our physical realm. When I hold one up and worship it...” here she held up her favorite, the lewd carving representing Ishtar, the love and fertility goddess, and bowed briefly before it. “Its spirit soars through the idol and enters into me, empowering me, answering my prayers, filling me with love and joy, giving me great...”

“Stop! Stop!” Abraham screamed. He could sense the demons swirling around. So that was the source of his confusion. He ran to the door of the tent, then turned back at the entrance. “Get them out, now! Every one! If one remains, I will destroy it. I swear I will!” Then he turned, sobbing, and ran for the hills.

When Abraham returned it was dinner time. Hazelle faced him with a smug smile. He confronted her gently. “Did you get rid of all the idols?”

“Yes, sir. They are all buried. Over there, by that tree.” She pointed. Abraham was sorry that he hadn’t specified farther out, but it was better than nothing. He graciously bowed. “Thank you. You are welcome to stay until the baby is born. But if I find any more idols, I will burn them.”

“It’s a deal. You won’t. I don’t want to cause any offense. I’ll go out there whenever I want to worship them.”

Abraham’s heart sank at hearing that, but a deal is a deal. The entire rest of the month, Hazelle went out two or three times a day, dug up her idols, and worshiped them, kissed them, offered them food and drink, then buried them again. Worse, she kept peeking out the tent door to make sure nothing was bothering them, and several times she drove away wild animals who smelled the blood and came to dig them up. Abraham could tell where her heart lay. And just like the poor woman with the bowl of meal, he knew he could do nothing to change her heart.

But the worst of all came just after the baby was born. Abraham and Keturah planned to consecrate him to Logos the next Sabbath, when, hopefully, Hazelle would be gone and Logos would return to them at the lamb sacrifice. But that very afternoon, when the baby was but an hour old, Hazelle made her regular visit to her idols, unburied them, and set them up under the tree. Then she ran back, picked up the newborn, cuddled him until no one was watching, then snuck out to have him ‘blessed’ by her idols.

Abraham, Keturah, and their aides were busy cleaning up, so it was a few minutes before Isaac noticed the baby gone. He ran out, saw what Hazelle was doing, and yelled for his father to come. Together they rushed to stop her.

Isaac got there first, and grabbed the baby. “Wait, wait! I’m not quite finished!” Hazelle reached to take him back. “He still has not had the blessing of Dumuzi, the most important god of all! The god of agriculture and summer fruitfulness. How can he ever grow up without...?”

But Abraham and Isaac had already walked off with the baby, answering her not a word.

Well, they finally managed to send Hazelle back home. They said a polite “No” to other relatives of Hazelle and Keturah who asked to visit. They got things straightened out with Logos, who consecrated their baby, **Zimram**. After that, Abraham determined to be more careful. He moved his family from Hebron clear down to Kadesh in the Negev. There they would be safe from interfering pagan relatives! They camped at the well where Logos had first talked to Hagar after Abram had sent her away.

Keturah, on the other hand, never really understood the problem, and no sooner had her mother left than she began planning for the next visit.

So it’s no wonder that, next year when Isaac ‘casually’ mentioned that he was nearly forty and wasn’t it about time for him to take a wife, Abraham nearly exploded. “Don’t even think about taking a wife from among the Canaanites! In fact, don’t think about a wife at all! I will find a wife for you. With the help of Logos I will.” The next day, Abraham sent his trusted servant Eliezer to Haran to find a wife for Isaac from among his own relatives.

Isaac, being an obedient son, readily agreed and thanked his father. He trusted him, and he trusted Logos. But as for not even thinking about it – well, now that he knew the time was at hand, that is about all he could think about. He wondered what she would be like. *Would she be beautiful, like his mother Sarah had been, and respectful, kind, and diligent?* The more he thought about it, the more he missed his mother. *No one could be all the things his mother was. No one could be that perfect. He was foolish for even thinking about it. He was sure to be disappointed.* So he kept telling himself. But he couldn’t stop thinking, just the same. His thinking just went around in circles.

Eliezer was gone a long time. It had been ten years since they had visited – when Terah had died. Abraham knew that Nahor and Milcah had borne many sons, all of whom were married. Surely by now they must have children of their own who might be about Isaac’s age. Abraham prayed intensely that Logos would go before his servant to find the right person for Isaac. Isaac also, trying to be patient, spent a lot of time praying and meditating in the fields as he waited. He wanted God’s best and knew God would provide. He set his heart to continue trusting.

For the tenth time that day, Isaac looked north across the wilderness. That was the direction that Eliezer would be coming from Haran. *Surely enough time had passed to get there and back. No, he must be patient. He must trust Logos. Besides, what sane woman would want to go to an unknown place with an unknown servant to marry an unknown man – she would have to be pretty desperate to find a husband. Probably some old maid who would scare even the goats if she unveiled herself. And anyway, there was no one in the world as lovely or as sweet as his own mother.* Again, poor Isaac put his face down into his hands and bawled. Why had Logos allowed Sarah to die? Why? Why? He was so lonely he could stand it no longer.

Evening was come. Isaac was glad that no one had seen him crying. He wiped his eyes on his shirt and blinked, wiped them again, and... yes! There was a camel caravan already quite near! *How could he have missed it? He quickly got up from his knees and dusted himself off, ran his fingers through his hair, and tried out his friendliest smile. No, no, it just made him feel sappy. How about the noble, wise look? He wished he had a mirror. Well, no time to experiment.* He started out toward the caravan, trying not to appear hasty. He amazed himself that the confusion and doubt that had so recently filled his mind had so quickly been replaced by hope.

He recognized Eliezer. He was busy counting all the other servants on the camels when the caravan stopped and people began to dismount. It made him lose count. He was just starting over when he saw her, dressed in one of the robes that Eliezer had brought as a gift. He knew it was her, for she was just covering herself with a thick veil, as befits an unmarried maiden meeting a suitor.

His heartbeat surged. He forced himself to remain at a genteel walking pace. "Thank You, Logos! You keep Your promises!" he breathed. Suddenly it didn't matter whether she was beautiful or not. *Logos had promised to make of him a great nation, and this was His gift of a wife to do that. He would accept and love whomever Logos provided. Even if she was old and ugly he would love her and raise many babies with her, for Logos' sake and Abraham's sake.*

After greeting Eliezer, Isaac walked right toward her. The sparkle of gold bracelets was a double confirmation. He bowed politely to the veil, wishing he could just get a peek behind it to see her face. "My name is Isaac, son of Abraham son of Terah. Thank you for coming. You are most welcome to our home. Your journey was long. You must be tired. Here, take my arm. I'll escort you to a tent where you can rest and refresh yourself before dinner."

"Yes. Thank you, kind sir. I am **Rebekah**, the daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor son of Terah," was all she said, but the musical lilt in her voice again made his heart leap. She took his arm and walked quietly by his side. The field was large. Isaac was glad. It gave him more time to find something to say to break the ice.

With the caravan following slowly behind, Isaac tried some small talk about the weather, but it went nowhere.

Suddenly he knew what to do. It seemed like Logos had just whispered to his mind, "Try truth." He stopped abruptly and turned toward her, taking both her hands in his. The caravan politely stopped just out of earshot. "Do you know why our servant Eliezer brought you here?"

"Yes, sir," the veil said. He desperately wanted to reach out and tear it off so he could see her face, but dared not.

"What did Eliezer tell you? About us, I mean?"

"Everything, sir. He told me everything."

"Did you come willingly? Did you want... to... to... Ah... Do you..." He couldn't quite get the words out.

"Yes, sir, I did. I do." Her words sounded so sweet and so eager he could hardly believe it.

So he took the plunge. "Look closely at me. I am the one you have come for. Eliezer brought you here to marry me. But now that you are here – now that you can see me – do you want me? Can you love me? Please be honest with me. I would never force you against your will."

She could see through her veil. He could not. It wasn't fair. A long moment passed while she studied his face and considered. *That was a good sign. She was thoughtful, careful, not rash or impulsive.* Then she squeezed his hands. "Yes, sir. Thank you for asking. I want you very much. If you are even half of all that Eliezer told me, then I already love you and will love you 'til the end of days."

Isaac smiled to the veil, and released her hands to begin walking again, but Rebekah hung on to his. "Wait, sir. That goes both ways. Do you want me? Can you love me? I know a lot about you, but you know of me nothing. You've never even seen my face."

He squeezed her hands. "I am dying to see your face, I admit. But I trust Eliezer. And I trust Logos. I have chosen to love you, whether you are beautiful or plain. But already in our short conversation I hear many things in your voice that I like about you. I will learn to love you quickly."

"Thank you, kind sir. I don't think I could handle not being loved. I promise I will work hard to earn your love."

Isaac thought that a strange way of expressing it, but he let it pass, and they continued across the fields to the tent that used to be Sarah's. "Here, Rebekah. This was my mother's tent. A bed and refreshments are inside. You may rest here until I call you for the Sabbath meal."

Abraham and Isaac stood with Eliezer, watching the servants unpack the caravan. They didn't even need to ask; he was glowing with all the things God had done in answer to their prayers. As he finished up his story, they were all rejoicing to know that this girl really was God's choice to be the wife for Isaac. They bowed together in worship.

Keturah had been busy with a special dinner. She had started fixing it well in advance of seeing the caravan, but Isaac had thought nothing of it – the Sabbath meal was always special. He called for Rebekah when everything was ready, just as the sun was turning the eastern hills to gold and the skies to flaming crimson. They gathered around the altar to confess their sin and offer the lamb. Isaac wondered all the while what Rebekah was thinking: *Had she done the sacrifice before? Did she know Logos? Would He come to welcome her?* They bowed to worship. Isaac caught a glimpse of Rebekah and her maid bowing before the altar halfway around the circle from him.

Logos was unpredictable, untamed. They never knew when He would come. They always worshiped Him as if He was there in Spirit when they couldn't see Him, but it would sure be nice if He actually showed up tonight, for Rebekah's sake. Isaac hoped to hear Logos joyously voice the Father's cleansing and acceptance of their sacrifice – then he would really know that Rebekah belonged here, and he could take her with confidence.

For a long minute, nothing happened. Isaac prayed desperately. "Please, Logos, please! Come and welcome Rebekah. Let me know if she is really the one, and if You approve of our marriage. I will love her in my heart forever, no matter what she looks like, if You come and confirm..."

At that moment, Logos appeared with a shout. "The sacrifice is accepted by My Father. You are all cleansed!" Then with hardly a pause. "Rebekah, My beloved with whom I am well-pleased, thank you for taking faith to come here at My request. Stand now, and move over to your husband." She did so, as Isaac also stood and reached out to draw her close. The others remained kneeling.

Logos smiled at the couple. The flaming robes that shrouded His body blazed like a tiny sun. "Rebekah, you have chosen to leave your family and your home to follow Me, though the destination was unknown to you. Your faith and your obedience give Me great joy. I now return My joy to you in the man beside you, whom I give you for your covering, your protection and provision, and your joy forever. Will you accept him from My hand?"

"Yes, Lord!" There was no hesitation in her voice.

"And Isaac, will you accept My gift, My choice to fulfill My covenant with you and with your fathers?"

"Yes, Lord!" He had no more hesitation either.

"Then turn toward each other and voice your vows to love and care for each other always."

They did, and Logos pronounced them husband and wife. The rest of the evening and all the next day was a whirlwind of celebrating, feasting, and drinking the sweet wine together. The whole time, Isaac never saw her face – just tantalizing bits of chin or cheek as she lifted her veil to eat and drink.

Finally the Sabbath ended. The sun withdrew in royal splendor. Everyone was tired; the evening meal was more subdued. Everyone had already spoken their blessings on the couple. Now it was time to head for bed. They went around the circle with hugs and kisses for each one, then Isaac took Rebekah and for the first time, led her into his own tent. He wasn't worried. He trusted Logos that she would be suitable – not too old, or too ugly. But her staying in his mother's tent had been a constant reminder to him of just how lovely Sarah had been. How much he missed her! No one could ever compare with her!

Inside the tent, they turned toward each other and enjoyed a long, gentle hug, standing very close. "You know I'm longing to see your face..." he began.

Rebekah giggled. "Oh, I know! I know!" she giggled again, with that musical lilt that tugged at Isaac's heart. "I've been watching your face. You're wondering if I'm old and ugly! You're trying bravely to trust Logos and not worry. But I see the worry still there. Shall I keep the veil on a few more days to test your faith?" She was teasing.

He hugged her closer, caressing her back. "You may keep the veil on as long as you like, my love. That is your choice, I will not violate it. I know this is all too sudden. You need time to get to know me. That's just fine. I will be patient. I do trust Logos. And I trust Eliezer."

"Well, in that case, I guess you don't need any more testing of your faith." She laughed as she flung off the veil and shook out her long hair, then stood back with a grin as Isaac gasped with delight.

For there before his eyes, Isaac saw a 20-year-old image of his mother! She had the same smooth, fair complexion; the same bright blue eyes and little up-turned button nose; the same broad grin with cute dimples accenting her smile, revealing finely spaced white teeth; and most important of all, the same gloriously golden hair, falling in generous waves almost to her hips. The vast majority of the sons of Shem were olive complexioned, swarthy, with dark hair. Rebekah was only the third person Isaac knew who was light complexioned and blonde – the other two being his own mother, Sarah, and her mother, Trisha. Isaac was overwhelmed. *Thank You, Logos my God!* He thought. *You have sent me comfort for the loss of my mother.*

"You are from my own family!" Isaac exclaimed to Rebekah. "I see my own mother's face reflected in yours. You must be related to Terah and Trisha."

Rebekah nodded. "My father Bethuel is a son of Nahor and Milcah. Nahor was a son of Terah and Tamara, but Milcah was a daughter of Haran, son of Terah and Trisha. My mother Berrie was also blonde; her father was Shushan son of Elam son of Shem, but her mother was a blonde daughter of Madai son of Japheth. I have blonde on both sides!" Rebekah laughed, that delightful musical laugh that rung the bells in Isaac's heart. She was home.

The years passed slowly on the grassy plains of the Negev. Never was there a love as strong as that of Isaac and Rebekah. Yet the many children they hoped to have, never came. There was just a series of miscarriages and heart-breaks. Abraham and Keturah were prolific, now with six sons and five daughters. But Rebekah remained barren.

Isaac told her the story of Sarah's barrenness, and how Logos had given her a miracle baby (himself) long after her time of childbearing had passed. So they trusted Him and believed His promises that He would make of them a great nation. Each time they came together they first prayed that Logos would grant them children. But Logos remained silent, testing their faith.

In 1800 BC Mars made its 88th catastrophic flyby of Earth. It was the worst since the destruction of Sodom, and caused great distress on the whole earth. Pretty much all the brick or stone buildings came down. The only ones that survived were the pyramids, the buildings built of the still-flexible sandstone laid down by the Flood, and... tents. Once again Abraham and his large clan in the Negev survived the catastrophe with no injuries, no damage, no loss. The next Sabbath Logos appeared to them in their worship. Isaac asked Him about it.

"No, I did not ask you to remain living in tents just to protect you from the earthquakes, though that is indeed a side benefit. Your uncle Nahor just died because he didn't take precautions before the quake and his fine brick home collapsed on him. I have had you dwelling in tents to keep you flexible, dependent on Me, ready to move when and where I lead, so that I can always lead you into the blessing even though My judgments are falling on the pagans all around you. Thank you for trusting Me, even though you have the means to build more-permanent homes. Your faith has grown strong, and it delights Me. So now I will bless you with something far better than homes of brick." With a twinkle in His eyes, He vanished.

That night, Isaac and Rebekah (ages 60 and 40), came together with faith, no longer just asking Logos for a son, but rather taking all their many prayers, mentally setting them down on the altar beneath His feet, and thanking Him for fulfilling His promises. *It is 1799 BC.*

That very night, as Isaac and Rebekah lay together still full of worship, they conceived. This time, there would be no miscarriage. Logos Himself dwelt within their worship. He joyfully returned to them His gift of life. All the angels danced with joy, singing, "Logos does indeed keep His promises! For His everlasting Word is Truth!"

However, not just one but two children were conceived that night. Months later, as Rebekah's two babies grew strong within her, they began to struggle together. Not knowing that there were two, she dared one Sabbath to ask Logos about it.

The flames above the altar dimmed, and Logos stepped down almost to the earth before them. Isaac and Rebekah shrank back in fear, their faces to the ground.

"Be at peace, My beloved," He reassured them. "Your question is a valid one, though it is difficult for you to understand the answer. You bear two nations within your womb. The younger begins as a child of My Spirit, strong, an overcomer with God and man. But the elder begins as a child of My adversary. He is stronger in the flesh, yet weak as water in the spirit." He smiled wryly. "As with your half-brother Ishmael, My adversary always tries to get his best in first. But I swear to you that My Promised One will come through the younger. Yet, again as with Ishmael, I shall bless both. Both shall become great nations, and you are to love and train both. With your help, perhaps we can redeem the elder from all that the adversary intends to do with him." He vanished.

"God's Promised One? – The Redeemer?" Rebekah breathed, a bright glow lighting her face.

"But how shall we know which is the younger and which the elder?" Isaac responded, thinking that Logos had referred to the one first conceived. He also longed for the Redeemer, and wanted to be sure he knew which was the child of the promise.

"Why, the youngest is whoever comes out last, silly!" Rebekah couldn't understand the problem.

The following spring Rebekah gave birth to her twins. The first to come out was furry all over, with red hair. So they named him **Esau**, meaning hairy. The younger came out hanging tightly to Esau's heel. They named him **Jacob**, meaning one who grasps or tries to take over. From the beginning, Rebekah was partial to Jacob, because of Logos' prophecy. Isaac withheld judgment, wanting more proof.

Old Mentuhotep II (to whom Abraham had witnessed in 1883 BC) had finally died in 1832 BC at the age of 90, two years before Terah died. His son (Mentuhotep III Sankh-kara) was quickly slain by his own son, Nebtawyre **Mentuhotep IV**. He ruled arrogantly, and cared not at all about Logos or His wisdom. He returned to the idolatry of their culture. Then in 1826 BC Mentuhotep's grand vizier **Amenemhat** (son of princess Nefert of **Elephantine** and a commoner named Senusret) staged a coup against the Mentuhotep dynasty, beginning what we know as the 12th Dynasty. He also was very wicked, with many wives and many gods. Logos warned Isaac not to go down to Egypt.

Amenemhat's first son Prince **Senusret** married Nefru, daughter of Mentuhotep IV, and began to rule with his father at the age of 18. His father sent him out with his army on campaigns to conquer and collect tribute from conquered nations around. He was as cruel and wicked as his father, as Isaac and Rebekah found out when he came to the Negev with his army and surrounded their camp at Beersheba, arrogantly demanding food and tribute.

Abraham graciously fed them all, though it was quite a burden, requiring hundreds from his flocks. But when Senusret demanded gold and silver as well, Abraham told him, “Any treasures that we may have belong to Logos our God. He is the Creator of the universe and King of kings. We must ask Him.”

Prince Senusret laughed as they knelt to pray before their empty altar. But he wasn’t laughing when Logos appeared in flames above the altar, and spoke directly to him. “Senusret son of Amenemhat and Nefrutoten, My hand is against you and your family. You live now only because you have not yet touched these My precious ones. Flee back to Egypt, for your father, his wife, and their guards are all dead at the hands of those who have stolen your kingdom. Yet I will bless you, and allow your wife Nefru and your baby to live, and restore your kingdom to you, if you will give gifts to My beloved sons Abraham and Isaac and persuade them to pray for you.”

The presence of Logos is always awesome, and it is not unusual for those who see Him to fall facedown in the dirt. Prince Senusret was no exception. Thoroughly humbled, he quickly ordered that a lavish quantity of gold and silver be given to Abraham and Isaac, and got on his knees before them, begging for their blessing.

When Senusret had gone, Abraham and Isaac found that his gift had more than paid for the food they had eaten. Truly, Logos was protecting them!

Senusret, deeply moved by his encounter with Logos, did succeed in capturing and executing all those who had assassinated his father’s family. And true to Logos’ word, his baby did survive, whom he named **Amenemhat II** in honor of his dead father. He honored him in other ways, too. He published his father’s writings, *The Teachings of Amenemhat*. He built an Egyptian fort at **Kerma** in Nubia and a funerary complex at **Lisht** in his honor. He also established regular trade with Abraham’s clan, which was mutually beneficial for many years. As young Amenemhat II grew up, Senusret shared the throne with him. He taught him to honor Isaac’s family. As promised, the blessings of Logos remained on Egypt as long as they treated the Hebrews well. Amenemhat II married. He had a son, named **Senusret II**, in honor of his father. They never again attempted to extort tribute from Isaac’s clan.

As Esau and Jacob grew up, it became pretty clear to Isaac who was the child of the promise. Esau was strong, fearless, hard-working, obedient, faithful, a skillful hunter and good provider for the family. Jacob was, well, just a supplanter, a ‘taker’ rather than a ‘giver’. He was weak, hanging around his mother’s skirts. He was selfish, lazy, sneaky, and self-centered. He told lies, and stole from his father. He spent more time figuring out how to get out of doing what he was told, than he would have spent doing it. And competitive! He was always fighting with Esau over something. He was a constant trial to his parents.

The Amorites had done very well in the land of Shinar. In 1878 BC King **Sumuaburn** had taken over the capital city of Accad and used it for his own capital, but had also begun building a mighty city of his own. He worshiped **Shamash, Sin, Astarte, and Marduk**, Amorite names for the sun, moon, Venus, and Mars – like the nations he conquered. He named his new city **Babylon**, ‘Gate of God’. In it, he built a temple to Astarte and a high astronomical observation tower to Marduk similar to the ones Enmar had built. Babylon was just down the Euphrates River from Accad. With the ancient religion restored, the people were comforted. Thus it wasn’t long before King Sumuaburn had their total submission, if not their allegiance.

So Shinar prospered, and each Amorite king was better than the last. The time of the birth of Jacob and Esau was the golden age of the **Amorite Empire**. It grew to extend its influence over nearly all of the Middle East, Anatolia, and Assyria, except for the fiercely independent Kassites living in the Zagros foothills. The 6th Amorite king of Babylon is the one we know best: **Hammurabi** left us records of his laws on famous monuments. He reigned for 42 years, beginning in 1792 BC when Jacob and Esau were 7. This was a time of relative stability and nearly worldwide peace.

In 1784 BC, at the age of 175, venerable Abraham died, well-satisfied with years and surrounded by all who loved him: Isaac and Rebekah with their twins; beloved Keturah with her six sons and five daughters (aged 21 to 36); and even Ishmael (at 89) was there with his Egyptian wife Annutsenre and their 12 sons and 15 daughters. Abraham blessed them all and gave them all fine gifts (for he was very wealthy), though he made sure that the larger portion of his inheritance went to Isaac. He died in peace, a prince with God and man and held in the highest esteem by all, even by the surrounding pagan Canaanites.

After his death, they buried him next to his beloved Sarah in the cave of Machpelah, facing the ancient Oaks of Mamre. There they stayed for a month, with the nearby Canaanites joining in their mourning. Finally, they settled his estate and began packing to leave.

Isaac and Ishmael faced each other one last time. “Good-bye, my brother,” Isaac spoke first. “May the God of our father Abraham go with you.”

Ishmael was silent for a long moment, staring at Isaac with a steely gaze. “Our father Abraham...?” Ishmael finally spat out. “I am the firstborn. Mine is the birthright. According to the law, I should have the inheritance.”

“Was his wealth not his to do with as he pleased? I took nothing from you, my brother – only what our father gave me. He gave you gifts as well. Can you not be grateful? Can we not remain friends?” Isaac realized he was pleading.

Another long pause. “We may be brothers, but we will never be friends. Never! I swear that you will live to regret stealing my birthright!” He turned away.

Isaac never saw him again. Ishmael returned to **El-Paran** with his family. His twelve sons married daughters of Egypt and Arabia. Thus his Semitic bloodline through Abraham was diluted among the many sons of Ham. They became twelve tribes of nomads wandering through the Arabian Peninsula. To this day the descendants of Ishmael (now called **Arabs**) remain bitter against the descendants of Isaac (now called Jews), though they've forgotten why.

Ishmael himself died at the age of 137 in **Elath**. He never did reconcile with his brother. The world still lives with the consequences of his irrational bitterness.

Abraham's beloved Lot died (at the age of 140) the year following Abraham's death, and Lot's two daughters died soon after. They never knew that it was Abraham's faithful prayers that had kept them alive. Lot's two grandsons Ben-Ammi and Moab and their families lived on the far side of the ugly pit that had once been the well-watered plains of the Jordan. Though the pit was now nearly filled with water, even that was ugly – brackish and salty. Nothing could live there. The Ammonites and the Moabites also retained a bitterness against Isaac and his descendants, though no one knew why. They did not maintain the faith that Abraham and Sarah had tried so hard to impart to righteous Lot and Iscah. Instead, they plunged wholeheartedly into idolatry of all kinds, even including regular child-sacrifices to the murderous god Molech.

In Haran, the remainder of Terah's family prospered. Seven of Nahor's eight sons had become tribes already; they built the City of **Nahor**, just south of Haran. But the youngest, Bethuel, had been injured when the house fell on Nahor. He had been an invalid when Eliezer had come. Bethuel had only two children, Rebekah and **Laban**. Due to Bethuel's confinement to bed, Laban had done most of the negotiating with Eliezer regarding his sister.

Bethuel died, leaving only Laban to carry on his family name. Laban had married young, at 29, but his wife was barren. In 1768 BC his wife, still childless, died. As was the custom, Laban searched for a younger girl to give him an heir. In 1758 BC, when he was 78, he married Lillia, who was 22. Their first child was **Leah**, born in 1756 BC. They had no more children for 7 years until lovely **Rachel** was born in 1749 BC. Finally, 28 years later, Laban and Lillia had two sons. They are important to our story in a round-about way, though their names have been lost to history.

After Ishmael left, Isaac left Hebron and took his family south, down to the plains around Beersheba. It was easier to pasture their flocks there, and it was farther away from the pagans of Canaan. Remember, the **Sinai Peninsula** was not then the desert that it is now. It was fertile land, with lush grass and lots of game. It was also closer to the Oasis of El-Paran where Ishmael had gone. Isaac always kept alive the hope that he and his brother, or at least their families, would someday be reconciled. His twins, Jacob and Esau, were only 15 the year their grandfather Abraham died.

When the twins were 22, Rebekah decided to have a heart-to-heart talk with Jacob in private. He was a man now, and she felt he could handle the truth. "Jacob," she addressed him as sternly as she was able. "It is time you grow up. You have some character flaws which will greatly harm you later on unless you listen to me now."

"Yes, Mother?" He usually tuned out these talks, but something in her tone of voice startled him.

Rebekah softened, smiled, and gave him a hug. "You are the child of the promise!" she whispered mysteriously. It was just the right thing to say, as he was already steeling himself for yet another scolding. She sat close to him and took both of his hands in hers. "Logos Himself came to me while you and Esau were in my womb. He prophesied great things about you!" Here she told the story, in great detail, with a few pet elaborations from her daydreams. She concluded with, "As the younger, you normally would get little of your father's inheritance. But because of Logos' promise, you can get it all!"

"Why then is Dad so partial to Esau?"

Rebekah grimaced. She couldn't deny it, but she had hoped it wasn't quite so obvious. "Your father has this strange notion that perhaps Esau was conceived after you and is therefore younger – the child of the promise."

A look of horror flashed over Jacob's face. "Then... what can I do?"

"That's what I've been trying to tell you. You have some serious character flaws. They are confirming to your father that Esau must be the child of the promise. If you don't fix them now, you could lose everything."

Jacob was ready to hear. Rebekah spent the next two hours opening his eyes to his deceitfulness, selfishness, and childish irresponsibility, and encouraging him in the ways of Logos. Jacob still had a tender heart. Soon he was weeping in repentance. I can't say that he was instantly the model son, but he never forgot this talk. It had a profound influence on him, literally for the rest of his life.

Rebekah also gave him some practical things he could do to better his relationship with his father. Jacob had actually laughed and taunted Esau for the way he bowed and addressed Isaac as if he were a king; now he listened and learned, and began to address his father with a lot more respect. Jacob also began to learn to cook. He had considered that a woman's job, or worse, a servant's job, and had despised his brother for the way he cooked game for their father. But Rebekah was a truly great cook. When she explained the importance of reaching his father's heart by first satisfying his appetite, Jacob actually began taking cooking lessons from her.

Thus, in 1776 BC when the twins were 23, Jacob was practicing his new cooking skills over an open fire at the door to his tent. He had just finished a great smelling stew.

It was made with red lentils, beets, celery, carrots, and pinto beans, with lots of little lumps of savory lamb mixed in. Jacob was sniffing it and adding onion, garlic, and other spices to make it smell just right, as his mother had taught him, trying to imagine if his father would like it. At that moment, Esau strode up from a long day in the fields.

“Hello, brother. It’s so good to see you. Did you have a good day hunting?” Jacob was practicing his respectful greetings, having discovered that they could be more fun than the taunting that used to get him into so many scraps.

Esau didn’t even notice the change. “No! I had a terrible day hunting!” He growled. “Every time I was about to make the kill, some stupid thing would spook the deer and it would get away. I can’t believe it!”

Jacob could sure believe it. Esau was disheveled, filthy, and covered with sweat. Suddenly, something clicked in Jacob’s mind and his eyes lit up. “I’m so sorry, my brother! Here. Please, sit down beside me and tell me all about it.” He pushed his stool over to be just downwind of his stew.

“Go to...” Esau began, then caught a whiff of the stew. All of a sudden he felt weak in the knees and his head spun. He sat abruptly on the stool, his mouth beginning to water. “I’m exhausted. Famished! What is that red stuff you’ve got here? That really smells good! May I have a taste?”

Not stopping to consider where the thought may have come from, Jacob responded, “That ‘red stuff’ is savory lamb / lentil stew that I made for our father. But you can have as much as you want if you sell me your birthright.”

Esau responded without batting an eye, “Of what use is my birthright if I die of hunger? I accept!”

“First swear to me.”

“Okay. I swear by Logos and our fathers Nahor, Terah, Abraham, and Isaac, that you can have my birthright.”

Jacob couldn’t believe he was making such a light thing of it, but he quickly fed his brother before he could change his mind. He filled Esau up with three bowls of stew, and bread, and his best wine, and anything else he could find in his tent. His mother was sure right about reaching a man through his appetite!

Later when he told his mother what had happened, Rebekah congratulated him. “That was great, my son! You’ve won your brother! Wasn’t that better than fighting with him? It was the respect as well as the food, you know. Now all you have to do is win your father like that.”

Six years went by. In 1770 BC the 30-year flyby of Mars again caused famines in the land. Isaac moved his family to Gerar. There he had a similar problem with **Abimelech II**, king of the Philistines, as their fathers had had nearly a hundred years before – claiming that his beautiful blonde wife Rebekah was his sister. As with Abraham, Isaac got properly shamed and humbled for his deception.

However, something good also happened while he was in Gerar. Logos came to Isaac and his family while they worshiped at the altar after the Sabbath sacrifice. He had not come often, so this was a very big thing to them all. They fell on their faces before Him as He blessed them, saying, “Do not go to Egypt for safety from the famine. Stay in this land as I lead you. I will be with you and bless you, for unto you and your descendants I will give all these lands as I swore to your father Abraham. I now confirm to you the same oath that I swore to him. By your presence here I have begun to remove the curse of wickedness that rests on the land. I will multiply your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven, and by them shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed me as Abraham obeyed Me and kept My commandments, My statutes, and My laws. I am the Word of YHWH.”

He vanished, but His words burned in their hearts. Isaac swore he also would obey Logos, Word of the eternal YHWH, just like his father Abraham. As they worshiped together, Jacob, deeply moved, likewise swore in his heart that he would obey Logos. For the first time he knew for certain that he was indeed the child of the promise. He determined he would do whatever it took to obtain that promise. This became a driving force deep within his soul.

As He had said, Logos blessed them there in the Negev, abundantly, beyond all reason, even near Gerar where the pagans suffered in the famine. Many of the Philistines were jealous and covetous. Some even stole from his flocks and took over his wells. Each time, he would move a bit farther away and dig another well. Thus he learned patience.

After a few years the skies cleared and the famine eased. Isaac moved again, back to the old homesite at Beersheba. But the wells that Abraham had dug were dry. The ground was still parched and covered with ash. Refusing to accept any less than YHWH’s blessing, Isaac ordered his servants to dig another well, and no one was less surprised than he when they found abundant water. It turned out this was the seventh well that had been dug there since Abraham had first come over a hundred years before, thus the town that sprang up there is known to us as **Beersheba**, ‘Seventh Well’. It was also known as the Well of the Oath, since in Hebrew the words ‘seven’ and ‘oath’ are nearly identical, and it was there that the kings of Gerar made covenants of peace with both Abraham and Isaac.

Logos came again to Isaac’s family there in Beersheba, giving them His eternal oath: “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants, for the sake of My servant Abraham.” And once again Jacob believed Logos’ promise. He treasured it in his heart, while his brother despised it in his heart just like he had despised his birthright.

When the twins were 40, Esau decided he didn’t want his father to find him a wife. He was of age. He went out on his own and married two Hittite girls, just like that.

He brought his two new wives to his tent, without so much as introducing them to his parents first. These two women, steeped as they were in the pagan culture of the Canaanites, made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah. This was a family tragedy, though some good came of it. For the first time, Isaac began to question if perhaps Esau might not be the child of the promise, after all.

Jacob patiently waited, working to gain his father's favor, and praying to be found faithful and to obtain Logos' promises. He had come a long way from his earlier lazy, selfish, bratty, rude, belligerent, deceitful attitudes, and his father did notice! But Logos saw how far he had to go (as we too shall see) and was yet testing him.

In 1750 BC Hammurabi died. His son **Samsu Iluna** took over. He was not as strong as his dad. In the 9th year of his reign the fierce Kassites came down from the Zagros foothills to attack Babylon. They did not succeed; the Amorites remained the second world power after Egypt. However, the Hittites (who had moved to Asia Minor) were growing strong, and would give them both some competition in time. The **Levant** (Canaan, Arabia, and Syria) was under the influence of all three world powers at that time: the Amorites along the Euphrates, the Egyptians under Amenemhat II, and the Hittites now in Hattusa.

As I said, Isaac had a fondness for savory meat dishes. With not only his wife Rebekah, but now also both his sons becoming great cooks and even competing to serve him his favorite dishes, he began to lose his rugged good health. Bluntly, he got fat and old before his time. He began losing his hair, hearing, and eyesight when he was only 120. Great wealth buys many servants to do your work, but it can't buy good health if you just sit around and eat.

So, by the age of 130 Isaac was bald, blind, and nearly an invalid due to all that excess weight he carried. It had happened so fast, that he got scared. Figuring he was about to die, he called Esau to his bedside. "My son, my firstborn. I am old, and do not know the day of my death. Go, take your hunting gear, catch a wild buck, and prepare a savory dish for me as you know I love. Bring it to me, that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die."

Esau obeyed immediately. The father's blessing was more than than it is now, as it was traditionally the means by which the inheritance was conveyed to the firstborn, a sort of 'Last Will and Testament'. Esau 'forgot' that he had sold his birthright, and his father had never known. In Isaac's mind, even though Esau had offended them by his marriage to the two pagan Hittite girls, tradition still ruled. Besides, Isaac had never really been reconciled to Logos' prophecy about, "The elder shall serve the younger." In his mind, they'd both been born at the same time, and Logos must have been talking about their conception being a day apart or something. Esau was still on his best behavior, and Isaac had no clue that it was mostly just an act to try to finagle a larger inheritance.

But Rebekah knew. She understood the prophecy. She knew about the sold birthright. And, since Isaac was hard of hearing and tended to talk loud, she also overheard his conversation with Esau. She had to do something. All her hints to Isaac over the years had obviously been in vain. It was time for action. She went looking for Jacob.

Michael flew up to the throne of Logos. "My Lord and my King! What shall I do? Your adversary is whispering lies and terrible ideas to Rebekah. She is listening, and heeding! She ignores my admonitions to Your wisdom and truth! May we now do battle with the sword?"

"Has Satan gone beyond the law? Has he harmed her? Pushed her? Or forced her against her will?"

"Well... no."

"Rebekah has a free will. I won't force her either. If she does not choose Me and My ways of truth now we shall wait and see where her choices take her. My adversary is but doing his job. Fear not. My Word cannot fail. All My promises will come to pass. My plans for My precious ones will triumph no matter what her choices. You shall see."

The angels watched while Rebekah and Jacob prepared the meal that Isaac had asked of Esau. As they worked they plotted. Rebekah carefully instructed Jacob in the fine art of deception. Satan was meticulously keeping within the letter of the law. He knew he had Rebekah's ear, and he was determined to make the most of it.

Michael was tense, trying hard to obey Logos and not fear, when Jacob came in to serve the meal to Isaac. Surely Isaac would discover the ruse. He couldn't see, but he could smell and hear! Then Jacob would end up with a curse rather than a blessing and all would be lost. Michael didn't see any way out of the mess. He was unconsciously wringing his hands. Why was Rebekah not listening to him now? He had urged her to make an appeal to Isaac. Isaac would have listened. He had prepared Isaac to listen. Jacob's improved attitudes toward Isaac had changed his heart, and he was ready now to accept Logos' prophecy. All it would take was one final appeal from Rebekah...

Michael's mouth dropped open in surprise. Old Isaac had bought the deception! He was blessing Jacob! "May God give you the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and sweet wine. May peoples serve you and nations bow to you. Be the master of your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow to you. Cursed be those who curse you. Blessed be those who bless you. And may the promised Redeemer come through you."

Michael realized he had been holding his breath, and he let it out with a sigh. "He did it. He pulled it off. I can't believe it! As always, Logos, Your awesome Plan of the Ages triumphs, even through Satan and his lies."

"We have not yet seen the end of the story," Logos responded. "The hardest test is yet to come."

They watched as Jacob returned to his mother's tent and they congratulated each other on what should have been their shame. Esau had already returned from the field with a tender young deer, and was preparing the meal he knew his father loved. In two hours he was in Isaac's tent. "Let my honored father arise, and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me."

Now it was Logos who seemed to be holding His breath. "This is the big test," He whispered. "Will Isaac do what is right, even in the face of the gravest injustice? Intercede for him with Me, dear Gavriel!"

"Your brother came deceitfully, and took away your blessing! Yes, and he shall be blessed. Behold, I made him your master, with grain and new wine I sustained him, and I gave you and all his other relatives to him as his servants. As for you then, what is there left for me to do?"

"He did it. He passed the test!" Logos whispered.

Esau wailed in agony of soul. "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, oh my father!"

"Your dwelling shall be away from the fertility of the earth, and away from the dew of heaven. By your sword shall you live, and you shall serve your brother. Yet when you get restless, you shall rise up against him and break off the yoke of servitude, to remind him of his deception."

There was silence in the heavenlies for a time, as Esau digested this, then bitterly went out to plot vengeance against his brother after their father passed away. Gavriel, still interceding, just shook his head. Michael dared to speak up. "I'm sorry, Logos. It still just doesn't seem right. I know that You wanted Jacob to have the blessing, and he got it. But getting it by deception... How can I protect Jacob from Esau's vengeance, when he earned it!"

"You cannot, dear Michael. But this is something you need to understand about My Plan of the Ages. It is self-correcting. Sin not only opens the door to vengeance, it also brings its own consequences. The consequences of sin awaken repentance to all but the hardest of hearts. True repentance then closes the door to vengeance. Jacob obtained the blessing by deception, so deception will not leave his house – it will torment him – until he repents."

"And I will see to it that he never does!" Satan came in unannounced, vastly pleased with himself. "You see, lies and deception are better than truth! Not only did my deception win the blessing You wanted him to have, but it has spawned many other deceptions. And each one will strengthen his ability and desire to deceive. Telling the truth doesn't make it any easier to tell the truth the next time! You see how my ways are better? It doesn't matter how many blessings he wins from You, with just a tiny, innocuous lie here and there I can destroy him!"

"Innocuous lie...? There is a flaw in your logic, My beloved adversary. Would you like to hear it?"

Satan almost said no. He does not have the patience to stand and listen to Logos' explanations, for he even hates to hear His voice. But this time, his curiosity got the better of him. He knew Logos would not tell him if he didn't ask to hear. He had finally learned that Logos never forces Himself, or His wisdom, on anyone. "Yes, I would."

Logos beamed. "Your choice for wisdom pleases Me greatly. Hear this: were it not for My Law, you would be correct. Lies would multiply and truth would diminish on the earth until all creation was destroyed."

"Your law indeed," Satan interrupted. "He has broken Your law! Jacob is mine! He has chosen my ways! He despised Your law, and it cannot help him now. All it can do is condemn him. I know the law!"

"If you really knew My Law, dear Lucifer, you would bow before Me here and now to acknowledge that My ways are best. Listen carefully. Though he broke it, yet My Law is woven into all of creation and imprinted upon his heart. It will confront Jacob and trouble him everywhere he goes. Gently, but persistently, My Law will show him his guilt. Every trouble he encounters, every deception he falls to, will remind him of it. He will sense My judgment in the slightest difficulty. He will learn to hate lies like I do and long for forgiveness and reconciliation. You have no idea, dear Lucifer, of the power of true repentance."

"Hate lies? Ha! How can he ever hate lies now? It was by lies that he obtained the blessing! He is learning to love lies, just like me. Just like all the Canaanites around him. Just like the whole rest of the world. You don't understand, Logos. You look at sin as if it is bad thing – sin is fun! All my people love it. Why would we choose any other way?"

"Love it... until it begins to destroy them..."

"Ha! Blood, guts, gore, pain, suffering... it is all part of the fun! Why do You think my war games, my battles and competitions to the death, my human sacrifices, are so well attended? Everyone loves to see the blood spurt forth, the eyeballs fly out, the..."

"Enough! That kind of talk is not acceptable in My presence. Your lies are exposed here. You may love to see the suffering of others, but when it comes down to you, personally, you will change your mind. As will each of my precious ones."

The fire of Logos' holiness burned brightly. It caused Satan, who had been too bold and come too close, to jump back, singed. "You see, My beloved adversary? Even you, when confronted by pain, do whatever it takes to save yourself. I assure you that when you face the pain earned by your misdeeds you will gain a new view of repentance!"

"You claim to never use force!" Satan shouted angrily, his pride singed more than his body. "I'll make You pay for that! I may not be able to touch Jacob, but Esau can. I'll have him kill Jacob just as surely as I made Cain kill Abel!"

“He really doesn’t understand, does he.” Gavriel sighed after Satan had stormed off. “Why do you keep trying to give him wisdom? He won’t receive it.”

“I am Love,” Logos said simply. “True love never stops trying. Besides, he asked for wisdom. His responses show that he was listening. He’ll think about it. Who knows? Someday he may actually receive it and repent. I gave him a free will just like you. In the meantime, he has chosen to harden his heart. His choice has become very dangerous. Michael, be on your guard for Jacob – and for his parents.”

“Yes, Lord,” Michael responded instantly, flying to Rebekah’s side. Satan was already there, attempting to compound the deception. “Truth!” Michael whispered in her other ear. “Lies always are found out; they always come back to torment you. Your only hope now to save your son is to go to Isaac and tell him the truth – the whole truth. He will hear you. He loves Jacob too!”

Sadly, Rebekah at this point in her life was more used to hearing the voice of the adversary than the voice of truth. Especially when she heard from a servant that Esau was planning to kill Jacob. She succumbed to fear, and told Jacob to flee to **Padan-Aram** (the plains of Syria) to her brother Laban’s house by the city of Nahor south of Haran.

Instead of just telling Isaac the truth, she avoided the issue by telling him that Jacob needed to go there to get a wife, so he wouldn’t take one from among the Canaanites as Esau had done. Isaac gladly agreed to that! Esau’s pagan wives were a constant trial to him, too. Isaac threw a big party and sent Jacob off with his blessing.

At the sending-away party, Esau finally understood what he had done to his folks. But instead of doing what was right – divorcing his two pagan wives and marrying a descendant of the Kasdim – he kept his pagan wives and went and married a third. She became just as much of a trial to Isaac and Rebekah as his other two pagan wives.

She was **Mahalath**, a voluptuous daughter of Ishmael and his lovely Egyptian wife Annutsenre, from **El-Paran** (just south of Beersheba). At least she was of the family of Abraham. But sadly, she had adopted her mother’s pagan practices as well as her father’s bitterness against Isaac.

‘Anna’ (the nickname Ishmael had used for his wife – he never did learn to correctly pronounce her Egyptian name) told Esau about Ishmael. He had died seven years before, at the rather young age of 137, still bitterly railing against Isaac for stealing his inheritance and his blessing. Hearing that only nursed the anger and bitterness in Esau’s heart against Jacob. Anna was glad to give her daughter Mahalath to Esau, especially when she learned that his brother Jacob had treated him just like Isaac had treated Ishmael. It seems that misery loves company. None of them ever realized that if only Ishmael had been able to get past the bitterness and reconcile with his half-brother, he would have had a happier, longer, and more peaceful life.

“Would you just look at that!” Logos told Gavriel. “That is what I hate the most!”

Gavriel, who had been kneeling before the throne in joyous worship, was startled. But looking where Logos was pointing, he understood. Annutsenre, Esau, his new wife Mahalath, and her older brother **Nebaioth** (Ishmael’s firstborn) were commiserating together on the unfairness of it all, feeding each other’s bitterness. “Yes, that is so sad. But, Logos, what about it do You hate the most?”

“Instead of covering for each other, helping each other overcome the bitterness and anger, they’re provoking each other! That multiplies it. They don’t realize it will destroy them like it destroyed Ishmael. Many future generations as well will reap the disastrous consequences of their sin.”

“Perhaps it is Your adversary and his demons, telling lies to their minds...”

“Of course it is!” Satan snapped, startling Gavriel by popping up suddenly before them. He had learned to listen secretly to the conversations at the throne room, thinking that Logos didn’t know he was there. But this was too good to stay hidden. “It is just as I said. Lies are stronger than truth. Once I get someone to act on a lie, just once, I own all his descendants from that time on forever! Now Esau, Ishmael, and all their descendants are mine forever, and there is not one blessed thing You can do about it – unless of course You want to use force. Which is my domain. You see, You’ve already lost! You’ve defeated Yourself!”

Satan went on and on, boasting and dancing around them, but Logos and Gavriel kept quiet. Finally he ran down, his curiosity impelling him to ask, “So, Logos, what do You have to say about that?”

“I must admit,” Logos responded quietly, “that you are nearly correct. The bondage of sin is indeed very strong. Once a person is entangled in it, it is almost impossible for him to get free. But I do have tools, and they are stronger than you can understand. I could shower them with My love and blessings, even vast wealth from the sands...”

“Ha! Then I will turn them into pleasure seeking, self-centered hedonists or power-hungry tyrants!”

“Or I could discipline them with trials and tribulations to bring them to repentance...”

“Then I will infect them with anger and bitterness against those trials, to make them hate You!”

“I could send them prophets to warn them, teachers to instruct them, scribes to record My Law into a holy book, My Word in plain language to instruct them...”

“Then I’ll send them a prophet of my own; give them their own ‘holy’ book; teach them to hate and kill any who say a word to dishonor my prophet or my book. They are mine! They will listen to my prophet and believe my book. They will despise Your law and slay Your prophets!”

“Or I could pay the penalty for their sin Myself.”

“What? Impossible. The penalty for sin is death.”

“I know.”

Silence, while the full implications of that sank in. Then, “You would do that? Give Your life for those, those... despicable rats?” He spat it out with utter disgust – trying to use a word even worse than ‘despicable’ but it wouldn’t come out.

Logos smiled at him. “The rats I created were beautiful and useful until perverted by sin.”

“Humans. Despicable humans, You idiot. You would give Your life for them?”

“Yes, even for the despicable ones.”

“That’s utter nuts... You’re crazy. But why?”

“Because I love them. True love must always be willing to give up his life for his beloved. That is why, in the end, love will win over hate.”

“Yeah. Right. Love wins over hate. I understand.”

Satan gave Logos a smirk and a staged bow, and returned to earth, thinking, *He wins by dying. I guess I can handle that.* This now was the second time Logos had talked about dying for the humans. The first time, after Abraham’s ‘sacrifice’ of Isaac, he had heard, but certainly hadn’t believed it was possible. But he knew that Logos was not given to idle words, and now he began to think it might be true. The thought strangely delighted him.

Jacob left Beersheba and headed north toward Haran. The first night he slept under the Oaks of Mamre, just north of Hebron. It took him a long time to fall asleep, as he was tormented by the fear of what Esau might do to him. Besides, though he knew he deserved to be banished from his family, he already missed them terribly.

The next day, continuing north along the hills of Judea, he managed by nightfall to reach the hill above Luz, where his grandfather Abraham had built an altar to Logos. He camped there for the night next to the altar. He was high on a ridge, with the town of Luz to the west and Ai to the east. Wanting to feel closer to his grandfather, he took a single stone from the altar, wrapped his outer cloak over it (for it was a warm evening), and used it for a pillow.

At first Jacob could not sleep. But this time it was not out of the fear of Esau’s vengeance. Isaac had chastised him many times for his duplicity. He had exhorted him on the importance of integrity and the dire consequences of lies. Yet now he had deceived his father to get the blessing, and Isaac had not said a single word against him. In fact, he had given him another big blessing at the sending-away party. Jacob wished his father had just taken him over his knee and paddled him, like he used to do when he was young. Then maybe he wouldn’t be feeling so miserably guilty.

He recognized the guilt, and realized he was not going to sleep until he did something about it. So finally he got up and knelt beside the altar. “Logos, God of my fathers,” he began, then stopped and began again. “Logos, my God and God of my fathers, I was wrong to deceive my dad. It’s late and I don’t have a lamb to offer here for my sin, but I will get one and offer it as soon as I can. In the meantime, will You please forgive my sin and let me sleep?”

He went back to his pillow and lay back down, then got up again and returned to the altar. “And Logos, I’m sorry that I’ve been so dishonest all my life. I will really try to do better. Please help me.” He paused, as his own wickedness was exposed in his mind. He felt filthy and ashamed. He began to sob. *He was unworthy to be in the presence of Logos. Logos hated him and wouldn’t even listen to his prayer. His ‘blessing’ wasn’t even going to work.* Jacob stood up abruptly. The night was dark and the altar was cold. *What was the use? Logos was not here. Logos didn’t care about him. He wouldn’t hear his prayers.* Jacob returned to his pillow. Still weeping, he finally fell into a fitful sleep.

“Michael. Organize your host. We must answer his prayer.” Logos was all smiles.

“He didn’t really repent!” The adversary was right there accusing. “He still loves lies. He just wants to sleep. I can handle this easily. I’ll just remind him of the wickedness of the Canaanites around him, and by comparison, he’ll feel pretty good about himself. Then he’ll sleep just fine! Only a few more like this, and his conscience will be dull enough that it won’t bother him anymore. He’ll sleep like a baby.”

“Get behind me, Satan!” Logos was suddenly unusually stern. “I demand truth in the inward parts. You and your lies have no audience here now.” Satan tried to respond, but found that no words would come out.

Four mighty angels ushered Satan out of the King’s presence, saying, “Logos is amazingly patient with you, but when your time with Him is over, it’s over. You may watch from there, but no closer.”

Gavriel and Michael chose the largest and brightest of their angelic hosts and organized them into two columns, one ascending and one descending between the throne of Logos and Jacob’s pillow. Other angels formed concentric rings around the columns, large rings near Jacob, getting smaller and smaller as they approached the throne. That made it appear that the throne was very high and far off, though it was really quite near. Then Gavriel reached into Jacob’s sleeping mind and awoke his spiritual sense so he could see those angels in his dreams. Gavriel dazzled his subconscious with the splendor and joy of it all.

Ascending angels smiled and waved at Jacob, inviting him up. Descending angels reached out to Jacob, eager to come to him. Myriads of angels surrounding the ladder were waving up their arms, as if lifting his prayers all the way up to the throne. Sleeping Jacob smiled and relaxed.

Logos was very pleased. The angels made a spectacular display. Jacob would never forget this! But He was not yet finished. The throne had appeared empty, for Logos had veiled His glory. Now He began to shine, slowly increasing in brilliance until the throne blazed in glory, like the sun. “I am YHWH Elohim,” Logos thundered, in a voice that shook the heavens. “From eternity I am God of your father Abraham and God of your father Isaac. I have heard your prayer, and have forgiven your sin. From this moment on I am also your God, for you are the son of My everlasting covenant. All the land on which you walk, I give to you and your descendants after you. They shall be uncountable like the dust of the earth and like the stars of the heavens. They shall spread out from this spot to the east and the west, to the north and the south, for in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you! I will keep you, and bless you wherever you go. I will bring you back safely to this land and to your family. Surely I will not leave you until I have done all that I have promised. And now...” as His brilliance slowly dimmed, “I answer your prayer and grant you My gift of sleep.”

Satan was hopping mad, demanding audience again with the King. At Logos’ signal, the angels allowed him to return. “That wasn’t fair!” He yelled. “You can’t force me out like that! I am the god of forces! You’re supposed to be the God of love. You’re changing the rules again. And You can’t let Jacob see You in all Your glory on Your throne! Don’t You remember Your Law? No one can see God and live! That whole thing was cheating! How can I beat You when You keep changing the rules on me? It’s not fair!!!” He went on like that for some time, shouting, stamping his feet, sputtering, and repeating himself, almost irrational with anger. Finally, he stopped short. “Why the heaven are You smiling at me like that? And nodding to Your slaves? And... why don’t You answer me?”

“Because this is the first time you have paused long enough for an answer.” Logos smiled broadly. “Listen now and learn, My beloved adversary. I do not – in fact I can not – change the rules. My Law is forever settled; nothing in heaven or earth can ever change it. No one can see God and live. It is impossible. No being alive, no matter how holy, can survive the full impact of the divine Presence, even when I strengthen him. So tell me, dear Lucifer. *Why do you yet live?* I often allow you into My presence.” He paused, but Satan was overwhelmed and had no answer. “Did it never occur to you that I have veiled My glory for your protection? Did you really think the flames blazing from My face was My full glory? I tell you no! The flames only cover My face to protect you from My glory!

“As for My forcing you out of My presence – you have a rather inflated opinion of yourself. You think you have a right to be in My presence. In truth, My Law prohibits you from ever coming into My presence, for you are sinful. No sin can abide here. But at times, in My love, I reach out to temporarily cover your sin, allowing you audience.”

Satan just stood there, his mouth hanging open. For the first time in his life, a sense of fear and awe came over him. *He was breaking God’s Law by coming into Logos’ presence? He could have been slain! He was only spared because of Logos’ love, temporarily covering his sin?* He wondered how many other laws he had broken, yet Logos had shown mercy and spared his destruction. His knees began to quake. For a moment he got an overpowering sense that Logos was much greater than himself. If that was true about His full glory being veiled by the flames on His face, then he was a fool for thinking himself equal with Logos.

But Logos was still speaking. “You also asked about My nodding to My ‘slaves’, as you so quaintly put it. But you know that I have no slaves. All these who serve Me do so willingly and joyously, and receive far more benefit to themselves than the service they give to Me. I nodded to them for this reason. Hear it well, My beloved adversary, for this is the essence of the **Great Controversy**. I allowed your sin, your pride, your self-centered nature, your lies, your direct challenge to My wisdom and ways, to exist in My universe for one objective: so that all who see you will ultimately see the terrible consequences of your ways, and will finally recognize and appreciate the goodness, the righteousness, of Me and My ways of Life.

“My angels are observing you. They see how far you have fallen, how destructive is your anger, and how pathetic are your lies. You have even deceived yourself to think you are so great, when you are but an empty shell of your former greatness. I swear to you that none who have seen you, really seen you, will ever choose you or your ways, and those who have chosen you will continue to do so only until their eyes are opened to My truth.”

Satan fled without another word, shaken to his very core. “Will he repent?” Michael asked soberly.

Logos shook His head no, but said, “Yes, he will repent. But it probably won’t be anytime soon. His lies, his pride, are just too strong within him. I have presented the truth, but I do not expect him to repent until he has suffered for himself the consequences for all his sins. He has rejected My forgiveness and hardened his heart. That is serious. It may keep him from repenting until he has experienced the death penalty and all its torments for each sin. As he tormented others, so it will return upon his own head – My law of sowing and reaping – until his hard heart is broken.”

Jacob slept peacefully through the rest of the night, completely unaware of the controversy in the spirit realm all around him. He awoke with the dawn as was his habit, refreshed. In acknowledgment of the supernatural nature of his dream, he renamed the area **Bethel**, meaning House of God. He restored his pillow rock to the altar, his heart full of worship and rejoicing. When he finished breakfast and was ready to go, he knelt down by the altar to offer thanks. A thought came to his mind. “You have received a precious gift from God. You must respond.”

“Yes, Logos!” He prayed. “I thank and praise You.”

“More than that,” came back to his mind. “What is your commitment? I made an everlasting covenant with you and your descendants. I await your response.”

Jacob got the picture. He spoke out loud, turning this into a vow from his heart. “YHWH Elohim, if You will be with me, and prosper and keep me on this journey, and bring me safely home, then You shall always be my God. This stone which I have set back into this altar shall be my eternal memorial that this is the house of God, where I met with You and accepted Your covenant. And of all that You give to me, I shall surely return to You a tenth.”

Michael, Gavriel, and their angelic host gave a mighty cheer and danced joyfully around the throne. Satan, on the other hand, was despondently kicking himself and lashing out at his demons in anger. He had thought he had him! He couldn’t believe that repentance had come so quickly, or so completely. He would have to study this to find out what went wrong and to learn ways to prevent it in the future. The thought that he himself was wrong, that he should repent and change his ways, came to mind again, but his pride would not let him receive it. Now that he was no longer in Logos’ presence, his fear had passed. It was replaced by seething anger and bitterness. He walked beside Jacob, plotting other ways to trick and torment him.

Jacob continued north, reaching by preparation day a small town called **Laish** in what is now Dan. He wanted to go on toward Damascus, but something inside urged him to stay. He wandered through the town until he came to a sheep market. There he was reminded of his promise to sacrifice a lamb for his sin. So he bought one, and headed up a mountain ridge to find a good place for the sacrifice. No place seemed suitable, so he continued up the ridge until evening. The Sabbath had begun. He knelt on the path and prayed that Logos would guide him and make his sacrifice acceptable. After his prayer, it was too dark to proceed, so Jacob decided to sleep right there. He’d look for the place to build the altar in the morning. He snuggled up beside his sleeping lamb and fell asleep himself.

The morning dawned with a brilliant sunrise. It was going to be another hot day. Jacob got up and continued his climb, strangely impelled up the ridge, though it was the Sabbath. By noon he had reached the first peak. It was a bigger mountain than he had thought. He must be in the southern foothills of Mount Hermon. Higher peaks lay ahead, and further to the north he saw a snow-clad ridge. His view of the surrounding countryside was spectacular. He could see clear to the Great Sea on his left, about thirty miles away. He turned to the south, and his eyes followed the lovely Valley of Shaveh all the way past the sparkling Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee). To the east, he could see to Damascus and beyond to the wilderness. At his feet were rocks and dry wood. This must be the place. Jacob built a small altar and put the sticks on top.

He knelt, laid his hands on the head of his little lamb, and spent an hour confessing his sins, all of them, really for the first time in his life. Finally he slew the lamb, sprinkled its blood on the altar, put the meat over the wood, and lit it, crying, “Logos! It is finished!”

Jacob knelt before the burning altar for a long time, worshiping. Finally he rose to leave. It would be cold at night up at this altitude; he had to get at least partway down the mountain before dark. But the flames on top of his altar were still burning brightly. *Was it Logos? The eternal Word of YHWH?* It had been years since Logos had appeared at any of his family’s Sabbath sacrifices.

“Yes, My son. It is I.” A human form coalesced out of the flames. “My Father YHWH has accepted your sacrifice. You are cleansed! I am very pleased with you. I will keep My promises to you and your descendants, for in them shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Now, you need strength for your journey. Take the lamb and eat. I return it to you. I will go with you and prosper you. *As you find My will for your life, I will give you the desires of your heart.*”

He was gone. The flames went out. Now the smell of perfectly roasted lamb awakened a sense of great hunger, for he had had no breakfast, nor dinner the day before. He ate until he was satisfied, then he continued his journey refreshed. As he walked he pondered Logos’ last words, which had impressed him deeply. “As you find My will for your life, I will give you the desires of your heart.”

CHAPTER 28 – JACOB AND LABAN

By the second week he reached Padan-Aram, where his uncle Laban (his mother’s brother, son of Bethuel son of Nahor), lived with Lillia and their daughters, **Leah** and **Rachel**. Jacob soon found out what Logos had meant. He met Rachel, a shepherdess, in the field by the well before he even found Laban’s home. She was young, fabulously beautiful, fair-skinned, shapely, and gloriously blonde, like his mother Rebekah and his grandmother Sarah. He instantly fell head over heels in love with her, without so much as praying to ask Logos if it was alright with Him. She responded warmly, even eagerly, to his kiss of greeting and Jacob was totally and irrecoverably hooked.

Then he reached Laban’s home. There was Leah, the dark-haired older daughter, standing graciously beside her mother Lillia. Jacob never forgot that moment; indeed it seared into his memory so deeply that it still causes him pain. Laban, the patriarch of the family since Bethuel was dead, was gushing polite nonsense about how glad he was to see him, and was at his service, and all he had was his. Rachel was gazing admiringly up into his eyes from behind Laban. And there stood Leah, looking surprised and a little confused, with one arm tentatively reaching out to her mother. At that moment the authoritative voice of Logos rang out to Jacob’s mind, unmistakably loud and clear.

“Leah is My gift to you. She has a good heart. Through her I shall fulfill My promise, that in your descendants will all the families on earth be blessed. Will you receive her?”

God, NO! Jacob’s mind shrieked so loud he was sure the family before him could hear. He quickly looked back at Rachel, desperately pushing the words of Logos out of his mind. He had already made his choice. He quickly deceived himself that the voice he had heard was not Logos at all, just some demonic impersonation. (Though try as he might, he could not get those words out of his mind.) Now the momentous promise that had seemed so clear and straightforward when Logos had said it, took on a different meaning. When he was troubled by it, he would turn it around in his mind: “I will give you the desires of your heart, and thus you will find My will for your life.” That all had to be Rachel, of course.

Over the next month his decision was confirmed. Rachel was everything he had ever wanted in a woman, and more. Only 20 years old (Jacob was 70) she was in the full flower of youthful beauty. Always laughing, bubbly, fun, she literally exuded the joy of living from every pore. Her lovely hair fell in glorious blonde curls like a waterfall around her smiling face, continually rippling as she bounced enthusiastically from one thing to another.

Leah, on the other hand, was tall, skinny, dark, and serious. Though a hard worker, Leah was pretty plain looking, and that is putting it kindly. Her dark hair was kinky, and had to be tied up to stay out of her way. Her eyes were weak, so she was always squinting. And she seemed so somber, especially in contrast to her younger sister’s exuberance. She often looked at Jacob as if she had somehow fallen in love with him – he hadn’t a clue why – and was sad not to be chosen by him. Besides, she was almost 28 years old. She should have been married by now. (In those days a man could marry anywhere from 40 to over 100 years old, but a woman usually married well before the age of 30, so she could have plenty of time for bearing the many children her husband hoped to have.)

Rachel was willing – more than willing. So Jacob and his uncle Laban negotiated a marriage contract for her. He would trade seven years of labor in his fields for her.

The seven years went by like a few days, so great was Jacob’s love for Rachel. At the wedding celebration Laban threw a big party. Food and wine flowed freely. It was late when they finally said good-bye to the guests and a slightly tipsy Jacob was able to take his precious (heavily veiled) Rachel to his bed. And what a night! She was so eager, so responsive, so delightful to hug and hold – so satisfying! Jacob finally slept, arms still entwined around her lovely body, totally convinced that he had made the right choice. He awoke with the dawn, as he always did, no matter how little sleep he had gotten. The light of the rising sun was gently filtering into his tent. He raised his head to gaze at his beloved Rachel. *But it was Leah!*

Uncle Laban had tricked him! He had hidden Leah behind the veil at the wedding party. In Jacob’s boisterous feasting and drinking he hadn’t noticed. Little clues came back to him. She seemed unusually tall, but he had just assumed that she was wearing heels for the occasion. She didn’t say much, but he had said plenty to make up for it, and assumed she was being a polite listener. She didn’t seem her usual bouncy self behind the veil, but he just assumed that she was overcome by the emotion of it all, in her eagerness to wed him. Jacob was furious – at Laban, at Leah, and even at himself for not catching the deception.

But what should he do? He stared at her half-covered body. He had enjoyed her so much last night, thinking she was Rachel! Well, close up, she wasn’t half bad. He could learn to love her, he thought, if he weren’t so mad at her!

Logos’ words came back, “Leah is My gift to you. She has a good heart. Through her I shall fulfill My promise...” *Well, Logos, looks like You win and I lose. My own lifetime of deception has come back on me. Huh. I guess I deserved this.* He grimaced wryly as Logos’ previous words popped into his mind, in the correct order this time: “As you find My will for your life, I will give you the desires of your heart.”

Suddenly it all made sense. “Logos,” he prayed. “Is this Your will? Did I find it through Laban’s cheating me? Do You plan to make it the desires of my heart by teaching me how to love Leah?” He closed his eyes, listening for Logos’ answer. He almost heard! But then, Rachel popped into his mind. He grew angry at Leah and Laban.

The battle in the heavenlies was fierce. Michael was determinedly whispering Logos’ truth to Jacob, but Satan was shouting lies into his other ear, inserting pictures of Rachel into his mind, and feeding his anger against Leah, Laban, and all the injustice and trickery. Michael was all ready to slay him if he went beyond the Law, but Satan knew it, and stuck to the letter, right down to the inch.

Jacob got up, quietly so as not to awaken his new wife, and began to dress. “Wake up!” whispered Michael to Leah’s sub-conscious. “Apologize and make it up to Jacob, now, before he goes. Tell the truth. Make it right. Humble yourself now or it will be too late!” She yawned, stretched, and opened her eyes. There was Jacob, buttoning his shirt.

“Jacob! My beloved! Please don’t leave. Forgive me, forgive us, for deceiving you. It wasn’t Dad’s idea; it was mine. Please! I love you! I have always loved you, since that moment you first entered our door. And last night was so good! So satisfying! I will always give you good loving. I will always care for you, work for you, raise your babies, obey you – anything! I will give my life for you! I’m strong. I will make you a much better wife than my weak, silly, flighty, irresponsible sister ever could. I swear it!”

Jacob almost bought it. As I said, the battle was fierce. But those slanderous comments about his beloved Rachel went over the top. He stormed out.

Logos covered His face in His hands and wept. The angels surrounding the throne wept with him. Finally Michael returned to kneel at His feet. “I’m so sorry, Logos. I tried! But Leah was holding bitterness against her sister, that did her in. There was nothing I could do to stop it.”

“I know, dear Michael. I don’t blame you. Just the same, this is a terrible tragedy. Jacob does not know the trouble this will cause. He started so well from his conversion at Bethel and his confession up on Mount Hermon. But now he is going his own way, refusing to hear My voice or heed My wisdom. We shall see where his choices lead him. This is not the first time he has chosen Satan’s ways. Unless he repents, deception will never leave his house. Yet I will keep My promise. My Plan of the Ages is big enough to accommodate any choice Jacob could make. He has only made it that much harder on himself.”

Jacob angrily accused Laban of the deception. He was nonchalant about it. “Oh, didn’t we tell you? It has always been the custom in this place to marry the oldest daughter first. But if you still want the younger one, that’s okay. Complete the bridal week for Leah and I’ll give you Rachel as well, if you promise to serve me another seven years.”

Again without consulting Logos, Jacob agreed. And Rachel was just as willing as before, after she got over her temper tantrum at being tied up in the hay loft all during the wedding. So Jacob took Rachel, and loved her dearly. Poor Leah was mostly ignored after her bridal week. But it was during that first week that she conceived. **Reuben** was born early the next year. The year after, it was **Simeon**, then **Levi**, and then **Judah**. All that time lovely Rachel remained barren. This became a huge problem. You have no idea of all the troubles that can be caused by two sisters in competition for one man’s affections. Bubbly, excitable Rachel became jealous and bitter at Leah, and cried out to Jacob, “Give me children or I shall die!”

“Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of your womb?” Jacob responded loudly. Then he was ashamed at himself for yelling at her, and fell on his knees sobbing to Logos. At first, Logos didn’t respond. But when Jacob’s heart had quieted a bit, a gentle voice reminded him of the prophetic word he had received about his descendants through Leah being the fulfillment of His promise. Then came the gentle suggestion, “Stop looking only at the outward appearance. Look to the heart, as I do. Can you not see Leah’s heart? She has a good heart! She is precious in My sight. Infinitely precious. I will give you children by Rachel after you learn to love Leah, also.”

God bless him, he tried! But the contention between the two sisters was too fierce. Now Leah also had stopped bearing children, and it became like a race for each of them to get children through their maids, who became Jacob’s concubines. Rachel’s maid **Bilhah** bore him **Dan**, then **Naphtali**. Then Leah’s maid **Zilpah** bore him **Gad** and **Asher**. It got pretty messed up with fighting and jealousy.

Jacob was disgusted with their bickering, and didn’t want to sleep with either of his wives anymore. Then a trivial thing happened that changed the picture. Leah’s firstborn, Reuben (who was nine), found in the field some mandrakes. [‘Love-apples’. A member of the potato family, but shaped more like a human body. Mandrake roots were well known back then to be an aphrodisiac.] He dug them up and gave them to Leah. Rachel saw them, and, desiring her husband’s love again, she asked Leah for them.

At first Leah coldly refused. “No! First you steal my husband’s love, and now you want my son’s mandrakes?” she sniffed. But Rachel was desperate for a baby. “Leah, I’m sorry. With all our fighting, we’ve both lost his love. Let’s make a deal. You give me the mandrakes to prepare. I will ask Jacob to sleep with you tonight. Then tomorrow I’ll feed him the mandrakes and maybe he will give me a child. If we work together, maybe we can regain his love.”

When Jacob came in from the field that evening, Leah met him first. “You must sleep with me tonight, for I have hired you with my son’s mandrakes!” she demanded. (The consequences of her wedding deception had taught her the value of honesty – now she needed to work on tact...)

“Good luck,” Jacob retorted, turning in disgust. Then he saw Rachel. Lovely Rachel, the delight of his eyes. Her blonde hair was freshly washed and brushed, and she was wearing Jacob’s favorite gown. But instead of coming to him, she turned and put an arm around her sister.

“Jacob, my love...” she said sweetly. “I’m really sorry for the contention that has been between us. It has hurt us all, especially dear Leah.” Not nearly so honest as Leah had become, Rachel put on a great act. “Leah did sell me her son’s mandrakes, and I’ll be preparing them for us for tomorrow night. But tonight, please, would you comfort Leah for me, and love her, and sleep with her? I desire your love too, but not at the expense of my dear sister.”

Leah brightened up, stood a bit straighter, and smiled. It was a new experience for her sister to actually take her side! Jacob found her smile, and their surprisingly friendly relationship, to his liking, and agreed to the deal.

From then on the sisters shared their husband equally, learning to curry his favor by caring for each other. This worked out so well they actually became friends. Logos seemed rather pleased. He not only gave Leah two more sons (**Issachar** and **Zebulun**), but He even opened up the barren womb of Rachel in Jacob’s old age! She bore him **Joseph** when she was 41 and he was 91. (*Note: I’ve only mentioned the sons. Leah and the two concubines also had 10 daughters. Leah’s **Dinah** was the youngest, after Zebulun.*)

With the birth of Joseph, Jacob felt the urge to return to his parents’ home in Canaan. He had become a wealthy man, as he had continued working for Laban long after his 14 years had passed. But Laban was no longer as friendly. He had broken his word and cheated Jacob several times.

CHAPTER 29 – JACOB BECOMES ISRAEL – RACHEL'S IDOLS

Laban's change in attitude was due to twins, both sons, born to him and Lillia in his old age (1713 BC, when he was 123 and Lillia 67). Laban began to see his wealth – his own two sons' inheritance! – going to pay for Jacob's labors. Before they were born, Jacob was Laban's only heir, so Laban had been especially generous to him. But now...

When the twins were first born, Jacob had seen the ramifications and wanted to leave. His promised fourteen years for his wives were long past. He was now working for wages. But Laban had urged him to stay longer. "Logos your God has blessed me on your account. If you don't like what I pay you, just say so. I will pay whatever you wish."

The wages he named were the blemished animals from the flocks. It sounded fine to Laban, but after a year, all of his animals seemed to be developing blemishes! Jacob had found a way to get blemished sheep by putting peeled almond rods in their water and where they could lick them before they mated. He grew very wealthy, and Laban got suspicious. So he changed the terms of their agreement, and Jacob got even richer. Laban then changed his wages again, but still Jacob seemed to always be one step ahead.

Jacob was concerned, afraid that his conniving would be discovered. He continued to pasture Laban's flocks, but moved his own flocks three days' journey away. Then one Sabbath, Logos came to him in a dream, reminding him of his dream at Bethel and his vow, and promising to prosper his return to his father's house. When he told his wives, they were both in agreement. It was time to take what they had and go. The ladies realized that the inheritance they had hoped for would now belong to their little brothers. But Jacob knew Laban would not let him go – his labor, and the blessing of Logos, was too valuable, and his sons, though eager to help, were too young to work in the fields. So in 1708 BC, they plotted together to escape secretly.

Beautiful Rachel also did a little plotting of her own. While Laban was out sheering his sheep, she stole the family idols. Longstanding tradition said that whoever has the family idols retains the right of inheritance. Rachel was a little bitter at her two baby brothers taking away the inheritance that was 'rightfully hers' (or would have been hers if they had never been born).

Their plan worked. They crossed the Euphrates River and traveled a full three days' journey south before Laban even knew they had gone. However, with his vast flocks and his wives and children, Jacob couldn't travel very fast. Laban was furious at being tricked! He armed his servants and caught up with him in northern Gilead after a week.

Satan couldn't resist a few laughs at Logos' expense. "See! I told you he'd never escape the lies and deception that has his whole family trapped!"

"You are too quick to write the last chapter and close the book, My beloved adversary. Jacob's heart may be trapped in deceit, but it is still tender and meek toward Me. We shall yet see if he can repent."

"He won't have the chance! Laban will kill him for me, especially when he finds the idols. I know where they are."

"Then I shall tell Laban not to kill him."

"Ha! Laban won't listen to You. He has no fear of God. Look at those idols he worships. He has become purely pagan! He listens only to me and my angels."

"We shall see, won't we." Logos smiled. "I will go to him, tonight, in his sleep. I believe he also has a tender heart and will be receptive to My love."

Laban was indeed planning to kill Jacob, and take back everything that Jacob had 'taken' from him. No slouch in the art of deception himself, he had discovered Jacob's duplicity; thus he justified himself. Everything Jacob owned belonged to him, including his wives and children! But as he slept that night, Logos entered his dreams. He appeared first as a blazing fire above the altar, burning brighter and brighter, yet neither the lamb nor the wood was consumed. Then as Laban watched in amazement, the fire dimmed and the sacrificial lamb stepped down from the altar to look into his eyes. "I am Logos, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," the lamb said. "And I am Jacob's protection and blessing. Be careful that you speak neither flattery nor cursing to him, for I shall hold you accountable. Every word you speak shall come back upon you sevenfold. If you treat him kindly, I will also return kindness to your house." The lamb then jumped back up on the altar, and the fire again blazed brightly, its flames reaching the heavens, until Laban awoke.

Logos and Gavriel watched the next morning as Laban accosted Jacob, accusing him of taking his family idols. There was Satan, nudging, trying to incite him to anger, whispering treacherous things in his ears. But strangely, Laban remembered that dream so vividly, that Satan's lies just didn't seem so effective. He never did find the idols. Rachel had the brilliant idea to hide them in the saddle of her camel, and then sit on them. Satan kept urging Laban to search the camel too, but Rachel pretended that she was menstruating – the cultural taboo against touching a woman in her menstrual impurity was too ingrained for Laban. All Satan's urging could not overcome it.

So Jacob and Laban reconciled. As they were offering a sacrifice and making a covenant of peace together, Satan gave up in disgust and returned to the throne. "I don't know what happened there, but it's OK. I have lots of time. Jacob still has the idols, and all that wealth, obtained by deception. He and his whole family still live by deception, even Rachel. They're mine, and there's nothing You can do about it. The whole world is mine! You're still struggling to get even one who will choose Your ways!"

“Again, My beloved adversary, you are too quick to write the last chapter. Just look at what happened. Laban received My Word and My love. He received My promise to show kindness to him if he showed kindness to Jacob. I shall respond by showering many blessings upon him and his household. I believe he, and his sons after him, will respond to My blessings by learning to love and trust Me.”

“Aha! You admit You failed with Jacob, so now You’re going to try to form Your precious Bride out of Laban’s utterly pagan family!” Satan pronounced those last words with great emphasis, dripping with heavy sarcasm.

“I told you, Satan, that My Word, My promises, cannot fail. Jacob is the child of My promise. His eleven sons are the firstfruits of that promise.”

“So You’re going to force him to give up his lying...”

“I do not force. He will voluntarily choose Me and My ways. He will learn to hate lies and deception. He will come to me and truly repent. You shall see.”

Laban was just leaving for home. They watched from the heavenlies as Laban blessed Jacob, and his wives, and their children, with kisses, hugs, and weeping. “You see, My beloved adversary. He is blessing him. My law of the harvest demands that his blessings multiply abundantly as they return upon him and his family. You want to use his idolatry to destroy him, but a higher law is at work here. Perhaps the loss of his family idols will turn out to be a good thing, if he learns to elevate Me in his heart instead.”

Satan was about to respond, but stopped. Jacob was saying his last farewell in response to Laban’s blessing, and it caught his ear. “I’m really sorry you lost your idols. But I swear that I did not take them. I would never take them, because I serve Logos, the one true God, Creator of the heavens and the earth, and He will tolerate no idols.

“But remember when you were trying to get me to stay with you, you said that Logos my God blessed you on my account? Now that your idols are gone, you can get Logos to bless you even without me! Just forget the lost idols and worship Logos only. Thank Him, pray to Him, remember His Sabbaths, and offer a lamb to Him to cover your sins. Then He will bless your family just like He did mine.”

“Thank you, Jacob. Yes, I will try that.” Laban bowed, remembering the vivid dream and Logos’ promise to him. “It certainly worked for you. I will offer a lamb to Him this very Sabbath. I’ll use that altar of uncut stone you made. Then we shall see. Thank you for suggesting it. I wondered how you always seemed to have God’s blessing over you.”

Satan was so furious he could hardly see straight. That one had caught him by surprise. In all Jacob’s twenty years with Laban he had never tried to testify to him. Now the damage was done, Laban had received it, and there was not a blessed thing he could do to fix it. Satan tried to level a few vile curses at Logos, but nothing came out, so he fled.

The angels danced around Jacob’s family in joyous celebration as Jacob packed up and headed south. He intended to cross the Yarmuk River, then turn west, cross the Jordan, and climb into the Judean highlands where it was not too steep before turning south toward Beersheba. He was unaware of the celestial party all around him. Michael appealed to Logos. “My Lord, I have a request.”

“Of course, dear Michael,” Logos laughed. He was in a very good mood, literally radiating with joy.

“It took a lot of courage for Jacob to do what he did, especially after all the cheating and deception that went on between him and Laban. But he did it! Jacob stood up for You! He boldly confessed Your name and proclaimed Your Word, in a way that Laban could receive it. Would You permit us to encourage him with a glimpse of our joy?”

Logos nodded, nearly falling down with laughter.

If you have never seen into the spirit realm, you cannot understand what happened next, but I’ll try to describe it anyway. Jacob’s caravan was just starting down toward the ford of the Yarmuk River. The path was a bit steep. Jacob had taken the hands of two of his youngest: three-year-old Zebulun and two-year-old Dinah. Rachel was to his right with baby Joseph. Leah was on his left with four-year-old Issachar, five-year-old Asher, and her maid Zilpah. The two six-year-olds, Naphtali and Gad, were play-fighting together behind Bilhah, Rachel’s maid, who respectfully walked behind her mistress. Myriads of animals were also on the move, in front, to the sides, and behind them, driven by Jacob’s many male servants. His female servants had the care of his other nine daughters. It was like a slowly moving tide all around them. At that moment, a thousand angels, dancing with all their might in robes of fiery white, unveiled themselves into the physical realm.

The littlest children saw them first. Baby Joseph thrust out a pudgy arm with a joyous squeal. Dinah stopped dead in the path, tugging frantically on her daddy’s arm. Little Zebulun let go of Jacob’s hand, jumped up and down, and clapped his hands in glee. Issachar’s eyes opened wide as he cried out, “Mommy! Who are they? Who are they?”

For spread out before them, on a level grassy field that had not been there moments before, were rings of bright dancing angels, reaching from where they stood on the hill, out all the way beyond the Yarmuk River, except by the time they reached the river, they were far above it.

Everyone had stopped now. The adults all thought they ought to be frightened, but somehow there was no fright here, only deepest joy. It was a little dizzying. The spirit realm intersected the earth at an odd angle. The ‘level’ of the grassy field was not quite where level ought to be. It looked like the angels were climbing up above the river, or like the flocks ahead were tilting down below the angelic dance. Jacob realized the truth. He knelt on the ground in respect and worship. The other adults followed his lead.

But the children... who could have predicted what they would do? The two-year-old, Dinah, was the first. "Dance with me! Dance with me!" She shouted, letting go of her daddy's arm and running forward. As I said, the path was steep, and by rights she should have fallen headlong. But she didn't. She chose the intersecting level grassy field, and an angel took her hand to join her in the dance. Another angel wove a wreath of vivid golden flowers (which dotted the field) and placed it on her head like a princess crown.

Other children quickly followed, from Zebulun all the way to eight-year-old Dan, who balked and hid behind his kneeling father, clutching his neck. The younger children seemed to have no fear of falling. They just ran out on the grassy field, even though it was semi-transparent and they could also clearly see the rocky ravine far below them. The older children were more cautious. Ten-year-old Judah stepped tentatively up to touch his toe on the grassy field. Eleven-year-old Levi hung onto his shirt. Then they both stepped up on it, a few inches above the ground, and jumped up and down to see if it would hold them, until a pair of angels came by and whisked them into the dance. All of Jacob's ten daughters had managed to escape from their servant's care by this time. They went squealing and twirling in joyous abandon. As the eldest of the children, Reuben (14) and Simeon (13) were too grown-up for that sort of thing. *Bah. Dancing, flowers – sissy stuff.* They just stood there wishing they could dance too.

Rachel and Leah knelt spellbound. Finally they looked at each other and nodded. Before Jacob could stop them, they threw off their outer robes and head scarves and jumped up with the angels, their skirts and long hair flying behind. After a joyous once-around with the angels, they beckoned to Jacob, who tentatively followed. Once on the grassy field, he laughed, whirled, and leaped like the rest. At that, Dan, Reuben, and Simeon forgot their pride and joined the frolic. Then everyone else surged forward – the servants, the maids, even the family dogs and pet lambs. They danced for hours, never getting tired. Their laughter blended with the glorious heavenly music filling the air.

In the end, Michael came to Jacob, bowed before him (which seemed odd to Jacob) and said, "Thank you for allowing us to share in your victory. Logos has permitted us to encourage you in this way, for He too rejoices in your triumph over evil and your stand for righteousness with Laban. But our time has passed. We must go. I bless you in the matchless name of Logos!" The scene began to fade. The people and animals wafted gently to the ground. Within moments the grassy field, flowers, and angels had vanished, leaving only the steep, rocky path to the river. Jacob scanned his flocks and herds – they were still in the same place. Only minutes had passed during their dance (for in the spirit realm time moves differently from time on earth). Jacob looked behind them, to where they had just camped and talked with Laban. Then he looked again out over the river, where the angels had so recently danced.

"There are two camps here!" he concluded. "We shall name this place **Mahanaim** [two camps], for we have camped here in the midst of God's heavenly camp."

Jacob was profoundly moved by this experience. *Logos and the angels are happy that he had reconciled with Laban.* As they hiked down toward the river, he realized that while one burden had been lifted, a bigger one remained. *Logos wants me to reconcile with someone else, too – my own brother Esau.* He prayed about it all the way down. Logos seemed to be saying that it was important, more important than getting to Canaan. So instead of heading west to the Jordan in the Yarmuk River Valley, Jacob decided to continue south toward **Edom**, where Esau lived. He sent messengers on ahead, to tell Esau that he was coming.

He had not gone forty miles before his messengers returned – with news. Esau was coming, with 400 armed men! He seemed angry! Suddenly all Jacob's grand ideas about reconciling with his brother flew out the window, and he was terrified. He could just picture Esau's 400 men, wading through his family and killing every man, woman, and child without mercy! He ordered his servants to divide everyone and everything into two equal groups. When they saw Esau, one group would flee west, the other north. Jacob would meet Esau in the middle to hold him off as long as possible. After he was killed, Esau would have to pick one group to chase, so the other group might escape.

They were just coming down to the Jabbok River. The Sabbath was nigh. Jacob decided to stop there and build a Sabbath altar. That evening, he offered three lambs on the altar, one for himself, one for his family, and one for the rest of his company. Then he spent all evening repenting and worshipping Logos, with his face on the ground before the altar. First he repented of his own sins – all the lies and deception, cheating, self-centeredness and pride – like he had on Mount Hermon twenty years earlier. He worshiped and thanked Logos for blessing him anyway. He repented of the sins of his wives and children, both those he knew about and also their secret sins. Then he thanked Logos for them and blessed them. He even repented for the sins of his servants, and thanked and worshiped Logos for them. He continued in worship like that for a long time.

His fire had long gone out. The rest of the group had gone to bed. Jacob looked up. A fire still blazed on the altar. *It was Logos, receiving his worship.*

"O Logos! Father YHWH! God of Abraham, God of my father Isaac, and my God! You told me to return to my home and family, and You said You would prosper me. I'm unworthy of all the lovingkindness You have showed me. With nothing but my staff I crossed the Jordan. Now I am two large companies. But... I am afraid! Deliver me now, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for he wants to kill me and my wives and children. Remember Your promises to bless me and multiply my descendants like the sands of the sea! Save me now, I pray!"

Finally Logos, who had been silent all this time, spoke. “Your attitude of repentance pleases Me. Your sacrifice is accepted by My Father. You are all cleansed – you, your family, and all your servants as you prayed. I do remember My promise. I will guide you and give you wisdom. Only do not fear. Just look to Me, and do as I show you.” For a moment the flames on the altar coalesced into a person, a man – strong, tall, and handsome, though as always His face remained obscured in flame. Then He vanished.

“Yes, Logos!” Jacob called out, greatly relieved. He went right to bed and slept well, awaking that Sabbath morning totally refreshed and determined to find Logos’ wisdom and do it. He spent the day fasting and praying, eagerly listening for that quiet voice in his heart that he had learned to recognize as the Spirit of Logos. He was led to prepare a huge present for Esau – one flock of 220 goats, one flock of 220 sheep, one herd of 60 camels, one herd of 40 cows, and one herd of 30 donkeys, each with the perfect balance between males and females that he himself would want. He figured it at 10 percent of his animals, all his best.

He commanded his servants to leave a space between each other as they traveled south so they would meet Esau one at a time. When each one met Esau, the servants were to tell him, “These belong to your servant Jacob. They are a present to my lord Esau. Jacob also is coming behind us.”

When the flocks were sent off, evening had come. Jacob was still fasting, but he made sure everyone else got plenty to eat, so they would be strong for the next day. Then they all headed for bed.

But Jacob couldn’t sleep. He tossed and turned until midnight, praying, repenting, worshiping, and asking Logos what he had missed or forgotten. Then suddenly he realized that he was still afraid. Logos had just told him not to fear. He was afraid that Esau would kill his wives and children. “Logos! What must I do? Deliver me from fear!”

“Can you trust Me with your wives and children? If you can, then send them south across the river, toward Edom. Give them up, to Me and to Esau. Demonstrate that you trust Me with them. Then return to this altar alone.”

“Logos, was that You?” At first Jacob didn’t believe it. Give up his wives and children? He could give up his flocks and herds, but his own precious family? No way! But still he could not sleep, and had no peace. Finally, he arose and woke up his family. He had them pick up all their bedding and carry it across the ford of the Jabbok River and up to a level place beside the road on the other side. Then he came back and helped his servants pack up the rest of the camp. He sent them across too. The animals were already bedded down on the fields around his family.

He was now alone on the north side of the ford. He went back to the altar, knelt beside it, and prayed: “Logos. I did it. I gave it all up to You and to Esau. I am holding back nothing. I trust You to keep Your promise. I will not fear.”

Again, a mighty cheer arose in the heavenlies! This was the second time in as many weeks that Jacob had won a great victory in righteousness. The angels were dancing in joy and shouting the praises of Logos. Satan, on the other hand, was sulking. “How did You do that? That was impossible. I had him! What are You doing to me?”

“I have carefully explained it to you several times, My beloved adversary. You simply have had trouble hearing. Do you remember My explanation about the power of true repentance? Behold, now you see it.”

“Bah! He hasn’t truly repented! He’s just scared spitless that Esau will kill him if he doesn’t find a way to get Your protection. But I still own his heart. As soon as the danger is past he’ll forget all about it and go right back to my ways.” Satan said it with a sneer.

“Hmm.... Perhaps you are right. Shall I go down and give him a lesson he could never forget?”

“No! You can’t do that! You are holy; Jacob is sinful. You can’t come near him. That would compromise Your holiness and You would cease to exist.”

“When did you become so protective of My holiness, My beloved adversary?” Logos laughed. “But no, in this case, you are wrong. He is perfectly holy right now. All his sins are under the blood of the lambs he sacrificed. In prayer and repentance his faith is now fully purified, as demonstrated by his obedience. I can indeed come to him, and I believe I shall. Watch! You might learn something.” Satan gasped. All the angels grew silent in wonder, as Logos stepped across the veil and onto the earth, not as unapproachable flames high above the altar, but as a man!

Jacob was kneeling with his face in the dirt at the altar, deep in prayer. Angels knelt in worshipful fascination all around, as Logos walked toward him. This was almost unprecedented! Logos as a man! His feet were touching the ground – even getting dusty! When had He ever done this before? Even when He had reached out to touch Enoch and Amy at their ascension He had only become man for the briefest moment, and His feet had never touched the ground. Why, the last time the angels could remember Logos being fully man was before the Fall, when Adam and Eve walked and talked with Logos in the garden, when everything was perfect and free of sin. Now the whole earth was polluted with sin. How could Logos touch the ground? But He was, just like any other man. Even His fire, the luminescence that He always radiated, was gone. His face was dark like that of any other man.

Jacob never saw Him coming. Logos grabbed him from behind and locked him into a wrestler’s hold, pinning his face to the ground. Jacob struggled briefly, but could not break the hold. He gave in, asking, “Who are you? Is it my lord Esau? I am your servant. Did you get my gifts? Are you not pleased with them? Ask what you will, and I will do it. Ask anything! Only do not harm my precious family.”

Logos did not answer. Instead, He pressed even harder, until Jacob cried out in pain. “Remember the pain you caused Laban when you fled.” Logos changed positions, putting Jacob under another wrestler’s hold, even tighter than the last. “Remember the lie you told Laban when you moved a three days’ journey away.” Then another hold, more painful yet. “Remember your deception in taking his blemished flocks and herds.” This continued for a long time, with pain after pain as Logos reminded him of every sin, every theft, every deception, every lie, all the way back to his youth and the way he had deceived and stolen from his brother Esau and even from his own parents.

By now Jacob had realized that this was not Esau. Many of those sins Esau could not possibly have known. Also, most of those wrestler’s holds Esau could not have known. This must be Logos. Only He would have known all that. But Jacob had never been permitted to touch Logos before – He was always shrouded in fire, always suspended high in the air above the altar, beyond the reach of sinful man.

So who was this? Just His angel? Jacob burned with curiosity. Yet he submitted, no longer struggling (which was futile anyway, since this stranger was considerably stronger). He relaxed and allowed the angel to hurt him. He relived the shameful memories and accepted the pain. He repented once again of everything the angel brought up. In fact, on one particularly painful hold, after he had again screamed in agony, he responded, “Thank you, sir, whoever you are. I accept your discipline. I have deserved every bit of that pain. Thank you also that although you are obviously capable of tearing me limb from limb, yet you have been gentle, to not hurt me more than I could bear. You must be a messenger of Logos, my Lord and my God. Tell Him I love Him, and I receive all His discipline with gratefulness... Ow!” Another powerful wrestler’s hold caused him to cry out in great pain.

How did he do that? Jacob lay with his face in the dirt totally immobilized, with just a touch of the stranger’s hand upon him. Suddenly Jacob realized that he could learn a few things here, like how to wrestle. He studied each move the stranger made, trying to memorize each hold, but still submitting, still repenting of each sin.

Finally the Stranger (who actually was Logos) finished. Dawn would come soon, and still Jacob did not know who He was. His face was dark. Jacob could recognize nothing. Logos released him and stood. “Remember! Do not again fall into your old habits of living by deception.” He turned to leave. The angels all around had been holding their breath. Logos stepped up to the veil, opened a thin rent between the two realms, and lifted a foot to go through.

But Jacob moved quickly the instant Logos turned His back. Grabbing Him from behind, Jacob pinned Him with the best of the wrestler’s holds he had just learned. He hung on with all his might, pulling Logos to the ground. Logos struggled and cried out but could not escape.

There were gasps of horror in the heavenlies. The rent closed. Logos was shut out, still a man, unable to return. Satan, at first as shocked as the rest, began to chuckle, then to laugh out loud. “Haw haw haw! That’s what love does! It makes You weak! You love-sick wimp! You should have just killed him when You had him. Did You forget what You told me, back when so many of my host were fried by the lightning bolt from Nyx? That when You enter into a physical form, You also enter into his weaknesses?” He laughed so hard he could hardly stand, continuing with his snide remarks between laughing spells.

Then Satan saw the empty throne. “I believe this is mine now, since Logos obviously won’t need it any more.” He boldly went up and sat on it. “Ahem. All you angels, listen up. You’ll be obeying me from now on. I’m your new lord and master. You may call me ‘Lord’, or ‘Lord Lucifer’, or ‘Your Majesty’. See how good I am? I give you a freewill choice! Ha! Just choose to ‘love’ me and my ways – or die!” He doubled up in laughter there on the throne.

Michael and Gavriel, together with their angelic hosts, studiously ignored him. They were committed to obeying Logos, and only Logos. Nothing Satan did or said moved them. Logos had not said anything about needing them to protect His throne or to kick Lucifer out of the heavenlies, so they made no move to dethrone him. Instead, they focused on Logos, ready to help in an instant if He asked.

Logos was still pinned. Jacob had learned well. Every move Logos made to escape was countered, so that the pin held. The eastern sky was beginning to lighten; dawn was upon them. Logos was exceedingly strong and quick, and He made a series of moves that should have broken the pin, but Jacob held on frantically, increasing the pressure until Logos cried out in pain. Finally Logos reached out a hand and touched Jacob’s hip as he knelt over Him. A bolt of electricity went through Jacob’s hip joint, accompanied by searing pain. Yet Jacob doggedly held on, ignoring the agony, again turning Logos’ body so that His face would be lit by the rising sun. He wanted to see His face.

Knowing his thoughts, Logos yelled, “Let Me go now, for the dawn is breaking! You cannot see My face and live! So let Me go already!” He sounded frantic.

“I will not let You go until You bless me!”

“You must let Me go! Did you not feel the pain when I touched you? I have the power of life or death in My touch. You must believe Me! You cannot see My face and live. If the sun comes up further so that you see My face, you will perish. No sinful man can see My face and live!”

“I will not let You go until You bless me!” Jacob firmly repeated, then added, “I will not perish. I cannot, because I have the sure promise of Logos to make of me a great nation, and He is stronger than You. I have repented and received Your discipline. Now I must receive Your blessing as well, or we shall both remain here forever.”

“What is your name?” Logos asked softly. He relaxed and submitted under the crushing hold.

“My name is Jacob. Supplanter. Deceiver.”

“Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but **Israel**, for you have wrestled with God and have prevailed.”

Wrestled with God?!!! Jacob was stunned, and his hold trembled ever so slightly. “Who are You? What is Your name?” Suddenly he was afraid.

Logos relaxed even more. “Why do you ask My name. Surely you know by now that it is a mystery.”

A mystery? Jacob suddenly remembered seeing Logos over the altar the previous evening. He had briefly appeared as a man, tall, strong, handsome, with only His face shrouded mysteriously in flames. This must be the same man! This was Logos Himself, and not just His angel! Now His face was unprotected, nearly lit by the dawning. He could almost see Him. He moved slightly for a better look, forgetting (because of Logos’ relaxed submission) to keep the pressure firm on his wrestling pin.

In a flash Logos was up and stepping into the rent in the veil between the realms. But even as He stood, the rays of the dawning sun reached down and for the briefest of moments illumined His face. Then He was through the rent, which He held open while He turned to face Jacob. Now that He was back in the heavenlies, He assumed His customary form, with His face shrouded in glory as always.

“Israel, remove your sandals and kneel now before Me, for you are standing on holy ground.” Jacob did so, in fear and trembling at what he had done.

“Truly, O Israel, you have bested Me, for no sinful man can see My face and live. Yet you have seen My face, and you still live, for this moment at least, within My sinless perfection. Every sin you have ever done is completely repented from and covered by the blood of the lamb, and every motivation of your heart is solely upon Me and My righteousness. Therefore O Israel, you are a Prince with God and man. I bless you in the mighty name of YHWH My Father in eternity. I shall make of you a great nation, which shall be called by your new name, Israel. In Israel shall all the nations, peoples, and ethnic groups of the earth be blessed. Go now. Prosper as you meet with your brother, for I have changed his heart so he will receive you.”

The rent in the veil closed, but not before Jacob (now Israel) caught a glimpse of the adoring angels surrounding Logos, kneeling and bowing with arms outstretched to welcome Him back. Jacob bowed in reverent worship for a long time. Finally, with the rising sun warming the earth, he stood. “From now on this place shall be called **Peniel** [the Face of God],” he spoke out loud, “... for here I have seen God face to face and lived.” Then he picked up his bedroll and limped down to the ford, crossed the Jabbok River, and headed up to his family on the other side.

“Satan! I told you to watch and learn. Tell Me, what did you learn?” Logos spoke sternly to Satan, who was still on the throne pretending to be a god.

“Well...” Satan hesitated, unwilling to admit that he hadn’t watched much, as he was having too much fun playing god. “I learned that You are a weak love-sick wimp, who can be wrestled to the ground and held there by a filthy, puny human.”

“Then get off My throne and never presume to sit there again. You have missed the entire point! In your pride and arrogance you have brought great dishonor upon this holy place. Remember that you are here only at My invitation. You survive here only because of My protective covering. If you refuse to learn wisdom from Me here, then I will no longer allow you audience.”

Satan slunk off the throne, down to the lowest place in the throne room, in mock humility. “So, what is the entire point I seem to have missed?”

Logos, who takes every attempt at humility and meekness very seriously, brightened up. “It is this, My beloved adversary. My Plan of the Ages shall not be thwarted, though ‘puny’ man wrestle Me to the ground and take Me captive – even though ‘puny’ man torture Me and slay Me – yet shall My love gain the victory. Look at the magnitude of this victory I have achieved! I wanted to bless him, and he has gained the blessing. I wanted to make of him a great nation, and now My promise to him is confirmed. I wanted to teach him to hate duplicity and love righteousness; now he does. I wanted to help him remember his repentance always, so we would not have to go through these lessons again; he will never forget what happened today.

“You called Jacob ‘filthy’, but he is not! He is righteous! In perfect righteousness he has prevailed over Me, not in his sinful flesh. Would to Father YHWH that every one of My precious ones prevail over Me in righteousness with such a pure heart for Me and such an earnest desire for My Blessing, for My wisdom and My will, for then I shall have My pure Bride, worthy of My holy name!”

Satan stood there for a long moment, stunned. What a fool he was! He was on the throne playing god when he should have been tempting Jacob to sin – any sin – just to keep this... this catastrophe from occurring! This is what happens when he shirks his duties! He closed his mouth with a snap, spun around, and fled, determined to never again let up the pressure on Logos’ Bride.

“Yes, My beloved adversary,” Logos whispered after him, so only the nearest angels could hear. “Keep up the pressure. Do what I created you for, so that My Bride may be tested, proven in every way, able to recognize and hate every kind of evil, able to fully appreciate My wisdom and My ways and to fully receive and return My love. In your pride you think you can defeat Me, but you deceive yourself. You are but a tool to accomplish My good pleasure.”

Israel reached the grassy plain where he had left his family. It was a tough climb, because the hip joint Logos had touched still pained him greatly. He had barely gotten there when he saw a large group on the road coming toward him. It was Esau and his 400 armed men! Instantly he was tempted to fear, along with a hundred more ugly thoughts at once. *That vision of Logos was just a dream. Forget it. Prepare to fight! Esau wants to kill you, ravish your wives, and take your children! Hate him! Get angry! Your anger will give you strength. Quick! Pull your knife! Defend yourself! You have to kill Esau before he kills you!* It was Satan, furiously making up for his lost opportunity.

But once again, Satan underestimated the power of true repentance. Israel fell to his knees. “Logos, that voice in my head can’t be You, for it is trying to make me afraid, and You just told me not to fear. I choose Your ways. I believe Your Word. I will accept Your discipline, this pain in my hip, as a constant reminder of the time I saw You face to face. You said that You changed Esau’s heart. I believe it. Please, tell me what to do.” All the angels in the heavenlies gave another mighty cheer and began again their victory dance – for the Bride’s third victory in the last two weeks.

Israel stood and gathered his family. He thought briefly about telling them the story of the new name Logos had given him, but then glanced at how close Esau was and decided that would have to wait. For now, he’d have to remain old Jacob. He organized his wives and children by rank, Zilpah first, with Gad and Asher; then Bilhah, Dan, and Naphtali; then Leah with Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; finally his beloved Rachel with baby Joseph. Each of his daughters stood behind her nearest brother. Jacob then moved out in front, bowing himself to the ground seven times as Esau approached.

Logos and Gavriel watched in eager anticipation from the heavenlies. Satan zipped between Jacob and Esau, frantically trying to stir up trouble. He wouldn’t be caught napping this time! His host followed his lead. Michael remained beside Jacob in case Satan went beyond the law.

But just as Logos had promised, Jacob’s meeting and reconciliation with Esau were blessed. Lavish gifts were received, returned, and given again. The two brothers hugged each other with tears, forgave each other, and made promises to each other. Angels danced all around. Satan finally quit in disgust, recognizing his defeat.

When it was over, Esau returned to Edom, and Jacob gathered all his people and possessions and traveled west, down the Jabbok River Valley to the Jordan. This was the time of year, just after the fall rains, when the Jordan flooded its banks. Rather than trying to cross it, Jacob camped east of the river, eventually building a house and sheds for his animals on the fertile plain. He lived there for twelve years. The place became known as **Succoth**, for the sheds (the *sukkim*) he made for his animals, for they were many. There his family prospered.

All that time, Satan did keep up the pressure on Jacob, whispering daily in his ear. For many years, Jacob would not hear him, for his ears were tuned only to Logos. He always kept the Sabbath holy and offered the weekly lamb sacrifice. He remembered his lessons on repentance. Logos was pleased, and blessed him abundantly. But this one thing Jacob did not do. He didn’t tell his family of his wrestling match with God beyond the Jabbok River, or of the new name Logos had given him: Israel, ‘Prince of God’.

Just a tiny lack of faith. Just a tiny open door. Satan entered it to tempt Jacob to move closer to the Canaanites. It took him years of persuasion, but finally in 1695 BC Jacob packed up, crossed the Jordan, climbed up into the highlands, and settled down on the outskirts of Shechem between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. There he traded with the Canaanites, starting with the purchase of a large field to camp and pasture his vast flocks and herds.

Hamor the Hivite was king in Shechem, but he was old. The town was currently ruled by his oldest son, **Shechem**, for whom Hamor had named the town. They welcomed Jacob and were glad that he had come to trade rather than to conquer. They pretended friendliness.

Friendliness begets trust, and Satan rubbed his hands in glee when Jacob’s family began freely entering the city of Shechem and trading with the townspeople. He figured that only a year or two of this and all the wickedness of the Canaanites would infect the children of Jacob as well.

Satan knew from past experience that he needed to keep the city’s wickedness in check for a time, or else Jacob would be alerted, hate it, and flee. He tried! He really tried! But the well-developed lusts of Shechem himself, prince of the city, got out of hand. He spied cute little Dinah, Leah’s youngest daughter, chatting with the girls at the market. He took her for himself, forcing her to lie with him.

Satan was furious! His demons he’d assigned to Prince Shechem swore they had never tempted him to do that – it was his own lust that drove him. Satan didn’t believe them, and slew them all. But the deed was done, and all he could do was to make the best of it. He decided to anger Jacob’s sons over it, hoping they would start a war with the entire town. Maybe he could get them all killed.

Jacob’s sons were angry all right. Their little fourteen-year-old sister, abused by the prince of Shechem! As they plotted what to do about it, Shechem had the gall to come asking to marry her! He offered a big dowry, and claimed that the marriage would cement an alliance of peace and trade between the two clans to last for generations.

Reuben was not there, so the next two, Simeon (age 25) and Levi (age 24) took charge. They agreed to Shechem’s proposal, on one condition: all the men of his city must be circumcised. They showed him how it’s done. It was their law, from the time of Abraham. They could never give their sister in marriage to uncircumcised pagans.

Surprisingly, Shechem agreed. Even more surprisingly, the men of the city all agreed. Frankly, they were afraid of this powerful new clan who had just moved next to them. They also envied his wealth. The pain of the circumcision was a small price to pay for a good, solid marriage alliance, with the peace and trade that it would bring. They did it.

Poor Satan was left scratching his head. He had planned this whole thing to infect Jacob's clan with wickedness, but now it seemed like the sons of Jacob were infecting the men of Shechem with righteousness. *But that's impossible. It simply can't work that way. Wickedness always prevails over righteousness.* Satan couldn't figure it out. He waited.

He didn't have to wait long. The second morning after the painful circumcisions were all complete, Simeon and Levi strode into town. They didn't say a word. They just pulled out their swords and started hacking off heads. The men of Shechem were in too much pain to defend themselves, and in an hour all the men of the city were dead. Jacob's sons spent the next week looting the city, seizing the women and children for slaves, destroying all their idols, and confiscating their flocks and herds.

Satan was utterly appalled! He stormed into the throne room of the Most High. "That's not fair!" he screamed, which was becoming an altogether too common greeting of his. "Once again, You are using my ways of trickery, force, lies, and anger. You can't do that! My entire city is destroyed! I worked hard to make those people what they were! They were mine! Mine! Do you hear? Mine! Mine! You can't do that! It's not fair! They were all..."

He suddenly realized he was beginning to sound like a spoiled brat, and shut up abruptly. Logos smiled at him. "Yes, My beloved adversary. I agree with you for once. They were totally yours, without exception. There was not one shred of righteousness in them – not even the slightest indication that they could ever repent and receive My forgiveness. They chose to live by your ways. So now they have died by your ways – the inevitable consequence of living by your ways. That was their choice.

"Do you really not yet understand that those who choose to live by lies, anger, and force will also suffer and die by lies, anger, and force? Whatever you sow, that is what you reap. I violated none of My Law in allowing the full consequences of their lives to return upon them."

"But... but it's not fair! How can I ever prove that my ways are best, when You use my own ways to defeat me? Wait... doesn't that in itself prove that my ways are best? When You have to use my ways to defeat me? But no... if they defeat me...?" He stopped, momentarily confused.

Logos chuckled. "Now you're beginning to get the picture, My beloved adversary! You are already defeated, along with all who choose your ways. Your ways can bring nothing but suffering, death, and destruction. It's My Law, woven into the fabric of the universe. It is inevitable."

"But even if I am defeated, I still have defeated You, for that was Your so-called Bride who just got angry and went on the rampage that killed all the men of Shechem."

"Ahh... but I have a tool that you do not. You have no way to avoid the deaths of all who choose your ways. I do! True repentance in the cleansing of the blood sacrifice. Were it not for that, you would be correct; we both would lose. My sinful creation would self-destruct. But in true repentance, any and all may choose life instead of death. Now that the eyes of your understanding are open to the hopelessness of your ways, I offer you My gift of true repentance." Logos beamed at him. "Will you accept it?"

Satan paused, horrified with himself that he should even be considering it. *He would have to admit that he had been wrong. He would have to bow and acknowledge that Logos is forever righteous and true, and that only His ways are faithful and good. Then he would have to apologize and ask forgiveness, publicly. He would have to humble himself.* He could see where this was going!

Satan remembered Logos' prophecy that someday he would bow the knee to Him. "No! Never! You have got to be kidding! I will never bow to You. I may not win them all, but I'll win 99 percent of Your so-called Bride, and I'll have the pleasure of seeing them squirm in their own blood as they die. Your blood sacrifice is weak. It only provides a temporary substitute. But mine is the true blood sacrifice. And it's permanent! Everyone dies for his own sin!"

"I don't kid, Lucifer..." Logos said sadly as Satan stormed off. "How much suffering and death will it take before your eyes are opened to the truth?"

Jacob chastised his sons for what they had done, then came humbly to the altar that Sabbath with three lambs: one for himself, one for his sons, and one for his extended clan. He poured out a heart of true repentance, begging for forgiveness and cleansing. He was afraid the surrounding Canaanite cities would join together to attack them out of vengeance for what his sons had done to Shechem, but he even repented of that fear and pled with Logos for His blessing and wisdom.

Logos came, comforted him, forgave him, restored his soul, and delivered him from all his fears. He urged him to cleanse away the impurities of Shechem, and then leave the area and travel south to Bethel (north of Salem).

Jacob obeyed. Everyone in his company bathed and washed his garments. Then everyone attended the blood sacrifice. All the booty from Shechem and the baggage of the captured slaves were thoroughly inspected for idols or traces of immorality, which were all destroyed. Jacob took all the gold and silver which had been made into idols, ear and nose rings, and other symbols of pagan worship and buried it deep in the ground, near the great terebinth west of the city. Finally they burned the city, and a cleansed company packed up and prepared to head south.

Satan came into Logo's presence, a smug look on his face. "Jacob thinks he's pure and holy, and that he has cleansed his company, but I know better. Rachel still has Laban's idols! She gave them to **Deborah** to hide, so she could 'truthfully' say to Jacob she didn't know where they were. But that is still deceit. I have occasion! I can destroy them all, and there is not one thing You can do about it."

Logos was sad. He did not immediately respond, and Satan took that for permission. He was finally beginning to realize that he did indeed need Logos' permission to harm the Bride. But as he turned to go, Logos said. "Yes, My beloved adversary, you do have occasion, but it is only against Rachel and her maid Deborah, not against Jacob or his company. Jacob has, in the integrity of his heart, cleansed himself and his family the best that he knew how. I count that to him as righteousness."

Satan left to make the most of it, working hard to stir up the wrath of the neighboring armies. Michael and his host were also there, working to encourage Jacob as they packed to leave. They got up early, since they had a long way to go. Jacob arranged his male servants into military style ranks for protection along the road.

The surrounding city-states had indeed planned to take revenge upon Jacob, not so much for destroying Shechem, but more because they were afraid they may be next! Eight cities gathered their armed men together. They planned to attack Jacob early on the morning of the closest approach of Chronos (which we know as Saturn), because in their experience the nearness of Chronos struck fear into the hearts of their enemies. (Though its close pass was not catastrophic in those days, a Chronos flyby always caused frightening earthquakes and thunderstorms.)

As Chronos neared its closest approach, the Canaanite armies rushed over the hill to attack. The earth rumbled and convulsed as expected. But Jacob's armed servants were already on the march. The Canaanites were appalled! Someone had warned Jacob. He was ready for them. Maybe he was marching to attack another of their cities. The eight armies halted, quaking in their boots. Chronos had turned against them! No one had the courage to lead the charge.

Satan was disgusted. He took out his wrath on Deborah, through the door she had opened to him by her sin. She saw the Canaanite armies up on the hill. Terrified, she ran screaming to her mistress. Rachel tried to calm her, but she became hysterical and suffered a heart attack. Jacob heard the commotion and came running. "Please be at peace, Rachel and Deborah. Our entire company is now cleansed and under Logos' protection. They cannot harm us!"

"We are not all cleansed!" Deborah wailed. "Rachel's idols! I hid them! Logos is angry with us! They will slay us all!" She writhed on the ground in fear and pain.

"What? Rachel's idols?" Jacob looked at Rachel. "Did you lie to me? You said you didn't have them!"

Rachel defended herself. "I didn't lie. I don't have them. I don't even know where they are. I gave them to Deborah to dispose of. I swear! Just ask her." She glared at Deborah, as if to dare her maid to contradict her. Years of submission to her mistress won, and Deborah shut up. Then a servant came in to announce that the Canaanite armies had fled. Deborah was relieved. Jacob thought she would recover. But in her heart, she still felt guilty as sin. The heart attack had left her too weak to walk or even stand. They carried her on a mule cart the whole day as they traveled to Bethel. That evening as they unpacked and set up camp, Jacob came to Deborah privately, to see how she was doing.

"I'm dying, master. My sins have caught up with me. I'm sorry. Please pray for me, that Logos will forgive me and accept me into His heavenly Kingdom."

"Logos will forgive you. But you must tell me the truth about Rachel's idols." Jacob said gently. He had seen Rachel glare at her, and suspected.

"Yes. I will tell you the whole truth. But please, don't punish Rachel on my account. She asked me to hide them. She didn't say where, but I already knew where, because I had seen her hide them in the saddle of her camel when Laban was searching for them. So I just hid them in the same place. She..." Deborah paused, sensing that Rachel had entered their tent. Then, realizing that the cat was already out of the bag, she plunged on breathlessly. "Rachel is pregnant! She wanted the blessing of Laban's idols on her baby! She couldn't let you destroy them."

Rachel screamed and took a swing at Deborah. Jacob tried to block it and got hit himself, hard. In the sudden pain, he yelled an awful, damning curse upon Rachel. Then they both stopped, shocked at what had happened.

If they could only have seen into the spirit realm. Satan was falling down, rolling in laughter, singing, "I got 'em! I got 'em! One more member of the Bride chooses me and my ways! I win! Victory is easy, but oh, so sweet!"

"I'm sorry, Rachel my love. I didn't mean to curse you! It just slipped out. Please forgive me. I love you! Why didn't you tell me about your – our – baby? We've been hoping for another baby for so long! Please, forgive me! Don't be upset about the idols. We'll get them and destroy them. Then all will be well again, I promise. I don't hold the idols against you. And Logos will forgive you, too."

Rachel's face was hard. "I have had four babies since Joseph, and every one has miscarried within the first few months. I knew it was because they were not blessed by my father's gods. So when I found I was pregnant again, I dug them out secretly and prayed to them, asking them to bless this baby. And they have! This baby will not miscarry!"

"When was that, my love? When did you pray to Laban's idols." Jacob suspected he knew.

"Well, the entire time we were at Shechem."

“That is what I thought, Rachel. Keeping those idols, even when they were hidden, is what was causing your babies to miscarry. And praying to them is probably what opened the door to that horrible situation with Dinah and the prince of Shechem. We’ve got to destroy them.”

“No!” Rachel was firm.

Jacob bowed, praying silently for wisdom from Logos. Satan, recovered from his victory dance and back hard at work, was yelling at him to agree to the idols, or stalk off angrily, or better yet, to ‘double and set’ his curse on her. But Logos, through Michael his faithful archangel, was urging him to set his choice for righteousness, instead. Jacob was more used to hearing that voice, and he did.

“I’m sorry, Rachel my love. I cannot let you endanger yourself, our baby, and our whole family with those idols. I’m going out now to destroy them. You can help me if you want, but you can’t stop me, for I know what is right.”

“NO!” Rachel screamed, jumping up and running out ahead of Jacob. Ever since Logos had touched his hip, Jacob was not a very good runner. She got to the camel before him, grabbed the idols, and ran off into the brush. Jacob quickly ordered some of his servants to give chase. But they were a bit late. By the time they caught up with her she had already buried them and was covering her tracks. They came back with her, but without the idols.

Before they could say a word to each other, there was a commotion in Rachel’s tent. “She’s dead!” someone screamed. They all went running. It was true. Deborah had just died. Jacob fell on his face to the ground and wept. After a bit, Rachel joined him. Deborah had been a good and faithful servant, and everyone loved her. Jacob had thought Logos would spare her, after her confession. They all had a time of mourning, while they buried her under the big old oak tree just below Bethel.

Then Jacob rebuilt the old altar that he had first built when he had seen the vision of the ladder to heaven (when had met with Logos on his way to Laban’s house in Padan-Aram). Once again he cried out to Logos. Again, Logos responded, blessing him just as before, and reminding him of his new name, Israel: one who wrestled with God and prevailed. This time, his family heard it, too. But he told them not to use it; it was to be just between him and God.

They lived there at Bethel until it was nearly time for Rachel to deliver. Then Jacob caught Rachel coming in from the brush. During their siesta time, she had been secretly going out to where she had hidden Laban’s idols.

Jacob confronted her on the spot. “My love, you have placed yourself in great danger! Logos is the only true God. Those idols can’t help you. Please, let...”

“No! I want this baby! My worship of my father’s gods has enabled me to carry it to full term, and I will not lose it now! I will not let you destroy them!”

Unaware of Satan’s laughter in the heavenlies, Jacob responded sadly, “Then we shall have to move, for I will not – I cannot! – allow you to be under their influence any more. We will leave today.”

Satan was very busy in the throne room, trying to taunt Logos. “You see! Rachel is mine! She chose me and my ways, and confirmed it many times. She worships me in her heart. She even has her husband’s curse on her head.”

“Yes, Satan.” Tears flowed down Logos’ cheeks. “I will not contend with you for Rachel. Do with her as you see fit. Only, you may not harm her child, for he is yet Mine.”

Stunned, Satan backed away. That was too easy. What was he missing here? He returned to Rachel.

Jacob and his company were already packing to leave. Rachel was looking for an opportunity to sneak out and dig up the idols so she could bring them along, but Jacob’s servants were keeping a close eye on her. Satan tried hard to arrange something, but no one else was listening to him. He wished briefly that he had not killed Deborah so soon – he could have used her here. He’ll have to kill Rachel now; then maybe her child will die, too. Satan laughed at that; it’s one of his finest tricks, getting a mother to kill her own child. He couldn’t harm the baby, but Rachel sure could!

The company had left Bethel. It was only sixteen miles to **Ephrathah**, where Jacob had planned to spend the night. That is an easy half-day journey. Satan got right to work, shutting down organs and body systems within Rachel. He was not going to risk missing his opportunity. He had to kill her now, or risk having her baby born alive.

With her internal life-systems all shutting down, the natural response of Rachel’s body was to go into hard labor, immediately, without warning. They had traveled only five miles down the road, still six miles to Salem, when she screamed in pain to be delivered. The baby was not quite ready; it had not yet turned head-down in its proper birth position. The caravan stopped right there on the road. Everyone scurried around getting ready.

The delivery was very, very hard. Poor Rachel was screaming incoherently most of the time. When she became lucid, she cried out for someone to get Laban’s idols, finally telling everyone where they were. Jacob immediately sent his servants back to find them and destroy them, which they did. Jacob tried to tell Rachel, but she was again screaming incoherently, and could not hear him. All he could do is hold her hand and pray.

Finally, late that night, the baby was born, amid shrieks of pain. The midwife called out, “No longer fear, Rachel. You have a healthy son!” She brought him quickly to her, bloody and with the cord still attached.

The screaming stopped, though Rachel continued to sob softly as she nursed her child. He was indeed healthy, a real fighter. He nursed with gusto from the first hour.

The midwife and her aides were cleaning them, but Jacob couldn't wait. He knelt beside Rachel. "My love, your baby is beautiful! Look! He is strong and healthy! Praise Logos! You see, you didn't need idols. Logos is all you need. I believe we got the idols destroyed just in time. You're going to come through this just fine."

"My gods! They are destroyed?" Rachel shrieked. "No wonder I'm dying. Now there is no hope."

"No, Rachel! You're not dying! Hope in Logos! You've got to get those idols out of your heart!"

Jacob tried. He really tried. They stayed there on the road, as Rachel slowly got weaker. Jacob cried out to Logos, but got no response. Rachel continued nursing her baby, but could do little else other than groan in pain. They were there a week. The baby was already gaining weight and strength. But now it was clear to everyone that Rachel was indeed dying. She wasn't even going to survive to the 8th day, when the baby would be circumcised and named. Realizing this, Rachel named him on the 7th day: Ben-oni – son of my sorrow. Within the hour, beautiful, bouncy, blonde Rachel had passed from the earth.

Again completely unaware of Satan's laughter in the heavenlies, Jacob was utterly heartbroken. He buried her there beside the road at the place where the town of **Ramah** has now grown up. He arranged for a nursing servant girl to care for the baby. And the next day, at his circumcision, he renamed him **Benjamin** – the son of my right hand.

Through it all, Leah remained right beside him, sharing his great sorrow, weeping with him, comforting him, and helping him get through it. Satan got suspicious. He came to the throne room. "Logos, what's with Leah? And why did You make it so easy for me to kill Rachel?"

"My beloved adversary! I am glad you come to Me for wisdom." Logos smiled sadly through His tears. "You were able to kill Rachel because of her choices for you. But have you forgotten My prophecy to Jacob regarding Leah? Or did you choose to disbelieve? My Word shall come to pass, even when My Bride makes wrong choices."

"So why could I not kill Benjamin? Why could I not kill Joseph? Why protect them, if Your promises to Israel will all be fulfilled through Leah?"

"Because, dear adversary, I want you to see how even wrong choices by My Bride ultimately work out for good. In eternity My Father sees every sin, every wrong choice, and makes use of it. Rachel's babies are an essential part of His Plan of the Ages. Just watch them and you will see. And thank you for helping Israel to discover his true wife."

Satan fled. He could not stand being thanked by Logos. Sure enough, plain dark-haired Leah had comforted Jacob. Her faithful love had won his heart. He was sleeping with her, and her alone, every night, having finally learned the lesson that true love is much more than outward beauty.

Jacob continued south from Ramah, past Salem, to Ephrathah, where he camped in the field at what would later be called Migdol Eder. The next week he walked back to Salem, alone. His grandfather had told him the story of Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of El-Elyon. He hoped the city had remained true to God. Surprisingly, Melchizedek was still king there, and the small city was still a strong testimony for God before the surrounding Canaanites. The good people of Salem welcomed Jacob. They pointed out where Abraham had worshiped on top of Mount Moriah. Jacob hiked up to the spot and spent the day crying out to God over his terrible loss. Logos met him there and comforted him. As he left Salem, Melchizedek sent him off with a blessing that Jacob never forgot.

After a month of mourning, Jacob left Ephrathah and continued south to Hebron. Isaac and Rebekah had moved there from Beersheba, and were staying under the Oaks of Mamre. It was their favorite place in Canaan, just as it had been for their father Abraham. They had grown old, and were expecting to live there the remainder of their days and be buried in the nearby Cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and his beloved Sarah were buried.

Isaac and Rebekah welcomed Jacob and his big family, especially 13-year-old Joseph and his new baby brother, Benjamin. The loss of their mother Rachel was, of course, a huge tragedy, but Leah was such a trooper, adopting and caring for them as her own. She just took charge of the entire household. Jacob was amazed. For the first time he really saw what an incredibly capable and loving mother Leah was. He realized to his shame that his focus had been so much on Rachel's beauty that he had not appreciated Leah for the wonderful person she was. Isaac and Rebekah soon learned to love her too. They had a little more trouble accepting their son's concubines Bilhah and Zilpah, and their children: Dan and Naphtali, and Gad and Asher. Something didn't seem quite right about their attitude.

It was Joseph who pinned it down, four years later. He was 17 at the time, old enough to be out in the fields with the sheep. At first he just had his own little flock, which he diligently shepherded. But then his older brothers started bringing by their flocks for him to look after while they staged rather violent competitions of strength and skill. These competitions became frequent, until Joseph was watching their sheep much of the time. The rivalry between the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah grew fierce, sometimes resulting in injuries. When they became disabled, young Joseph's workload got even worse.

One day the sons of Jacob's concubines got together and challenged the sons of Leah to one huge month-long competition. They all left their flocks and herds to Joseph. Joseph put his foot down. He knew he could not properly supervise all those sheep, goats, camels, and mules, even with the servant's help. He complained to Jacob.

Jacob reprimanded them. “Do you not realize that all my flocks and herds are yours when I pass on? Why then do you fight and play while the flocks are endangered? And why do you abuse your brother Joseph with more responsibility than he can bear?” So he reassigned their pastures to separate the flocks, and reassigned his servants to be more of a help to them and to keep an eye on them.

They all were pretty upset at Joseph, calling him a baby, unable to watch over a few sheep. But it got worse. Even before Rachel had died, Joseph had been Jacob’s favorite, but when he presented him with a beautiful specially woven multi-colored tunic, it became painfully obvious. *Jacob wanted to give him the inheritance, and shut them out!* They began hating him so much they wouldn’t talk to him.

Worse yet, young Joseph now began having dreams of grandeur, in which his parents and brothers, and even the sun, moon, and stars all bowed down to him. He foolishly related these dreams during a family meal. Jacob rebuked him. “Shall I, your mother, and your brothers really come to bow ourselves down to you? That’s just prideful fantasy. Better you should just keep quiet about such dreams.”

Joseph quickly shut up. He was startled that his father had already, in four years, forgotten his own mother’s death, and was now calling Leah his mother. He went to her for a much-needed hug. Leah, as always, had time for him. He relaxed, and unloaded all his troubles on her.

She understood. She believed in him. She loved him. Suddenly he realized why Jacob had called her his mother. She had become more of a mother to him than the flighty, frivolous Rachel ever was. “Thank you, Leah, for being such a good mom to me. I wish you were my real mom.”

“But darling, I am! I have adopted you. I love you just as much as any of my other children!”

“No, but if you were my real mom, maybe all the others would accept me.”

“Joseph, Joseph. They will accept you if you are kind to them. Just be respectful and helpful.”

“Yes, Mom. I’ll try. But I think they all hate me and want to kill me. Besides, I’ve tried being helpful, and they just abuse me and make me do their work. And they call me names, and...” Joseph began to cry. Being a teenager was tough back then, too. Besides, after all that abuse, Joseph was having a little trouble with bitterness.

Leah talked it all over with Jacob in bed that night. She bared her heart. Jacob appreciated her insights. He was so impressed with her wisdom, love and understanding, and so glad God had chosen her for him, that their intimacy included the physical too, something Leah was very good at. She loved to be loved by Jacob, and now that her sister was no longer competing for his love, his embrace was her entry into paradise. Finally, they were truly one in body, mind, and soul. Jacob had found God’s will for his life.

The next morning, Jacob gathered all twelve of his sons around in a big circle, with Dinah and her five remaining unmarried sisters right behind them. Leah stood with him, holding baby Benjamin (now 4). Bilhah and Zilpah were behind him. Jacob made a speech about the importance of family, and sticking together and supporting one another, rather than the strife and contention he had been seeing. He apologized for the favoritism he had been showing (Leah had advised him to do that) and vowed that all his sons would share and share alike in his inheritance – if they promised to live in peace with one another! He didn’t single out or accuse any of his boys, but they all knew exactly which ones he was talking about.

Jacob assumed that his speech would take care of the matter, and thought no more about it. But the anger, resentment, and jealousy against Joseph by his brothers only grew. They just hid it better. Yes, it was actually Satan egging them on. Once you begin listening to his voice it’s pretty hard to stop. Michael figured out what Satan was doing and went to Logos. “My Lord and King, I believe Satan may be planning to harm Your Bride. He is stirring up strife among Jacob’s sons. Someone could get hurt! Satan does not have Your permission. Shall I stop him?”

“Michael, My beloved archangel, I do appreciate your concern, but no. You cannot stop him. He has occasion against them, given to him by Joseph’s brothers in their jealous and self-focused attitudes, and by Joseph himself, in his bitterness and pride. Encourage Joseph to humble himself, repent, and come to Me for cleansing before it is too late. If he delays, he may have much suffering ahead.”

Michael did that, not just for Joseph, but for the whole family. Jacob was always responsive to such suggestions from Michael. He offered an extra lamb for his sons. He repented and prayed earnestly for them. But young Joseph had not yet learned to heed Michael’s voice. His father had always taken care of that. He ‘heard’ but just shrugged it off. *He’d done nothing wrong. It was all his brother’s fault.* Thus his pride got in the way of listening to Michael.

Six months later, Jacob sent Joseph out to find his brothers, and to report on the state of the flocks. They had gone north to Shechem and beyond, to find fresh pasture land. Joseph finally found them way beyond Shechem, in **Dothan**, which is a land of numerous hand-dug wells that had mostly gone dry.

His brothers saw him from a distance. “Here comes the dreamer! Let’s kill him and throw him in that dry well. Then we’ll see what will become of his dreams to rule over us!” It was Simeon, the second-born of Leah’s children, but it didn’t sound like him, and even he looked startled at the horrid suggestion coming out of his mouth. Then Levi agreed, and Issachar, Dan, Gad, and Asher chimed in as well. Reuben and Judah were horrified but said nothing. Satan was hard at work on them, too. If he couldn’t tempt them to agree, he would simply silence them.

Joseph approached them with a cheery greeting. His naturally happy optimism and friendliness grated on them even more, and they got up to grab him. But Reuben finally found his voice. “No! Shed no blood! Just throw him into the pit, but do not earn Logos’ wrath by harming him.” He figured he would come back later, get Joseph out, and send him home. He had already done too much to earn his father’s disapproval, and he wanted to make it up to him. Michael and the angels gave a rousing cheer, and a second as the rest took his suggestion. As the eldest son, his word carried a good deal of weight with them all. Traditionally, he would get the lion’s share of their father’s inheritance. They wanted to stay on his good side!

They took Joseph, stripped off his multi-colored tunic, and threw him into the pit. Then they sat down to enjoy the goodies he had brought them.

Reuben was crushed that they should treat their brother so casually, and he would not eat the food that Joseph had brought. He told the others he was going to check on the flocks, and walked around behind the hill. There he bowed his head and wept.

But while he was gone, a caravan of Ishmaelite traders came in sight. Now Judah found his voice. “What profit is it for us to kill our brother and just cover up his blood? Come on; let’s sell him to these Ishmaelites. That way we make a profit, and we don’t have to answer for his blood.”

His words made sense to the rest. They quickly agreed – too quickly for Satan to figure out what was going on and adjust his plans. He didn’t see any value in Joseph anyway. This seemed like a good way to prolong Joseph’s pain.

The traders had first come north from **Midian** bringing exquisite crafts through Edom, Moab, and Gilead. There they had traded for precious spices. They had then crossed the Jordan and were now heading south to Egypt. They gladly paid the brothers twenty silver coins, the going rate for a slave, and took Joseph away.

Reuben had seen the traders – even seen them stop to talk to his brothers – but he had no idea that they would sell Joseph. Michael tried to warn him, but Reuben still was not used to hearing Michael’s voice and didn’t catch on. He was devastated when he came back to the pit and found no Joseph. Judah told him what had happened. Reuben tried to get the others to give chase, but after they gave him his share of the money, he calmed down.

Again Simeon, the plotter, spoke out. “You’ve already forgotten how much you hated him, haven’t you, Reuben. This way, we don’t have to harm him, but we’re rid of him, forever, him and his visions of grandeur! All we have to do is smear his coat with a little goat blood and give it to our father, then let him draw his own conclusions. We don’t even have to lie about it. See how easy it is? We’re clean, and he’s gone!” Satan within him laughed uproariously. With their personal demons’ persuasion, the rest agreed.

Michael entered the throne room, his head bowed in sorrow. “I have failed You, my King. I hope Joseph isn’t too important in Your Father’s Plan of the Ages, for I fear we have just lost him completely.”

“Fret not, dear Michael. Father’s Plan of the Ages is big enough to accommodate any possible choice My weak and fallible humans make. What would you say if I told you that this choice, as tragic as it seems, is the key for saving the entire world, and that young, foolish Joseph is destined to rise from a poor slave in Egypt to the greatest and most powerful ruler on the face of the earth, giving all creation a lovely picture of the future Redeemer?”

“What would I say...? I... I am astounded. Spirit just told you that? Wow! I believe! I will guard him.”

“Thank you. Please do. Of course, it still depends upon Joseph’s choices and attitudes, but I think you can help him have good ones from now on – he certainly has seen the consequences of bad ones!”

“My beloved adversary! You have a question?” Satan was standing behind Michael with his mouth open. He had been preparing to boast about sparing Joseph’s life so he could torture him longer, but he now suspected that he had made the wrong choice. “No? No questions?” Logos smiled at him. “Well, I am glad you came, anyway. Thank you for sparing Joseph’s life. You could have killed him then, you know. I believe you are learning compassion.”

But Satan had already fled. He just could not stand being thanked by Logos, especially when he screwed up. He determined he would find another open door to Joseph and finish him off posthaste.

Poor Joseph spent the entire trip to Egypt repenting of every sin he could think of, and crying out to Logos for forgiveness. The next Sabbath, though the Ishmaelites didn’t sacrifice a lamb, Joseph sacrificed one in his heart. Logos was pleased. He counted it to him for righteousness.

Thus Joseph arrived in Egypt a humble, repentant man. He tuned his heart to know the voice of Logos and his angels. Satan had no further occasion against him.

When the Ishmaelite traders reached Egypt’s capital city of Lisht, they sold Joseph to the captain of Pharaoh’s bodyguard, a wealthy officer named **Potiphar**.

Jacob was devastated. He assumed, as his sons knew he would, that Joseph had been eaten by wild beasts on his way up to Shechem. He tore his clothes, covered himself in sack-cloth, and would not eat. All his sons and daughters gathered around, but he would not be comforted. Reuben and Judah were bursting to tell him the truth, but were afraid their brothers would kill them if they squealed. For ten years there was nothing but sadness in their house. Rebekah (age 158) died in 1681 BC. Isaac (180) followed her two years later, his heart broken. They buried them in the Cave of Machpelah, close to Abraham and Sarah.

Meanwhile, Joseph had actually done quite well in Egypt. Slavery had humbled his youthful pride. He served Potiphar with grace, integrity, and faithfulness, just as if he were serving Logos Himself. With his attitudes so well improved, Satan had found no open door to kill him. Instead, Logos found an open door to bless him. All that he did prospered, so much so that Potiphar recognized it and put him in charge as the overseer of all he owned.

Sadly, Potiphar's wife **Tikra** saw it too, and wanted him. The hard work of slavery had been good for him. The skinny 17-year-old had grown into a tall, muscular, and handsome 27-year-old. There is no nice way to say this. Tikra lusted. Satan worked hard to feed that in her.

Potiphar also prospered. He got very busy, and began spending more time away from home. His wife Tikra took advantage of her loneliness to try to seduce Joseph. She was not unattractive, and the temptation was strong. But ten years of crying out to Logos had tuned his heart toward righteousness, and he politely refused her advances. Tikra kept pestering him, day by day, but he made sure he was never alone with her, never in a compromising situation.

Satan was furious. He had been sure he could tempt him. He poured all his efforts into it, but still came up short. Well, if he couldn't tempt him to adultery, he would try something else. He urged all the other male servants out one day when they were supposed to be in, and got the two alone together. It didn't take much temptation to get Tikra to grab Joseph's outer robe. He quickly spun out of it and fled, as Satan knew he would. Now Satan filled Tikra's mind with anger at being snubbed. She told Potiphar that Joseph had tried to rape her, and showed the robe as proof.

Potiphar put Joseph in his prison, where he spent the next three years. He could have gotten bitter. He could have sent a letter to Potiphar telling him the truth, possibly resulting in the breakup of their marriage. But he did not. He continued in prayer, served the other prisoners, and studied to master the Egyptian language and culture.

The chief jailor appreciated Joseph's refined character. He promoted him to be his personal assistant, in charge of the other prisoners. Other prisoners saw it, and confided in him their sorrows. Joseph worked to make the prison more bearable, and to respect each man for who he was.

Once the chief jailor even invited Joseph to eat with him and the officials in the palace rather than with the other prisoners in the prison. He politely accepted the invitation. But the entire meal turned out to be a disaster. Much of what was served was swine, shellfish, mice, bat, dog, and other delicacies he couldn't conscientiously eat. And the stories and jokes they told around the dinner table made his ears burn with shame.

So he begged his master to just let him eat with the other prisoners. The jailor was so impressed, he actually improved the fare of all the prisoners for Joseph's sake.

The year was 1680 BC, which was on the 30 year cycle of catastrophic Mars flybys. People were used to it and knew how to handle it, so few lives were lost that October. But some mountain building across North Africa and a small crustal shift occurred which changed the weather pattern over Africa. It resulted in more rainfall in Egypt and Nubia, though less to the west in the African Sahara.

For Egypt, that was good. The Egyptians began to prosper like never before. They had an abundance of food, resulting in an abundance of all things. Potiphar's jailor was able to improve the fare of the prisoners even more.

Now the prisoners were doubly grateful. They asked Joseph about it all. He responded, "I am here, not because I offended Potiphar. I am here because of my own pride and arrogance toward my brothers. I was my father's favorite and I let it go to my head. I lorded it over my brothers, thus earning their anger and jealousy. I even told them of my dreams that I would one day rule over them. The last straw was when I told them I thought my dreams were prophetic visions of Logos my God, and that He was certain to bring them to pass. What arrogance! I can't believe that I was so naïve! No wonder my brothers sold me into slavery. I'm determined now to remain the humble servant of Logos and be kind to everyone Logos brings me near. Because of that, Logos has prospered me. His blessings on me may affect you, too. Some day I think He will set us free."

"What are prophetic visions, and who is Logos?"

Joseph gladly shared with the prisoners about Logos and His guidance, wisdom, and love. He told how Logos loved to communicate with His precious ones, though He is Spirit, from the fires over the altar at the lamb sacrifice, or through his thoughts or dreams. And he gave them examples of how Logos had led his father and grandfather, blessing and protecting them in the land of Canaan.

"Do you still believe that Logos will fulfill your dreams – the ones about ruling over your brothers?"

Joseph paused, wondering why were they so interested in his dreams. "Yes..." he said cautiously. "I don't know how, but Logos always keeps His promise. He confirmed to me that those dreams were a promise from Him."

"He talks to you?"

"Yes!" Joseph beamed at the thought. "He talks with me often as I worship Him or when I pray to Him. He loves me. He assures me that I belong to Him."

The prison was strangely quiet as they went to bed that night. The rowdy ruffians seemed deep in thought at the things Joseph had shared. They were hoping that Logos would speak to them. Some even tried worshiping Him and praying to Him before they drifted off. They wanted to hear from Logos! That night, many of them had dreams, vivid ones. They awoke excited at their dreams, but then frustrated that they could not understand them.

They exchanged their stories among themselves, and realized that none of them could make sense of his dream. When Joseph came out of his prayer closet, he picked up on their frustrations and asked why.

“We tried what you said yesterday, but it didn’t work. Nobody talked to us. We all had dreams, but they don’t make sense, and we have no one to interpret them for us.”

“Interpretations belong to Logos. Tell me your dreams. Perhaps He will reveal the interpretations.”

Amseth told his dream first. Hearing it, Joseph was filled with the Spirit of Logos. He saw the interpretation before he even finished hearing the dream. “After two years you will be forgiven and pardoned from your crimes, and given a high office in the Pharaoh’s kingdom.”

Bathatra then told his, and though the dream was very different, the interpretation came out exactly the same. He was followed by Calakut, and Damatetra, and Elezath, and nine others. In each case, though the dreams varied wildly, the interpretation was identical. Everyone began to get suspicious. Even Joseph was beginning to wonder what was going on here. Finally it was Otath’s turn. (He recently had been the Pharaoh’s chief cup-bearer and wine taster. Pharaoh had gotten drunk on his wine and had thrown a hissy fit.) “Well, my dream probably didn’t mean anything at all. I just dreamed about grapes and wine. It sure didn’t have any ‘two years’ in it! There were three branches on the grape vine. Right before my eyes they budded, flowered, and produced big ripe grapes. I picked them and squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and handed it to him. That’s it.”

Relieved, Joseph brightened up. “Praise Logos, Otath! You’re right. That dream is not for two years. It will all be fulfilled in three days. You will be restored as the Pharaoh’s chief cup-bearer! From then on, your life will be blessed. Please, Otath, remember me when you are restored, for I did nothing wrong that I should remain in this dungeon.”

Pentam, the Pharaoh’s chief baker, had been put in the prison at the same time as Otath. He had actually done nothing at all, except to be in the wrong place when the angry Pharaoh had thrown his drunken hissy fit. He was encouraged by the interpretation Joseph had given Otath. “I think mine must be three days too. I dreamed I had three baskets of the finest bread for the Pharaoh, which I carried on my head. But the ravens came and began eating the bread out of the baskets. It was a nightmare. I tried to shoo them off, but they kept eating. Then I woke up.”

“Yes, Pentam. That does refer to three days, but I’m sorry. The Spirit of Logos has shown me that you will not be restored. In three days you will be taken out of the prison and hanged, and the ravens will eat your flesh. What evil have you done to deserve that?”

“Nothing that I can think of. Nothing at all.”

“Oh?” Joseph frowned. “Are you being truthful?”

Pentam swore he had done nothing worthy of being hanged. Why would Logos want that to happen to him? Confusion, doubt, and unbelief surged through the group. Joseph fell on his knees in a corner and cried out to Logos for Pentam, but Logos did not answer. The men started to leave for their own cells, a bit disgruntled and skeptical.

“Wait!” Joseph called. “Logos does not always reveal everything. He is a great and awesome God, and His ways are so much higher than ours that sometimes things are a mystery too great for us to understand. But I promise you, after three days we will all find out. In three days, what happens to Otath and Pentam will confirm everything. Please wait three days before you stop believing in Logos!”

Those three days came, and went. On the evening after the third day, as the men were getting ready to go to bed, faith in the prison was at an all-time low, lower even than before Joseph had come. Joseph too, was sorely tested. He lay crying on his bed, praying for Logos to vindicate him. This called into question everything he had ever heard (or thought he had heard) from Logos. Logos did not answer.

“You see,” Satan said. “He doesn’t really trust You. He just wants himself to be vindicated. It is all about self. Now, do I have Your permission to slay him?”

“You insist on closing the book before the last chapter is written, My beloved adversary. Wait and see. I believe he shall yet choose Me and My ways.”

“The last chapter? It has come and gone. The three days are over. He failed. He has lost faith...”

“Hush, and listen. The dreams were Egyptian dreams, and Egyptian days are not like Hebrew days. In all of Egypt the fourth day does not begin until the dawn.”

As they argued, Joseph relaxed in his bed, still praying aloud, but now much softer. “I trust You, O my Lord and my King. I worship You, Logos my Redeemer. Though all prophecies fail, though I am consigned to prison forever, though I never again hear Your sweet voice, yet I shall trust You, and love You, and worship You, to my dying breath.”

“See, My beloved adversary? That’s all I waited for.” Logos smiled, as the angels danced for joy at the victory.

A loud pounding filled the dungeon. The jailor awoke and ran to the door. One of the Pharaoh’s personal guards was just outside, asking for Otath and Pentam.

“Otath! You lucky devil you! Pharaoh has forgotten his anger and the bad taste of your wine. He wants you back. Immediately! Hurry to your old quarters and get washed and dressed, for he has thrown a big party and needs you there to taste his wine. Now scat! He’s calling for you.”

Otath scampered off. The guard then called for Pentam. He was already standing by the door, wringing his hands in nervousness. “There you are, Pentam. Run after him. Wash and dress. Pharaoh wants you, too. Right away!”

Pentam ran to catch up with Otath. The guard turned to go. Joseph called after him. "Kind sir! Please, would you tell us what becomes of these two men? They are friends of mine. I am concerned."

"Sure. No problem. **Senusret III** is 60 years old today, you know. He's having a grand celebration. He's in a great mood. The party began just before dusk and will probably continue until dawn. He's turning Egypt over to his son, **Moeris**, who has taken the throne name **Amenemhat III** after his great-grandfather. He's been "co-regent" since the age of two, but he's 19 now. Everybody loves King Moeris. He's kind, and a real gentleman. He cares about people! And no temper tantrums like his dad. The cup-bearer and baker will no doubt be fully restored to their office."

"Thank you, kind sir. Please let me know if anything changes." Joseph bowed graciously.

After he left, the remaining prisoners crowded around Joseph. "Looks like you guessed right on Otath, but you sure missed it on Pentam. They're both being restored! Well, I guess 50/50 ain't bad."

"50/50 is unacceptable to the God of the universe!" Joseph maintained. "Just wait. You will see. I know now that Logos will fulfill His Word."

Again, the angels in the heavenlies gave a mighty cheer as they continued their victory dance around the prison. Joseph's faith had stood the test! Satan left in disgust.

Joseph arose early the next morning to pray. He didn't need to see. He now knew in his heart that Logos would fulfill His Word to him. But he was praying for the others in the prison. They were just beginning to have faith. He prayed that they would see, and believe. As he prayed he looked out his tiny window into the gray twilight of the early dawning. There on a tree not far from the prison, was a man, hanging, dead, with the early rising ravens already pecking at his flesh. It was Pentam, the baker!

Joseph bowed to thank Logos, asking, "Why, Lord? Why did he have to die? He had done nothing wrong!"

Instantly the response came to his mind, flooded with the love and peace that he had learned to recognize as the trademark of Logos. "Pentam was a thief and a very good liar. He deceived you, and even the Pharaoh for a while. But he was caught and has now received his just desserts."

When the others woke up, Joseph showed them the body and told them what Logos had said. As he had hoped, they believed, every one of them, even the chief jailor. They spent the day repenting of their sins, being forgiven and cleansed, praising Logos, and learning more of Him from Joseph. It was the greatest revival that Egypt had ever known, right there in the darkest dungeon of the land. Joseph was awed. The angels celebrated around the prison with a joyous victory dance. The jailor got a big tub of water, and Joseph held a ceremonial washing from sin.

That evening Pharaoh's guard again showed up at the door. When the jailor let him in, he pointed at Joseph. "You the guy who's friends with the baker and cup-bearer? Well, I was right about the cup-bearer. He was restored to his most-trusted position at Pharaoh's side. But I was sure wrong about the baker. It seems that Amenemhat had caught him stealing and taking advantage of his position to enrich himself. He had been doing it for years. And so believable, too! An accomplished liar. Fooled us all. Well, old Senusret stood him up, confronted him before the whole party, and finally got him to confess last night. They took him right out and hanged him. I'm sorry, buddy."

"Thank you for letting us know." Joseph bowed respectfully. "You have done us all a great service, more than you know. May Logos bless you for it."

The guard left, scratching his head. The words 'Logos' and 'bless' did not make sense to him. He had no concept of the blessing. He chalked up the misunderstanding to that tall Hebrew's unfamiliarity with the Egyptian language, which is extremely difficult for foreigners.

There is no way that Otath could forget Joseph. He had heard Joseph's interpretation of all those dreams. He had seen the fulfillment of his own dream, as well as that of Pentam the baker. But he had never really believed in Logos, or in Joseph, and had not repented of his sins after Pentam had died, like those who remained in the prison.

Satan used that as an occasion against him. He filled his days with pleasure and prosperity. He could not risk Otath remembering and springing Joseph from the prison.

The prophesied two years went by slowly. Joseph soon realized that Otath had forgotten, but he didn't really care. He was where he was supposed to be, discipling these new believers in the prison. The jailor even managed to get a lamb, and Joseph sacrificed it for their sins that Sabbath. Joseph spent his days teaching them, and telling them the grand stories of Logos' meetings with his forefathers.

Egypt prospered. The rains were better than ever and the prosperity of Egypt was legendary. Old Senusret left all the details of running the kingdom to Moeris (now known as Amenemhat III) while he spent his time strutting about enjoying the worship of his subjects. They had always gone through the motions, but now with their surge of prosperity, his people really put their hearts into their worship. Senusret was very pleased and proud. He claimed credit for Egypt's extraordinary affluence.

Then strangely, without any known cause or warning, Senusret took sick, and within days was dead. It was a severe blow to the land. Gods are not supposed to just die like that! His son Amenemhat III was now sole ruler of the land. That part felt good, after being just co-regent so long. Yet Amenemhat, along with all of Egypt, mourned for Senusret for seventy days. Then he ceremonially buried him in his royal tomb within his pyramid at **Dashur**.

Amenemhat honored Senusret before the people for his good deeds. He had been a mighty warrior in his younger years, with an unusually commanding presence at 6 foot 6 inches tall. He had extended Egypt's southern border above the **2nd cataract** of the Nile, where he constructed the great fortress of **Semna**. He had repaired and widened the canal around the **1st cataract** for his fleet of military ships. He had brought the Nubians into submission to Egypt, and exacted tribute from them. He had used the money for many civil improvement projects, increasing the overall prosperity of Egypt and improving the lot of the middle class. He had reigned for 39 years of increasing prosperity (nearly 20 of them co-regent with his son).

Amenemhat blessed his father as he put him to rest, never mentioning his difficult later years when he'd been given to pride, drunkenness, and temper tantrums. All the people worshiped Amenemhat with surprising fervency. They loved their new Pharaoh, who was so kind and gracious and had not yet become arrogant or demanding.

Still the rains increased across the land. The prosperity of Egypt soared. *How long can this last?* Amenemhat wondered. He was young and inexperienced, and knew it. The burden of being a god to his people weighed heavily upon him. He didn't much feel like a god.

Amenemhat married **Nimaatre**, his young cousin, as was required by their custom. She was way too young to marry, but that didn't matter to his people; they idolized youth. He took pity on her and decided to just keep her a virgin at least until she was old enough to have children. He guarded her as he would his little sister.

One day when he was watching her play with her dolls, he spoke aloud to himself. "We're gods to all these people? Why, I'm just a child myself. O God in heaven, I beg You! If You can hear me... Grant me wisdom to lead this people. Please, send me someone to teach me Your ways. I don't want to be a god, but these people all look up to me! They worship me! I can't stop them! Forgive me for accepting their worship. I give it all to You. Only hear my prayer for wisdom..." He began to weep. Nimaatre, who really loved him, came and hugged him, but it was no comfort to his soul. He went to bed early, without tasting his dinner.

He slept fitfully, awakening in a sweat in the middle of the night after a vivid dream of seven lean cows eating up seven fat cows. "What a stupid dream, to thus frighten me and awaken me!" he thought as he tried to get back to sleep. But it seemed only minutes later, he again awakened in a sweat after another dream. This time it was seven thin ears of wheat on one stalk, which ate up seven fat ears of wheat on another stalk. He lay awake for hours. The two dreams must mean something. They both were saying the same thing! But what? He remembered his prayer of the day before. Could God have heard his prayer? Were these dreams His answer? The next morning Amenemhat called in all his magicians and wise men to interpret his dreams.

They fussed and argued all day and on into the evening, but could not come up with an answer. The next morning they returned to bow before him, prostrating themselves on the ground, and urged him to seek the counsel of the gods. He himself was a god! Surely the other gods would reveal it to him. They were mere mortals, unable to hear the voice of the gods. Only a true god could interpret such significant dreams as his, and so on. Their grovelling blather sickened Amenemhat, so he ordered them all out.

"So, what did you think of that, dear Otath?" he asked his chief cup-bearer, who was always by his side now that Senusret had died.

Otath was not used to being asked for advice. But then, Amenemhat was not Senusret, either. "Well Your Majesty, I thought they were all behaving like ignorant fools... Uh, I'm sorry, Your Majesty! I didn't mean..." He covered his mouth with his hand.

Amenemhat laughed. "You need not fear to speak your mind with me, my friend. You were faithful to my father, and I trust you more than any of those silly wise guys. Frankly, I thought they behaved like fools myself! But what do I do now? My dreams trouble me greatly!"

Suddenly, Otath's mind cleared. Michael was at his ear, whispering over and over the single word, "Joseph." This time, Satan was caught napping. "Your Majesty, I ask your forgiveness. I had forgotten until this very moment... Uh, do you remember when Senusret was angry with the chief baker and me and had us thrown into Potiphar's prison? Well, two years ago we both had a dream there, the same night. A Hebrew youth was also there, one of Potiphar's slaves. He never did anything to deserve being thrown into prison. He interpreted our dreams for us. It happened just like he said! So maybe he could interpret your dreams! I'm sorry that I forgot about him until now. Please forgive me."

Amenemhat remained silent until Otath bowed to the floor before him. "Get up, my friend. You, at least, surely know that I'm not a god. I hate it when people grovel before me. Send quickly now. Bring this Hebrew to me."

So Joseph was called. It was just two years from Otath's release. Joseph washed, shaved his beard (Egyptians only respected clean-shaven men), dressed, and came before the throne, bowing in proper respect. "I am Joseph son of Jacob the Hebrew. I was a slave of Potiphar, and have come from his prison. What is your desire, Your Majesty?"

Amenemhat again kept silent. He felt overwhelmed that this must be the answer to his prayer, and awed that it had come so soon. This was the man he had prayed for, to teach him the wisdom and ways of the gods. He knew it, before another word was spoken. The silence lengthened. Joseph remained standing before the throne, patiently and respectfully bowed. "Why do you not fall down before me in worship?" Amenemhat suddenly demanded. "Do you not realize that I am a god?"

“Yes, Your Majesty.” Joseph bowed a bit deeper, but did not fall to his knees. “You are indeed a god to all this great land of Egypt, and I honor and respect you for that. But I do not fall to the ground to worship you, because my God, Logos, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the One who made you and keeps you, and the One to whom you are accountable. I worship only Him.” He spoke in flawless Egyptian, with only the slightest hint of a northern accent.

Again the pause lengthened. Everything seemed right, but he had to be sure. “Oath, how shall we punish this arrogant creature who refuses to worship the Pharaoh? Slay him on the spot? Hang him from the nearest tree?”

“As you wish, Your Majesty.” Otath was trying hard not to grin. He knew Amenemhat was only playing with him. He had just said that he hated groveling.

Joseph remained bowed respectfully, motionless before the Pharaoh. But inwardly, a turmoil raged. Satan was screaming at him to bolt, to yell in anger, to fall down in fear and grovel for mercy, anything! Joseph checked for the love and peace that always accompanied the voice of Logos; it wasn’t there. So he knew it was the voice of the adversary and rejected it. “Logos, give me strength and grace to trust You and not to fear. You are greater than this Pharaoh. No matter what he does to me, I shall trust You!”

“So, you were one of Potiphar’s slaves, were you? We shall call him, and see if he has any good word on your behalf, that perhaps could spare your life.” Amenemhat sent for Potiphar with a wave of his hand.

The servants returned with the captain of the guard, who knelt before the throne.

“Potiphar, do you recognize this man?” Amenemhat demanded. “He says you had him in your prison. What did he do to deserve that?”

“Yes, Your Majesty, I know him. He was my Hebrew slave. I put him in my prison because He violated my wife.”

“Oh? Did you see him? How do you know?”

“I did not see him, but my wife Tikra told me. She had his robe that he left behind in his haste.”

“Send for Tikra. We must get to the bottom of this!” Amenemhat needed to be certain. A man with the wisdom of the gods surely would not be playing fast and loose with his master’s wife!

Tikra entered, also kneeling at the throne and bowing to the ground. Joseph remembered her lust, and her anger at being rebuffed. All seemed hopeless for him, if these two were the only witnesses he was going to have. Again he committed himself to Logos. “I worship You, Logos, my King. If I am to die, may I die with Your holy, wonderful name in worship on my lips,” he mouthed silently. All the angels in the heavenlies gave a mighty cheer and danced for joy. The final victory was won!

“Well, Tikra? Do you recognize this man? Look at him. Has he ever done anything to harm you?”

“Your Majesty...” Tikra began, looking at Joseph’s face. He glanced down and for a few moments their eyes met. She stopped. She was a pretty good liar, but this was a whopper. Suddenly she was not sure she could pull it off.

Amenemhat sensed her indecision and pounced on it. “I am glad you hesitate and ponder. Your carefulness with your answer could spare your own life. Do not attempt to mislead me. If I catch you in the slightest deception I shall surely have you hung before the sun departs tonight.” In those days displeasing the Pharaoh was a capital offense.

Tikra looked to her husband. Then back to Joseph. Then back to the Pharaoh. His steely eyes seemed to look right through her. She realized that she couldn’t lie to him. Satan was screaming lies at her with all his might, but you simply don’t kneel there and lie to a Pharaoh! A lifetime of conditioning and faith in his divinity would not permit it. “Yes, Your Majesty. I know him. He is Joseph. He was our slave for ten years, the best, most diligent and honest slave we ever had. He always treated me exceptionally well. He honored and obeyed me, with the greatest respect and faithfulness. He has never harmed me in any way.”

“But you said he...” Potiphar started.

“I was wrong, my lord.” Tikra still spoke directly to the Pharaoh. “Joseph did not harm me. I behaved wrongly to him. Whenever my husband was gone, I... I tried to seduce him.” She started to weep, but continued through her tears. “When I could not tempt him to sin I got angry with him. So I lied about him to my husband and had him thrown in prison. I am ashamed of myself, Your Majesty. He deserved better than that. I think there must reside in him a spirit of the gods, for he never accused me, never cursed me, never said a single bad word, even when he was thrown into our prison. Please forgive me, Your Majesty. Please forgive me, Potiphar.” She dissolved in tears.

Amenemhat stood up and stepped down from the dais. He stretched out his hands, lightly touching his right on Potiphar’s shoulder and his left on Tikra’s. “Go in peace. You have told the truth, and you have spared your lives. We shall trust you even more hereafter because of your truthfulness. You are free from all duties for the coming four weeks. Draw your pay from my paymaster and take a vacation together, to restore your marriage. When you return I know I shall have a better bodyguard from you – and a better bodyguard’s wife from you.” Amenemhat indicated each with a nod and a smile.

When they had gone, there was Joseph, still standing with head respectfully bowed. Though his outer position remained unchanged, he was inwardly rejoicing. “The lie is always uncovered; the truth always prevails,” came to mind, as once again he sensed the peace and love of Logos to his soul. He silently worshiped in grateful love.

Amenemhat was still off the dais, standing next to him. “Joseph, look at me!” he commanded. Joseph lifted his head and looked, right into his eyes. They twinkled with delight, and a smile broke through Amenemhat’s stern demeanor. “My friend,” he continued, “I must agree with Tikra. Within you resides a spirit of the gods. I am sorry that I asked you to grovel before me. I will never do it again, for I despise those who grovel. Servants!” he shouted out. A dozen attendants came scrambling. “Bring my honored guest the chair I reserve for foreign kings.”

When Joseph was seated on the dais beside the throne, Amenemhat called his wife and his top advisors to gather around. “I want you all to hear what this man has to say, for I believe he has the wisdom of the gods. I have tested him, and found him faithful and true. Listen closely to what we shall discuss. I feel it will be of great importance.”

Little Nimaatre actually climbed right up onto his lap, with her arm around his neck. She was uninterested in the discussion but glad for the closeness. Meetings of state always bored her. She knew this would be no exception. But she always was a cuddler and dearly loved his hugs.

Amenemhat began to talk, in a low voice. His servants leaned closer to hear. “I have had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But after all I have seen and heard of you, Joseph, I believe that you can.”

“No, Your Majesty. Not I. It is not within me. But my God will give the Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

“Yes, yes. I understand.” Amenemhat was beginning to like this humble man more and more. “In my first dream, I stood by the banks of the Nile. Seven fat and healthy cows came up out of the Nile and began grazing on the lush grass all around. But then seven other cows came up after them, ugly and lean – I have never seen such sickly cows! – and ate up the fat cows. Yet they remained lean! I woke up in a cold sweat. After I got back to sleep, I dreamed again. Seven ears of wheat, full and fat, grew up on a single stalk at the river’s edge. Then another stalk sprouted up next to it, also with seven ears of wheat, except they looked thin and withered, blasted by the desert winds. They swallowed up the fat ears, yet remained thin. I told these dreams to my magicians and wise men. They didn’t have a clue.”

Little Nimaatre was listening in spite of herself. She loved stories, especially mystery stories, and this could be a good one. She looked into Joseph’s face, and he smiled at her. She smiled back, her dimpled cheeks flushing a bit, then buried her face behind her husband’s fake chin beard.

“Your two dreams are one and the same, Your Majesty. God has shown you what He is about to do in Egypt. The seven fat cows, and the seven fat ears, are seven years of immense prosperity in Egypt, even more abundance than now. Then the seven thin cows, and the seven withered ears of wheat, are seven years in which terrible famine will ravage the land.

“The famine will be so severe that the abundance which you had will all be eaten up, just like the lean cows ate the fat cows, and the thin ears ate the fat ears, yet remained thin. Your dream was given twice as confirmation. It is doubled and set, and thus it will certainly come to pass, beginning this very day. It is determined by God Himself, the Almighty, who will accomplish it.”

Little Nimaatre was now leaning forward, eyes wide. This was no dry cabinet meeting with a bunch of stuffy old blowhards trying to butter up her husband. This guy talked like he really knew. She spontaneously whispered in her high-pitched voice, “Then, what should we do?”

“If it please the Pharaoh, let him appoint a man who is discerning and wise to be in charge of preparing for the famine. Let him exact a fifth of the produce during the seven years of plenty, and store it away against the coming seven lean years, that Egypt may not perish in the famine.”

The silence in the great hall was profound. Each man’s heartbeat seemed to echo off the stone walls. Finally Nimaatre decided if no one else was going to respond, she would. She was a bit spoiled, after all, and used to doing whatever she pleased and getting away with it. She slipped off her husband’s lap and stepped over to Joseph’s chair, laying both of her little hands on top of his big hand where it rested on his knee. “Well, I believe you, even if no one else does.” She looked back to her husband. “Moeris, you should put him in charge of preparing for the seven years of famine. I’ve never heard anyone wiser than him.”

There was a gasp among the servants, and she realized her blunder. “Except for you, of course!” She stepped back to the throne and jumped back on her husband’s lap, again throwing her arms around his neck in a tight hug.

Amenemhat laughed. He was used to this, and minded it not a bit. If you marry a little girl, you have to expect a few royal bloopers now and then. Kids will be kids. He knew she loved him. He didn’t fear the competition. He returned her hug, and she delightedly snuggled up as he told her, “Yes, my dear, I totally agree with you. Could we ever find such a man, in whom is the spirit of the gods?”

That brought forth a chorus of hearty affirmatives from his servants and advisors alike, and he realized that the same spirit that had affected Nimaatre and himself had touched them all. So he said to Joseph, “Since your God has told you all this, I believe there is no one who is as wise and discerning on this matter as you. Therefore you shall be my ruler in all the land, second only to me in the throne. At your command all my people shall bow, and to you shall everyone give absolute obedience.”

He was taking the signet ring off his finger as he spoke. He leaned over to Joseph and took his hand. As he put the ring on his finger, he called out in his most-resonant voice, “With this ring, Joseph, I confer on you all authority and power in all of Egypt, second only to your Pharaoh.”

Amenemhat gave orders for royal robes to be brought, and a royal gold necklace. He commanded that the royal guest suite in the palace be prepared, to become Joseph's permanent residence. He directed that the second royal chariot be hitched up to his finest stallions, in preparation for a royal procession through the capital city of **Lisht**. After he finished directing his servants, Amenemhat asked Joseph about his wife and family. He responded, "I am but a slave. I have no one in this land but Logos my God."

"You must have a wife. It is the custom here for any ruler. They will not respect you if you do not have a wife. I will find you one. And..." he stopped. He was so used to giving orders he had to reset his tone of voice. "Please, when you have some free time I would like to hear more about this Logos of whom you speak. I prayed, and He answered me. None of our gods have ever done that."

"Yes, Your Majesty. Whenever you wish."

"What better time than the present?" So as the royal robes and jewelry were being brought and the procession being planned, Joseph told Amenemhat about Logos, YHWH His eternal Father, the Sabbath, and the sacrifice. He told him about sin, forgiveness, and cleansing, and the resulting transformation in truth and faithfulness.

Amenemhat was amazed. "Is this even possible, for a god to forgive sins and change a person's life?"

"I am proof, Your Majesty. And I have further proof, if you will allow me some time to prepare it." He prayed that he was making the right decision. "Will you allow me to release the prisoners from Potiphar's dungeon?"

Amenemhat raised an eyebrow. "Well, Potiphar will be on an extended vacation, so he can't object. But you forget. You have my ring. You don't even need my permission. Just give the command and it shall be done!"

A novel idea. This would take time getting used to. Joseph waved to a servant, with the hand bearing the ring. The servant hurried over. "Command that the jailor and all the prisoners in Potiphar's dungeon appear before me at this time tomorrow, washed, shaved, and ready for work. Put them in uniform, like any other officer of the court."

"Yes, Your Majesty!" the servant responded with a deep formal bow before scurrying off.

"Wow! He didn't even question me. That's pretty cool. Are all your servants that well trained?"

Amenemhat chuckled. "Huh! If they aren't, they lose their heads. This is not exactly a democracy we run around here, you know."

Sure enough, the jailor and his prisoners stood before him the next day, freshly bathed, shaved, and looking spiffy in officer's uniforms. "How would you all like to work for me?" he asked, grinning at their awkwardness. They remembered his interpretation of their dreams.

"How long has it been since you all had those dreams? Remember? What was it I said?"

"Yes, sir, uh... Yes Your Majesty!" Amseth responded, spotting the ring on his finger. "You said that we would be pardoned and given a high place in the kingdom of the Pharaoh after two years. We remembered! It was two years just yesterday, when you got out. We knew you wouldn't forget us." Amseth bowed low. "We are all at your service, Your Majesty." The other prisoners bowed in agreement.

"Thank you. And you all shall receive your pardons. First I want you to greet your Pharaoh. Tell him who you were, and relate what happened to you in prison."

They bowed to Amenemhat in respectful greeting, then shared their stories. They came from varied backgrounds, some worse criminals than others – some only guilty of offending an official. But all had believed in Logos and His forgiveness and love, and desired to live in righteousness, faithfulness, and truth. Amenemhat was very impressed.

Young Nimaatre was even more impressed. She walked around among them as they told their stories. She always did love stories. Her eyes were wide and her smile was broad for each one of them. Though she stood up straight and behaved like a queen, she still looked more like an eager little girl wanting to make friends. She shook each one's hand and thanked him when he had finished.

Joseph commented, "I believe Nimaatre wants to learn about Logos as much as anyone here. Is she your daughter, Your Majesty?"

Amenemhat laughed. "No, she is my wife. In Egypt the custom is for the Pharaoh to marry young. But she really loves me, as you can see." She nodded as he continued, "Joseph, as the prime minister in my kingdom, I ask you to no longer address me as 'Your Majesty'. I hear that too much and it has gotten tiresome. Just call me Pharaoh, or Moeris, and I'll call you Joseph. Hmm... that doesn't sound Egyptian enough. I'll have to think of an Egyptian name for you before our procession to meet my people."

Nimaatre was back on her husband's lap. The second he shut up, she cried, "Yes! I want to learn about Logos. He's real! All of these Egyptian gods..." she hesitated, looking up at Amenemhat's face. He smiled down at her, indicating that she could continue. "Well... they're fake. Everybody worships us, but I'm no god. Moeris is no god. The baboon is no god. Neither is the ibis, the jackal, the falcon, or the crocodile. You won't find me praying to a darn crocodile! The sun or moon are no gods, or Mars or Venus. That's just ridiculous. The sun is good to grow the crops, but it burns you if you expose your skin to it for too long; the planets are beautiful to look at, but cause earthquakes when they come too close; no amount of praying changes that one bit. I want to believe in a real God, who can hear our prayers, and give us wisdom and understanding, and direct our future, and... and make us better, like with all these men."

The surrounding Egyptian servants and officials were stunned, horrified, that their Pharaoh should be allowing his wife to speak such blasphemies. Amenemhat realized that he was about to have a crisis of confidence here. He hugged Nimaatre close, saying sternly, "She is but a child. I'll deal with it. All of you, leave me now, except for Joseph and his ministers." The servants and officials scurried out.

Nimaatre had fire in her eyes. She waited until they were all gone, then blurted out, "You know what I said is true! When you thought I was playing with my dolls, and you prayed for God to send someone to help you, to teach you His ways – remember? – I heard you! You admitted you're not a god. You still think I'm just a little girl who likes to cuddle. Well, I've grown up. I'm your wife, and I want you to start treating me like your wife, starting with listening to me right now!" She crossed her arms.

"Yes, yes, my love! Thank you for saying what you just said. I agree with you totally, but I'm glad that you said it and not me! How am I ever going to explain it to the rest of Egypt, who really believes in all those old gods?"

She relaxed in his arms and he pulled her close. "How fast she has grown up!" He shook his head and laughed. "Don't marry that young. It is too much of an emotional spring-board. But she's a wonderful wife. I'll try to find one just like her for you... uh, or a bit older. How old are you?"

"Thirty, O Pharaoh, but..." Joseph bowed. "If it pleases you, I would rather marry a descendant of my own race. My God would be honored..." He kept his head bowed.

"Joseph, my friend, I can handle that. Ha! And I know just the one." He gave him a secretive grin and walked off, with Nimaatre hanging on to his arm.

Shortly, he returned. "I have an Egyptian name for you. How do you like 'Zatenaph Ipuankh'?" (It means, roughly translated, 'He who is called Joseph of the Living God.') Joseph bowed his gracious acceptance. "Then that will be your official name before the people. Between us though, you're still just Joseph. Now, your welcoming procession through the city is ready. Let's go. Prepare to be loved!"

After the procession, Joseph moved into his spacious new quarters and found rooms for all his officers. They were getting settled when Amenemhat came barging in with a big grin. "I've arranged a short trip for you and me. Just a few days. Call it a vacation, after your three years in Potiphar's prison. When can you be ready?"

"I am ready now, O Pharaoh." He bowed again.

The roads were good. The 42 mile trip from Lisht down north to On was an easy three hours. The Pharaoh and his wife sat facing Joseph in the royal coach, which seats four. The whole way, Nimaatre plied Joseph with questions, mostly about Logos. Entering On, Amenemhat instructed his chauffeur to approach the temple on the side streets. He didn't want to get all tied up in official protocol.

They entered the great temple of the sun at On (known in Hebrew as Bethshemesh, and in Greek as Heliopolis). No one was expecting them, so they managed to get all the way up to the high priest's quarters before they were seen and all the bowing began. The high priest, **Potipherah**, came rushing out to greet the Pharaoh. "O my lord the Pharaoh! I was not expecting you. Your Majesty! I would have had a royal welcome prepared." He fell to his knees.

Amenemhat chuckled. "Get up, my friend. I didn't send any word that I was coming because I didn't want a royal welcome. I seek a bigger favor than that. Much bigger. May we come in and discuss it?"

"Yes, of course, Your Majesty."

They were led into Potipherah's lavish private quarters. Obviously the high priest of On had done well for himself. He sent his servants scurrying to prepare refreshments. Then he bowed low before Pharaoh. "Your Majesty, your wish is my command. Say the word and it shall be done."

"Thank you. First, allow me to introduce my new prime minister. His name is Zatenaph Ipuankh, but between us just call him Joseph. Notice that he has my ring and all authority and power in my kingdom, as well as my full trust and confidence; and he is single. Now call your wife."

"Yes, Your Majesty." Potipherah returned with her almost immediately. She must have been listening behind the door. When she came in Joseph nearly fell on the floor. She was a tall, stunning blonde, just like his own mother. Rachel had died when Joseph was only thirteen and he had not seen another blonde since – until now. He could not take his eyes off of her.

Watching his reaction, Amenemhat had a big grin on his face. He introduced them. "Joseph, this is Potipherah's wife Tamie. Tamie, this is my new prime minister, Joseph. Would you please tell him where you came from?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. I am from Edom, south of Canaan, east of the Wilderness of Paran. My father was Esau, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, son of Terah, and my mother was Basemath, daughter of Ishmael, also son of Abraham."

"And whom do you worship, Tamie?"

"O Your Majesty, I fully honor and respect your own royal person... and my husband as well."

"Good answer, but not what I am looking for. Whom do you worship, in your heart, when no one else is around? Answer truthfully, now."

"Yes, Your Majesty. But you do not know Him. In my heart of hearts I worship the God of the Hebrews, Logos. I am a Hebrew. Please allow me that one indulgence!"

"Thank you, Tamie. I know Him better than you think. Now, please bring your children out before me."

Bowing low, Tamie quickly backed out the door.

“Potipherah, are you beginning to guess what is the huge favor I am about to ask you? Joseph must have a wife. It is required of one so great in Egypt as my prime minister. He also worships Logos, as does your wife. He prefers a wife from his own race, the Hebrews. Do you have any children that you might contribute to so great a cause?”

“Yes, Your Majesty. I have one daughter who is of age. Tamie and I would be most honored to enter into such an arrangement with your prime minister. Is Joseph willing?”

They both looked at Joseph. He was praying intensely. This seemed to him an odd way to get a wife, but in prayer, he seemed to have the peace and love of Logos in it, so he nodded. “Yes. I am willing. Logos has led me this far, so I trust Him to grant discernment through you in this matter also. But how is it, sir, that you have a Hebrew wife?”

“Many years ago, I was setting up heliograph towers to Edom through the Wilderness of Paran. We do maintain communications across the peninsula, you know. While there, I saw this lovely woman, and could not take my eyes off her. I noticed you had the same trouble! I paid a great deal of dowry for her. She has been eminently worth it. She has born me many children. Most are dark, like me, but one...” He smiled knowingly. “Well, you’ll see.”

Children began arriving, some young, followed by the older ones. Tamie returned behind them, but another girl slipped in behind her as she entered. She lined them all up, or tried to, but that last girl seemed awfully shy.

“My, my. What a fine looking family! Aren’t they all beautiful?” After the introductions, the Pharaoh was still grinning like a school kid. “Thank you, children. You may all leave now – except for the oldest. What is your name? A’senath? I would like you to stay with your mother while we have some refreshments, if it pleases your father.”

“Yes, of course, Your Majesty,” Potipherah responded. His oldest daughter was still trying to hide behind her family, but when the other children trooped out she was deprived of all her hiding places. Joseph saw her, and his heart leaped. She was a miniature of her mother!

Dinner was served, a multi-course eastern feast that lasted for hours. Joseph was seated opposite A’senath. She was young, and shy, staring only at her plate. So he carried on a monologue for a while, telling her about himself, his family, his being sold into slavery, his repentance of pride, his time in the dungeon, and now his promotion to prime minister. She listened politely, but wouldn’t make eye contact. Finally Amenemhat entered their conversation. “A’senath. Look up at me and tell me what you see.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” There was a pause while she looked up, then back down at her plate. “I see you, O mighty Pharaoh, with lovely Nimaatre on your arm.”

“Very good. And does Nimaatre look happy?” It was pretty obvious where he was going with this.

A’senath caught it right away, but she was not about to make it any easier. “Yes of course, Your Majesty. I’m sure she is very happy with you. You’re always so good to her.”

“So, how would you like to have a loving arm to hold? That of a kind man who would be good to you?”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” A’senath was very light-skinned. Her blush showed up cherry red.

“Then lift up your head and look at the handsome man across the table from you, for I would like to give him to you as your husband,” Amenemhat announced, adding, “With your parent’s permission, of course.” He never was one to beat around the bush.

“Yes, Your Majesty.” She looked up. Her young eyes met Joseph’s for the first time. “But... But Your Majesty! I don’t even know him!” She looked back down.

“I believe I can remedy that. Would you like to come back to my palace in my royal coach? I have a special room you can stay in, next to Nimaatre’s room. You and she can spend some time together. Nimaatre will tell you about Joseph. She is getting to know him, aren’t you, my dear?”

“I sure am. And I love him already. You can’t help but love Joseph when you get to know him, A’senath.”

“Potipherah, my friend? And Tamie? What do you think about all this?”

Potipherah instantly gave his assent. He wasn’t about to let anything obstruct his allegiance to his Pharaoh. But Tamie had some hesitation. She was sitting in between her husband and A’senath. She had heard Joseph’s monologue and was quite impressed. But as a mother, she could see that her daughter was not ready. “Your Majesty, would you please excuse us for a few minutes? I think we need to talk.” She took her daughter and they left the dining hall.

Once out of earshot, Tamie guided A’senath to a couch and sat next to her. “Darling, I did not tell you this before, because I didn’t want to upset you. For many years I feared for you, afraid that you would marry an idol worshiper, like I did your father. It’s hard, always having to put on an act in the temple with all those heathen gods, when in my heart I really love and worship Logos. I wanted better than that for you! Frankly, it did not seem possible here. Yet for many years I’ve prayed to Logos, that He would send someone who knows Him. He has! Joseph knows Logos!”

“But Mom! I don’t know Joseph,” A’senath cried.

“Do you know Logos? Have you prayed about it?”

“Yes. No. Well, no. I guess not.” She knelt by the couch and began to pray as her mother had taught her.

Tamie waited, thinking. An idea came to her. She quietly got up and went into A’senath’s bedroom, to dig around in her closet. After A’senath had finished praying, Tamie handed her a child’s princess gown.

A'senath recognized it right away. She had loved to play princess, and used to dance for hours with her imaginary prince. Slowly, she put it on. It fit, barely, though it was a bit tight in places where it used to be way too big for her. She twirled around tentatively, remembering.

"What did Logos say, dear?"

"Yes. He said yes. Then He gave me His peace about it, just like you taught me to expect."

"So what will you do?"

"I will put Joseph's face into my dreams. He will be my imaginary prince, and I will dance off into the sunset with him. We shall live happily ever after!" She grinned.

When they returned to the dinner hall, A'senath held her head high and stood tall, her pretty gown making her look like a true princess. She walked gracefully to stand directly in front of Joseph, then took a deep curtsy. Then, still without saying a word, she looked directly into his face and flashed him her biggest, brightest smile. He stood quickly, nearly knocking over the chair in his haste. Before he knew it, she had taken his hand in hers, put her left hand to his waist, and was leading him around the floor in a slow, twirling dance. The rest watched, fascinated, for a while. "Well, I guess that's a 'yes'," Amenemhat said.

"Whatever happened to her?" her dad wondered.

"Shhh! Listen!" Nimaatre hissed.

A'senath was dancing very close to Joseph, and had begun whispering in his ear. "My beloved! My darling! You are my shining prince, the man of my dreams. I'm sorry that I didn't recognize you at first. I didn't expect you so soon. But I've prayed for you ever since I was a little girl. I am 18 now. I've prayed for you for 8 years, since I was ten. Now that you have come, I shall never let you go. I have dreamed a thousand times what I would do when this time came. And to think... I almost missed this... this magic moment because I was so ashamed of the way I look..."

Joseph stopped dancing suddenly, pushing her away a bit so he could see her face. "... of the way you look? What's wrong with the way you look?"

"Just like my mom. It's this awful blonde hair! Everyone else has dark hair. In a group I stick out like a duck among a flock of swans! Everywhere I go, people stare google-eyed at me! And my pasty white skin. Egyptians are a handsome bronze, but I can't even get a tan – I just burn! So if you can put up with my looks, I'll love you forever!"

Joseph glanced up. Every eye in the room was on them. He gently twirled A'senath around a few times, stopping with them both facing the group. "I suppose you all heard what she said," he began. They nodded. "Potipherah, you have a beautiful family, every one. But to me, this one in my arms is the most beautiful of them all. I would be most grateful if you would grant her to be my wife."

With Potipherah nodding his vigorous assent, Joseph continued. "Tamie, whatever you said to your daughter – thank you. I believe Logos must have inspired you – and her – to accept me. I promise you, our home will never be without Logos and His love." She also nodded, her smile lighting up the hall. That was what she really wanted for her daughter.

Joseph turned to Amenemhat. "O Pharaoh, your great wisdom is exceeded only by your kindness. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I accept your gift, and I shall treasure her always."

"You're welcome, Joseph. But aren't you going to tell A'senath what you think of her 'awful' blonde hair?" Amenemhat wasn't one to beat around the bush.

"I think she will figure it out, when I tell her mom what I think of her." He winked at Tamie. "Ma'am, from the moment you first walked in the door, you took my breath away. You are the most stunningly beautiful woman I have ever seen, save one: *that is my own mother*. You look just like her! And your grandmother Rebekah was also blonde. I know, for she is my grandmother too." He looked down at A'senath. Yes, she had caught the point, and was smiling happily at his side. She had found her 'Prince Charming'.

They remained the night as guests of Potipherah. The next morning A'senath said her good-byes and got in the coach beside Joseph. But now the monologue was on her side. The entire three hour trip back up south to the palace in Lisht, she talked, telling her life story as well as Egypt's history and culture. Nimaatre and Amenemhat did get in a few words here and there, but Joseph just listened, awed at the intelligence and education of his new fiancé.

A'senath's father was a powerful man, well-liked and respected all over Egypt. He traveled a great deal, and often took his oldest daughter with him. He loved the reactions of the crowds to her blonde hair, though she hated it when they stared at her. But she put up with the stares, because of her love of learning. She related that, though Inyotef II had finally united upper and lower Egypt through trade after 1920 BC, Egypt as a whole had not prospered much, and had suffered greatly under the seven year famine from 1890 to 1883 BC. But then Mentuhotep II was blessed by Logos for treating her ancestors Abraham and Sarah well. In 1874 he conquered the rebellious kings in lower Egypt to begin what we now know as the **Middle Kingdom**. Even with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in 1860 BC, which had devastated Egypt and split it up into squabbling Nomes struggling for survival, God's blessing remained on Mentuhotep. In the 39th year of his reign he succeeded in uniting Egypt again. He restored its power and prosperity, which lasted until his death at the age of 90 in 1832 BC. Sadly, his son Mentuhotep III was weak and was slain by his own son, egomaniacal Mentuhotep IV. But he had no love for Egypt, or Logos, and everyone hated him. His powerful vizier, wicked Amenemhat I, saw his chance.

He staged a coup in 1826 BC and took over the throne, changing the name of the capital city at Lisht to Iti-Tawy: 'Siezer of the Two Lands' (upper and lower Egypt). A cruel king, he was assassinated in 1797 BC. At that time his son Senusret was on a war campaign. He confronted Isaac and Rebekah (A'senath's great-grandparents) and demanded tribute, but met Logos instead. A'senath was breathless and wide-eyed as she told the story of how all of Egypt was blessed by that meeting. She was proud of her heritage, and grateful to know Logos as they did.

Senusret ruled for 33 years after meeting Logos; his son Amenemhat II reigned 32 years after him; his son Senusret II reigned 18 years after him; and his son Senusret III reigned 36 years after him. Under each one, Egypt became even more powerful and prosperous, trading with both the Canaanites and with the sons of Abraham. Senusret III's son Amenemhat III was ruling now, and Egypt was more prosperous than ever, surely the greatest, most powerful nation on the face of the earth! When A'senath finished, she bowed to him and expressed her gratefulness and pride in such a great land, now the premier world power.

Amenemhat asked her, "Do you know why we are so prosperous now?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. Logos has been blessing us ever since your fathers met Him."

"Yes. Well, what means has He used?"

A'senath knew that one, too. "Logos made our military powerful and brought us peace. He increased the rains. And He has given you and your fathers wisdom and love for your people, resulting in our prosperity."

"Logos...? What about your own father's gods?"

"My father's gods are fake, just a useful fiction."

Amenemhat raised his eyebrows. "Oh? Are you not aware that I also worship your father's gods?" Amenemhat gave her a wry grin. "As did my father before me?"

A'senath was speechless. She had just assumed that Amenemhat believed in Logos, and she knew that Logos did not tolerate any idols. She bowed again to hide her embarrassment. "Your Majesty! I understand that you are surrounded with a culture of idolatry, as are my mother and I. But I also know that you have accepted the wisdom of Logos through Joseph, or he would not even be here."

Amenemhat laughed. "Yes, my dear. I suppose you're right. Joseph has told me just enough about Logos to make me appreciate Him. He can change hearts and interpret dreams! I don't worship Him, yet, but after hearing your perspective on our history, I am eager to get to know Him."

They reached the palace all impressed and pleased with A'senath. She and Joseph married in a lavish celebration in which they were introduced to the nation as the new prime minister and his wife. Everyone welcomed them with joy.

The next six months flew by. Most of that time was spent on an extensive chariot tour of Egypt. People bowed to Joseph everywhere he went. His new officials, as well as a few of Pharaoh's guards, trailed behind him in a stately column. Each chariot was large enough for two. Joseph insisted on bringing his new wife beside him. It was a wise choice. They looked spectacular, with A'senath's long blonde hair flying out boldly behind and Joseph's royal turquoise-striped cape flapping in the wind. A'senath continually surprised Joseph with her knowledge of the history and culture of the people and places they visited. He praised Logos for sending him just the right wife!

Along the way, Joseph paid an official visit to each of the Nomarchs (local governors of each 'Nome' or district). He ordered them to immediately start collecting an added 20 percent tax of the grain harvest and put it in storage.

Joseph grouped Egypt's 42 Nomes into three principle Waret (cantons): Waret of the Headwaters (9 Nomes) with its Hatwaret (canton head for grain storage) at **Thebes**; Waret of the South (12 Nomes) with its Hatwaret at **el-Lahun**; and Waret of the North (21 Nomes) with its Hatwaret at **Avaris** in the Nile Delta. Each Nomarch was to bag up the added grain and send it to the local Hatwaret, where Joseph would build a storage facility for it.

Joseph also ordered the Nomarchs to increase the size and safety of their own silos, and warned them to store up for the coming lean years. One of his own officers from the prison stayed behind at each Nome to enforce his edict. This should be easy for the powerful Nomarchs. They already taxed their people in grains, collecting it after the harvest, and reselling it to the people in the winter. It's how they maintained their power and control over the people.

Joseph discovered that the prosperity of the people was not as dependent on the rains as on the river. In those days there were no sandy deserts, but the wilderness had little rainfall and poor soil; its grass could support flocks and herds, but that's about it. The Egyptians were farmers, craftsmen, builders, or warriors; they considered herding flocks as beneath them. The increased rains did help the grass in Egypt's wilderness plains, but not enough to turn it into farmland. That last close pass of Mars had changed the trade winds such that the rains that used to fall all across the North African Savanna were now mostly falling on Nubia and the Sudan, filling the headwaters of the Nile. The Nubians to the south had grown strong, even stronger than when Amenemhat's warrior father had brought them into submission at the turn of the century (1702 – 1699 BC). But most of the Egyptians lived within 30 miles of the Nile River; their prosperity was dependent not on the rain, but on the regular flooding of the Nile, which irrigated their farmlands and deposited the rich black silt topsoil that produced so abundantly. The increased rains greatly expanded those precious flooded / irrigated areas.

When he reached the southernmost border of Egypt he was about to turn around and head home, for the harvest was completed, and the rains (and flooding) were about to begin a new cycle. But A'senath suggested he continue south, into Nubia, where Egypt then maintained regular fortresses along the Nile. "At least go as far as the **Second Cataract** in lower Nubia," she said. "It's not far. I've been there. Our forts are fascinating, especially **Fort Semna** which the Pharaoh's father Senusret built."

Joseph did not see any sense in going farther. He was commissioned to help Egypt, not Nubia. But he went, just out of deference to his new wife. The rains were indeed beginning, and the Second Cataract was a lot farther than A'senath had remembered. The Nubians along the way did not bow or welcome him. At first they were downright unfriendly, as conquered people tend to be. But then the rains got so bad that they mostly left his procession alone. Just the same, Joseph was trying hard to find some reason to be glad that he had listened to his wife's suggestion. He found it at Fort Semna.

It all started with his discovery that the Nubians were not prospering from the heavy rains as much as last year. The rains were getting so heavy that they were washing away topsoil, and it was raining so much of the year that their growing season was shortened. The Nubians were struggling to cope. In a flash of insight, he could see the very real possibility of that happening in Egypt as well. Maybe this was the wisdom that Logos had for him way up here in Nubia. A'senath had been right.

Joseph went to thank his wife for her suggestion. He found her talking to a group of guards in a watchtower overlooking the river. They, as with pretty much everyone everywhere, were entranced with her golden hair. Joseph watched her, fascinated. She wasn't shy at all. She enjoyed their attention, and even flaunted her glorious hair. What had changed? She had said that she hated it and didn't like everyone staring at her. He realized the change was her marriage to him. She was so comfortable now in his love for her and his appreciation of her hair, that she had accepted it, too. Joseph was delighted.

He came and hugged her, looking out over the river. Joseph asked the captain of the fort how much higher the river came during the flooding seasons. He bowed low and assured him that it came much higher than this, and that he was in no danger, though the floods had been coming a little higher each year.

"I'm not concerned about myself!" Joseph laughed. "I'm concerned for Egypt! From now on, I want to know what the peak is, every year. Set zero level to be the mean low level of the Nile in summer before the rains start. Inscribe on that stone cliff just how high the flood stage gets, and send to me its measurement above the zero level. Tell the captain of **Fort Kumma** [the fort across the river] to do it too. Do you have any idea how high that might be?"

[Note: Egyptians used cubits, palms, and fingers width, and stadia distance. I have translated his report to English measurements, dear Reader, for your convenience.]

"Yes, Your Majesty. For many years flood stage was roughly 30 feet above low water stage. But the last 5 years, it's been rising higher each year. Last year it was nearly 45 feet! But it has to get a lot higher than that to threaten the fort. I will keep accurate records and send them to you."

Joseph realized the great significance of those statistics. Now he knew what he had to do for Egypt and Nubia. "Tell the Nubian governors that they will only have prosperity as long as they have fertile farmlands. Tell them that they must work hard to protect their topsoil: plant their farms and gardens in terraces surrounded by dikes, provide silt settling ponds, anything that will keep these rains from washing away all their topsoil. If they do not, they will be starving in seven years, and their land will become like a wilderness." It had suddenly become clear to Joseph: the Pharaoh's dream about the 7 fat cows and the 7 lean cows rising up from the river? It was the rising of the river itself that would cause both the years of plenty, and the famine.

All the way on the rainy drive back north, Joseph and A'senath focused on the river. They looked for erosion, for areas of flooding, for swamplands, for possible alternate watercourses. They had started their tour by going down north from Lisht, crossed the Nile Delta to Avaris, then come up south on the east side of the river and crossed over from Fort Kumma to Fort Semna, using the military barges to transport their chariots. Now they came down north on the west side, looking for solutions.

After they returned home, Joseph began large-scale water-works programs. His advice was not just for the Nubians. All over Egypt he started channeling the Nile to reclaim swamplands, building dams and dikes, creating holding ponds, and designing water control gates and canals. He worked with inspired urgency.

In the next few years Joseph directed the building of three magnificent grain storage facilities. They were rat and vermin proof, and heat and moisture controlled – truly the marvel of the world! One was at Thebes, another at what we know as **Hawara** (though at the time it was just a suburb of el-Lahun) and the third at Avaris in the Delta. As an example, the facility at Hawara, at 800 x 1000 feet, was larger and more majestic than the **great pyramid at Giza**! It had twelve roofed outer courts, six facing north and six facing south, one for each Nome. From each court was a series of 25 rooms for administration, receiving, accounting, and grain distribution, and 225 more rooms for long-term grain storage, constructed like a maze behind the entry courts. That is a total of 3000 rooms on two stories. It is now called the **Labyrinth of King Moeris** by those who do not understand its origin. The other two were similarly lavish, though as of the date of this book modern archaeologists have not discovered their remains.

Thus Joseph stayed very busy for the next seven years. He got the whole picture during his grand chariot tour, and he designed ways to retain and preserve the water when needed, and release it when levels got too high, always preparing for the extra-high flooding he knew was coming. Altogether Joseph reclaimed 156,000 acres of marshes and wilderness into useable farmlands.

His greatest water-works achievement was not started until the fifth year, after completing all his other projects and getting them functioning efficiently. He and A'senath had found a location a little south of Amarna that had a long stretch of sandy valley almost parallel to the Nile and nearly level with the Nile. When the floods were at their peak (which was an astonishing 60 feet that year), he hired thousands of laborers to cut a diversionary channel across to the river, so that the flood waters filled the valley. They continued channeling this water away from the Nile, and then parallel to it for a distance of 125 miles. It emptied into an immense natural reservoir 140 feet below sea level, called **Lake Moeris** (Birket Qarun) after Amenemhat III.

His laborers were 'corvée' – conscripts who sold their efforts for a minimum wage only during the flood cycle, as they could not farm until the floods subsided. Thus Joseph planned his labor-intensive projects during flood stage, providing even more prosperity for the people. Once the canal started flowing, it pretty much dug itself, with the force of the rushing floodwaters carving it deeper and wider until it was about 300 feet wide, able to significantly reduce the level of the floods. It was just in time. His canal (which is now known as **Bahr Yussef**, the waterway of Joseph) was able to quickly drain the excess flood waters, allowing the flooded lands to dry out just in time for the spring planting. Without that canal, Egypt's famine would have started two years early!

His canal flowed right past Hawara and emptied into Lake Moeris, just south of the city of Medinet el-Faiyum in the area known as the **Faiyum Basin**. Joseph knew that his 300 billion cubic feet (650 square miles averaging 16 feet deep) of stored water would be needed that summer. He had done such a good job of channeling the floodwaters and draining the swamplands, that without it, they might run out of irrigation water before the harvest.

So he dug another channel to move the stored water of Lake Moeris back into the Nile. To lift the water 160 feet up to the level of the Nile, he built the great **Waterwheels of Faiyum** and designed a complex series of dikes and water-gates. His system was incredibly successful and popular during those last two years of prosperity, but rather than taking the credit, Joseph dedicated it all to Amenemhat III, even building colossal statues of him on either side of the canal where it emptied into Lake Moeris.

Thus the people were happy, the Pharaoh was happy, Joseph was happy, and his wife was happy. Some might even claim that she was happiest of all.

Yes, A'senath had borne Joseph four children during this time. His first was a son, **Manasseh**, born two years after he became prime minister, when Joseph was 32 and she was 20. The next year they had a daughter, Meghan; the year after, another son, **Ephraim**; and the fifth year of their marriage, another daughter, Ellahan. They were exquisitely happy, especially because Joseph was never too busy to take along his growing family on his many trips around the country, and he had learned to carefully listen to his wife whenever she had a suggestion. I've heard it said that behind every great man there is a great woman, and this was especially true for Joseph. You've heard a lot about him, but you never realized before how much of his fame was due to listening to his highly-intelligent wife!

The excessive rains had wiped out the Nubians. They had been unable to retain their topsoil; it was all being washed down-river to Egypt. The rains and floods had also shortened their growing season to the point where the fall rains would come before they could get a summer harvest. By the sixth year of Joseph's reign, they were starving. Joseph felt partially responsible for them, since they were now ruled by wealthy Egypt, so he sent large quantities of bread and beer during the flood season, again instructing them in how to improve their harvest the following year. The Nubians survived only by his efforts.

The Ethiopians in upper (southern) Nubia were still prospering. Joseph established a trading colony at **Kerma**, the ancient capital of Nubia, at the **third cataract** of the Nile. The Ethiopians brought their much-needed produce down north to trade with their brothers in Nubia.

The unusual weather patterns had also hit Canaan, Arabia, and the Sinai. For seven years they had seen little rain. They were already starving. Joseph established a merchant colony in Phoenicia, and sent armies to control the strife in Canaan and Syria due to the famine conditions there. Joseph's efforts thus helped to extend Egyptian influence and power over most of the civilized world.

Right about this time a terrible tragedy occurred. The great pyramid of Amenemhat III at **Dashur** was in trouble. The Pharaoh expected to be buried there to preserve his influence over the land, but its foundation was crumbling! The heavy rains and flooding had undermined it. After all that work, it was useless! Joseph came to the rescue. He immediately began constructing another funeral pyramid, this one at the Hatwaret of the South, Hawara, next to his now famous grain storage facility. At all costs, his Pharaoh would not be shamed before the people! As always, he gave all the credit to his Pharaoh for his labors.

Never was a man more loved by his countrymen. They knew who had really saved Egypt, and this was before the famine even began. They begged Joseph to allow them to build him a palace, a token of their undying gratitude for all his efforts on their behalf. (Up until now, his only home was that guest suite in the Pharaoh's palace at Lisht.)

Joseph had divided much of his time between his three Hatwarets at Thebes, Hawara, and Avaris. But his children were growing up on the road. He knew he needed a home. Since the Pharaoh resided at Lisht, near Hawara, Joseph picked Avaris in the Nile Delta for his home. So it was there, on a delightful suburb overlooking a branch of the river, that the grateful people built him a home. It was a veritable palace. It had a grand inner court for receiving guests, surrounded by a cloister and with a water fountain in the center. It had a huge columned hall as a living room and entertainment room. Off the hall was a huge bedroom for Joseph and A'senath, with closets and storage galore. On the other side of the great hall was another bedroom for his daughters. It had two separate suites for his two sons and their families when they married. It also had a flat roof for watching the stars at night, and many other amenities. In the palace garden was a small pyramid, with a stone tomb underneath, prepared for Joseph's eventual burial. Beside it was a garden chapel, with an incredible twice-life-size color statue of himself commanding its entrance. This palace was completed in the seventh year of Joseph's reign.

When Joseph first came to his new home, he and A'senath were astounded! Their entire focus had been on helping the people; they had never expected anything like this for themselves. Joseph could not believe the beautiful statue of himself in the garden chapel! He was sculpted seated, staring serenely northeast toward the **Promised Land**. His unusual non-Egyptian hairdo, his clean-shaven face, and his brightly painted coat-of-many-colors (just as he had described it to the Pharaoh) were all beautifully carved and painted. Surely no one in all of Egypt (except possibly the Pharaoh himself) had ever been given such a magnificent statue!

A'senath's nesting instincts instantly kicked in. She delightedly settled her family into their new digs. After that, she rarely accompanied Joseph on his travels – her babies needed her more. Part of the greatness of this amazing woman was that she kept her priorities straight.

It's a good thing she did. The very next year the Nile inundations reached epic proportions. Reports came back from Forts Semna and Kumma that the floods had peaked at 70 feet above low water, an unthinkable height! Bahr Yussef was full; Lake Moeris was full; all the sluice gates taking the floodwaters through to the ocean were wide open; and there were simply no more places for the water to go. It was a catastrophe of the first magnitude. The water flooded homes, washed out roads, dikes, and dams, and overflowed lands which had never been flooded before. It washed away whole villages. It flooded temples, tombs, and palaces, coming close even to Joseph's home. All Joseph's efforts seemed futile against this monster flood. Joseph was at Hawara when the floodwaters peaked there, and for the first time, he even feared for his grain storage facilities. Another four feet and they also would be flooded! Then all would be lost! He cried out to Logos.

Logos heard, and appeared to him in a dream that night. "Joseph, my son, my beloved! Fear not. I have appointed you as My savior of all mankind. You shall not fail, but everything I showed you shall come to pass. As a sign, I now give you a gift: My heavenly language [Kasdan]!"

Joseph was encouraged. He determined not to fear. When tempted to fear, he would worship Logos in Kasdan. (Next year the floodwaters would come within two feet of his grain, and in the following years within mere inches.)

Satan, of course, was disgusted. He had done his best. "Why is it that there is always one joker who will not fall to my temptations?" he muttered to himself, leaving Egypt to torment Jacob and his family instead. Watching him go, Logos instructed Michael and Gavriel: "You see, Jacob's error in marrying Rachel after I gave him Leah has turned out for good. It delights My heart greatly to see Joseph so quickly turn to Me with each difficulty, and trust Me so completely in all things. I believe it's time to restore Joseph to his family. But look there. It seems, does it not, that My beloved adversary also has the same idea."

As Joseph had guessed, the unimaginably high floodwaters did not recede and dry in time to plant the spring crops. When the waters finally did dissipate, much of the farmland had washed away with it. And so many of the dikes and dams had washed away that Joseph's irrigation systems did not work. By the time the dikes were repaired, it was far too late to plant, and they had no harvest at all that year. Joseph ordered that the dams and roads be rebuilt, higher and better than before – especially the main roads from Thebes to Avaris. He directed that each of the Nomarchs open up their local grain silos and sell to their own people that year. Joseph knew that he had to preserve his stored grain for the future.

Sadly, many of the Nomarchs had neither heeded Joseph's warnings nor obeyed his commands to improve their own grain storage facilities. They had not believed Joseph, thinking the prosperity would go on forever. Thus they were unprepared for a flood of this magnitude. Soon the wealthy Nomarchs were pleading with the Pharaoh for help. Now this was an interesting turn of events. Those Nomarchs had always been difficult for the Pharaoh to control. They were just a bit too wealthy, too independent, and too powerful. He sent them to Joseph, saying curtly, "Whatever he says to you, do it... or starve."

Joseph told them that they had to make it through this first year of the famine using their own grain reserves. They whined and complained, but he just reminded them of his earlier warnings and sent them away empty-handed. A'senath was beginning to think that her husband had developed a hard-hearted attitude. When she mentioned it in private, Joseph responded. "I'm sorry I have to be that way, my love, but these leaders have become too proud and self-sufficient. God cannot bless Egypt until they are humbled and brought into submission to Him."

The prophesied famine had obviously begun. But instead of opening up his vast storehouses, Joseph sealed them up tight. No more grain was coming in; 20 percent of the harvest is zero when there is no harvest. People were beginning to cry that they had no bread. Knowing what was in his storehouses, they begged Joseph to have mercy. "Just to get us through the year. Next year will be better!"

Joseph knew it wouldn't. He sent word throughout the land that every Nomarch and their priests must come to Lisht to give a strict accounting of their own grain storage. He ordered his own officers in each Nome to verify the accounting, so there could be no lying, no hoarding.

They came, from all 42 Nomes. They spent days with Joseph and the Pharaoh, presenting their food assets and shortages. Of course they tried to finagle a bit, but Joseph's officers were right there to keep them honest. When the week was past, everyone could see that Joseph was right. They did indeed have enough for one year, though they obviously had to do a bit of belt-tightening and general conservation. Joseph gave them strict orders on stretching and guarding their reserves, and sent them home.

Amenemhat was duly impressed. "Joseph, my friend, every time I see you, you amaze me! My Nomarchs are usually unruly, arrogant, and self-serving, not to mention dishonest when they think they can get away with it. But when you command, they just obey! And I loved the way your officers kept them honest! So how did you do that? I mean, those are the prisoners you pardoned! Potiphar!"

"Yes, Your Majesty!" As captain of the bodyguard, he had been standing by the whole time.

"Did you recognize any of Joseph's officers?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. All of them. You are quite correct. They all came from my prison."

"Did you notice any changes in them?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. They are now honest, respectful, and loyal to Your Majesty. I assure you, they were not that way when I put them in my prison. I really don't know what happened to them."

"Joseph does. Don't you, my friend. Tell us!"

Joseph bowed to the Pharaoh. "O Pharaoh, it was not I, but Logos, the living God, the God of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things. He changed them, like He changed me, to accomplish His good pleasure. He has chosen to bless you, and all Egypt, through us in this way."

"God of heaven and earth and Creator of all things, eh, Joseph? Well, His interpretation of my dreams was right on, and He has certainly given you wisdom to help Egypt. I'm grateful to you and to your God. I want to meet Him now." Amenemhat was never one to beat about the bush. They had talked about Logos many times, but this is the first time he had demanded to actually meet Him.

Nimaatre, now very grown up and standing by his side, also spoke up. "Yes! We both want to meet Him. I know you've been awfully busy, but we've waited a long time!" (Nimaatre and Amenemhat now had two children. Their firstborn was a son whom they named **Maakherure**. He grew up to become **Amenemhat IV**. They also had a new baby daughter named Neferu-Ptah.)

Potiphar had also been impressed, both by his former prisoners, and with the stories he had heard about Joseph from his wife Tikra. (Now that their marriage had been reconciled, they were communicating, for the first time.) "I too, would like to meet Logos, Your Majesty," he added.

Joseph bowed in silent prayer. He knew that Logos would not appear just to satisfy the curiosity of these pagan idolaters, but he also knew that you don't just order a Pharaoh to fall down and repent. He remembered A'senath's story of how Logos came to Isaac and wicked Prince Senusret, back when his father Jacob was but a baby. A'senath had said: "He demanded tribute, but he met Logos instead." Well, if Logos would meet with wicked Senusret, He may also meet with this Pharaoh who had shown such integrity and kindness. "Yes, O Pharaoh. I will ask Him. But I must warn you. He is the true, living God. He sees men's hearts and hears their thoughts. He is Spirit, not a man or an idol. He may not appear at all. If He does come to you, do not try to tell Him what you do not mean, nor promise Him what you do not plan to fulfill."

Those were the sternest words Joseph had ever spoken to the Pharaoh. There were some gasps in the room; others in Egypt had lost their heads for less. They were amazed when their Pharaoh nodded earnestly. "I hear you, Joseph. Sounds fair enough to me."

Joseph bowed again and began to pray silently, first worshiping awhile, then recalling the blood sacrifice which covered his sins, and finally asking for Logos to meet with them. He prayed for a long time, but nothing happened. He began asking Logos what to do. *Should he attempt to sacrifice the lamb here in front of the Pharaoh? No! That would surely be an abomination to the Egyptians.* He prayed earnestly. Logos materialized standing close to Joseph, with his flaming hand touching Joseph's shoulder as he prayed. Though He shone with the brilliant fires of glory, yet He had dimmed the flames somewhat so as not to startle them. "You asked to see Me. Here I am. I grant your request out of My gratitude for your care of My precious son Joseph and his family. As long as you continue to bless them, I shall spare Egypt. But when you forget Joseph and oppress his descendants, Egypt shall be destroyed."

"I see your hearts, as Joseph said. Each of you in your heart has despised your own gods, who are not gods at all, and in your limited understanding has opened your heart to Me. I honor that, and I receive you. I shall bless you, protect you, and give you wisdom and understanding as you come to know Me. Now, you have questions of Me?"

The three were stunned, awed. Potiphar had dropped to his knees. Amenemhat and Nimaatre clutched each other in fear. Logos patiently waited. Finally Nimaatre (who was used to speaking her mind) spoke up: “Logos, what kind of a God are You? Are You fire, like the sun?”

“I am Spirit. I created the sun. Normally, man cannot see or hear Spirit, but I have power over time and space, and can make Myself visible when I choose.” His face beamed at Nimaatre. “Your heart is pure. Your faith is strong and bold. You, like Me, despise false gods and long for Truth. I am the One you seek. Learn of Me. Trust Me. Obey Me, and I shall dwell in your heart forever just as I dwell in Joseph. Thank you for returning My love.”

Nimaatre smiled, nodded, fell on her knees in worship, and breathed: “My Lord and my God.”

“And Pharaoh, I hear your question, though you choose not to speak it. You are correct. Only you three can see or hear Me. No others in the room will know that I have come, except Joseph. But he will know it only by faith, for he cannot see or hear Me either.” Amenemhat bowed, again stunned that Logos could so easily read his thoughts.

A pause, then Logos continued. “A very good prayer, Potiphar. I hear. I am glad to answer it, for I too love Tikra. I have summoned her. Even now she arrives at the door.” At that moment a bewildered Tikra came hesitantly into the hall, “Potiphar! Why are all the servants frozen...” she began. Then she saw the Pharaoh with Logos shining in splendor behind him, and she put her hand to her mouth.

“Welcome, my beloved Tikra!” Logos reached out His arms. “Your husband prayed that you would come. I am Logos, Creator and King of the universe, God of time and space. The servants are frozen because time has stopped, but for you four. Please come, join your husband.”

She came and knelt beside Potiphar. “I forgive you for what you did to My servant Joseph. In Father’s perfect Plan of the Ages, We have turned it around for good to all the world. I have accepted your repentance and restored your marriage. And now, I hear your heart cry. I will open your barren womb. About this time next year you shall bear a son, followed by other children as you continue to seek My face and believe My Word.” Tikra bowed her face to the ground sobbing, as all her pent-up emotions turned to joy.

“Now I speak to you all. Do not tell Me what you do not mean. Do not promise what you do not plan to fulfill. You live in a culture filled with false gods. You were raised to accept and live by them. Very few escape such a pagan society. But My son Joseph prayed for you. I have heard his prayer. To you and you alone I have revealed Myself, as the only living and true God. You will not see Me with your physical eyes again, for I am Spirit. Will you continue to believe in Me, obey Me, love Me, and worship Me alone, even in the midst of this pagan culture? And will you remain faithful to Me whether in blessings or in trials?”

Logos paused, while the full implications of His words sank in. The Pharaoh himself, the only one of the four not yet kneeling, responded first, sliding off his throne and kneeling beside his wife. “Yes, Logos. I do believe in You. I choose to love You and obey You, and worship You alone, forever, either in blessing or trial. I place my trust in You. And I thank You for preserving my people in this famine.” The other three followed with similar vows of fidelity.

“I have heard your vows. Keep them. You have sworn yourselves to a higher standard than those around you. Should you prove false, I shall hold you accountable with a more-severe punishment. But as you remain true, I shall delight in pouring out the blessings of heaven upon you, even in the midst of trials and great distress all around you, for I love you, and I have accepted you into My family.”

“One more thing. Tikra, I have forgiven you, but you also must obtain forgiveness from Joseph My son. I and YHWH My Father in eternity bless you.”

At that, Logos slowly vanished. For the first time, Tikra saw Joseph, who had been hidden behind Logos. It looked to her like Logos just morphed into Joseph. His head was bowed in intense prayer, and he was unaware of Tikra’s presence. She walked close to him. “Joseph?”

He flinched, startled, lifting his eyes. “Oh! Tikra! I did not see you come in. What can I do for you?”

“Your Majesty, I will be most grateful if you can find it in your heart to forgive me for the horrible way I treated you when you served in my husband’s house.”

“Yes, of course. I have already forgiven you. My God Logos has turned it all around for good, for me, for you, for all Egypt. If only you could meet Him, learn to know Him, you would understand.”

“Uh, Your Majesty... I have met Him. I do know Him. I love Him and have vowed my life to Him.” Joseph looked behind her at the three others still kneeling, who nodded their affirmation. “He stood right there, Joseph, where you are, and talked with all of us. We saw Him, and heard Him, and can never doubt Him again.” The others stood and crowded around, each eager to share his or her perspective of the divine encounter. As they talked, time resumed for the servants, who had seen and heard nothing at all.

They dined together that night, and continued talking into the wee hours of the morning. As Logos had said, Joseph had not known that Logos had ever appeared, though he had come to the faith that he knew He would. They all had lots of questions. Joseph answered, and they heard with open hearts to believe and receive.

Potiphar was awed that Tikra had showed up so soon after his prayer. “It takes a half-hour to get here from my home. Logos knew what I would pray before I prayed it. He knows the future! That’s how He can interpret dreams. None of the gods of Egypt are able to see into the future.”

“Well,” Joseph hesitated. “The way I understand it, Logos doesn’t know the future either. But YHWH His Father, who dwells in eternity, knows all things from the beginning to the end. YHWH is way too big to enter our realm of time and space. Even the entire universe is much too small to contain Him. So He sent His Word, Logos, as an expression of His love to our universe. The Holy Spirit of YHWH is in constant communion with Logos. He tells Logos whatever He needs to know about the future.”

“Yes,” Tikra said. “When He left, His last words were, ‘I and YHWH My Father in eternity bless you.’”

Joseph nodded. “Whatever it costs, whatever you must do to obtain His blessing, it is more than worth it.” He paused, reminiscing about all he had been through to get to this place. “Everything I went through, my slavery and imprisonment, it was all of Logos, testing my heart to see if I would remain faithful to Him. When I passed the test...”

“I made you prime minister!” Amenemhat chuckled, really understanding it for the first time. “So, I wonder what tests Logos will give me?”

“Ahead of Egypt still remains six more years of fearful famine, O Pharaoh. Time enough for heart testing.”

The Nomarchs and their priests had all gone home. They used up all their grain reserves, still not believing that the famine would last more than a year or two. It had been so bad, they were sure the next year would be better.

But the next year was even worse. The Nomarchs were devastated. Again, they came, hat in hand, to Joseph, pleading for help, thoroughly humbled.

Joseph remembered the dream – he had to plan for not one year or two, but seven full years, and not just for Egypt but for the entire Middle East.

Joseph had collected 20% of Egypt’s grain for seven years. Bountiful years! It was so much grain he had lost count; there was simply no way to keep track of how much grain had flooded in during those years of abundance. All he knew was that his wildest imaginations had been far exceeded. Now every cubic inch of his storehouses, as well as the storage rooms in the Pharaoh’s palaces and temples – even in his own home – were filled with grain. He had done all that could be done. Now it was time for the payoff.

Joseph began selling his grain, starting with all that was in the palaces and temples, then opening his storehouses. The Nomarchs were very wealthy; they could afford to live well that year. So Joseph began collecting huge profits for the Pharaoh. He faithfully accounted for every dime, and brought it all to the Pharaoh personally at the end of the year. When Joseph presented it – equivalent to billions of our dollars – Amenemhat could hardly believe it. “Joseph, my friend! Even in the middle of Egypt’s greatest tragedy, the blessing of Logos rests upon you. This kind of ‘testing’ from Him I can handle!”

It was 1669 BC. The famine was severe in all the earth. Joseph’s waterworks projects in Egypt had postponed its effects there, but for the rest of the world, the famine had begun years earlier. In Nubia it had begun in 1672. For many other places it had actually started shortly after 1680 with the close pass of Mars and the dramatic weather shift. The excess rains that had caused so much prosperity in Egypt had not reached Canaan, Arabia, or North Africa. Their grasslands were withered, parched, and dying.

Thus, for years wealthy foreign merchants had been coming to Egypt from the lands of Canaan, Midian, Libya, and even as far away as the kingdoms of the Amorites and Hittites. Now the stream became a flood, as everyone, not just traders, wanted grain. Joseph established strict rules. He would not sell to those whose nation was not in proper submission to Egypt. He refused to support the Pharaoh’s enemies. He spent most of his time at the Hatwaret of the North at Avaris, to personally verify the status of foreign caravans from the north, east, and west. The security of Egypt was always in his mind. He was ever alert for spies.

I must pause to describe this grain storage facility to you, as you have never heard of anything so magnificent. Its remains have never been found, as it was built on the soft sediment of the Nile Delta rather than the harder sandstone of the southlands, and its foundations have long since crumbled into the mud. It was the largest structure ever built, before or since. Its roofs covered nearly a square mile. It was all on one story; Joseph knew the soft ground would not support two stories. There were seven huge courts along each wall, protected from the rains in winter and the sun in summer by high roofs. On three sides, a court was assigned to each of the 21 Nomes of the Delta. Then on the east wall there were six courts designated for foreign caravans coming from the surrounding nations, plus the center one just for Joseph’s family and friends.

That one was especially elegant. It had chariot stalls, a graceful entry arch, and a columned concourse lined with trees and lovely fountains. The road from his palace ended at a lavish suite where Joseph grilled foreign delegations. (No foreigner could buy grain without registering with Joseph. His divine gift of the heavenly language, Kasdan, also gave him a pretty good command of all seventy earthly languages.) Each of the courts had 25 rooms with counters for grain sales, as at Hawara. Behind them, again arranged like a maze to enable him to rotate his stock, there were an amazing 375 storage rooms for each one of the 28 outer courts! That is an unbelievable 11,200 rooms, all on one story under one set of roofs. Those roofs were a marvel of modern engineering. They were carefully sloped to direct the rainwaters to drainage channels in between each of the covered courts, where subterranean aqueducts carried the water away. As at the other two Hatwarets, the inner rooms were rat and vermin proof, and temperature and humidity controlled using solar airflow and evaporative air conditioning, all designed by Joseph himself.

Joseph was there one hot summer day, resting in the shade on his throne. Grateful servants hovered around, alert to meet his every desire. He was dressed and groomed in Egyptian style – not his Asiatic hairdo as when he first appeared before the Pharaoh. Two of his closest advisors were with him: Amseth and Bathatra – they rotated here with Calakut, Damatetra, and Elezath at the Hatwaret of the North – all faithful friends from the prison.

As Joseph had anticipated (and as he had hoped and prayed) ten of his brothers now appeared before him. They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground, begging to be registered to buy grain. Joseph had long awaited this moment, even allowing himself idle daydreams about how he would handle it when they came. Had not his own dreams when he was seventeen foretold this moment?

But now that it had come, he was nearly overcome with emotion. He steeled himself, and spoke harshly to them so they would not recognize him. He accused them of being spies and demanded to know everything about them, their home, and their family. Of course he spoke only Egyptian, through an interpreter. He demanded they tell him of their father and the brother they had left at home. Then he said that the only way they could prove they were not spies was to show their other brother to verify their statements.

Of course they couldn't, so he had them put in prison. When he came home he rejoiced with A'senath that his brothers had finally come and that his father, at the age of 130, was still alive. He spent that weekend praying and asking Logos how to treat his brothers. He knew from experience that they would not learn proper humility and submission to Logos if they were not disciplined. By the third day he had decided. He ordered them brought out of the prison. He told them (again through the interpreter) that he would keep Simeon in prison as surety (remember, he had been the ringleader in selling Joseph into slavery) and send the rest home with food for their families. But he assured them that if they ever came back, they would die unless they verified the truth of their words by bringing their youngest brother (Benjamin) with them.

After they had taken his registration certificate and headed for one of the eastern courts to load their donkeys, he told Calakut to follow them, and to arrange to return their money at the top of each of their sacks. Joseph had overheard them talking in Hebrew amongst themselves. They recognized that Logos was punishing them for what they had done to him. They were very distressed when he had accused them of being spies. Joseph knew that Logos was dealing with their consciences. But it was clear to him that they were mostly sorry for their troubles and not truly repentant. Next time he will accuse them of being thieves as well. Eventually they may be able to truly repent.

They went back to Canaan. Joseph waited. The famine was even more severe in all the land, and Joseph knew they would have to return or starve.

Sure enough, in six months, they were back. Yes! They had their brother Benjamin, Joseph's only full brother through his mother Rachel. At 31, he looked so young, and so vulnerable. There they all were, kneeling before him, faces to the ground as before; even offering him gifts – the best of the produce of Canaan. And double the money to try to prove that they had not intentionally stolen the money before. What should he do?

He decided to ignore them at first while he took care of other foreign registrations. He wanted them to stew for a day or two. He told Bathatra (who knew Hebrew) to eavesdrop on their conversation. He sent Amseth to notify Amenemhat (who was at nearby Bubastis). The Pharaoh had been delighted to hear about their first coming, and had ordered that he be notified so he could welcome them personally when they returned. Then Joseph sent Calakut back to his palace, to tell his steward to plan the Sabbath feast for extra guests, including the Pharaoh, and to order a special table be set for his brothers. That night he sent Damatetra over to his dungeon to release Simeon and allow him to rejoin his brothers.

The Sabbath arrived. Bathatra reported back to Joseph, "They are grumbling about the delay and fearful of you, but they don't seem particularly repentant." Bathatra understood repentance. He had been one of the worst of the criminals in the prison, and had spent years obtaining forgiveness and making restitution for his crimes.

Joseph told him to take them over to his palace and get them washed and dressed for dinner. "Treat them well. Feed and groom their donkeys. When it comes time for the feast, seat them according to their birth order." He pointed them out to Bathatra. "Leave the head of the table empty, since I might come to sit there. Put Reuben on my left, around to Benjamin on my right."

As I told you, Joseph's palace was magnificent, a marvel of architecture, lavish in spacious elegance. The grateful Egyptians who built it had spared no expense. Though appearing tiny in comparison to the nearby Hatwaret (grain storage building), it far exceeded it in opulence, second only to Pharaoh's palace at Lisht. The two suites which had been built for Joseph's sons and their families were fully furnished for other guests, since Joseph's sons were only 7 and 5 at the time. Often Potiphar and Tikra, or Amenemhat and Nimaatre, or Potipherah and Tamie, or any of Joseph's officers from the prison would come with their families to spend a Sabbath with Joseph, just as he might take his family up to Lisht to stay in the Pharaoh's guest suite for the weekend. They loved to get together, relax around the Sabbath meal, and talk about Logos.

Potipherah still had not met Logos, but was very open-minded about Him, at least accepting Him as another of his many gods. On this particular Sabbath, Potipherah, Tamie, and their children were already there at Joseph's palace, staying in one of the guest suites.

Joseph returned to his palace and entered the dining hall. His brothers were waiting outside, but it seemed that everyone else was there: the Pharaoh with Nimaatre and their children; Potiphar, Tikra, and her baby; many of his officers' families; Potipherah's lovely big family scattered around. Tamie was talking excitedly with A'senath, their breathtakingly blonde hair brightening the banquet hall.

"Attention, please!" Joseph called as his own children ran to greet him. "Thank you all for coming. Our beloved Pharaoh honors us with his presence, but for this meal he has offered to sit in the back and allow me to be the acting Pharaoh for my brothers' sake. They are just outside. I'm not yet ready to tell them who I am. They will be dining at this table beside my throne. You all may sit wherever you wish and dine the same as we often do. However, this time I will dine on my throne, so I can observe my brothers and overhear what they discuss amongst themselves. A'senath, please, sit with your mother and sisters." He sent his four children over to her. "Nobody speak Hebrew now, except my interpreter – OK? Ready? Bring my brothers."

They came in, looking properly bewildered, awed, and afraid. Always through the interpreter, Joseph asked about their family's welfare. Again they bowed themselves to the ground, offering their presents. They presented Benjamin, the youngest, as the one Joseph had requested they bring. Joseph blessed him, but then could no longer control his emotion at seeing him for the first time in years, and had to retire to his bedroom to vent his feelings for a few minutes.

The meal was then served, a typical eastern feast which went on for hours. As Joseph had figured, his brothers relaxed as they were served, and talked freely amongst themselves in Hebrew, thinking that nobody else could understand. He was able to overhear a lot as he ate on his throne, and even more when he came down to sit briefly at the head of his brothers' table and to bring food portions from his own dishes. He gave special foods to Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, but five times more to Benjamin. It was a delight to see him again. But he tried to make it seem natural, by also walking among the Egyptians' tables, greeting, chatting, or sitting with them, too. Amenemhat and Nimaatre were delighted. They were glad to play the game, and never let on who was the real Pharaoh.

Joseph's servants had finished feeding and grooming their donkeys. When they reported to Joseph, he ordered them to fill their sacks with grain, to again return their money in the mouths of their sacks, and to put his silver cup in a sack on Benjamin's donkey. His brothers would recognize that cup; they'd all seen him drinking from it.

When the meal was over, Joseph blessed them again and sent them off. He gave them time to reach the edge of Avaris on the road to Canaan before he sent his steward after them. Awaiting the outcome, the Pharaoh and his family rested in one of Joseph's beautiful guest suites, and Potipherah and his family waited in the other.

When Joseph's brothers returned, nearly everyone else was still talking together in the entry courtyard, just inside the arch by the water fountains. Joseph tried to look stern when they threw themselves on the ground before him. "Why have you repaid me evil for good? Are you not aware that as a god in Egypt I can see the future? I told you that you were spies. Now I see that you are thieves as well. You steal back your money for the grain, and now you have even stolen the silver cup that I use for divination!" Joseph really put on a class act. By this time even the interpreter was having a hard time keeping a straight face.

To Joseph's satisfaction, his brothers seemed properly repentant. He noticed their clothes were torn and their faces streaked with tears. They didn't even try to make excuses. They acknowledged that God had uncovered their iniquity, and they pledged themselves as slaves.

"No," Joseph responded, "Only that one, the one in whose possession my cup was found – he shall be my slave. The rest of you go in peace to your father."

Judah and Reuben looked at each other. This was a catastrophe of even greater magnitude than the famine! They had sworn to Jacob that they would protect Benjamin at all costs, even the lives of their own little ones! Judah spoke for both. With deep emotion he explained about the frailty of their father. He told Joseph of his special love for his two youngest children, one of whom (he was sure) had been eaten by wild animals, and the other was the one now accused of stealing the silver cup. He knew if they returned from Egypt without Benjamin, Jacob would die of sorrow. Judah and Reuben offered to be slaves or even to die for their youngest brother. At that, the other brothers agreed that they would, too.

Joseph listened to their story. Finally he could see true repentance in his brothers – and true love for each other, for Benjamin, and for their father. Suddenly the emotions within him could no longer be held back. He told everyone else to go back into the palace. Though they were enjoying the charades, they understood. This was Joseph's special time with his long-lost family; he needed privacy.

Joseph began to weep uncontrollably. He wept so loudly, that everyone in the palace could hear. Now his brothers were doubly afraid. What was it they had done now? This mighty potentate was beyond their understanding. All they could do was bow to the ground before him and weep with him in their own anguish and despair.

For a long time, nothing could be heard but weeping and wailing from everyone in the courtyard. But finally Joseph blurted out in a loud voice, "I am Joseph! I am your brother! Is my father still alive?"

He was speaking Hebrew! But hearing Hebrew words from this Egyptian god standing before them was more than they could comprehend. They remained with their faces on the ground, stunned speechless.

So Joseph cried out again, "Please, my brothers, come closer! Look at me! I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. Don't be grieved or upset with yourselves for what you did to me. Though you meant it for evil, God meant it for good! He sent me here ahead of you to save your lives. The famine has been in Egypt only two years; another five years yet remain in which there will be neither sowing nor reaping. God sent me here to preserve you, and all the earth, by this incredible deliverance."

The brothers all crowded around him, beginning to believe. "Can you see that it is really me? Now hurry back to our father. Tell him of all my splendor in Egypt – all that you saw in my palace – and bring him down here. I will care for him here. I will make the best of the land available for him and Leah, and for all of you, my brothers, and your kin. Why should you be impoverished in the famine?" Joseph fell on Benjamin's neck, hugged him, and wept.

Finally, they could see that it was really Joseph. He gave another round of hugs, kissing and weeping on each one. Then he brought them back into his great hall, where they spent the rest of the evening bringing each other up to date. Joseph introduced them to his wife and children. Then Pharaoh and Potipherah and their families came out and got introduced.

Amenemhat was delighted. He recalled what Logos had promised about sparing Egypt as long as he continued to bless Joseph and his family. He treasured Logos' blessing. Though he didn't know Hebrew, he told Joseph, "Tell your brothers for me that I welcome them and their families in Egypt. Send them back to Canaan with empty wagons to bring back their families and all they own. I will give them the best of the land, and they shall eat of the fat of the land." Amenemhat was beaming with pleasure.

So, the next day the brothers were sent back to Canaan with wagons and with a sample of the treasures of Egypt to help convince Jacob. He did need some convincing, to be sure. But finally they left Hebron, with his family and all of their goods, flocks, and herds, heading south. They reached Beersheba just before the Sabbath, and camped there. That Sabbath night, as Jacob was sleeping, Logos came in his dream. "Jacob! Jacob!" he called. "Israel!"

"Yes, Logos. I am here."

"I am the Word of YHWH, God of your fathers. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will be with you and bring you back again. Joseph will close your eyes, but not before you see My great deliverance." He smiled at Jacob. "Now you are truly Israel My Prince, for you have prevailed to obtain the promise."

So his caravan continued into Egypt, bringing all he possessed. Along the way, Jacob tallied up his most-valued wealth: his children and grandchildren. In those days they usually just counted males; there were a total of 65 males of Jacob's own family coming down to Egypt.

But if you count the women, the way we count today, you find a lot more. Jacob's eleven sons had wives, plus 46 daughters. Nine of them had husbands too, which hadn't been counted among the 65. And five of his grandsons had wives. They also had 225 servants. Finally, we must add in those already in Egypt, Joseph, his wife A'senath, and his four children. So the grand total of Hebrews in Egypt then came to 360 persons. What incredible wealth!

Jacob's one great sadness was that he had lost Leah. Not that she had done anything bad – she was just a little too trusting of the surrounding Canaanites. They'd lived at Hebron for so long, and Leah always wanted to help out her hurting neighbors. So when the famine hit, she would often go around sharing what they had. The Canaanites of course all loved her for it. They treated Jacob's clan with respect and honor. But there were some worthless men among them who (like evil men everywhere) tried to take advantage of her kindness as an open door to plunder her family. She died in the ensuing ruckus, faithful to Jacob and her family to the last. Truly she was God's special gift to him! Jacob had buried her near Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah, in the cave of Machpelah.

Jacob sent Judah on ahead of the group, to ask Joseph where to camp. When Joseph heard, he went out in his own chariot to meet him. He lifted Judah into his chariot and put one of his own royal robes on him. They returned to the caravan together, like two rulers of the land. The Egyptians all along the way bowed low before them.

Needless to say, Joseph's reunion with his father and the rest of his family was glorious. Though their own flocks and herds had been decimated by the famine, their eyes lit up as they entered the land of **Goshen**, where the Pharaoh's immense flocks grazed! Joseph selected five brothers (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and Benjamin) to go with him up south to Lisht to meet the Pharaoh. He had a plan, and he coached them on what to say to Pharaoh.

Amenemhat was glad to see them. Sure enough, he asked their occupation. As coached, they told him they were professional shepherds, descending from a long line of shepherds. True enough; they all took their turns with their father's sheep and goats. But they conveniently didn't mention that they were a lot more than that. Among them were also expert carpenters, metalworkers, stonemasons, craftsmen, musicians, and so on, as God had blessed them. But Joseph knew that the shepherding profession was the lowest and most despised line of work in Egypt. Egyptians hated those foolish sheep! Pharaoh always had a difficult time finding good shepherds for his flocks in Goshen.

Sure enough, Amenemhat quickly agreed that the land of Goshen would be a perfect place for them to settle, and promised to hire all who wished to work for him to care for his own flocks. They, of course, all pledged their allegiance and their desire to accept his generous offer. Even apart from the interpreter, Amenemhat could see their delight.

“Then it is agreed. You shall settle in the land of Goshen as Joseph directs. As you are able to take over the care of my own flocks, I shall re-locate the Egyptians from the thirteen Nomes of Goshen and give the entire area to you and your families. As Joseph has blessed my family and all of Egypt, so I bless you and your families in the name of Logos. I shall reserve the two Nomes that surround Joseph’s palace for his two sons when they are grown. You eleven brothers of Joseph, when you become trained to care for my flocks, shall become the Nomarchs of the remaining eleven Nomes of Goshen.”

Along the way from Lisht back to Goshen, Joseph’s brothers expressed their delight with the Pharaoh’s very generous offer of making them all Nomarchs.

“Actually, that was my plan,” Joseph responded. “The Nomarchs in Goshen were particularly resistant to my rule. Plus, they don’t take good care of their own people, as they hate shepherds. All they do is try to amass wealth for themselves while staying as far as possible away from the sheep. Under their rule, the Pharaoh rarely saw much increase in his flocks. I shall depose them – send them up south – and appoint you as Nomarchs in their place. You shall rule the land of Goshen under me. It’s good fertile land. With your expert shepherding, the Pharaoh’s flocks will flourish. There you also shall prosper, and bring to the Pharaoh his rightful share of the increase.”

Within four years nearly all of the Egyptians had left Goshen, and the eleven brothers of Joseph had taken over as the Pharaoh’s Nomarchs there. They did indeed do well, especially in caring for all his flocks and herds. Pharaoh noticed a huge increase in the productivity of Goshen. It benefited his entire kingdom. Truly, these Asiatics had turned out to be skillful shepherds! He was very pleased.

But this did not happen without growing pains. Joseph warned his family against inter-marrying with Egyptians. He explained that though the Pharaoh and his bodyguard had met Logos, most Egyptians were still utterly pagan. Idol worship was ingrained into their culture from the very founding of Egypt. His own wife demonstrated that Logos was able to provide spouses for their children from among the descendants of the Kasdim, spouses who knew and loved Him. Joseph urged them to wait for Logos to send others to Egypt. He knew that they would come.

So as the Egyptians moved out of Goshen, Joseph told his brothers to watch for their relatives from Haran, Ur Kasday, Edom, or Midian. “When they come to buy food, ask them if they know Logos. If they do, invite them to bring their families and settle in Goshen with you. Adopt them into your own families. Inter-marry with them. You are few, but your Nomes are large. The land can support many of our own relatives from around the world. Thus each of you will prosper to become numerous – a strong tribe. The famine that is so severe over all the earth will then become a blessing to our family and relatives.”

That is exactly what happened. As Joseph prophesied and believed, so Logos and his mighty angels worked to draw most of the descendants of the Kasdim down to Egypt. Those who were disobedient mostly perished in the famine. Outside Egypt, less than a thousand of the Kasdim survived (mostly families of the Magi living in Ur Kasday, whom Logos still protected because of the prayers of the city’s founder, Shelah). Those who obeyed the divine call joined themselves to one or another of the sons of Israel and settled in Goshen. Thus the twelve sons of Israel quickly became twelve large and powerful tribes. By the end of the seven-year famine, the number of Hebrews in the land of Goshen had grown from 360 to over 24,000.

The tribe of Joseph at Avaris was no exception. Joseph adopted hundreds of the Kasdim into his own family and provided homes for them near his lovely palace. Joseph’s two sons were still too young to rule (they were ten and twelve by the end of the famine). The Nomarchs ruling on either side of Joseph’s palace were resistant to having so many Asiatics living in their territory. So Joseph quietly deposed them and took over those two Nomes himself, based on the Pharaoh’s promise to give them to his two sons. Now the sons of Jacob ruled all thirteen Nomes of Goshen. They prospered abundantly.

Years and generations flowed by. **Pharez** (in the line of Messiah) was born in 1665 BC to Judah, when he was 53. **Kohath** was born in 1663 BC to Levi, when he was 56. Many others were born to Joseph and his brothers as well, but those two are important to our story.

In 1652 BC, seventeen years after they had come into Egypt, Bilhah and Zilpah came sobbing to Joseph with a message. “Jacob our lord has weakened. He says he knows it is his time to die. He sent us to call his family around him for his final blessing and the passing on of his inheritance. But he wants you and your two oldest sons to come first.”

Joseph hugged his father’s concubines for a while, weeping with them. He didn’t need to say anything. He knew this was coming. Then he sent his servants to gather the rest of his brothers, while he got his two oldest sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. They went to Jacob’s lovely home by the river, which was within easy walking distance of Joseph’s palace. Along the way, Bilhah and Zilpah talked of happier times with Jacob. Bilhah admitted, “I’m sorry that Rachel died when you were so young, but, after she died and Jacob learned to love Leah, he was kinder to us, too. These last forty years with Jacob have been like heaven for me, especially since we came to Egypt. Thank you! Even though I am 98 years old, I have never lost my passion for him. No, not since the first day I saw him in Laban’s house. I will miss him terribly. I don’t know if I can go on.”

Zilpah echoed the sentiments. “We didn’t deserve it. We were just slaves, maids of Jacob’s wives. Yet Jacob has treated us with respect and love, almost as if we too were cherished wives of his. It will be so hard to lose him.”

Joseph put one arm around Bilhah and the other around Zilpah in a three-way hug. “You both have been most kind and caring to my dad in his final years. Thank you! You will be rewarded for your faithfulness. I swear that your sons will share equally in his inheritance.”

Jacob was indeed very weak. Only with help was he able to struggle to a sitting position in his bed. He was nearly blind, but his voice was strong and his mind clear as he spoke. “God Almighty wrestled with me in Canaan. He renamed me **Israel**, meaning ‘Prince with God’. He blessed me and reminded me again of His promise to multiply my descendants and give them the land of Canaan forever. I’ve seen only the first half of that promise, but I trust Logos to fulfill the rest in His time. From this day forth you will be known as ‘the sons of Israel’, in faith that Logos keeps His promises.” Jacob was finally ready to accept his new name.

Joseph nodded. He too had learned that Logos keeps His promises. Jacob continued. “Now, I asked you to bring my two favorite grandchildren first. They were born when I thought you were dead. Thus they are very special to me. I adopt them now as my own sons – they shall share in my inheritance equally with all my sons and shall become princes of their own tribes just like Reuben and Simeon. All your other children, Joseph, are your own. But I want my inheritance to be divided thirteen ways, with a full portion going to Ephraim and one to Manasseh.”

Joseph thought it rather strange that Jacob should put Ephraim before Manasseh; he knew Manasseh was the oldest. When he blessed them, again he put Ephraim first, crossing his arms to put his right hand on Ephraim’s head. Joseph tried to correct him, but Jacob responded, “I know, my son. Manasseh shall be great, too. But his younger brother shall be greater than he. Ephraim’s descendants shall be the fullness of the nations. Just as you are being used by God to provide for the rest of my sons, even so I prophesy that Ephraim’s descendants shall one day be used of Father YHWH to provide for all the rest of my descendants.” After Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob blessed his sons in the order of their birth, starting with Reuben. But Reuben did not get the traditional double portion, for it had already been allotted to Joseph, for his two sons.

Not just the sons of Israel, but all of Egypt mourned Jacob’s passing. When they took his body back up to Canaan for burial, 1000 chariots and 10,000 horsemen from Egypt came along. Even the Canaanites joined in the mourning. (Their wickedness had not yet become total.) They buried Jacob’s body beside Leah’s in the cave of Machpelah by the ancient Oaks of Mamre where his fathers, Abraham-Sarah and Isaac-Rebekah, are buried.

With their father dead, Joseph’s brothers feared that he would exact vengeance for selling him into slavery. But he assured them, “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Am I in the place of God to you? Do not fear. I will continue to provide and care for you and your little ones.”

When the period of mourning was over, Joseph sent everyone back to Egypt except his immediate family and his personal bodyguard. He told them, “I will return to Egypt, but first I must go up to see the Holy City on the mountain where my fathers worshiped.” He told them the story of when his great-grandfather Abram had met Logos on Mount Moriah after following Melchizedek to Salem.

Joseph was a very wealthy man. He and A’senath always tithed of each year’s increase, as Logos led them, and this time Logos had led them to bring their tithe with them. They took it up to the top of Mount Moriah, and laid it out beside the old stone altar that Abram, Isaac, and Jacob had used. It made a substantial sum. They worshiped there all afternoon, bowing before Logos with thanksgiving and praise. He spoke to them, telling them to take their tithe down to Salem, where they would learn where to give it.

They spent the night on the mountain. Early the next morning they went into the small town of Salem. The city elders welcomed them and brought them to Melchizedek, the king of Salem. He sat Joseph and his family with him at his own table, and they all had breakfast together.

It was obvious from his youthful appearance that this Melchizedek was not the same one Abram had met nearly 230 years before. When Joseph asked him about it, he explained: “I am unworthy to bear that name. My actual name was Zedekia, Son of Righteousness. Melchizedek prepared me to succeed him. But the good people of Salem had known Adonai Melchizedek as their king for so long, they insisted that I take his name after he left.”

“He left? He didn’t die? How long was he king of Salem? Where did he come from? Where did he go? Whose son is he?” Joseph was full of questions.

Melchizedek hesitated for a while, as if the questions overwhelmed him. Finally he spoke softly. “Melchizedek was king of Salem for a very long time. Some say he was born of Heber before the earth was divided [in 2610 BC], and that he founded the city of Salem in the days of Peleg. But that would make him a thousand years old when he departed! He is not listed in Heber’s genealogical records. They may have gotten lost during the confusion when the earth was divided. He himself would never tell where he came from, nor his age or genealogy.” He paused.

“Melchizedek was a very old man when my father knew him, and his father, too. But like Job, he never seemed to get feeble or senile. He trained me to rule here after his departure. Then he... well, he... I saw this strange cloud. It was filled with light, and cast no shadows. It came down to earth. I saw it with my own eyes! It glowed, like it had fire within. Melchizedek stepped into it – into the fire. Then the cloud just whisked him up into the heavenlies.”

Melchizedek paused again, wide-eyed and breathless. Joseph interrupted, “This Job you mention. Is he here?” He had the impression that his tithe was for Job.

“I saw it! I swear it! I was with him when the fiery cloud descended behind him. He was still talking, warning us to rule in righteousness and justice as he had always ruled. He stepped into the cloud and it became like a whirlwind of fire. It lifted him right up! We never found his body...” Melchizedek shook from the intensity of the memory.

“Yes, yes. I believe you. I must see this Job you said was like Melchizedek. Is he here?” Joseph scanned the group.

“Job? No, no. He’s a prince of the east, the land of Uz.”

So Joseph wrapped up the visit, got directions, and headed east for the land of Uz. It is what we know as the Arabian Desert, though it was lush grasslands back then. Job lived about mid-way between Shinar, Syria, and Edom. Job was indeed like the first Melchizedek, ancient, ageless, judging the land of Uz in wisdom and righteousness. But when Joseph arrived, he found that Job had suffered an incredible series of calamities over the past few months, with the loss of his children, his great wealth, and now his health. His friends felt that Job must have committed some grave sin, but the longer Joseph stayed with him the more he found him to be a man of deepest integrity and faith.

Job’s story intrigued Joseph, especially the contrast between what his four friends had said, and what Logos Himself had told him. His first friend was **Eliphaz**, son of Esau by **Adah** (a Hittite called Basemath); he was an elder from **Teman**, a city in Edom known for its wise men. Then came **Bildad**, son of **Shuah** son of Abraham by Keturah. He was the patriarch of a tribe in Arabia. Third was **Zophar**, a Canaanite elder from **Naamah**, a prosperous city halfway between Hebron and the Western Sea. These first three maintained that God was justified in cursing Job. He must have committed some heinous secret sin to incur so great a judgment, so he needed to repent. Job’s fourth friend was **Elihu**, young son of **Barachel**, son of **Buz**, son of Nahor, nephew of Abraham (whom the Buzites still referred to as Abram, or just Ram). Elihu disagreed with the first three. He reproved Job for criticizing God, correctly stating that judgments may be purifying rather than just corrective.

Joseph and A’senath felt led of Logos to give their tithe to Job. News of his calamities had spread far and wide. He had been like a king / priest over the land for generations, so others also came to give their tithes. At God’s command, Job prayed and sacrificed for his first three friends, and they, too, gave him gifts. The last of the scars from Job’s boils healed, leaving Job’s skin soft and smooth. Finally, Job’s wife Jeri announced that she was pregnant! God’s blessings had returned to Job’s house. The two families became lifelong friends. Each year when Joseph’s family returned to worship on Mount Moriah, they went home via the land of Uz in order to visit Job. He fully recovered, to become more prosperous than before. Jeri bore him seven sons and three daughters, equalling those who had died. After seeing God’s blessings on him, Joseph offered to write out Job’s story. We have it as the book of **Job**.

Amenemhat III ruled Egypt well for nearly 60 years, with his lovely wife Nimaatre always by his side. Joseph had not only saved Egypt from the famine, he had also bought most of the lands of the Nomarchs for Pharaoh, solidifying his power over all Egypt. Overall, Amenemhat was a good ruler. Egyptian power and prosperity during his reign were legendary. He used his wealth well, with many public works to benefit his beloved people.

Joseph continued as his prime minister and closest advisor, confidante, and friend. As long as the Pharaoh listened to Joseph, everything he did was blessed. Satan could not harm them with the close pass of Mars in 1650 BC. They had 42 years of peace and prosperity. The ‘sons of Israel’ in Goshen, with the huge influx of their relatives from all the surrounding nations, multiplied like rabbits.

But sadly, the seeds of the destruction of Egypt had been planted by Amenemhat back at the time of Jacob’s death. While many in Egypt (including Nimaatre) had gone to Canaan to mourn with Joseph and his family, Amenemhat had stayed behind, thinking of other things. His oldest son Maakherure was then 23 and unmarried, and he was searching for a wife for him. He enjoyed this matchmaking game, having been so successful in finding Joseph’s wife A’senath. But with Joseph not there to advise him, and his wife not there to stop him, he did a terrible thing. He took his sister’s daughter Arientre to be a wife for his son. She was young and lovely. He fell to temptation and violated her himself. It caused a big scandal. She had his child, whom we know as **Sobeknefru**. Yes, Nimaatre forgave him, and they raised Sobeknefru as their own daughter, but things were never quite the same between them after that. The bond of trust is fragile; when it is broken, it is difficult to restore. After her baby was born, Arientre was given to Amenemhat’s son. But Logos was not pleased, and He closed Arientre’s womb from then on. Amenemhat realized that this was the ‘heart testing’ from Logos Joseph had warned him about. He had failed the test. His family and all Egypt suffered the consequences.

At the age of 43, Maakherure began ruling with his dad (who was 67) as Amenemhat IV. Sadly, he never really accepted Logos, and he would not listen to Joseph. All his life he held a bitterness against his dad for stealing his wife’s virginity. He ruled in arrogance and pride, as bitter rulers often do. He preferred the acclaim of the people as their god. He died childless after 12 years of co-regency.

His dad, at 79, was showing signs of age and senility. Against Joseph’s counsel, Amenemhat proclaimed his illegitimate daughter as the queen of Egypt in 1620 BC. Sobeknefru was 32 and unmarried, though she had been sexually promiscuous ever since she was 17 and had five children through at least three consorts. She was beautiful and smart (or perhaps ‘crafty’ is a better word here), but loud-mouthed, arrogant, and self-centered.

Sobeknefru had seen how her dad had controlled things behind the scenes during the 12 year co-regency of her half-brother Amenemhat IV. She would have none of that during her reign! As soon as she had consolidated the power of the throne behind her, she arranged for her father to be assassinated.

Logos was displeased. He removed His protective covering. The close pass of Mars in 1620 BC caused Thera to erupt again, darkening the skies over Egypt and causing another famine for the next few years. Sobeknefru did nothing at all to aid the people. They all hated her. Her reign only lasted four years before she died. Nobody knows for sure how she died. Everyone despised her, and many had reason to kill her. But the best theory is that her bastard son **Wegaf** (who was then 19) arranged for her death so he could take over the throne. She had set the example for him. He knew she had killed her own father!

With the deaths of Amenemhat III, Maakherure, and Sobeknefru, the 12th Dynasty and the glory days of Egypt's Middle Kingdom effectively ended. Wegaf began the Second Intermediate Period. He married his half-sister and ruled like the spoiled brat he was. But after 4 years his younger brother **Amenemhat V** got old enough to kill him, marry his wife, and take the throne of Egypt. By this time there was so much inbreeding, incest, and adultery in the royal family that the 13th Dynasty was plagued with defective births – 'idiots' to put it bluntly. They made weak and ineffective rulers. They regularly killed one another off to gain power and control. Some local rulers rebelled to rule their own Nomes. There were more than 20 Pharaohs during the 80 years following Amenemhat's death. Egypt suffered bitterly under their ineptitude and corruption.

But the sons of Israel flourished, growing strong and numerous. Joseph recognized the inbreeding problems in Egypt, and made laws against any of the Hebrews marrying half-sisters or close cousins. But with the huge influx of the Kasdim from all the surrounding nations, there was no need – they had plenty of distant relatives to choose from. They remained healthy and strong – and prosperous.

Joseph died in 1598 BC, at the age of 110. He was embalmed according to Hebrew traditions, and placed in a cedar coffin under the small pyramid behind his home. His dying request to his sons was to take his bones with them when they left Egypt, and re-bury him in Canaan. He still had faith that God would give them the land of Canaan, just as Logos had promised his fathers.

Grieving A'senath appealed to Pharaoh Amenemhat V. She reminded him of all that Joseph had done for Egypt. The Pharaoh's older counselors likewise reminded him, and urged him to announce an official period of mourning. He agreed, and imposed an entire year of mourning for all Egypt. He even set aside his royal crown and put on a dark robe himself. Joseph was truly honored, in death as in life. Egypt loved him more than any ruler before or since.

Amenemhat V never regained his crown. He died of political intrigue before the year was over. His youngest son **Amenemhat VI** was still too young to rule, and his other sons had been slain due to inbreeding imperfections. His viziers and counselors fought amongst themselves for control, and whenever one seemed able to take the throne, another one killed him. It was a bloody period. The result was six years with no Pharaoh in Egypt at all, until young Amenemhat VI managed to take the throne in 1592 BC. Unfortunately, he was just a spoiled kid and made a weak and ineffective ruler. Everyone hated him. He only lasted three years before his vizier **Sehetepibre** staged a coup. He took the throne and assassinated foolish Amenemhat VI, marrying the last remaining royal daughter to legitimize his lawless actions. The only good part about this horrible period in Egyptian history is that they had so many weak rulers, political intrigues, royal corruption, and palace revolts that they pretty much left the Hebrews alone.

But it wasn't just Egypt that was brought low and torn apart by strife and corruption. Satan had discovered how much fun it was to entice nations to war and bring their rulers down. Now he was doing it all over the globe.

The Amorite kings ruling Babylon, Shinar, and Mari had also become fat, lazy, and corrupt. Their weakness was noticed by the ambitious and ruthless Hittites, who invaded in 1595 BC. They overran the countryside, sacked Babylon, executed King **Samsuditana**, and replaced him with Hittite King **Mursili**. They tried to take over all of Mari, Shinar, and Assyria, too. That was a mistake! The Assyrians trounced them. The Hittites had overextended themselves. They were weakened to the point that the Kassites from the Zagros foothills managed to conquer north Babylonia in 1570 BC, and all of Shinar by 1475 BC. The wicked Amorites never regained their former power. Hurrians from the north (now known as the **Mitanni**) pushed the Amorites out of Mari. They fled west into Syria, but the Mitanni chased them out of there, too. So the Amorites moved into Canaan about 1560 BC, where they made alliances with the **Jebusites** and the **Anakim**. Together they conquered most of Canaan. The entire Middle East was a cauldron of strife and corruption. The peace and good laws established by Hammurabi only 200 years before were now replaced by oppression and violence. Power was king, and might became right.

What is now **Greece** also suffered under Satan's hand, as various city-states which had been settled by Javan's descendants fought each other. The **Trojans**, centered along the **Hellespont**, fought to control the **Mycenaeans** in eastern **Attica**, but were eventually overcome by them. The **Dorians** in **Macedonia** moved south, first fighting with the **Aeolians** in **Thessaly**, then the Mycenaeans, and finally taking the south half of **Peloponnese** from the **Achaeans**, who retained the north half. The **Ionians** from midwest Turkey also fought the aggressive Mycenaeans. They eventually 'won' by intermarrying with them.

The **Minoans** on Crete (descended from Mizraim's son Caphtor) had recovered from the catastrophes of 2715 – 2700 BC, when Saturn had come so close and the earth's crust had broken up. They managed to defend themselves against the warring Greeks. By 1500 BC they had a highly advanced civilization, modern architecture, plumbing, air-conditioning, luxurious palaces, exquisite art, jewelry, sculpture, frescoes, and carvings. Their merchant marine was the best in the world. Those warrior aristocracies of Greece tried several times, but could not overcome them.

The Pitu (Berbers) and Lubim (Libyans) in North Africa never recovered from those celestial catastrophes. They became even more war-like, fighting and bickering amongst themselves, which further slowed their recovery. They never again achieved the same level of civilization they had before there was a moon. That was also true of many other peoples, including the sons of Cush in upper Nubia (now the Sudan) and Ethiopia, and the various descendants of Ham and Shem who were now scattered throughout the Arabian peninsula. Several sons of Cush had migrated to Australia and South Africa. They barely survived; **Australian Aborigines**, and their relatives the **African Bushmen** and **Pygmy** races, are still among the most primitive people on earth. The past glories of their powerful and advanced Nubian heritage were forgotten in the day to day struggle for survival by bow and spear.

Cimmerians (from Gomer) north of the Black Sea, migrated throughout Europe, to settle in Spain, France, England, and Germany. Today they are known as the Welsh Celts. The Sythians from Togarma and Magog (also known as Magogians, from north of the Caspian Sea) also grew and migrated throughout the European theater. They ultimately became what we know as the Irish Celts, though for a time the two groups were called the **Celto-Scythae**. However, from the beginning, these various tribes fought each other for the land. They were fiercely independent and warlike. Later, **Latins** called them Galli; Romans called them **Gauls**. From them also came the **Goths**, **Ostrogoths**, **Visigoths**, **Teutons**, **Burgundians**, **Vandals**, **Jutes**, and **Galatians**.

Ashkenaz (also from Gomer) wrote a different story. His family, known as the **Askaeni**, had stayed behind when the rest of Gomer's sons left the Zagros foothills for the Black Sea. They struggled to survive the close pass of Saturn, the following 58th close pass of Mars, and the terrible damage from the 61st flyby of Mars in 2610 BC. Finally they also could take no more, so they followed their kin into what is now Europe. But everywhere they went their brothers fought with them and rejected them. Struggling to retain their identity, they moved on, finally finding a frozen empty land northwest of their brothers. They adapted to the cold and eventually flourished there. They named it after themselves: **Ascania**. It later became **Scandia**, and finally **Scandinavia**. **Askaeni** morphed into **Sakasanoi**, then **Sachsen**, and finally **Saxons**.

Only a few thousand of the Tamoanchan had survived in Central America after Saturn stole their heartland. The tragedy splintered them into little groups, of which the primary survivors were the **Mexica** (who called their lost heartland **Aztlan** and later were called **Aztecs**), the **Olmec**, the **Nahua**, and the **Mayans**. They recovered quickly after the catastrophic pass of Saturn. By about 1500 BC those four had grown strong, though not particularly civilized. They became mighty warriors, given to idolatry and bloodshed, fighting each other. They built great pyramids as earthquake-proof temples to their bloodthirsty gods. Other splinter groups from the Tamoanchan fled their violence back into North America as the glaciers receded. A few went down into South America as well. These tiny groups barely survived, and remain primitive to this day.

A family group had formed in western Europe made up of Canaanites who had intermarried with a family of Tiras, son of Japheth. After the Tower of Babel catastrophe, some of them migrated across a land bridge north of Atlantis to Newfoundland, but advancing glaciers from the Ice Age forced them south. They populated the Carolinas, then migrated to Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and finally back north to Minnesota and the Dakotas about 2600 BC after Saturn warmed the earth and the glaciers receded. They are called **Siouans** or **Sioux**; from them came our native American Indians. They were originally a peace-loving people, but again, Satan incited them to split up into warring tribes; by 1800 BC they were among the most cruel savages on earth, never really becoming civilized.

Many of this same group stayed in England and France. As the earth warmed they migrated north to Greenland / Iceland (which were connected then), where they became known as **Lapps**. Some then went east to become the **Yukaghir** in Siberia. Others went west to Newfoundland and Northern Canada, to become **Eskimos** or **Aleuts**.

This is probably the last time I will interrupt my story with the development of ancient civilizations, as from now on you can fit them in their proper place into history as you have been taught. History books (until now) could not accurately go further back than about 1600 BC, since all historical records before this were lost in the repeated catastrophes. For some cultures, histories before this were never even written down, as they continually suffered the close passes of the planets and the warlike nature of other cultures around them. Some cultures never re-developed the ability to read or write their new, difficult languages after their brains were fried at the tower of Babel. These were brilliant people – smarter than men today. Most had photographic memories (which made writing much less important). But after generations of disasters repeatedly wiping out their cultures, they were beginning to forget the advanced civilization they had before the Flood. What they remembered was told from father to son in myths, legends, and epic poems, which we who have such lousy memories now regard as fables.

Writing histories or rebuilding their civilizations took a back seat to survival. Modern historians made guesses, using inadequate information and logic corrupted by their hatred of God. They termed these early struggling cultures 'prehistoric', pretending that they were primitive people evolving from ape-men. But now that you know how these cultures actually developed, you will no longer be fooled. History books tell of the aggressive nature of many of these ancient cultures, but they never explained why. Now you know. Satan was angry, and from about 2700 BC on he worked to incite all the peoples to war.

There are two notable exceptions to those wars and corruption which by 1600 BC had spread all over the globe: the Sinites and the West Indians.

The Sinites (from Canaan's son Seni, or Sin) had not only survived, they had flourished. As you recall, they had very nearly frozen in their Sin-kiang Valley after the close pass of Saturn which formed our moon. They had first traveled east across what is now the Gobi Desert (it was not a desert then) until they connected with the Huang Ho (Yellow River). They followed that east and south to lower elevations where they found warmth in what is now the Shaanchi district of central China. They named their first city Chang-An, meaning 'perpetual peace'. It was ruled by Siang Fu, meaning 'Father Seni'. By 2600 BC they had developed a prosperous, stable, and peaceful society. From them came all the **Mongol** (Oriental) races. They remained pretty isolated for a thousand years, developing their own civilization, language, script, and culture. They worshiped the Creator God, 'Shangdi' in their language. They kept the Sabbath, and their leaders would offer a blood sacrifice (usually a bull) once a year for the sins of the people. They also venerated Noah (whom they called Nu Wa) and his wife Fuchi (Fu Xi) as the survivors of the Flood and the progenitors of humankind since then. (That legend, though perverted, remains today.) Seni ruled for centuries. He was succeeded by **Shennong**, a humble but wise man, now known as the father of Chinese Medicine.

The **Elamites** in Persia became quite warlike after the Tower of Babel catastrophe. But among them were a few peace-loving families who intermarried with some of the sons of Madai in 3175 BC and fled the Middle East in search of peace. They first settled at Mehrgarh, in an upper river basin between what is now Iran and Pakistan. There they lived in peace for many years, developing their own language and recovering their society with no outside interference. Though they venerated Old Man Noah, they weren't particularly religious. But they cared about one another, and worked hard to develop practical things to make their lives easier. They achieved rather advanced levels of farming, architecture, metal-working, medicine, dentistry, sanitation, and hygiene – enough to found the most modern cities of their era. They excelled in the arts and crafts, including theatre and the dance, with lovely jewelry, costumes, beadwork, and musical instruments.

The close pass of Saturn in 2715 BC did not harm them, but the cold which followed did. Many left the high river basin in search of warmth, going southeast into the Indus River Valley. There they started what is known as the **Harappan** civilization. Due to their peaceful nature, they rapidly developed into one of the most advanced cultures of their time. They excelled as traders, thus prospering abundantly. Their descendants continued east to populate what is now southern India, then farther into Indo-China and Indonesia. There they intermarried with the local Mongols in the 16th and 15th centuries BC to form all the southeast Asia and **Pacific Island** races. Though their religion has now been corrupted into idolatry, their early veneration of Noah is still hinted at in the name of the chief Hindu god Vishnu, which means 'Old Man Noah'. I am sad to report that as they foolishly allowed their religion to degenerate into idolatry and virulent pantheism, their idyllic culture suffered the natural consequences. Most of them now are neither as civilized nor as prosperous as their forefathers the Harappans.

Other than the West Indian Harappans and the Sinites, most of the cultures of the world were struggling with wars, corruption, strife, and famine. Righteousness and wisdom were scarce on the earth, and Satan was having a field day. By the end of the 17th century BC, Sobeknefru's two bastard sons were ruining Egypt in what we call the Second Intermediate Period. But the descendants of Jacob, now known as the 'Children of Israel', had grown mighty and prosperous, strengthened by the copious influx of the Kasdim. Among them, **Amram** was born to **Kohath** son of Levi at the age of 48 in 1615 BC. In the line of the Messiah, **Hezron** was born two years later to Pharez at the age of 52. Levi, who had three sons (**Gershon**, **Kohath**, and **Merari**), lost his wife in 1618 BC; he was 105. He married a younger daughter of the Kasdim and in 1614 BC she bore him **Jochebed**. Many others were born to the family of Israel, but these are important to our story.

Their father Levi died in 1582 BC at the age of 137; Amram and Jochebed found comfort in each other's arms. Though Jochebed was his aunt, they were nearly the same age. They married in 1578 BC, when Amram was 37 and Jochebed 36. But the Lord was not pleased that Amram should marry the half-sister of his own father in defiance of Joseph's strict command, and He closed Jochebed's womb for a long time.

Now I must discuss the planets again, this time in a fairly complex sequence of interactions that no one fully understands. Please bear with me. This is crucial to our story. You know about Jupiter and Saturn, which no longer directly threatened Earth, yet controlled the orbit of Mars. And of course you know about Mars, locked in its resonant elliptical orbit which crossed earth's orbit every 2 years. It still was coming dangerously close every 6 years and catastrophically close every 30 years because of the 12 and 30 year orbits of Jupiter and Saturn.

Now please recall the lovely trinary which had been 'birthed' by Jupiter in 3300 BC. We know it as Venus, with Mercury and Phaeton circling as moons around it. Their comet-tails streamed out millions of miles, pointing away from Sol. The tails of the two moons twirled in graceful spirals around the central tail of Venus to form a **caduceus** in the sky. [See Preface.] As part of her new religion, Ishtar had named Venus Astarte, after herself. Its two moons then became her two jealous twin sisters **Ereshkigal** (Mercury) and **Allatu** (Phaeton). It had been gloriously beautiful in the sky, and it was worshiped over most of the world as the goddess of love – when it was far away!

However, its orbit was non-resonant, rapidly decaying, and sharply elliptical. It crossed the orbits of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, and by 1600 BC its orbit had decayed so much that it was nearing Earth's orbit, too. Plus, the planets had pulled it to within 8 degrees of the ecliptic plane. It was still going pretty fast, but the drag of all these planetary interactions was slowing its orbital speed to the point where it was sure to lock in to a resonant orbit somewhere.

But Satan did not want a resonant orbit! He had big plans for this renegade trinary. He had learned a lot from his many years of using Mars to terrify the earth. One thing he knew for sure: resonant orbits prevent collisions. Half a dozen times he had done his darndest to bring Mars in to collide with Earth. Though he had gotten very close, its resonant orbit always corrected itself within a few passes.

But something else he knew: Venus had two moons, and moons are easy to guide into collision once they are pried away from their parent planet. So he had formulated a master plan for Venus. It was really rather simple. The only hard part was the waiting, until its normal orbital decay brought it near Earth. Patience has never been one of Satan's strong points, but Venus is just too large for him to manage the huge orbital changes he had in mind, even using all his demons, so he had no choice.

Earth's astronomers could easily see that Venus was being drawn ever closer. They began to study it intently. It was beginning to cause substantial fear and consternation. Astrologers (and the Magi still in Babylon) prophesied future cataclysm. The goddess of love now became the goddess of war. It began to be feared even more than Mars. The fear of the unknown played games in their minds. Its decaying orbit was unstable and was impossible to predict. Immense static charges made the pull of the other planets especially fierce in those days, and the Magi were unable to calculate their effects on the trinary. Its tails were shorter now than at its 'birth', but it appeared larger because it was ten times closer, and getting closer yet with each orbit.

Satan loved that fear, and he worked to multiply it in their minds. Of course his master plan for Venus involved maximizing the terror. He never did get it straight in his mind which he preferred – tormenting people to death, or receiving their willing worship out of their fear of him.

When he toyed with the planets, he got quite a bit of both. He loved his 'toys'! He took time off from inciting wars and corruption to make sure the Venus trinary was properly lined up for his master plan. First he would pass Venus near Earth, but not too close! All he wanted now was to slow it down a little more. He knew Earth's orbit was stable; he would simply duplicate it, except tipped just a few degrees from the ecliptic plane. When Venus crossed the ecliptic near Earth, he could easily peel off a moon, terrorize everyone with it, and collide it in some highly populated area to cause the most death and destruction.

Then, after both its moons were gone, Venus would settle down into the ecliptic plane exactly over Earth's orbit. But since Venus has 20% less mass than Earth, its speed would have to be 20% greater to remain in the same orbit. Thus within a few years it would overtake the Earth – slowly, to maximize the fear – on collision course.

Michael was becoming worried. Logos had always encouraged him to have faith – to simply do his job and trust that Satan would not get the upper hand. But it was obvious to Michael that Satan was planning to collide Venus into Earth. Venus was a free comet. Even big comets can be manipulated if you plan well ahead and are patient. He went to Gavriel, highest of the archangels.

"Gavriel, look at Logos' Bride in Egypt. They prosper abundantly. Satan doesn't even try to trouble them. Why, in no time, they could be even stronger than the Pharaoh's armies! But the rest of the world is troubled by pestilence, wars, crime, immorality, hate, bickering, and struggles for survival. I think Satan stopped harassing the Bride because he intends to just destroy them with the Venus trinary. It's getting pretty close now. Satan is working to make people all over the world terrified of it, even more than Mars. It's pretty obvious to me that he's planning a collision, soon, before Venus gets locked into resonance. Do you think Satan could actually pull it off?"

Gavriel didn't know either, so they returned to the throne room. "Logos," Gavriel began, "Venus is nearing Earth. We think Satan must be plotting to use it to destroy Your people in Egypt. Otherwise, why has he left them free of oppression for so long?"

Michael added. "We do trust You, Logos. I just want to know how best to protect Your Bride from this new attack. We seek Your wisdom here."

"Thank you, My friends. You are both doing your jobs just fine. You need not fear Satan's schemes. He did not get permission to harm My Bride. Therefore she not only will not be harmed by this new attack – she will be blessed by it. You shall see. As I told you, when Satan tries to harm My Bride without My permission, every atom of the universe conspires against him to turn it into a blessing instead."

"Well, la de da! We'll just see about that. Blessing indeed!" Suddenly Satan himself was there, jeering.

“Lucifer, My beloved adversary! I’m glad you’ve come. I wanted to express My gratefulness to you for sparing My Bride any troubles for so long. They prosper abundantly. Egypt has been very good to them. Have you noticed how numerous and strong they have become? Or have you forgotten your accusation that My promises to make a great nation of Heber and his descendants had failed?”

Satan’s eyes grew big as he realized the truth. While he was going all over the earth teaching nations to war and hate and covet, it seemed like almost overnight Heber’s descendants had grown into a mighty nation – the **Hebrews!** It was that big famine he had caused. It had drawn all the Kasdim together in Egypt, into one family – the Children of Israel! Suddenly Satan understood. All his efforts to harm the Bride had indeed turned into a blessing for the Hebrews, just as Logos had said. Satan turned and fled without another word.

As is usual in one who is self-deceived, Satan wrongly concluded that the Hebrews only prospered because he had stopped oppressing them. *So... he would change his tactics. The world had never seen oppression like he would rain down upon them!*

Neferhotep I of the 13th Dynasty was Pharaoh at the time. He was weak and foolish, but Satan knew how to fix that. Using his idolatry as an open door, Satan personally possessed him, to multiply his own attitudes of arrogance, hatred, and cruelty. The first outward evidence of that appeared in Neferhotep’s new thirst for more power and control. He began restoring the glories of Egypt, which had greatly declined from the height of its power during the time of Joseph and Amenemhat.

The Amorites under King **Enten** had conquered all of Phoenicia and part of Philistia; Neferhotep subdued the Amorites and restored Egyptian control over western Canaan, and over the Sinai Peninsula as well. The next year he sent his armies south to reconquer Nubia (which had gained its freedom since Joseph’s days). Now Egypt had a strong Pharaoh and was again a major world power for the first time since Queen Sobeknefru had assassinated Amenemhat III. Modern scholars think that Neferhotep I was a powerful ruler, but now you know the truth. He was just a weak fool, inspired and empowered by Satan.

But Satan didn’t stop there. He slyly planted an idea in Neferhotep’s mind: “Behold, the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. We must deal wisely with them, lest they align themselves with our enemies!” His old advisors warned him against touching the Hebrews, telling him that they were blessed by a stronger God than all the gods of Egypt, and reminding him of how the Hebrew God, YHWH, had saved the whole world through Joseph only two generations before. But Neferhotep listened instead to his younger advisors, who had never known Joseph. They advised him to enslave the Hebrews before they grew too strong to be enslaved.

It was 1542 BC, 56 years after Joseph’s death. Israel’s sons had all died (the last, Levi, had died in 1582 BC at the age of 137). Ephraim and Manasseh had also died. The thirteen Nomes of Goshen were now ruled by grandsons and great-grandsons of Israel. They ruled well, and the entire land of Goshen prospered with them. In fact, many thousands of Hebrews were involved throughout the rest of Egypt as well, in all the various trades and industries as well as in politics. They filled the land. They were smart and worked hard. They had proven themselves skilled, responsible, and faithful. The Egyptians loved them! They knew that their own prosperity and peace were due in part to the Hebrews and the blessing of their God, YHWH.

So Neferhotep had a problem. How could he enslave the Hebrews when his own people loved them? Satan was right there with a whispered solution: “Use the Nubians!” Neferhotep missed it at first. The Nubians were way up south and Goshen was way down north. In a surprising spate of patience, Satan kept whispering, day after day, until Neferhotep finally went up to Kerma to discuss the matter with King Cush (back then Nubian kings were known by their founder’s name, Cush). King Cush readily agreed to a deal: instead of monetary tribute (which had been a big burden for him), Nubia would supply some of their young men to help Neferhotep rule the Hebrews. He started by offering him one of his bodyguards, a huge, incredibly strong and fierce warrior whom we only know by his Egyptian name, **Nehesy Aasehre**, ‘the Nubian’.

When he returned to Lisht, Neferhotep gathered his young advisors around, proudly showed off big Nehesy Aasehre, and told them of ‘his’ plan.

“The Hebrews are taking over Egypt!” he said. “I have decided we must carefully control them before we become servants in our own country. I hereby order that beginning next month, no Hebrew shall be permitted to remain a Nomarch. Instead, I shall appoint Nomarchs from among the Nubians for the thirteen Nomes of Goshen. They shall take their orders from Nehesy Aasehre here. He shall be my Pharaoh at Avaris, second in Egypt only to me.” He stopped and with a grand flourish presented his official ring to Nehesy. “He has come with his family to move into the royal mansion that our fathers built for Joseph. He is totally loyal to me. He will keep those precious Hebrews in their proper place in our land.”

So that is what happened. Nehesy called himself “Seth, Lord of Avaris.” He brought all his family and moved into Joseph’s home. The Hebrew Nomarchs were deposed and replaced with Nubians. At first, not much changed. The Hebrews remained prosperous and free to pursue their various trades throughout Egypt. But Nehesy slowly and methodically replaced with Nubians or Egyptians any Hebrews in positions of authority. He also strengthened his police force and made laws to control the Hebrews.

From Avaris Nehesy took control of much of the Nile Delta. This began the 14th Egyptian Dynasty, concurrent with the 13th at Lisht. Nehesy ruled well, wisely, with the full support of Pharaoh Neferhotep. Goshen continued to prosper for many years. At first the Hebrews complained about their Nubian Nomarchs and all the petty little laws slowly restricting their freedoms, but it was easier to just adjust. Life goes on. Like the proverbial frog in the pot of water over the fire, their loss of freedoms increased so slowly that they barely noticed until it was too late.

One day Nehesy announced the Pharaoh's grand plan to build cities at **Tanis** (just north of Avaris, now known as **Pi-Rameses**) and **Pi-Atom** (**Pithom**, just south of Avaris) in Goshen. Egypt was now a first-world power, and these glorious treasure cities would display Egypt's greatness. Since nearly all the workers in Goshen were Hebrews, Nehesy hired only Hebrews to build the treasure cities. In fact, he asked for Hebrews from all around Egypt to come help – all who were not in charge of the Pharaoh's flocks and herds. Nearly all the Hebrews willingly came – it was good employment, close to home, and Nehesy treated them well. He knew better than to abuse them – they were still far too strong and numerous for him to control.

But now that he had them all in Goshen working for him, Nehesy Aasehre began shrewdly applying pressure. He appointed Nubian taskmasters over them who did not love them like the Egyptians did. He lengthened their hours and reduced their wages – always slowly, over a period of years – so they would not rebel. He gave whips and rods to his taskmasters, with instructions to beat them if they slacked off or broke any of his many rules.

Strangely, the Hebrews seemed to love the hard labor. They thrived, and continued to multiply and prosper. The long hours and short wages seemed to only make them stronger and wealthier. Nehesy and Neferhotep, being idolaters, could not understand it, but you and I can. The Hebrews had gotten a bit complacent in their worship of Logos. But with the oppression, they began to get serious again, calling out to God for forgiveness and cleansing. With their restored relationship with their Creator, they also received His covering, so everything that Nehesy tried to do to them turned into a blessing.

Amram and Jochebed, for example, cried out to God for forgiveness and cleansing, repenting of their improper marriage. (Jochebed was Amram's aunt, half-sister of his father.) Logos heard and forgave. Finally, after 37 years, He opened Jochebed's womb. She bore **Miriam** in 1540 BC, and **Aaron** in 1534 BC when they were 80 years old.

The oppression grew more serious. Neferhotep worked to instill a national pride in young Egyptians – they began thinking of the Hebrews as a lower class. Their love for the Hebrews was behind the times, only for the elderly. The modern generation of Egyptians joined in the oppression. Now that they had slaves, their own lives were easier.

Still the Hebrews multiplied and prospered. But the rulers of Egypt did not do so well. Neferhotep's family was badly inbred due to their custom of marrying only within the royal family. His sons, Wahneferhotep and Sihathor, had turned out to be mental midgets, and were slain. That left Neferhotep without an heir. In desperation, he had his vizier, **Sobekhotep IV**, marry his oldest daughter **Bathiah**. But no. Year after year she remained barren.

Neferhotep was furious! Those Hebrews were breeding like rabbits and he couldn't get a single perfect heir! It was time to take the gloves off. He ordered that all the Hebrew midwives must come before him.

"The Hebrews are having too many boy babies," he told them. As they knelt and bowed before him, he gave them a command that made even his own household shudder. As soon as a Hebrew baby boy was born, before he even drew his first breath, the midwives were to hold him tightly over his face and let him die. Only if the baby was a girl could they take the normal steps to allow her to breathe.

Of course the midwives, who feared God more than they feared the Pharaoh, would never obey that terrible command. So the Hebrews continued to multiply and grew ever stronger. When called back on the carpet before the Pharaoh, the midwives lied about it, saying that the Hebrew women were too quick for them, giving birth just an hour or two after going into labor. So by the time the midwives got there the baby boys were already breathing.

Logos does not normally condone lying. But He doesn't condone killing babies, either, especially of His own Bride. He rewarded the midwives for their protection and care of His precious little ones, by giving them good husbands and children of their own.

But old Neferhotep... you have never faced such anger! His countenance red from rage, he screamed out his new orders: all Hebrew boy babies must be cast into the Nile, sacrificed to Sobek the crocodile god!

Logos sent Gavriel to summon Satan into His presence. Satan was rather busy inspiring Neferhotep, but he was also curious. This was the first time in 2000 years that he had been directly summoned to the throne room. Against his own intuition, he came.

He was prepared with a sneering remark about Logos being ready to concede, but Logos spoke first. "Thank you for coming, My beloved adversary. I'm concerned for you, as you seem to have lost your temper. Unbridled anger begets mistakes. You are persecuting My Bride without My permission. Have you not seen how that just helps her and hurts you? You've made a mistake inspiring Pharaoh to kill the Hebrew baby boys. My law of sowing and reaping says that it will be a Hebrew baby boy thrown into the river who will defeat your plan, and bring down the Pharaoh and all of Egypt. All the harm you intend for my Bride will only make her strong and set her free to possess the land."

Logos paused, so Satan jumped right in. “Anger is a good thing, You fool!” he shouted. Surrounding angels gave an involuntary shriek in horror. Such condemning language was not usually permitted – or even possible – in the throne room. “Don’t You see that great anger begets great *strength – power – control*?” He emphasized each word with an angry shake of his head. “I am winning! I am harming Your Bride without Your permission, and I’m doing quite well at it. I have already slain over a thousand Hebrew baby boys – if for no other reason, just to prove to You that my ways win over Yours. I control Your Bride! Through Neferhotep and Nehesy I can force her to do whatever I want! They may not all bow to me yet, but they are my slaves, just like the rest of the world, and there is absolutely nothing You can do about it! Not one blessed thing! You’ve lost! Your weak, wimpy love is...”

“Satan!” Logos thundered out. Satan shut up abruptly, his eyes wide, while all the angels gasped at the unheard-of interruption and violence of His tone-of-voice. Even so there were tears in His eyes as He spoke. “I also am full of awesome anger. Wrath the likes of which you cannot even imagine! But in your self-deception you have twisted the truth. Anger by itself does not beget true strength, power, or control – it only sows the seeds of its own destruction. All it creates is an empty shell, the self-centered illusion of power and control. It may look strong, but its foundation is rotten, and it shall fall.

“My wrath is of a different nature, and is in fact at the very core and support of My holiness and My love. For My wrath is never by itself. It is always blended with My love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – My righteousness. It is only because I love you, dear Lucifer, that I am full of wrath against that which will destroy you. You are here only by My invitation and are not slain at My holy presence because of the balance between My wrath at your villainy – killing My precious ones...” now the tears were flowing freely down Logos’ face, “and My great love, patience, and kindness toward you. But I swear to you, if you cannot receive My love, cannot repent, cannot learn the wisdom I’ve been trying so desperately to teach you, then one day My patience toward you will reach an end and you shall experience the full measure of My wrath. You shall be banished from My presence, barred from heaven, and sent to experience in full My law of sowing and reaping. Every pain, every death you caused shall return upon your own head. All the suffering you have caused others shall be yours in full, until you truly repent and bow before Me.”

Logos paused, awaiting Satan’s response, but he was speechless. He stood in awe of the power of Logos’ words and the violence of the fire flashing from His countenance. Satan nearly bowed before the throne then and there. It took everything he had to hold his head high and walk away. Finally he recovered enough to repeat petulantly, “I’ll show You hate is stronger than love! I’ll show You!”

Gavriel knelt before Logos, who put His arm around him. They wept there together for a time. “Did he even hear You?” Gavriel whispered.

“Yes. He heard. But in his self-deception he does not want to hear and could not receive. Maybe he will receive when My promises come to pass...” and again Gavriel was awed that Logos’ love never seemed to give up or His patience to run out. “Go, dear Gavriel. Tell Michael and his host that Satan has gone too far. They are to protect My precious ones from Satan’s anger by whatever means is required. No more Hebrew babies shall die!”

Gavriel took the good news to Michael. Together they discussed how to accomplish it. Thousands of Egyptian and Nubian taskmasters now worked for Nehesy Aasehre. They strictly enforced his commands. When Neferhotep’s order came to them about casting the Hebrews boy babies into the Nile, they too were horrified. But an order is an order, and they made sure it happened. Every few months they would take a tour through their districts, looking for baby boys. Any they found under two years old would be immediately tossed into the Nile, and his parents would be whipped for their disobedience.

But Michael remembered back to 2734 BC when the Chaldeans had forced the Kasdim to throw their babies into the Euphrates – and how the Kasdim had responded by putting them in baskets first, allowing godly Shelah to save most of them. Michael and his host immediately whispered reminders of that story throughout the land of Goshen. Young mothers, desperate for anything to save their babies, heard the angelic whispers readily, and began making baskets for their baby boys. Young fathers also heard, and organized baby retrieval stations and nurseries, hidden at various strategic locations down the Nile. The men took shifts watching for baskets drifting down the Nile. Mothers volunteered at the secret nurseries to nurse the babies that were recovered. When they were two years old, they would be returned to their own mothers.

It worked. No more Hebrew babies died. Extra-heavy angelic protection over the secret nurseries prevented the taskmasters from finding them. Even Satan was prevented from seeing what was happening to the baby boys after they were put into the baskets and set adrift in the river. Thus the Hebrews continued to multiply and prosper. Logos was very pleased.

Amram and Jochebed had another baby, just three years after Aaron’s birth. He was beautiful, perfect in every way. They somehow knew he would be special. There was no way they were going to let him be eaten by crocodiles! They circumcised him on the eighth day and named him Ben-Amram, after his father. But the very next day, their taskmaster, a cruel Nubian named Nickerty, very nearly caught them! Jochebed only escaped by quickly putting her crying baby to her breast while Amram distracted Nickerty away from her hiding place.

They developed better hiding places and a warning system to keep from getting caught. But Nickerty knew Jochebed had been pregnant, and he didn't see any baby girls around. So he kept nosing around suspiciously at odd times. Energetic Ben-Amram grew strong, and developed a healthy pair of lungs. After three months of this, poor Jochebed was worn to a frazzle. They had to do something!

Reluctantly, Jochebed made a reed basket. Amram tarred it carefully to make it water-tight. They all went together down to the Nile. After one last good feeding, changing his diaper, and wrapping him up in his special blankie, he was placed into the basket and launched. Jochebed was crying. Nine-year-old Miriam was crying, too, even as she tried to comfort her mother. Amram took a long pole and began pushing the basket through the reeds toward open water. But he had barely begun when their neighbor came running. "Nickerty is at your house, asking for you. He found some baby stuff. He's sure you're hiding a baby boy. He seems really angry. You'd better run home."

"Miriam, you hide there in that stand of scrub brush and keep an eye on Ben-Amram. We'll be back as soon as we can." And they took off after their neighbor up the hill. Miriam did as she was told, settling down in her hiding place, but breaking off enough branches so she could see the basket. It sure wasn't going anywhere. The Nile was slow this time of year anyway, but the basket was still caught in the reeds well away from the current. At least it would be pretty well hidden if anyone else happened by. Morning passed, and Miriam's tummy began to remind her it was almost lunch-time. She ignored it and waited. Her baby brother was more important than lunch.

About noon the sun poked through the papyrus stalks and cattails to beat down on the basket. Ben-Amram had begun to cry. Though his father had made good ventilation and a cover to shield him from the sun, yet he was hot, and wet, and hungry, and he just wanted the world to know. Poor Miriam didn't know what to do. Her parents must be having a tough time with that old Nickerty! She wondered if the water was deep, and if a crocodile would eat her if she waded out to comfort Ben-Amram. Then she heard voices.

It was a gaggle of Egyptian ladies, wearing the regalia of the Pharaoh's palace. Oh no! Miriam recognized Princess Bathiah, daughter of Neferhotep and wife of his vizier, Sobekhotep IV. He had just become Pharaoh the previous year (1532 BC) so Bathiah was the new queen! Still barren, she came once a week to bathe in the Nile River god **Hapi** (a fertility god) in hopes of presenting the new Pharaoh with an heir. She would have passed by, but she heard a baby's cries, and sent her maidservants out to find the baby.

Poor Ben-Amram was now howling in earnest. Bathiah lifted him out of the basket to cuddle and rock him, but the crying continued. She put him to her breast, and he sucked eagerly for a bit as Bathiah stroked his head. But she had no milk. Soon the crying started again. She looked around.

"It's one of the Hebrew babies. He's perfect!" She held him high, little hands and feet flailing. "Anyone here able to nurse him? I want to keep him! He is my gift from Hapi!" Her ladies-in-waiting giggled and twittered, but no one stepped up to take him.

Little Miriam could wait no longer. Her baby brother was in trouble, and her parents weren't around to tell her what to do. She had to make the decision herself. She ran down to Bathiah, and boldly asked the obvious. "Do you need a wet-nurse, Your Highness? Shall I call for one from among the Hebrew women, that she may serve you?"

There was a pause as Bathiah put two and two together. She was no dummy. *Surely this must be the baby's sister and she was offering to get their mother. Perhaps that was a good thing – who better to love and care for the child than his own mother?* "Go," she answered. "Bring her."

Miriam turned and ran like the wind, her face flushed and her heart pounding with the fear that she had done the wrong thing and the hope that she had saved her baby brother. Soon Jochebed was standing, head bowed, before Bathiah. "Your Majesty the Queen! I am at your service."

Ben-Amram was still wailing woefully, enough to melt the heart of any woman. Bathiah handed him to Jochebed without a word, watching her closely. Jochebed didn't need to be told what to do. She put Ben-Amram to her now painfully full breast. The crying stopped. Queen Bathiah's eyebrows went up, and a faint smile curled the bright red lips on her painted face. "Where do you live?" she asked.

"Your servant lives two miles yonder, Your Majesty." Jochebed pointed with her nose. A slight smile played around her lips, too.

"That is good. You must live only a few miles from my palace. Take the child. Nurse him for me. Bring him to me at the palace each morning at 10:00. I will enjoy him for a while, then release you to take him back to care for at your home. I will pay you a good wage if you are faithful to me."

"Yes, Your Majesty. I will be faithful."

"I will assign you two of my female guards. They will place my ensign on your house so no one will bother you. They will help with your household chores, and escort you to my palace and back. Here is my ring. Wear it at all times. If anyone questions you about the baby, show them my ring and tell them he is mine. Do you have any questions?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. What will you call him?"

"Oh. Good question." She thought for a moment, then said, "Mes! [which in Egyptian can mean both 'newborn', and 'drawn out'. It is Moeshe in Hebrew, and **Moses** in English. For ease of understanding for all my dear Readers, I shall use the English from now on.] Because I drew him out of the water!" She laughed at her own pun.

"Thank you, Your Majesty." Jochebed bowed low.

CHAPTER 34 – MOSES THE FUGITIVE RULER

Amram and Jochebed praised Logos for the incredible miracle. They could raise their baby boy as they chose, and that old black Nickerty couldn't touch them! They were always careful to be obedient, respectful, and punctual, as Bathiah's loyal servants. She accepted their service with gratitude, and even granted them Sabbaths and holy days off. The next year Queen Bathiah had a normal and lovely daughter, **Genirah**. Perfect! *If Moses were to marry the Princess Genirah, perhaps he could be the next Pharaoh.*

Amram and Jochebed now became more than servants to Bathiah; they became friends. The queen treated them well for Moses' sake. She knew they were educating him in the Hebrew culture when he was home. But that was okay with her. She wanted to learn about the Hebrew culture herself. She was still having him educated in the wisdom and knowledge of the Egyptians when he was at the palace. Often she invited the whole family over to the palace for dinner – and some very challenging discussions. Amram's family learned to be totally bi-cultural and bi-lingual.

Moses grew to be everything Bathiah had hoped for: brilliant, handsome, athletic – he looked and acted every inch the prince. In comparison, her own son Khahotepre (whom we know as **Sobekhotep V**, two years younger than Moses) was physically whole, but homely and dim witted, even to his mother, which says a lot. Bathiah later regretted letting him live. Over the following years she had other sons and daughters. Most had to be slain at birth, and of the few who were allowed to live, only her daughter Genirah turned out to be normal. So she stuck with her original plan. At the age of twenty, Moses would marry the Princess Genirah to become the next Pharaoh.

Moses was quite happy with this arrangement. Genirah was truly beautiful, as well as smart, gracious, and kind. Growing up in the same household, they learned to love and respect each other deeply. They made plans how they would rule Egypt together, and how they would treat the Hebrew slaves. When he became Pharaoh, things would be different! Egypt would be restored to her former glory under Joseph. Egypt's false gods would be deposed and only the one true God worshiped. Hebrews would again be given honored places throughout the kingdom.

Alas it was not to be. When Bathiah spoke of her plan to her husband Sobekhotep IV, he threw a hissy-fit. *No Hebrew would ever rule in his kingdom! They were slaves. His own son would rule after him!* So when Khahotepre reached the age of eighteen (1511 BC), against the counsel of all his advisors, Sobekhotep officially crowned him co-regent with himself. (Historians call him Sobekhotep V.) It was an unmitigated disaster. His utter ineptitude and stupidity were only exceeded by his arrogance and cruelty. After three unbearable months he and his foolish father were thankfully slain in a palace conspiracy by two of his advisors, the brothers **Laib** and **Ay**.

Bathiah was caught off guard. Before she knew what was happening, Laib, supported by his younger brother, took lovely Princess Genirah as his wife and declared himself the new Pharaoh. Fearing for their lives, Queen Bathiah fled to Amram's home to warn Moses' family. But before they could decide what to do, Laib's soldiers caught them and brought them all before the new Pharaoh.

Laib (who now called himself **Wahibre**) got right to the point. "You are alive only because my wife Genirah has interceded for you. But you are banished from the palace grounds forever. If my guards catch any of you here again, I will have you instantly slain. Do you understand?"

Poor Moses was having a tough time with this. Still, he spoke humbly. "Yes, Your Majesty. But I am betrothed to Genirah! Has she agreed to this?"

Laib Wahibre merely grunted and pointed his false chin beard toward his new wife. Genirah spoke up, "Yes, dear Moses. I agreed to become his wife, in exchange for your lives. I was given no other choice. I'm sorry. He has spared your lives only because I told him that if he had any of you killed, I would kill myself. He knows I love you, and that I would do it, too. So please, flee, all of you, and never come here again. And thank you for caring for my mom!" She dissolved in tears, saying good-bye between sobs.

But Moses was not done. He stood tall and spoke boldly to the new Pharaoh. "I will do as you say. Thank you for sparing our lives. Please be good to Genirah, as we all love her dearly. And please, be good to our brothers, the Hebrew race, for I see that you also are descended in part from the Hebrews." (Laib and Ay were Hebrew half-breeds from Avaris.) "And please, remember Father YHWH, the one true God, the God of our – your – fathers."

At this audacious reminder of his heritage, Laib's anger flared. "I'll treat them more harshly than you can possibly imagine!" he screamed. "I am an Egyptian! I renounced the God of the Hebrews – when did He ever help us? Now I am Pharaoh! I am god of all Egypt! I am your god! Get out of my sight. Never see my face again."

Realizing that arguing with such anger was impossible, Moses sadly turned to go. He gently put an arm around the shoulders of both his mother and his adopted mother as they went out of the palace. Everyone was weeping except him. He was too stunned to weep. Everything was lost. Everything he had ever worked for, believed for, dreamed for. All his education, his training to become Pharaoh, his plans to help Egypt, his religious education through his birth parents, his hope to enlighten the country in the ways of Logos and His Father YHWH, even his beloved Genirah with whom he had grown up – whom he loved as dearly as his own life! – all... gone.

No, not quite all gone. He still had Bathiah, whom he loved like his own mother. He hugged her. She was now a widow. Finally he began to weep.

They reached his birth home. Though a tiny, humble cottage, Queen Bathiah had visited often. They gathered there to discuss what they must do. Amram wanted to flee – perhaps to Philistia or Edom. Moses wanted to stay and gather an army of Hebrews to fight Laib before he got too powerful and entrenched. Surely many of the Egyptians hated him too, and would join them for Bathiah's sake. Finally they asked her what she thought.

"It is true. I am still queen mother, and many Egyptians will stand with me." She waved to the door; outside stood a dozen brave warriors who were totally loyal and would defend her to the death. "But no... We cannot win, pitting Egypt against Egypt, because the battle is not in physical strength or numbers. Once the Pharaoh dies and another replaces him, there is no more question in the minds of the people. The Pharaoh is their god. They would obey him. No amount of loyalty to me or you can change that."

She paused, smiled at them, and continued, "But we can stay here, in perfect safety and comfort. As long as we are no threat to Laib, he cannot touch us. And that's not just for Genirah's sake, but also because I have my people all around us for a half mile in every direction, all trained to protect this house." She grinned. "My secret service. They look like they are going about their normal duties, but they've been watching, guarding us, for twenty years." She whistled to her head guard, who instantly poked his head inside the door. "Gather all my men, to meet me here in a half hour. I have a little speech to make." They made quite a crowd. Queen Bathiah brought them up-to-date on the tragic situation, and gave them their new orders.

So they developed a truce with Laib Wahibre. He made no attempt to harm them. He allowed Bathiah to keep her loyal guards, but gave them no access to the palace and no official jobs. They were still 'dignitaries', but 'retired' so to speak. To his credit, Laib paid Bathiah's guards and sent provisions for their needs. They correctly assumed that again, his kindness was due to Genirah's intercession.

Moses chaffed with the inactivity. Here he was, trained to lead the country, and already put out to pasture. Bathiah was a big help. She continued his education, both teaching him herself, and getting the captain of her guard to come and teach him all he knew. Still, when a supervisory work position opened up on a small construction project in the Faiyum, he applied, and got the job. As royalty, he didn't have to work, but if he couldn't relieve the bondage of them all, at least he could help a few.

At last he was able to use his talents. He had several hundred Hebrews under him. He treated them well – far better than they had been treated as slaves of the Pharaoh. He told his Nubian overlord, Nathiatar, that he didn't need his taskmasters or their whips. Being Hebrew himself, he could get his men to work without whips. He planned to use positive incentives instead, such as giving his workers all the money Nathiatar would have paid the taskmasters.

At first, it looked like he would be late and way over budget as a result. But the men responded to the good treatment with better, and more, work. The whole project was finished beautifully, on time, and within budget. Nathiatar was duly impressed. As he was inspecting the finished job, he complimented Moses. "Your methods are strange, but they seem to work. You are a great job boss. I'm glad I hired you. Stay loyal to me, and you'll go far."

And so it was. Job after job over the next ten years Moses remained faithful, always completing his jobs faster, with fewer men, lower cost, and fewer problems, than Nathiatar's other crews. The hard work was good for Moses. His men learned to love him and do their best for him. Politics was temporarily forgotten.

1500 BC rolled around. The Olmecs had begun the city of Teotihuacan in Meso-America. The Mycenaeans now flourished with an astonishingly advanced and powerful culture on the mainland of Greece. Europe was a cauldron of barbarian hordes fighting and bickering. The Kassites had gained control of northern Babylon from the Hittites. The peaceful but defenseless Harappans in the Indus River Valley had been overwhelmed and scattered by bands of Aryan barbarians with their horses and chariots sweeping across the Zagros Mountains. The surviving Harappans fled to southern India where they are known as **Dravidian** traders. Some of them continued to China where they intermarried with the peaceful Mongols, sharing their skills to begin the glory days of early Chinese civilization.

The Egyptian palace at Lisht was still ruled by political intrigue. Laib's power and glory just went to his head. His younger brother Ay, who had been faithful all these years, began to get bitter. Laib had everything; Ay had nothing to show for his support. Bitterness breeds anger. That breeds violence, and so it was. Ay saw his chance. He poisoned his older brother, took his brother's wife Genirah for himself, and declared himself the new Pharaoh **Merneferre**.

But nothing really changed. Though continuing the persecution of the Hebrew slaves, Ay Merneferre understood about the truce with Bathiah and her Hebrew family. He left them alone for Genirah's sake. She kept her part of the bargain as a dutiful wife. For all outward appearances, she was Ay's regal, beautiful queen. Ay of course ordered all her sons by his brother Laib slain, so that his own sons would become heir to the throne. But Genirah was no dummy. She saw that one coming, and sent her oldest son **Ini** (who was eight at the time) to his grandmother, Bathiah, with instructions to hide him.

Bathiah knew he would not be safe with her, so she sent him on to Moses, who was still working in the Faiyum. Moses understood. Hoping Ini would be the next Pharaoh, he began training him like he would his own son. *Finally there might be a Pharaoh who would respect the Hebrews and stop the persecution!* But sadly, a great tragedy occurred before he could complete Ini's training.

Ini had just turned sixteen, and Moses was forty at the time. His Nubian overlord Nathiatar had never accepted his method of positive incentives. Instead, he had fostered a fierce competition between his crews, to see if any of them could beat the efficiency of the crew under Moses. Since they always lost, the taskmasters of the other five crews became increasingly more demanding and violent. Their slaves suffered greatly under their cruelty.

Moses should have kept his focus on his own crew, to make them the best they could be. But no, he'd been watching a particularly brutal Egyptian taskmaster in one of those competing crews, so he followed him one night after work. His suspicions were correct; the taskmaster had gone to the home of one of his men, to give him some incentive to work harder. He grabbed him away from his wife and kids, hauled him outside, and began beating him cruelly. It was appalling. Moses was afraid he might be killed! He could take no more. He ran up to intervene, pleading with the taskmaster to use common sense and not abuse his own workforce.

The taskmaster turned on Moses in a vicious attack. Moses defended himself, and in the ensuing struggle the Egyptian was killed. Fortunately no one else was around. Moses was sure his beaten Hebrew brother wouldn't tell. He kindly carried the poor fellow back to his wife, and then buried the dead Egyptian in the sand.

He was wrong about the Hebrew. Evidently more than a little bitterness had festered in the other crews. They saw how well Moses treated his crew in comparison to how poorly they were being treated. The very next day when Moses tried to stop a squabble between several men in a different crew, they derided him. "What 'cha gonna do, Moses? Are you gonna kill us like you killed that Egyptian yesterday?" It seemed everyone knew!

It would only be a matter of time before Nathiatar found out. He would tell the Pharaoh. And Moses knew that Ay was looking for any excuse to have him slain!

Moses went home and packed. As soon as Ini returned from his tutor, he told him the whole story and exhorted him, "When you're Pharaoh, you must stop this madness." That night they left together for Amram's home.

But as Moses was discussing with his dad and his two moms what he should do, the captain of Bathiah's guard came in to warn him. "Pharaoh has found out about the slain taskmaster! He has sent men to the Faiyum to find you and bring you before him. You must flee!"

Moses hugged his family, packed food and water, and fled, heading southeast toward the desert. Being young and very strong, he kept going for three days and nights before resting. By the end of the week he had crossed the desert to Edom. He rested there on the Sabbath, but even that didn't seem safe, so Sunday morning he went through Ezion Geber and started south toward the land of Midian.

Moses was devastated. This was far worse than when Laib had taken away his wife and his kingdom. Now he was separated from his parents, his people, his culture, everything he had ever known. Young Ini, Genirah's son and heir to the kingdom – who would protect him now?

To top it off, even the land turned against him. The **Wilderness of Shur** (called the **Wilderness of Etham** by the **Edomites**) was bad enough, as he had found little food or water. But then he got to the **Wilderness of Marah**! There was no food at all, and what little water there was salty, brackish, and undrinkable. He continued on, crying out to Logos for wisdom, but got no answer. The sun beat down upon him. He grew faint from hunger and thirst. Nearly delirious, Moses stumbled south through the **Wilderness of Sin** (called the **Wilderness of Sinai** by the Midianites), finding nothing at all to relieve his thirst. Reaching a towering rock called **Rephidim**, he fell beneath its shade and cried out for Logos to take his life. He was in his prime – forty years old – but now he had nothing left to live for, only misery and the haunting memories of what might have been. [See maps & endnote, pages 313 - 315.]

"Why, God? Why? I obeyed You! I kept Your law in my heart! I wanted only to serve You, to testify of You before Egypt, and to help Your people Israel. Now I am a fugitive and a vagabond. Take my life. I have nothing left to live for." There was no answer. Moses slumped down and lost consciousness, his face in a small crack in the rock.

Gavriel wept as he knelt in worship. He would never question Logos' ways. But a thought crossed his mind. *Moses had so much potential. Consider how much good he could have done.* He pushed the thought away. He would not be guilty of rebellion against the King of the Universe.

"Dear Gavriel, look at Me," Logos said softly. Gavriel looked, and saw tears in His eyes as well. "Do not fear to question Me. I Myself planted those questions in your mind. I have not forsaken Moses, as you might suppose. And I am neither judging him for some great sin, nor punishing a rebellious heart."

Gavriel nodded. He had considered those very things. Logos continued. "Remember My son Job? Though he was pure and upright before Me, he, too, was devastated. I used it to purify him and teach him of Me and My ways, to build My nature and character into him. Ever since then he has been My high priest, not in the physical order of Levi, but the higher order of Spirit. Like Melchizedek, Job was My witness to the many tribes of Arabia of the splendor of My Holy City, so that some could be saved – and any who would not be saved would have no excuse."

Gavriel was beginning to understand. "So You still have some use for Moses, after all?"

"Yes, of course." Logos smiled. "He shall be My trophy. I shall purify him as no other, so that I can walk and talk with him face to face as a friend, even as you and I."

As He spoke those comforting words to Gavriel, a wealthy man in the town of **Al Bad** was led by the Spirit on a pilgrimage north through the Wilderness of Sinai to the holy mountain, **Mount Sinai**. His name was **Reuel** (Friend of God), with the honorary title **Jethro** (High Priest). For many years he had served as God's high priest of Midian.

Reuel journeyed a half-day north before coming to the mountain. He did not see Moses, though he came within sight of the towering rock called Rephidim. He worshiped at the base of the mountain, offering a lamb on the altar there as a sweet-smelling aroma to YHWH. Finally, as he got ready to leave, Logos bade him leave both the roasted lamb and his water bottle on the altar. Though a strange request, he knew God's voice and obeyed, then hurried home before the evening darkness should overtake him.

Moses revived to the faint aroma of roast lamb. Satan was screaming in his ear, tormenting him cruelly, trying to get him to take his life. He brought before his mind every mistake, failure, and sin that Moses had ever committed. In his delirium, Moses believed Satan's accusations.

Michael stood by in horror, ensuring that Satan stayed within the law, but not allowed to interfere. Gavriel came to stand beside him, their angelic host all around. Satan's rage was unusually fierce, and Gavriel was suspicious. Echoing his thoughts, Michael said, "I think Satan must have guessed that Moses is the one Logos was talking about when He said that a baby boy thrown into the Nile would be Satan's defeat. I've never seen him so angry or vicious! He is determined to destroy him."

"I will talk to Logos. Maybe we can help him." Gavriel hurried up to the throne room. "Logos, Satan is unjustly abusing Moses, who is weakened by hunger, thirst, and heat stroke. Moses is delirious, unable to defend himself. He's believing Satan! I'm concerned that Moses may try to take his own life. How can I help him?"

"Thank you for your concern, dear Gavriel. But no, your help will not be needed. I believe Moses will achieve this victory without your intervention, though he is being tested to his ultimate limits. I'm interceding for him now." Gavriel knelt before Logos and joined in the intercession.

A dozen times Moses was at the point of casting himself headlong on the rocks to end the torment, but each time he decided no. He belonged to Logos. Logos could take his life, but he could not. He knew he was a dead man already. He pled with Logos to get it over with quickly.

As he contemplated death, standing before the Judge of the Universe, Moses began repenting of all the things Satan had been bringing to his mind. He directed his focus on purifying himself and preparing to meet the King. When he had repented of everything he knew, he lay on his face in worship, resigned to, even welcoming, death. Satan's angry accusations were no longer getting through to him. He relaxed, and his mind began to clear.

The surrounding angelic host gave a mighty cheer. Satan walked off in disgust. *How could he have failed? Never was a man so weakened, so discouraged, so ripe for the slaughter! Was he losing his touch? Or was Logos correct in saying he could not harm the Bride without His permission?* He pushed his doubts aside, determined to look for another opportunity later. Everyone has his price.

Evening shadows lengthened. Moses pulled himself up, supported by the rock. There was that smell of roast lamb again. It was too persistent to be a hallucination. Moses licked his finger to determine the direction of the faint breeze, and set off southeast, toward the mountain.

It took him a long time to cover the two miles between Rephidim and Mount Sinai. He was greatly weakened, and even with a walking stick he needed to rest often. Finally, fainting from hunger and thirst, he had to crawl. But he kept at it, reaching the altar at the base of the mountain by the light of the moon. There he found the roast lamb and water that Reuel had left. He thanked Logos for sparing his life, refreshed himself, and slept.

Moses was much stronger the next day. He saw Reuel's tracks in the sand and followed them, reaching the town of Al Bad shortly after noon. He refilled Reuel's water bottle (he had lost his own in his delirium) and sat at the well to contemplate his next move. But as usual when shepherds came to water their flocks, there was much jostling and bickering around the well, so he had to stand aside. He found a palm tree and rested in its shade, idly watching the shepherds filling the watering troughs for their sheep. Then he noticed that the large flock which had come first to the well was still there. It seemed to be shepherded only by seven girls, no doubt sisters. They were all very young and small – too small and weak to be tending such a fine big flock of sheep. The other shepherds kept pushing them aside to allow their own flocks to drink the water that the defenseless sisters had just drawn for their thirsty sheep. That wasn't right! His sense of justice made him leap to his feet and come to the aid of the girls.

When he had finished helping them water their flocks, he settled back down under the palm tree, satisfied that he had done some good. If he couldn't help his countrymen in Egypt, he could surely help some defenseless shepherd girls here in Midian. The thought crossed his mind that those cute little shepherdesses might need a man among them on a more permanent basis, but he pushed it aside. Who was he to interfere? He dined on some more of the roast lamb, and prepared to move on.

Without any conscious decision, Moses headed south along the road he had seen the shepherdesses use. As he left Al Bad, he suddenly realized that, well... yes, he was interested. They were lovely young ladies. And he was terribly lonely. Some were old enough to... Moses prayed, "Logos, would You have me travel this way?" Sensing God's peace, he continued, trusting Logos to lead him.

So he was not really surprised when the seven girls came running up the road, bowing and thanking him, and begging him to return to their father's house with them.

When they arrived, Reuel came out to meet him, also bowing before him in greeting as is the eastern custom. He began to return the bow, then jumped as Reuel grabbed the water bottle out of his hand in amazement. "Where did you get this? I left it by the altar at the holy mountain!"

Realization dawned. Moses bowed deeply. "Then you are the one who saved my life. Thank you! I was nearly expired from hunger and thirst. But I smelled the roast lamb and followed the smell to the altar. Your sacrifice and your water bottle revived me. I owe you my life."

"No." Reuel returned the bow. "It was YHWH who saved your life. I merely obeyed as He told me."

"Then there is a fear of YHWH in this place?"

"I am but His servant, His priest to these people."

Needless to say, Moses was welcomed into Reuel's home. They talked for hours that evening, sharing each other's stories. The young ladies crowded around to hear.

Finally Moses could contain his curiosity no longer. "Reuel, I see seven daughters, but I see no sons. Where are your sons?"

"Alas, my beloved wife bore only daughters. Now that she is passed on, I fear I shall never have a son. I cannot marry any of the heathen women around us, nor can I allow one of their sons who fears not YHWH to marry any of my daughters."

There was a pregnant pause, while the tent grew very still. The girls all froze. Moses knew what he must do. He could hear the quiet voice of Logos telling him it was right, and this was the time. Moses bowed his head in prayer as the minutes lengthened. Finally he looked back up at Reuel. "I fear YHWH. He led me here, through what can only be called a miracle. I would like to stay with you, and be your son. I believe I can be of assistance to you with your flocks..." He stopped short. It would not be appropriate to say anything about the surrounding lovely young ladies as they listened with wide eyes and bated breath.

But Reuel finished his thought for him. "I was hoping you would want to stay with me. I sense a real kinship with you. My home is yours. My daughters are yet pretty young, but my eldest is almost twenty and ready for marriage. I offer her to you to become your wife. May she bless you all your days, as you have blessed me this day."

Moses heard the gasps and shrieks, followed by some giggles and titters among the girls, but he stifled the urge to try to spot the one to whom Reuel referred, and bowed his head in acceptance. "Your wish is only my joy and delight, for my life is yours. But... would it not be wise to delay discussing marriage until you all get to know me?"

So the mighty prince, who was set to rule the greatest nation on earth, became a lowly shepherd, protector to the seven young daughters of Reuel. Strangely, he accepted his fate gracefully, and gratefully. His trust in Logos grew strong, as did his patience and humility. Some have even claimed that in the years to come the hotheaded and slightly arrogant Moses mellowed into the meekest, most sensitive and thoughtful man on the face of the earth. Surely all the young daughters of Reuel loved him dearly. By unspoken consent, they determined to make him guess which one was the eldest, each perhaps hoping that in his ignorance he might choose her instead. For her part, the eldest did not want to push herself on him; she too wanted to be chosen, not just given by her father like he might give a sheep. As a result, Moses was kept in the dark. He learned their names and enjoyed sweet fellowship with each one, still not knowing who was the oldest. He was not anxious. Reuel would say something when he felt it was time. Moses was still learning patience and meekness.

Reuel picked a cool, cloudless winter night. The sunset had long-since faded. Stars filled the heavens with glory. Their after-dinner fellowship had been good, as always. The seven sisters clustered around, sometimes joining in the conversation. Rare indeed is a family with such peace, love, and joy, shared and returned by all. Everyone was getting sleepy, and Reuel stood as if to retire. Instead, he began a speech, rehearsed many times in his mind. "Moses, your godly character is not unnoticed. I have watched you and found you to be faithful and true. I have not seen such a spirit as is in you, no not ever before in any man. I would be honored if you would accept my offer of marriage to one of my daughters. However, I've decided to change the offer..." Here squeals erupted from several of the girls. "... and allow you to choose which one you wish. It has been two years since I made that offer. I only had one daughter old enough for marriage back then. But they are all growing up now. And I know they all love you! Please, Moses. You know them well by now. Make your choice. We shall arrange the wedding for this Sabbath."

Though he had eagerly anticipated this moment for the last two years, Moses was strangely subdued. He stood and bowed his acceptance before Reuel. Then he took a torch, for the night had gotten very dark, and moved slowly from one girl to the next, pausing with each one long enough to look into her eyes and touch her shoulder tenderly. Finally he returned to stand again before Reuel. "My father, I love each one equally. I find it impossible to choose one above another. If you would permit it, I would marry them all. You chose for me."

Reuel laughed. Some of the girls joined in, but their laughter sounded a bit strained. One even began to weep quietly. Moses was drawn to go comfort her, but resisted the impulse. "I do not believe YHWH would be pleased if you had more than one wife. You choose one. I know I can trust you to make a wise choice." Reuel waited.

Again Moses got the torch and moved from girl to girl, searching their eyes as he prayed intensely. They smiled their sweetest at him, hoping, pleading with their eyes, even mouthing “I love you” to him. Even the youngest (who was only six) smiled up at Moses eagerly. Except, the one who had started to weep would not smile at him or even look up at him, but buried her face in her dress at his approach, sobbing as if her heart were broken. Moses left her and moved on, until he had completed the round and stood again before Reuel. “I cannot decide, my father. Not until **Ziporah** is able to stop her weeping and smile up at me like the others.” He sat down.

Reuel called to her, “Ziporah, my love, have you no smile for Moses? Don’t you want to be chosen?”

She had no smile, and no answer. Her sobs grew louder. Moses suddenly realized why she wept. She was not the prettiest, nor the smartest, nor the most vivacious, nor the strongest, nor the most talented, nor the most fun to be with, nor... anything special. She was just plain Ziporah, ‘little bird’. She wept because she loved him so fervently and yet knew she would never be chosen.

Again Moses was drawn to her, strongly, and he bowed his head in intense prayer. He didn’t need the prettiest, or the smartest, or the most fun – he needed the one with the truest and most faithful love. Logos gave him that inner knowing that it was right. He stood again and walked to her. “Ziporah!” Her sobbing stopped with a shaky breath, but her face remained buried in her dress.

“Look at me,” he ordered. “My love!” That last came out in a whisper, but she heard, and her tear-stained face finally came up from the dress. Their eyes met, and locked. Still unsmiling, her mouth was open in surprise. “I choose you!” Moses said it slowly, deliberately, with a conviction he had not felt until this very moment.

Again the squeals and shrieks as she threw herself into his arms and all the others crowded around with their hugs and congratulations. When things finally settled down, Reuel admitted to Moses, “I knew why she wept. I did her a terrible wrong. I promised her to you and then reneged and gave the choice to you. She felt betrayed. If you had chosen one of her younger sisters, Ziporah would never have forgiven me. I praise YHWH that you chose correctly and bailed me out of my dilemma.”

“You are the eldest?” Moses looked at his newly betrothed, who nodded. “I would never have guessed. You are more shy and submissive – not at all like I thought first-borns were supposed to be. Besides, you are shorter than some of your sisters. And sometimes you seemed to act younger, too.” She snuggled up in his arms, not caring a whit about his scholarly analysis, so long as she remained his ‘chosen’. There was no happier woman on earth.

So they married, and lived happily in Midian for many years, while the world revolved around them.

Every chance Moses got to talk to traders, he would ask about Egypt. The news he heard was not good. Genirah’s young son Ini had grown into a man. Knowing his heritage as prince of Egypt, he at first was hopeful. His mother Genirah had born Ay no sons, only daughters, whom Ay despised and never allowed in his presence. So Genirah conspired with her mother Bathiah to have Ini marry her oldest daughter **Semka**, Ini’s half-sister, even though she was barely 15 at the time (Ini was 23). Ini fully expected that would make him the Pharaoh. But his Uncle Ay had no such intentions. Ay was strong and cruel, ruling Egypt with an iron hand, and though he no longer tried to kill Ini, neither did he allow any opportunity for him to take over.

At first Ini and Semka were happy together. Over the next eight years they bore two daughters and six sons: **Sewadjtu**, twins **Ined** and **Hori**, **Pul** (Little One), **Hor**, and **Senebmiu**. Though some were less than stellar, they kept them all. They raised their family next door to Ini’s grandmother Bathiah. But in those eight years since his marriage to Semka, Ini grew bitter, especially when Moses’ father Amram died in 1478 BC at the age of 137, and his grandmother Bathiah died at 64 a few months later. Ini realized his time was passing. He was getting nowhere. So at the age of 31 (in 1476 BC, when Moses and Ziporah’s firstborn son Gershom was twelve) Ini staged a coup. He took advantage of the fact that virtually everyone in the palace hated Ay for his ruthlessness and arrogance. Proclaiming himself the true Pharaoh of pure royal blood through Genirah, he denounced Ay and his older brother Laib as half-breed Hebrew usurpers. With the help of Genirah’s personal guard, he got the entire palace guard on his side. After he gained control of the palace, he had Ay, his advisors, and his bodyguard slain. Ini then proclaimed himself the new Pharaoh, with the throne name **Neferhotep II Sobekhotep VI Sekhemre Sankhtawy** (from his great-grandfather, grandfather, and others, to fortify his claim to the throne).

Ini, with his lovely wife Semka and the queen mother Genirah at his side, actually made a pretty good Pharaoh. He brought Amram’s family into the palace and treated them well. I would like to say that he treated the whole Hebrew race well for their sakes, but it wouldn’t be totally true. He did pass laws to limit their persecution and to punish taskmasters who abused them. He even increased their wages above the bare subsistence they had been receiving. But he also knew that the economy of Egypt had become dependent upon the slave labor of the Hebrews, and he was too shrewd to upset the status quo very much.

Ini never accepted Logos, the God of Moses and his Hebrew family. Moses’ flight when he was 16 was proof in his mind that Logos had no power to help him. However, he did try to locate Moses to invite him back to the palace, but never succeeded. Moses heard about the power shuffle from the traders, and at first was hopeful. *Had Ini learned his lessons?* But as long as the Hebrews remained slaves, Moses feared returning to Egypt.

Ini and Semka continued to be prolific. In the years after the coup, they bore three more sons, (**Kerkheperre**, **Merikare**, and **Dudimose**) and three more daughters. The Egyptians loved him and his big family. The years flowed by. Egyptians venerated youth and physical perfection, but Ini, being part Hebrew, had a black beard that was impossible to keep clean-shaven and young-looking. So in 1467 BC (when he was forty) he bowed out of public view, crowning his sons as ‘figurehead’ Pharaohs when they turned eighteen, with himself ruling behind the scenes. Sewadjtu was first, then Ined two years later, Hori the next year, and Pul the year after. Of these, Pul was the only one truly capable of ruling. The others were foolish sons. Though their Hebrew blood from their grandfather Ay made them less inbred than was typical with Egyptian royal families, Ini still should never have married his half-sister. Most of their children were mentally inferior – handsome figureheads but not capable of actually ruling.

But Pul was different. He was smart and he really ruled. He took the throne name **Sobekhotep VII Merkaure**. So in 1463 BC Ini retired from public life to enjoy his family, and allowed Pul to take over completely. He was pleased when Pul continued his practice by allowing each of his five younger brothers their year of ‘figurehead’ Pharaoh when they came of age. He could see the Egyptian people loved it too. But Pul maintained a strong hand behind them. He knew none of his brothers (except perhaps Dudimose, the youngest) was mentally able to challenge his rule.

Sadly, the lovely queen mother Genirah died at the age of 70 in 1461 BC, during the ‘figurehead’ rule of Hor II. Egypt mourned her passing. Alas, now the restraining influence she had exercised on behalf of the Hebrews for Moses’ sake, was gone. Persecution of the Hebrew slaves increased. Some said it would have been better if Ini had never given them any relief, than for Pul to now take it away again. And it was to get worse. When Dudimose, the youngest brother, took over from his brother Merikare in 1455 BC at the age of 19 as the new ‘figurehead’ Pharaoh, he demonstrated a cruelty toward the Hebrews worse than any before him. This is a sad part of our tale, but I must tell what happened. Ini and Semka came to Pul, asking him to restrain Dudimose for Genirah’s sake. Pul reacted angrily, conspiring with Dudimose to assassinate their parents, and to search out and slay all those remaining in the palace of the family of Amram and Jochebed. There would be no Hebrews in the palace when he was Pharaoh! Pul and his younger brother grew harsher than ever with their slaves. They cried out to Logos for deliverance.

Logos sent numerous warnings. He sent prophets to Dudimose and Pul, and allowed catastrophes to fall on their family and on the land of Egypt. But they reacted by slaying the prophets of Logos and treating the Hebrews with even greater cruelty. Michael came trembling before the throne room, fearing for the Bride whom he was charged to protect, seeking wisdom and strength.

Logos too was weeping. The great oppression of His beloved Bride was more than He could bear. Her cries had reached His ears, and touched His heart. “But Michael, Gavriel...” He cried, “I do not want to destroy Egypt! They were the salvation of My people at the time of Joseph, and I still have many faithful ones among them. I must warn them of what is to come. Release Satan to make use of the Venus/Mercury/Phaeton trinary.” Michael shuddered as Gavriel hurried off to give the message to Satan. He knew what that meant, but dared not argue with the King of the Universe. “Logos, how do I protect your Bride?”

“You must cover them; cover the whole land of Goshen with your host. There will indeed be terrible calamities, but My people will only be strengthened and drawn to Me. I empower you and your host as never before.”

“And Moses?”

“I will go to him. He has become a trophy of My grace – a shining light of My righteousness. I believe I can meet with him face to face. It is time! I finally have in him one who shares My Spirit, My nature and character; one whom I can use to accomplish My desire. Go now. I am with you.”

Michael obeyed instantly. His host formed a vast angelic canopy over the entire land of Goshen even before Gavriel finished relaying Logos’ message to Satan.

Gavriel was blunt and short. “Satan. You have Logos’ permission to use the Venus/Mercury/Phaeton trinary as you will. Except as always, you may not touch or harm the Bride but by Logos’ command.”

“Of course,” Satan sneered in response. “If I use it to destroy Earth, I won’t be touching the Bride.”

Seeing no need to respond to the taunt, Gavriel just returned to Logos’ throne. Satan got back to work. He had been planning this for years anyway, as he didn’t think permission from Logos was something he even needed anymore. The planets were finally lined up. His demonic host were in place for the big push to execute his master plan for Venus. The first battle between Venus and Earth came on February 22, 1454 BC. Satan had done his homework. If his calculations were correct, Earth’s pull would slow Venus and bend its orbit to overlap Earth’s, except tilted 2 degrees off the ecliptic plane. That would give Satan years to torment mankind before going for the kill.

However, as Logos had said, the elements conspired against Satan to thwart his plan. He had considered every factor into his calculations – except one. Venus has an off-center magnetic core. This will give unpredictable results unless you know exactly where it is all during the flyby. Satan didn’t. The magnetic core faced the wrong direction, reducing Earth’s pull. Venus went long, wide, and way too fast. So he tried again, when it returned October 22, 1453 BC. But now the core was turned the opposite way.

The results were not what Satan had planned. This time, Venus was slowed way too much and pulled too far, into an unstable orbit inside Earth's. Satan was furious. He'd really have to work to get it back. But at least he got a bonus for all his trouble. On that first flyby, tiny Phaeton had pulled away from Venus to begin a dangerous new orbit around the sun. Phaeton was easy to control. So now Satan put it into a sharply elliptical orbit crossing Earth's. Michael duplicated his calculations, and saw to his horror that Phaeton was on collision course to impact Earth in 1452 BC. But Logos had clearly given Satan permission. Michael determined to trust Logos even if it meant giving his life to protect the Bride.

The three years between 1454 and 1452 BC were filled with terror for the human race. It came to a climax on October 31, 1452 BC just after the biennial pass of Mars. That day was forever imbedded in human consciousness as a date of dreadful catastrophe and demonic horror, and it is still celebrated as such in many cultures. On that day, Phaeton hit Earth, setting Arabia and North Africa on fire and making a crater at Bermuda half the size of the USA.

This catastrophe is indescribable to modern minds, but I must try. Phaeton entered the atmosphere low on the horizon above China's southern border. Its head burned fiercely, followed by showers of sparks all along its tail.

This was the 'great dragon' of Chinese legend. With its righteous and peace-loving people, China was spared. They still commemorate this day with an annual dragon festival. The comet sped west as the earth turned toward the east. The first to experience the wrath of the dragon were the godless Harappans and the barbarians who had driven them out of the fertile Indus River Valley. They did not survive. The dragon "drank up the waters of the Indus River" resulting in the great **Indian Desert**. Drought and famine spread throughout India for many years.

Passing just south of Persia, the great dragon set the wilderness of Saudi Arabia aflame with the intenseness of its flash heat, resulting in a sterile sandy desert where there had been pastureland. Many people, particularly in south-eastern Saudi Arabia, were slain or died in the subsequent famine. The mighty Amalekites in western Saudi Arabia were also devastated. Their land was set aflame, but by that time Phaeton had moved farther away, so they survived. Within a few months they were headed northwest to find a better land. They shall enter into our story later on, when they meet the Hebrews at Rephidim.

Satan was trying to bring Phaeton directly over Goshen to wipe out the Bride, but slight magnetic variations had pushed it off, and he missed both Goshen and Midian by over 500 miles. Even worse (for him), Phaeton's angle of attack was so shallow that the comet nearly bounced off Earth's atmosphere back into space at this point. Satan had not expected that. His demons worked feverishly to slow it and bend its course back toward Earth.

Watching Phaeton cross over the Red Sea just above the atmosphere, Michael was awed, and grateful that the Bride had been so wonderfully protected from the catastrophe. But the dragon had been slowed, and Earth's gravity now helped reel it in. It flew over the border between Egypt and the Sudan, then populated by Nubians. Their legends declare that this is what turned their skin to black. Their powerful culture, which had been rescued from the floods by Joseph, was nearly destroyed. It has never recovered.

Phaeton blazed across North Africa with unimaginable heat, utterly destroying all life and incinerating all organic material in what became the great **Sahara Desert**. North Africa had been a fertile and prosperous land, with several advanced civilizations sprawled across its verdant plains. These are lost to history. All traces of their cultures are gone. Only those along Africa's northern border survived.

Phaeton then plowed across the Atlantic, the ocean boiling in its wake. Satan intended for it to inundate the earth with a towering tsunami. But in accordance with Logos' promise never again to flood the earth, Phaeton's incredible velocity and heat generated more steam than tidal wave. The comet impacted North America's east coast, pushing up the Appalachian Mountains, spraying North America with rocks and dust, and reducing the size of our USA by about a third. The resulting crater filled in with ocean in a thundering crash, becoming what is now called the Sargasso Sea above the North American Basin. The Bermuda rise sprang up at its center as is typical with such an impact. 500 foot waves washed the Atlantic coastline and raced back and forth across the oceans.

It was a colossal cataclysm of apocalyptic proportions. Most surviving cultures could not describe it except in terms of cosmic battles among the gods. Every culture recorded these terrifying planetary battles from their own perspective. For example, these were the celestial conflicts between Hathor or Isis and Seth in Egypt; between Marduk and Tiamat the dragon in Mesopotamia; between Vishnu or Krishna and the serpent in India; between Ormuzd and Ahriman in Persia (now known as Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu of Zoroastrianism); between YHWH and Rahab the Egyptian dragon in Hebrew tradition (Psalm 89:10); between St. George and the dragon in European legends; and, best known to later cultures, the heavenly clashes between Zeus and Typhon of Greek legend.

Pul and Dudimose became experts at weaving such legends for their people. They began what became a habit of hardening their hearts to the warnings of Logos. They slew the prophets who warned them, and intensified the persecution of their Hebrew slaves. They were clearly blessed by the gods! Egypt had survived, while many of the surrounding peoples had not. Thus they took advantage of the catastrophe to increase their power and domination.

But in Midian, another encounter occurred – again indescribable, but I'll do my best.

Father YHWH, as Logos His eternal Word, came down to talk with a man. He had long planned, even yearned, for this meeting. Besides, the land of Uz had just burned up and Job had died. So Logos was lonely. He could find no one else righteous on the face of the earth. Until now.

Moses had overcome, through painstaking preparation and purifying. Logos came down right behind the fires of Phaeton and stood softly on the ground at the Mountain of the Law. The angelic host held their collective breath. *How could it be? The King of the Universe was placing His own feet onto contaminated soil, soil that cried out with the blood of sinful human flesh. Surely the universe would cease to exist!* Yet there He stood, as a flame of purest fire amid a land that moments before had been purified by fire. He stood quietly, arms lifted to the eternal Father – Spirit calling, yearning, for the joy of human companionship.

Moses heard the call. Back in Egypt, hiding from the wrath of the Pharaoh, his brother and sister also heard it. Aaron and Miriam did not understand it. They only knew they had to find their brother. They left their spouses with their children and set off together with their donkey across the desert, trusting that Logos would guide them.

At first Moses did not understand the call either. But over the next few days it became irresistible. “Reuel, Logos has spared us from the tragic catastrophe that has fallen upon the world. I must go to the holy mountain and offer sacrifice to Him in grateful thanks. Please allow me to take a few sheep from your flocks, to offer for me and for you.”

“Of course, Moses. I’ll stay here with the ladies, so I can continue to minister to the surrounding Midianites in their grief. Go, as Logos calls you.”

Moses sacrificed a ram on the altar at the base of the holy mountain, where he had first found Reuel’s water bottle. It is called Mt. Sinai by the Midianites, or **Mt. Horeb** by the earlier Amalekites and others. He remained the entire day, repenting, worshipping, and offering thanks.

The next morning he prepared to leave, but the call was still strong. It guided him around the north side of the holy mountain, then south behind it. He found himself on the backside of the desert called the **Wilderness of Sinai**, 180 degrees around the holy mountain and just opposite the spot where he had offered the lamb. His sheep grazed quietly. He was surprised to see so much grass still there, considering the flames that so recently had engulfed the land. There, a little higher on the mountain, a small bush still burned, but everywhere else the land had cooled.

Moses knelt again and worshiped. He had never felt this close to Logos, and it delighted him. He moved to the base of the mountain, then knelt and worshiped again. Still the call was strong, urging him to climb. As he rose, he noticed that that silly bush was still burning. Strange. It should have burned up by now. He climbed toward it, and again knelt on the slope in fervent worship and thanksgiving.

Finally lifting his head once more, it struck him that the bush was still in intense, brilliant flame, where it should have been nothing but embers by now. His curiosity could not be denied. “I am sorry, Logos my Lord and my King. But I am only human. I must interrupt this precious time to go up there and see why that silly bush is not consumed, for it distracts me. I cannot concentrate on worship while it yet burns.” He stood and hiked right up to the bush.

“Moses! Moses!” Suddenly the call became audible.

“Yes, my Lord. Here I am.” Moses recognized His voice, and instantly fell on his face before Him.

“You cannot come any closer, lest you be slain by the fires of My holy Presence. Quickly, remove the sandals from your feet and cast them from you, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.”

Moses did so, flinging them far from him down to the base of the mountain. Then he again fell to the ground in reverential awe and fear. But now Logos spoke tenderly out of the flames in the middle of the bush. “Thank you, Moses, for coming as I have called you. I have longed to see you face to face. Please, look up at Me now.” Moses lifted his head and, still on his knees, looked briefly into the very face of God. “I am the Living Word of YHWH, God of your fathers, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” He said sweetly. But Moses was afraid, and once again hid his face in the sand, overcome with awe.

Logos understood. He continued to talk lovingly and tenderly, enticing Moses to look up. “I have heard your prayers for My people in Egypt. I have seen their afflictions and heard their cries. I too have felt their sufferings. I have passed judgment between them and those who so cruelly oppress them. I have come to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them out of Egypt to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place that the Canaanite, Hittite, Amorite, Perizzite, Hivite, and Jebusite now occupy.”

Encouraged by the sweet tone of the voice and the promise of deliverance for his people, Moses lifted up his head to gaze into the face of God. He was not slain as he had supposed. He tentatively stood, his eyes still fixed on the flames, and raised his arms in worship. He heard songs and shouts as if from some distance away. It was the sweet music of the angelic host witnessing this miracle. The form of Logos coalesced in the flames as an angel. He stepped out of the bush and reached out His hands toward Moses. “I accept your worship. Indeed I have used all the trials you have been through to purify you for this moment, for I have longed to meet you face to face as we are now.”

Moses nearly fainted, overcome by the closeness of his God. But Gavriel was behind him, supporting him. For a long time they stood there face to face, with such love flowing back and forth between them as no human being had experienced since the Fall of Adam and Eve.

But finally Moses fell again to his knees, overwhelmed and humbled. “Oh God, I am unworthy...”

“I have made you worthy. For I have chosen you to stand against the Pharaoh and bring My people out of Egypt. You shall go for Me, to display My glory and power before the Pharaoh and all the land of Egypt, and you shall lead My people to the good land I have promised.”

Moses bowed his head again to the ground, unable any longer to look into the face of God. “Who am I, my Lord, that I should deliver Your people?”

“Surely I, even I your God, shall be with you, to deliver them though you. You will know that I am He by this sign: when you have delivered My people out of Egypt they shall follow you to worship Me upon this mountain. From this day on you shall call Me by the name of My eternal Father, YHWH, Keeper of Covenants, for I keep My promises.”

“Yes, Lord YHWH. But... what is that name? What does ‘YHWH’ mean? I must know, so I’ll have an answer when they ask.” He dared to look up again.

Logos smiled at him. “I am the Ever-present One. I am the I AM. Tell them the I AM has sent you.” He thankfully paused, while the implications of that statement sank in. Throughout the rest of their conversation, it burned in Moses’ mind. No wonder He had said, “Surely I will be with you.” He is always with us. The Ever-present One! The great I AM! Everything he had ever hoped or dreamed for the future, everything he had ever been proud of or regretted in the past, was nothing before the presence of the great I AM in the now.

“This is what you must tell the sons of Israel,” Logos continued. “‘YHWH, God of your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has sent me to you.’ YHWH is My name from eternity. It is My memorial name to all generations, for it is the name of My Father who sent Me. He dwells in eternity, where His Word is forever settled. When you tell them, they will listen. Then go before the Pharaoh. Tell him, ‘YHWH, the God of the Hebrews, has called us. We must go a three days’ journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to Him.’ But know in advance that he will harden his heart and not let you go. I have seen the hardness of his heart, in what he has done to My people and to My servants the prophets. So I will stretch out My hand to strike Egypt with miracles, to mock all the foolish gods of the Egyptians. Then he shall let you go. And I will grant you favor with the Egyptians, who will send you out urgently, with all the back pay they owe you, gold and silver and fine clothes...”

As Logos waxed enthusiastic, Moses again bowed his head, totally overwhelmed. “But, what if they don’t believe me?” was his weak response.

“What is that in your hand?” Logos chuckled.

The sound startled Moses such that he looked up again. “Just a shepherd’s staff, my Lord.”

“Not any more. Throw it down.” Logos laughed.

Moses threw it down. It became a large snake, causing Moses to jump back in fright. Logos could hardly contain His laughter. “Don’t be afraid of your staff, Moses! Come, come! Grab it by its tail.” He was enjoying this immensely.

Moses gingerly came forward and caught the snake by the tail. It instantly turned back into a shepherd’s staff. “They ought to believe that,” Logos laughed. “But if they don’t – slip your hand under your shirt for a second.”

Moses obeyed, and was shocked to discover that it had turned leprous, with his flesh white and decaying before his eyes. He glanced up at Logos, who was still laughing. “Go ahead, stick it under your shirt again.” He did. When he pulled it out this time, it was completely restored.

“They ought to believe those two signs, but if they don’t (for they are a hard-headed people), then I shall give you more, as many as you need. For you shall lead My people out of Egypt!” He grew serious. “The Nile has become sacred to them. They look to the Nile more than to Me. Take water from the Nile, pour it out on the ground before them, and it will turn to blood. The thought of drinking blood from their precious Nile ought to shake them up!”

Moses bowed once more. “Please, Lord YHWH. I fear the Pharaoh! He is cruel and sharp-tongued! I have never been particularly eloquent, and now that I am eighty years old, I have gotten slow of speech.”

“Who made your mouth and your tongue? Who makes any man eloquent or dumb, hearing or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, YHWH of Hosts? Go now, and I shall be with your mouth, to teach you what to say, and to add power to your words.”

Moses heard, but did not really believe. There was in him still a trace of that all-too-common false humility that can acknowledge his own unworthiness but not that his Creator can live in him and manifest His power and glory through him. “Please, Lord YHWH, send someone else.” He again bowed his face in the sand.

At this faithlessness, the flame that was Logos flared up in wrath, touching Moses until he screamed out in pain. “There, Moses. The fire of My righteousness has purified you. It has burned away your unbelief and false humility. Nevertheless, I have heard your request, and have called for your brother Aaron. Even now he approaches, eager to see you. He can speak fluently, as you know. If you wish, he can be your mouthpiece. Yet I shall speak only to you. Thus you shall be as God to Aaron.”

Moses stood once again, shaken to the core, but imbued with true meekness and faith as never before. The flame that was Logos had not burned his clothes or his flesh, only the unbelief that had lurked in his heart. He turned to look. Aaron, and Miriam their sister, was just coming around the base of the mountain to meet him.

“Go now back to Egypt, for all those who sought your life are dead. Perform before Pharaoh the miracles I have put under your control, but I shall harden his heart so he shall not let My people go. Then tell him, ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn. Because you have refused to allow My son to go, behold, I shall slay your son, your firstborn.’ Then finally he will let My people go. I must leave you now, for Aaron cannot see My face and live; but you shall tell him all that I told you and he will believe.” He briefly reached out and touched Moses’ staff, saying, “You are no longer a keeper of sheep, and this is no longer a shepherd’s staff. It is now My staff. Take it with you. Use it to do all My signs and miracles.” The staff aged and hardened in his hand.

“Yes, my Lord and my God.” Moses bowed once again before Him. He had a new strength of resolve. He would accomplish all that Logos had said, or die in the effort. He was no longer just a shepherd of Midian, or even a prince of Egypt; he was now a servant of the Most High God. The flaming form that was Logos stepped back into the bush, and the flames began to die down. Moses turned. Aaron and Miriam had spotted him, and had tied their donkey at the base of the mountain. Moses called down to them, “Aaron! Miriam! Thank you for coming. Would you please bring up my sandals? The stones are sharp.”

After the traditional hugs and kisses Aaron asked, “How did you ever get up here without your sandals?”

“I threw them down. This was holy ground. Logos was here! He talked with me, face to face! He promised to send me to lead Israel out of Egypt! He said to call Him YHWH, Keeper of Covenants, because He keeps His promises.”

“Yeah, right. So, what did He look like? Nobody has ever seen God. You’re pullin’ my leg, right?”

Moses paused. Logos had just said that Aaron would believe. “Aaron, look closely at that bush.” He waited.

Aaron and Miriam looked, then looked again, and began to tremble. The bush was still green and unburnt, yet it still smoked and glowed like embers from a fire. “The comet passed by days ago, but...” Aaron began.

“It was not Phaeton that ignited that bush. It was the flame of Logos Himself. He spoke to me in the flames, and came out of that bush as a shining man wreathed in fire.” They started back down. By the time they reached Reuel’s home Moses had told them the whole story.

They did indeed believe. So did Reuel, who sent them off to Egypt with his blessing. Only Ziporah had trouble believing. But she hid her doubts in her heart and dutifully followed her beloved husband and their sons, **Gershom** (36) and **Eliezer** (33). They reached **Nakhl** where they lodged for the night. There the angel of YHWH met them and threatened to kill Moses. Poor Ziporah was terrified, hysterical. What could she do to save her husband?

As he struggled with the angel, Moses called out. “He fights me and prevails only because I still have impurity in my house! Ziporah, take my flint knife and circumcise our sons’ foreskins, just as I showed you I was circumcised. Quickly! Logos demands it, and I have been negligent.”

Ziporah’s horror at that thought overcame her hysteria. But Gershom understood and cooperated, making it easier for her. Still, she took the bloody foreskin and threw it at Moses’ feet, crying, “You’re a bridegroom of blood to me!” and ran off sobbing. Still in pain, Gershom bore it like a man while he circumcised his younger brother Eliezer.

When they had finished, Moses said to the angel of YHWH, “Now you must leave me alone, for you have nothing else on me.” The angel continued the fight. But Moses, not knowing about Ziporah’s unbelief, gathered his strength and threw him off.

“I will leave you alone only if you agree to not bring your wife with you to Egypt,” the angel said as he picked himself up and dusted himself off.

“Why?” Moses was mystified and a bit hurt.

“Because she has no part in this deliverance.” He said no more, but suddenly Moses understood.

“I love my wife and will not give her up so lightly. I will leave her behind only on one condition,” Moses bargained with the angel as if he was bargaining with Logos Himself. “...that when I return to worship on the holy mountain as You promised, You will restore my wife to my side.”

The angel nodded and vanished. Ziporah, hiding wide-eyed beside the lodge, saw him vanish and began to believe. But it was too late. Moses had promised.

Gershom and Eliezer did believe. They assured Moses they’d care for their mom. “I think it’s better this way,” Gershom said. “Reuel still needs our help with the flocks. But you don’t need our help. You have God with you!” So after healing up for a few days they took Ziporah back to Midian, leaving Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to go on alone.

When they reached Goshen, they spoke to the sons of Israel all that Logos had told them, with Aaron acting as Moses’ spokesman. Just as Logos had warned, they could not believe. So Moses took the staff, now called the Staff of God, and performed the three signs Logos had given him.

That turned it around. They believed, and sent Moses and Aaron on to Pharaoh with their blessing.

As Logos had promised, neither Dudimose nor his older brother Pul (who had both been born after Moses had fled Egypt) recognized him. Their parents Ini and Semka certainly would have recognized him, but they had been slain three years before. Moses spoke only Hebrew, which Aaron translated, “Thus says YHWH, the God of Israel, ‘Let My people go, that they may sacrifice to Me in the wilderness.’”

Always the smart-aleck, Dudimose replied in his usual arrogant way, “So who is YHWH, that I should obey Him? I don’t know Him. Even if I did, I would not let Israel go.”

“Father YHWH is the one true God from eternity. He rules the universe by His Word (who is Logos). All things are upheld by the Word of His power. You shall know Him better hereafter, for He shall show you mighty signs and wonders which will shake the very foundations of Egypt if you will not obey Him!”

Pul just laughed derisively from behind the throne. Dudimose came down off the dais. “Okay sport. I’ll bite. Show me one of these ‘mighty signs’,” he sneered.

Moses held up the Staff of God and threw it down in front of Dudimose. It became a large snake.

“A cheap trick. My magicians can do better than that.” He sent for them. Sure enough, they did indeed manage to turn their staffs into little snakes, using slight-of-hand within their long robes. But before they could demonstrate their adeptness at changing them back to staffs, Moses’ larger snake ate up their snakes, shaming them. Then he calmly picked it up by the tail, and it became a staff again.

The magicians also duplicated the leprosy sign. Their hands looked leprous, but everyone knew it was just a white powder. There was still a little under their fingernails when they showed them the second time. In contrast, Moses’ hand had been truly leprous, with even the stench of death upon it. Then when he pulled it out the second time, it was fresh and clean as a baby’s skin.

Finally, the sign of the water changed to blood. Again, the magicians duplicated it, by means of a chemical they threw down with the water. But when they cleaned up the floor, everyone could see how easily their red-colored water wiped up, while the water Moses had thrown down was sticky, coagulating and clotting there on the floor.

Dudimose still refused to believe. He hated the Hebrews anyway. He reacted to the third sign with a rage, ordering his guards to throw the Hebrews out.

That very day he ordered his Nubian Pharaoh in Avaris, **Ankhkare**, to command his taskmasters to increase the slaves’ labors. They’d been making bricks for his treasure cities Pi-Atom (just south of Goshen) and Pi-Rameses (just north of Avaris). Good bricks were made with clay mixed with straw for strength, then baked in the sun. Ankhkare commanded his taskmasters to require the Hebrew slaves harvest their own straw, yet continue to meet the same quota of bricks. It was impossible, of course, so the slaves got whipped for it almost daily.

When they complained to Ankhkare, he called them lazy and sent them back to work. So they sent a delegation to Moses, criticizing him for causing trouble. Logos again promised through Moses to deliver Israel with mighty miracles and judgments, but this time they did not believe.

In order to understand the rest of this story you must know what is going on in the heavens. After Earth had peeled Phaeton away from Venus back in 1454 BC, the orbit of Venus / Mercury (now just a binary) had changed several times. It was terrifying! Its latest orbit was more circular, closer to the plane of the ecliptic, and totally inside Earth’s orbit. Nobody knew if it would prove stable. Venus was still moving faster than Earth. It began slowly catching up after the Mars flyby of October 24, 1452 BC. Since Mars was then inside Earth’s orbit and nearly even with Earth, Venus was pulling up right in between them. There were bound to be some planetary clashes!

These interactions were spectacularly ominous. Direct observation was impossible, as they occurred between the earth and the sun. Besides, dust from that terrible impact of Phaeton clouded the sky. Still, darkened sun mirrors allowed astronomers to see what happened. The tail of Venus was several million miles long, made of ions as well as vapor, volatiles, debris, and hydrocarbons picked up from its encounter with Jupiter in 3300 BC. It usually pointed away from the sun, driven by solar winds. But whenever Venus came within 10 or 15 million miles of another planet, its tail split into two tails. One of these kept pointing away from Sol, but the other curved toward the nearby planet along its lines of magnetic force. Together, the two tails looked a bit like the horns of a bull. This occurred November 30, just as Moses first came before Pharaoh. Venus was approaching Mars and Earth from behind. Mars’ magnetic field pulled the particulate matter in Venus’ tail away from the ion stream.

Frankly, the Pharaoh’s astrologers were scared spitless. This was a bad omen! Look what had happened the last time the tail had split in two – Phaeton had nearly destroyed the Earth! Plus, they had seen the signs of YHWH through Moses and knew that they were real. They pled with Dudimose to beware the wrath of the gods. So Dudimose conspired with Pul to come up with a solution. They called the people together and proclaimed a fast. **Hathor**, the ancient Egyptian goddess represented by the Milky Way, was the ‘heavenly cow’ from whose udders flowed the milk of life. Now, they said, Isis (Venus), daughter of Hathor, represented Hathor herself. They must sacrifice a sacred **Apis** bull to her, lest she strike them again. Since Venus obviously had two ‘horns’, the people bought it. They sacrificed and prayed fervently.

The Venus binary was still slowly catching up to both Mars and Earth as 1451 BC rolled around. Its second tail remained pointing toward Mars until about January 4th, when it dissipated and began pointing more toward Earth. But Venus was still 8 million miles away and its tail was shorter than that. The frantic people worried what might happen as Venus got closer. Nothing serious had occurred so far, so the astrologer/prognosticators insisted that Hathor had accepted their offerings. That seemed to calm the Egyptians. They went about their business.

But Logos was not happy. Even after all His warnings through His prophets, through the celestial signs, and through Moses and Aaron, Egypt was still not listening. He wept for them. “O Father! What more can I do? They’ve hardened their hearts, every one. They hear and see My warnings, but they will not turn to Me. They turn even more toward their idolatry, wizardry, and witchcraft!”

“Of course, You must destroy them!” It was Satan, eavesdropping at the throne room again. He sounded rather gleeful at the thought. “And while You’re at it, You’ve got to destroy Israel as well—all they do is complain and moan about how hard they have it, and now they have completely rejected Moses and Aaron! Why, some have even sacrificed to Hathor!”

“I do not destroy My people or yours. You have just exposed the biggest difference between your ways and Mine, Satan. I gave you permission to use the trinary as you would. You chose to torment and destroy your own slaves even as I desperately try to save some. And My great love shall save some, you shall see. But as for My people, My Bride, I never gave you permission to harm her, thus you cannot, though you bring the stars down from the heavens and smash them into the earth. Did you not notice how Phaeton skipped over them, not even harming a hair on their heads? As you now have chosen to use Venus and Mars to bring great cataclysm into Egypt, I shall separate between My people and yours, so all the universe shall see the benefit of choosing Me and My ways. You shall see it yourself, and someday you, yes even you, shall come to Me and acknowledge that My ways are best.”

Satan fled. Logos’ words did have power, he had to admit that. He was more shaken than he cared to admit by Logos’ bold predictions. And how did Logos know what he had decided to do with Venus and Mars? Satan angrily decided to go for the jugular.

Moses was hiding in a cave, for the people seemed ready to stone him. Aaron and Miriam had gone into town for supplies, so Moses decided to spend the time alone in prayer and worship. Logos came to him as the eternal fire of YHWH, which flamed brightly, then coalesced into the form of a man, lighting up the cave. “Blessed are you, My beloved son, trophy of My grace. Your obedience is My great delight! I know you don’t feel very blessed, but be not discouraged. I am always with you.

“Pharaoh has hardened his heart just as I told you, and has refused to let My people go. I have given him time to repent, and even more warnings than you know, but he only turns to his wise men (who are fools) and his gods (who are not gods at all). Go to him by the banks of the Nile tomorrow morning, as he is ready to bathe, and say to him all that I tell you.” Logos told Moses the details of His plan, remaining with him for several hours. Suddenly He stopped. “Aaron is back. I must go. He cannot see My face and live. I have deeply enjoyed our time together.”

Even as the flame that was Logos flickered out, Aaron and Miriam came tramping in. “Moses! What is that light?” Aaron asked.

“Oh, that was Logos, but He’s gone. He told me that you cannot see His face and live.”

Miriam was right behind. She gasped and fell to her knees. “He isn’t gone! I see Him in you!” she whispered.

Aaron agreed. “Moses, your face is glowing! Your whole body glows!” He knelt beside their sister.

“Hey! Get up, you jokers! Don’t kneel to me. I’m just a man like any other.”

They got up, and Moses told them what Logos had said. But from then on they looked at their younger brother with a new respect, even awe. Moses too was awed. He was beginning to understand what Logos had meant when He had said He would make Moses to be like God to Aaron (and to Pharaoh), and Aaron would be his prophet.

As Logos had commanded, they went to Pharaoh at the banks of the Nile early the next morning. His guards had standing orders not to let anyone approach, but they backed off as Moses came striding up. His face still glowed slightly, visible because the sun had not yet broken through the morning mist. They went right up to Dudimose. Moses spoke quietly to Aaron, who raised the Staff of God and translated. “YHWH, God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you saying, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness.’ But you have not listened to Him. Therefore, thus says YHWH, ‘By this you shall know that I am YHWH. I shall strike the water of the Nile with My staff, and it shall be turned to **blood**. It will become foul, its fish will die, and your people will be unable to drink from it.’”

“Now that’s a trick I’d like to see,” Dudimose sneered. “Your cheap little stunt with the colored water on my floor didn’t impress me much.”

Without another word, Aaron brought the staff down hard on the Nile. It made a satisfying splash. Then they turned to leave, without waiting to see the result.

“Wait, you frauds. Nothing happened. All your grand promises and all I get is a splash? Care to strike it again?” Dudimose was openly scornful.

“I don’t need to strike it again. Would you care to bathe in it? Go ahead, give it the old ‘toe test’.”

The Pharaoh removed his sandals and took a bold step into the water. Then with a little shriek he jumped back. Against the gray of the morning the water just looked dark, but his feet were covered with blood! Trying to preserve his dignity, he stepped back into his sandals, bloody though he was, and strode back to the palace without another glance at Moses. When he arrived, he shouted for his magicians and wise men and showed them his bloody feet. “What do you have to say about this?”

After conferring with his two magicians, **Jannes** and **Jambres**, **Arte** (the chief wise man and wizard) answered, "We have noticed it too, Your Majesty. You see..." and he went into a lengthy explanation about the nearness of **Isis/Hathor** to Earth, and how her horn (comet's tail) which used to point toward **Mars**, now seemed to point directly toward Earth. It had pierced **Hapi** (their Nile River god), changing it to blood. It was like a baptism all across the land. But if they continued sacrificing **Apis** bulls to **Hathor** she would pass, withdraw her horn, and all would be well.

Now that he had an explanation, **Pharaoh Dudimose** was happy. He had almost begun to believe that madman, **Moses**. He told the whole story to his brother, **Pul**, and they had a good laugh together. They cared not one whit that their people were frantically digging wells around the Nile in search of drinking water.

A few weeks went by. Again **Logos** came to **Moses** in the cave. They shared sweet fellowship, as before, while **Logos** told **Moses** what to do. Again his face glowed when **Aaron** returned, confirming to him that **Moses** really had spoken with God. They found the **Pharaoh** walking in his garden. As before, **Moses** spoke in Hebrew, while **Aaron** held high the Staff of God and boldly thundered out the translation. "Thus saith **YHWH**, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me!' But as you refuse to let them go, behold, I smite your whole land with frogs. They shall swarm up out of the Nile and enter your houses, your kitchens, your ovens, and even into your bedrooms, both you and all your people."

"You've had some lucky guesses before, but I've talked to my wise men, so I know what's really causing this. And it has nothing to do with you or that silly stick you're waving about so pompously. So get out of my sight!" **Dudimose** spat disdainfully and returned to the palace.

On their way back to the cave, **Aaron** stretched out the Staff of God over the Nile and its tributaries, as **Logos** had commanded. That night, frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt; yes, even into the bedchambers of **Pharaoh** himself. **Dudimose** was furious! He screamed for his wise men. They had been trying to escape the frogs themselves as they attempted to hatch some plausible explanation. "Your Majesty! It is just as we expected. Impregnated by **Hathor**, **Hapi** [the Nile] has given birth in her watery abyss to a multitude of our gods: **Nun** and **Heqet** [the male and female frog god] and **Naunet** [the snake god]. See..." **Jannes** and **Jambres** waved their arms mysteriously, said a few magic words, and out from the folds of their garments sprang ten more frogs. "Rejoice, O **Pharaoh**, that we are so blessed by our gods!" **Arte** added. "After **Hathor** changed **Hapi** to blood, the fish died, letting our gods multiply..."

"Did I say I wanted more frogs, you fools? Get them out of my bedchambers, NOW!" he screamed. "And call for **Moses**!" He was apoplectic. The magicians and wizards scooped up their frogs and ran, robes flapping and magic paraphernalia leaving a trail behind them.

Now, they had no clue where **Moses** was staying; even the **Israelites** didn't know. But **Logos** knew, and He bade **Moses** arise and return with **Aaron** to **Pharaoh**, even though it was night. They met the frenetic wizards at the gates to the palace. "Hurry! **Pharaoh** is about to have a cow in there!" **Arte** told them, gasping for breath.

They ran in together. **Dudimose** was still screaming, "I want **Moses** in here, NOW!" His brother **Pul** was futilely trying to quieten him. He shut up abruptly when he saw **Moses** and **Aaron** enter. **Pul** spoke for both of them. "Please **Aaron**, ask your sidekick to entreat **YHWH** that He remove the frogs from us. Then we will let your people go sacrifice to **YHWH** just as you have asked."

Aaron began to translate, but before he could finish, **Moses** spoke up, in flawless Egyptian. "That is what I was hoping to hear. We accept your offer. The honor is yours, O **Pharaoh**. Tell me when you want the frogs to be destroyed from your people and all your dwellings, and left only in the Nile."

"By tomorrow morning!" **Dudimose** squeaked. It was well past midnight and he didn't want to waste a minute. But **Pul** was startled to hear **Moses** speaking Egyptian. "Who are you? Where are you from? And how can it be that you know my language so well?"

Moses addressed **Dudimose** first. "According to your word shall it be, that you may know that there is no one like **YHWH** our **Elohim**." Then he replied to **Pul**. "I am **Moses**, adopted son of **Bathiah** the queen of **Khaneferre Sobekhotep IV**. I came from this very palace. I learned Egyptian here at **Bathiah's** knee. I was betrothed to marry your grandmother **Genirah** at the age of 20, since **Bathiah** intended me to be the next **Pharaoh**. But **YHWH** our God had something much higher and better for me: to lead His people **Israel**. As you cooperate with Him, you and all of Egypt will be blessed – abundantly! But if you resist Him, you and all Egypt will surely be destroyed." He bowed in respect as is the eastern custom, and they turned and left.

The servants by then had cleaned the frogs out of their sleeping chambers, so they retired. Sure enough, by the next morning, all the frogs not in the rivers and lakes had died, and were being collected in great heaps by all the people. His wise men and magicians were ready for him at his breakfast table. They all bowed deeply to the **Pharaoh**, trying to recover their dignity after their fiasco yesterday.

"Your Majesty!" **Arte** spoke for the group. "**Nun** and **Heqet** have heard your request and have withdrawn their spirit from all the frogs on the land. As you yourself said, there were too many, and they had no food. All now will be as before. There shall be no more plagues, we swear..."

"Get out of here, you fools!" **Dudimose** never forgave them for bringing in more frogs when he was inundated with them. He hated frogs anyway, gods or not. He put the **Hebrews** out of his mind, and went about his business.

Pul never followed through with his promise. If anything, the taskmasters were even harsher, and the guards even more restrictive on their slaves. The Hebrews groaned under the heavy bondage. Logos heard their cry. Several weeks after that frog nightmare was all cleared up, Logos came again to Moses in his worship. "Peace, My beloved. I know that you are disappointed, but remember, I warned you that Pharaoh would harden his heart. I must give him a few more warnings. Perhaps he may yet repent." So He sent him to Pharaoh for a third plague.

They found Dudimose on the dusty road between the palace and his pyramid / temple complex. He had just finished sacrificing to his gods. Since it was a hot, sticky afternoon, he was heading back to the palace for a bath.

Again Moses spoke only Hebrew and Aaron translated, holding the Staff of God high. "Thus saith YHWH, the God of Israel, 'Because you have failed to keep your promise to let My people go, the very dust of the earth on which you trod shall turn to **vermin** on your body, that you may know that I am YHWH Elohim, the God of heaven and earth.'" Without another word, Aaron struck the dust of the earth with the butt of the staff, making a shockingly loud 'whump'. Then they turned and walked off.

Dudimose tried to think of a smart-aleck comeback, but he was distracted by this powerful itch. He looked down at his skin. It was crawling with vermin. "I am going to take a bath!" he shrieked, trying but failing to retain his dignity. "You wise guys had better have an answer for this when I'm done!" He all but ran toward the palace.

His wise men, magicians, and sorcerer/priests also headed for the baths. All along the route, they saw others frantically heading for water. They realized with horror that the whole land was covered with vermin. This was the mother of all nightmares, and they had no answers. They were desperately trying their powders and medicines, hoping for some relief, when Dudimose and Pul barged in to their lab. "So, what is it, you fools? Has Hathor gotten too close, and is this just the lice from her moth-eaten hide?" Dudimose was dripping with sarcasm and disdain.

They hadn't thought of that. Earth was now well within her 'horn', and it could be filled with vermin. But they were in too much torment to think clearly. "No, Your Majesty. This is not Hathor. She is kind, and we faithfully sacrificed to her. This is the finger of YHWH, the Hebrew God."

"But I suppose you can duplicate it, since you are greater than He?" Dudimose said derisively.

"Surely you jest!" said Arte, his head wizard / advisor. He threw off his robe. His body was crawling with vermin. "You do not have enough vermin? You wish me to make more?" He pointed to his poor dog, who was writhing in agony in the corner of the lab. "There is vermin on man and beast all over the land, and still you want me to create more?" Arte was almost hysterical. "I cannot!"

"Call for Moses and Aaron! I shall kill them! That will put a stop this madness!" Dudimose was screaming like a spoiled child, hopping up and down, fists pumping the air. "Don't just stand there! Guards! Bring me the heads of Moses and Aaron! They shall not live another day!"

But no one could find them – except for Logos, who came and had sweet fellowship with Moses in his cave.

Another week went by. The vermin plague died down and the Pharaoh got over his wrath against Moses. By now the river Nile was again clear and clean, with the frogs and other wildlife back in normal balance for mid-February. Pharaoh Dudimose had returned to his daily ritual baths in the Nile, his public worship of the river god Hapi, and his prayer for the prosperity of Egypt. Logos told Moses to meet the Pharaoh there and prophesy the fourth plague.

Moses started talking in Hebrew. Aaron held the staff, ready to translate. But before Moses finished, Dudimose butted in. "Stop speaking Hebrew to me, you... noxious vermin! I know that you know Egyptian! And don't tell me your God caused that last plague. I've got it all figured out. It's the tail of the comet we call Hathor. It contains vermin and we're passing right through it. I know, for your people suffered under that plague just like mine. You can't fool me anymore. Just like all of my gods, your God is a useful fiction – useful to control the people, but..."

"Thus saith YHWH Elohim!" Moses thundered out in Egyptian, interrupting the Pharaoh. "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. But if you will not let them go, behold, I will send swarms of biting **insects** upon you and all your people. Insects shall fill your palace and the homes of your people, and cover the ground on which they live. But on that day, I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people live. No swarms of insects will be there, that you may know that I, YHWH Elohim, am in your midst. So I shall put a division between you and Me, and between your people and My people, from this time forth forever."

"Ha! Now that will be a good trick. So how do you expect to keep the insects out of Goshen? And when am I to see this amazing miracle?" Dudimose had returned to his usual arrogant, sarcastic self.

"Tomorrow," Moses retorted, and turned away.

"I thought we were going to have them slain," Pul nudged his brother. Are we getting soft here?"

"Not at all. I'm just curious to see if he can actually pull it off. I can't imagine how he could fill the land of Egypt with insects as he promised, without any in Goshen. When he fails, his own people are likely to kill him for me."

"And what's this about all our gods being just a useful fiction?" Pul whispered so the attendants couldn't hear. "Don't you know that your throne depends on believing in all those gods? All Egypt depends on it! What happened to your training? Was I wrong in making you the Pharaoh?"

“Huh. You and I are the only gods around here. You can fool the people, but you can’t fool me! The world revolves at my command! I am Egypt’s source of life! Everything else, including all that Moses does, has an explanation.”

“Ahh... the arrogance of youth.” Pul chuckled. “I used to believe that... I guess it’s what our people really need to hear. But you’re right, if Moses can pull off this next one, then we’ll know that his God is really... well, really real.”

“Now you are the one getting soft!” Dudimose sneered. “Has he started to make even you believe? You’d better be glad I am the Pharaoh now.”

But the next day, Dudimose was not crowing. He was calling for Moses and Aaron. Truly the land was filled with biting insects. Neither man nor beast had any relief. They were starting to eat the young flax and barley plants, too, threatening the harvest. He told his heliograph operator to signal his Nubian Pharaoh at Avaris, asking if the plague had come there. Ankhkare responded that the plague of vermin had been unbearable, but the air had been clear for the last three weeks. No insects were there now. Not one. That did it. When Moses and Aaron showed up, Dudimose shouted at them, “Oh, there you are, you troublemakers! I should have had you slain when I first had the chance.”

“You’ve never had the chance, Your Majesty. YHWH our God protects us,” Moses answered in Egyptian.

“I could have sent my soldiers to have you slain anytime I wished.” He’d forgotten his earlier failure.

“Actually, no. You have no idea where we live.”

“What do you mean? You live close by. Whenever I send out my servants, they find you easily.”

“Again, no. They never find us. Ask them.”

Dudimose looked at the messengers he’d been sending. They bowed deeply and said, “He is right, Your Majesty. We don’t know where he lives. Whenever you ask us to get him, he just, well... he shows up at your palace gate.”

“YHWH tells me when you want me.”

There was a long pause. Pul, standing behind the throne, chuckled. “Oh, shut up!” Dudimose snapped at him. Then, turning, “I am sorry, Moses. I misjudged you. Perhaps your God is more real than I had imagined, and more powerful. Please, entreat Him for me, to remove the insects. I’ll give your people a vacation so they can make their sacrifices to your God right here within the land.”

“That would not be right, for we must sacrifice that which is an abomination to the Egyptians, and they might stone us. We must go a full three days’ journey into the wilderness. YHWH has spoken.”

“We’ll split the difference. I’ll let you go just as you say, if you swear by YHWH your God to not go very far away. Now, pray for me, before these insects destroy the land.”

“Agreed. I will entreat YHWH for you. He will remove the insects. But do not deal deceitfully again by not letting the people go!” The attendants gasped. Accusing their Pharaoh of lying was a capital offense. But Dudimose had no smart-aleck answers left. He stood silent, frowning. Moses turned to go, but Aaron held the Staff of God up and gave Dudimose a knowing nod before following.

Logos responded quickly to Moses’ prayer. The insects were all gone by the next morning. But for the last time, Dudimose hardened his heart. He knew now that YHWH is the one true God, unlike all the false gods of his realm. He had seen the proof. No one, not his wise men, wizards, or magicians, no god or man could explain how the insects had covered the land of Egypt while the land of Goshen remained clear. And they came and went only at Moses’ command. That had happened too many times now to be a coincidence. Dudimose knew. And he hardened his heart. He sent out an entire platoon of soldiers with orders to get the heads of Moses and Aaron. They searched for weeks, but came back empty-handed. Dudimose was furious. He raged and swore. He kicked the wall, pounded his fists upon it, and even butted it with his head. He ordered Ankhkare to increase the pressure on the Hebrew slaves.

Now, this is a sad part of our story, but I cannot change what occurred. The family of Ini and Semka had been the most godly Egyptian rulers since the time of Joseph and Amenemhat. They had reduced the burden on the Hebrew slaves (mostly for the queen mother Genirah’s sake). They had put a stop to the practice of killing all their political rivals and all their less-than-perfect offspring. They valued human life, which is a godly character rather rare among Egyptian Pharaohs. God had responded by giving them many good children: nine sons and five daughters. Nearly all of these were pretty normal, though perhaps a bit slow; only Pul and Dudimose were the brilliant, aggressive type needed to make good rulers. God had not judged Ini for marrying his half-sister, for he did it out of ignorance. Ini and Semka had impressed upon their children the value of human life. We know this because they instituted the practice of letting each son rule for a year when he turned 18 or 19. When each son became the ‘figurehead’ ruler, the others all worked together to make his reign successful. They were a close-knit family. The brothers and sisters were devoted to each other. The Egyptians loved them. Though Ini had rejected YHWH as his God, yet those years of training from Moses in the Faiyum had still paid off.

But Dudimose and Pul had changed all that when they had slain their parents for trying to reduce the persecution of the Hebrews. That had opened the door for Satan to rob them of their heritage of respect for human life. So now in his great wrath, Dudimose even turned against his own brother, Pul – yes, the brother who had stood beside him, helped and supported him since the day he was born, and had made him the Pharaoh, glad to give him the glory while working with him behind the scenes.

It happened like this. Dudimose ordered Ankhkare to increase the pressure on the Hebrew slaves. Pul objected. "Hey, Dude! Wisdom, my man, wisdom. Pressure in a cooking pot is good, for the meat cooks faster. But too much pressure will break the pot. I believe the Hebrews are close to rebelling and rising up against us. Hadn't we better leave well-enough alone?" As always, he spoke kindly, not wanting to enrage his brother any more. He had always been a calming influence on fiery Dudimose.

But this time, it didn't help. Satan had filled the heart of Dudimose, and he rose up in great wrath, drew his sword, and slew his brother right there on the spot. I weep as I tell it, for Pul had never done anything but good for his dear brother. It was so sudden, and so unexpected, that Pul never had a chance to defend himself. Worse, Dudimose then went after his other brothers, slaying them all that night in their beds. It was horrible, like he had gone insane with blood lust. His sister Mara, whom he had married the day he became Pharaoh and who had recently borne him a beautiful son, was appalled and spat out a terrible curse upon him. He raged at her and would have killed her, too, but he did not want to leave his precious heir motherless.

Venus reached its aphelion (farthest from the sun) on February 22, 1451 BC. Venus was keeping up with Earth, which was still within its tail. Mars was now returning for its regular March flyby, drawing rapidly near. Would they clash? That would surely shower Earth with deadly debris. Astrologers were petrified. With two planets overhead, tides were monstrous. Venus' tails began to flit back and forth. Now the shorter tail of her one remaining moon, Mercury, swept over the land. Electric arcs thundered between the planets. Dust still circled the earth from its collision with Phaeton, turning the sky blood red. Winds howled. The ground shook. Hair flew up from the static.

Logos again came to Moses in the cave. "The groaning of My people is unbearable to Me. Pharaoh has hardened his heart for the last time. So I shall send increasingly severe judgments upon Egypt in rapid succession until it is destroyed and My people set free. If Pharaoh tries to stop the plagues by repenting, I shall harden his heart, for his time of repentance is now past." He sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh with His Word regarding the fifth plague.

Aaron still held the staff, but Moses no longer needed an interpreter. Logos inspired a new boldness in him. He thundered out, "Thus saith YHWH Elohim, the God of the Hebrews, 'Let My people go! If you refuse, My hand of judgment will fall with **pestilence** on your livestock in the fields, so that they will sicken and die. But again I make a distinction between My people and yours, so that not one animal will die of all that belongs to My people. Tomorrow this will happen. Then you will know that I am YHWH.'"

"Now I've got you! I shall make you eat those words. Guards! Seize them! Slay them before my eyes. They shall trouble this land no more." Dudimose glared fiercely.

Pharaoh's personal guards were the very best of Egypt's soldiers, and were heavily armed. Moses and Aaron were unarmed, except for the Staff of God. Aaron was afraid, and turned to run. But Moses spoke quietly to him in Hebrew. "Fear not. They cannot touch us, but by YHWH's command. Face them. Point the staff at the first soldier." Aaron did so. Fire came from the staff, burning the lead soldier to a smoking corpse at his feet. It was the same with the second, the third, and on until Pharaoh, his face white, finally called a retreat.

"I told you, YHWH our God, the great King of all the universe, protects us," Moses said boldly to Pharaoh. "You told me you did not know Him, so I swore that you shall know Him better hereafter, for He shall show you great signs and wonders to shake the very foundations of Egypt if you will not obey Him. Go now, and tend to your cattle, for they are destroyed, as is all of Egypt unless you repent!"

Aaron was still shaking as they walked off. He had never killed a man before. He tried to hide it by making light conversation. "That was really impressive, Moses. You don't need me as your mouthpiece anymore. You have become eloquent and powerful in speech!"

"That was not me, my brother. That was the Spirit of YHWH, filling me. And that was not you who slew those soldiers, either. That was the fire of YHWH coming from the Staff of God. I assure you that you shall see much more of that. So stand strong. Do not fear, but only believe!"

"Surely now the Pharaoh will repent, after..."

"No. Logos said he would not. He has hardened his heart beyond repentance. His pride prevents it. Egypt will be destroyed. Thus Israel will be set free."

Indeed Dudimose did not repent. He was filled with fury, which grew as the promised pestilence fell on the beasts of the field, and even on his sacred Apis bulls. He telegraphed Ankhkare down in Avaris, who reported that the Hebrew livestock were all fine. His fury increased to a towering rage, and he screamed out orders to his generals to muster his entire army and slay every Hebrew in Egypt, man, woman, and child.

Fortunately Arte, his advisor and chief wizard, had the temerity to stand up to him, even knowing he risked his life doing so. "May it please the Pharaoh to reconsider, Your Royal Highness? Egypt needs the Hebrew slaves. Besides, they are more and mightier than we, and if we try to attack them, they will rise up against us and may well defeat us. We must deal wisely with them. They grow bold because this trickster Moses has convinced them to believe in YHWH. But we have uncovered his tricks. The reason the plagues of insects and pestilence did not afflict the land of Goshen is their strict laws of washings and burial of their refuse. They never have flies or diseases, or even mice or rats among them, as long as they observe such strict laws of cleanliness."

That was a new one for Dudimose. Maybe there was an explanation for all this. He quieted down and began to think a bit more rationally. "Okay. So, what about the fire from Aaron's staff? Only a god can do that..."

His wizards already had an answer prepared. "Watch, and you shall see!" They showed him a hickory stick that had been sharpened to a point at one end. "Do not fear, Your Highness!" Arte said in a calculated attempt to get him to do just that. "We will be careful where we point it. But, you see, with the closeness of Hathor and Set [Mars] and the fiery battles between them [the huge electrical discharges of continuous lightning between the planets], some of it is bound to spill off on the earth."

He rubbed the stick with a dry sheepskin, then brought the point close to the Pharaoh's gold-plated throne. Sure enough, a tiny bright spark bridged the gap, with a crack that made Dudimose jump. All the hair stood up straight on his arms and neck, as it had when Aaron had pointed the staff at his guards.

"We shall see more and more of this, Your Majesty, as Hathor and Set get even closer. But do not fear! It is just static electricity, and it cannot harm anyone unless it is amplified like this." His two magicians held the sharp stick firmly, pointing it at a potted plant near the throne. Arte took the sheepskin and rubbed it back and forth furiously in the middle. For a while, nothing happened, though the static buildup in the room hung heavily around them. Then suddenly there was a bolt of lightning, jumping from the pointed end of the stick to the plant, which instantly wilted, smoking. It made a pretty impressive display.

Dudimose was a bit skeptical. He looked at the small wilted plant. He recalled his slain soldiers. He had never seen Aaron frantically rubbing his staff. But he wanted to believe, and he had noticed a lot of static electricity in recent days, so he let it go. "Okay, Arte, so it was all tricks. I'll have Moses and Aaron's hide for that, I swear!"

A slave ran in. "Sir, I have a telegram from Ankhkare. He says that your flocks of sheep in the fields of Goshen are dying from the plague. But the flocks of the Hebrews, even those in adjoining fields, are not dying. At first he thought that your Hebrew shepherds were deliberately poisoning your flocks. But he has tortured several of their shepherd supervisors to the death, yet they admit to nothing at all. Now he thinks it may be the same plague that is afflicting your flocks and herds over the rest of Egypt."

Dudimose started to jump up and down, cursing. Arte, standing beside him, saw his master's face get very red and distorted. He was afraid Dudimose would have a coronary on the spot. "Your Highness. Please, relax. They're just sheep! You hate sheep anyway, remember? That's why we wanted the Hebrews to tend them in the first place."

Dudimose wagged his finger in front of Arte's face and screamed, "So how do you explain it?"

Arte left to consult privately with Jannes and Jambres, his two chief magicians. Returning, they bowed and said, "It is Hathor and her calf, Your Majesty. We are now within both her horn [the tail of Venus] and her calf's horn [the tail of Mercury]. Hathor has shown her acceptance of our worship and offerings by taking the finest of all our sacred animals, cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, asses, and sheep, as one great, grand sacrifice, once for all time. But you need not fear, Your Highness. Once Hathor passes by, it shall never happen again. As for the Hebrews, Hathor has not honored them by taking even one of their flocks or herds!"

"That kind of honor I could do without, you jackass!" Dudimose shouted angrily. "Now, you flea-bitten fools, get out of my sight before I 'honor' you by sacrificing your miserable hides to Hathor!"

Arte fled with his magicians, robes flapping wildly and dignity thrown to the winds, desperately hoping that the worst was over.

It was not. That Sabbath Logos came again to Moses, urging him to loose the sixth plague. His face still glowed when he came before the Pharaoh on his way to worship his gods Sunday morning. Carrying two fistfuls of ash from a kiln, Moses again thundered out, "Thus saith YHWH Elohim, 'Let My people go! But because you have neither listened nor repented, I shall send My pestilence to become **boils** upon your own skin.'" He flung the ash into the air where a wild wind sprang up and carried it away. "Thus you shall know that I am YHWH."

Moses and Aaron walked away, while Pharaoh and his attendants frantically ducked and scattered to avoid the white powder in the air, thinking it might be toxic. At least the Pharaoh had the good sense not to send his soldiers after them this time. Nothing else seemed to happen so they continued to the temple. But when they came out, the wild winds seemed to have carried that ash all across the land. There was fine white powder blowing everywhere, even obscuring the sun. They could not avoid it. By the time they got back to the palace, their skin was breaking out in boils and open sores. Dudimose hysterically called for his wise men, magicians, and physicians but they didn't come. Their sores were already so bad they couldn't even walk. Dudimose was ready to call for Moses and repent. But Arte, his chief advisor, who had returned with him from the temple and lay in agony near him, said, "Your Majesty, the small handfuls of ash Moses threw into the air could not be the cause of this. The whole land is filled with fine white dust! This is dust from the horn of Hathor, which we are still passing through. The wild winds that carry it are also a result of the nearness of Hathor and Set. As they battle each other, they stir up stormy weather all across the land. But fear not, sir. It shall soon pass."

The Pharaoh heard and believed Arte. Thus his heart was hardened again as Logos said. His pain was too great. He remained in an utterly foul mood.

Michael bowed before the throne. He was puzzled but did not dare to ask his question until invited.

Logos knew, and urged him to ask. "I delight in your questions, for I want you to learn wisdom."

"Well, Logos – about those comet tails Earth is passing through. Why do you make it easy for them to disbelieve, by providing those physical explanations? Do you not want them to be forced to admit to Your great miracles?" As soon as he used the word 'forced' he knew the answer.

Logos smiled at him. "Very good, dear Michael. Do you see now how voicing the question enables you to understand it better? It is indeed My nature to entreat, but never force. Everything that happens gives mankind the choice to turn to Me and believe, or turn away from Me and harden their hearts. I provide the physical explanations, so those who have hardened their hearts can continue to do so. The Pharaoh has hardened his heart with every choice I sent him. He has already destroyed himself in My sight, yet to his people he does not appear so. From now on, I will allow the hardness of his heart to become so great that all the universe will see its consequences. He shall be My finest example of the destiny of those who choose Satan and his ways. If I gave him miracles for which he had no explanation, which he could not resolve in his own mind, he might be forced to acknowledge Me, and repent, and obey Me. Then I must heal him and restore his land and his kingdom, so My illustration would be lost."

"Your illustration, Lord?" Michael was mystified.

"Yes. There is a vital principle here, which you, firmly fixed within time as you are, must understand. In eternity, My Father is not bound by time. All things are complete and perfect, and My law of sowing and reaping does not exist. But within time, everything has its consequence. To every sinner, every rebel, everyone who chooses Satan and his ways, there comes a time when he can no longer repent, but must suffer the full consequence of his choice – must pay the price for his sin. Some might think that that time comes only at death, but it is not so, for the sinner is dead while he lives. Even in his living death, there comes a time when he can no longer repent and receive My forgiveness. Pharaoh has now passed that point, as you shall see."

Michael, and Gavriel beside him, heard, understood, and worshiped. All their mighty host behind them also gained wisdom, and bowed in wonder and awe at the righteousness of God displayed in Egypt. Within them all was birthed a healthy fear of God – the kind of fear that keeps one from rebellion and its inevitable consequence, the hardness of heart they saw in Pharaoh, for who knows when their own time of repentance may also be passed?

After a time of worship, Gavriel lifted his head and softly asked the inevitable question. "Logos, my King? What about dear Lucifer – Satan? Has he rebelled beyond his day of repentance and forgiveness?"

There was sudden silence in the heavenlies, as every ear strained to hear how Logos might respond. They heard Him softly weeping, so everyone guessed the answer. "Yes," He finally said. "He can no longer repent, but must suffer the consequences of all his misdeeds and pay the full price for all his rebellion. I gave him every warning. I instructed him in My wisdom. I granted him everything he needed to appreciate My ways. But this day Lucifer also has hardened his heart beyond repentance. His choice is now made... to remain Satan, My adversary. My wrath shall abide on him until Satan and all his works are utterly destroyed in the due consequences of his sin."

The heavenly host gasped, as one. Michael cried out, "Lucifer destroyed? The best of Your creation?"

Logos was sobbing openly now. The pain of what He had said had wounded Him deeply. But after a time He continued. "No. I only said that Satan shall be destroyed, and all that he fathered by his rebellion. When he and all his works are finally burned up, there may be something left of the glorious Lucifer I created which I can restore. We shall see. But for now, look at My example, Pharaoh. In him is now being developed all of Satan's own corrupt nature: his rebellion, his selfish pride, his lies, his anger, *even the utter stupidity of his foolish, irrational choices!*"

He said it with such vehemence that Gavriel and Michael jumped back, then looked around to see if Satan was listening in, expecting him to challenge Logos on such a condemning statement. No one remembered Logos ever saying anything so condemning before... about anyone! It shocked them all.

But Satan was not eavesdropping, as had been his habit. Logos answered their unspoken question. "Satan is no longer welcome here. I tolerated his evil presence only in the hope that he would repent and learn wisdom, but that day is past. My patience and love for him no longer softens My hatred of his sin. From this day forth I banish him from My throne room and from the entire third heaven, except by My specific invitation. He is now limited to the second heaven or the realms of men, where he will test My people to see if they will choose Me and My ways instead of his perversions. No longer intercede for Satan, but rather use caution. He is exceedingly dangerous. He rages with all his might and cunning for he knows his time is short."

No one in the palace could sleep that night. They were up with first light, hobbling in their agony down toward the sacred Nile to wash away the impurities of their boils and open sores. Dudimose was still in a foul mood. He had lain awake all night plotting how to eliminate Moses and Aaron, and had finally decided on sheer brute force. They might be able to kill a few soldiers coming at them, but they could not kill an entire regiment. As he reached the Nile he swore by Hapi that as soon as he was well enough to stand before his army, he would gather them nearby, for the next time Moses showed up.

But Logos had met with Moses that night as well. He and Aaron were already there to meet them.

Moses spoke in Egyptian directly to Dudimose, but this time out of sympathy for his pain, he spoke entreatingly, gently. “Thus saith YHWH Elohim, God of the Hebrews, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me! But because you have hardened your heart and not repented, I have unleashed all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, that you may know I am YHWH and there is no one like Me in all the earth. For if I had not restrained My plagues until now, but allowed My pestilence to run free upon the land, there would have been no flesh left alive, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this cause I allowed you to live, O Pharaoh, to show you My power and to proclaim My great name throughout all the earth. Because you still stand up in pride against Me and against My people, behold, early tomorrow morning I shall send the seventh plague: a very heavy **hail**, with an earthquake and thunder and lightning storm such has not been seen in Egypt from its founding until now. Therefore I urge you, O Pharaoh, remain inside, with your servants and your little ones, and bring in with you all your cattle, your flocks, and your herds, that they may live and not be slain by the force of the hail. For every man or beast that is found in the field when the hail falls will die. But I take no pleasure in their death, for I am YHWH, God of the living, the God of all Life.”

Moses and Aaron walked away. The Egyptians could not help noticing that they were not limping or stepping gingerly on boils. *YHWH must have made a distinction between the Egyptians and the Hebrews for this plague, too. But how is that possible? The fine white powder had covered the land. This must be the finger of God! YHWH is the God of all Life! He must be the one true God over all!*

But even as that thought crossed Pharaoh’s mind, his advisors gave their explanations, never realizing that it was Satan himself whispering in their ears. “Your Majesty, the Hebrew’s skin is tougher than ours; the powder could not penetrate it. And of the hail he promises, we’ve had hail before; we’ve had great thunder and lightning storms. Moses is just guessing, but we too can guess: these wild winds are just the start. With Hathor and Set growing closer, and Thoth the Ram interceding between them, we also prophesy terrible earthquakes with heavy rain, hail, lightning, and thunder. It could get quite destructive. So we too counsel you to be inside until it passes.”

[Note: in Egypt, Mercury was then called Thoth the Ram due to its spiral horn, though later it became known as Sekhmet, the goddess of disease and healing.]

Arte added, “Your Majesty, with all the static electricity being built up in the atmosphere, it wouldn’t surprise me if the rain and hail were mixed with static. That would make a spectacular display, like fiery hail, but don’t be fooled. It’s all just natural phenomena.”

The Word of God through Moses spread quickly across the land, as everyone warned his brother and his friend. They had suffered greatly under these plagues, and many were eagerly asking one another what Moses was now threatening. Any who feared God protected all his loved ones and any surviving livestock that night. Even many Egyptians did so, but alas, the Pharaoh was not among them. He did stay inside, together with an entire battalion of his finest troops he had mustered to deal with Moses, but he cared not for his flocks and herds. All who had escaped the pestilence were slain by the hail.

The storm continued from morning until noon. As Arte had warned, fire was mixed with the hail, while the ground shook continuously. Dudimose watched the spectacular display from his window, deeply awed. Moses sure made it tough to not believe. He had to keep reminding himself, *It’s all just natural phenomena. All just natural phenomena.*

Natural or not, the land was devastated. Every man or beast still out in the fields was slain. In addition, the barley, which was nearly ready to harvest, was destroyed. So was the spring flax, which had just begun to flower. Only the summer wheat and spelt, which had not yet sprouted, remained unharmed. Every tree was damaged and their fruit was ruined. Yet the storm continued unabated.

Finally, the Pharaoh could stand it no longer. “Call for Moses and Aaron!” he shouted, beating his fist on the window sill. “They’ve got to make it stop!”

Again miraculously, Moses and Aaron were right at his doorstep. Dudimose never stopped to consider how they had arrived safely in the midst of the hail. He just cried out, “I have sinned! YHWH is righteous, but I and my people are wicked! Make supplication to YHWH for me, for I can take no more of His thunder and hail! Then I will let Israel go just as you said. Please intercede for me this last time!”

Moses and Aaron glanced at each other as if to ask, *What’s going on here? Logos said he was beyond repentance.* Then they saw the large number of troops lining the great hall. Suddenly they understood. *He wasn’t going to repent. He was just going to get them to stop the hail, then order his troops to slay them before they could get away.*

So Moses answered the Pharaoh. “Okay... As soon as I leave the city, I will raise my hands up to YHWH and the thunder and hail will cease, that you may know that the earth is YHWH’s. But I know that you have not really repented, and do not yet fear YHWH. For you have placed your trust in your advisors and your army. Therefore the fiery hail shall not cease until after I leave the city.” Aaron raised the Staff of God and thumped it on the floor. Then they turned and made their exit, nodding politely to the guards and the commanders of the troops as they passed.

They strode out into the hail, unconcerned for their own safety. Once out of the city, Moses prayed, and the storm ceased just as he had promised.

As soon as the hail stopped, Dudimose screamed to his commanders, “After them! Run! Catch them before they reach their hideout! Slay them instantly! I want their heads by nightfall, before they can cause another plague! Go! Go!” He was screaming and pumping his fists like a kid throwing a tantrum. His battalion streamed out.

Late that night his general returned and knelt before Dudimose. “There is no way they could have escaped, Your Highness. We ran and spread out, covering the ground for miles around. We left no bodies unturned. There are dead bodies everywhere. My men are exhausted. I’ve returned them to their barracks. Moses must have been slain by the hail but so badly deformed that we didn’t recognize him. He surely could not have survived that hail. I’m quite certain that he and Aaron are both dead.”

At that moment Moses and Aaron strode into the great hall and stood once again before the Pharaoh. He looked at them, then down at his general, then back again at them in disbelief. “There they are! Get them, you fool! Get them! Don’t let them speak! Slay them before they can prophesy another plague!” Again, he was screaming in fury.

The general, a seasoned warrior, wasted not a second. He jumped up and lunged, drawing his sword as he came. Aaron barely had time to lower the staff towards him, but it was enough. The fire of God came from the staff and slew the general as his sword was just inches from Aaron’s neck.

Dudimose and his servants and guards stared dumbly at the body. A tingling fear filled the room. In the stillness, Moses thundered out, “Thus says YHWH, God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me! But I know that you will not let them go, for I have hardened your heart, that I may make a mockery of your gods, and that I may cover the land with plagues so you will know that I am YHWH. Therefore behold, if you refuse again to let them go, tomorrow morning I will bring **locusts** into your land. They shall cover the surface of the earth, so you will not even be able to see the ground. They shall eat all that escaped the hail. They shall fill your houses and darken the skies, a plague like you and your ancestors have never seen nor ever shall again.’” They turned and strode out of the palace. As they passed, the shocked palace guard backed away in fear.

One of Pharaoh’s personal servant girls, a dark-haired Arabian beauty named **Kharsi**, was first to snap out of it. She was always near Dudimose. Her job was to fan him, bring him drinks, clip his nails, rub his back, skin his grapes – anything his heart desired. Now she had the audacity to speak up what all the rest were thinking. “How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, Your Majesty, that they may serve YHWH their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed? You banished the Hebrew slaves from your palace; now banish them from the entire land, that we may again live in peace.”

All the others in the great hall were nodding their agreement. Dudimose realized that he was about to have a crisis of confidence here. Suddenly he felt very naked and vulnerable. He had slain all his brothers, his parents, and everyone who really loved him. *If his palace attendants and guards turn now against him, he himself might be slain!*

To top it off, Mara his wife, standing beside Kharsi, now spoke up, “You’d better listen to her, Dude.” She spoke respectfully, but her voice held an edge of scorn. “I’ve been having nightmares about this, and last night I dreamed that there was not a male left in all the land of Egypt.” She tightly clutched **Ini II**, her six-month-old son, heir to the throne. “I dreamed...” she hesitated, then plunged on, “... that you and Ini had been slain. I searched all Egypt to find one of royal blood to be the Pharaoh, but there was none. *So Kharsi became the Pharaoh, and I became her servant!*”

That broke the spell. The very thought of a slave girl becoming the next Pharaoh shook Dudimose to the core. “Call for Moses and Aaron! I want them back before me, immediately! I’ll tell them that...” But suddenly, there they were, striding back into the great hall, just as if they had never left.

“You were about to say?” Moses asked.

“Er, yes! Ahh... I repent! Go! Serve YHWH your God. Three days’ journey... Uh... who all is it that will go?”

“We shall all go, with our young and old, our sons and daughters, and all our flocks and herds – not a hoof will be left behind, for we must hold a great feast before YHWH our God, and we know not with what we must serve Him.”

Dudimose glanced at his own precious heir, and an evil gleam came to his eye. “You may go, only you must leave your wives and little ones behind. You do not need them to offer sacrifice. My people will care for them until you return.” He smiled smugly.

“Not a hoof, nor a toenail, shall be left behind.”

Dudimose flew into a rage. “May YHWH your God slay me if I ever let you go with your little ones! You have evil in your mind! Only the men among you shall go and sacrifice to your God!” he screamed. “Now get out of my presence before I get angry!” He ordered his servants to drive them from the palace.

As they left the palace courtyard, Logos directed Moses to raise his hand over the land of Egypt to release the eighth plague. The gusty winds changed to a strong east wind, which blew steadily all night. By the next morning, the locusts had come. Just as promised, they darkened the skies and filled the land. Within one hour, every green thing across the land was stripped bare. Of all the fruit trees and plants so recently damaged by the hail, anything remaining was gobbled up and utterly ruined. The plague was appalling in its suddenness, and horrifying in its magnitude. Truly the land was laid waste.

Michael and his host, covering the Israelites in Goshen, struggled to hold them back. Alas, unbelief among the Israelites allowed some to get through, though not like the rest of Egypt. The Israelites could see the skies blackened with locusts all around them, and when a few locusts began eating their own crops they cried out to Logos for mercy and forgiveness. He was quick to hear and deliver them, for that is always what He wants to do.

But when the Egyptians cried out to their gods, their mouths filled with locusts, for the air was so thick with locusts that they could hardly breathe. Even the Pharaoh panicked. He began shrieking like a madman for Moses and Aaron. Once again, his servants did not have to go far, for Logos had already directed Moses to the palace gates.

When they arrived at the throne, poor Dudimose was literally crying in terror. (Though arrogant, he had never been particularly brave.) “I have sinned against YHWH your God, and against you. Please, forgive my sin only this one more time, and make supplication to YHWH your God, that He would remove this death from me.”

“Oh! So now you repent and acknowledge that YHWH is the true God causing these plagues? And now you really will let His people go to serve Him in the wilderness?” Moses was not convinced.

“Yes! Yes!” Dudimose croaked, then stopped to spit out another locust. “Go! Go now! And bless me also.”

So Moses and Aaron left the palace court and prayed. God changed the strong east wind to a west wind, blowing all the locusts into the Red Sea. That very same day, the land was delivered of them. The Pharaoh just as quickly forgot his earlier terror, and would not keep his promise, for Logos had hardened his heart so he could not repent.

After a sweet Sabbath fellowship, Moses and Aaron came unbidden to the palace at dawn on Sunday (Nisan 7) and asked to see Pharaoh. He was worshiping his falcon sun god **Ra**, and would not admit them. But Kharsi his beautiful Arabian servant girl came out to meet them.

“Tell your master that he is still worshiping the wrong god. Because he has refused to acknowledge YHWH as the true God of all the earth, his precious sun god Ra shall be **darkened** for a time. Thus are all his false gods exposed before YHWH, who by Logos His eternal Word created the sun he worships, as He created all things.”

Kharsi first bowed, then fell on her knees before Moses. “I will tell him,” she said, adding, “Please entreat your God YHWH for me, also. For I do truly repent and renounce all the gods of Egypt. From this day on I swear my allegiance only to YHWH, to worship and serve Him and Him only.”

Startled, Moses looked at the tears in her eyes. Logos had told him the Pharaoh would not repent, but had said nothing about this humble slave girl. *Could she be saved, even from the Pharaoh’s side?*

“I will entreat YHWH for you,” Moses promised. He sent Aaron to town for food, and trudged alone up into the badlands above the Nile, praying as he went. When he reached his cave four miles from the palace, Logos was already there, in the flame of fire that had become such a delight and comfort to him. “I hear your prayer, and I will save Kharsi. Indeed, she shall become the queen of Egypt. I have yet many others in the land whom I will save. When I set you free from Egypt, you shall take them with you. They are Mine. I entrust them into your care.”

Moses bowed in worship and acceptance, though he wondered how Logos would make Kharsi queen of Egypt if she was escaping Egypt with them. Logos continued. “This month [Nisan, our March/April] shall be the first month of the year for you, for this is the month I shall set you free from Egypt and from the bondage of the Pharaoh, so you can serve Me only. This is how you shall celebrate My deliverance. On the tenth of Nisan at evening each household among you shall take a perfect lamb (or if the family is too small, share one between several families), inspect it, and bring it into the house. Keep it with you until the fourteenth, then slay it by cutting its throat. Put some of its blood on the lintel and doorposts of each house. Then roast the lamb with fire, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs that same night. Eat it in haste, fully clothed with sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. For at midnight the Egyptians will urgently compel you to leave Egypt. The death angel shall slay the firstborn of all Egypt, but I shall cover all who have the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, so the death angel will ‘pass over’ them. Then I will lead you out. Thus, forever from this day forth you shall celebrate Nisan 14 as My **Passover**. I give it to you for a memorial of My great deliverance.

“Now hurry down to Avaris,” Logos said, “Instruct the elders of My people as I have said. They shall believe, for I have made you as God to them. Then return here to Lisht. Stretch your hand out over the Pharaoh’s palace in the sight of his guards and officials, and call for the ninth plague, darkness so thick it can be felt, as I told you.”

Moses obeyed. The people believed, and rejoiced! At dusk beginning Nisan 10, as the Israelites were selecting their lambs, Moses was back. He stretched out his hand over the palace and proclaimed darkness upon the land. The night grew black, as the demons of hell were loosed to walk the earth. Before morning, Earth fell into the shadow of Venus, hiding the sun and darkening the moon. The Egyptians awoke with terror in their hearts, for not only was there no dawning, but also the noxious gases from Venus and Mercury’s tails were choking them. It obscured even the stars. Demons danced around them, tormenting them. They could not light a fire, for the demons would blow it out. Screams and sobbing filled the air. Demons played in their minds with images of terror, accusing them of their many evil deeds, while laughing, shrieking, and howling horribly in the dark recesses of their minds.

Michael and his host kept the demons out of Goshen. Though their land was dark from the eclipse of the sun, they had the light of their torches and cooking fires within their dwellings. They drew close to their families, cooking, eating, singing, dancing, playing with one another, and worshiping and thanking Logos. It was their first vacation in years, and they made the most of it. They had believed God, and knew they were about to be set free. The angelic host, looking on, stood in awe and wonder as they saw the contrast between the terror of the Egyptians in the dark, and the joy of the Israelites!

The darkness lasted a total of 113.5 hours. That's 4.5 days, of which three were total darkness. Various cultures record conflicting accounts, since the perception of time passing in total darkness is subjective. Some cultures reported as much as nine days without the sun. It sure seemed that long! The Egyptians remained in their beds, tormented by their demons, getting up for neither food nor water, lying in their own excrement, cursing the night.

Logos assembled the heavenly host and bade them look and learn. "You see, the same trouble that calls My people into the heaven of My presence, has pulled My adversary's people down into the hell of his presence. Learn wisdom! This is the consequence of all who choose Satan and his ways. My illustration is complete. Now I shall arise!"

Finally the Pharaoh could take no more. Though it hurt his pride to have to beg for help again, even a Pharaoh has his limits. He lay in his bed, screaming for his servants to call Moses and Aaron. His servants were all lying in their own beds, fully engaged in their own private torment, and did not respond. But lovely Kharsi, though it was not her job, was moved by compassion and arose. She felt her way along the walls and with difficulty found the main gate. She opened it, then paused, not knowing what to do or where to look. In desperation she tried a prayer. "YHWH, God of the Hebrews, please, send Your servant Moses..." She had barely uttered the words when she saw a light on the road. It was Moses, his whole body glowing like the sun in this pitch-blackness. Kharsi fell to her knees in awe and wonder before him, but he just told her to get up and go with him to the Pharaoh's bedchambers.

"I have prayed for you, Kharsi," Moses said, his body lighting the way as they walked back through the palace. "YHWH heard my prayer, and promised that if you wish, you may join the Hebrews when we escape from Egypt." He decided not to say anything about her becoming the queen of Egypt. He did not understand that himself, and he didn't want to get her hopes up.

Dudimose saw the light, and knew it was Moses. Before he even got to the door, the Pharaoh was yelling at him. "Moses! Go! Go! Be gone as long and as far as you want. Serve YHWH your God. Take all your people, even your little ones. Only leave your flocks and herds behind as surety, so I know that you will return."

Dudimose was a filthy mess of stinking nightclothes. Always before, the Pharaoh had been impeccably dressed, clean-shaven, and fragrant with perfumes and spices. The contrast was shocking. Moses had spent the three days of darkness celebrating with Logos in his cave. For the first time he realized how devastating the darkness had been to the Egyptians, for even their Pharaoh looked like he had spent those three days in hell. His hollow, tormented eyes looked imploringly past the dark stubble of his beard.

"Not so, O King," Moses replied, remaining respectful. "You must let us have our animals for burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to YHWH our God."

"Yes. Yes. Take enough animals for sacrifices. But you have vast flocks and herds and you won't need to sacrifice them all. They'll just be in your way. Only entreat YHWH your God for me, to remove the death of this darkness!"

"Not so, O King," Moses repeated patiently. "All our livestock must go with us. Not a hoof shall be left behind, as I said before. For until we arrive, we will not know what YHWH will require of us."

There was a pause as Dudimose weighed his response. Mara, his wife, lying in the bed beside him, whispered, "Dude! Let 'em go, for heaven's sake. Don't you know that Egypt is destroyed?" He almost gave his assent. But Satan was right there screaming in his ear, and he was more accustomed to hearing and obeying Satan's voice. "I know that there is treachery in your mind!" His voice started low, but by the time he finished he was screaming, just like the voices in his ear. "You have destroyed all my flocks and herds. Your pestilence and hail have slain all my sacred cattle. Your locusts have eaten up all their fodder. Even my sheep which were in your care you poisoned. Your own flocks and herds grow strong at my expense. I will be damned if I will let you take all your livestock with you! Now go! Get out of my presence! I am the mighty Pharaoh! See my face no more, for if you do, you shall surely die!"

"You are correct, O Pharaoh. I will see your face no more – not as Pharaoh, anyway. Out of your own mouth you are condemned. For finally you acknowledge that all these plagues came from YHWH at my command, yet you will not believe Him, that you and all Egypt may be saved. Therefore, thus says YHWH Elohim, 'At midnight on the 14th I will pass over the land of Egypt.' All the **firstborn** of the land shall die, from the firstborn of the Pharaoh..." Here Mara let out a shriek. "... to the firstborn of the slave girl behind the millstones, as well as the firstborn of any remaining livestock. Then there shall arise a terrible cry of despair in all the land of Egypt, such as has never been heard before nor ever shall again. But against the sons of Israel not even a dog shall bark, that you may understand how YHWH makes a distinction between Egypt and His people Israel. Then your servants..." He waved a hand at Kharsi, "... will come and bow down before us, urging us to leave with many gifts. Then we shall go out."

“Hey, Dude! You fool! Let ‘em go! Think of our baby! Remember my dream? In my dream you and Ini were slain by a god! You’ve gotta let ‘em go!” Mara was hysterical.

Dudimose slapped her across the face with the back of his hand for her insolence, causing Kharsi to cry out in sympathy. He was in an uncontrollable rage. “Get out! All of you! Get out!” he screamed.

As Moses left the hall, Kharsi clung fiercely to his arm. “Let me go with you, now!” she whispered. “Only let me get my things.” Her bedroom was next to the Pharaoh’s. She pulled him to her door to light the room, then scurried around putting things in a bag. “Okay. I’m ready.”

As they reached the palace gate, they were met by a tall Egyptian in dark robes. It was Arte, the Pharaoh’s own chief wizard and advisor, the foremost of his wise men. He had heard the heated exchange in the Pharaoh’s chambers, and had managed to dress and gather his things. “Please, Your Highness!” he addressed Moses as if he were Pharaoh. “Please take me with you. Your miracles are real, I know. Your God is true. He is able to deliver you. I must escape the Pharaoh and all his false gods.” He hung his head. “Jannes and Jambres won’t come. They just mocked me.”

Moses looked at Arte, haggard, unshaven, eyes red from crying. His worst enemy in Egypt! From the first, Arte had opposed everything he had said to the Pharaoh, and had given Dudimose every reason to not believe. Moses sent up a quick prayer from his heart. “Yes!” Logos responded. “I have chosen him as a testimony of My grace. Take him with you. I swear that he shall become a great blessing to you. Thus I shall save many Egyptians.”

Even as they came into the courtyard, they were joined by others. Like rats fleeing a sinking ship, it seemed that all Pharaoh’s servants, having seen YHWH’s mighty miracles, wanted to flee Egypt with Moses. He remained in prayer for them all, “Logos, send only those You want to join with us.” Like the Pied Piper, he led the procession out of Lisht.

With all these people following him, Moses never even went back for his stuff in the cave. Avaris was a long twenty hour walk from the palace at Lisht. But the road was broad, level, and empty. So they just continued through the night, with Moses lighting the way like a beacon. They arrived in Goshen by the evening after the fourth day of darkness, the end of Nisan 13. They didn’t see the sun, but they could now see the stars and the sky was beginning to lighten. Earth had left the shadow of Venus.

The elders of Israel had been meeting with the people, ironing out the final details of the Passover as Moses had instructed them. They saw a crowd coming down the road, and hurried out to meet them, rejoicing that the darkness was past. Moses told them what Logos had said about Egyptians who had chosen to follow them. Then, looking back in the twilight, he was startled to see that there were many thousands behind him, more than he could count.

For the next hour they worked to verify that all the Egyptians there were truly repentant of their idolatry, and then distributed them among the families who had more than enough lamb and were willing to ‘adopt’ them into their homes. The Egyptians gave rich gifts to their hosts. They were willing to give anything to escape Egypt.

Lovely Kharsi would not allow Moses out of her sight. She gave to him the treasures she had packed – gold, silver, and precious jewels – keeping only a change of clothes. She wept in true repentance as the blood was sprinkled on the doorposts. She ate the Passover meal standing between Arte and Miriam, who stood beside her husband Hur.

When the meal was over, with the joy and love still overflowing among them, Moses was startled to see tears still flowing down the cheeks of Kharsi’s red face.

“Kharsi, why do you weep? Are you regretting your decision to follow us? Do you wish now to return to your master?” Moses was concerned.

“No!” Kharsi opened her eyes wide, fear flashing over her face at the thought of her previous master, Dudimose. “Now and forever my Master is only YHWH, and you, His representative. The tears I weep are tears of joy, for I have never before been so welcomed, so loved, so, so...” Her voice cracked in emotion. “... so much a part of a family! Even when I was a little girl in my father’s house, there was not so much love. I am overwhelmed by love!”

“Where is your father’s house? Perhaps you would like to return there?”

“No, please! Do not send me away! I want only to remain here forever to serve in your family. My father was an Arabian king, a cruel and haughty man. When I was a teenager, he tried to force me to marry his rival, to forge a political alliance. I rebelled against him and fled from his presence, only to be captured by Egyptian soldiers and taken to the Pharaoh to be his slave. I want nothing more to do with politics, princes, or Pharaohs. Please, let me be just a slave in your household for the rest of my days.”

“We too, have been slaves. Don’t you want to be free?”

“Slavery to you will be freedom. I ask nothing more.”

But Moses was thinking of his two sons. “You shall not be my slave, for I do not condone slavery in my household. But if you wish, you may be my daughter, for I have two sons, but no daughters.”

Kharsi flung herself into Moses’ open arms, entangling her tiny body in his long white beard. Still weeping, she cried decisively, “I accept, my father! I accept! And if you should ask me to marry one of your sons and bear your grandchildren, I accept that as well! I am forever grateful.”

Moses smiled and gave her a big, long hug. *That was too easy. Perhaps he should have prayed about it first. But it had all happened so suddenly...*

The evening passed. Midnight approached. The roast lamb was polished off, and the cooking fires died down. The Israelites were full, satisfied. Though they had eaten in haste, standing, now they began getting drowsy.

But just as Moses pulled up a chair to sit back and relax, the fire flickered and died. The air grew suddenly icy cold, and prickles ran up his spine. A cry, a scream, rang out through the midnight air. It was promptly followed by another. It became a chorus, and then the nightmare noise of a gazillion screams and wails all across the land. For just as Logos had warned, Satan and all his demonic host had been loosed to claim the firstborn of everyone not covered by the lamb's blood on the doorposts. Michael and his host stood careful guard to ensure that Satan stuck to the letter of the law. No harm would come – not so much as a hair of their heads – no, not even a dog would bark against those who had obeyed the command of Logos. Indeed, this, the worst of catastrophes for Egypt, must become the greatest of blessings for Israel. But throughout the rest of Egypt, from Pharaoh's palace to the captive in the dungeon, there was not a family in which there was not one dead, except for those who had believed the Word of YHWH and had stayed in a house with the ram's blood on the doorposts.

Mara was inconsolable. "My baby, my baby, my baby!" she wailed. She would not even look over at her husband. Dudimose was already dead to her in her heart. He raged and swore. He tried to find servants to obey him. But they were all either disabled by their own family's grief, or... missing. Even Arte, his chief advisor and head wizard was gone! *Where had they run off? Why had they left without his permission? Why was nobody even listening to him?*

Dudimose was insane with fury, beating his fists and even his head against the walls. For a short time his mind blanked out entirely. When he awoke, he found himself in his bed beside his wailing wife and dead baby, curled up in a fetal position and sucking his dirty thumb. He yanked his thumb from his mouth and sprang from his bed in horror. *Had it really come to this?* He tried to light a torch, but it would not ignite. He flung off his filthy bedclothes, pulled on a clean royal robe, and felt his way out of his darkened bedchamber. *He was the Pharaoh! God to these people!* Deliberately quelling his panic and engaging his most-commanding voice, he ordered his servants to call for Moses. There was no response. His voice was drowned out by the wails and screams of his grief-stricken people.

Well, if his servants wouldn't respond, he would call Moses himself. He had to get the Hebrews out, now, before Egypt was destroyed. He set his course by dead reckoning across the darkness of the great hall. He thought he had counted his steps, but still he bumped hard against the far wall, spraining his ring finger on his right hand. He again cursed and called Moses some vile names, but eventually he found his way to the royal stables.

He harnessed two horses to his fastest chariot. Then he took off recklessly down north on the road to Goshen. His horses knew this road, so once he had started them off, he gave them the lead. Though it was still night, the moon and stars had come out. The thick darkness of the past four days was past. It was a good thing, too, for even knowing the road, his horses might have galloped over the edge into the Nile if they had not been able to see.

However, as he neared Goshen, he passed more and more traffic on the road. Dudimose yelled and cursed at them to get out of his way. *Why so many? Why were they still on the road so long after midnight? And why were they all streaming toward Goshen?*

Finally he arrived at Avaris. Dudimose was appalled. The streets were clogged with Egyptians! They were all looking for Hebrews, giving them gifts, and urging them – his own slaves – to leave Egypt! With horror Dudimose realized that his 'crisis of confidence' had passed – and he had lost. *His own people no longer trusted him or obeyed him. They were rebelling against him – him! The god of Egypt!* He was utterly undone, shocked into a semblance of rationality. So it was with a trace of humility, even repentance, that he called loudly for Moses and Aaron.

They heard, but Kharsi spoke up first. "Please sir, may I go out and talk to him?" She had all sorts of things she wanted to say to her previous master, some not so nice, and she didn't want Moses to hear. She opened the door, wondering how to respectfully call Dudimose a stubborn, arrogant, ignorant, heartless, cruel, pompous jackass. Miriam took her arm as she walked out, and Arte came out just behind. Arte also had some unprintable things to say. So it was good that they didn't need to speak at all.

With chagrin Dudimose recognized his lovely Kharsi standing arm in arm with Miriam and Arte in the doorway. There was no more doubt that he had lost. "Tell Moses and Aaron, 'Rise up now. Get out from among my people, both you and all the sons of Israel with your wives and little ones. Take your flocks and herds. Be gone as long as you wish. Sacrifice to YHWH your God. Bless me also, for I am undone.'" He said it loudly, so that not only Moses and Aaron, but everyone for many houses around heard him. His ring finger had swollen and was throbbing. He took off his royal ring, held it up for all to see, and threw it toward Kharsi. Then he bowed his head in shame and defeat, wheeled his chariot about, and headed back toward Lisht.

With his declaration, there was a surge of energy as the Egyptians pressed them with lavish gifts, urging them out of the land in haste, saying, "Go now, or we shall all die!" The Hebrews received their gifts. It was a colossal plunder of silver, gold, clothing, blankets, sandals, and food. Thus the Word of YHWH came to pass that they received from the Egyptians all the back wages that they had been due from their years of slavery. Thousands more God-fearing Egyptians joined with Hebrew families that night.

So that very hour they woke up their flocks and herds from their four-day sleep, well-refreshed, and set off toward **Succoth** (as Moses had prearranged with their elders). Succoth was the military staging town on the southeast edge of Goshen, bordering the wilderness. Moses knew it well, from his early days in training to be the next Pharaoh. Though not much of a town, it had good water and a huge area for them to assemble before striking out for Canaan. It was about thirty miles from Avaris, and no more than a long day's walk from anywhere in Goshen.

All day on Nisan 14 (our Sunday) they gathered. Moses was awed; he didn't know there would be this many! He estimated roughly a half million men, plus their wives and children – maybe 2 million souls in all. How many were true sons of Jacob, and how many were adopted from the Kasdim or recently added from among the Egyptians, he did not know. But it didn't matter. They were all Hebrews now, committed to follow YHWH wherever He may lead.

The grass was good and the water plentiful at Succoth. Their flocks and herds recovered from their extended fast. The people celebrated all evening and slept as free men that night. The last to arrive came in well after midnight. They had gotten permission from Ankhkare, the Nubian Pharaoh who lived in Joseph's palace at Avaris, to dig into Joseph's pyramid and collect his bones. They had brought them along, in order to fulfill his dying wish to be buried in Canaan beside his father at the cave of Machpelah.

Moses awoke them at dawn on Monday the 15th. As repentant as the Pharaoh had seemed, Logos had said He would harden his heart, and Moses was taking no chances. Logos had told him not to go north by the **Way of the Land of the Philistines**, lest the people get disheartened in the battles and return to Egypt. So he chose to go south, then east by the **Way of the Wilderness** towards Nakhel. It was farther to Canaan but was by far the shortest and safest way to cross the desert. From Nakhel he would turn northeast toward Kadesh, Beersheba, and the Promised Land.

Everyone had a big breakfast. Their animals had grazed most of the night. Moses gathered them all together and formed them into military style ranks. They started off in great spirits. Daytime in the desert can be very hot and dry, especially since the great comet Phaeton had burned off the vegetation across much of the Sinai Peninsula (though it had bounced above the atmosphere over Egypt). But strangely, a pleasant cloud covered them. It was cool and comforting. They made good time, talking, laughing, and joking together, their animals lowing alongside.

Towards evening, some of them asked Moses to call a halt for the day, while they leavened their dough and let it rise for their daily bread. They had eaten up all their bread the day before, and had nothing but unleavened dough. Moses pointed up to the cloud over their heads and said, "So make for yourselves unleavened flat-cakes as we go. We will stop when Logos stops, and not a minute before."

That was a new one. No wonder the cloud was so cool and comforting. Logos was in it! As the daylight waned, they could see an intense blue-white fire within the cloud. They rejoiced, and followed it with new interest.

The cloud did not dissipate that evening, nor that night. It remained over and ahead of them, lighting their way so they could continue without stumbling. Logos was indeed in the cloud, and it was He, and not just Moses, who was leading them. In awe they continued walking all through the night. The next morning they learned why their flocks and herds had not stopped all day or all night to graze or sleep – there had been water and some grass as they walked south along the lake, but now on the Way of the Wilderness there was no vegetation at all, no, not so much as a single blade of grass. And no water.

They continued walking all that day the 16th and on into the evening of Nisan 17, a total of 36 hours without stopping. (These are 25 hour days, 360 per year.) No one, even Moses, had realized that the Wilderness of Shur had become so inhospitable. But now they knew – if they had stopped to camp and sleep, they might not have made it across the desert. So they continued on, desperately tired and thirsty, their water supply almost gone, living off the flat-cakes that they had never had time to leaven.

Darkness had fallen and the stars were out when they reached Nakhel, where there was good water and grazing land for their flocks. There they camped for the night while they refreshed themselves and replenished their supplies. Though Nakhel is at the crossroads of two major trade routes in an area claimed by both Egypt and Edom, it is really nothing more than a trading post and an oasis, plus a few dwellings for the Egyptian military sentries who manned the watchtower up on top of the hill. The guards of course immediately telegraphed Egypt of the arrival of the Hebrews – that was their job, to notify the Pharaoh of anyone using these trade routes.

Early the next morning (Wednesday, Nisan 17) Moses gathered the Hebrews into ranks for travel. He expected to take the northeasterly trade route through Kadesh and on to Canaan. But Logos spoke clearly to him, "Turn back. Head southeast toward **Elath** and **Ezion Geber**. For I have an appointment with you on Mount Sinai in Midian."

"Yes, Lord!" Moses responded, remembering Logos' promise that they would return to worship on Mt. Sinai. So they turned back, and walked along the route used by merchants between Egypt and Arabia. It was still a good road, well packed from many traders. But it snaked back and forth in a narrow wadi with rugged hills all around. They were now 'shut in' by the wilderness, unable to spread out as they had when crossing the desert. The huge crowd became strung out into a twenty mile long column. Of course the Pharaoh's sentries in the watchtower saw them turn back and take the road toward Ezion Geber. They dutifully telegraphed back the surprising news.

Dudimose was still dealing with the death of his son and only heir, Ini II – not to mention trying to pacify his hysterical wife and his grief-stricken people. He wondered how all those Hebrews could have gotten clear across the wilderness so quickly, then pushed it aside from his mind. He had plenty on his plate right now.

But Satan wasn't taking no for an answer. He continued yelling in the Pharaoh's ear, stirring up his anger against Moses, and reminding him how easy it would be to trap the Hebrews in those hills. Satan knew all the right buttons to push. He reminded Dudimose of his 'godhood' and fed his pride (Satan's specialty). He urged him to 'get even' with those who were to blame for his monumental tragedy.

Dudimose began to give in to anger. He was angry at all the verbal abuse heaped on him by his wife, angry at Moses, angry at YHWH, and angry at himself for being made a fool. He needed an excuse to get out of the palace. So he called up all his military forces and ordered them to assemble for battle at Succoth. He knew that road the Hebrews were taking, bound by rugged hills on both sides. All he had to do was block their way forward. After slaying that troublemaker Moses, he could drive the Hebrews like sheep. His 650,000 man army had been decimated by the plagues, but he still had 600 chariots, 50,000 cavalry, and 200,000 infantry. (Barely half that actually showed up at Succoth, as so many had deserted to go with Israel. But Dudimose didn't know that.) He signalled for Ankhkare, his Nubian Pharaoh, to join him with all his taskmasters. *He could not fail! The Israelites had no weapons, no battle training, no defense. It was payback time for Moses!*

Walking under the shade of the cloud by day, and led by the fire in the cloud which lighted their way at night, the Israelites plodded along, with no campsites or rest stops, averaging about two miles per hour day and night. Again, their flocks and herds came willingly, as there was no water in the wadi and little vegetation for them to graze.

On Thursday morning, when they were about twenty miles from Ezion Geber, Logos spoke again to Moses. "We will turn right, on the road just ahead." He didn't explain, but Moses knew His voice and obeyed without question. This road was even slower as it meandered through the hills. Traders rarely used it. But as long as Logos continued to cover them with His cloud, Moses would follow.

An Egyptian watchtower stood on the hill above the crossroads. Moses could see two soldiers there conferring with each other excitedly, and then telegraphing the news back to Egypt. He knew this road, both its ruggedness and where it led. It wound back through the lower part of the Sinai Peninsula, past Egypt's vital turquoise and copper mines and the soldiers guarding them. It then connected with the road heading north and ended up right back in Egypt. He wondered what the Pharaoh would think of this change of course – probably that he was an idiot. But to his credit, he never complained or argued with Logos.

Dudimose did indeed think he was an idiot. He was then only a day and a half behind them. He got the message when he arrived at Nakhl that night. He had stationed a small battalion of troops at the copper mines to guard an important shipment. He sent an order for them to meet him from the south. He and his men slept well at Nakhl. They were in no hurry now. The Hebrews were pinned between his own army and that battalion from the south. Calculating how he would deal with Moses and all his tricks, Dudimose let his men recover the next morning. They didn't leave Nakhl until nearly noon on Friday.

At that time the Israelites were forty miles beyond their turn south. Logos appeared to Moses in the air in front of him as flames of fire. He was all smiles. "Your obedience, even though you knew this was an idiotic road to take, pleases Me greatly. As a result, I shall receive honor, and you also shall be honored before My people. Look now to your left, to that narrow wadi you just passed. Turn back, for that is our route." He paused. Moses glanced around; it was obvious that those with him neither saw the vision nor heard the voice. He gave the command and turned left.

Grumbling arose among the elders beside him. That winding roadway up the narrow wadi didn't seem suitable for so large a company. Moses didn't try to argue with them, or explain to them logically why this was a better route. He had no arguments, no logic – all he knew was that he would obey Logos no matter what. Thankfully, the wadi broadened a bit upon reaching **Migdol**, where some Egyptian sentries eyed them warily. But there in front of them lay the **Red Sea** (we know it as the Gulf of Aqaba), a vast expanse of deep blue water. Now the grumbling increased. Moses was tempted to fear that he had just made a tragic tactical blunder and gotten them all trapped.

He bowed in silent prayer, determined to give up his fears, even his own logic, and just trust Logos. In that moment, Logos appeared before and above him in brilliant flames of fire, which coalesced into a dazzling angel with arms outstretched. "Thank you, Moses, my beloved son, for trusting Me in this. In submitting to Me against all logic you have proven yourself to be the meekest man on the face of the earth. Meekness before Me is power. I will show Myself exceedingly powerful through you."

Moses fell on his face before Him, feeling unworthy of such high commendation, especially after he had recently entertained doubts. The elders surrounding him stopped, seeing Moses fall, but not seeing the vision. They assumed that Moses had made a colossal mistake leading them here, and was finally prepared to admit it. They argued among themselves who would now take over, to lead them back to Egypt, where at least they had food and water. Arte and Kharsi defended him, but the others wanted to kill him.

But Logos had other plans. "Stand, friend Moses, and raise up your arms toward Me." Moses shakily stood and reached out his arms.

Logos came down closer. Their fingertips just touched. Bolts of electricity coursed through them, but the shocks only served to strengthen Moses. He felt wave after wave of love, joy, peace, and reassurance wash through his outstretched body. The host of surrounding angels held their breath in awe and wonder. Logos was touching the fingers of sinful human flesh, yet the universe went on! Surely Moses must have been purified as never a man since sin entered the world. A mighty cheer broke forth. This was Logos' greatest victory! He finally had that for which He had longed since time began: close fellowship, intimate companionship with His Bride.

Moses remained like that for a long time while Logos communed with him face to face, linking earth to heaven. No words were needed, as they spoke heart to heart. The elders grew tired of waiting for him to turn and apologize for leading them astray. They picked up stones to slay him, so they could elect a new leader. But Logos was saying, "When Pharaoh heard you had taken this road he thought to himself, 'They are wandering aimlessly. The wilderness has shut them in. Now is my chance to get even!' He is chasing you with all his armies. They are coming south from Nakhland and north from the copper mines. I am leading them here to show them My power and glory, and thus all Egypt will know that I am YHWH. Go down now, Moses. Camp south of **Pi-hahiroth**, between Migdol and the sea, across from **Baal-zephon** at the south end of the beach."

Suddenly the eyes of the multitude were opened. They saw Moses shining like an angel, reaching up and touching a flame of fire brighter than the sun. Yet Moses was not consumed. They fell to their faces. Those who had picked up stones dropped them in shame. Logos was still with them, after all. When Moses finally turned to face them, instead of burned out, sightless eyes, his sight penetrated into their very souls. "I have just received further direction from YHWH!" he thundered. "Follow me! Move out!"

Though they had been traveling for 56 hours straight, they were re-energized. By that evening they had reached the beach at **Nuweiba**, passed the Egyptian fortress of **Pi-hahiroth**, and made camp on the south end of the broad beach, opposite the heathen temple of **Baal-zephon** on the other side of the gulf. They ate their Sabbath meal with rejoicing and thankfulness. Logos had delivered them. He was leading them. They partied long into the night, and then slept well. Many slept in until noon on the Sabbath.

The watchtower on Migdol Peak had telegraphed the news. Pharaoh got the message as he turned his army south. He laughed at Moses' idiocy. *Haw, haw! They must have spotted his battalion coming up from the copper mines.*

He caught up with them by Sabbath noon, Nisan 20. He and his chariots thundered down the wadi to Nuweiba, followed by his cavalry, then his foot soldiers, and finally his battalion from the mines. His soldiers in **Pi-hahiroth** came out to join him. This would be a great day!

The Israelites awoke to the pounding of horses' hooves. In terror and confusion they wailed, moaned, or cried out to Moses, "Is it because there were not enough graves in Egypt that you brought us here to die in the wilderness? Why did we ever leave Egypt? We were better off as slaves! Now, after all our efforts to escape, we're doomed!"

Moses stood before them smiling, his face still shining from his encounter with God the previous day. He raised his arms for silence, then spoke, his voice ringing out over the beach. "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of YHWH which He will do for you this day, for the Egyptians you see behind you, you will see no more forever. YHWH will fight for you, while you stand by and watch in awe and wonder!" Thus he silenced the cries of the people.

Moses turned his back to them, faced the sea, and slowly walked out to the edge of the water. The tide was high, but starting to ebb. It would be a very low tide that night, as Venus, Mercury, Mars, and our moon were all lining up. A stiff east wind seemed to be helping, as well. He wondered if the extra-low tide would empty the bay. Not a chance, he decided. It was too broad (nine miles) and it looked impossibly deep. He began to earnestly pray.

Logos' response was immediate. "Why are you crying out to Me?" Moses heard the sound of laughter, guffawing, as if this terrible situation was a great joke to Him. "Tell My people to go forward. Stretch out your staff over the waters and divide them, for the sons of Israel shall cross through the sea on dry land." The laughter continued.

Moses looked to his right. There was Miriam, with lovely little Kharsi beside her, their arms wrapped around each other like a mother and daughter. They obviously hadn't heard the laughter. Miriam looked like she was about to cry. Kharsi was saying, "... but surely YHWH will do something! He sent all the plagues and got us out of Egypt! Maybe he will make a bridge, or send us a big boat, or..." Then Moses looked to his left. There was Miriam's husband, old **Hur ben Judah**, with Arte and Aaron. They hadn't heard the laughter either. Arte stared, bug-eyed, at the Egyptians, but at least he kept his mouth shut. Hur was mouthing the words, "O God, O God..." over and over. Aaron was repeating, "I just knew this would happen. But we almost made it! I just knew it. But we almost made it!" Neither one was listening to the other. Moses realized that even his own brother and sister didn't really believe.

He turned back to look at the terrified Israelites. The Pharaoh's chariots had reached the beach and were racing towards them. They would be upon them in minutes. "Logos says to go forward!" Moses yelled. "Follow me! Do not fear the Egyptians. Logos Himself is our rear guard!" Then he turned, held the staff high, and stretched out his hand over the sea. "**Sea of Edom!** I command you now to part in front of us! Stand up to the right and to the left. Wind! Blow before us to dry the sand that we may cross on dry land." It was the boldest thing he had ever uttered.

Logos responded to Moses' faith. The cloud that was shading them from the noonday sun moved swiftly behind them, falling as thick darkness upon the Egyptian army. That east wind grew stronger, blowing in their faces down from the hot hills of Midian. The tidelands dried quickly in the wind. As Moses walked forward toward the waterline, the waterline retreated before him. He hoped the people would all obey and follow him, but he did not look back. That hot wind now seemed to come from directly above him, pushing the water far off to either side.

He strode into the channel. The sand in front of him dried just as reached it. On his left, Hur was still saying, "O God, O God..." Aaron was repeating, "I don't believe it!" On his right, Miriam was just gasping, open-mouthed, while Kharsi gushed, "I knew it! I knew it! YHWH is the only true God, the great and powerful God, the faithful God, the loving and kind God..." She kept thinking up more superlatives. Moses realized that Kharsi believed and worshiped YHWH more than his own family.

What a jewel! He fingered Pharaoh's ring that Kharsi had caught and given him. *What a wonderful wife she will make for one of his boys!* "Lord, which one?" he mused, but did not get an answer. *Just as well*, he thought. *I must not let myself get distracted from what God is doing now.*

He looked to the left and right. The tide certainly had gone out! Way, way out! They were reaching the bottom of the channel, over 300 feet below the tideline. On both sides the water had been pushed back by the strange winds so that it stood like a sloping wall on either side. The dry path between the walls of water was roughly a mile wide, and behind him, the Israelites were beginning to fill it!

Dudimose reigned his horses to a stop, as did those around him. *Drat this damnable pea-soup weather! Where did all this fog come from? It was sunny just two minutes ago!* It quickly grew dark and started raining. Now thunder and lightning began a nearly-continuous raucous concert. *Ahh... it was that big cloud he had seen hanging over the beach as he came down the wadi.* It had become a regular thunderstorm, as is so typical on a hot, dry day when the sun evaporates too much moisture off the surface of the bay and the winds drive the moisture up against the hills.

At first the cool rain felt good after the three days of travel across the dry desert. But a gusty wind sprang up, whipping the rain into his face, and soon Dudimose was soaked through and miserable. He took consolation in knowing that all those in the camp of the Hebrews were certainly more miserable than he. No doubt the wind gusts had blown apart their flimsy tents, and that lightning and thunder were terrifying them. *They'll be thoroughly cowed – ready for him to drive back to Egypt as soon as he kills that troublemaker Moses!* Dudimose shook his fist at the sky, cursing the weather and calling on his gods to drive it away. *Surely a spring thunderstorm like this couldn't last long. An hour at most, and he would have them!*

Even with a mile-wide path, it took the rest of the afternoon and all night for all the Hebrews to cross. With the addition of the Egyptians who had joined them Passover night, there were about two million of them, with over three million sheep, goats, and other livestock. When the cloud had moved behind them, blocking their view of the Egyptian army, a great peace had settled over them. They packed up and followed Moses, rejoicing and praising God for the miracle. Shouts of joy rang out, together with loud exclamations of awe and wonder.

Dudimose heard it, incorrectly interpreting it as cries of fear. A cruel smile played over his smug face. *They know they're trapped, like rats in a cage. Just wait until this storm passes. They will know terror like never before!*

But the storm didn't pass. The sounds died out, and the darkness of the storm turned into the blackness of night. Dudimose grew impatient, but what could he do? Even if he could go forward, his men couldn't see him to follow. They bedded down where they were, soaked and utterly miserable. But that cloud seemed filled with demons, harassing him and his men unmercifully all night with spine-tingling shrieks and moans. Dudimose didn't get a wink of sleep, and became more cranky by the hour. He had no way of knowing that the same cloud which had cast them into darkness was lit on the other side with the fire of YHWH. It shone like the day above the Israelites, lighting their footsteps and filling their night with joy and peace.

By dawn on Nisan 21 (our Sunday), the storm began to clear. Finally! Dudimose directed his army to prepare for battle. He ordered his generals to execute his plan to first smash the magic staff. Then they could easily take Moses and Aaron. There would be no hesitation or call for retreat, no matter how many soldiers were slain by his silly stick! This game was for all the marbles, and there would be no excuses for failure. His commands rang out with a total certainty and ruthlessness. Death and eternal shame for any man who balked or hesitated to carry them out!

The morning fog finally began to lift. Dudimose signalled his commander to sound the battle cry, then rubbed his eyes in disbelief. The huge beach, which had been filled with his Hebrew slaves, was empty! But his men already had their orders, and poor Dudimose was nearly run over by his own army. He angrily whipped his horses to try to catch up. He finally did, when his commanders slowed down for him at the far edge of the beach. "There they are, Your Majesty! They're fleeing frantically in the far end of the channel. Shall we pursue them?"

"Of course, you idiot! Get them! They shall not escape! Run them down with your chariots! Show no mercy! Don't stop until you have destroyed the magic staff and captured Moses. Bring him to me and slay him before my eyes, so that all my slaves can see." But his commanders had heard all that before, and had already taken off down the slope. Dudimose again whipped his horses furiously to catch up.

The Hebrews were walking, and the Egyptians were only a few miles behind them with their fastest chariots. They certainly should have been able to catch up before the Hebrews reached the far side. But for some strange reason, they now began to experience mechanical trouble. Chariot wheels fell off. Axles broke. Bridles or harnesses came undone. Saddles slipped. Chariots swerved and ran into each other. Chariot wheels broke on rocks that hadn't even been there moments before. Battle trained war horses shied at nothing, rearing up and throwing their riders or flipping their chariots. It became a mass of confusion.

But the threat of death for failure is a powerful incentive and the officers urged their men on. They were slowed but not stopped. Now the cavalry began swirling around past the disabled chariots, bringing even more confusion. The soldiers were close to panic. Some cried out, "Let us flee from Israel, for YHWH their God is fighting for them – against us!" The cry echoed down the line.

Dudimose heard their cries and realized he was close to losing his final opportunity. "Call for the priests!" He screamed. "Bring them up front, that they may bless us!" The last of the Israelites was now reaching the far beach. Dudimose, his broken chariot abandoned, rode his white stallion halfway up the slope. He saw Moses and Aaron, nearly within his grasp! Dudimose turned his horse and cried out again, "Bring the priests that they may bless us! We have them! The victory is ours!" and other nonsense.

Then suddenly he saw the priests. They were fleeing, their gold plated chariots flashing in the sun. Normally they rode behind his war chariots and ahead of the cavalry. But they had slipped back through the cavalry and were trying to get up the other side. The only reason they hadn't yet escaped was that their way was blocked. The remains of his infantry, 80,000 men, had marched, 800 abreast, rank by unstoppable rank, into the channel, filling the gap.

Now even his chariot commanders were trying to flee. A great terror had filled them, and all the cries and threats from Dudimose fell on deaf ears. But the oncoming cavalry was impenetrable. A mid-channel collision was inevitable. Finally someone blew retreat to turn the cavalry about, only to face the infantry, now completely in the channel. Dudimose was furious! He had ordered his officers to not blow retreat, no matter what happened, even if they were about to be slain to the last man! Then Dudimose heard his infantry commanders sound the retreat as well. Turning, they collided with that battalion from his copper mines.

He'll have their heads for this! This was mutiny! This was treason! He was pummeling the air with his fists in rage. "You fools! Don't you realize they are defenseless? There's not a sword among them! All you have to do is cross the damnable channel and we've got them! Generals! Slay the rebels who blew retreat! Take their horns and blow the call to battle! Charge! Charge! We have them in our grasp!" He was screaming like a spoiled child.

Moses looked down on the frantic Pharaoh yelling at his fleeing forces. He shook his head. But before he could comment, Kharsi spoke up. "Sir, YHWH is indeed fighting for us, just as you said. They're not even going to make it up the slope. They're starting back. YHWH has poured over them fear and confusion. We won't even have to fight. It's amazing! YHWH is an awesome God!"

"Praise YHWH!" Arte responded. "Praise YHWH! He is the only true God, the God of awesome power and glory! All my magic and wizardry was child's trickery compared to this!" He raised his hands and began to worship right there next to Miriam and Hur.

"But you said that we would see the Egyptians no more forever!" It was Aaron, still doubting. "And you said we'd never see Pharaoh's face again..."

"That is not Egypt's Pharaoh. Dudimose has forfeited his authority. And that is not Egypt's army. All you see now is the accursed of YHWH." He raised his voice, "Look and see the consequence of rejecting YHWH's Word!"

Dudimose heard, and turned to look. His face was red with fury. Moses couldn't resist a parting jab. "Hey Dude! Finally ready to 'Repent and let My people go'?"

Arte picked it up. "Yo, Dude! You crazy fool! You always listened to me before. Now listen to me one last time. All my magic and all the gods of Egypt are defeated. Get down off your high horse and fall to your knees now before YHWH, the true God of all the earth, or you and your army shall be destroyed!"

Dudimose raised his javelin high in his right hand, drew his sword with his left, and uttered a blood-curdling battle cry. His war horse knew the drill – this was for effect to instill fear in the enemy. So he reared up majestically on his hind legs with a piercing scream, nostrils flaring. Now, Dudimose was a very skilled horseman and had done this a thousand times. But for some reason – maybe it was the strange wind gusting down in his face – maybe it was the sandy slope he was on – his horse began to fall backwards. The Pharaoh should have jumped away, but instead he tried to stay on his horse, needing at all costs to protect his dignity. Leaning forward, he willed his horse to recover. But it was too late. Frantically pawing the air, the stallion fell backwards, crushing poor Dudimose under him as he fell, then rolling over him a second time in his scramble to get up. Even as he lay dying, Dudimose glared up at Moses, croaking pathetically, "I'll get you for this! I'll get you if it's the last thing I do!" He was unrepentant to the last.

"No more taunts. Grieve for them. It is done. I wish I could have saved more." Moses heard the unmistakable voice of Logos, filled as always with love and compassion. "Stretch your hand now over the sea, that the waters may return over the Egyptians, over their charioteers and their horsemen, to cover their misery from your sight. I'm sorry that I made them. I shall give their land to another."

Moses stretched out his hand and commanded, "Sea of Edom, hear the Word of YHWH. Return to your place. It is done." The hot wind coming down on them from over the hills of Midian stopped. For a moment there was a great, sad stillness, in which even time itself seemed suspended. Moses dropped his hand. Then, in a scene forever etched in the mind's eye of two million Hebrews, the Red Sea closed with a mighty crash upon the entire Egyptian army. Moses was startled. He knew the tide had been coming in, but he had not realized that the water was so deep!

For a time, the Egyptians were covered in froth and foam. The only living creature remaining was Pharaoh's war horse, who had gotten back to his feet and galloped up the slope to Moses. Moses reached out his hand to stroke his muzzle. All the fight had gone out of him. He was docile and submissive. He wanted to be close to Moses, as if he knew a great leader when he smelled one.

But then heads began to bob up all over the channel. Others had survived, and were swimming toward them. It was – horses. Riderless horses. The Pharaoh's cavalry had all been unseated, and their freed horses were swimming toward the beach. Thirty thousand of them. The people scanned the water for human survivors and found none. Their armor had dragged them down. The Egyptians tied their weapons to themselves so they wouldn't lose them in battle, making it impossible for them to swim. But their horses could swim. All those not tied down to chariots were swimming toward the Israelites. Most of them made it, saddles and bivouac packs still on their backs.

They noticed one lone horse swimming for the far side, one belonging to a priest. (They'd been first to flee, and had nearly made it.) He had broken free from his gold plated chariot, but they recognized him by the flash of the gold ornaments on his harness. He trotted across the far beach and went up the wadi to return to Egypt.

The Israelites received the horses gratefully, praising Logos for caring for the animals even as their owners were judged. The horses became a great blessing to them. They were used to carry their burdens and their little ones. Not a one was vicious or unruly as mighty war stallions tend to be. It is only sad that there was no mare among them. The Egyptians used only stallions for war. Of course they had been stabled, but all their breeding mares had been slain in the fields during the plague of hail. With no mares, the horses died out in a single generation.

That lone horse did succeed in returning to Egypt, back to his own stall in the priest's stables. Word was passed to Queen Mara, who then recognized that the rest of her nightmare had come to pass. Now her husband as well as his heir were gone, as were as all of Egypt's finest men in the military and the priesthood. There were no noblemen left. The Nubian Pharaoh Ankhkare and his commanders and taskmasters were gone as well. Mara knew that they had been slain, undoubtably, to the last man.

Mara searched for a male of royal blood to rule the land. She found none. All of Egypt's mighty men were gone. None but peasants were left. Finally, in desperation, she wrote letters to the kings of Hatti, Mitanni, Mari, Assyria, and Babylon (Karduniash), pleading for a prince to come to Egypt, marry her, and become Pharaoh. Sadly, that was not to be, for one more plague was yet to fall upon Egypt.

The Israelites celebrated their escape with three days of feasting, dancing, and singing. Sunday was the seventh day after their escape, the last day they had to eat those tasteless flat-cakes. Now they had time to wait for their bread to rise, and by Sunday evening, Nisan 22, they had real bread. (Thus the Feast of Unleavened Bread goes for seven days after the Passover, from Nisan 15 through 21.)

The Amalekite temple of Baal-zephon had long since been abandoned. Kharsi, daughter of an Amalekite king, told the story over a campfire one night. This is her story.

"Amalek, a bastard son of Ishtar, brought his tribe to this land many years ago. With them came the worship of Astarte and the Baals [the planets] as they had learned from Ishtar. They built lavish temples such as this all around the borders of their land. For many years they corrupted the land with their vile immorality and idolatry. But in time their moral perversions became their undoing. A terrible plague spread throughout their tribe in 1790 BC. All their finest young men began developing disabling venereal diseases. In desperation, they appealed to the aged patriarch in Canaan, Abraham. He was the most respected sage in the land. If only he would help, they swore to do whatever he told them. He sent Midian (his son by Keturah) with them back here, with instructions that Amalek must simply obey whatever Midian said.

"Midian first ordered them to go through the land, smashing all the towers and temples to the Baals. That was done, and that is why the temple you see here is ruined and abandoned. The Amalekites obeyed him so willingly, that Midian saw an opportunity. He told them that the land itself was polluted by their sin. He ordered them to leave it unoccupied for ten years, while the land purified itself. They must all move south down the Arabian peninsula. Surprisingly, they obeyed. Midian returned to Canaan to get his wife and family, and took over what became known as the land of Midian. His clan multiplied rapidly in the rich land, dwelling in houses and tilling fields left by the Amalekites. When they learned of his deception, Midian sent his loveliest daughter, Elkara, to marry the Amalekite prince Edgar, thus forging a peace treaty with them. Edgar fell in love with beautiful Elkara. He persuaded his father to accept Midian's offer. Their plague had passed and they had done very well in their new land, so his father agreed."

Kharsi ended her story, smiling at Moses and admitting to be a descendant of Prince Edgar and Elkara. Moses was delighted to learn that his daughter-in-law-to-be was also a daughter of Abraham, through Midian and Elkara.

There was only one thing to dampen their party: by the third day, the stench of the dead Egyptians washing up on the beach had begun to overwhelm them. Though they had initially sunk, their bloated, rotting carcasses had floated up and blown ashore. Moses prayed, “O Logos, eternal Word of YHWH, please give us an easterly wind. Blow the bodies and the stench to the other side.”

Logos responded, as He often did, with some hearty laughter. “Moses, My friend. Wrong prayer. What would you do without Me? I allow the stench to urge you on. We are not yet at My holy mountain. But I sent the wind, and the bodies, to this beach for another purpose. Before you leave, I want you to collect their weapons. You will need them, I know. Let every man among you find himself a sword, a spear, a shield, and a dagger. Thus from now on forever you shall be My army, marching and going to battle at My command. I swear that as long as you obey Me, you shall never lose a battle, for I have spoken.”

So they all collected weapons – until they could no longer stand the stench! Then they set off north up the beach. (Moses knew they were close to the holy mountain, but there was no easy way up and over the hills. The strong could have made it, but the weak and the animals could not.) They found a large wadi about twenty miles north, but Logos said no, so they continued another three miles where they found an even larger one. They followed it for twenty miles into the Wilderness of Etham (its Edomite name – the Midianites call it the Wilderness of Marah).

It had been 5 ½ days since the Red Sea crossing and all that time they had found no fresh water. They reached **Marah** at the head of the wadi they were following. But to their dismay, the water there was brackish, foul, and undrinkable. By then the euphoria of their amazing Red Sea deliverance had worn thin. The people began to grumble.

Moses cried out to Logos. Immediately he heard that laughter with which he was becoming all too familiar. Frankly, he was a bit miffed. “Lord, this is serious! Why do You laugh? Don’t You know that we shall all soon die if we don’t find water?”

The laughter continued for a bit as the fiery form that was Logos slowly coalesced into the shape of a man. He was wiping His eyes, a huge smile covering His face. “Moses, My friend! No one ever dies from lack of water. Only from the lack of trusting Me! I am the Living Water! I only led you here to test you, to see if you would truly trust Me or not. Don’t you think I have given you reason enough to trust Me by now? But I am glad that you made it this far before doubting. You are learning. Next time your faith will be even stronger. So tell My complaining people, ‘If you will earnestly listen to My voice, do what is right in My sight, and heed My commandments, then I will put none of these diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for as the Word of YHWH, I Am your Healer. I am your Provider, your Rear Guard, your Leader, and your Friend.’

“Now, do you see that large hyssop bush over there? Take a branch from it and stir the waters with it. They will become sweet. When all the people have drunk, tell them what I said. They must learn that being free from Egypt doesn’t mean being free to do whatever they please. No, true freedom is only found in obeying and following Me.”

Moses obeyed. The people drank, and their faith was strengthened. They praised Logos, and swore allegiance to Him and to Moses. That evening began the Sabbath (Nisan 27th), so they rested there and worshiped the entire day.

Logos was pleased. When the Sabbath was over, He led them but a day’s journey south to **Elim**, a refreshing oasis with twelve springs of water (one for each tribe – so no more bickering over water!) and seventy date palms loaded with juicy, sweet dates. They camped there from Iyar 1 through 8, slowly recuperating from their arduous **Exodus** out of Egypt on Nisan 14 (March 15), 1451 BC.

Moses expected to continue south, but instead Logos guided him west, back to the Red Sea. He warned Moses, “You didn’t collect nearly enough weapons. You have a big battle ahead of you and you must be prepared.” So they camped there, while the young men spent the next few days hiking all the way to Baal-zephon and back, scouring the beach for weapons. The stench of the decomposed bodies was mostly gone, so they could do a more thorough job, though some of the metal had begun to corrode in the salt water. By the Sabbath of Iyar 11 they returned to camp with a big haul of weapons, enough for each man of war.

On the 12th, they headed back up the wadi toward Elim. But unexpectedly, Logos did not allow them to return there. Instead, He turned them south, and headed them into the desert wilderness known to the Amalekites as the Wilderness of Sin. (Sin was their moon god.) For two days they searched the wilderness for food but found none. The provisions they had brought from Egypt were now gone, for it was a full month since the Passover. The people began complaining again, saying, “Why didn’t we just return to Elim? Why did Moses lead us into this barren wilderness? Would to God that we had just died in Egypt, where at least we had meat and bread to the full!”

Logos told them to set up camp just east of the hills of **Dophkah**, which stood between them and the Red Sea. It was a barren wasteland, an unlikely place for a miracle. The people’s complaints grew louder. Moses boldly urged them, “Whatever your needs, your desires, just pray to the eternal Father! Trust YHWH! Remember all that He has done for you, and worship Him! Then ask whatever you need and thank Him for His provision. Look around you at this barren wilderness. See? There is no food here! That is because you must learn to look only to YHWH our God for your provision. He is your provider. That’s why Logos said to use His memorial name, YHWH, for He is the God who keeps His promises. He has a covenant with you! He is just testing you, to see if you will trust Him or not.”

So the elders of Israel got together and agreed on a plan, which they brought to Moses. "We will test YHWH in this. If He answers our request, we shall trust Him forever. We have asked Him for bread and meat, not from our own flocks, for that would not be a miracle, but bread and meat coming down from the heavens above."

Moses gulped. He had told them to ask what they will, but had not expected them to be so bold. But thankfully his faith did not waver. "Yes! Ask Him, and it shall be done for you. Only ask in faith, and in obedience to His commands, not in complaining or doubting, and it shall be done."

Moses went into his tent to pray, wondering if he had been too bold. He heard the familiar happy laughter which he was beginning to enjoy. Logos appeared before him, wreathed in smiles. "Well done! O, well done, my friend! Bold, I like! Ha! Let us grant their request, in abundance! They think they are testing Me, but I shall make this a daily test for them, to see if they will walk in My ways or not. Now go back out. Call down for them bread and meat from the heavens, and tell the people the words I give you."

So Moses went out and told Aaron to gather the people together. Aaron was pretty miffed at their complaining. He shouted out, "Come before YHWH, you faithless rebels! He has heard your grumblings, for they are against Him." He was about to add that they needed to be punished until they learned to trust, but Logos shut his mouth.

The people gathered, their backs to the Dophkah mountains, facing the distant Sinai range. The elders were in front as always. Moses looked right at them and shouted out, "This very evening you shall know that YHWH has brought you out of Egypt, for you shall see His glory. And you shall receive from His hand meat from heaven, just as you have requested. And in the morning, you shall again see the glory of YHWH, and receive from His hand bread from heaven, also as you have requested. The meat and bread shall be abundant and overflowing, even though this is a desert, overwhelming you until you cry out, 'Enough!' and fall down to worship YHWH your God."

Aaron, standing beside him, added, "So then remember your promise to always trust Him and never complain. For He has heard enough of your grumblings against Him, and He desires to hear your complaining no more forever!"

The people gasped and fell on their knees before Moses and Aaron, crying out in awe and worship. Aaron felt pretty good about that. It must have been what he had added that was the clincher. He turned to smile and nod at Moses, then caught a glimpse of what was behind them.

Now they both saw it. They also dropped to their knees in worship. The cloud of Logos that had led them through the desert had changed. It now stretched to the horizon, lighting up the distant mountains with glory! The entire range blazed like fire, especially the tallest peak called Mt. Sinai. It sparkled like multi-colored rays from a diamond.

Until twilight they worshiped. Logos was very pleased. He sent meat from heaven, as He had promised. Quail, in abundance, came down from heaven and flew through the camp. Young, tender, tasty quail; really stupid quail; they literally ran into your arms begging to be caught and eaten. The Israelites feasted merrily until well after midnight. Satisfied and sleepy, they tried to retire, but quail filled their tents and covered their beds. It reminded them of the ghastly plague of frogs in Egypt! They cried out to YHWH, "Enough! Enough! Thank You YHWH, but it is enough!" Logos heard their cry, and the flock of quail quietly moved on as suddenly as it had come.

They awoke, very late and fully refreshed, to cries of "Ohh..." and "Ahhh..." and squeals of delight. It was their own children, who had arisen early. Poking their heads out of their tents to see what all the commotion was all about, they again saw the glory of YHWH in the cloud. This time, the dawning had painted brilliant reds, yellows, and golds throughout the cloud, like a thousand sunrises and sunsets in one, stretching from one end of the horizon to the other. Again, they fell down and worshiped.

But the squeals from the children were not about the glory of the sunrise. Somehow, children seem to take that for granted, as if they just expect YHWH's cloud to be filled with many-splendored glories. They were focused down. For wherever the dew had evaporated, a thin layer of white flakes appeared on the ground. They were gathering the flakes and eating it, with obvious relish and delight.

"What is it? What is it?" they cried. That's 'Manna' in Hebrew. Of course their parents didn't know either. So they asked Moses, "What is it?" (Manna?)

Moses chuckled. "Manna indeed. So it shall be called. It is the bread from heaven, as you requested from YHWH. Gather it for your daily bread. But eat all you gather! Do not keep any until the next morning, for it will spoil."

Arte, who loved to be near Moses, was busy analyzing the sky. "You know, Moses." He pulled him aside. "I think I know how He did it. Venus has been slowly receding from us, and the horn that we were passing through has ceased. But now we are entering the other horn. I think this horn must be made of manna, which collects in the dew at dawn. And that's why the sunrise was so spectacular, too."

Kharsi, clinging to Miriam as if she were her mother, punched Arte in the shoulder. "You silly wizards are all alike. You want it to seem like magic to us, but you have to understand it so you can manipulate it. Can't you just let it be a miracle from YHWH and worship him? He is worthy! Even if He did use the tail of the comet, look at the miracle of the timing. We prayed for bread from heaven last night; this morning we have bread from heaven!"

"Thank you, Kharsi." Arte nodded. "You're right, of course." Moses grinned at Kharsi, still wondering as to which of his two sons would belong this treasure.

Miriam gave Kharsi a big hug. At the age of 90. Miriam had lived a full and profitable life. Her aged husband Hur, now a chief advisor to Moses, was an elder and respected prophet among the people. Miriam had often prophesied along with him. Their children had grown to be great men and women, full of faith, given to prayer and ministry. They had married and borne her many grand-children, each a testimony to the grace and goodness of YHWH. But recently, Kharsi had somehow become Miriam's favorite. Her radiant smile, her innocence and purity, her joy and constant worship, her unquestioning trust, the praise that so quickly rose to her lips – she was truly a jewel.

The next morning, a putrid stench hung over the camp. Moses was angry. He called for the elders of Israel. "It's the manna! But not from the ground around you, for the sun evaporated all the excess yesterday. This stench is from your tents! I told you to gather only enough for the day. Some disobeyed me and gathered too much. So it spoiled, just as I promised. Give them a tongue-lashing from me, and tell them to take it out and bury it." Sure enough, many had disobeyed and had gathered extra manna, out of fear there would be none the next morning. It had become foul and bred worms. The smell was overpowering. They quickly buried it, and swore they would obey.

The next day (Iyar 17) Moses told them, "Tomorrow morning is preparation day [the day before the Sabbath]. You shall not go out to gather manna on the Sabbath, for it is a day of rest, and there will be none. Instead, on every preparation day, each one of you shall gather twice as much manna as normal, enough for two days. I promise that it will not spoil or breed worms on the Sabbath."

Sure enough, with the stench of the previous day still on their minds, many feared to collect any extra for the Sabbath. When they went out on the Sabbath morning to collect their daily bread, there was none, just as Moses had spoken. They went hungry. But Moses was furious. "How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and heed my instructions? Surely you are trying the patience of Father YHWH! Remain every one in his place, and let no one venture out to gather manna on the Sabbath."

Totally exasperated, Moses returned to his tent, to hear the familiar heavenly chuckle. "Just whose patience is being tried, my friend? Be gentle with them. They are like children. Each lesson must be clearly seen to be believed. Thank you, my friend, for believing even before you see, and for speaking My words so boldly. I take delight in you!

"Now, take two quarts of manna and put it in a clay jar. Keep it with you, in My presence always throughout all your generations, as a testimony to My provision." He laughed at Moses' wide eyes. "No, I assure you it shall not spoil or breed worms in My presence, for I shall preserve it by My own purity. Thus I shall be honored before Arte and others like him who are always trying to explain away My great miracles and reduce My power to magic tricks!"

CHAPTER 38 – SALITIS AND THE AMALEKITES AT REPHIDIM – MOUNT SINAI (MOUNT HOREB)

Remember the Amalekites? They had traveled north from their burnt homeland in western Arabia to the hills east of Midian. King Salitis stood there with his younger brothers Yakubher and Sheshi looking down on the plains. Several towns lay scattered about. The Midianites had, of course, seen the vast horde approaching. Terrified, they were scurrying frantically about gathering weapons and strengthening their defenses, preparing for battle.

"Now it is payback time for what Midian stole from our ancestors, may they rest in peace," King Salitis vowed. The Amalekites were not ones to soon forget a grudge. *It would be an easy matter for him to wipe out the pitiful Midianite army, slay their men, enslave their women and children, and take their land. This shall be the Amalekite homeland once again!* He was proud of his army. He had 400,000 trained warriors, all with fine steel swords, as well as 500 iron chariots. The only army on earth that might defeat him was Egypt's. He gave the call to assemble the troops.

Salitis turned back toward the plains of Midian. He was startled to see someone dressed in purest white standing there, also looking down. He hadn't been there before. Where had he come from? Salitis put a hand to his sword.

"Hey! You in the white bathrobe! Who are you?"

The man didn't move. "They are like children, like sheep. So weak. Helpless against your vast army."

Salitis dropped his hand. He wasn't going to need his sword. This guy was no threat – he wasn't even armed. "Right. And I am about to slaughter them like sheep, too. So who are you? And where did you come from, anyway?"

Unhurriedly, the man turned to look into Salitis' eyes. "I am Logos, Master of the Universe, Lord of all Creation, King of kings, Ruler of time and space. I raise one up and put another down. I care for the mighty and the weak. I am the One who grants life to every living thing, from the tiny sparrow to... you." He said it softly, humbly.

But it had power. It took Salitis' breath away. Somehow he almost could believe it. He finally found his voice. "Okay... so bless me already, before I go into battle."

"No. But I will bless you if you leave these My people alone. I have many precious ones among them. I would protect them from you."

"Oh? Then what will You give me in exchange? For I have righteous cause against them. This land belongs to me and my people. Midian deceived us and stole..."

"I am aware of the wrong done to your ancestor Edgar. You do indeed have occasion against them. I swear that if you will forgive them, I will give you a better land, a land well-watered and spacious, with fields already planted and houses already built, for which you will not have to fight."

“Not have to fight? This land is already planted? Houses are already built? Why would they give it to me without a fight? That doesn’t make sense.”

“I give you My word.”

Again, the power of His quiet promise took Salitis’ breath away. He simply could not, not believe.

“What about the grazing lands for my flocks and herds? I left Arabia because all the grazing lands were burnt up.”

“Those who possessed the land I shall give you were shepherds. Their grazing lands are among the finest in the world. They were not even scorched by the pass of the fiery comet, for I protected them.”

“You protected them, but now You are driving them out to give me their land? That still doesn’t make sense!”

“I am bringing them to an even better land, once they learn to follow Me.”

Salitis looked over at Yakubher, then across at Sheshi. They too were overwhelmed. Though they couldn’t see the man in white, they did see, and hear, Salitis talking to intense flames of white fire. They nodded.

“Okay. I accept Your offer. I have Your word, and I shall hold You to it. If You prove false, I shall come back here to slay every last one of these Midianites. I don’t tolerate those who don’t keep their word.”

“I keep My Word.” The man in white vanished.

The Israelites stayed at Dophkah through the Sabbath, then traveled south to the hills of Alush. There they again camped facing the Wilderness of Sin. But there was no water there either, so they crossed the wilderness and reached **Rephidim** on Iyar 22nd. Again, no water. None since Elim. They had run out. Moses said nothing. Logos also said nothing. Both were hoping that the Israelites had finally learned to trust and not complain.

Alas, they had not. They grumbled against Moses, against Aaron, Hur, and Miriam, even against Arte and Kharsi. Arte informed them, “Lookit, guys. I am a great wizard! I can change water to blood and change a staff to a snake!” (He demonstrated his little tricks before them.) “But I cannot pull water out of a rock or bring a river up from the desert sand! Only YHWH can do that. So you’d better stop complaining and talk to Him!”

Kharsi was even more blunt. “After all the wondrous miracles YHWH has done for you, still you do not trust Him? Shame on you! Bow in worship. Wait for Him. Surely He knows your need and will provide.”

But no, they still complained. A group of elders came to Moses and said, “Why did you ever bring us out of Egypt if you plan to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” They were angry. Some belligerently threatened Moses with stoning if he didn’t find them some water.

Moses went to Logos. “What shall I do? I trust You, but a little more and this people will stone me!”

Logos chuckled sadly. “Yes, I know, dear friend. Your trust in Me is My greatest delight. I only wish My people would follow your example. If they could have waited patiently for just one more day, they might have avoided a terrible battle and many casualties. But no. They insist on learning My lessons the hard way. Bring your staff to the rock called Rephidim. Gather the elders together before the rock facing the holy mountain. I will stand with you there. You shall strike the rock with My staff, so that water comes out of it in the sight of all the elders of Israel.” He paused to chuckle. “Arte told the people that only I can pull water out of a rock. Thus I will honor him before the people, for his faith pleases Me.”

It was awesome! I wish you could have seen it! At Rephidim Moses approached the tall rock, which stood ninety feet high like a tower on top of a low hill. When he struck it, the rock reverberated like rumbling thunder and sparks flew from the staff. Then the entire rock split in half, from where Moses hit it, clear to the top. For a long minute the dust settled in silence. Then out of the cleft in the rock sprung a flood of water, on both sides of the rock, to form two small rivers leading down the hill. At first the water was sandy and cloudy, but within minutes it had cleared up to be the best water you ever drank.

Salitis, to his credit, had led his people past the land of Midian without even stopping for water or supplies. He knew his army was itching for a battle, and would use any excuse to attack the Midianites. It was well known how Midian had cheated the Amalekites, and Salitis didn’t want to take any chances. So he stayed east of a long row of hills separating Midian from the **Wilderness of Horeb**. [See endnote.] But when they neared **Mt. Horeb**, a scout in the hills returned with news. “There is a huge encampment of nomads the other side of the hills. Maybe a couple million, with millions of sheep and goats. They’ve got war horses, but I didn’t see any chariots. They probably could field an army of a half-million, but they just look like shepherds, certainly not warriors. We can take ‘em easily.”

“But why would we want too? If they’re nomads they have no land. We already have more animals than we can feed. We’ll just go on past... Wait... drinking water – we’re running low. Did you see any sources of water?”

“You bet! They’re camped all around a tall split rock, and two streams of water are flowing out of the rock.”

Salitis turned and ordered his commanders to head on up over the hills. They would visit this clan. But when he turned back, there was the Guy in the white bathrobe, the one who called Himself Master of the Universe, looking straight into his eyes.

“I suppose You’re going to try to bargain with me for these people, too.” Salitis was a bit skeptical.

“No bargains. These are the people I am leading to a new land. They are Mine. I shall protect them.”

“What will You give me to stay away from them?”

“I said no bargains. You may visit with them. You may ask them for food or water. But if you harm a hair on their heads you shall be cursed with an everlasting curse.”

“Everlasting curse? What about the land You promised me? Where is that? I kept my part of our bargain. I didn’t touch the Midianites, or even ask of them food and water. So are You going to keep Your word, or not?”

“I keep My word. I now give you the rich, fertile delta of northern Egypt, the land of Goshen. These My people have just left it. It lies empty, awaiting you, for it needs you. Go quickly north to Elath, then west to claim your land.”

“What? Egypt? They have the most powerful army on earth! We could not defeat them.”

“The Egyptians abused and enslaved My people. Egypt is destroyed. Their army is no more. I want you to help them restore their land. Rule them from Avaris in Goshen. I have chosen you as the next Pharaoh, even over all Egypt. But if you harm My people, your race will be destroyed.”

Salitis opened his mouth with another question, but the man in white disappeared. He wondered how this ‘everlasting curse’ could even hurt him if he really got to be the Pharaoh in Egypt. Sounded like a pretty cushy job to him. He whipped his horse to catch up with his officers.

They called a halt at the top of the hill. Spread out before them was a multitude, filling the plains around a big rock with water flowing from it, just as his scout had reported. “Sheshi! Yakubher! We shall not attack these people. We only visit them to purchase water, then we head north. Warn your men that we shall not harm them, nor even touch any of them. They may look weak, but they are protected by a God more powerful than ours.”

They formed a long column, circling around the north side of the Horeb Mountains and then back south into the Wilderness of Sin. Salitis took his commanders and rode toward the rock to talk to their leaders.

When they reached Moses and Aaron, Salitis bowed low as is the Eastern custom. “I am Salitis king of Amalek. We seek only water. We will pay you a fair price. Then we will pass by in peace, on our way north.”

Moses returned the bow. “I am Moses. The water is free. I will move my people to give you access. Take as much as you want. Water your livestock also. Then go in peace.”

“That was too easy,” Salitis thought, turning his horse to go. But a flash of color caught his eye and he noticed a lovely dark-haired girl trying to hide behind Moses.

Yakubher noticed her too. “Salitis! It’s Princess Kharsi! They have your princess!”

Salitis wheeled his horse back toward Moses. Then he dismounted and bowed again. “Moses, you have someone who belongs to me. Princess Kharsi is mine. I want her.”

“No!” Moses was firm. “Kharsi has chosen to remain with us. I have adopted her into my family. She is promised to marry my son.”

“That promise is null and void, for long before that her father promised her to me. She is mine!”

“We shall ask her. Kharsi!” Kharsi came fearfully out from behind him. “Do you know this man?”

“Yes sir. He is Salitis, the man my father wanted me to marry. He is the reason I ran away. He is a cruel man. I will kill myself before I marry him.”

“There is your answer, Salitis, my friend. She has made her choice. Now go in peace.”

“Peace? There can be no peace while you have what is mine! I have an army powerful enough to slay every last one of you and take what is mine. They are ready to attack with but a word from me. Consider well! Is one woman worth the loss of all your finest men?” He was red-faced with rage, having forgotten his intent not to harm them.

Now Moses balanced on the horns of a dilemma. He should have prayed about Kharsi before. But frankly, he didn’t want to pray about her. He had suspected Logos might want him to give up Kharsi, but he really wanted to keep her. Again without praying about it, he responded, “You shall find a stiff fight on your hands, my friend. We have more than a half-million men, all well-armed.”

“Then prepare yourselves for battle, for I shall attack at dawn!” Salitis spat out. He wheeled his horse around and rode off in a huff.

Sheshi and Yakubher agreed that this insult to their honor could not go unchallenged. Salitis ordered his men to prepare for battle the next day. But a different battle also raged within his heart. What about this ‘everlasting curse’? He got out his idols and prayed to them, burning incense and offering sacrifices. No answer. He called for the Guy in the white bathrobe, but He didn’t appear.

Finally he made his decision. He’d play the game both ways. He was superstitious enough to want to avoid that Guy’s curse, but surely he could get his princess back from these primitive nomads without actually hurting them.

At dawn Salitis saw the Israelite men lining up across the battlefield. They did indeed have armor, weapons, and war horses, though they still looked more like shepherds than soldiers. He ordered all his best warriors to mount their steeds and line up before the Israelite army, but to not actually attack. “Begin the battle with a bold feint, then just hold the line, only defending yourselves. Block the Israelites from where I really plan to attack. Don’t hurt ’em. Just make it enough of a fight to keep ’em distracted.”

The battle was joined. It was like taking candy from a baby. His men were trained warriors, excellent horsemen, and superb charioteers. The Israelite shepherds flailed away with their Egyptian swords, but couldn't even make a dent in his line. The Amalekites laughed as they parried every blow, and, as ordered, made no effort to strike back.

"Ha! They said they were well-armed! They don't even know how to use their swords, much less their horses. And they have no chariots at all! This will be too easy. That old fool shall regret defying me!"

Now for the second part of his plan. Though his best warriors were all on the battle line, King Salitis had held back a substantial number of his weaker or older men. He ordered them to take weapons and circle quietly around outside the Israelite camp. The attention of everyone was on the battle line, so his men were to pick off stragglers on the outskirts of the camp – the aged, and the women and children – and take them captive. These nomads had come a long way through the wilderness. They'd be too weak to resist. After he kidnapped ten thousand of their women, Moses would surely be willing to trade them for Kharsi! So nobody would get hurt, he would avoid that 'everlasting curse', and he could still claim that good land promised him by the Guy in the white bathrobe.

Moses and some of his counselors were on top of the rock, watching the battle. Moses was mystified. His field commander, **Hoshea**, had ordered a full frontal attack on the enemy line, but the Amalekites had just laughed at his men. They had hardly even attempted to fight. Yet they had stopped them cold. The Israelites had been slaves – untrained in battle. They were fumbling about, dropping their weapons, tripping over their own feet. They should have practiced with those swords and spears they had taken from the Egyptians. And the war horses – they'd never used them except to carry their children or supplies – his men hardly even knew how to ride, much less fight on them. They tumbled off without even being hit!

Hoshea regrouped his men and attacked again, with the same result. The Amalekite laughter was unnerving. They waited in their unbroken line as if blocking Hoshea's best efforts was child's play. But why were they not attacking? What was going on here? Moses scanned the rest of the camp. From his vantage point high atop the rock, he could see what others could not – the Amalekites had circled the camp and had taken captive many Israelites from the rear! *It was their women and children! Of all the dirty low-down tricks!* In agony of soul, Moses cried out to Logos.

Logos responded instantly. He had no gentle chuckles this time, only tears, as He said, "The arm of the flesh will always fail you, My friend. Why did you not consult Me? I am far more than merely your provision. I am also your protection, your wisdom and guidance, and your power to do what is right and necessary. Now, lift your arms high in worship and behold what I will do."

As soon as Moses raised his arms to Logos, there was a mighty shout from the Hebrews below, and they charged the Amalekite line the third time. They took courage, and began swinging their swords as if they knew how to use them. It was a miracle! This time that solid Amalekite line broke. The Amalekites were pushed back. Some of their horses were fallen. A chariot was overturned. Amalekite commanders began yelling for reinforcements.

"Oh! Thank You Logos!" Moses held his hands high in worship. He had been wrong, but Logos the Word of YHWH would win the battle for him anyway.

Moses' hands grew tired. He lowered them, bowed his head, and knelt down on the ground, still in worship. But then he heard a chilling cry from below. He looked out on the battle. "Moses!" Aaron cried. "When you lowered your hands, our troops fell back, disheartened. They must think you're giving up. Stand and raise your hands again. You've got to be strong! They all look to you!"

Moses jumped to his feet and raised his hands, the Staff of God in his right. Again there was a great shout and the Hebrews surged forward. The conflict became a real battle. The Amalekites desperately tried to hold their line, but it was clear they were now actually fighting for their lives. "Aaron, you're right! But I can't stand like this all day. Find me something to sit on. And send a message to Hoshea about the captured women and children." So they found a big stone. Moses sat on it. Aaron helped support his right arm with the staff and his brother-in-law Hur ben Judah helped support his left. There they remained until sunset.

Salitis had ordered his troops not to fight, expecting this to be a cakewalk. So much for that part of his plan. At least he still had their women and children. So it was time to negotiate. He sounded his horn for an orderly retreat. But by then Hoshea had gotten the message from Moses. He well-understood what happened to lovely young ladies captured by opposing armies! He didn't waste a minute. He led his victorious men straight past the retreating forces and charged into the Amalekites grouped at the rear of the camp. Having seen what Israel had just done to their finest warriors, they turned tail and fled, leaving all the captured Israelite women and children behind. Salitis was appalled. He had lost! Now he had nothing at all. He blew his horn in the universal signal for surrender.

Hearing the horn, Moses descended from the rock. Kharsi ran up and knelt before him. Her face was washed in tears of agony. "Sir, I was wrong. Many brave, good men lie injured or dead today because of me. Please forgive me, my father! I will go with Salitis. I have prayed to YHWH. He has assured me that it is okay. This is my destiny."

"No, Kharsi, my daughter! I have promised you to my son, and I keep my word. I will never give you up to that cruel man. Never. I pledge my life and honor to that."

"Sir? Have you prayed about it?"

“Uh... no. I guess not. I really wanted you in my family, and I was afraid that Logos might disagree.”

Instantly Logos appeared to Moses, in flames of fire. “Thank you, my friend, for being honest with yourself. In the integrity of your heart you spoke. I have forgiven you of your presumptuous pledge. Set Kharsi free to do as I am leading her, for I have need of her. As I told you, she shall be queen of Egypt.” He chuckled. “Had you forgotten?”

The vision faded. No one else had seen or heard. Now he had a choice to make. Satan was whispering in his ear, and the temptation was strong to pretend he had gotten the okay from YHWH to keep Kharsi and honor his pledge. No one else need ever know. Kharsi would surely submit to him. After all, they’d just won a battle for her! No one would want that to be a wasted effort.

But he would know. And Logos would know. The sweet fellowship he had with Logos was too precious to lose, even for this lovely princess before him.

“I have prayed to Father YHWH, my child. Logos has answered me and has forgiven me of my foolish pledge. You are free to do whatever He leads you.”

King Salitis and his two generals were riding toward the camp under a white flag of surrender. The group from the rock had now all made it down. They stood beside Moses.

Salitis, Sheshi, and Yakubher dismounted and knelt before them. “We are fairly defeated. We unconditionally surrender. We are now your servants. Truly your God is powerful! For it sure was not your army that defeated me. You could use a little... mmm... a lot of military training. We could help. We will pay whatever penalty or servitude you impose upon us. Further, I surrender to your God. Tell me who He is, that I may worship Him forever.”

Kharsi was still hiding behind Moses, praying that she would do the right thing. Hearing all this, her eyes grew wide in wonder. This did not sound like the cruel, proud, self-centered man she had known. But Moses, ignoring her, was speaking. “We accept your surrender and I accept your offer. Your penalty is to remain here for two weeks, training my army how to ride and use the sword. As for our God, He is the only true God, the Master of the Universe, Lord of all Creation and King of kings. He is Logos, Word of YHWH the eternal Father, blessed be His holy name.”

“The Guy in the white bathrobe!” Salitis cried, falling on the ground before Moses. “That is just what He called Himself. He spoke to me at Midian. I would have slain the Midianites and taken their land, but He stopped me, and promised to give me another land instead. But... He told me I would be under an everlasting curse if I harmed you! I told my men to not harm you. I ordered them to... to...”

Now King Salitis, though a grown man and a hardened soldier, writhed face-down in the dust, weeping like a baby. “I violated His command! I am undone!” he bawled.

Moses, uncomfortable that this king was bowing before him, was about to say something. But this was the moment that Princess Kharsi chose to come forward. “Salitis. Logos will forgive you. He is a kind and compassionate God, full of mercy, love, and understanding. I will teach you about Him, for I know Him well. I saw His miracles in the land of Egypt, when He delivered us from slavery by His great and mighty power! I saw His miracles when He destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea before our eyes. I saw His miracles in the wilderness, as He fed us bread and meat from heaven, and brought forth pure water out of the rock. I worship Him continually. If you wish to worship Him too, I will be glad to teach you.” She paused for breath.

Salitis looked up, his face gritty with dusty tears. “You think He would forgive me? He swore we would be under an everlasting curse if we harmed His people.”

“He will forgive you, if you are truly repentant,” Kharsi affirmed. “And so will I,” she added quietly.

Salitis blinked in surprise. “You hate me. Why do you say such things, now that I am defeated and shamed?”

“I hate the cruel, insensitive, angry, arrogant fool that you were. But you have changed. Perhaps I could learn to admire the man you have become.”

Salitis stood. Darkness was imminent. “I accept your offer, princess. And yours, old man.” He wiped his eyes on his dirty sleeve. “And now, we must attend to our dead and wounded. We shall be ready begin your military training in the morning.” He bowed deeply.

Moses returned the bow. “I will move these two tribes so your people will have access to this north stream. But tomorrow [Iyar 24] is Preparation Day, preparation for the Sabbath. We also have much to do in attending to our dead and wounded. We shall not start military training until the day following the Sabbath [Iyar 26]. Salitis nodded, and turned to go. But Moses continued, “And Salitis... Thank you for not attacking the Midianites. My father and my wife and sons are there. They surely would have been slain defending their people. I will treat you well for their sake.

“Hoshea! Aaron! Notify all our people of the agreement we have achieved. Tell them that the Amalekites are now under our protection. We shall care for them as we do our own people. And move the tribes of Reuben and Simeon to the west side of the stream. The Amalekites need water.”

The next two weeks were busy training – and healing. Not the least of this healing was between King Salitis and Princess Kharsi, repairing their relationship. She taught him about YHWH. He fell in love with this powerful God who was just and holy, yet caring and quick to forgive.

Salitis also learned to love Kharsi truly. She accepted his love, and agreed to become his queen. Moses’ family came up from Midian in time to celebrate their marriage, just before Kharsi set out for Egypt with the Amalekites.

Now, that is a big story in itself. But as it does relate later to our tale of the Hebrews, I must tell it. So we will leave Moses, Ziporah, their two sons Gershom and Eliezer, and Reuel his father-in-law, to enjoy their happy reunion at Rephidim in front of Mount Sinai, in the shadow of the split rock where the luxuriant streams still burst forth. For a while we will follow King Salitis and Queen Kharsi.

They passed through Ezion Geber, Elath, then Nakhel, following the trade route to Succoth. All the Egyptian forts and lookout towers were deserted. They continued on to Goshen. It too was deserted. They moved in, taking houses they had not built, harvesting fields they had not planted, and leading their flocks and herds into the finest grazing lands in the world. Salitis and Kharsi moved into Joseph's palace at Avaris, so recently vacated by Ankhkare and his Nubian overlords and taskmasters. Their death in the Red Sea ended the 14th Dynasty, just as the death of Dudimose ended the 13th. All the surviving Egyptians feared the Amalekites and fled, staying away from Goshen entirely.

Kharsi also taught Salitis about the Sabbath and the lamb sacrifice. They purified themselves. Thus one fine Sabbath in late summer (Our August 1451 BC), Logos appeared to them as a brilliant flame in the smoke above the altar. "I have accepted your prayers and forgiven your sins, King Salitis. Now, if you continue to obey Me, I shall make you the Pharaoh over all Egypt. For I am King of kings and Pharaohs. I raise one up and put another down."

"Yes Lord, I am Your servant. You have kept Your word to me. I am grateful. But... what about that eternal curse You swore You would put on us if we harmed Your people? I attacked them, and we even killed some of them!"

"I like your change of attitude, as does Kharsi. I have forgiven you just as she promised you I would. That curse cannot fall as long as you remain true to Me and obedient to My Word. But I swear to you that in the day you or your descendants turn away from Me, that curse shall begin, until the proud name of Amalek is utterly blotted out."

Logos told them what to do. Soon Salitis had mustered his army once again. They marched south along the Nile from Avaris up to Bubastis. It was a basket case of terrified peasants, frantically beseeching their worthless gods even knowing they had no power to deliver them.

Moses had given King Salitis Pharaoh's royal ring as a wedding gift. He just held it up and took over. His men didn't even have to draw a sword. They slew the priests, smashed the idols, and tore down the idolatrous temples, the final blow to the Egyptian's bankrupt faith system. Then Salitis set up a new government, organized to help the people get back to work and recover from the plagues.

He did the same at On, Memphis, and Lisht, one city at a time. The frightened and devastated Egyptians could offer no resistance, with neither army nor gods to protect them. Salitis took over without even needing to strike a blow.

History only records that the Egyptians hated them, as their temples and monuments were destroyed and their gods denigrated. History does not record the truth. Salitis and Kharsi actually saved the Egyptians. Yes, he was firm with them. He disciplined them. They needed it. He put them to work rebuilding their ruined land, and started Egypt back on the road to recovery.

Not all the Egyptians hated Salitis. Mara, still grieving over the loss of her husband and her son, saw Salitis and Kharsi ride in to Memphis. Mara had failed in her attempts to find a prince to marry her and become the next Pharaoh. She had moved out of her palace at Lisht with its haunting memories, and was fixing up the newer palace at Memphis in hope that a new Pharaoh might reside there. She didn't know King Salitis, but she saw the ring on his finger, and recognized Queen Kharsi! Recalling her dream as vividly as if it were yesterday, she came and fell to her knees before them. "Welcome, O mighty Pharaoh, whom YHWH has sent us in our time of great need. I am your servant."

Kharsi jumped off her white stallion and ran into Mara's arms. "Oh, Mara, Mara, I'm so sorry. So sorry! First your son, then your husband! I'm so sorry. The land of Egypt... mourns for you." They wept together awhile.

But it began to get a bit awkward for Mara's ladies-in-waiting seeing their queen being comforted in the arms of a former slave girl. Mara stood tall and waggled her finger at the crowd. "Is this how you greet your new Pharaoh? Don't you see his ring? Fall on your faces before them! Get down, I say!" Her voice still held the power of command. Soon everyone in Memphis knew they had a new Pharaoh. So it was as Pharaoh, with Mara going along as advisor, that Salitis and Kharsi traveled to Lisht to officially take over. (At Mara's suggestion, Salitis Egyptianized his name to Sa'itis, to make it easier to pronounce.) After getting settled at Lisht, Salitis continued his military campaign, taking Hawara (where Joseph's magnificent grain storage facility still stood in the Faiyum), and then Herakleopolis, Amarna, and all the way up south to Lycopolis.

Upper Egypt between Abydos and Elephantine had organized under a strong local Nomarch called Intef V, ruling from Thebes. His son **Rahotep** had already formed a small defense force, and Mara wanted no bloodshed. She advised Salitis to leave his troops at Lycopolis, while they took some chariots and bodyguards to Thebes to negotiate with Rahotep. As Mara had expected, he was terrified! He was willing to pay tribute to buy peace. Thus began the 17th Dynasty. So Salitis returned to Avaris in triumph, as Pharaoh over all Egypt, just as Logos had promised him.

His younger brother Yakubher then took the army east and north, conquering Egyptian rulers on the north coast of the Sinai Peninsula and on into Canaan and Syria, up to the Hittites ruling north Lebanon. Yakubher began the 16th Dynasty. He, and later his son **Anat-Har**, ruled under Salitis, though they never accepted YHWH as their God.

King Salitis and Queen Kharsi ruled well, for 19 years, as did their son **Bnon** for 44 years after that. They are the founders of the 15th Dynasty. We now mistakenly call them ‘**Hyksos**’, from ‘Hekau-khaswet’, ‘foreign princes’. (They did use that title, but so did 14th Dynasty Nubians!) Egyptians can’t pronounce ‘Amalek’ so they called them ‘Aamu’. Hebrews used ‘Malakhei-roim’ – ‘king-shepherds’.

Ruling from Avaris, Salitis recognized the need for a ‘figurehead’ Pharaoh in the old palace at Lisht. Sadly, he made a compromise there which would later prove fatal to the Amalekites. He installed his youngest brother **Sheshi** as Pharaoh there. Sheshi was a young and inexperienced ruler. As the years went by he became a cruel and arrogant tyrant. He had never submitted to Logos, nor even believed in the ‘everlasting curse’ Logos had promised if they turned away from him. He never really gave up his worship of Astarte and the Baals they had inherited from Ishtar, though he at first pretended to be in agreement with his older brother. Sheshi adopted the idolatrous Egyptian throne name Ma-yeb-re (seeing into the heart of Re, the sun god). Then slowly, slyly, he took the old gods of the Egyptians and recast them to match the old gods of the Amalekites, which was easy, since they had the same roots. Astarte (Ishtar) was Isis. Marduk (Mars), became Seth the destroyer god, whom Sheshi now elevated as the chief among the gods. Rashap the god of battle became Horus. Dumuzi (Tammuz) became Osiris, and so on.

Sheshi’s brother Yakubher, now firmly in charge in Canaan, eventually succumbed to the same temptation (probably because the same tempter was at work). He took the throne name ‘Mer-user-re’ (strong is the love of Re). Then when his son Anat-Har took the throne, he exceeded the cruelty, idolatry, and immorality of Sheshi.

Nearly 41 years after Salitis began his rule in Avaris, Logos visited him again. He and Queen Kharsi had retired. The land was ruled by their son Bnon, who ruled well, though by this time had also begun to compromise with the idols of the land. Bnon took the same Egyptian name as his brother Yakubher, Mer-user-re (which has become a source of confusion to modern Egyptologists). He was not present when Logos appeared to Salitis and Kharsi. It was nothing spectacular, just a humble Guy dressed in a white bathrobe standing in their bedroom doorway when they went to retire for the night. “I thank you for remaining faithful to Me,” He said gently. “I have fulfilled My Word to you, have I not?” His smile spread from ear to ear.

“Yes, Lord!” They both fell to their knees.

“As you have not forsaken Me, I have protected you from the everlasting curse which you earned at Rephidim. However, I cannot protect your younger brothers. Each of them has rejected Me, and has returned to worship your fathers’ gods and all the gods of Egypt, even though those gods were able to deliver neither you nor the Egyptians from My hand.”

“Does that mean... the curse...? What can I do?”

“There is nothing you can do. They have made their choices. I have sworn that your people shall be destroyed, and the name of Amalek shall be wiped from the face of the earth. But you shall not see it happen, for in you have I found favor. I shall bring you to Myself that I may enjoy you forever. Wrap up your affairs, for that time is near.”

“My son... his wife and children... he is a good man! Will he also be destroyed? Will they all be slain?”

“Be at peace, My beloved. That shall not happen in your lifetime, nor his, nor his sons’ lifetimes, for I show mercy to the third and fourth generation of those who love Me, all who trust and obey Me. I prefer mercy to judgment.”

“Thank you Lord! You are just and holy, but I rest on your everlasting love. Uh... I have one more request, Lord YHWH. May we see Moses again before we die?”

Logos grinned. “I was hoping that you would ask. Yes. Leave your home and family. Go to the land of Canaan, east of the Dead Sea. You’ll find Moses on top of **Mt. Nebo**. Give him a message from Me, *that I keep My promises!*”

We too shall meet him there, dear Reader, but now we must return to see Moses, Reuel, Ziporah, Gershom, and Eliezer at their reunion at Rephidim right after the battle. Moses always did want to be a family man. He delighted in telling his family about all that Logos had done for them since they had left him at Nakhil. Especially how Logos had protected them (and the Midianites) by appearing to King Salitis. After Moses finished, Reuel gave his perspective.

“When we saw the Amalekite army on the hills above us, we were terrified. We fully expected them to sweep down and wipe us out, to the last man, for my people had stolen this land from them many years before. I knew I was going to die. But as I was offering what I figured might be my last sacrifice to YHWH, Ziporah came to me. ‘I have prayed,’ she said. ‘They will not harm us.’ ‘Then why have they surrounded us in battle array?’ I replied. ‘Logos will come and lead them away,’ she insisted. ‘I know, because Logos promised Moses that I will be restored to him. And that cannot happen if we’re all dead!’ Ziporah had more faith than I. And now, Logos has kept His promise!”

The next morning it was back to the daily grind for Moses. From dawn to dusk bickering people came to him to arbitrate their petty disputes. Reuel was appalled. That night he chastised Moses for trying to do it all himself, and suggested he appoint wise men under him to act as judge for all but the most difficult cases. Then he would have more time to wait on Logos – and to spend with his family. Moses accepted his father-in-law’s wise suggestions. It turned out to be a big relief. Thank God for Reuel!

Moses had renamed Rephidim ‘**Massah**’ (temptation) because of the Israelite’s quarrelling and testing the Lord. Now he renamed it again, to ‘**Meribah**’ (strife, quarrels).

The Amalekites were still training the Hebrew army when Reuel arrived from Midian. He was delighted to meet Salitis. When Reuel asked why he had not attacked them, Salitis replied simply, “Logos made me a better offer.”

“Logos came to you, as Ziporah knew He would.”

“Yes, and I have sworn to worship Him, and Him only, forever,” Salitis responded, with a glance and a smile to Princess Kharsi. “She is teaching me about Him.”

Reuel saw the glance, and understood. Sure enough, he attended their wedding a week later. When the Amalekites left for Egypt, he blessed them in the name of YHWH. He prophesied YHWH’s protection over them, and success in taking over and ruling Egypt.

After they left, Reuel also returned home. He had many responsibilities as the priest of YHWH for the Midianites. But Ziporah remained with Moses, never to leave his side again, faithful to the day of their death many years later. Truly Logos kept His promise to Moses for her.

Logos came again to Moses the night Reuel left. His hearty laughter filled the tent. Even Ziporah heard it, though she didn’t see the vision or hear His words. “Don’t you just love the way I have turned a great curse into a great blessing for Salitis! True repentance triumphs over all! And I have many precious ones among the Amalekites who will join with My own people because of this. Now, I do have one more task for you before you leave this place. Write the curse over the Amalekites on a clay tablet. It shall say, ‘I, YHWH, will war against the children of Amalek, until their memory is blotted out from under heaven.’ Read it to Hoshea. He will see the first fulfillment of it. Then build a new stone altar with the tablet buried in the stone. Offer a lamb upon the altar, covering the curse. It shall not fall in this generation – not until Amalek falls away from Me. Repentance has won the victory!

“The next morning, Sivan the 8th, break camp and journey around the north side of the holy mountain to the place where you met Me in the burning bush. Sanctify the people there, for on the third day, Sivan the 11th [the day after the Sabbath], I shall come to you, and speak to you in the cloud in the hearing of all My people, so they might learn to trust you. For out of all the nations of the earth, I have chosen this people as My special possession, My treasure! Though the whole earth is Mine, yet if they will obey Me fully and keep My covenant, I will make of them a holy nation, a kingdom of priests unto Me.”

Moses did all that Logos commanded. Hoshea, his field commander, never forgot that lesson. As long as they were repentant, God’s eternal curse against Amalek was sealed in stone under the altar, under the blood of the lamb. 415 years later, the year God charged King Saul to destroy the Amalekites, the altar crumbled apart and the clay tablet was revealed. The last of the Amalekites were annihilated in the times of King David and (finally) King Hezekiah.

When they got to the backside of Mount Horeb, in the Wilderness of Sinai, they camped at the base of the holy mountain and purified themselves. Then on Preparation Day, Moses had the people erect 24 stone markers around the base of the mountain, telling everyone not to trespass beyond the markers. On the morning of the third day (our Sunday) they gathered at the markers and awaited the promised visit from Logos. They were familiar with the thick, dense cloud, the fire sparkling from within, and the column of smoke rising up from it. They were familiar with the quaking and rumbling of the earth. But the voice of God, coming to them as a piercing trumpet blast, was something new, and they were terrified. “Logos is calling me to come up to Him,” Moses explained. “Wait here at the markers. Do not go past them.” He called to Logos, “I’m coming, Lord!” and began climbing up the holy mountain.

Within the trumpet blast Logos distinctly answered, “So come already, My friend.” The people all heard it. They were shocked to discover that the powerful trumpet blast was languages – certainly Hebrew, but also Egyptian, Amalekite, Assyrian, Sumerian, Canaanite, Ethiopian, Nubian, Aramaic, Hittite, and many other languages that they didn’t even recognize – all blended into one. Logos was speaking in the trumpet blast, commanding all people and nations to come to Him, believe in Him, trust Him, obey His laws, seek His wisdom, forsake their false gods, and worship Him and Him only forever. The trumpet call was an invitation, in all 70 languages of the earth! It was so loud and penetrating that anyone on earth could hear the invitation in his or her own language – if they wanted! This was Sivan 11, seven weeks (fifty days inclusive) from the Firstfruits celebration after the Egyptian army was drowned in the Red Sea. We now call it Pentecost.

When he reached the place of the burning bush, Moses removed his sandals. But the call of Logos urged him higher. He struggled bravely on, but the sharp, hot rocks were cutting and blistering his feet. Moses determined to continue anyway, and not complain, but at the next step, he spotted a pair of brand new sheepskin moccasins, with the wool turned inward. He put them on, and found them to be the most comfortable footwear he had ever worn. He couldn’t even feel the rocks! Thus with the help of the staff, he was able to climb all the way to the top.

But he had no sooner gotten up than Logos urged him to return. “Go down quickly, Moses! Warn My people, lest they touch the holy mountain out of curiosity and forfeit their lives. Tell them that even priests who approach me must have special purification – mere curiosity seekers cannot come near lest they see Me and die. After you warn them, return here. And bring Aaron, if he is willing.”

“Oh, the people wouldn’t pass beyond the markers...” Moses began, then suddenly knew that they already had. He hurried back down the mountain.

Sure enough, many had gone beyond the markers. The curiosity of some even under threat of death is beyond belief. Moses assigned guards to enforce the boundary. Then he brought Aaron with him back up the mountain.

Aaron had purified and prepared himself. He was of course by now a believer. He had seen too much to *not* believe. But he was so overwhelmed by the divine Presence that he never made it past the site of the burning bush. There he took off his shoes and fell on his face before YHWH. He was still like that when Moses came to get him.

All the time Moses and Aaron were on the mountain, the earthquake, smoke, lightning, thunder, and trumpet sound got louder and more awesome. The people grew fearful. Most of them actually backed well away from the markers. They thought Moses and Aaron had been slain.

When Moses and Aaron finally returned, the mountain quieted down, but only so Moses could address the people. “We have been in YHWH’s presence...” he began.

But the people cried out, “Don’t let us hear the voice of YHWH any more. We can’t stand it! If it gets any louder we may all be slain! You go up to God, and hear from Him, then speak to us and we will obey.”

Moses nodded. “Don’t be frightened. YHWH loves you. But He has come to test you and to impress upon you His power and glory, so that you will fear Him and thus keep away from sin. YHWH wants to make a covenant with us, a covenant of obedience to His laws. If we will do that, He will pour out everlasting blessings upon us as His special treasure, a kingdom of priests unto Him. In seven days Aaron and I will go back up the mountain, together with Aaron’s sons and seventy elders of Israel as witnesses. You can just wait here until we return with the covenant.”

So they purified themselves, and on Siwan 18, Moses climbed the holy mountain a third time. Aaron, **Nadab**, **Abihu**, and the seventy elders remained near the burning bush site worshiping, while Moses again put on his special moccasins and went up to the top to hear the rest of the covenant. When he returned, the others were all still on their faces. “Did you see anything?” Moses asked them.

“No. It is too awesome for us. You go up for us.”

“I’ve already been up three times! I want you to look up to the top of the mountain.” He pointed.

“We shall all be slain if our eyes behold YHWH!”

“Those who are not purified will surely be slain. But you have been purified. Now, I command you, look up!”

They slowly obeyed, accompanied by gasps and cries of delight! They expected to see dense clouds and smoke, with fire flashing within it. But when they looked up, they saw the glory of God, in a fire of multi-colored splendor, with gold sparkling like the sun all about Him, standing on a hill of transparent sapphire. Logos smiled down at them.

They again fell on their faces in worship. But it was enough. They never forgot that they were among the very few people in history who actually saw God and lived. Arte, who had offered to go as one of the seventy elders, spoke what they all felt, “Wow! That was incredible! After seeing YHWH in all His glory and majesty, we will never again be tempted to worship any other god!” He felt so privileged to be included as an elder and advisor to Moses. (It never occurred to him that he had only been chosen to go because they had trouble finding seventy elders of Israel who weren’t too scared to go up the mountain!)

When they returned to the people, Moses told them all the words of the covenant that YHWH had proposed. “Will you accept this covenant? Will you keep YHWH’s laws, to receive His blessings?”

“Everything YHWH has said, we will do!” all the people swore fervently. Moses spent the next three days writing down everything that Logos had given him.

Moses chose some young men to build a simple earth and stone altar, using no tools to profane it. They also set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel in submission to YHWH. They sacrificed lambs as burnt offerings and young bulls as fellowship offerings. Then Moses took the scroll he had just finished, and read it to all the people. The flaming display shining like the sun on the mountaintop showed YHWH’s approval.

They responded as before, “Everything YHWH says, we will do!” So Moses took the blood from the sacrifices and sprinkled it toward the people to seal the covenant, according to their own words. Again, Arte voiced what they all were thinking, “Sealed by the blood, forever! As YHWH’s special possession! I can’t think of anything else I’d rather be. And His commands are things we want to do, anyway. They are all for our own good. Praise YHWH!”

The week went by. The camp settled in. A group of strong young men succeeded in channeling the water from the split rock at Rephidim through the low pass in the Sinai Mountains just north of the holy peak (Mt. Sinai, or Mt. Horeb). The stream went over a low ridge and right into camp. Moses never figured out how they got it over the ridge. It looked to him like the water flowed uphill!

The next Sabbath (Siwan 24) was the most restful and delightful day of worship they had ever had. They were free. They had plenty of water and daily manna. They had an everlasting blood covenant with Father YHWH. And they had no enemies, only peace on all sides. It was good!

Moses honored Hoshea, his field commander, before the people. He acknowledged that though Logos had won the battle at Rephidim, He had used young Hoshea to do it. It was Hoshea’s sensitivity to YHWH’s direction that really had won the battle. So Moses changed his name from Hoshea (salvation) to **Joshua** (in YHWH is salvation) and appointed him as his personal assistant.

This had been a week of feasting and celebrating. The glory of YHWH covered the mountain as a fiery, brilliantly shining cloud. It filled the camp with awe, and they feasted on His glory as much as on any earthly food. Moses was sure the people would never again turn away from YHWH – never again be tempted to worship any heathen gods. As the sun was just setting to close the Sabbath, Moses prayed a beautiful public prayer of commitment and dedication. All the people responded with, “Amen – so be it.”

Logos heard his prayer and the people’s response, and was pleased. He answered in a voice the people heard as deep thunder from within the cloud. They fell on their faces before Him. But to Moses His voice was gentle. “Thank you for your commitment to Me. Long have I yearned for a people, a holy nation, with whom I could have sweet fellowship. You, My chosen people, My special treasure, are more precious to Me than words can tell! Your choice this day, your celebration in Me on My holy Sabbath, indeed, your celebrations throughout the week in thanksgiving for My deliverance, have been My greatest delight, for I celebrate with you! Even as I now dwell upon this holy mountain, so I choose to dwell with you forever! But you will not always be here. So build Me a tabernacle, a sanctuary, which you can take with you everywhere you go, that I may dwell in it, to always enjoy sweet fellowship with you My precious ones. Therefore, Moses My friend, come to Me on the mountaintop. Bring Joshua with you. Stay with Me here, while I write out for you our covenant on tablets of stone, to last forever. And wait upon Me while I give you instructions for the tabernacle I want you to build for Me. I want everything about it to be a physical picture of the realities in the realm of spirit where I dwell.”

So they all purified themselves for three days. Early the next morning (Siwan 28), Moses took Joshua with him up the mountain. At the site of the burning bush, he turned to briefly address the people below. “We may be gone a long time. Logos has a lot to tell us, and we have to write it all down. So I am leaving Aaron and Hur in charge while I am gone. Listen to them and obey them just as you would me. If anyone has a dispute that the judges cannot settle, let them come to Aaron or Hur. Their word shall be final. And please remember Joshua and me in your prayers.” Then they turned, changed to the special moccasins Logos had provided, and stepped into the fiery cloud. To the people, it looked as if they were consumed by the flames.

They were indeed gone a long time. Joshua, though just as overwhelmed as Aaron and the seventy elders had been, proved braver than any of them. He focused on his task, staying beside Moses so he could write down everything Logos said. But entering that fiery cloud was the hardest thing he had ever done – even tougher than facing the Amalekites in battle. He kept wanting to fall on his face in awe, but no – Moses kept charging on ahead, as if meeting with Logos was the most delightful thing in the world. So Joshua pushed aside his fear and ran to catch up.

The top of the mountain looked blisteringly hot, yet their special lamb-skin moccasins didn’t burn, and their feet even felt cool on the hot rock. Joshua was greeted by hearty laughter, which startled him even more. Moses had stopped in front of a white flame of fire, so he fell on his face, again surprised that his face was not burned.

“Welcome, Moses, My beloved! And welcome to you, Joshua, My brave young friend!” He paused for laughter. “You wonder that your moccasins are not consumed, that your face is not burned, and that your papyrus and writing quills have survived the heat? You are startled by My laughter and amazed to be in My holy presence yet not be slain?” He paused again, with some more chuckles. “Am I right? Stand, My friend. Look up at Me and answer!”

“Y-Yes, Lord.” Joshua stood on wobbly legs. He looked up. The flames had coalesced into the form of a man with a huge smile and long white beard, in a fiery white robe. “Yes, Lord!” was all he could say.

“I laugh, in the sheer delight of our fellowship. You are not consumed, only because you have a pure heart toward Me and have purified your body as I commanded. I love to introduce new people to My presence. It gives Me much pleasure to have you here. It is fun to see you struggle with this new realm where I dwell, where all the physical laws under which you have grown up are replaced with the higher laws of My realm. I take the greatest joy in watching you grow as you taste eternity and begin to comprehend things of spirit. Look now, under your feet.”

Joshua looked under his feet. His lovely lamb-skin moccasins were still totally new, unmarked, even though he had struggled up a rather steep, rocky mountain in them. He looked again. His feet weren’t even touching the ground! There was an inch of space between his shoes and the rocks. He heard uproarious laughter, and looked back to Logos. “Now, throw yourself down before Me.” Joshua was only too willing for that, but when he did, he never reached the ground. Instead, he went spinning head over heels in the air. Logos’ laughter continued, as did Joshua’s spinning. He wondered if this was how he would spend the rest of his time on the mountain.

“You may stop spinning now,” Logos said gently.

“I don’t know how!” Joshua began to say, but as soon as he thought, “Stop spinning,” he came around upright and stopped, now almost a foot above the ground.

“In My realm...” Logos said between chuckles, “there is no gravity, no dirt or scuffed shoes or worn out clothes, and no time or space constraints. It all works by a thought. If you want to go somewhere, you’re there with a thought. If you want to enjoy a good spin or romp you just decide and it’s done. Do you really think Moses, at his age, could have run up this mountain if he had not entered My realm? It’s a wonderful realm. And it’s so fun to have you here to enjoy it with Me. You’ll never want to leave!”

“Yes, Lord!” said Joshua, beginning to catch the joy of it all. He was starting to relax, and even began to laugh a little himself. Logos’ hearty laughter was infectious, and His joy was totally compelling, like a flood that swept Joshua along with it. Logos seemed in no hurry to go on to more serious matters, so young Joshua began to ask questions – more than Moses had ever dared to ask. Logos responded delightedly, teaching him about this new realm of spirit, even taking them on a tour of the heavenlies, showing them distant planets, galaxies, and other splendors of the universe. He introduced them to Gavriel and the mighty angelic chorus that attended Him, singing His praise and telling His glory. This seemed to go on for days, until Joshua asked, “What about food in Your holy realm? Why are we here for so long, yet have never gotten hungry?”

“Because I was waiting for you to ask!” Logos’ laughter shook the universe, so that the surrounding angelic chorus bobbed up and down, and even the stars seemed to be laughing with Him. Suddenly they were back on top of the holy mountain. Spread out in front of them was a feast.

“There is no hunger in My realm, except for Me.” Logos responded. “I am your source of life. Yet feasting with you, like fellowship, is still joy and pleasure. Here, taste this...” He held an item out to them to taste, even as He ate some Himself. Joshua understood that eating here was pure fellowship, and not a demand of the body for sustenance.

Now he was fully relaxed. He continued to ply Logos with questions – many of which Moses had considered asking but feared to voice. He asked a lot of questions about the miracles of the Exodus and the Red Sea crossing. I won’t go into all the details, for that would take days, but a summary of what Joshua learned is in order. Logos never breaks any laws in any of the three realms: physical, moral, or spiritual. A miracle is merely the perception of those locked within one realm, who can’t (or won’t) discern what is going on in another realm.

For example, the Egyptians had entered a moral realm of selfish rebellion, disobedience, pride, and idolatry in which the natural consequence was their destruction, but they couldn’t see it. So they kept trying to explain away their catastrophes from the perspective of the physical realm. Further, Logos always gave them some means of explaining it away; thus they were never ‘forced’ to acknowledge His ‘miracle’ intervention. “I never force!” Logos said. “That is Satan’s realm. People must make their own choice to acknowledge or reject Me. So if they will not receive the higher laws of My moral and spiritual realms, I allow them some physical explanation so they can soothe their conscience in their unbelief.”

“So how did You make the water in the Red Sea stand up so high, like a wall on each side of us? And that water from the split rock at Rephidim... I would swear it is flowing uphill in that channel they cut across the ridge! How do You do that?”

Logos’ laughter shook the table for a while. He was enjoying this more than Joshua. “Yes, yes! That was good, was it not? It does look for all the world like I broke the physical laws of gravity to do it. But I don’t break the laws I created. Never! No, all I do is allow some physical object, in this case water, to partially enter My realm of spirit, where there is no gravity.” He laughed uproariously as they all, table included, started to float up away from the ground. Food began to rise above the plates; the wine began to levitate in red globs above the crystal goblets.

Joshua began getting dizzy. It reminded him of his eerie episode of spinning head over heels. He concentrated on everything settling slowly back down to the ground, and he mentally told the wine to all fall back into the goblets. Sure enough, that is what happened. Logos rewarded him with a hearty laugh. “Very good, My friend, very good! Yes! It is all done by a thought, with, of course, a bit of faith and understanding of My realm of spirit.”

“But the water in the channel... if someone has no faith and chooses to not believe, what physical explanation have you given him to explain that away?”

“Actually there are several, just like at the Red Sea crossing. The Egyptians could believe that it was just very low tide, or that the closeness of the planets was pulling the water away, or that the strong wind was blowing it apart... different people need different excuses for not believing. With the water in the channel, some will simply not see it as flowing uphill. Others will shake their heads and think they’ve had too much old wine. Others will look closely and argue it as an illusion of perspective, with the ridge sloping down to the pass, it makes the water look like it is coming up to meet it. Only those with the eyes to see and heart to believe will look with wonder at My miracles all around and fall down in love and worship before Me. For in truth, every living thing, every thing that happens, even every instant of time, is a miracle for those with the eyes to see. It is all upheld by the Word of My Power. The universe only continues to exist because I have spoken!”

Poor Moses was gasping for breath, but young Joshua boldly plunged on. “What about those who are innocent? The young? Babies? The blind? The simple-minded? Those who suffer and die because of the actions of others? It doesn’t seem fair... They can’t... They have no faith! They may want to believe, but they never get the chance.”

“Then I give them chances in the realm to come, My heavenly realm, where there is a Nursery to give them time to grow in knowledge and learn to love Me and My ways. For everyone shall learn of Me, in this realm or the next, that everyone may make his or her own choice to love Me or hate Me.” His fiery eyes blazed in reds, yellows, and golds, casting a look of intense seriousness across a face still split ear to ear with smiles. “Those who hate Me accuse Me of being unfair for allowing innocents to suffer. I allow them that excuse for their own unbelief.”

“Just an excuse?” Joshua was beginning to understand. “Like Pharaoh explaining away Your miracles because he didn’t really want to believe? It is not really unfair...?”

“Fairness actually has nothing to do with it. I created all that exists. Is the potter unfair to a clay pot which he has made, when he crushes and reforms it? Was I unfair to Job, in allowing Satan to torment him? He was already the most righteous man of his time! Was I unfair to you, Moses, when I banished you to 40 years of trials in the wilderness? What had you done to deserve that? Nothing.

“Any good parent will discipline his child to ensure he learns wisdom. I allow suffering to lead My precious ones to maturity, to become all that they can be. No one who has not seen suffering, no, not even righteous Job, will amount to much. But look at all Job accomplished in Me after His testing! He became My high priest to the Arabians in the land of Uz. Was not a little ‘innocent suffering’ worth it? And look at you, Moses, My faithful friend. With you I can have fellowship face to face, any time I wish, as with no other since Adam and Eve before the Fall! Was not your little forty year banishment to the wilderness worth it? It is just so with all men – there must be some purifying pain, some trouble, some testing, to build their faith and mature them into what I intended when I created them.”

“But I thought suffering was always tied to sin.”

“Sin always results in suffering, for every deed has its consequence. But it does not follow that every trial is the result of sin. Adam and Eve before their first sin had much testing to go through. If they had never sinned, they still would have suffered greatly on their way to becoming My Bride. My Bride shall not only be sinless – she also will be mature, strong in faith. Only through suffering, discipline, and testing shall My Bride be worthy of ruling My creation with Me. When you realize that pain can be a good thing, then you can comprehend why the innocent suffer.”

“Suffer... OK. I understand. But is it fair if they die?”

“Like time, life and death are in My hand. I grant life as an opportunity for growth – for gaining maturity, learning wisdom, and discovering how to make beneficial choices, whether in this realm or the next. While not part of My original design, death has become an alternate doorway into My realm, where all whose time on earth is cut short can still learn to love and trust Me. Nothing is wasted. Even My enemies who die hating Me and descend to hell to suffer the full consequences for their own sins are a good example to teach you to hate evil and love My ways.”

This went on for days. Joshua became aware that this was a taste of heaven. It was all he had wanted, all anyone could ever want. He knew without a doubt that he would never again be tempted to turn aside from worshiping and loving Logos, the King of Heaven, and that there is no greater goal on earth than to reach this place, whatever the cost, and to worship and enjoy Logos here forever.

Moses, who had been mostly quiet, spoke up. “Logos, I’m concerned for the people waiting down below. They are praying for us. I don’t want them to begin to worry. Shouldn’t we begin to write down Your instructions on building the tabernacle?”

“Yes, yes...” Logos’ laughter became a sigh. “Time is no constraint to Me, but you are bound by it on all sides, so I will not let it become a stress to you. I hope you never let the constraints of time and duty cost you the joy of sharing fellowship with Me. Let’s see... start the tabernacle with a freewill love offering of gold out of the wealth they got from the Egyptians, to give My people an opportunity to express their gratitude for My deliverance.” Logos then meticulously detailed His plans for the tabernacle and its furnishings, and many other details; plans for the priests and their consecration, clothing, and duties; and plans for the offerings, incense, and anointing oil. Joshua wrote it all out, while Moses listened and watched and made sure he got it right. It took a very long time. All the while, Logos was playing with two large flat stones in His hands.

Moses and Joshua weren’t looking at the two stones; they were fiercely concentrating on getting the dictation. Finally Logos was done. They stood and stretched. “One last thing,” Logos said. “Tell the Israelites, ‘You must keep My Sabbaths. They are a sign between you and Me forever, for all generations to come, that you may know that I am the Word of YHWH who sanctifies you. Therefore, always keep the Sabbath holy. Don’t ever profane it with secular work. If you want to be My holy nation, a kingdom of priests unto Me, through whom I save the world, you must keep the sign of the Sabbath, even upon pain of death for those who profane it. This is the sign between Me and you My chosen ones forever, to all generations.’”

Wow! Joshua thought, *This must be a big thing with Him, to have emphasized it so strongly, and so many times.* Logos chuckled and responded to his thoughts, “Big thing it is indeed! On this one thing everything else will stand or fall. If you keep My Sabbaths, you will keep close to Me, and the evil and idolatry of the surrounding nations will not capture you. But if you...” He stopped, and His broad smile fell away. The flame on the mountaintop grew cold. “They’ve made their choice,” Logos whispered. “After all I’ve done for them, they’ve made their choice!” His head dropped into His long white beard and He began to weep.

Moses and Joshua were stunned. For the first time there was deathly silence. They had been unaware of the singing of a vast angel chorus until it stopped. All the normal bird and animal sounds ceased in sorrow. They waited.

Finally Logos handed Moses the two stones He had been playing with as He had talked. He had rubbed them together until they were very smooth, then had traced His finger across both sides of each. Powerful electric arcs from His finger had etched Hebrew letters into the stone – it was the **Ten Commandments**, the summary of His Law.

Logos did not mention them. “Go down, Moses! Your people, whom you brought out of Egypt, have already become corrupt. They have chosen to turn away from Me and from My laws, and have made themselves a golden idol cast in the form of a calf. They are bowing down to it, sacrificing to it, and swearing to each other, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’ They are a stiff-necked, rebellious people. Leave Me alone, that My anger may burn against them, that I may destroy them. Then I will turn again and make of you a great nation.” His fire grew hot again, blazingly hot.

To his credit, being used to instant obedience, Moses had already started down the mountain. But when he heard the last part, he ran back and fell on his face before Logos. “Not so, my Lord! If I have found favor in Your sight, please hear me now. The Children of Israel are Your people, whom You brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand and great miracles. Why should Your anger burn against them, to slay them in the wilderness? For the Egyptians will say, ‘It was with evil intent that YHWH delivered them from our hands, that He might slay them in the wilderness.’ Far be it from You to bring dishonor upon Your magnificent name in the hearing of Your enemies. Remember Your love! ... Your mercy and compassion! ... Your longsuffering patience! I beg You, turn from Your fierce anger; relent, and do not bring such a disaster upon Your people. Remember the promise You swore to Your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You swore by Your own honored name to make their descendants as the sands of the sea and the stars of the sky, and to give them the land of Canaan as their inheritance forever...”

Moses didn’t stop. He just kept on and on like that for an hour. Poor Joshua’s face was burning as he knelt beside him. He thought about nudging him and whispering, “Pssst. Hey, Moses! That is only the almighty King of the Universe you’re arguing with!” But he didn’t dare. He was appalled. This was a side of Moses he had never seen. How could this meek and sensitive man who had always seemed so obedient and teachable before Logos, kneel there and dispute with Him so boldly? And it seemed like he would keep it up the rest of his life! It was unbelievable.

But even more unbelievable is what happened next. Right in the middle of a vigorous argument, Logos hoisted Moses high and said, “Enough already! You win. I will not utterly destroy them. You go deal with it. I will not watch.” He dropped him like a rag doll and turned His back.

Moses didn’t even try to finish his sentence. He picked himself up, grabbed the two stone tablets, gave Joshua a push, and fled down the mountain, almost flying over the rocks. Joshua ran to catch up. They’d been gone forty days.

“I can’t believe it!” Joshua shouted after Moses. “So soon? After all the great miracles, all the commitments? How could they? Is the human heart really capable of... of... losing faith so quickly?”

“The human heart is desperately wicked. It is utterly deceitful and capable of profound evil. That is what Logos was telling us about suffering. It is only by years of testing, purifying, and burning out all traces of evil, that anyone can become as holy as I am. The Israelites are children, immature. We must understand, forgive, and help them to grow up. We must show patience and love, like Logos.”

“What is that sound that I hear?” Joshua had caught up. “It’s like the sound of war in the camp!”

“That is neither shouts of victory nor cries of defeat. That is the sound of singing, celebration. Like they’re...” They broke out of the cloud and looked down on the camp. “Would you lookit that! They’re throwin’ a party!”

They descended to the place of the burning bush, where they changed to their earthly sandals (the ones that actually touched the ground). They could see the entire camp there, while remaining unseen. It was indeed a party, or perhaps you would call it a drunken orgy. There was loud music, to the heavy beat of bass drums. Many people danced in various stages of undress – some entirely naked! They saw signs of drunkenness and self-indulgence all around, bodies staggering and falling, lying in the dirt, even shamelessly committing immoral acts in plain view!

Moses stood transfixed, his mouth hanging open. This was the people who had so recently pledged themselves to forever keep YHWH’s blood covenant. The people who had seen YHWH’s glory, heard His voice, and promised to obey His commandments forever.

And there, right in the center of the camp – what was it, glittering in golden glory? An image of a bull, a **golden calf**, shaped like the Apis bull that the Egyptians worshiped. They were gathered around it, singing to it, bowing down to it! *What in Sheol had happened?* “Damnation!” Moses swore, lifting the two precious stone tablets up over his head. “Double damnation!” He flung the tablets down the mountain, where they smashed into a zillion pieces.

Now Joshua was shocked. The words of Moses flitted through his mind. “...understand... forgive them... show great patience and love... become as holy as I am...” What happened to the man so full of love that he argued with the King of the Universe to spare their lives? He was running down the mountain, screaming at the top of his lungs like a lunatic. The music died. The people backed away. Moses reached the golden calf. It was large and very heavy, but he snatched it up with superhuman strength, wooden base and all, and cast it into the sacrificial flames. He was almost incoherent with rage. Joshua followed behind, his whole body shaking. *Wow. And he had thought Logos was angry.*

“Who is on YHWH’s side?” Moses thundered. At first, no one responded. Then from the tents behind him, men from the tribe of Levi emerged. They had been praying, interceding and repenting for the people. Moses saw them and paused for breath, trying desperately to calm himself.

“Strap your swords to your sides. Slay everyone who has bowed their knee to this accursed calf!” he thundered. “Do not spare, though it be your brother or sister, your son or daughter! The plague has already begun! Hurry! Or we shall all perish!”

The Levites obeyed. It was pretty easy to tell who had participated in this drunken orgy – and in their drunkenness they were unable to defend themselves. Over three thousand died that afternoon.

But Moses was not done. With the help of Joshua and a few others, they got the golden bull out of the fire. After it had cooled, they ground it into fine powder, so that it could never again be formed into jewelry, or idols. It took a long time. When they were done, they had ten baskets of gold powder. Moses thought about it. No matter what he did with it, someone was going to try to scrape it together and re-melt it into something. “Let the accursed gold dust be poured into that stream flowing down the ridge, and make the people drink it!” he ordered.

After that, Moses furiously confronted Aaron. “What in Sheol happened here? Where are Hur and Miriam? Where is Arte? What did these people do to you, that you led them into such heinous sin?”

“Hur is dead...” Aaron began. “He died in peace, of old age. We all mourned a week. Miriam is still in mourning. And I think Arte is with her.” Aaron glanced nervously around. The Levites had finally returned from executing those who had bowed to the idol – would they accuse him also of bowing, and slay him as well? He decided to stick to his story and hope for the best. “Please don’t be angry, my lord.” He bowed. “You know how these people are – quick to do evil. Even Logos agreed they are stiff-necked and hard-hearted. After Hur died, they insisted, ‘Make us a golden image of a god to go before us. For this man Moses who brought us out of Egypt – he has not returned. He must have been consumed by YHWH’s fire.’ I told them to give me their gold earrings. I took them and threw them into the fire, thinking that would be the end of it. But the next morning when the fire had died down, there was this gold calf among the ashes. The people saw it, and before I could destroy it, they took it and set it up before them to worship. You saw the rest. There was nothing I could do. They were out of control and no longer listened to me.”

Moses just stood there, listening. Joshua tried not to snicker. *Aaron was clearly telling a whopper. Surely Moses would not be fooled.* Moses put his hands on his brother’s shoulders to look into his eyes, but Aaron could not meet his gaze. For a long moment Joshua held his breath, expecting another angry outburst from Moses. But no. Moses dropped his arms, turned, and walked off without another word. Joshua came to walk beside him. “There has been enough bloodshed,” Moses confided. “My anger does not accomplish the will of God. I’m sorry that I lost my temper. After all these years I am still weak.”

Joshua stayed with Moses in his tent that night. His wife and sons huddled in one corner, shaken to the core. But Moses just sobbed and sobbed. He was crying when Joshua fell asleep. He was still crying when Joshua awoke. He refused breakfast, still crying. Finally he went out to the center of the camp and called all the people together.

“You have sinned a terrible sin,” he told them. “Bow now in repentance, and pray for me. Sanctify yourselves with weeping and fasting. I will go up to Logos. Perhaps He will forgive our sin, or perhaps I can make atonement.”

He bowed his head, turned, and trudged off toward the holy mountain. Joshua started to follow him, but Moses shook his head. This was something he had to do alone.

He felt very old. The mountain seemed very rugged and steep, and higher than ever. Moses didn’t run up this time, and those magical moccasins didn’t seem to help much, either. It took a long time. He finally reached the top.

There was Logos with His back to Moses, exactly as he had left Him. “O Lord Logos!” Moses threw himself down at His feet. “What an awful sin we have sinned against You! You were right. They made for themselves a god of gold. They bowed down to it, and worshiped it with a vile orgy, just like the pagans. Then I made it worse by losing my temper at them. I am so ashamed! Please, forgive our sin. But if not, then blot out my name from Your Book of Life.”

Logos slowly turned around. His eyes still blazed with fiery gold, but a slight smile had returned to His face. “Oh. Hello, Moses. Did you really lose your temper? I didn’t see it. Thank you for returning, My friend. No, I will not blot your name out of My book. Whoever sins, it is he who risks being blotted out, not you. Now go. Leave Me alone. You lead these people to the place I promised you. I’ll send My angel to go before you. He will help you drive out the inhabitants of the land to enable you to possess the land I promised you, the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, for they are a stiff-necked people, and I might destroy them along the way. On Judgment Day I surely shall remember this sin against them! Throw their golden earrings into the fire and out comes this bull... of course it must be the same god who led them out of Egypt. Yeah, right... I never want to see another golden earring!” He turned His back again. The interview was over.

Moses returned to report what God had said. Most of the camp was sick with dysentery – Moses figured it was from the gold dust they had drunk. But it had its desired effect. They were repentant! They took off their earrings. They never wore gold earrings again, even to this very day.

But all signs of the presence of God in the camp were gone. The glory cloud that had shaded them by day and lit their way by night, that had led them on the way, that had given them peace and comfort in their distress and blazed with glory overhead whenever Moses talked with Logos... it was completely gone. The people mourned their loss.

Moses prayed. Joshua prayed. Arte prayed. Aaron and the Levites prayed. All the people prayed. Day after day. There was no answer. The Sabbath rolled around, and they sanctified themselves and sacrificed lambs and bulls for their atonement. The heavens were dark and cold. Finally Moses talked to his Egyptian advisor, Arte, in his tent. Only Joshua was with them. “Arte, as a dispassionate third party observer, tell me – while we were on the mountain, what happened here that Aaron isn’t telling us?”

Arte didn’t want to talk, because he didn’t want to say anything bad about his friend Aaron. “Arte, you must tell me. Don’t you realize that YHWH is gone!”

“Yes, I do. I’m sorry. What Aaron said was mostly true, except... well...” Arte bowed his head. His longing for the return of YHWH in power and glory overcame his desire to save face for his friend. “He didn’t exactly just... throw the earrings into the fire. They had made a mold. He melted the jewelry in a big iron pot and poured it into the mold to cast it into the golden calf. At first he didn’t want to do it. He argued with them. He even tried to destroy the mold once. But eventually he gave in to their demands and cast the idol.” Arte was weeping at the memory.

“When was it that he gave in to the people, Arte?”

“Well, let’s see. Mmm... it was the morning of Av 9, the second day of the week. An hour or so before noon.”

“That is what I thought. That is the exact time that Logos told us about the idol. *Let the 9th of Av be a curse to Israel from this time on forever!*”

Arte shuddered. He had never heard Moses utter such a curse before. “But sir, there’s more. After they got the golden calf out of the mold and set it up on a base, all the people gathered and Aaron gave a speech. It was really very good. He has a way with words. He said all sorts of nice things. That any who cared to worship the idol could separate themselves and go back to Egypt if they wanted, but he had chosen to follow YHWH, and he would not go back. Even if you and Joshua were slain by the fire on the mountain, he would not go back. He believed in YHWH, and he would wait for Him to lead them on to the Promised Land. He told all those who were faithful to YHWH to turn their backs on the idol. We went back to our tents to pray. Most of the Levites, too. I comforted Miriam. We heard the music, but we didn’t see what they did with the idol or the altar they built to it.” Arte hung his head. He had meant it to defend Aaron, but now he realized that Aaron hadn’t been much of a leader, just telling them to turn their backs.

“But Moses,” Arte brightened up. “I know how we can get YHWH back to the camp. If He won’t come here, we will go to Him. Let’s set up a special tent on the mountain, up where the burning bush was. If we purify ourselves, YHWH will meet with us there, I know He will! He is a God of great mercy and compassion, and He wants to meet with us just as much as we want Him to. Maybe more!”

“Thank you Arte. For an old Egyptian wizard who was my bitter enemy, you have become a dear friend and good inspiration to me. We’ll call it the **tent of meeting**.”

So that is what they did. Sure enough, the glory of YHWH did come down in a small pillar of cloud and fire to the tent of meeting up on the side of the holy mountain. It was tiny compared to the incredible glory they had seen, but God was in it! So the rest of the time they remained at Mount Sinai, Moses would go up there to talk with Logos. Whenever the people saw him go up, they would stand respectfully beside their tents and worship.

As Arte had hoped, Logos came and spoke with Moses every day, face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Arte and Joshua attended him, helping him up and down the mountain. But finally, Joshua was so overcome with the glory of Logos that he remained in the tent of meeting day and night. Then Arte would go back and forth with Moses, even becoming his spokesman sometimes when he gave YHWH’s Word to the people. Arte also helped carry food and water up to Joshua.

Poor Aaron was so overcome with guilt at his sin, he hung his head whenever Moses came around, and hardly said a word. He kept wondering when his punishment would come. Finally he took Moses aside and asked him. “Moses, what did Logos say? What is my punishment? Do I no longer have any part with you in leading the people?”

Again, Moses looked into his eyes, but Aaron still could not meet his gaze. “Ask Him, Aaron. He will answer you.”

Moses was thinking of all those things Logos had said about Aaron during his forty days on the holy mountain. Logos had said that Aaron would be the high priest for all the people – that he would be the head of a tribe of priests. But Moses knew that could not happen while Aaron still hung on to the lies in his heart.

So Aaron prayed. And prayed. And prayed. No answer. A week went by. He came to Moses again. Moses told him, “Logos will answer you, but maybe He is waiting to see a full repentance first. Have you confessed all of your sin?”

“No. I have not.” This time Aaron met Moses’ gaze. “We had a mold. We fought over it, but I was weak and gave in. That golden bull didn’t just walk out of the fire by itself! We cast it and set it up secretly at night. When they told everyone that the bull had come out of the fire from the melted earrings, I...” he hung his head, “... kept silent.”

Moses nodded. “Come up with me today up to the tent of meeting. Kneel by the door, and tell Logos that. I think He will answer your prayers.”

Aaron did. Logos heard his confession, forgave him, and restored his position of leadership in the Levitical priesthood. Then Aaron read the instructions that Joshua had recorded from their forty days on the mountain, and wept at what he had nearly missed.

CHAPTER 40 – GOD’S FACE – THE TABERNACLE

Joshua considered it his sacred duty to record every word that passed between Logos and Moses. He rarely interrupted, but he heard, and pondered. So a few months after the tent of meeting had been set up, he told Moses, “Sir, there are a few subjects that you and Logos seem be avoiding. Like the two stone tablets you smashed when you lost your temper, and what Logos said about leading the people to the Promised Land without Him.”

Moses shut his eyes with the memory and nodded. But before he could answer they heard a soft chuckle, and there was Logos, an impish grin on His shining face. “Avoiding, eh, Joshua? Ha, ha! I’m not afraid of the tough subjects. But with people bound in time, there is a time for everything. I can wait until the time is right for you.”

“Er, ah...” Moses bowed low before Logos. “You told me to lead my people to the Promised Land. But they are Your people! And You haven’t told me yet whom You would send with me. If You do not lead us up... Well, You know I can’t lead this great people by myself! So if You are pleased with me, teach me Your ways. Teach me to know You, so I can walk with You and You with me. Only then I can lead Your people. If not we’ll just stay right here.”

The chuckles turned to hearty laughter. “And I believe you are just strong-willed enough (dare I say stubborn enough?) to ‘stay right here’ forever, until I relent and promise to ‘walk with you and you with Me’.”

“Yes, Lord!” Moses’ face was burning, but he was quite determined to not allow Logos to talk him out of it.

“I told you, My angel shall go up with you.”

“That’s not good enough. If Your own holy Presence goes not up with me, I can’t lead and we shall remain here.”

More laughter. Logos was obviously getting a big kick out of this. “Look at Me, Moses! Whom do you see?” He smiled broadly at both Moses and Joshua.

Moses looked, intently. He loved to gaze into the face of God. “I see You, Logos, almighty God, the King of the Universe, Word of YHWH the eternal Father, the most awesome, holy, glorious Presence in the universe.”

“No, you don’t. You just see My angel, whom I form to gently talk with you and lead you. No man can see My face and live. The glory that is Mine is multiplied a zillion times over the glory you see in the face of My angel. Your body is frail. You could not take it. It would slay you instantly! Be glad that I said I would send My angel to lead you.”

“I want more than just Your angel. I want Your glorious Presence! Your Presence has been missing from the camp these last two months. I want more than just an angel hiding in a tent outside the camp halfway up a mountain! How will the people know You are pleased with me if Your Presence remains not with me when I talk with them?”

The laughter stopped and the face grew serious, but the smile remained. “I will do what you ask, for truly I am pleased with you. You alone among all people on the face of the earth have the boldness to come into My presence, even at the risk of your life. I swear, My Presence shall remain with you, Moses, from this time forth forever.”

“If You are pleased with me, show me Your glory!”

There was silence, for a long time. Finally, very softly, “You have seen more of My glory than any man.”

“I am not satisfied seeing the face of Your angel. Show Me Your face! Your real face in all Your heavenly glory.”

“All My glory? No man can see My face and live!”

“Then slay me. I will not go until I have seen Your glory! I cannot lead Your people unless I know You, and I will never know You until I have seen Your face.”

“I need you, Moses! I chose you. Only you can lead My people. I cannot slay you. I don’t want to...”

“Ah ha! Then I have won. For I shall not leave here until I see Your glory, and You will not slay me. So You must find a way to keep me alive when You show me Your glory!”

Another long pause. Then Logos began again to chuckle. “You are correct, My beloved. You have indeed won. I shall strengthen you greatly, that you may see a little bit, a tiny taste, of My glory. But even then, it will slay you if you don’t follow My instructions exactly. Now, we have another subject you wish to discuss?”

“Yes, Lord. I broke Your lovely tablets of stone on which You wrote Your Ten Commandments. I deeply regret that, and I again repent of losing my temper. I want You to make more tablets of stone to replace them.”

“You want Me to make...? Did I break the stone tablets? I don’t recall breaking anything.”

“No, Lord. I just told You. I broke them.”

“Then you shall make others, just like the ones I made, and you shall write on them My commands as I gave them to you. That is your punishment.”

“Yes, Lord.” Moses took a deep breath. “I can make the tablets. But Lord, I can’t write the letters on them. I don’t have electricity in my fingers! You have to do that!”

Hearty laughter. “Dear, dear Moses! You drive a hard bargain! Okay. You make the stone tablets, and I will do the writing. But I can drive a hard bargain, too. I will only do the writing if you bring the tablets of stone to the top of the mountain where I gave you the first ones. And you must have them there no later than tomorrow morning!”

Moses gulped. He had better get busy. He nodded. “It’s a deal, my Lord, but only after You keep Your promise to show me Your glory. For by my life, tomorrow morning shall not begin until You have kept Your promise!”

“Moses!” Logos exclaimed in feigned indignation. “How dare you tell Me when tomorrow morning begins!”

“I claim Your word. You promised to show me Your glory. So let the whole universe wait suspended in time until You have kept Your word!”

Poor Joshua gave an involuntary gasp. He was so shocked he stopped writing. He could not believe Moses’ impudence! Surely Logos would be angry.

But Logos just laughed and laughed, until the entire universe seemed to be laughing with him. “Dear Moses! How I love you! I have not had such delights of fellowship and discourse since time began! Truly My Bride shall be worthy of My love and greatest delight, as you have just demonstrated to My universe. Come and see!” He opened Moses’ eyes to His realm of spirit, and held out His hand. The angels all around were singing, dancing, and shouting victoriously, obviously rejoicing at the bold faith Moses had just demonstrated with Logos.

But Moses was not interested in the angels, nor the splendor of this realm of spirit. “Lord, I still see You just as a flaming angel. Time cannot reach tomorrow morning until you keep Your word.”

“Just look!” Logos spread out His arms, blazing in blinding white and gold fire. My glory is displayed throughout this, My realm of spirit.” He took Moses’ hand and together they flew to glory after surpassing glory.

But Moses still had eyes only for Logos. “I still see You only as a fiery angel,” He whispered resolutely.

Instantly they were back at the tent of meeting. “Go now. Prepare tablets of stone like the first. Bring them up the mountain tomorrow morning. Come alone.” He held up His hand, as Moses was about to protest. “I shall hide you in a cave in the rock and strengthen you greatly for your protection. Then I shall cause the glorious nature and character of My good name to pass by the cave. But I shall shield you with My hand, that My glory not destroy you. When I have passed by, then I shall remove My hand, and you will see My back, but My face cannot be seen.”

Moses bowed deeply. “Then morning may begin.”

He worked furiously the rest of that day, and all night, pausing for nothing, not even food or drink. Before dawn he was climbing the mountain. The path remained quite dark. Fortunately, he was familiar with it. He neared the top a few hours later. Still, the sun had not begun to rise. He was exhausted. Those stone tablets were heavy! Moses regretted missing breakfast, and dinner the night before. His head was spinning. Low blood sugar. He rested for a few moments before starting to climb again. But somehow he had lost his way and was now on unfamiliar ground. He retraced his steps, but could not find the path. It was still too dark! Where was Logos? He began to get frantic. He was near fainting. Terror pushed down hard upon him.

He clutched the stone tablets tightly and cried out for Logos. No answer. He bowed his head, feeling very weak, ready to kneel there until Logos came. Then a quiet voice in his mind said, “Go forward. I’ll lead you to the cave.”

He carefully walked forward over the uneven ground. He was sorely tempted to curse the darkness. He could see nothing at all now. It was darker than any moonless, cloudy night. *What happened to the dawning? It should have come two hours ago!* Suddenly he bumped into a big flat rock. It made a level ledge in the side of the slope. He climbed up onto it and found a narrow entrance to a cave. This must be the place. He put his two stone tablets down safely deep inside the cave, then returned to the entrance where he stretched and massaged his sore arms.

“Okay, Lord Logos, I’m here,” he called. Immediately a mighty wind sprang up, which ripped at Moses’ clothing and caused him to hang on tightly to the walls of the cave. It was so powerful that the very rocks themselves were torn from their places and came crashing down all around him. But he would not retreat. When the wind had failed to force him into the cave, a terrible earthquake shook the mountain, shattering rocks around and above him. The walls of the cave began to crack, and the rock at his feet tipped crazily from side to side. But he would not retreat. When the earthquake had failed, a fire sprang up below, and rushed toward him up the mountain, to engulf him in flaming fury. He faced the blaze with fierce determination to burn to dust rather than miss the glory of YHWH. The fire passed. Moses still stood in the mouth of the cave.

All sights and sounds faded. Moses stared into the blackness. He cried out in disappointment that he had missed seeing the glory of Logos. Then he heard the angel chorus, sweetly, softly, in deepest worship. He listened intently, then sank to his knees on the rock, joining the worship. YHWH the eternal Father was here!

He still saw nothing, but the eyes of his spirit were opened, and he knew. His soul was flooded with love, overflowing with irrepressible joy, and overwhelmed with peace. His spirit saw the very nature and character of God—His unfailing faithfulness, His awesome kindness, His powerful gentleness, His amazing patience, His fantastic goodness, and His utter holiness, truth, and righteousness—each washed over him like thunderous waves on a beach. What had been just words, like wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, and the holy fear of YHWH, came alive to Moses, no longer mere words but now living beings, Spirits, vital aspects of the eternal Spirit.

His physical being all but overcome, Moses forced his hands to grip the sides of the cave, forced his head up and his eyes to keep looking out. But as each succeeding wave of Spirit washed over him, he grew weaker and closer to fainting. Finally, his head spinning, his body completely overwhelmed, his determination gave in. He cried out, “Enough already! Let morning come!”

Instantly the horizon brightened, giving a focus for his spinning brain. Moses was gasping for breath; his body slumped between outstretched arms. The sun rose quickly before his eyes, in royal splendor unmatched by any sunrise before or since. But it was as nothing in contrast to the splendor and majesty of the eternal Spirit of YHWH. Moses had seen Him! In the blackness of the night, Moses had truly seen! Now he knew Him beyond all human knowing. No earthly eye-candy would ever tempt him again. He stared at the spectacular sunrise, only half interested, still relishing in the Holy One his spiritual eyes had seen.

Suddenly without warning, the majesty of the sunrise changed. What before had been just a sunrise, spreading in all its reds, yellows, and golds from horizon to horizon and up over the top of the mountain, now grew in breadth, depth, and height. Moses gaped in wonder. The sunrise now covered the earth and the heavens above! Still it grew, until it filled the solar system and reached out to the stars, continuing to quickly grow until it filled the galaxy, then the entire universe, and beyond! How can a mere sunrise be so vast? Yet it grew, until Moses once again was gasping with the immensity of the splendor before him. His eyes were overcome with glory, but he could not close them. He tried to cover his eyes with his hands, but his fingers had sunken deep into the rock sides of the cave. He turned his head, and then looked at his feet, but no matter where he looked, the sunrise had grown there, too. He gritted his teeth, desperately hoping that the moment would soon pass. But to his horror he saw that the sunrise had reached into his future, for all the ages to come, and into his past, back to the beginning of time, and still it grew. Once again he cried out, "Enough! It is enough! I am undone!"

Laughter. Hearty belly-laughter. The sunrise was instantly back to a normal, well-behaved sunrise, and there was the brilliant angel that was Logos, laughing until His sides were ready to split.

His laughter was catching, and pretty soon Moses had recovered enough to begin laughing with Him. He stood and pried his fingers, one by one, out of the rock walls of the cave. Logos couldn't resist a few jabs in between bouts of laughter, "... and that was just My backsides... As My hand covered you... And after I had strengthened you."

Moses was startled to discover that he was indeed strengthened. After no dinner and no breakfast, and that strenuous climb with the heavy stone tablets, he expected to be weak and near fainting. But he had never felt better, or stronger. He looked at the walls of the cave. He felt the place where his fingers had been. It was solid rock. He looked at his fingers. They felt soft as ever. *How had they pressed themselves so deeply into the solid rock?*

Logos answered his unspoken question. "I had to make you stronger than the rock, dear Moses, or you would not have survived." More chuckles. "Oh, that was delightful, was it not? I don't think I've ever enjoyed Myself more!"

"Yes, Logos, that was good. I am satisfied. You have kept Your promise to me. I am grateful."

The fiery angel that was Logos came close to Moses, stretched out His arms, and lightly put his hands on Moses' shoulders. "Now, do you still want to see My face in all My glory? Or are you rather glad that My full glory is veiled by the flames you see before you?"

"Yes!" Moses nodded fervently to both questions. He thought for a moment, unaccustomed to Logos' touch or closeness. "How is it, my Lord, that You touch me but I am not slain – or the universe cease to exist? I am born in sin and You are utterly holy!"

"I told you, My friend. I have strengthened you. The strength of a thousand normal men could not have withstood My touch. And I have purified you in ways that you cannot comprehend, through the wind, the earthquake, the fire, and the visions of My glory. No high priest going through the rites of purification for a lifetime could attain to the perfection of holiness I find in you. I shall not waste this opportunity! I have longed to hug you, even yearned with love unspeakable since the beginning of time."

Though overwhelmed, Moses struggled to respond to Logos' love. He tentatively lifted his arms and put them around the angel's waist. Slowly Logos reached around farther, until He had enveloped Moses in a flaming hug.

The hug lasted a long time. The heavens above were crowded with angels struggling to see, and then gasping with the sight. Satan was also drawn to the commotion. "What in heaven is going on here?" he swore. "Let me see! I have authority here! You cannot keep me out! This is my domain. These fools are all mine! They have made their choice! I won the right... Hey! This isn't fair! You can't..."

Michael was blocking him. Finally he spoke. "The only thing that will be 'fair' is when you meet your doom in flames to pay the price for all your pride and rebellion, and all the suffering you have caused. And as to your 'rights', these people are forgiven and covered under the blood of the lamb. You have no more right to them than you have to enter the throne room anymore. From now on, all your work shall be done 'by invitation only'. You are not invited here. So go! Find some of your own to torment."

Satan finally left, sulking. He never did find out about the hug, though the momentous event was discussed in the heavenlies for years to come.

Finally, hours later, Logos pushed Moses back to arm's length, and said gently, "Thank you, My friend. How I long for the day when all My precious ones are ready for this! But they shall be in the fullness of time, for I shall see to it. Now, please get the tablets of stone you have brought."

Moses retrieved them from the cave and held them out to Logos. "No, no, dear friend," Logos said with a sparkle in His eyes. "You write the commandments on them."

“But... but... You said... I said... I can’t! I don’t have any electricity flowing from my fingers!”

Logos gently took Moses’ right hand in His own, and began to trace his fingers over the stone. The electricity flowed from Logos’ hand through Moses’ fingers, cutting Hebrew letters into the stone just as it did when Logos did it by Himself. But then Moses was startled when Logos removed His hand, and the electricity just kept flowing! Amazed, he continued tracing out the letters, until the two tablets were finished. “How can I do this?” he cried.

“You can do all things in and through Me,” Logos replied with a grin. “Now, we still have a little unfinished business to wrap up.” They discussed the covenant with Israel, the Ten Commandments, the associated laws and statutes, ceremonial and sacrificial laws, laws concerning the Feasts of Israel, and so on. Moses was up there with Logos forty days and nights. He neither ate, nor drank, nor even slept. There seemed to be no need, since he was supernaturally strengthened. An added bonus was that his memory was so improved that he remembered every word even though Joshua was not there to take dictation.

Moses finally came back down the mountain. He held the tablets of stone firmly in both hands – they would not be smashed this time. But as he walked back into the camp, no one greeted him. Had they all slept in? Or were they hiding? It was after noon. “Aaron! Miriam! Arte! I’m back! Gather the people. I’ve got to tell you what happened!”

They finally got the people gathered, but there was an unnatural stillness, even fear, over the camp. Moses stood on a platform and presented the renewed covenant YHWH had made with them. He briefly went over all that Logos had told him, including the tabernacle He wanted them to build so He could dwell with them. The people had all knelt before him. Now they put their faces to the ground. “All that YHWH tells us, we will do,” they swore.

“So why are you bowing to me?” Moses asked, shaking his head in exasperation. “Get up already, and bow your faces only before YHWH!”

Old Arte finally got up the courage to confront Moses. “Sir, are you unaware that your face is blazing like the sun? Even when you talked to Pharaoh, your face never shone like this. You look like a god, or a son of the gods! I know you, yet it’s all I can do to keep from bowing down to you!”

Moses looked into Arte’s face, but Arte couldn’t endure the blazing radiance. He raised a hand to shield his eyes.

“That does it. When my closest friends have to cover their eyes, I’m getting a veil.” So from that day on, Moses wore a veil whenever he talked with the people. But when he went up to the tent of meeting to talk with Logos, he would remove the veil to commune with Him face to face.

That same day they all brought an offering and began building the tabernacle, as Logos had showed Moses.

It had been nearly a year since the Exodus from Egypt. The people contributed generously of their great wealth received from the Egyptians. They also gave of their skill and labor. The tabernacle was truly glorious. It was made of white, blue, purple, and scarlet curtains embroidered with gold thread, stretched over a framework of acacia wood frames overlaid with gold, and protected with a three layer tent. The inner layer was goat hair, then red-dyed ram’s hides, and finally rough, strong porpoise skins.

The furniture of the tabernacle was even more glorious. The altar was made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze. Nearby was a big bronze laver (ceremonial washbasin). These were in the outer court, which was delineated by curtains. The entry to the tabernacle was veiled with a fine linen curtain embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet and held up on gold rings. Inside were three spectacular furnishings: First, a table of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, to hold fresh bread symbolizing the Presence of Logos, the Bread of Life. Second, a solid gold lampstand with seven lamps representing the Seven Spirits of God. And third, another table of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, where fragrant incense burned morning and night, its sweet-smelling smoke rising like prayers to YHWH.

A small room in back was partitioned off with a heavy embroidered veil, thick and triple-layered like the tent. Within this room was the most exquisite furnishing of all: the **Ark of the Covenant**. Again, it was made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, but it had a ‘Mercy Seat’ cover over it made of solid gold, supported by two solid gold angels, with their wings stretched out over and behind the seat.

They also made special robes and other clothing for the priests, and utensils, incense, anointing oil, and other items for the priestly service. While they were working on all this, Moses and Joshua were writing out the ordinances of the priestly service – everything Logos had told Moses on the mountaintop. His memory remained perfect, and they were able to write it all down word for word, just as Logos had given it to Moses. We know it as the book of **Leviticus**. It shows us that his forty days and nights on the mountain without food, water, or sleep were not wasted!

Even as they were writing, they instructed the people regarding all the washings, sacrifices, and offerings, the annual celebrations or Feasts of YHWH, the special foods and the prohibited foods... it was a very big job.

Finally, when it was all written down, Moses honored Aaron and his sons before the congregation, as Logos had commanded him. He put on Aaron’s special robes of the priesthood, the breastplate, the turban, and the crown. He dressed Aaron’s sons. He used the special anointing oil to anoint them, the tabernacle, and everything holy. Then Moses and Aaron together cleansed the altar and made the first sacrifices on it. They began the first of Nisan, 1450 BC, and the whole process took seven days. Moses finished by sacrificing a ram of ordination for the Aaronic priesthood.

Everything was finally complete. All the people were purified. The sacrifices were offered for their atonement. Moses stood before the people, and for the first time took off his veil in their presence. His face shone like the sun, as he raised his hands in prayer to YHWH. The people all gasped and fell on their faces before him. He began to pray, asking YHWH to grant that His holy Presence come to His tabernacle, and reminding Him of His promise to dwell among them. He prayed for an hour, swearing to Logos that he would continue praying for the rest of his life until He answered. He stood on Father YHWH's firm promise, and he would not let it go.

Logos responded with His characteristic soft chuckle in Moses' ear. "I'm here, My friend. I'm here. And I love this! You have done well! Very, very well! I'm delighted! Now, walk toward the sanctuary as if you plan to enter."

Moses entered the outer court, strode across it, past the laver and the bronze altar, and stepped up to the veil in front of the tabernacle. He lifted his foot to step inside, but at that instant the glory of YHWH fell upon the sanctuary, filling it with white fire and smoke. Moses was thrust back. Startled, he fell on his face before the sanctuary.

Again, he heard laughter, this time the laughing chorus of a million angels. Above it all, there rang a mighty cry, "Father! I have it! A holy nation of priests to Us, and a holy place to dwell among them! Celebrate with Me! Rejoice with Me, in this My finest hour!"

Moses remained before the sanctuary for a long time, half aware of the people worshiping behind him, and half aware of the celebration going on in the heavenlies above. But finally he realized it was getting dark. The people were tired. He stood and returned to his podium. His veil was still off, and in the gathering twilight, his face blazed forth like a brilliant beacon over the camp.

"The Sabbath is now over," he called out. "Go, eat and drink, work and play, enjoy your wives and your families, sleep and be refreshed. But never forget what happened this day, when YHWH our God came to dwell among us. For He is our God, now and always, and we are His people, the sheep of His hand. Keep yourselves holy. Never again bow to any other god. Remember the covenant YHWH made with us. Keep His commandments and follow His statutes. Then He will always dwell with us, and will lead us and protect us and provide for us. And we will learn to love Him, and enjoy Him, as He loves and enjoys us!"

"Now, may YHWH Himself bless you, and keep you, and make His face to shine upon you, and give you peace, from this day forth and forever. Amen."

"Amen! Amen!" the people shouted, as they began to turn away toward their tents. Aaron too, headed for his tent, to enjoy his wife **Elishiva** (daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, a prince of the tribe of Judah), and their four sons, **Nadab**, **Abihu**, **Eleazar**, and **Ithamar**.

But as Moses stepped off the platform, looking forward to some time with his lovely wife Ziporah, there was his sister Miriam with Arte, their arms around each other. "What do you want now, you old Egyptian wizard?" Moses asked, a little bit miffed.

Arte bowed. "That's just it, sir. You still think of me as nothing but an old Egyptian wizard. But I have repented. I'm forgiven. I believe in YHWH just as you. I'll never turn away from Him, I swear! Please, sir. I'm a lonely old man. Miriam loves me. Don't leave her a widow the rest of her days. Grant me the favor of marrying into your family."

You have got to be kidding! was Moses' first thought, but thankfully he didn't say it. Arte saw that look on his face, and hurried on. "Before you say no, would you please pray about it? Miriam and I have. YHWH confirmed it to us today when His glorious Presence came down among us. Logos wants us to celebrate His joy with each other."

Miriam just nodded her head and hugged Arte even tighter. Moses blinked. He expected a torrent of words from her – his sister was never without a few sharp words. "Okay, Arte, my friend. I will ask Logos about it. But don't be disappointed if He says no. He frowns on us Israelites marrying into the surrounding heathen nations, y' know." He was trying to make that come out in a joking way, but failed and realized he had hurt them both. He never was very good at jokes. "Sorry, Arte. I'll let you know."

"Thank you, sir. YHWH is good! We have enjoyed this day together like no other! I had forgotten what a delight it was to have someone close to share my joys, to share my deepest feelings..." He wanted to bubble on, but Moses was thinking of more important things, and turned to go.

He reached his tent. The smell of steaming stew drew him in the door. His lovely wife, dressed in a long flowing scarlet gown, came rushing over in a graceful arc and flung herself into his arms. She, at least, was not put off by his shining face. His two sons excitedly exclaimed what a glorious day that had been and how proud they were of their father. Right in the middle of that touching scene, Logos spoke to him. "Moses, My friend. Remember when you first prayed about Arte and I assured you that he would become a blessing? This is what I had in mind, a blessing for you and for Miriam!" Moses heard the hearty laughter he had come to recognize. He started to chuckle. Ziporah pushed herself back and asked what was so funny.

"Well, Zip... I don't know. What do you think about Miriam and... ah... er... old Arte..."

"Of course, my lord! Miriam loves him dearly. She has been so lonely ever since her husband died. And Arte has become a tremendous man of God and a leader among us. With your permission for their marriage, he'll be accepted as a true Israelite. It's obvious that he adores her. Haven't you noticed how they always stand so close together? I've been wondering why you seem to be so dense!"

Moses began to laugh. Was he really that dense? Or just preoccupied? Soon the whole family was immersed in hearty laughter; a delightful end to a wondrous day.

The next day Moses held a ceremony, at which Arte publicly renounced the gods of Egypt, confessed his faith in YHWH, and was adopted into the family of Israel with the sign of circumcision. Moses then announced Arte's engagement to his sister Miriam. This was met with great rejoicing ... way, way beyond what Moses ever expected. He set the wedding date in one week, Nisan 7, so Arte and Miriam could celebrate the Passover together.

Right after the announcement, Gershom and Eliezer came to Moses with two lovely Midianite ladies who had joined the tribe of Levi. They wanted him to marry them, too, at the same time. Like Arte, they had renounced the false gods of Midian and confessed faith in YHWH.

Moses took the matter up with Logos. He was laughing Himself silly, so it took a while to get an answer. Finally, "Yes, yes, dear Moses. Yes! All the foreigners who fall in love with Me and forsake the idolatry and wickedness of their culture ought to be welcomed into My family, don't you think?" Thus after the precedent set by Arte, it turned out to be a rather busy week. A hundred thousand foreign males pledged their faith and submission to YHWH and were formally adopted into one of the tribes of Israel, not counting the women and children. Moses had no idea that that many had joined up with them since the Exodus.

That Sabbath was Aaron's first time to sacrifice the ram as the high priest of Israel. Logos honored him with fire from His glory cloud consuming his burnt offering. The people shouted with joy and fell on their faces in worship.

The next day (Nisan 7) saw five thousand marriages between foreigners who had now become Israelites, and the sons or daughters of the tribes who had adopted them. This turned into a multiple-marriage extravaganza. There was hardly a person in the camp not involved in one way or another. Of course the couples all insisted that Moses be the one to proclaim YHWH's blessing over their marriage. He had to bless them in groups, just to get them all through in one day. After that, the celebrations... you've never seen such celebrations! Even long after dark parties continued in every tent. The Spirit of Joy swept like a flood through the congregation. Moses returned to the tent of meeting, exhausted. Logos met him with rip-roaring laughter.

"So what are You laughing at? That was brutal. I'm all wedding'd out!"

"My faithful friend! It seems you got a few lovely daughters-in-law over the deal too, did you not? Share in their joy! Many precious ones were added to our family today! Israel My son grows strong. First the Kasdim down in Egypt. Now the Egyptians, Midianites, and Amalekites. They joined Israel because they love Me! Abraham is becoming the father of many nations just as I promised."

"But all in one day?"

"You made them wait a long time. Nearly a year."

"I made them wait...?"

"None could marry until you set the pattern for their adoption into Israel. I certainly do not allow My precious ones to 'marry into the surrounding heathen nations' as you so quaintly put it. But if they fall in love with Me and My son Israel, how can I turn them away? I made Israel as a light to the nations. Let all who love the light be adopted into Israel. Don't be an old sourpuss! Rejoice with us!"

The celebrations for some continued all night. Long after Moses and Ziporah slept, others in the camp still laughed, and feasted, and caroused, and drank...

When Moses returned to the tent of meeting the next morning, the mood of Logos had shifted. Moses knew that someone had sinned. He interceded awhile, determined to stand between the people and their sins. *It must have been the joyous partying. Somebody probably got drunk and did something wicked.* Moses began repenting for them. "Remember, Lord, that we are but flesh. Have mercy on our weakness, and forgive our sins."

Finally Logos spoke. He didn't mince words. "Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron whom you ordained to the priesthood last week, are lying dead before the altar in the tabernacle. In their drunken stupor, they broke the strict law I just gave about My holy fire I sent to light My altar. Send priests in to get them and bury them. Let no one weep or mourn for them. And let this be a lesson to anyone who would enter My holy presence stinking drunk."

Aaron later said that was the toughest thing he ever did, continuing his duties as high priest with not a tear, not even attending the burial of his two eldest sons. But he did it, weeping only privately with his wife. Logos honored his dedication, and confirmed his approval of Aaron before the people. All the congregation, however, mourned for Nadab and Abihu, in awe and fear at YHWH's holiness.

Arte and Miriam went away on their honeymoon. They showed up in camp again just in time to partake of the Passover celebration together. They seemed very happy with each other, though Miriam seemed a bit cool toward Moses. Maybe it was her focus on her new husband. Or maybe she had taken offense that Moses had made them wait so long. Perhaps she had been hurt by his tactless joke about 'marrying into the surrounding heathen nations.'

Moses put it out of his mind, to began organizing the people for travel. The tabernacle was directly in the middle of the camp, with Levites all around to care for it. After the Passover season, on the first of Iyar, Moses took a census of the fighting men – now 603,550 men able to serve in the military (not counting Levites, who were only to serve as priests and not permitted to fight). Moses organized them by families and tribes all around the tabernacle.

CHAPTER 41 – TOWARD THE PROMISED LAND

Logos spoke to Moses, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. It’s time to pack up and head for the hill country of the Amorites, the good land which I promised to you and all the descendants of Israel forever. I have given you the land. Go now and take possession of it.”

So on the 20th of Iyar, the cloud lifted from the door of the tabernacle and began moving north to go around the Sinai range. Moses was ready, but the people were not. They had been camped too long. Poor Moses scurried around trying to get the people packed and moving out. The Levites had the worst time. They had their own stuff packed, but no one wanted to carry the heavy furnishings for the tabernacle. Moses was nearly tearing his hair. He thought that had all been settled. It was noon before they got going, and late afternoon before the last of the camp, the tribe of Dan, could start. They barely made it back to the split rock at Rephidim by dark.

Moses first sent word to Reuel, his father-in-law, that they were leaving. Then he had a good talking-to with the commanders of each tribe regarding the mismanagement of their day’s travel. They were supposed to have already organized everything. What had gone wrong? Sadly, all he got was excuses. Moses realized they had never really been serious about preparing to travel and had never wanted to understand his instructions. So Moses started over. Five long blasts on both silver trumpets together called all the men to the tent of meeting. Five short blasts on one silver trumpet called only the heads of the tribes to the tent of meeting. As soon as the cloud lifted from the tabernacle, everyone was to start packing. When the silver trumpet sounded one long blast, The tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were to set out, following the cloud. Those who carried the tabernacle (the tribes of Gershon and Merari, sons of Levi) were to immediately follow. After they were on the way, another long blast of the trumpet would start out the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, followed immediately by those carrying the holy furnishings for the tabernacle (the tribe of Kohath, son of Levi). A third blast would start out the tribes of Benjamin, Manasseh, and Ephraim, and a fourth long blast would start out the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, and Dan. Then when the cloud stopped moving, wherever that may be, the Levites carrying the tabernacle were to immediately set it up directly under the cloud, so it would be ready when the holy things arrived to put in it. *What’s so difficult about that?* Moses wondered.

Each of the commanders listened intently, and swore they would do it correctly next time. It certainly should not take an entire day just to move fifteen miles around the mountain. Moses thanked them, commending them for their good attitudes. At least they were trying.

But the cloud remained hovering above the tabernacle the next morning, so the people relaxed. That afternoon, Reuel and his family showed up to see them off.

Ziporah caught up to date with her sisters. Her next younger sister, Hanani, had married a bright young man named **Hobab**, who was with them. Like many Midianites, Hobab had accepted YHWH as a result of Reuel’s ministry, but had not become an Israelite – yet. Moses invited him, “We are headed for the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Join with us, Hobab. We will give you and your family a share in all that YHWH gives us.”

“No. I have my own land and people right here. Besides, it was only a few years ago that I married Hanani, and our firstborn son **Kenai** is but a baby.”

“Please, Hobab! We need you! All Israel needs you! You know this wilderness and its people. You would be our eyes and ears. And Ziporah would love to help you care for her little nephew. I’ll adopt you into my own family, and you will become my personal advisor.”

Moses’ persistence paid off. Hobab finally agreed, and went home to pack. Moses was glad to have an advisor to replace Arte, who of late seemed far more interested in his new wife than in his old friend Moses.

The next morning, they set out again. This time, their departure went more smoothly. Moses was pleased. They traveled for three days, passing by the hills of Dophkah again. But already the people had begun complaining about the hardship of the travel, so Logos sent a grass fire from the east, with a hot wind blowing it right into the camp. The frightened people fled before the fire, crying out to Moses for help. It was already beginning to burn up their tents on the outskirts of the camp.

Moses prayed, and immediately the wind changed, blowing the fire back on itself so that it quickly went out. “Why do you try YHWH’s patience with your grumbling?” Moses asked them. “Of course the way seems a little tough. You’ve gotten soft, camping in one place for a year. Be glad that God is toughening you up for the battles you will fight to take over the Promised Land. Stop your complaining. Trust YHWH, and He will bless you.”

They named that place **Taberah**, ‘the Burning’. They headed north, stopping briefly at Elim to stock up on water and gather the dates. But Logos didn’t allow them to camp there. People begin to gripe and grouse once again. This time they were murmuring against the manna, which had fallen faithfully for them ever since they had first entered the Wilderness of Sin. They were tired of it, remembering the meats, the fresh vegetables, and the spices of Egypt.

At first, they didn’t bring their complaints to Moses, but Logos heard. He came to Moses at the tent of meeting (which had been pitched next to the tabernacle ever since they had left Mt. Sinai). Moses heard no laughter this time. “My friend! Guess what your people are doing now?”

“No. Not again!”

“Walk through the camp, and listen for yourself.”

Moses did. He was appalled! It seemed like there was grumbling and complaining in front of every tent. And so soon after Taberah! He returned to the tent of meeting, deeply discouraged. “O Logos! Why have You brought this trouble upon Your servant? What evil did I do that You have placed the heavy burden of this people upon me? They are crying for meat, again! Where could I possibly get enough meat for all this great company? Do me a favor and slay me right now. I would rather die by Your hand than face the slow death of their constant complaints.”

“I am sorry, My friend. The journey is too difficult for you. That is why I inspired Reuel to counsel you to set up the seventy elders of Israel as judges over the people. I will empower them to assist you in these matters. Tell them to consecrate the people tonight. Tomorrow, I shall answer their request. I shall give them meat, not just for a day or a week, but for a whole month, until it comes out their noses and they loathe it and vomit it up. For they have rejected Me, even after all the lessons I gave them on trusting Me.”

Moses’ eyes got very big. “Lord? Here I am among 600,000 foot-soldiers, and You say You will give them meat for a month? Even if we slaughtered all their flocks and herds—or even if we caught all the fish in the Red Sea—it still wouldn’t be enough!”

“Oh Moses, My friend. Have I been with you so long, and even you do not really know Me? Is My arm too short or My resources too limited?”

“No, Lord. I’m sorry. You are able. I do trust You. I will go and call the seventy elders.”

Early the next morning, when the elders had gathered around the tent of meeting after consecrating the people, Moses started to tell them what God had said, but before he could say a word, Logos Himself came down upon them from the fiery cloud, in tongues of fire on each elder’s head.

They began prophesying the Word of the YHWH, bold words of encouragement, worship, and praise, telling all the people that God would provide, and chastening them for their complaining. It was as if God was speaking through them, just like He always did through Moses. The gathering crowd was awed.

Hobab, Moses’ new advisor, came running up from the camp. “Moses! Two elders remained back in the camp. They are prophesying the awesome things God will do. They are saying that YHWH will send meat from heaven, enough to last them a whole month! They sound just like you do when you prophesy the Word of YHWH to us.”

Joshua was afraid that Moses’ authority was being undermined. “Moses, my lord. Shall we go stop them?”

Moses laughed. “No, my friends. Are you jealous for my sake? I am not anxious about YHWH leading His people through whomever He wishes. I would to God that all of YHWH’s people were prophets.

“Just think, if the Spirit of YHWH rested like that upon all of His people, there would be no more rebellion, no more disobedience, no more complaining, and no more whining about going back to the comforts of Egypt.”

“But that can’t really be the Spirit of YHWH! It’s silly to prophesy meat for everyone for a whole month!” Hobab hadn’t seen God’s miracles before, and couldn’t believe it.

Moses turned and smiled at him. “Yes, Hobab, there really will be meat for a month. The people cried for meat, and YHWH will give them meat. Be careful what you cry to God for. He just might give it to you. But it may not be what is best for you.”

The people were camped around a dry wadi that led up from the Red Sea. A cool wind came up from the water. By noon, the wind had brought low-flying quail spreading out across the camp. They flew about 3 feet off the ground, making them easy to catch. The people began madly killing them, trying to get as many as possible before the flock was gone. But it kept coming, on into the evening. Never has there been such a flock of quail.

The men worked themselves up into a frenzy, clubbing down flying quail. Even after dark, they continued their insane killing by the light of the moon. Great heaps of dead quail lay all over the ground. The next morning they were still at it, though any rational person could see they already had all they could safely handle. All day, the river of quail kept flying, as the crazed men kept swinging wildly. Finally their wives screamed at them, “Stop! Stop! Don’t you realize how much we have? We don’t have to get them all. YHWH can send them back later.”

The spell was broken, and the men calmed down to take care of their catch. The least among them had killed the equivalent of ten donkey loads. They all worked together to pluck them, clean them, skin them, salt them, and stretch them out to dry in the sun. But the sun set before they had them ready. There were just too many.

They worked all the next day to try to finish the huge cleaning job. They began to regret how many they’d killed. But that night, they would have a feast! I am sorry to report that their feast came with a high price. They had too much meat and had not been able to get it all preserved in time. Some of the meat began to spoil. The wise among them just buried the spoiled meat, trusting that YHWH would send more later. But sadly, there were many among them who did not trust YHWH, who were determined to not waste a single bird. Rather than let their wives bury the spoiled meat, they ate it at the party that night.

Logos was not happy at their continued lack of trust, even after He had sent them meat as He had promised. The celebration that night was marred by the agony of many stomach-aches. By morning, their grief-stricken widows were burying more than spoiled birds. Thousands of greedy men had died.

Hobab was shocked. “Moses, why did so many die? The meat was supposed to be a blessing!”

“How much did you gather, Hobab?”

“I got my share! But YHWH promised to provide meat for a month. I just got what we could preserve the next day. I knew He would send more later.”

“And that, my dear Hobab, is why I wanted you to come with us. You’re smart! And already you trust the Word of YHWH more than these people. They didn’t believe God’s promise and tried to get too much, so it spoiled on them.”

They called that place **Kibroth Hattaavah**, meaning the Graves of Greed. When the remaining meat had dried and the dead were buried, they packed up and moved on. And yes, that flock of foolish quail followed their camp for the rest of the month, just begging to be killed and eaten, thus shaming those who had gathered so much at the first.

They stopped just before they reached Ezion Geber, on the north tip of the Gulf of Aqaba. It was a prosperous city, guarding the major trade route from Arabia. Moses took Hobab and Joshua to negotiate passage with the **Edomites** (descendants of Esau) who lived there and at its twin city, Elath. They were terrified of the Israelites, having heard all about their miracle deliverance from Egypt. They sent out a delegation of elders and wise men from the two cities.

After the traditional bowing and diplomatic greetings, Moses got to the point. “We come in peace. We have meat, water, and fodder for our herds. We wish nothing from you but safe passage through your lands. We will not harm you, nor even touch you, for you are those whom YHWH our God loves and protects.”

The king of Ezion Geber bowed before Moses. “I have heard those words here before. Did you meet an Amalekite king named Salitis, with his lovely Queen Kharsi, who came through here a year ago?”

“Yes, YHWH sent them in peace from us.”

“They said exactly those same words. They were very gracious in keeping their promise. If you are as gracious as they, you are welcome as friends. We do not wish war.”

So it was. As the Israelites passed through, they traded with the Edomites, and both clans were the better because of their friendship. They passed on through Ezion Geber and Elath, and traveled up the road toward Kadesh. They found good pastureland and water at **Hazereth**, just south of Mount Paran. Logos let them camp there for a month. Moses kept them busy exercising and training for war, practicing what they had been taught by the Amalekites.

“YHWH has promised you a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey,” Moses told them. “But He has also warned you that you’ll have to fight for it! Its inhabitants are devoted to wickedness and must be destroyed from the land before you can dwell there in peace and safety.”

Some in the camp did not like the rigorous military training. Most notably Aaron and Arte. *After all, they were leaders in the camp. Elders. Why should they have to endure military maneuvers with the younger men? It wasn’t fair!* They complained about having to work so hard. *Moses doesn’t work so hard. He just stands around giving orders.*

Sometimes a second-hand offense is the worst kind. Miriam picked up on Arte’s offense. She was miffed at Moses anyway, because he had been so slow to accept her Egyptian husband as an Israelite and allow them to marry. She had never forgiven that snub from his ‘surrounding heathen nations’ comment. But she couldn’t complain about the military training, which was only for the men. So instead, she publicly complained to Moses about his wife, who was part Hittite and part Cushite through Abraham’s wife Keturah, mother of Midian.

“Moses, you refused to let us marry a foreigner until he swore an oath to YHWH and was circumcised and formally adopted into Israel. Yet you married this Midianite woman born of the heathen Hittites and Cushites! She was never adopted into Israel. She’s not an Israelite. She’s black! You’re not always right! Sometimes you screw up just like the rest of us! And after all, now that YHWH has spoken through the seventy elders, any one of them could lead Israel. Aaron could lead. My husband Arte could lead. Arte prophesied the Word of YHWH just as well as you! And I prophesied, too! We are all prophets! You should put it to a vote of the people before you order us around like this.” (Miriam actually used a lot more words than that. I’ve condensed her key points to spare my dear Readers.)

Moses was utterly appalled. His own sister! Wife of his dear friend Arte. He looked at Arte, who just covered his face with his hands, appalled as well. Moses looked at Joshua. He didn’t have a clue. Moses looked over at Aaron. He grimaced at Moses and shook his head, as if to say, “Don’t look at me. I didn’t put her up to it.”

But after thinking a bit, Aaron admitted. “I’m sorry, Moses. Perhaps our complaints about the toughness of your training upset Miriam. She heard us complaining and criticizing you. I apologize. Please forgive me. We are glad to submit to your leadership. Really. And I would never say anything disparaging about lovely, faithful Ziporah.”

Arte was quick to agree. “We should not have said what we said in the presence of our wives. Please forgive us.”

Moses was about to let it go, but Logos spoke out loud. “Moses! Aaron! Miriam! Come to the tent of meeting.” They did. The congregation, hearing the voice of Logos, crowded around the tent (which was now set up between the Levites and the tabernacle). They were curious. *How would Logos treat this challenge to Moses’ authority?*

When they were gathered, Logos descended in the fiery cloud at the entrance to the tent, and in a deep, resonant voice asked Aaron and Miriam to step forward.

They came to the edge of the cloud. The deep, rich voice continued, "When My prophet is among you, I reveal Myself to him in dreams and visions. That is not so with My servant Moses, who is most faithful in all My house. He alone, of all the people on the earth, sees My form. I speak clearly with him, face to face, not in riddles. Why were you not afraid to speak against My chosen?"

The cloud lifted, moving back over the top of the tent. Aaron and Miriam turned to go back to their families. Then Aaron gasped – Miriam was white with leprosy!

"O God! No!" he cried, and threw himself at Moses' feet. "Please, my lord, do not hold against us this sin! It was just foolishness and ignorance!" The crowd which had begun to gather when Miriam had first made her petulant speech, had gotten large. Now they were backing away.

Arte also fell at Moses' feet. "My wife!" he screamed. "Please, Moses! Let me take her punishment! I simply could not bear to lose her so soon. Please intercede with YHWH for us, for I know that YHWH hears your prayers."

Moses nodded and fled into the tent, crying out loud to Logos, "O YHWH my God, have mercy! Please heal her."

"For your sake, My beloved, I will heal her. But she has publicly dishonored you and Me. Such a public offense demands a public punishment. Send her outside the camp to bear her impurity for seven days. Bring food and water, but keep her in quarantine. After that I will heal her."

The camp remained in mourning for the seven days. There were no more complaints about Moses' leadership. On the seventh day when Moses, Aaron, and Arte went to get Miriam, the camp bowed in silent prayer until they returned. Sure enough, she was healed! They all rejoiced!

"Thank you, my lord!" Arte was ecstatic to get his wife back. "I shall never again question your leadership. From this day forth, I am totally submitted to YHWH and to you, Moses, as the one He has chosen."

The next day the cloud over the tabernacle lifted, and they all packed up and headed north. They crossed the Desert of Paran, which was still dry and parched from that fiery pass of Phaeton. Once again, Logos led them through the night with his cloud of fire lighting the way, so they could travel day and night until they reached Kadesh, on the southern border of the land of Canaan. Finally! The foothills of the rich lands of the Amorites lay before them.

Moses gave them a few days to recover. There was water in Kadesh, and some dry grass lands, but not much else. However, they could see before them vast lush grazing lands on the hills of Canaan. When they were settled in their camp, Moses called them all together. "YHWH has promised us this good land you see before you. All you who are men, put on your armor and prepare for battle, for YHWH has given us the land." He lifted up his hands over them and pronounced God's blessings upon them.

So that week they prepared for battle. Moses left a few guards to protect their families at Kadesh, then led his main force forty miles north to the wells of Beersheba. They took the area without a fight. The few shepherds and nomads who lived there fled in great fear. After refreshing themselves for a day, Moses prepared to continue north, simply clearing out the land of Canaanites as they went.

But Hobab came to him with a group of elders. "Sir? Is it really wise to just walk in and try to take over? Shouldn't we scout out the land first?" The elders all voiced their agreement. Clearly it had been their idea.

"Okay," Moses responded (without praying about it first). "That sounds good to me. I'll pick a strong young man from each tribe, a leader in his tribe, to go for us." He picked Shammua of Reuben, Shaphat of Simeon, Caleb of Judah, Igal of Issachar, Joshua of Ephraim (his first field commander), Palti of Benjamin, Gaddiel of Zebulun, Gaddi of Manasseh, Ammiel of Dan, Sethru of Asher, Nahbi of Naphtali, and Geuel of Gad. He told them, "Go up through the land. See if it is a good and fertile land. Are the Canaanites strong or weak, few or many? Do they have swords? Iron armor? Are their towns walled or fortified? Are there trees? Try to get some of the fruit of the land." Then as an afterthought, Moses added. "Uh... guys! Wait. Let's first ask God about this before you go."

Logos responded immediately to his prayer, but Moses heard no laughter or chuckles this time. "Yes," He said sadly. "Send some men to scout out the land. Pick one from each tribe, young leaders, and send them out."

"Uh, Lord? I have already picked the men."

"Yes Moses. I know." Logos seemed very sad.

"But Logos, would You rather I not send them?"

"I would rather you had asked Me first. You are now committed. I cannot reverse time any more than you can. Pray that they come back with a good report."

Moses remembered Logos' command when they had left Mt. Sinai. He had just said to go and possess the land. Suddenly he realized his choosing men to scout out the land was a lack of trust. "I'm sorry, Logos. I do trust You. But the men were just trying to be on the safe side."

"I know. That's good human logic. I don't criticize you. Nothing is wrong with human logic, unless it substitutes for obedience and faith. But perhaps all these lessons have had their effect. Perhaps they will trust Me, even after they receive the scout's report. Intercede for them."

"Yes, Lord."

So Moses sent out the scouts, with instructions to meet them back at Kadesh in forty days. The rest of the army returned to their families. Moses obediently went into the tent of meeting to pray for the spies. He prayed the rest of that day and all the next, with no response from Logos.

But the next morning, when he returned to the tent of meeting to pray, Logos was there. “You are praying the wrong prayer, My friend,” He said softly. “At this point, it is useless to ask Me to do anything, as I have already done all that can be done. Intercede for them. Put yourself in the gap between them and My adversary, the devil. The land they have entered belongs to him and his demons. He would capture their minds and hearts, to cause them to lose faith in Me. Intercede, that their faith remain strong and their hearts and minds pure. You are their covering, Moses. Cover them now. They desperately need it.”

“Yes, Lord!” Moses remained on his face, trying to figure out how he could be their covering here in the camp, when they were away in the land of Canaan.

“Moses, My friend. It is a spiritual battle. My realm is a vast and many-splendored place, but the contact point for the entire realm is right here, in your own heart and mind. Send your spirit with the scouts, to be their covering day and night. Pray, and My angels will assist you, for they are empowered by your prayers. My Spirit will guide you in your intercession, for I too am interceding for them. But My adversary is looking for any opportunity to destroy My people. He will try to use all the sights and sounds of Canaan and its lusts to cloud their minds and deceive their hearts. If they lose their faith in Me, and put their focus on the land and its people, then all is lost! They will forget the lessons I have given them and all the great things I have done for them. Thus they will lose their trust in Me.”

“No, Lord! They will never forget. How could they possibly forget?! I shall cover them. I shall intercede.”

At the appointed time, the scouts returned to Kadesh with a glowing report. “The land is indeed a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey. It is well-watered and fertile. The fruits and vegetables are huge and plentiful.” Pointing to the abundant produce they had brought back, Joshua waxed enthusiastic. After his speech, he turned to Moses. “You were praying for us, weren’t you? I could feel it. Many times, whenever I was nearly overwhelmed by the awful wickedness of the land and the great strength of its people, I could always hear you saying, ‘But YHWH is far greater than these!’ Thank you for your prayers.”

Ammiel added his perspective. “Yes, Joshua is correct. The people living there are terribly strong, and their cities huge and well-fortified. It was overwhelming to me, too.”

Igal interrupted. “And the **Anakim** live there!”

Palti, his eyes wide with fear, added, “Among the fierce Jebusite warriors we saw the sons of Anak, south of Jebus in the Valley of the Rephaim. They are giants! Our biggest, strongest soldiers would not equal the smallest of them. We looked like grasshoppers in their sight! Their fortified city at Kiriath-Arba [Hebron] is only twenty-five miles north of Beersheba. We could never overcome it, not in a million years. We must stay away from there at all costs!”

Gaddi spoke up. “The Hittites live in the north along the coast. They are an exceedingly large and powerful kingdom that would be impossible for us to ever dislodge. The Amorites are spread all across the land, even east of the Jordan River; again, they are a mighty race, warriors all, and a very great kingdom. They rule from the ancient royal cities of **Lachish** and Hebron (the city the Anakim call Kiriath-Arba). Both cities are absolutely impregnable. It would be unthinkable that we should ever attack them. Just to the north are the Jebusites, with their capital city Jebus-Salem. It is well-fortified and would require a siege of many years to take. Down toward the Jordan is another strong Jebusite city, **Jericho**, which is even better fortified and may prove impossible to take, ever. The Jebusites are exceedingly strong warriors. They have alliances with the Amorites and with the giant Anakim, and would call for their aid if we attacked them. Then east of the sea of the Jordan live the Moabites and Ammonites. They were conquered by the Amorites and are under their protection. If we fought them, the Amorites would come to their aid.”

Sethru added, “The **Casluhim** [Philistines] live on the coast south of the Hittites. Among them are more giants, descendants of the **Nephilim**! Their cities Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod looked utterly impregnable! I don’t think...”

Nahbi interrupted him, “Guess who now controls the Negev north and west of us, including the mighty cities of the Casluhim? It is the Amalekites, from Egypt! We heard that Salitis sent his younger brother Yakubher up there to conquer the wicked Canaanites. The Canaanite cities just north of us are weak, but we would not want to attack even them! Why, if we did, Salitis would come up with the entire Amalekite army to really wipe us out!”

And so it went, with each of the scouts outdoing the last in describing the impossibility of the task before them. Many in the camp began to cry and complain to each other. Finally Caleb shouted for silence. “Why are you shrinking back in fear? Don’t you remember when the Amalekites attacked us at Rephidim? They were the best warriors in the world, far stronger and far more skilled in battle than we, yet when we looked to YHWH, we defeated them. They became our servants and helped to train us. So now we are even better warriors. With the help of YHWH, there is no army in the world that can defeat us! Let us go up immediately and take the land, for we can certainly do it!”

Joshua stood with Caleb, adding, “YHWH promised us this land! Don’t you remember all the mighty miracles He performed getting us out of Egypt and bringing us here? He will surely keep His promise to give us this good land, flowing with milk and honey. Take courage; trust YHWH. He is our God! He has already won the victory!”

But the sun had set, and the people were making use of the darkness to sneak off to their tents for the night. They had already made up their minds, and didn’t even want to hear the bold words of Caleb and Joshua.

There was weeping and wailing in the camp that night. The people grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying such things as, “If only we had died in Egypt, or in this desert. Why are you bringing us to this land only to fall by the sword? Our wives will be ravished and our children taken as plunder. You are no longer fit to be our leaders. We must choose a new leader and return to Egypt.”

Moses and Aaron heard their complaints. At dawn they fell down before Logos at the door of the tent of meeting. Caleb and Joshua tore their clothes in consternation. They called the assembly together again. Caleb shouted out, “The land before us is an exceedingly good land. It is our destiny, for so YHWH promised. If He is pleased with us He will surely give it to us! Only do not rebel against Him!”

Joshua was right beside him. “Do not fear the people of the land. We’ll swallow them up! Their protection is gone because of their wickedness, but we have the protection of YHWH, the Almighty! With Him, we cannot be defeated!”

But then the other ten scouts shouted him down. They began yelling for people to stone Caleb and Joshua, and Moses and Aaron too, so they could choose someone else to lead them back to Egypt. The congregation took up the shout, and those in front picked up stones. But just as the first stone was hurled, the glory of Logos appeared in fiery splendor at the door of the tent of meeting. Before anyone could react, the flame blazed hot and flared out at the ten rebel spies, burning them to ashes. Only Caleb and Joshua stood untouched. Joshua was suddenly aware of the date. It was the 9th of Av, the date Moses had cursed at Mt. Sinai!

The people shrank back in fear, but Joshua and Caleb just bowed down to YHWH beside Moses and Aaron. Again, Joshua was awed to hear Moses arguing with Logos about the Israelites. Logos wanted to destroy them all, and make a new nation from Moses. But Moses wouldn’t hear of it. He kept reminding Logos of His infinite love and patience, His great grace, mercy, and forgiveness, and His faithfulness to keep His promises. Moses appealed to the holiness of His great name, insisting that His reputation among the heathen was at stake. All the things Joshua had heard on the mountaintop after the Israelites had bowed to the golden bull, Moses repeated, with even more pleas besides. “Now, in accordance with Your great love, I plead with You to forgive the sin of this people, just as You have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now.”

To Joshua’s amazement, Logos bought it. “Okay Moses, I forgive them at your request. But as surely as I live, as surely as My glory fills the earth, not one who treated Me with such contempt shall ever enter the land I promised their forefathers! Every man who saw My glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert, yet still disobeyed Me, rebelled against me, and tested My patience these ten times – every man twenty years old and older who has grumbled against Me and refused to trust Me this day – your bodies will fall in the wilderness.

“As for your children whom you feared would be taken in plunder – they shall enjoy the good land which you have rejected. For forty years they shall be your shepherds in the desert, a year for each day the rebel spies explored the land, until the last of your bodies lies lifeless in the desert.

“Only Caleb and Joshua have a different spirit in them. They please Me greatly. They have chosen to trust Me and believe My Word. When your children arise to enter the land, they too shall enter in and take possession of it.

“Behold now, the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell before you in the hill country. Do not try to engage them in battle, for I will not go up with you. I will not protect you. Turn back toward the Red Sea tomorrow morning.”

So it was a sad Moses and Aaron who stood before the people to report what Logos had said. The congregation, shaken to the core by the sight of the ten scouts being slain in front of them, listened in silence. They had a gloomy night. There was bitter weeping throughout the camp. But at dawn they awoke with new resolve. Their leaders came to Moses. “We have repented, sir. We will trust YHWH. We are right now organizing for battle. We will go up and take possession of the good land that YHWH promised us. We swear, sir, that there will be no more complaining or fearfulness. Never again. Thank God for His forgiveness!”

Moses raised an eyebrow. “God has indeed forgiven you. And I will be grateful to hear no more complaining or fearfulness. That, I am looking forward to see! Now, there is just this little matter of obedience. You cannot succeed in taking possession of the land, when YHWH has told us to turn back toward the Red Sea this morning. So tell all your people to take off their battle gear and prepare for travel, as YHWH has commanded us. We shall head out before noon from Kadesh, south toward the Red Sea.”

“No, but YHWH has heard our repentance, and He will surely give us the land. We are prepared for battle.”

“YHWH heard your repentance and will forgive and care for you as you learn to simply obey Him. Do not go out to battle! You will be struck down before your enemies, for YHWH will surely not go with you! He told me so!”

Alas, their stubborn resolve knew no bound. All Moses’ arguments fell on deaf ears. The armed men left the camp at noon, chanting victory songs. Led by Hegel (a warrior chief from the tribe of Dan), they marched to Beersheba.

Moses returned to the tent of meeting and fell on his face before Logos. He was there all day and all night. But the next morning, Logos spoke to him. “Get up, Moses. Take Aaron, Hobab, and some aides and go to Beersheba. Your people have disobeyed Me again, and are in trouble.”

Indeed they were, though they didn’t know it yet. They had, as before, taken Beersheba without a fight. They were headed northeast along the route the scouts had taken, expecting to just march in and conquer Canaan.

The Canaanite armies were gathering on a ridge of the hills above them. Nearly a half-million Israelite warriors marched toward them, confident of victory. Canaanite city-states were weak, with small armies. Israel would surely overwhelm them. They could not have had time to call for reinforcements from their Amalekite overlords.

Hegel took three of his commanders and rode up the hill toward them. Their enemy likewise sent four men down to meet them just below the ridge. "We are followers of YHWH, King of the Universe!" Hegel shouted as they came near. "We destroyed the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. We defeated the Amalekites at Rephidim. Surrender now, or fall by the sword, for you cannot defeat us!"

Their enemies held their peace. They drew near and halted their horses. Hegel was shocked to see Yakubher himself! He rode beside a giant Philistine general named Gath, a Canaanite warrior king named Cain, and an aide. "Where is Moses, your leader?" Yakubher asked softly.

"Moses is in the camp, kneeling in the tent of meeting, praying with YHWH for us to gain the victory."

"No, he is not. For Moses is a man of God, and God would not allow him to pray for victory."

"Oh! Moses does not pray for victory against you, Yakubher. We have no dispute with you. Only with these wicked Canaanites that God told us to destroy."

Cain, king of Arad, grimaced and shifted on his horse, but held his peace. Yakubher responded, "God did not tell you to destroy them, for YHWH Himself has just put them under my protection. If you fight against them, then you shall be fighting against YHWH, and against me."

"You can't protect them. You don't have an army here. Our spies would have seen them, and reported it."

"You are wrong, my friend. I have a rather large army here, which I recently used to subdue all the Canaanites." Gath and Cain nodded wryly. "YHWH gave them to me because, as you so bluntly put it, they are wicked. My army is just over the ridge. Do you wish to come up and see?"

At this point Hegel had a choice. YHWH had spoken through Yakubher, and he knew it. He should have backed down, or at least ridden up beside Yakubher to see the extent of the armies beyond the ridge. Then he could have apologized and retreated, and all would have been well.

Sadly, Satan was screaming blood lust in Hegel's ear. Because of his rebellion he had lost the covering of YHWH as well as the intercession of Moses. He reacted in anger. "You are a liar and a heathen! YHWH gave us this land! He does not speak to you! The dogs shall lick your blood from the dirt before this day is through!"

He wheeled his horse about and gave a shrill battle cry. The Israelite army surged forward, picking up the cry and raising their Egyptian swords and spears over their heads.

Cain nodded to his aide, who sounded the call to battle. Yakubher shook his head and called after Hegel, "You are a fool! When will you learn to listen to the voice of YHWH?" But Hegel was not paying any attention.

Gath, who was a towering giant of a Philistine, turned to Yakubher. "May I?" he asked.

"Yes. Go ahead. He's a dead man anyway."

Gath dismounted and picked up some smooth stones from the ground. Selecting one, he put it into his sling. Unhurriedly, he stood and began to swing it around his head. Hegel was now coming back up the slope with his army, sword held high, inspiring them on. Gath focused intently on him, letting the stone fly at just the right moment. It hit Hegel in the middle of the forehead, killing him instantly. Cain and their aide clapped vigorously at Gath's skill, but Yakubher just put his head in his hands.

When their leader went down, the Israelites faltered. Then they beheld the awesome sight of the combined Canaanite, Philistine, and Amalekite armies streaming over the top of the ridge toward them. The victory charge turned quickly into a rout, as fear seized them. They fled down the hill, past Beersheba and down the road toward the Red Sea. The Philistines and Canaanites chased them all the way to the border of their land in the Negev.

Finally leaving the defeated army to lick their wounds, the Philistines and Canaanites rejoined the Amalekites at Beersheba. Moses, Aaron, and Hobab had just arrived and were busy setting up a tent and preparing food. Yakubher and his Canaanite generals rode over and dismounted.

"Moses, my friend!" Yakubher began. "Talk to us! Why did you send your army out against us?"

"Not so! I did not send my army out, nor did YHWH. They are a stiff-necked and rebellious people. They went up to fight contrary to YHWH's command, and mine. Come, accept my hospitality. We can talk about it."

While the victorious armies tended their horses, Moses and the three commanders broke bread together in his tent. Ziporah had also come, to serve them. Moses learned from Yakubher of the victories of Salitis and Kharsi, how they had taken Egypt without having to draw a sword, and how Yakubher had then conquered the Philistines along the coastlands and all the Canaanites and Amorites who had previously ruled the hill country, all the way up to the Hittites in the north. Yakubher now had peace treaties with them all, including the Anakim and the Jebusites.

Knowing the ways of God, Moses understood. "YHWH knew we would lose faith and rebel against Him. But in His eyes the wickedness of the Canaanites had already reached its full. So He sent you to subdue them instead of us." He looked at Cain and Gath. "You will learn that wickedness and idolatry always results in judgment. If you care about your people, put them under YHWH and His Law."

Looking back to Yakubher, Moses shook his head grimly. “Guard yourself from their immorality, Yakubher my friend. I swear, if you rule in righteousness as YHWH commissioned you, you will rule forever. But if you allow yourself to fall to their temptations and bow to their idols, we will be back in forty years to drive you out!”

Yakubher laughed. *He had seen YHWH's power. He had experienced it first hand! He would not fall to the worthless Canaanite gods. Or so he swore.*

Gath did not laugh. Though he had heard the stories, he had not seen any miracles of YHWH. He crossed his arms over his great chest and muttered, “My gods have well cared for us. Need I remind you of whose stone it was that slew your commander? Even the Amalekites’ victory over us has been only good for us, as you can see. They treat us fairly – much more fairly than the Amorites they subdued! And their army protected us from you.”

Moses stood to place his arm on the seated giant’s shoulder, looking him in the eye. “You defeated my army only because they had rebelled against YHWH,” he said. “Hegel, their commander, led the rebellion, and thus was the first to die. But I swear to you that if you do not repent of your immorality and idolatry, a day will come when the least of the men of Israel, even a young shepherd boy, shall slay your mightiest hero. Then you shall know there is a God in Israel who governs over the affairs of men.”

The next day the armies of the Philistines and the Canaanites returned to their own lands, with a signed forty year peace covenant from Moses. As he left, Yakubher swore he would teach the Canaanites about YHWH, and enforce the worship and laws of YHWH over the them. He promised that when Israel returned in forty years they’d be welcomed back to renew the treaty in YHWH’s name.

Watching the encounter, Satan saw Yakubher’s pride. He knew how to defeat him. The nations he had conquered treated him like a god. They praised him for delivering them from both the Amorites and the Israelites. They praised his tolerance of their customs and their gods. Of course that went to his head. Within a year he proclaimed himself a god-Pharaoh, using Egyptian gods as ‘useful fictions’ to control the land. Thus began the 16th Dynasty.

King Cain plotted to defeat and plunder these foolish Israelite nomads and their ‘weak’ God. He sent a sentinel to look out over the ridge each day, watching for their return. *Sure, he had signed that forty year peace treaty. But he never entertained the slightest intention of keeping it.*

The Israelites retired back to Kadesh to heal up and bury their dead. They remained there through the month of Tishri. Their celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles was subdued, as they were reminded that by this time they might have – should have! – already taken possession of the land. Finally they headed south, toward the Red Sea, again crossing the Desert of Paran.

The next forty years was a depressing and discouraging time in the history of Israel. They lived like desert rats, until the adult men among them all died and were buried in the sand. There is not much to tell about this time. They went from campsite to campsite, staying away from the Edomites in the east, Salitis and the Egyptians on the west, the Midianites in the south, and the Philistines, Amorites, and Canaanites on the north. They named their campsites, merely out of pure boredom; none can be identified today.

Though the manna continued each day, they ran short of nearly everything else, especially water and tempers. Listening to all the people’s complaints, poor Moses was constantly on edge. For many years he bore it patiently, but it was to have some serious repercussions later, as we shall see. For now, Moses just sadly focused on getting through the forty years. He also was terribly disappointed at reaching the Promised Land only to be turned back.

There was one major event during that time. It started very small. One Sabbath morning in the fifth year after the Exodus, some elders caught a man gathering wood for cooking. They brought him to Moses to find out what his punishment should be for working on the Sabbath.

Moses questioned him. “Did you hear the law? Do you know that gathering wood on the Sabbath is forbidden?”

“Of course. Who cares? We’re all dead anyway.”

Moses brought the matter to Logos. He had no chuckles this time. “The man shall surely be put to death. Take him outside the camp and stone him. If he had unintentionally sinned, I would forgive him with just a sin offering. But the one who sins defiantly, whether native or adopted alien, that one is blaspheming My holy name. He shall be cut off from his people, because he despised My Word.”

So that is what they did. Great fear fell upon the camp that day, as everyone realized that Moses was really serious about enforcing YHWH’s Law.

But some in the camp took offense at Moses and Aaron. **Korah**, son of Kohath ben Levi, spread sedition among many of the leaders in Israel. Over the next few weeks, he had 250 men listening to his rebellious talk. With **Dathan** and **Abiram** (Reubenite leaders) standing on either side of him, he convinced them that Moses and Aaron had taken too much authority in their own hands, and needed to be challenged. *Why, if Korah were in charge, no one would be executed for simply gathering sticks on the Sabbath. That was excessive and cruel! Korah would be more fair.*

So with his followers in tow, Korah stood up before Moses and Aaron at the tent of meeting. “This time, you’ve gone too far! You’ve become too rigid, too strict. You can’t make us holy by stoning everyone who breaks your laws! We are already holy. Every one of us. And YHWH is in our midst. So why do you exalt yourself above us?”

Moses cried out, as if in agony, and fell on his face before the door to the tent of meeting. He was there a long time, while the glory cloud hovered over his head. Finally he stood back up. "Tomorrow morning YHWH will show you who is His, who is holy, and whom he desires to come near to Himself. Sanctify yourselves this night. Tomorrow morning, take your incense censers, every one of you. And Aaron also shall take his censer. Then YHWH will choose from among you whom He wants to stand before the sons of Israel as His high priest."

The next morning the 250 leaders in Israel came, led by Korah himself, each with an incense censer ready to make sacrifice at the altar in front of the tabernacle. But Dathan and Abiram had stayed home. Moses summoned them again, but still they refused to come. Instead, they sent a curt message, "Is it not enough that you brought us out of a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, but now will you lord it over us as well? Though you gouge out our eyes, we will not come up."

Moses, frankly, was having difficulty holding back his temper. His eyes flashed fire as he said, "Light the incense in your censers, each one of you, and enter the tabernacle to offer it as a sweet-smelling offering before YHWH. For you are all priests, holy before YHWH, all chosen by Him!" Dripping sarcasm, his voice betrayed his emotion.

They obeyed, and all crowded around the door of the tabernacle. Aaron brought his censer and came with them. But as the first of them stepped up to the veil, the cloud over the tabernacle burst into flames, consuming them instantly before the door. The stench of burnt flesh wafted through the camp. The assembly drew back in horror.

Wait, one was still standing, a burning censer in his hand. It was Aaron. He was in the middle of the group, yet untouched by the flames. He hesitated, horrified at what had just happened. Then, remembering his mission, he stepped through the veil to offer the incense to YHWH.

While Aaron was still in the tabernacle, Logos spoke to Moses. He sounded like an old man who was sad and tired. "I accept the incense from the censer of Aaron, My chosen. As for these other men, I do not know them. Send Aaron's son Eleazar to gather up their censers, for they are holy. But have him dump the smoldering incense into the mud, for I do not accept their offerings. Aaron's other sons shall bury the dead and cleanse the ground.

"Tell Eleazar to beat the holy censers into hammered sheets to plate the altar. Thus they shall be a constant reminder to the sons of Israel that no one except the descendants of Aaron My chosen may come near to burn incense before Me.

"Now, Moses, there is this matter of those rebels, Dathan and Abiram. They will not come to you, so you must go to them. Tell all their relatives and neighbors to flee from them, for I must destroy them also."

Moses obeyed. Dathan and Abiram came out of their tents, to stand sneering defiantly in their doorways. Seeing them so unrepentant, Moses got angry. "Everyone, stand well away from them! If these men die the death of all men, then you will know that YHWH has not sent me. But if YHWH brings about an entirely new thing, and the earth opens up and swallows them whole, so that they descend alive into the abode of the dead with all they own, then you will understand that they are rebels against YHWH."

Many believed Moses and fled. Then there was a sharp earthquake and the ground under the tents of Dathan and Abiram opened up. They and all their possessions fell into the abyss, including their friends and family members who had chosen to remain with them. Fire flared briefly from the hole, then the earth closed slowly over them to silence their screams. After a loud belch of smoke and one more sleepy shudder, the earth was still.

Strangely, Moses was reminded of an evil giant, licking his chops after a feast. Briefly, the eyes of his spirit were opened. He saw Satan and his demons, gorging themselves on the flesh and drinking the blood of the rebels. "They are his rightful prey," came to mind. It was Logos' voice.

He walked sadly back to his tent, discouraged to find that Satan had a prey within the camp. But it was to get worse. The next morning, thousands had gathered before the tent of meeting, complaining bitterly. They were upset over the deaths of so many good elders and leaders of Israel the day before. And they were blaming Moses and Aaron.

Logos descended in the cloud over the door, and spoke to Moses. He sounded more angry than Moses had ever heard. "Moses! Aaron! Move away from this congregation, that I may consume them instantly!"

Moses fell on his face before Him. Aaron saw and joined him in front of the door of the tabernacle. Moses began to plead for mercy for YHWH's people as he had twice before. But as Aaron knelt beside him, the fire of YHWH flamed out just above their bowed heads, killing the nearest of the gathered crowd. As soon as he went down, the fire spread to the one behind him. It was like falling dominoes.

Moses quickly stood and lifted his hands up to Logos. As he had figured, the fire of YHWH stopped when he raised his hands into the flame. But when he looked behind, he saw to his horror that a circle of deaths slowly continued to spread out from the tabernacle, even though the flame had ceased. "Quickly, Aaron. Take your censer and get coals from the altar. Lay holy incense on the coals. Then run out to the congregation to make atonement for them, for a plague from YHWH has begun!"

While Moses continued standing in the door with his hands raised, Aaron scurried to obey. As he ran around the edge of the circle of deaths, he held the censer high. "This far, and no farther!" he shouted. Then he blinked, open mouthed. It had worked. The deaths stopped at his feet.

Aaron walked between the dead and the living. Those still alive were looking at him in fear and awe. He smiled, rather pleased with himself. His simple obedience had saved the entire nation! Just obedience! It was so easy! Finally he returned to kneel beside Moses, who was still standing with arms raised at the door of the tabernacle.

Logos was furious. "How dare you block Me from what I must do? This is a wicked, rebellious people. They always resist My authority, complain about My gifts, and disobey My Law. They are ungrateful, quick to forget My wonders on their behalf, and slow to do the simple things I require. Their pride has made them gods unto themselves. They must be destroyed! How dare you stop Me?"

Now, Aaron usually didn't hear when God talked to Moses, or if he did hear, it was in the sound of thunder, or a sound of rushing waters, which he could not understand. But this time he heard, and understood! He was shocked! He thought that what He and Moses had done was a good thing! Anger usually begets anger, and the wrath of God stirred something in him, a boldness, a deep indignation.

"YHWH, we meant no disrespect, but we dared to stop You because what You were doing was wrong! You are a righteous God! What You were doing was a violation of Your own nature! I know You must punish the wicked, but far be it from You to slay the righteous, the innocent, with the wicked. Those gathered right around the tabernacle were faithless rebels. Perhaps they deserved to be slain. But many within the camp have not complained – those who still trust You and are grateful for Your provision. Like me! Would You slay the righteous with the wicked? If so, then slay me first, for I am no more worthy than they to receive life and strength from Your hand!" Aaron had been kneeling; now he stood up, stepped right up to the veil in front of Moses, and raised his arms into the cloud.

The cloud descended, and Moses feared that its flame would indeed consume Aaron. Moses had never heard Aaron talk back to God before. Ever.

Finally the cloud lifted. Aaron was still standing there, arms raised in worship. Moses was startled to hear the familiar chuckle from Logos. "Aaron, My beloved friend!" He paused to laugh a hearty, welcoming laugh.

"You have correctly discerned My true nature. I am pleased at you; more pleased than I can say. Now I have two upon the face of the earth who are willing to stand in the gap, even at the risk of your own lives, between Me and My adversary, between My great love and My holy wrath at sin, between My mercy and the justice My Law demands. Now I have two sons I can talk with, face to face!

"Moses, I shall honor Aaron greatly for this, from now on forever. Tell the leaders of Israel to get a dry stick from the head of each tribe, twelve sticks in all. Write the name of the tribe on each stick. But write Aaron's name on the stick for the tribe of Levi, that I may publicly honor him."

When Moses stood to look, the congregation was still cowering, terrified of the plague. "Fear not! The plague is past," Moses shouted out. "Aaron has made atonement for you, that your lives be spared. Now, come bury your dead. And from this day forth let there be no complaining against YHWH or rebellion against those He has chosen."

Moses gave them a month to mourn their dead and choose new leaders from among them. Then he called the leaders together. "The leaders and elders who preceded you are all dead. They died because they rebelled against the ones God has chosen as His representatives. You also shall likewise die, if you also rebel. So go out now, find a dry dead stick, one for each tribe. Put the name of your tribe on your stick and bring it back to me by nightfall. Aaron also will bring me a dead stick for the tribe of Levi, with his own name on it. Then YHWH our God will make it absolutely clear whom He has chosen."

They did. Moses took the thirteen dead sticks and put them inside the most holy place, leaning up against the Ark of the Covenant. The next day, he returned to get the sticks, and found to his delight, that even in that dark place, one of the rods had sprouted! He brought all the rods out, and passed them out to the people according to the names on each rod. Every rod he passed out was still dead and dry. Lastly he took the rod with Aaron's name and held it out to him. It had leaves and buds on it!

There were some grumbles. "There is no way it could have sprouted like that overnight." "Somebody switched rods!" "Maybe Aaron picked a live stick."

Aaron held his rod high, so everyone could see. As they watched, the buds opened into blossoms, then full flower. The people crowded around. The petals began dropping off, and there, right before their eyes, almonds appeared. The crowd gaped in wonder. A few reached out. As they touched the almonds, they found them ripe for harvest.

"It is a miracle!" Awe swept through the crowd. "Indeed, YHWH has chosen Moses and Aaron!"

"Promise me now that you will never complain or rebel against Him again," Moses called.

"We promise! We all promise!" Moses heard.

Moses expected them to return to their tents, but there seemed to be a controversy among them. Moses waited. Finally Arte, the old Egyptian wizard, stepped forward. He looked like he bore a thousand griefs upon his head.

"Moses. Aaron. We will never complain again. But, well, the elders have appointed me to bring before you... ahh. They asked me to plead with you. They are afraid to be chosen as leaders among their people. All the previous leaders have been slain! We are all dying! Everyone who has any part in leadership, everyone who comes before you, everyone who even comes near the tent of meeting... they've all been slain! Are we to perish completely?"

Moses opened his mouth to answer, but Aaron put his arm around Arte and beat him to it. "We will ask YHWH for you, Arte. He will provide for you. I'm sure He doesn't hold any grudges against being a leader around here."

Moses asked. Logos answered as usual in a voice like thunder which none but Moses ever understood. Except this time Moses just stood there with a blank look on his face. Aaron suddenly realized that he, alone among the crowd, had understood Logos. "YHWH said that I and my sons would bear any guilt for the congregation, and would make atonement for it in the tabernacle." Aaron paused.

"Uh... YHWH wants me to be your high priest. He said the sons of Kohath will assist me in the priesthood. The rest of the sons of Levi will also help with the tabernacle, but will not be priests. So none of your leaders will have to come before YHWH, not anymore. You won't have to face Him yourselves. We will stand between you and YHWH."

The people all clapped their hands in acceptance and gratefulness. Thus Logos greatly honored Aaron that day, and confirmed him as head of the **Aaronic Priesthood**.

Finally, as the group was ready to leave, satisfied with Aaron's answer, Moses offered them a little concluding wisdom. "I was not chosen to lead you from Egypt because I wanted to. Likewise, do not choose leaders from among yourselves according to your own desires. Instead, find the ones among you whom God has chosen. Though sad, this is a good thing that happened to us. Now, those who want to lead in their own pride or ambition will be afraid! Only those who really know God's calling on their life will humbly volunteer to be chosen as your leaders."

Campsite after barren campsite, the dreary years went by. They remained until the surrounding grass was eaten up and the wells were running dry, then moved on. It was a tough life. The older ones, with no hope left for anything better, died off rapidly. But there was less complaining, and those chosen as the people's leaders did a better job of submitting to Moses and Aaron, and YHWH.

A new generation grew up. **Othniel** was born of Kenaz in 1440 BC. In 1432 old King Salitis retired to give Bnon the throne in Avaris. In 1429 **Achсах** was born of Caleb at the age of 60. In 1428 at Thebes in upper Egypt, Rahotep retired and his son **Sobekemsaf** ruled for 15 years. Then his vizier **Djehuti** assassinated him, married his daughter, and stole the throne. Djehuti was a real megalomaniac! We'll meet him at Hazor with King Jabin fighting Joshua.

In the first month of 1411 BC (the fortieth year after the Exodus) the Hebrews headed back up towards Canaan, again camping at Kadesh just as they had 38 years before. When they were settled, Moses sent a delegation of elders from each tribe north beyond Beersheba, to find out if Yakubher had kept his promise. (He had promised to teach the Canaanites to worship YHWH and enforce His laws, so they would welcome Israel in forty years.)

Alas, Yakubher and his son Anat-Har had fallen away from the faith, and had forgotten their vow to convert the Canaanites. The elders discovered that the Canaanites were even more wicked than before.

But old Cain, king of Arad, had not forgotten his grudge against the Hebrews. Though he was old and feeble, his hatred was still strong. His lookouts still kept a watch over the ridge. They saw the Hebrew delegation coming and alerted him. Cain sent his son (also named Cain), and his army. They quickly captured the delegation of elders and took them hostage. Then old Cain sent a message by the hand of his son and a few of his chief warriors.

Prince Cain and his aides approached the camp. A little distance away, they halted their horses and sat waiting. Moses, Aaron, and Hobab walked out to meet them.

Prince Cain wasted no time. "I am Cain of Arad. We took your spies captive. If you and this company head back the way you came, we'll release them. If you take so much as a step farther north, we shall kill them, then attack you and your worthless army. We shall crush you as before, only this time we will not stop. We shall pursue you until there is not a man left standing, then plunder your camp."

"Prince Cain," Moses bowed in the customary greeting. "We negotiated a forty year peace treaty with your father. We are yet in the 38th year since that time. I sent no spies. There was not a warrior among them. I sent elders from each of our tribes, to see if you remembered YHWH our God and wished to extend our peace treaty in His name."

Cain sneered. "The way I heard the story, your God was unable to deliver you from our hand. YHWH is a weak and worthless God. I spit on Him. The only peace treaty we make is on the edge of a sword."

Moses now had all the information he needed. "Okay, Prince Cain. Release to us our elders, and we will turn and leave your country this very day."

Cain wheeled his horse around and rode off, shouting over his shoulder, "I will release them after you are all gone from here. Not one moment before!"

Returning to camp with a heavy heart, Moses called the people to prayer. That night they all came together to cry out to YHWH. Moses prayed, "O YHWH our Elohim! These people have broken our peace treaty and cursed Your holy name! What would You have us do about it?"

There was a time of waiting on YHWH for His leading. The whole congregation was in prayer, bowed before the cloud above the tabernacle. The elders who were captured were their finest leaders. They were among the very few left of those who had passed through the Red Sea with Moses. They were now in their 70s or older. For 38 years they had not complained, nor rebelled against Moses at the time of Korah, so God had preserved them. They were all dearly loved. The congregation wept as they prayed.

Miriam, prophetess and elder sister to Moses, came to him asking for permission to speak. She was now 129 years old, and was respected as a leader of the women in the camp nearly as much as Moses was respected as leader of the men. Moses gave her a nod, so she spoke out, "Hear me, people of Israel. I have lived a long and good life, especially these last 38 years with Arte. We've both grown close to YHWH and are eagerly awaiting the day that we shall see Him face to face. I hear YHWH calling me, and I believe this is my day. According to the Word of YHWH you cannot enter into the Promised Land until my entire generation has passed away. God is telling me now that, no matter what we do, the wicked Canaanites will kill all our elders anyway. That gives us legal occasion against them! God calls their land **Hormah**, 'devoted to destruction'! He says to utterly destroy them and burn their cities."

The people began to murmur. They did not want to hear about the deaths of their beloved leaders. Miriam paused, her head bowed, then continued. "My husband Arte is with them. He is a good and godly man. I know you all loved him nearly as much as I. But I know that he is now a dead man. YHWH has assured me that I shall see him no more in this life. If I do not follow him to Sheol this day, then you will know that God has not spoken through me." She knelt, sobbing, her heart broken.

Moses rose to speak, but as he did, Miriam collapsed. Loving hands eagerly came to her aid, carrying her to a tent, ministering to her. But it was to no avail. She died within the hour.

After her sons had taken her body, Moses again stood before the group. "YHWH has spoken through my sister. Let us make a vow. O YHWH our Elohim! We commit Arte, Miriam, and all these our beloved elders into Your hands. Receive them into Your presence this day. Grant us the courage to minister Your holy vengeance for their deaths. Remember, O Lord, that we have only acted in good faith with Cain and his people. It is they who broke our peace covenant and attacked us unjustly. Surely we have occasion against them! Therefore, we vow before You this day that if You will give Cain and his armies into our hands, we will utterly destroy them and their cities, as you have spoken through Miriam."

Moses nodded to Joshua, his field commander. He immediately began preparing his army for battle. The next morning, early, they marched north, fiercely determined to avenge Miriam, Arte, and the other elders. When they reached Cain's army (which was waiting on the same ridge as before), Joshua and his two captains walked up to meet them. Prince Cain and two aides came down toward them, mounted on magnificent stallions. (Israel had no horses left, as they had never had any breeding mares and their Egyptian war stallions had all died off.)

"I told you to turn and leave my land!" Prince Cain thundered out. Joshua held his peace.

"Because you have not obeyed me, I killed seven of the fourteen spies you sent. If you do not turn and leave my land now, I'll kill the other seven. Then my army shall feed your flesh to the birds of the air and the dogs of the field."

Finally they were close. Joshua spoke softly. "Tell me, Prince Cain. Among the elders we sent to you, there was a tall leader, a very old man, with a long white beard and clouded eyes. Does he yet live?"

Cain spat viciously. "No. That old fool was the first to die. I slew him at noon yesterday, as soon as I saw you had not obeyed me to leave my land."

Joshua took a quick breath. Arte! That was the very time Miriam was making her speech. "If you had returned our elders, all of them, alive and well, we would have left you in peace, for we keep our covenants. However, you broke your covenant with us, and you also defied YHWH, the living God who rules over the affairs of men. Therefore YHWH has commissioned us to utterly destroy you, your army, your cities, and everything that is yours, so that the surrounding nations will know that there is a God in Israel. Prepare for battle." He turned, signalled his men to wait, and trudged back toward them.

The battle was very brief. Joshua raised his arms and blessed the army. They all knelt before him to receive the blessing. The Canaanites flowed over the ridge and rushed down upon them, their horsemen in front. But this time the Israelites did not turn and flee in disarray before the thundering hooves, as they had before. Instead, they waited, still kneeling. At the last second, they lifted the tips of their Egyptian spears to skewer the horses, then drew their swords to lop off the heads of the riders as they fell. In minutes it was over. The Israelites had not lost a man.

Joshua found Prince Cain among the carnage. He was still alive, but barely. "As you now see, YHWH our God is indeed the true God of all the earth. Do you have any last words of repentance, or any message for your father?"

Cain cursed angrily, blood frothing from his mouth. He was still cursing when he died. Joshua realized, for the first time, that there was no hope for these people. So he told his troops, "We must keep the vow that Moses made before YHWH yesterday. These people are irreconcilably wicked, beyond any possibility of repentance. Let us go now and utterly destroy them and all they possess. Their wickedness is a blot on the land and a reproach to their Creator. Maybe we can rescue the last seven of our elders."

But no. By the time they arrived, their elders had been slain already, as Miriam had prophesied. When the battle was over, Joshua's men lovingly carried their bodies back to camp. They, with Miriam and Arte, were buried on a hill rising above a huge rock facing Kadesh. The congregation mourned thirty days for them. Then they came to Moses and Aaron asking for permission to go farther into the Promised Land, to begin the campaign of total conquest.

Moses prayed about it, then responded. “No. It is but the end of the 38th year of our forty year covenant of peace with the Canaanites and their Egyptian overlords here. We keep our covenants. We shall remain here for a while, then pass through Edom and up north toward the nations east of the Jordan with whom we have no covenant.”

They stayed there for another four months. It was now 40 ½ years after the Exodus. Logos told Moses to get ready to leave Kadesh. The most direct route was through the lands of the Edomites (founded by Jacob's brother Esau) and the **Horites** (a tribe of Hurrians whom Esau had first married into but ultimately conquered and dispossessed). Moses, expecting no trouble, sent messengers to the king of Edom begging permission to cross his land, promising to stay on the road and take nothing along the way.

While waiting for the messengers' return, tragedy struck. The wells at Kadesh which had been so good up until now, ran dry. Caught by surprise, the people had no water stored up. They were totally out of water! That very same day, the messengers returned from Edom saying, “No! The king of Edom swears you shall not pass through his land, lest he come out against you with the sword.”

Rats. What terrible timing! Moses thought. He was stuck. He quickly sent another plea to Edom. But even as he sent off the messengers again, some people came before him to complain about the lack of water. Moses couldn't believe it! *How many times must he deal with this rebellion?* He got Aaron, and together they went to the doorway of the tabernacle to fall on their faces before YHWH.

Logos' laughter immediately greeted them. Moses was doubly miffed at the familiar laughter. “Why, Lord? More complaints! Do they never learn? Can they not just trust You? We are almost ready to leave Kadesh anyway. Can they not wait even one day before they begin murmuring?”

“Moses, Moses! I am laughing not at them, but at you! Look at your reaction. Do you never learn? All these years I've been teaching you patience, and still you are so quick to get upset. Relax, My friend! Their complaint is valid. Nobody expected the wells to fail. They were unprepared. That is not a lack of trust. Just the opposite. They came to you because they do trust! They trust you to find them water. Go out now to the big rock at the base of the hill. Speak life to it. Then it shall bring forth water abundantly for them and their herds, until you leave this place.”

Moses and Aaron bore the gentle rebuke silently. Moses went to get the staff. Aaron assembled the people at the big rock. But inwardly, Moses was seething. *The people complain, for the umpteenth time, then he gets blamed for not having enough patience. How fair is that?*

He reached the rock. Above it was the hill where Arte, Miriam, and their elders lay buried. *Water from this rock? 'Speak life' out of their deaths? Nuts!* Moses was angry. The forty years of bearing with this people weighed on him.

Aaron was angry, too. He began berating the people for their complaining and lack of faith.

Moses waited until he was through. Then he shouted out, “Listen now, you rebels! Must we bring forth water for you out of this rock? Look up there! There are the graves of the last of those who came out of Egypt with me. They all died, every one except Caleb, Joshua, Aaron, and I. Your elders all died because of complaining and lack of trust in YHWH. And in your complaining this day, you show that you are no better than they.” He punctuated the last word by taking his staff and striking the rock with a resounding whack. As before at Rephidim, the rock split open and water gushed forth in great abundance. Moses and Aaron turned disgustedly away toward their tents.

Ziporah followed Moses into their tent. “O Moses!” she said softly. “My lord! Why did you get so angry? That was not right. You have dishonored the name of YHWH. Please, return to the tabernacle to repent before Him. You've been so good to me. I don't want to lose you now!”

“I am not angry!” Moses snapped back. “I'm just a bit peeved at their constant complaining!”

Ziporah didn't argue. She honored and respected him too much for that. She just hugged him tightly and began to sob in his beard. But that did it. “A'right a'ready! Stop your crying, Zip. I'll go!”

He returned to the tabernacle. Aaron was already there. His wife must have talked to him as well. They fell on their faces in front of the cloud. “YHWH, we repent. You're right. After all these years we still haven't learned patience. We dishonored You. We're sorry. Please forgive us.”

They heard weeping instead of the familiar laughter. They waited. Moses wondered that Logos' mood should change so quickly, and so completely, at such a little thing. Finally Logos began to speak, in a voice that made Him sound a zillion years old. “I'm sorry too. I've worked so hard with you both. I had such high hopes. I strengthened you. I poured out grace upon grace – you are trophies of My grace. I gave you good wives and families. I extended your lives. I guarded you from all the adversary's attacks. I looked for another completed man from each of you, like Enoch and Amy, to populate My Kingdom. But alas, the journey has proven too difficult for you. You have neither believed Me, nor obeyed Me, nor honored My holy name before the congregation. Therefore you also shall go the way of all flesh, and I shall choose another to bring My people into the good land I have promised them.”

Moses and Aaron were stunned. They were to die for a little thing like this?! Neither spoke, but Logos knew their thoughts. “Anger? Dishonoring My holy name? Lack of trust in My timing? Direct disobedience? You think those are ‘little things’? I may overlook them in babies who have not yet learned to know Me. But you have walked with Me for a lifetime. You have no excuse.”

Moses finally spoke up. “Logos, remember the good times, the sweet fellowship we have together. There is no one else on the face of the earth with whom You have such fellowship. You said that yourself. If You cut short our lives, You will have no one left alive to fellowship with. You will be lonely again!”

Logos laughed; it was comforting to Moses and Aaron. “Cut short your lives? As with Melchizedek and Job, I have lengthened your lives. I greatly extended them! I hoped that you would continue to only choose righteousness, so like Enoch and Melchizedek you would never have to die, but rather bodily enter into the Resurrection Life of My Kingdom. But no. The wages of sin is death. You cannot bring your sin into My presence. You must die. I will not cut short your lives. I will simply stop extending them. And as for the sweet fellowship I shall miss when you die – I shall find others. I am patient. I shall work with them, prepare them, teach them – woo them into My holiness as I did with you. But you and I shall still have sweet fellowship as well, for at your death you shall return to Me.”

Moses was heartbroken. He began to weep softly. Through his tears he saw Aaron pensively staring at him, as if to plead, “Can’t you do something?” There before his eyes, even in this short time, Aaron looked noticeably older. Logos was right. He had been extending their lives, and their strength and health. At 120 and 123, He and Aaron were twice as old as anyone else in the camp. Then Moses realized that his own eyes were beginning to dim. Suddenly he felt very old, and tired. He no longer had the energy to argue with Logos. He shook his head sadly at Aaron. Together they left the tabernacle to return to their families. To this day the hill where Moses struck the rock at Kadesh is called **Meribah-Kadesh**, ‘strife’ or ‘striking’.

That night, Ziporah was shocked at the appearance of her husband. He looked like death warmed over. How could he have aged so much in one day? She would not criticize him, but she could sympathize. She hugged him, massaged his back, fed him a wonderful dinner, then danced and sang around him all evening in her loveliest evening gown. That always excited him and restored his youthful zest for life and the joy of loving. Except, this time his eyes were heavy and he fell asleep in his hammock. Ziporah was very concerned.

The next day, the messengers came back from the king of Edom with the same response. Moses was not looking forward to the long trek around their territory. He thought about going personally to negotiate with him. But his scouts said they were already mobilizing for war! Moses didn’t have the energy to contend with them.

So he sent one last message to the king of Edom. “Do not attack us. We will not fight against you, for you are our brothers. We will go south, around your land. Perhaps we will meet again someday under better circumstances. YHWH be with you.”

So they packed up and headed south along the borders of the land of Edom. When they reached **Mount Hor**, they stopped and camped. All along the way, Ziporah had been praying for her husband. Now she noticed that Aaron, too, was noticeably older than she remembered. It seemed so sudden! “Why, Lord? What can I do about it?” she prayed.

Logos told Moses to go to the top of Mount Hor and officially transfer the office of high priest from Aaron to his son Eleazar. Now, Mount Hor is more of a big hill than a mountain. It is not that difficult a climb. But Moses and Aaron had a tough time of it, even with help from their wives. The rest of the congregation were all young, and of course they had no trouble at all. They were enjoying the celebration, for they loved Aaron and his family greatly.

But Aaron’s wife Elishiva stepped aside with Ziporah to discuss what was bothering her. “It seems like just this last week, Aaron and Moses have gotten a lot older. Aaron shows no interest in me anymore. He’s tired all the time. He just wants to sleep when he’s not at the tabernacle. Is Moses the same? He looks a bit weak. I don’t think he’s going to be able to lead us into the Promised Land.”

Ziporah was startled at how old Elishiva looked, but she didn’t want to hurt her best friend. “So it’s not just me. No matter what I do, I can’t get Moses to respond to me anymore either. He is weak. He seems so old and worn out! I’m concerned. I’m losing him! What can we do?”

They cried together, and prayed together. Then when the ceremony ended, Elishiva went up in front to stand by her husband for their blessing on their son Eleazar as the new high priest. They both looked very, very old.

The blessing was finished. The people all clapped and cheered passionately. Aaron just smiled at them all, then bowed his head and slumped to the ground. Elishiva tried to support him at first, but then, alarmed, she cried out, “Help him! He’s fainting!” She knelt by his side, cradling his head in her loving arms. Within minutes he was gone, at the age of 123, right there on the mountaintop.

The congregation buried him right where he had fallen. They built a memorial for him there, and mourned for him at the base of the mountain for a whole month. Elishiva never recovered. She died within the month from a broken heart, and her sons buried her beside her husband.

Moses bore his grief very heavily. It was not just the passing of his older brother, friend, confidant, supporter, and spokesman. That just multiplied his grief of losing the Promised Land. He thought of the forty years he had spent in the desert with this stubborn and rebellious people. The only thing that had kept him going was his longing to enter the Promised Land! It just wasn’t fair! Moses spent the month in weeping, fasting, and praying, barely able to arise each morning to face the day. Finally he decided that he had better put his own affairs in order and prepare for his own death, for it could not be far off.

Moses would drag himself to the tabernacle only to be met with deathly silence. He pled with Logos to show him who was to be his replacement, but Logos wasn't saying. Finally he went to Caleb, Joshua, and Hobab. He didn't mince words. "Please don't tell my wife, but I am dying. Logos won't, or hasn't yet, told me who will lead Israel after me, but it will probably be one of you. I have nothing left to live for. My earthly task is done. Please pray that God will give you the strength and courage, and enough love and patience, to lead this great nation of His into the Promised Land. I wish I could be with you. And... take care of Zip. Tell her I love her!" He bowed his head, overcome with grief. He'd been through too much to have it end like this.

They were unable to console or encourage him. He returned to the tabernacle. This time he would not come out. He determined to die, as he had lived, in the presence of YHWH. He fell on his face just inside the veil, being careful to allow his feet to stick out beyond the veil so they could pull out his dead body. There he remained for hours, praying that God would get it over quickly to minimize the suffering that his wife, family, and friends would have to endure. A lot could be said about this, the darkest hour of his soul, his personal journey through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. But in the end, it was just a little thing that got him back up. No word from the Lord. No stirring vision or mighty revelation. He had to pee.

He must not soil the sanctuary! But he could not hold it any longer. He jumped up and ran out to relieve himself. He was standing beside a thirsty bush, thankful to have made it there in time, when a strange word popped into his mind. "Write." Of course he dismissed it. *Logos, in all the glory and majesty of His holiness, does not speak to one when one is relieving oneself beside a bush. Does He?*

Just the same, he gathered pen and paper when he returned to the tabernacle, and presented them before Logos. "My Lord, my God, my Friend. I have walked with You these many years, always eager to do as You asked. That voice sounded like Yours, though at a great distance. If that was You, please tell me what to write. For as You know, I am not good with words, and I cannot write unless You help me." He remembered how Logos had caused the words to flow in a torrent after his forty days alone with Him on Mt. Sinai. He smiled at the memory, and relaxed.

There were no chuckles, no laughing, shining angel, no audible words. But just the same, the thoughts began to come. *So I lost the Promised Land. Big deal. Where really is my dwelling place? – Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations, even before the mountains arose, even before the earth itself was born. Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.* The words flowed smoothly, and in the dimness of the tabernacle, he wrote them down.

The dry, dusty desert. His entire generation had spent the last forty years returning to the dust. Just like the curse given to Adam at the Fall.

You return us to the dust, saying "Back to the mud from whence you came." His lessons on patience filled his soul. Forty years? Even a thousand years is nothing in Your sight. Like yesterday when it is past. How short had been his life. We have finished our years like a sigh. The length of our days may be seventy years, or eighty for the strong, yet is their pride but labor and sorrow. It is soon past, and we fly away. ... So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. And what was his life worth? Anything? Certainly nothing without YHWH. How long until You return to your servant, O YHWH? To satisfy us with Your lovingkindness that we may sing for joy all the days You have afflicted us, the years we have travailed under our evil nature. Show us instead Your work in our lives. Your majesty! Your beauty! Your favor and grace! Only by seeing Your nature in us can we confirm the work of our hands.

It was a nice poem. Moses was pleased and comforted. Suddenly he discovered he was hungry. He took it back to his tent. Ziporah had prepared a lovely meal. Moses showed her the poem. "Here is my epitaph, Zip," he said. "It comforted me. Perhaps it will comfort others." (It has indeed blessed many since then! It is the **90th Psalm**.)

But Ziporah wasn't taking to this 'epitaph' stuff. "Moses! This is wonderful! And you said you weren't good with words. You should be doing more writing! Don't let Joshua have all the fun. Those stories you've been telling me from your collection of the ancient Kasday archives – Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abram and Melchizedek – You could organize 'em and put 'em into a book! And you've got to write out the story of the Hebrews going to Egypt in the famine, and Joseph. And..."

"No, no, my dear. Joshua can write all that stuff down. Why, I won't even last long enough to..."

"Joshua can't! He doesn't know half of what you know! All the time you spent with Logos – you know more than anyone alive about all those stories from before the Flood. And the story of the Exodus..."

"No!" Moses interrupted. He seemed determined not to let Ziporah talk him out of his blue funk. He glared her into silence, as if to say, "We are still grieving for Aaron and Elishiva, and Miriam and Arte. How dare you try to make me happy or give me some reason for living?"

Ziporah too was grieving, but no longer for Aaron or Elishiva – for her own husband! She wasn't blind to the depths of his despair! If nothing changed, he too would soon be laid out on the mountaintop. That night when Moses was sleeping, she stole out of their tent under cover of darkness, and went to the tabernacle. There she entered the holy place and knelt, weeping, just inside the veil.

"Ziporah, why do you weep?" The voice was deep and resonant, but in her grief she assumed it to be Eleazar the new high priest. She cried out in despair. *She was caught. Now she must be stoned!*

“Ziporah! Why do you weep?” the voice repeated.

“I know I’m breaking the law. But please let me finish praying before you stone me! Moses is dying. I’m pleading with YHWH to spare his life. He’s got to lead Israel into the Promised Land! YHWH promised!” She dissolved in tears.

Logos let her cry for a bit, then responded, “So, plead already. What is this that I have promised?” Ziporah heard a sound like chuckles, or muffled laughter. It startled her enough to stop her crying and open her eyes.

There in front of her was a man, shining with the brightness of an angel. She fell on her face before Him. “My Lord YHWH! Oh, please forgive me for intruding upon Your holy tabernacle! You may slay me if You wish. But first, please assure me that You will honor Your promise to Moses. If You don’t strengthen him soon, he’ll die!”

“My promise? What promise was that?” The laughter continued, even louder. It was confusing poor Ziporah.

“Well, Sir, Uhh... Your Majesty... Your Holiness. You told him that You would use him to lead Your people into the Promised Land. We’re not there yet!”

“How do you know I promised him that? Were you there? Did you hear Me?”

“No, Sir.” That laughter was beginning to get her mad. “But he told me, and I believe him. You may do whatever You want with me, but You must keep Your promise to Moses, for I know that You are the God who keeps Your promises.” Her voice rose along with her temper.

“Yes, yes. So I am and so I shall, My love. Return now to your husband, knowing I shall keep My promise to him.”

“Why are You laughing at me? This is not funny at all! I’m serious! I will not go back until You promise me that You will strengthen him, the whole time! He can’t lead Your people into the Promised Land looking like death warmed over. He can barely see. How can he lead?”

“Well, well. We do have a fiery little bobcat on our hands, don’t we?” The angel paused, holding His sides in laughter. Ziporah just knelt there, open-mouthed, not knowing if she should be angry, or laugh with Him. Finally she could take it no more. She tried to suppress it, but there was just no way. Good belly laughter is contagious, you know. Soon she was laughing nearly as hard as He.

Finally the angel that represented Logos wiped His eyes. “Ahh... That was good. Would that all My people could just come into My presence to enjoy Me, believe and trust Me, and then hold Me to My word.” He paused again for some more chuckles. “Is it not more fun to discuss important matters after a good laugh together? But yes. Your husband. I did make him a promise, though it was not exactly as you remembered. My exact words were, ‘... you shall lead My people to the good land I have promised.’ Not ‘into’, but just ‘to’. Do you spot the difference?”

The eyes of Ziporah’s understanding were suddenly opened. They had come ‘to’ the land. YHWH had kept His promise! Moses was dying. God would choose someone else to lead them in. Again she fell on her face weeping.

“No, no, My dear. Enough of that crying. How can you weep before Me when we’ve just had such a good laugh together? Now look up at Me. Smile. Yes, yes, that’s better. Big smile! Then you can tell Me what you want from Me.”

At Logos’ command Ziporah wiped her eyes and looked up. Slowly she managed a smile, though she had to work at it for a bit. Then she said. “Sir, I want You to extend Moses’ life so he can continue to lead Your people.”

“How long? How long? What is the normal lifespan of a man? Would you have him live forever?” Logos tried to look stern while covering a huge grin.

“Oh, no. I guess not.” Ziporah suddenly realized that Israelites were dying out at the age of 60 or so, and that Moses was already double that. She herself was 100, though it had never occurred to her to feel old. “But Sir, will You just extend his life until we enter the land? And conquer it and settle down? His health and strength, too, and his eyesight. He’s going blind! He must see to lead! And...” Fearing she’d said too much, she shut up abruptly.

“Do you realize that it may take many years, and many battles, to completely conquer the land and settle down? Do you really want that for Moses? Many battles, much complaining and faithlessness from an oft’ stubborn and rebellious people – don’t you think Moses has suffered enough at their hands?” Logos still smiled and His eyes twinkled with delight. It took the edge off His challenge.

Ziporah boldly caught the challenge. “It matters not how much he has suffered, as long as You lead him on. With You, he is a great leader. A great leader! Why must he die looking so old and feeble and blind, with his job yet unfinished?” She took a deep breath and stood up, holding out her palms. “Yes, Sir. I ask You to make him young and strong until his job is done – until we conquer the land!”

Ziporah heard singing, and shouting. She looked to see where it was coming from. But Logos ignored it as if He was used to it. He laughed again, “My beloved Ziporah! How I have enjoyed your bold faith and your deep and unfailing love! I cannot grant all you ask, for I cannot go back on My word. He may view the Promised Land from east of the Jordan, but not go into it. Yet I’ll offer you a deal. I will let him conquer the lands of the Amorites east of the Jordan, and will add that land to what I already promised.”

Ziporah suddenly knew this bargain was the best she was going to get. “I accept. Thank You Sir. Uh... You will keep him strong and healthy until then?”

“Of course, with your help.” Still chuckling, Logos reached out to hand her a clay jar. “Give him a little of this each morning with his breakfast.”

Ziporah opened it. It was full of fine powder in a blend of earth colors. “What is it, Lord?”

“It is mostly dried raw ginseng root, ginger root, onion, beet, dandelion, and rose hips, with traces of other herbs and minerals. It will help his eyesight and his skin, and begin to restore his natural energy.”

“Yes, Lord. But I don’t understand. You are God! You don’t need medicines to keep him strong.”

“Thank you, My dear. You are correct, I do not. As you know, I have been extending his life, and yours, for many years with no medicines at all. But most of the time I use means, and choose to work within My natural law so that you and your loved ones can learn wisdom. It might be good if you were to take a little of this each morning, too.”

“Yes, Sir....” She paused. Logos waited, to encourage her to ask the question on her mind. “Thank You, Sir. You have been most kind. But I do not understand. You laugh with me. You grant me my requests. But You should stone me, for I broke Your Law in coming here. Women are not permitted in Your tabernacle. Why do I yet live?”

“My Law says that the sinner must die. Yet you...” He spread out His arms to show her that His ‘you’ included all Israel “... still live. Why?”

“Well... we are covered by the blood of the lamb, the atoning sacrifice. As You Yourself commanded, Sir.”

“Correct. That is a higher law. When you keep the higher law, the law of sin and death has no power over you. When you came here into My holy presence, you kept the highest law of all! I could no more slay you, My beloved Ziporah, than I could slay Myself!”

“The highest law of all?” Ziporah’s eyes got very big. “B-b-but Sir. I don’t even know what the highest law is! How could I keep it? I just thought I was going to die!”

Logos’ laughter burst forth again, and for a time the entire universe laughed with Him. Once again Ziporah was drawn into it. Though not understanding the joke, His laughter was irresistible. Finally He calmed enough to answer. “Yes! That is the highest law! When you love so much you are willing to give your life for your beloved!” He winked at her and vanished, with one last loud guffaw.

With the bright angel gone, the only remaining light was the seven dim and flickering flames on the lampstand. It took a while for Ziporah’s eyes to adjust. But that was good, as it took even longer for her brain to adjust. She had negotiated with God, and had won! She had the ginseng to prove it! She worshiped there in the holy place for an hour. Then she returned to sleep beside her husband.

She never told Moses about her divine encounter. What she had done was prohibited by the ceremonial law, and she didn’t want to put him in the position of having to chose between enforcing the law or sparing her life.

But she did put the ginseng powder in their breakfast each morning. And each morning she saw her beloved husband grow a little stronger. Within a few days he had forgotten his argument with Ziporah. He began compiling all his ancient Kasday records, and writing out the stories. (Thus began what we know as the book of **Genesis**.)

The thirty days of mourning for Aaron passed. Moses had not appeared to the people since Aaron and Elishiva’s funeral. Everyone remembered his difficulty going up the hill. They were quite sure he would not survive another month in the desert. They planned to bury him on that hill beside Aaron, and elect another to lead them on.

But one night, in the privacy of their tent, Moses looked at his wife with new vision. “Darling! My eyes! They’re so clear! The cloudiness is gone! How lovely you look! You are still as young and as beautiful as the day I chose you. You seem to be growing younger! Remember when you put on that lovely gown to sing and dance for me?”

“Yes, I remember. But I didn’t think you noticed.”

“Oh, I noticed all right, Zip. But my eyes were so cloudy I could hardly see you. And my body was so tired and worn out, I could not respond to you. But God is good. I am recovering. Please, will you sing and dance for me again?” She did. Moses joined her in the dance. Needless to say, their evening was full of kissing, caressing, and loving, much as a pair of young newlyweds on their honeymoon.

CHAPTER 43 – TOWARD THE PROMISED LAND ONCE AGAIN!

The next day, Moses assembled the people. He was a commanding presence, full of vim, vigor, and vitality and ready to lead them on. “Our brother Esau will not allow us to cross over these mountains to pass through Seir, so we will turn south along this valley. When we reach Elath and Ezion Geber, their kings will surely let us pass through, for we proved faithful when we passed through before.”

The next day they packed up and headed south toward the Red Sea. Along the way, Logos tested them to see if they had learned to trust Him yet. The weather grew hot, their protective cloud overhead grew thin, their water supply ran low, and their tempers flared. All these extra miles just because the sons of Esau wouldn’t let them pass through Edom! It was infuriating!

Again they began to grumble and complain, about the water, the heat, and that loathsome manna. After forty years, they had pretty well exhausted all the different ways it could be prepared. Even knowing their lives depended on it, they still dreaded going out each morning to gather more. Again they began to speak against God and against Moses. “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? For there is no food or water, and our souls utterly loathe this miserable manna!”

But the grace and patience of God was having its effect in Moses. He didn't get angry. He didn't even chide them. He barely glanced up from the book he was writing. "YHWH will judge between me and you, if your complaint is warranted or not. I will pray to Him. If He opens up the windows of heaven to pour out upon you His bounty from the abundance of His infinite provision, then you will know that your request is valid. But if instead he sends fiery serpents among you, to bite and slay the faithless among you, you will know that your complaint is but the outward evidence of an unbelieving and rebellious heart set on selfish comforts rather than on the will of God."

When the poisonous serpents came, the people were quick to repent and cry for Moses to intercede for them. He went to Logos, who told him, "Make a fiery reminder for them of My deliverance from Egypt. Set it high on a pole. When they look at it, they'll remember Me and trust Me. Then I shall heal them from the poison of their snakebite."

The surrounding nations all worshiped the caduceus – that fiery Venus / Mercury / Phaeton trinary that looked like a long snake with two snakes spiraled around it. But one of its spirals had been lost when Phaeton collided with Earth. Venus / Mercury had locked into resonance with Earth at the Exodus. Though it never again came as close and its tails were shorter so they no longer reached Earth, it still hung spectacularly overhead for about half a year every five years. It was now 40 ½ years since the Exodus, so their flyby had recently past. Venus was slowly retreating. It now appeared about as large as a crescent Moon. It was still exceedingly beautiful, especially right after sunset. Nobody feared it anymore, but the lovely 'feathered snake' in the sky was still fresh in everyone's minds.

So Moses knew exactly what Logos meant by "a fiery reminder" of His deliverance from Egypt. What better reminder than those celestial snakes? Moses cast a single bronze serpent spiraling around a staff. It looked like the tail of Mercury around the tail of Venus. They called it 'Nehushtan'. We know it now as the 'Rod of Asclepius'. Moses set it up right in front of the tabernacle. It turned out to be a big faith-builder, reminding them to look only to YHWH, rather than the planetary gods of the nations. Whenever a serpent bit someone, he would simply look up to the bronze standard, remember YHWH's miraculous deliverance at the Exodus, and have faith for His healing.

Moses was right. The kings of Elath and Ezion Geber remembered them and were glad to give Israel passage. Again, they were careful not to harm them and they both benefited from honest trading. From there Israel traveled southeast through the Wilderness of Sin, past Edom and through the Seir mountains, and then north through the Wilderness of Horeb towards Canaan. It was a long way.

You and I, dear Reader, must take a brief detour here. While Israel turned north in the Wilderness of Sin, we shall turn south with Hobab and his lovely wife Hanani.

Their children were now grown, so they left them with their oldest, Kenai, in charge. They assured Moses that they would catch up with the Israelites, but they had to go back to Midian to see if their father Reuel was still alive and to learn what had become of Hanani's five younger sisters.

The first thing Hobab discovered was a thriving town of Midianites at Marah where Moses had made the waters sweet for the Israelites. Further south, he found another big town at Elim among the palm trees – again Midianite. Similarly at Rephidim, by the twin streams – Midianites had taken over the entire area. They reached Al Bad and discovered why. Reuel's priestly ministry there had paid off, and the once small town had been blessed by God. It was now a prosperous and still expanding metropolis. The Midianites had become a powerful nation. Sadly, in their wealth many had forgotten God and returned to idolatry.

Hobab and Hanani reached her father's homestead a few miles south of Al Bad. They were greeted by Hanani's sister Melody, with her six children. Melody took them right back to see their father, Reuel. He was old and feeble, and confined to bed, but he swore that YHWH had kept him alive for this moment. He insisted that Hobab tell him all that had happened to Moses and Ziporah since he had left them at Rephidim nearly forty years before.

Mark, Melody's husband, came in from the field as they were talking. He too was eager to hear the news. Hanani was delighted to meet him and discover that her sister had found a godly man. He had not only married Melody and taken over the old home, he also had promised to care for Reuel until the day of his death, and then carry on his ministry. Melody was happy and blessed with her growing family. Hanani rejoiced to meet her six obedient, well-mannered children. Truly YHWH had been good to them.

But other news at Midian was not so good. The other four of the seven sisters had each married a rich young Midianite prince (against their father's wishes). These princes, together with a twin brother (already-married), had moved north to the area between Moab and Ammon. Sadly, the sisters had rejected YHWH, the God of their father, and had embraced Baal and Chemosh, the Moabite gods. Reuel had warned them that YHWH's judgment would fall upon them, but they did not heed his warning. These five princes now ruled five Midianite cities among the Amorites east of the Dead Sea. They had prospered abundantly. Reuel cautioned Hobab about them. He was still praying for them to return to the faith of their father.

Reuel told Hobab that YHWH had warned him about a prophet from Ur Kasday who lived along the Jabbok River north of Moab. YHWH had said that the Ammonites and Moabites would hire him to curse Israel. He and Mark's family were praying that those curses would fail, and that YHWH would bless Israel instead. Hobab and Hanani joined Mark and Reuel in their intercession, praying as one mind, one heart. Reuel died in his sleep that night.

As Hobab and Hanani mourned Reuel's death, the Israelites were heading north along the backside of the wilderness. They were careful to give the Edomites a wide berth, for Logos had said, "Do not trouble them, for I will not give you any of their land. I gave it to the sons of Esau."

But they were surprised to find Midianite cities and towns east of the Seir mountain range. They had found water there, and had prospered. Midianite settlements dotted the wilderness, and their traders reached every nation. Their cities were rich and strong, but very wicked. However, they still remembered Moses and Reuel, and did not contend with the Israelites as they passed through.

They continued north in the wilderness, across the dry wadi of the brook Zered, to the land of Moab. (See map in Vol. Three) Again Logos told Moses, "Do not trouble them either, nor provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land. I have given it to the daughters of Lot."

So Moses sent a kind message to **Balak**, king of Moab. "Do not fear us. We will not fight against you, for you are our brothers. We will go around your land through the wilderness. If we eat any of your food or drink any of your water, we will pay for it. YHWH be with you."

King Balak did not believe Moses' message. He abused the messengers, treating them like spies. He sent them off with neither food nor water, with a message filled with spite and dishonor. He sent spies to keep watch on them. At the same time, he sent an urgent letter to **Sihon**, king of the Amorites, to whom he paid tribute for protection.

[NOTE: the **Amorites** were powerful but exceedingly wicked descendants of Canaan. They had allied with the Jebusites and Anakim and conquered the land of Canaan in 1550 BC, ruling it from the royal cities of **Lachish** and **Hebron**. Then about 1450 BC, the combined Egyptian and Amalekite armies under King Yakubher had subdued Lachish and forced peace treaties with the Amorites, the Anakim, the Jebusites, and the other Canaanites in the area. But east of the Jordan, the Amorites still ruled. The other nations there, Ammon, Moab, and Midian, all paid them tribute. Their capitals were at **Heshbon** under King Sihon, and at **Ashtaroth** in **Bashan** under King Og. They had grown strong, with a world-class military. Among them were remnants of a race of giants, the **Rephaim**.]

Sihon responded to Balak. He had heard stories of these Hebrews, and he feared them as well. He immediately mobilized his army and prepared for battle. His message back to Balak was, "Yes. I will protect you. Fear not! My army is even now preparing for battle. They cannot defeat us, for we are fresh and well-provisioned, while they are weakened by years of wandering in the wilderness."

When Moses reached the Arnon River, he did not cross. Instead, he sent a polite message to King Sihon. Again he asked for permission to cross their land, promising to stay on the highway and take nothing from the Amorites.

Sihon, with his army already mobilized at Jahaz and itching for a fight, refused. Still Moses did not cross, but rather spent a day in prayer, seeking YHWH's leading. Finally he sent another message. "We do not wish to fight you, King Sihon, for you are the protector of the sons of Ammon and the sons of Moab, our brothers by Abraham's nephew Lot. We promised Moab that we would respect his land as we passed through, and we kept our promise. Even so we will respect you and your land if you will allow us safe passage. But if not, know that we will defeat you, and destroy you, your army, your wives, and your little ones. We will capture your cities and confiscate your land from Ar to Jazer and from the Arnon to the Jabbok. So choose wisely this day, in the name of YHWH our God."

King Sihon despised this gracious (but firm) message, returning only insults. His messengers challenged Moses from across the river, openly cursing them and their God YHWH, claiming that Israel only hesitated because they were too scared to fight.

Logos responded with the fearful command to slay the Amorites. So Moses gathered his army to bless them before the congregation. Ziporah was proud of him, and pleased. He looked stronger and more resolute than ever before, even at the battle with the Amalekites at Rephidim. He raised his arms over the congregation – and held them up the entire time he talked. He charged them to be strong and very courageous in the strength that YHWH provides. He reminded them that these were YHWH's enemies, as they were totally wicked, and unrepentant as well.

He concluded with the Word of YHWH, "I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and all he owns into your hand. Therefore begin this day to take possession of the good land I have promised you, by contending with him in battle. This day I shall begin to put the fear and dread of you upon all nations everywhere under heaven. When they hear reports of you, they shall tremble and be in deepest anguish because of you. Therefore you shall slay them all with the sword, men, women, and children. Leave no survivor, to later become a snare to you. But each may take his share of the spoil, including their animals and all they possess, for their land is My land; today I give it to you to be your land from this day forth forever."

The people cheered and danced and screamed out their promises to do all that Moses asked. But Ziporah just knelt and gave thanks that Logos had answered her secret plea. He was indeed keeping His promise to her.

So Israel's army, in high spirits, crossed the Arnon River and headed north toward Jahaz. Moses led the way, with his personal aide and field commander Joshua beside him. The women and children remained behind to pray and intercede for their men. Never a woman prayed like old Ziporah, combining fervent perfect faith with earnestness of heart and soul for her beloved husband, knowing that Moses lived on borrowed time.

Three days later, the army returned. Even from a great distance, Ziporah could see that not half of their number was with them. And as they got closer, there was no Moses, nor Joshua, nor any of their leaders in sight. Poor Ziporah scanned the group frantically as they walked down toward the river. She was sorely tempted to fear.

But she chose instead to kneel in worship and reaffirm her fervent faith. “YHWH, King of My heart! I choose to trust You, not what I see, for I know that You keep Your promises. Please, continue now to strengthen Moses wherever he is, until we have taken all the land east of the Jordan, as You have promised. I believe Your word!”

A message of victory was shouted through the camp! Hearing it, Ziporah arose from her worship. Sihon was totally defeated; his army was no more; his cities were all taken and purged of all survivors. Moses and the other leaders were now at **Abel-Shittim** (Meadow of Acacias) preparing a place for them.

The returned men helped them all pack up, and soon everyone joined the army at Abel-Shittim. It was a lovely valley opposite Jericho, between Heshbon and the River Jordan. It was fertile, green, and well-watered – a perfect campsite – their best yet. Moses planned to use it as their base camp as long as they remained east of the Jordan.

They spent a week mopping up, distributing all the booty from the Amorites, and enjoying their new land. It was indeed a good land, with farms they had not planted and cities they had not built.

But a few problems remained. Not the least of these was Og, the giant king of Bashan, which lay just to their north. Logos urged Moses to not delay, for Og had gathered a big army and was preparing to attack. He planned to suddenly invade the unfortified camp and take hostage their wives and little ones, to force them to surrender. Moses had to attack first. So he mustered the army and marched across **Gilead** into Bashan, attacking Og the giant on his own turf. As with Sihon, Israel wiped out the Amorites, plundered their capital city Ashtaroth, and annihilated their people.

As before, Ziporah didn't see the battle, except in her prayers as she wrestled with the angels and demons for her beloved husband. She knelt and worshiped when Moses returned victorious, looking younger and stronger than ever. She was the only one in the camp who knew what was really going on with Moses. The victory celebrations, with the partying, drinking, and dancing, found her in the tent on her face before Logos giving Him grateful thanksgiving. When Moses returned to their tent very late that night, flush with the sweet taste of victory, he called, “Ziporah, my lovely little bird! Where were you? Why did you not come to the party to celebrate our great victory?”

She flung herself into his arms, laughing and sobbing at the same time. He just cuddled her awhile. It was good to be back home.

Finally Ziporah responded softly, “I was with you in spirit, my lord, every minute of every day you were gone. While you celebrated with the others, I was on my face in the tent thanking YHWH for your victory. For He showed me that though you lost the right to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land, yet you entered it here! Indeed, you enlarged the Promised Land to include these lands also!”

Moses stared at her, wide eyed, for a moment. Then he nodded and hugged her closer, grateful for this Midianite treasure YHWH had given him. This was the only time Ziporah even hinted at the part she had played in that last year of the life of Moses. Moses never knew how much his faithful wife had achieved by her intercession.

Several other incidents occurred while they were camped at Abel-Shittim, involving the Ammonites and the Moabites. They seemed minor, at first. As soon as they were settled, Moses sent his emissaries into Ammon, assuring them (as with the Moabites) that they would not fight with them or invade their land, for so YHWH had commanded them, since they were brothers through Lot.

But just like Balak king of Moab, the king of Ammon treated the Israelite emissaries poorly. Moses wanted to negotiate a covenant of peace with them, but they treated his ambassadors with shame and abuse.

As Israel's army had marched into Bashan and back, they had passed the land of Ammon. The Ammonites had stationed soldiers along their borders, but had offered them no greetings or overtures of peace.

Moses was a bit miffed at this, particularly after his great victory over Og the king of Bashan. It seemed to him that Ammon and Moab would be sending ambassadors thanking him for delivering them from their oppressors and pleading for a peace covenant! He should have asked Logos about it, but it was a small thing. He just let it pass.

An old prophet lived among the Amorites, a wise man, diviner, and astrologer, descended from the Kasdim. His name was **Balaam**. His father Beor had come from Ur Kasday on the Euphrates River. After the Amorites were defeated, the kings of Moab and Ammon and the five princes of Midian offered Balaam vast riches and glory to prophesy for them against Israel. Balaam agreed. He would never have to work again a day in his life! However, every time he opened his mouth to prophesy against Israel, the intercession of Reuel and his family would block him, so nothing but blessings would come out.

This happened three times. Finally Balaam told Balak that he was unable to curse Israel, but he knew a way that their own God, YHWH, would curse them. “It will be very easy,” he claimed. “Just pretend friendship with them. Let your daughters marry their sons and slowly introduce them to the worship of your gods Chemosh and the Baals. YHWH is a very jealous God. He will curse them, as He does not tolerate Israel worshiping any god but Himself.”

Balak was skeptical. "What do I do, just send my daughters down to invite their sons over to dinner? They're not going to fall for that!"

"No," Balaam agreed. "But I know that Moses' wife is a Midianite. That is your open door. Talk to the princes of Midian. They'll help you."

So that is what Balak did. When he visited the five main Midianite cities between Ammon and Moab, he learned that four of the wives of the five Midianite city-kings were sisters to Moses' wife Ziporah. That was it. Midian would have a big reunion party, with Moab invited.

Moses was hesitant. It simply didn't smell right to him. He didn't mind going to visit the Midianites. After all, they were kin. But with Moab invited? He smelled a rat! *First Moab treats his ambassadors poorly, even insults them openly. Then Moab teams up with the Midianites to throw the Israelites a welcoming party? Huh.* But with his wife all excited to visit her sisters, how could he refuse?

The party lasted for days. There was lots to eat and drink; the wine flowed freely. While they were there, Balak sent out the whores of Moab to tempt the Israelites.

Sadly, they fell for it. From that first night half-drunk young Israelite men were sleeping with Moabite girls. While Ziporah and her sisters were catching up with the family gossip and Moses and the elders of Israel were enduring the polite conversation of the five Midianite city-kings, even some of the Midianites were out seducing the sons of Israel. Moses and Ziporah never saw it coming.

Hobab and Hanani returned from Midian and caught up to the Israelites on the afternoon of the third day. They immediately looked up Moses, finally finding him in one of the Midianite cities with Ziporah and her sisters. Hobab pulled Moses aside to caution him. "Israel's camp seems to have degenerated into a drunken brothel. It is just as Reuel warned me! The Midianites are leading them into sin."

Moses and Hobab left Ziporah and Hanani at the party with their sisters and ran back to the camp. They got there near sundown. To their horror they discovered that many in the camp were gone. Of those remaining, many were engaged in drunken debauchery or open immorality. "Where are the rest of my people?" Moses thundered out.

He got some drunk to point across the valley to **Mount Peor**. "They all went that way. Shomshin 'bout lunch w'd a view and t'anks to d' gods. I couldn't make it." He began to vomit, then passed out and fell into his own stew.

Moses and Hobab ran across the camp, eyeing the mountain. Sure enough, crowds of people were up there, partying. But what was that silhouetted by the setting sun? It looked like an altar, and it had smoke rising from it. Moses could hardly believe his eyes! Those were Israelites, bowing down before that pagan altar! Moses ran back to the tabernacle and threw himself on his face at the door.

Logos was angry. "Moses! Finally you return! Why did you not ask Me before going to visit the Midianites? Your people were left with no covering, and they have already gone a'whoring after other gods, Baal and Chemosh, gods of the Moabites. Go out now. Slay all the instigators—those who have led your people into sin. Execute them in broad daylight, for in broad daylight they shamelessly sinned against Me and desecrated My holy name."

So Moses immediately called for Eleazar the high priest to blow the silver trumpets calling Israel together.

Those on Mount Peor also heard the trumpet, and started down. Still, it was dark when the congregation had all gathered. "The party is over!" Moses called out. "You must send all our guests home, immediately. Not one may remain in the camp this night. Many among you have behaved shamefully with them, violating their women and bowing to their gods. So clean out your tents and purify yourselves with fasting. Tomorrow morning we shall see how YHWH will discipline you."

Ziporah returned from her visit late that night, greatly saddened by what she had learned about her sisters. The men they had married had deceived them. They were not godly. Just the opposite, they were blatant idolaters. They had become proud and cruel. Their cities were filled with immorality. Her sisters groaned under the oppression of wickedness; even their own children had been drawn into it, and there was no escape. They longed for the pure, peaceful days, filled with real love and understanding, back home with Reuel, but alas, they could not return. Poor Ziporah wept for them much of the night.

First thing next morning the congregation gathered. Moses assigned the judge of each tribe to try the men under his jurisdiction, to determine who had gone up Mount Peor and bowed to the false gods, and who had committed adultery with the Moabite or Midianite women.

But as they began judging, a proud young Simeonite prince named **Zimri** went strolling into a tent arm-in-arm with a lovely Midianite girl. Ziporah screamed. "That's my niece Princess **Cozbi**! She's a daughter of King Zur and my own sister, **Jerusha**. I thought that all the Midianites were supposed to go home last night!"

Moses called loudly for Zimri to come out of the tent. All he got from the couple was a rude response and some giggles. They knew Moses would never dare to enter their tent! He went to the tabernacle to ask Logos what to do.

But **Phinehas**, son of Eleazar the high priest, had seen it too. He was enraged. *And so soon after Moses had chastised the congregation and promised YHWH's discipline!* Zimri was not only disobedient, he was also totally unrepentant! Phinehas ran for his own tent. He soon returned with a spear in his hand. Moses was not there, but Ziporah and everyone else were just standing around staring at the tent with the flush of embarrassment and shame on their faces.

Phinehas yelled to the couple in the tent to come forth and face the wrath of YHWH. Again, all he got were lewd noises and laughter. It was clear that significant hanky-panky was going on inside. Phinehas flung open the tent entry flap and strode in. The laughter turned to screams, and he strode back out, without his spear.

“Cozbi!” Ziporah cried in horror. “What did you do with my niece?” She already knew the answer.

Phinehas looked her in the eye. “Ma’am, your niece was dead when she walked into that tent. She died when she disobeyed Moses’ order to go home.”

Moses, still on his face before Logos, heard a deep, sad sigh. “It is done, My friend. Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron My priest, has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel, in that he was jealous with My jealousy – jealous for the honor of My holy name. Otherwise I would have destroyed them all. But now, I grant you My covenant of peace, for Phinehas’ sake. And it shall be for him and all his descendants a covenant of perpetual priesthood, because he understood My wrath and jealousy, and acted as I would act to make atonement for the sons of Israel.

“But as for the Midianites in these five cities, be hostile to them. Strike them without pity, for they deceived you, both in the idol worship on Mount Peor, and in the whores they sent to tempt you, culminating in the affair of Zimri and Cozbi whom Phinehas slew.”

Moses returned to Ziporah, who was weeping near the now-quiet tent. He faced her and gently lifted her head to look into his eyes. “Stop weeping for Cozbi, my love. Weep instead for yourself and your children. But do not weep for the Midianites in this land, for God has rejected them. They deliberately deceived us with overtures of friendship, but they were actually plotting to turn us away from YHWH. And they used your own sisters as the bait!”

Ziporah opened her mouth to try to defend her sisters, but she was interrupted by a priest. “Moses! Please come! Eleazar needs you! Many people are dying from a plague!”

The judges had been putting the people on trial and separating them into two groups. When Moses got there, he saw one group clearly was in trouble. Many were no longer standing. He heard shrieks and groans of agony from those who were. “Eleazar! What is going on here?”

“The judges have finished separating the people. We were waiting for you to find out from YHWH what their punishment should be. But those who bowed to Baal on Mount Peor as well as those who committed adultery with the Moabites and Midianites seem to be in serious distress. A few have even died! It began rather suddenly, just as the judges finished separating them. What shall we do?”

Moses looked up toward the sun. It was high noon. He remembered the Word of YHWH to slay in broad daylight those who had fallen into sin.

He called to the other group, the ones who had been judged innocent. “Go home. Those of you who are jealous for YHWH and His righteousness return with a sword at your side. Slay these your brothers and your friends who are faithless and have caused Israel to sin. They are dead anyway. Put them quickly out of their misery.”

Eleazar was shocked. “Slay them? What about the plague? What if it spreads to the rest of us?”

“The plague is already stopped, Eleazar. Your own son Phinehas stopped it, when he sank his spear through a couple committing open and unrepentant adultery.”

“But... people are getting worse. They’re dying!”

“Those people are already dead, Eleazar. The plague will spread no further.”

Even as he spoke, men were returning with swords. The group under judgment gave them no resistance; they were too weakened by the plague. They died quickly, 24,000 of them. The rest of the day was devoted to funerals and burying the dead. All Israel mourned their loss.

They spent the next week repenting for their sins and purifying themselves. After the next Sabbath, Moses took a census of all the men in the camp. There were 601,730 men 20 years old and up, able to go to war, plus another 23,000 Levites who were exempt from war. Of that vast number, only two were left (besides Moses) who had been 20 or older 40 years earlier, when they had been turned away from Canaan the first time. They were Caleb and Joshua. YHWH’s promise had been fulfilled. The last of the rebels from 40 years earlier had died in the plague. (Older females still remained, but the census didn’t count them.)

The purpose of this census was to provide an equitable basis for division of the Promised Land among the various tribes. But before Moses could finish, Logos spoke to him, “Take full vengeance on the Midianites for those who died. This will be your last battle, My dear friend. After this, you shall be gathered to your fathers, and to Me.”

Of course Moses knew what his beloved wife would think of that! So instead of telling her, he suggested she invite her sisters over for a tea party. She was delighted, sending the invitation via their advisor Hobab. But Moses had told Hobab, “Send your four sisters-in-law here. When you are sure they are here, give this message to the five city-kings of Midian: “Many died in Israel because of your deception in league with Moab. Therefore we have righteous cause against you. Prepare for battle, for YHWH has commanded me to take His vengeance out upon you.”

The five city-kings, Evi, Rekem, Reba, Zur, and his twin brother Hur, got the message. They were terrified! This was exactly what they had feared, and why they had joined in league with Moab to hire Balaam. They had a meeting to decide what to do. They were traders, not warriors. The Amorites, their previous protectors, were gone.

In desperation they sent ambassadors to Balaam, with orders to bring him at all costs. They sweet-talked him into coming, stretching the truth a little in the process. They told him that his plan had been outstandingly successful. The Israelites had been seduced into immorality and idol worship, and YHWH had put a great curse upon them, causing many thousands to die and the whole company to be permanently weakened. Therefore the kings of Moab and Ammon and the five city-kings of Midian wanted to honor Balaam with riches and fame as promised, at the big celebration they had planned in his honor.

Of course Balaam fell for it. He came. When he got there, they told him the whole truth, and ordered him once again to curse Israel, or they would all die.

Moses knew the entire army would not be needed just to defeat the five Midianite cities. So he had each tribe (except Levi) choose 1000 to send, a total of 12,000. (With Ephraim and Manasseh there were now thirteen tribes, as I'm sure you remember.) They were on the march even as Balaam was being told the truth.

Terrified, Balaam prophesied up a storm. But YHWH was not with him and he knew it. Israel's small army, with Joshua as commanding general, conquered the five cities of Midian with not a man lost. They killed all the men (including the prophet Balaam, who wouldn't even have been there if he hadn't been so greedy). They took the women and children captive, then plundered the cities and set them on fire. Then Joshua returned to the camp, presenting their captives and the plunder to Moses.

But Moses was angry with Joshua. "Why have you spared the women? They are the ones who seduced Israel into sin. They'll do it again if we let them live. Kill them all! Kill the male children as well. Spare only the virgin girls."

Joshua was surprised. "What about Ziporah's sisters? They are Midianite. Do we slay them, too?"

Ziporah shrieked and covered her face with her hands. Moses opened his mouth – then shut it. He was trapped. He flashed a pleading look toward Hobab, his advisor.

Hobab bowed his head for a minute. "Sir?" he began, looking up. "In Midian we have an ancient tradition, that if a young girl makes a vow, whether in marriage or anything else, and her father rejects that vow in the day he hears of it, then she will be forgiven of her vow if she will only repent. The father thus has authority over his daughter, to affirm or to annul her vows. If they are annulled and she repents, it shall be as if she never made them."

"Yes, Hobab, go on." Moses was starting to get it.

"Reuel never accepted the marriages of my wife's four sisters. They rebelled and married against his will. He made an oath in front of all of us, in which he rejected their marriage vows, and swore the four heathen princes would never share his inheritance. I heard it myself."

At that, Logos spoke to Moses by His Spirit, "That 'ancient Midianite tradition' is actually My own law, which I gave from the beginning of time. Reuel has the authority under My Law to annul his daughter's marriages, if now they will only repent of their foolish vows."

"Thank You, my Lord!" Moses said, a smile breaking his face. Hobab started. He had not heard Logos, and since Moses was looking at him, he thought Moses was calling him 'my lord'. But Moses didn't try to correct it. He called for Ziporah's four sisters to stand before him.

"Do you, or do you not, repent of your marriage vows made to the wicked princes of Midian?"

The youngest, Jerusha, grieving mother of Cozbi, spoke for all of them. "Sir, we regretted our rash choices as soon as we left home, and we've been repenting ever since. The five Midianite princes plotted together to deceive us! They swore they had given up their idolatry and accepted YHWH, but it was a lie! They abused us horribly, and our children too. Our children grew up within a culture of total evil, from which they could not escape. Some were sacrificed to Chemosh as babies – they were the fortunate ones! Those who lived became more wicked than their fathers. I have cried out to YHWH for deliverance every hour of every day since then, but the heavens were brass, and I knew it was because of my own rebellious choice.

"I tried so hard with my children – especially Cozbi! – to teach her about YHWH and His laws as Reuel taught me. I really tried to give her wisdom! When she was young she submitted to me, and I really thought she would... but no. My own rebellion followed me in my children. Cozbi in her teenage years became the worst little seductress of all." Jerusha was weeping profusely as she talked but she bravely continued on. Her three sisters were nodding as they put their arms around her and comforted her.

"We have lost everything we had, our husbands, our children, our homes, everything. Even the clothes on our backs, which we burned." She glanced down at her simple robe. "These clothes are Ziporah's, God bless her. We repent of it all and gladly give it all up, if only we can be forgiven and set free of our foolish vows. We want to be Israelites, and to bow only to YHWH, the God of Israel."

Her sisters all agreed. So Moses told the congregation, "I hereby declare that the marriage vows of these four are annulled, by the authority of their father, Reuel. It is as if they never married. But all who touched the unclean thing must purify themselves outside the camp for seven days. After that I shall adopt them into my own family."

As Moses had commanded, the other Midianite women were executed, except for 32,000 virgin girls. They were purified according to the law and adopted into the various tribes. Even Eleazar adopted several into his family. *Israel grows strong! With so many new foreigners added into his family, Abraham is now truly the father of many nations.*

CHAPTER 44 – MOSES' LAST BATTLE

Thus they had peace east of the Jordan. Moses could return to the task of calculating the portions of land to be divided among each of the families of each of the tribes of Israel, according to the number of sons in each family. This may sound boring to you and me, dear Reader, but to them it was everything! This was why they had come – to possess the land! Each family would have a permanent inheritance in the Promised Land to pass to their children. Moses and Eleazar led the operation, with Hobab, Caleb, and Joshua advising. It took over a month. Logos made it clear that the inheritance would only be passed from father to son; daughters would have no inheritance except with their husbands. Of course the unmarried daughters of **Zelophehad** complained about that! *Their father had died with no sons. Why should his name be blotted out in his tribe just because he had no sons? It just didn't seem right!*

When Moses brought it to Logos, He conceded the point. Each man's inheritance was his sacred possession, forever. If he dies with no son, his inheritance will pass to his daughters. And if he dies with no children at all, his inheritance will be maintained in his name by his closest relative. The Israelites were happy with that arrangement.

But as the allotted portions to each family were being settled and agreed upon, the sons of Reuben and Gad came to Moses with a request. "This land of the Amorites is good for livestock. We have much livestock! If we have found favor in your sight, let our portion of the Promised Land be on this side of the Jordan, these lands of Jazer and Gilead."

"Hold on a sec. That wouldn't be fair!" Moses objected. "All of Israel fought for this land. Why should you get all the benefit while the rest of Israel still has to cross over the Jordan and fight for their portions?"

"No, no, sir! Our fighting men will go with you across the Jordan and help you conquer the rest of the land. Only let us first build sheepfolds and strongholds for our wives and little ones – all those unable to fight. They need not go out with us across the Jordan. They can remain in this land while we go out to battle beside Israel. Then we will return to our families after the fighting is over."

Moses thought about it. He prayed about it. He was interrupted by some of the sons of Manasseh son of Joseph. They wanted in on the deal, too.

"Yes," Moses agreed. "YHWH concurs, but only if you keep your promise to help us conquer the land across the Jordan. If you do not, your sin will find you out, and your land will not be blessed. Guard yourselves from the false gods of Moab and Ammon, lest they become a snare to you and bring down a curse on your land. But as long as you remain faithful to YHWH and keep your promise to me this day, to join Israel's battles across the Jordan until the whole land is subdued before us, this land will be blessed for you and your descendants from now on forever."

Thus he gave to Reuben half the prime land of Sihon, south from Abel-Shittim to the Arnon River. He gave to Gad the other half of Sihon's land, north from Abel-Shittim to the Jabbok River. And he gave to Manasseh the beautiful land of Bashan and as far north as they cared to venture, even up to the Euphrates River. However, it turned out that only half of the sons of Manasseh accepted the deal. The other half still wanted their portion west of the Jordan. So Manasseh divided into East and West half-tribes.

Ziporah, bless her soul, saw that her beloved husband was looking a bit tired of all these deals. The cares of this vast multitude of people seemed to weigh heavily upon him. She suddenly realized that Logos had totally fulfilled His promise to her – they had conquered all the land east of the Jordan and now had peace on all sides. Logos had kept Moses strong through all the battles. In addition, between battles, Moses had found time to finish his books telling the stories of creation, the Flood, the **Exodus**, and their wanderings in the desert. He had also finished a manual for the priests, and compiled all the laws Logos had given. And that little jar of ginseng had finally run out.

Ziporah discerned that Moses' job on earth was done. He was ready to be gathered to his fathers in that better land – to return to his Creator. Ziporah bowed before Logos in the privacy of her tent. "O YHWH my God, holy, faithful, and true! You have fully kept Your promise to me, and I am satisfied. You may take my husband to his reward, for You have endowed and honored him as no other man in history. But YHWH, I do have one other small request. Please, Lord, I have lived with him and loved him these 80 years. I cannot go on without him. Would You take my life when You take his?" Ziporah heard no audible response, but she was at peace. She knew God had heard her prayer.

In that very hour, God came to Moses as he worshiped at the tabernacle. "Moses, my friend!" His characteristic laughter was comforting, welcoming, contagious. "You've done all I asked. You've finished your course and kept your faith. It is time for you to come and live with Me, where your fathers are, and to receive your rewards. Commission Joshua son of **Nun**, in whom resides My Spirit, as Israel's leader in your place. Then address the congregation, exhorting them to keep all My commands as I taught you. Finally, bring only your wife with you to the top of the mountains nearby, to the place I show you. From there I shall let you view the good land I am giving to My people, as I promised your wife. Then I shall bring you to Myself."

Logos and Moses remained in fellowship a long time, sharing their thoughts as one might share with his closest friend. Moses returned to his tent that evening to find his beloved wife facedown in their bed, weeping, her pillow soaked with tears. "Ziporah, my love! Why do you weep?"

She jumped up and ran into his arms, laughing as she cried. "I weep for sheer joy, my lord! Joy that you have completed your task on earth. You are going Home!"

Moses was mystified. “How do you know that, Zip? How did you know exactly what Logos has been talking with me about most of the day?”

Ziporah just clung to his chest and buried her wet face in his beard. How could she answer? How could she admit that it was her prayers that had kept him alive this last six months, and had strengthened him to victory in his battles against Sihon, Og, and the five kings of Midian? How could she confess to the deal she had made with God, to allow Moses into the lands east of the Jordan even though he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land, so that even the lands east of the Jordan had now become part of the Promised Land forever? How could she let him know that she had agreed for God to take Moses, now that God had so abundantly kept His promise to her? How could she tell her request to go with him, as in life, even so in death?

Moses finally began to talk. He told her of all the things God had shared with him that day. About Joshua, and his commission to lead the people in. About the boundaries of the land which Logos had described to him. About the inhabitants of the land, and how they must be displaced or they would become a snare to Israel. About the big speech he would give at the commissioning of Joshua. And about his final trip up the mountains of Nebo, in which he would take only her, his beloved wife, to see the Promised Land before he died. No one else was to know his grave site.

“Yes, I know,” she responded softly, smiling through her tears. “And where you are buried, my lord, there also shall I be buried, for I shall never again leave your side.”

“Not so, my love! Logos said you may see me die. But you shall not die there. Only I got angry with the people at Meribah. Only I am punished by not getting to enter the Promised Land. You’re twenty years younger than I. You can continue on to live a full and satisfying life. You shall live to see your children’s children to the fifth generation, bouncing them on your knee and teaching them the ways of YHWH. They need you, my love. You shall not die!”

“I do not argue with you, my lord. I only point out that we have already entered the Promised Land. You have just conquered the eastern half of it. Even now Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh are building places here to protect their little ones. You have done this, my lord. With great strength and honor, and with the greatest of integrity in soul and spirit you have done this. You are honored as the finest leader, the mightiest conqueror, since our father Abraham, or since his father Heber, or since his father Noah, or even since his father Adam. You have prevailed with God and man! Therefore you go now, not to your punishment, but to your reward! And I? Have I not stood with you, labored with you, honored and supported you, and kept faith with you through thick and thin, through joy and sorrow, through plenty and want, through peace and battle? Shall I not then be privileged to go up with you, to die with you, and to have a share in your reward?”

Moses could not comprehend such love. Now his tears also started to flow. He had never known Ziporah to be so eloquent. Suddenly he realized that it was not her, but Logos Himself who prophesied to him through her. He relaxed into her embrace and responded, “Yes, my love. You shall indeed be so privileged. I honor your choice. Thank you! And you also shall be rewarded, for never has any woman been so faithful to stand by her man.”

Moses remembered his own choice, so many years ago in her father’s home, with Reuel’s seven daughters eager to become his choice. He had not chosen the prettiest, or the smartest, or the strongest, or the wittiest, or the most fun – he had chosen the one with the truest self-sacrificing love. Now, eighty years later, he was still reaping the rewards of such an astute choice.

He clasped her tightly, lifting the back of her blouse to caress her back. She responded as loving wives still do in the privacy of their bedchambers. They both thought this might be the last time on earth they would come together like this, but there was no sadness or regret. And for a time in their ecstasy they even heard the familiar laughter in the heavenlies as Logos shared their joy.

The next morning Moses gathered all the people for his farewell speech and the commissioning of Joshua. Ziporah stood by his side the whole time, holding tightly to his arm. As Moses laid his hands on Joshua to pass on his mantle of authority, Ziporah’s free hand followed his. At that, her youngest sister Jerusha popped up to join the circle. She put one hand on Ziporah and the other on Joshua. Now, that was unprecedented! It seemed a bit rude and forward. Moses considered reprimanding her. But he didn’t want it to turn into a public rebuke, for that would include his wife! So Moses let it pass and gave his speech to Joshua.

Though in his early eighties, Joshua looked young, energetic, handsome, and strong. He would make a good leader, so long as he depended on YHWH rather than on himself. Moses ended with the challenge, “Be strong and courageous! Follow YHWH wholeheartedly. Trust Him in all things. Love righteousness. Hate the wickedness and idolatry of the nations you dispossess, or YHWH will do to you what He is doing to them! And if you ever are in doubt and don’t seem to be hearing the Word of YHWH, go to Eleazar the high priest. He will inquire for you by the Urim and Thumim, God’s lots. YHWH will answer through him. Thus you shall always know the will of God.”

It was a good speech. The people applauded and swore that they would follow Joshua as they had followed Moses, all the days of his life. When they quieted down, there was an awkward pause. Moses wanted to begin his farewell address, but there stood Joshua, with the hands of Ziporah and her sister Jerusha still resting on his shoulders. Moses wanted to say, “Lookit, Jerusha. We’re done already. So return to your place in the congregation.” But what would he say to Ziporah?

While he tried to figure out what to say, Joshua spoke, quietly, hesitantly. “Uh... Moses? I, uh... have a request.” Without waiting for an answer, he plunged on. “I have been your personal aide for forty years. I spent all my time waiting on you and on Logos, day and night. Therefore, though I am 82, I have never married. Yet any good leader must have a good wife to support him, as you have been blessed with Ziporah. I have wrestled with Logos about this for years, and He has now answered me.” He glanced at Jerusha, who was giving him an encouraging smile. Moses saw it, but he still didn’t have a clue. “Logos has granted me permission to marry a pure virgin daughter of Israel, who loves me and will stand faithfully by my side just as Ziporah has stood by your side. Will you marry us?”

Moses blinked. “A virgin daughter of Israel...?”

“Specifically, this pure virgin daughter of Israel, who stands here by our sides.” He smiled at Moses’ momentary confusion. “As her father, will you grant us permission to marry and confirm our vows?”

Then Moses remembered. Jerusha’s marriage vows had been annulled and he had adopted her into his own family. He was now legally her father. She was his own purified daughter under the law. He looked into the face of Jerusha. She had only been six when he had chosen Ziporah. Now she was 84, and still strong and lovely. She smiled at him, in a pleading sort of way, indicating her agreement.

Moses glanced at Ziporah. Jerusha was her youngest sister, and her favorite. She also smiled at Moses, nodding, eager to have her beloved little sister marry such a good man after having traversed hell and back with that wicked Midianite prince Zur she had first married.

“YHWH, what about this?” Moses breathed. Instantly Logos responded, “Yes! I have forgiven Jerusha. I have healed and cleansed her of her past. By Reuel’s prayers, she and all her sisters are Mine. Jerusha was dead, but now she lives. Her life with Me has only just begun. I have restored her youth and her strength. And besides...” He laughed, “I have big plans for her and her husband, Joshua.”

So Moses gave his permission, and married Joshua and Jerusha on the spot. Then, his farewell speech forgotten, the whole congregation broke into a grand celebration for them. The party and feasting lasted for three days. Moses began to understand that the congregation really needed this time to learn to love and respect their new leader. Moses was glad that the focus was finally off him. And, to his and Ziporah’s great delight, it gave them another three nights to share and satisfy their boundless love.

On the first of Teveth, forty years and eleven months after the Exodus, Moses stood at noon to give his farewell address. Ziporah was clinging to his waist the whole time. Joshua, with his new wife Jerusha on his arm, sat on a stool at his right hand writing furiously, even though Moses had already written out the law.

We have Moses’ speech recorded almost verbatim (it is the entire book of **Deuteronomy**), so I will only briefly summarize it here. Some scholars have argued about the authorship of Deuteronomy, but the solution is simple. Joshua wrote out the speech, then compiled into it all the law and covenant material that Moses had already written, then finished it off with his own narrative of the death of Moses at the end, just as Moses told him to do. But there are a few things Joshua never knew (nor Moses before his trek up the mountains of Nebo) which I will add to the story.

In his farewell speech, Moses reminded the Israelites of their history – their choices and resulting consequences. He reminded them of the covenant YHWH had with them, to follow His laws and receive His blessings, or to reject them and suffer under His curses. He warned them sternly about turning aside to the gods of the nations, and about making any graven image of any god. He specifically exhorted them to not bow down to the sun or moon, or fear the planets when they passed, as did all the other nations in their ignorance. He described the boundaries of the Promised Land, as God had said, “... every place on which the sole of your foot treads, from the River of Egypt [the Nile] north to Lebanon and from the Western Sea to the River Euphrates.” He reminded them of God’s Law given on Mt. Sinai. He reiterated the Ten Commandments, the Ceremonial Laws, the Feasts of Israel, the Health Laws, Laws of Tithing and Finances, Laws against Immorality, the Laws of Slaves and Masters, Laws of the Priesthood, the Laws for Prophets and against Witchcraft, Laws of Land Ownership and Inheritance, the Rules of Warfare, Laws of Marriage, and many others. All these laws were already written down as we see them in Deuteronomy. Moses only reminded Israel of them in his masterful speech. Wherever Moses voiced only the reminder in his address, Joshua later inserted the entire law that Moses had written out earlier, as we see now in Deuteronomy.

Then Moses challenged the congregation to set up a memorial of these laws, after they had taken possession of the land. They were to build an altar to YHWH on top of Mt. Ebal, the highest mountain in Samaria, and set up a monument of the Tables of the Law. They were to read the laws, every word. Then they were to antiphonally recite all the curses of disobedience and the blessings of obedience echoing between Mt. Ebal and nearby Mt. Gerizim. Thus they would remember God’s covenant to keep it forever.

It was a magnificent address – frankly one of the finest speeches ever given. I kinda wish Joshua had not inserted all the details of the various laws, for it makes the speech seem to us wordy and boring. But it was not. Moses prayed, prophesied, and sang to the congregation for 4 hours, while they all stood – yes, stood! – listening intently. It was inspired! I urge you, dear Reader, to read this great speech from the book of Deuteronomy with a new eagerness to hear Moses, in the glory of a lifetime of walking with Logos and talking with Him face to face, as friend to Friend.

As the sun was setting, Moses finally concluded, "I have sternly warned you this day. Take my warnings to heart. Command them to your sons. Observe them carefully. This is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your very life! For by this word you shall prolong your days and increase your prosperity in the good land YHWH has given you."

Moses was finished. He stopped speaking. His hands, which had been raised nearly the entire four hours, finally settled back down to his sides. His left arm circled around the waist of his precious wife. He waited for applause, or a few 'amens' – or something! But a deathly silence reigned among them. Even the earth seemed hushed in unnatural stillness. Then people began falling to their knees. Moses saw they were in awe. They had realized it was not he who spoke; it was almighty God speaking through him. He glanced at Ziporah on his left. She looked up at his face and winced – in the reflections from her eyes Moses saw the glory of YHWH blazing brilliantly from his face.

He glanced at Joshua, sitting to his right. He had stopped writing and just stared up at him, open-mouthed. Moses shook his head, and waited. It was obvious to him that God was dealing with the congregation by His Spirit. The sun set. A moonless darkness descended on the camp. The only light was that which radiated from Moses' face. But that was enough. Every heart drank in the glory.

Finally God was done. Moses knew, as the utter silence became a restlessness. He raised his arms once more and gave them the Aaronic Benediction, then told them to go home to their families. Now there was applause! It shook the surrounding hills! Surely Moab and Ammon must have been terrified!

Moses and Ziporah, arms about each other's waists, just turned to leave. But Joshua had a question. "Hey, Dude!" he whispered. "How did you do that?" ("Hey, Dude!" had become a popular exclamation ever since poor Dudimose had 'lost it' so badly at the Red Sea.) "Back at Rephidim, you could barely hold your arms up for five minutes. We had to set you on a rock and hold 'em up for you. But now, forty years later, you held up your arms for four hours!"

Moses shook his head. He hadn't been aware of his arms. Logos must have strengthened him.

Logos greeted them with hearty laughter in their tent. He appeared not just a flame of fire, but in the angel form that Moses had grown to love. Moses was delighted to note that now Ziporah could see and hear Him as well as he.

"Moses-Ziporah, My beloved!" Logos said joyfully. "Well done! Oh, well done! Thank you for all you have written of the history of My people. Joshua My scribe will finish your book for you. Your course on this earth is done. You have won the victory! This very day you shall join Me for the celebration in the heavenlies that I and My angelic host have prepared for you. For I have an appointment with you today on top of Mount Nebo."

"Yes, my Lord and my God, we are ready." Moses bowed low to the angel. "When shall we start up?"

"Anytime today," Logos grinned. "I wouldn't mind if you enjoyed your love for each other again before you go. It's too dark to climb now, anyway. Just be at the top before sunset today. I have something special for you up there." His grin became chuckles which could not be suppressed. Soon they all were rolling in boisterous laughter.

Finally He wiped His eyes. "Joshua thinks you are being punished for dishonoring Me at Meribah, for that is what I told you and that is what he heard from you. He will write your epitaph that way." More laughter. "But I turn tragedy into triumph. I turn weeping into laughter, and mourning into joy. Thus now I turn your punishment into blessings! Oh! How I love you, Moses!" He disappeared.

At Logos' encouragement, Moses and Ziporah again behaved like newlyweds on their honeymoon. Indeed, all their many years of loving could not top the satisfaction and joy of that night.

The next morning, after several hours of saying their good-byes, hugs and kisses from their relatives and many friends, a good-bye speech from Joshua and Jerusha, and a lot of tears from Ziporah's sisters, they started off, arm in arm, toward the mountains of Nebo. At first a huge crowd followed them, but at the base of the first hill, Moses stopped them. "Return to your families and to your new leader, Joshua," he told them. "This is something we must do alone. YHWH told us that He Himself will bury us, and no one may ever know our burial spot."

They first headed for the peak called Nebo. But later Logos directed them farther northwest, to the high pass between Nebo and **Mount Pisgah**. They could hear His laughter echoing in the rocks and hills all the time they climbed. Rather than getting tired from the steep climb, they felt more energized the higher they got. Their legs were strong, and their feet light. They began to frolic and joke together as they climbed. Nearing the pass, they came over a ridge, to see a couple already there, laughing and embracing. Moses was startled. "Logos, You said no one was to know of our burial place. Who then are these?"

Now the laughter became unbearably contagious and soon they were again rolling on the ground in joyous spasms. When they finally were able to look up, the embracing couple had joined them. It was Salitis and Kharsi! Much older, of course, but still very much in love! They also had clearly been strengthened.

Time seemed to pause as they hugged each other, laughed and played together, and brought each other up to date on all that YHWH had done in the last forty years. Finally the ethereal laughter that was Logos took human form, blazing more brilliantly than Moses had ever seen. "Come with Me!" He shouted victoriously, leading them on a mad run up Mount Pisgah. "Further up! To the top!"

Reaching the top, they paused. Before their eyes spread a grand panorama across the Jordan from Zoar clear up to Mount Hermon. Logos spread His arms. "I promised your wife that you could view the Promised Land before you died. There it is, My friend. All that your eyes can see."

That reminded Salitis of the message Logos had told him to give Moses. "YHWH commissioned me to give you this message: *He keeps His promises!* He certainly kept them for us. Not only His promise to make us the Pharaoh of all Egypt, but also His blessings that have rested upon us and all we did our whole lives, and our sons lives too..."

"Blessings always go both ways!" Logos laughed. "I am blessed by your obedience and faithfulness, more than you can know. All My precious ones in Egypt also received the benefit, for through you they were saved and their land was restored from the catastrophes at the Exodus."

Moses, emboldened by the exchange, spoke up. "If You keep Your promises, I have two I would now like to claim!" He grinned like an eager schoolkid.

"What? IF I keep My promises...?!" Logos cried in mock indignation.

"Yes, Sir." Moses tried to force a straight face. "First, as You just confirmed, You promised Zip I could view the Promised Land before I die. So I want to see it already."

"I have strengthened your eyes, My friend. You can see as well as any young man. Look! The land lies before you!"

"And I do not accept that deal any more than I accepted just seeing the face of Your angel!" Moses said in feigned sternness. "All I see is the sides of a few hills and a few mountaintops. I demand to view the land. All of it! Every square inch! Clear out to the Western Sea!"

Salitis and Kharsi gasped with their hands to their faces. They could not conceive of talking back like that to Logos, the King of the Universe! Even Ziporah shrank back at her husband's boldness. But Logos only threw back His head and laughed uproariously. Finally He wiped His eyes and asked, "I suppose the second promise you want to claim is My offer to let you see My face in all My glory?"

"Of course! Your Father, too!" Moses grinned. "Now Your threat that it would slay me to gaze into the face of God means nothing. The time of my death has come."

"Yes!" Logos shouted in triumph. "Once more the boldness of your faith has prevailed in victory!" For a time the skies split wide open to reveal a myriad of the heavenly host, rejoicing and shouting with Him.

Finally the shouts and laughter died down a bit, and Logos stretched out His arms. "Come you two, beloved of My Father. Take My arms and we shall view this land together. Then you shall see My face in all My glory, and the face of My Father as well. And I shall bring you to the place I have prepared for you, to dwell with Us forever."

The four humans did not know to whom Logos referred in saying "you two," so all four reached out. Moses and Ziporah both touched Logos' right arm, and Salitis and Kharsi both touched His left, at the same time. In that instant, four human shells fell to the ground at their feet, emptied of life, while the life-form that had been Ziporah merged with the life-form that had been Moses; similarly Kharsi merged into one with Salitis. In their new bodies their eyes beheld the awesome glory of Logos in His realm. Leaving their dead bodies behind with not the slightest pang of sadness, they leapt into His embrace in the air above Mount Pisgah. They were free of the shackles of earth, free as the birds! Flying high, they explored the Promised Land, all of it, from the plains of Moab where the earthbound Israelites still plodded, across the hills of Judea to the Western Sea, north across Phoenicia, east across the lands of Aram, south over Edom to the Red Sea, west across the Sinai to the Bitter Lakes of Egypt, back up the coastlands, and finally concluding above the city of Jebus. Moses-Ziporah saw it all, every square inch, and he was satisfied. Salitis-Kharsi saw it too, in awe and wonder. It was truly a good land, filled with milk and honey.

"Now, you wanted to see My Father, as well. You shall." Logos stated solemnly. "But not quite yet. First I must strengthen your frail bodies that you not perish!"

"Strengthen us? But Logos, our frail bodies are already dead. We left them back down there on the mountain."

"Thank you for reminding Me," Logos said in mock surprise. "Let's deal with them first." His arms still tightly embracing the pair, He swooped down to where the four bodies lay. Now that their eyes were opened, they beheld the angelic chorus in glorious array, circled in ever larger rings around the bodies, singing and shouting the victory.

"Bring them along," He asked. The pair had no trouble complying, for the dead shells were as light as air. They flew with them down to the saddle between Mt. Pisgah and Mt. Nebo. The angelic chorus followed. There Logos dug a big deep hole, with just a word from His mouth. There He gently laid the four bodies, Salitis next to Moses, Kharsi next to Salitis, and Ziporah next to Moses, as befits esteemed kings and queens. From His mouth came fine silks and tapestries, sweet-smelling cedar boards, then engraved slabs of pure gold, and finally thick, heavy stone blocks, covering the kings and queens layer by layer to nearly fill the hole. "Now, hide the evidence, that men never find it to make it into an object of worship," Logos directed. Moses-Ziporah and Salitis-Kharsi had seen Logos work with just a command, so they tried it too. Sure enough, the resulting soil and rock covering the grave looked like it had not been touched for a million years.

Logos then flew off with them, to introduce them to greater and greater glories, strengthening them mightily for the time they would finally be able to withstand seeing the face of the eternal Father.

Michael and his host remained around the place where Logos had laid the four bodies. They sang and worshiped a long time. The triumph of bringing a perfected member of the Bride home was multiplied many times, as these two were the finest illustrations of God's Plan of the Ages ever to return to the spirit realm from whence they came. The one illustrated perfection through long discipline and testing. The other was a prime example of God's mercy and forgiveness. What incredible trophies of the grace of God! What precious jewels to demonstrate to the universe the goodness and righteousness of Logos' ways, as compared to the foul horror of Satan and his ways! Speaking of the devil, he heard the rejoicing and finally broke through the angelic formation to try to discover what was going on.

"No," Michael said, quietly but firmly. "You are not permitted here. This is holy ground."

"Why?" Satan whined. "It looks like plain old dirt. What happened here? I am god of this world, remember? Dirt is my domain. You can't keep me from doing my job."

"It's not plain old dirt. It is ground that Logos touched," Michael explained patiently. "It is holy. I'll defend it with my life, and I am stronger than you. You must leave."

"But why did He touch it?" He snooped around. "I see nothing special here. Surely there must be a reason. Here between two mountain peaks – there's not even an altar. This dirt looks like it's never even been touched! How can this be holy ground?" He wandered off, investigating.

Soon he was back. "Moses! It's Moses, isn't it? He must have died, for Joshua is in charge down there and Moses is nowhere to be found. His dead body is beneath that dirt. I'm sure of it. That is my domain! Remember your Master's curse over Adam, 'You are dirt, and to dirt you will return.' Well, He commissioned me lord of the dirt, so that makes dead bodies my domain, too. In fact, dead bodies are my specialty! Especially Moses. He spent his whole lifetime tormenting me and my angels. Now that he is finally dead, your protection is no longer needed. I want his body!"

"What would do with it if you had it?"

"Nothing. Uh... what I always do with dead bodies. The worms go in, the worms go out, the worms play pinochle on his snout – you know." He seemed to get a big kick out of singing his little ditty.

"You would take his body to your generals to boast that you had defeated and killed him. You would tear it limb from limb and drink his blood. You would hold him up to the universe as 'proof' that the law of sin and death still wins, even for the most righteous man on the face of the earth. You would bring men to discover the body, and inspire them to build monuments to it and worship it, thus leading them into idolatry. No. I think not."

"I promise I will do none of those. I swear it. Now, let me have his body! It is my right as god of this world!"

"You swear it? By what? There is nothing in heaven or on earth that you hold sacred! So your oath is worthless. You are a liar and the father of it. All your rights are forfeit when they conflict with the Word of Truth."

"I demand to see his body!" Satan drew a sword.

Michael lifted up his head. He was tired of arguing. "Logos! Please, You rebuke him!" he called.

At the sound of Logos' name, Satan screamed and fled. He returned to the Israelite camp, still trying to find some open door to turn the people away from YHWH their God.

Michael stationed an angelic guard beside the grave, with orders to prohibit any visitors, human or demonic. Then he continued guarding the Bride, using Truth, Love, and Life to counter Satan's lies, hate, and death.

In the heavenly realms, Logos still works to grant His perfected saint Moses-Ziporah understanding of who He really is: not just YHWH, the God who keeps covenant with Israel, but also Logos, the eternal Word of God to the entire universe and the fullest possible expression of the infinite eternal Father in our limited space-time realm. The Holy Spirit teaches Moses-Ziporah freely, now with no hindrances. Beholding Logos' face in all His glory was but the first step. With each new glory, each conversation, each hug, Logos further expands his/her mind to begin to think like Him, to see as He sees, to love as He loves, and to actually partake of His awesome nature and character. His goal is to transform Moses-Ziporah into a true son of God.

He introduces him/her to all who had joined Him in this realm of spirit from the years gone by. Each generation has its testimony of God's goodness and grace: Adam-Eve, Abel-Diana, Cain-Darla, Seth-Serena, Enosh-Evita, Jared-Judith, Amy-Enoch, Methuselah-Marion, Lamech-Leah, Noah-Fuchi, Shem-Cherrie, Arphaxad-Aimee, Shelah-Sherry, Heber-Helene, Terah-Tamara, Abraham-Sarah, Lot-Iscah, Melchizedek (who had never married), Joseph-A'senath, Amenemhat-Nimaatre, Potiphar-Tikra, Job-Jeri, and many others – all one with Him in His heavenly Kingdom. It is a wonderful reunion. For the first time Moses-Ziporah understands the old Hebrew expression 'gathered to his fathers'. Male, yes indeed! But male is a much bigger word than we have known, for in this realm it includes the patriarchs each in total oneness with their God-joined wives, just as Adam at the Creation.

As Moses-Ziporah gets to know them better, he realizes a greater truth. They seem at first like a harmonious group of men, his fathers, all following Logos joyfully wherever He goes. But then the analogy breaks down. For though there are many of them, they are simply too harmonious! They all have jobs to do, yes, but no – they all do all the jobs as if it is just one body at work. Or is it even work? They all celebrate everything together as if every job was play and all of their existence was just one grand party! And he is instantly welcomed as if the party was for him all along!

Knowing his thoughts, Logos confirms it to Moses-Ziporah, “Yes, I have only one body – My Second Adam. I am his Head. These patriarchs you see are being joined to Me as a bride is joined to her husband. My First Adam died in the day he sinned, fallen prey to My adversary. But as I told him, this Second Adam I am bringing forth from the tragedy is even greater. He is many members – My chosen saints, as you see – thus many times more glorious. I am welding them all together into one pure body, My Bride!”

One question remains in back of the mind of Moses-Ziporah. Why, even in the heavenlies, does he still need to be strengthened to see the face of the eternal Father? Where is the eternal Father? Why is this Second Adam, this body of his fathers, this beautiful Bride being formed, still not strong enough? Yet every time he (or she) asks, Logos only answers cryptically, “Look at Me. Learn of Me. I and the eternal Father are one. The more you learn of Me the closer you are to Him. I promise, one day you will be strong enough to see My face – in all My glory!”

His/her longing only increases with each new glory that he/she sees. I must finish this story of time, dear Reader, the story of God’s Plan of the Ages, in future volumes, for this volume is full. But I cannot resist jumping now to the very end of the ages, so I can answer the longing of Moses-Ziporah, which truly is the deepest longing of us all.

So let’s skip now to the end of time. The Second Adam is complete, perfect, one body. He now fully encompasses the many-membered Bride of which Moses-Ziporah is just a single cell, still longing as always to see the face of the eternal Father. The universe is unthinkable vast, but this Second Adam spans it from one end to the other, ruling it all in perfect harmony with Logos as his Head.

All this time the increase of His government has never ceased, reaching up to the highest heaven and down to the lowest hell, as was prophesied by Isaiah. Now there is no place, no person, nothing in all the universe which is not perfectly submitted to His rule and authority, perfectly in harmony with His original created design.

There is no one left to reach with the gospel; no one left who has not bowed the knee to the Master of the Dance; no one left who has not joined the Heavenly Symphony. That last enemy, death, is but a distant memory.

“Father! It is finished! I’m coming Home!” sings Logos. He touches the hand of His completed Bride, “I have strengthened you. Come, see the face of the eternal Father YHWH in all our glory! I keep My promises!”

Moses-Ziporah (with all the other members of the Bride of Logos) shouts out, “Yes Lord! I come! For You do keep Your promises!” Now Logos fills his/her mind with the detailed movements, thoughts, motivations, actions, consequences, and prayers of everything in the universe throughout all time, from the greatest person to the tiniest sub-atomic particle. He then frames it as a marvelous multi-dimensional tapestry, now complete and perfect. Moses-Ziporah sees it all as a family. *The Bride, in union with Logos, has brought forth an uncountable multitude of children.* They are Logos’ servants and His brothers/sisters – all together now in the Family of God. It is all creation, fully redeemed to love and enjoy their Creator.

The Father’s voice (which is the voice of Logos, for they are one) is full of joy. “My Plan of the Ages is complete, as We agreed at the beginning of time. Look into My face, My beloved!” *The family looks up, and in the look, is drawn into eternal oneness with the Father. The universe, even time itself, is expanded into eternity. Finally, God is all, in all.*

Frankly, Moses-Ziporah is rather blown away by it all. As much as he has seen of the glory of God in Logos, he is now staggered to realize that he knew not the thousandth part. Truly seeing the face of the eternal Father is far and away more than he could ever have asked or imagined. It is as if he had spent the ages as a babe in the womb, and has just now been born. For in the light of the Father’s glory, with all rule and power and authority finally abolished and the universe in perfect harmony, he sees all of creation released into the full freedom of the glory of the Children of God, as Father God intended from eternity.

THE END OF VOLUME TWO

This volume is preceded by *Volume One – The Feasts of Israel, God’s Plan of the Ages*, which presents the theological and historical background necessary to understand the story of God’s Plan of the Ages.

This historical fiction story is continued in:

Volume Three – Joshua through King Jotham

Volume Four – King Ahaz to Messiah

Volume Five – Messiah through the End of Time

APPENDIX – INBREEDING (from page 141)

One of the traditional (but foolish) questions by which unbelievers try to stump Christians is, “Where did Cain get his wife?” The correct answer, “He married his sister,” is met with derision, for everyone knows that inbreeding, marriage between close relatives, results in birth defects.

The solution is so trivial that I hate to mention it in my book, thus this appendix. All of my dear Readers except those who were brainwashed in government ‘educational’ institutions will understand this already, and will not need this appendix.

But for those few of you who have not recovered from the humanist state propaganda, please note first that the problem exists whether you believe in the creation story or the theory of evolution. Either way, you must start out with a single pair. The probability of the gradual evolution of a creature so incredibly capable and intelligent as *Homo sapiens* is already so impossibly slender, that to have it occur separately at least eight times so that each newly evolved *Homo sapiens* has his own totally independent set of genes, is ridiculous on its face. Even the staunchest evolutionist admits he is very lucky to have had it happen once. And don’t you dare try to tell me that these highly evolved *Homo sapiens* were mating with chimps to improve their gene pool! Even a fool knows that that would destroy their gene pool in one generation, for good.

But stop and think. If it only happened once, who is she going to marry? So it had to happen twice. OK, they have kids. Who are their kids going to marry? Oh, we’re back to marrying his sister! That obviously doesn’t work, so this evolution thing had to happen four times. But even that doesn’t work, for within two generations we’re starting to get back into the inbreeding that is so destructive. History indicates that we would need an absolute minimum of eight completely independent sets of genes in order to avoid serious inbreeding in just ten generations.

As I said, the solution is simple. It also strikes another fatal blow against the theory of evolution. God created the first man, Adam, with a perfect gene set. I mean, really, truly perfect, infinitely more perfect than any conceivable evolutionary scheme could concoct.

This gene set completely and perfectly encoded every possible characteristic: black, brown, yellow, white, red; tall, short, thin, round, stocky; blonde, brunette, auburn, fiery red, or jet black hair; the list goes on and on. Adam had it all. His descendants to the ‘nth’ generation could have married their sisters ‘til kingdom come with not the slightest inbreeding defect to pass to the next generation.

It was the same with animals. God created only one breeding pair of each species, such as one pair of dogs. All the varieties we see are the result: big dogs, tiny dogs, long dogs, short-hair, long-hair, black, white, brown, multi-color, yippy, growly, woofy dogs, all in that first gene set.

Do you see how this strikes a fatal blow against the faith of the evolutionist? For his scheme to work, he has to believe that the gene pool started out small, weak, and characteristic-poor like the chimps we supposedly came from. Then as *Homo sapiens* evolved, our gene pool was slowly strengthened by the ‘survival of the fittest’ to add new capabilities, more and better characteristics. Darwin fervently believed this – so much so that he married his cousin, hoping that this combination of two clearly perfect specimens would result in the beginning of a ‘master race’.

Darwin was wrong. Inbreeding does not – can never – create a ‘master race’, as Darwin found to his chagrin. (His offspring suffered from serious inbreeding problems.) Inbreeding can never add anything to the gene pool. The best it can do is select certain desirable characteristics which were already in the gene pool to begin with, and make them dominant. (That is called selective breeding. It is used to breed dogs, horses, or roses, for example.) Even ardent Darwinists admit now that he flubbed on this.

So what happened to damage Adam’s perfect gene set? Again, the evolutionist has no answers, because he has to believe in good mutations to get a mechanism for the gene set to improve. He must remain in denial that mutations are always harmful or neutral. They can add nothing to the gene pool, all they can do is damage or destroy genes from it. But Creationists know that there were no mutations in all of creation for at least the first 1656 years. Adam’s gene set remained perfect in all his descendants until Noah because there was nothing to change it. There was no such thing as inbreeding before the Flood. That is why Cain could marry his sister. That is also why Noah’s family could safely intermarry right after the Flood.

You see, before the Flood, there was no mechanism for mutations. Our thick vapor barrier and thick warm air provided a total blockage of all cosmic radiation. Back at Creation there were no meteorites impacting the earth to create very heavy radioactive elements such as thorium, uranium, neptunium, plutonium, curium, and so on. Solar radiation was so heavily filtered that Eve couldn’t even get a sunburn! When this vapor barrier was seeded by Glacis and fell as rain in the Flood, we lost our protection.

So after the Flood – now we have a mechanism! The vapor barrier was lost. Much of our air was lost. Cosmic radiation began getting through. Earth also suffered numerous meteorite impacts, generating the radioactive metals that now all lie within the top few hundred feet of earth’s crust. The solar radiation now burns our skin. Mutations, cancers, and other diseases began shortening the lifespans of mankind soon after the Flood.

Noah’s 950 years was never achieved again. His sons lived 600 years; their sons 400; by the time it got to Terah and Abram the lifespan of mankind was down to 200 years. That reduction is (at least in part) a direct result of mutation damage to the gene pool.

Don't tell me mankind is evolving! We're devolving! We're neither as strong nor as intelligent as before.

So, while before the Flood you could marry your sister with absolutely no inbreeding problems, after the Flood, it slowly became a problem. It took time. The human body is resilient, and it took many mutations before the potential for inbreeding got serious. During mating, the fertilized egg has the phenomenal ability to throw off faulty genes and use only perfect ones to form the new baby. But, when the same gene is damaged in both parents, that defective gene can be passed along to their child. That is inbreeding. Sadly, with thousands of years of mutation damage behind us, that has become more and more common.

So let's put a time scale on this. The Flood was 3450 BC. The Tower of Babel was 3180 BC. Thus far, brother/sister marriage was common and there were no problems with it. None whatsoever. Individual families split up from Babel and went their separate ways, to form great nations all over the earth. Now for the first time you begin to see problems; just little ones at first. Some genes had been damaged! Noah and his sons had perfect gene sets. Any of Noah's children could produce offspring with a broader range of physical characteristics and skin colors than seen today anywhere on the planet. But after the Tower of Babel, the Medes, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Sinites, the Egyptians, the Nubians, the Arabians, the Cimmerians, the Saxons, the Tamoanchan, the Olmec, Minoans, Lapps, Gauls, and all the others – each family began to develop those unique racial characteristics so prominent today.

Their gene sets were no longer perfect or complete. They had become very slightly inbred. Oh, there was still great variety, but not nearly to the extent of mankind before the Flood. That is why we have races today.

About 1924 BC Terah's children intermarried. Abram was half-brother to his wife Sarai. Note that she was barren most of her life. So was Nahor and his half-sister/wife. About this time, I believe, God prohibited brothers and sisters from marrying, at least among His chosen race, the seed of Abraham. The risks had become too great. Lot and Iscah violated Logos' command and suffered from it. Lot's two daughters suffered even more after their incest. Please don't judge them too harshly. That was quite common in all cultures at the time, though God was calling Abraham's family to a new and stricter moral standard.

Most of the great nations of the earth had grown large enough by this time that inbreeding was not a problem. Egypt was an infamous exception. From their founding in 3170 BC they had established a royal family that always intermarried. By the time of Abram's journey into Egypt in 1884 BC their royal family was already somewhat inbred. That is why the Pharaoh wanted Abram's wife! Inbreeding became such a problem that when the Pharaoh's wife drew Moses out of the water in 1531 BC, she decided to make him the next Pharaoh even though he was a Hebrew.

The Hebrews would have also been inbred (they all came from one father, Jacob) except for the huge influx of the Kasdim from Ur who came during the famine. In a way, the famine saved the family of Israel! At the Exodus they were joined by many believing, God-fearing Egyptians. Later contrite Midianites, Amalekites, Amorites, Hittites, Canaanites, and others were adopted into the family of Israel, ultimately fulfilling God's promise that Abraham would become the "father of many nations." (Gen 17:4)

So, what of the future of the human race? Cancers and other radiation-mutation induced diseases have now all but taken over mankind. And rather than treating them with nutrients and exercises that strengthen the body's immune system, 'modern' doctors treat them with toxic chemicals, radiation, and amputation. Like I said, we're devolving, and pretty rapidly, too. You'd think people would have a bit more basic common sense! But no. Our technology is wondrous, but our level of intelligence is far below that of Adam or Noah. My guess is that a few more generations and it will all be over, unless Messiah returns to give us new bodies and set all things right again.

We don't know when that will be. We must live as faithful stewards of what we do know, what we have now. For sure God has given us in America a multitude of races and cultures in this "melting pot" we call home.

But these racial disparities have become a curse to us. Accusations of racial prejudice, race ghettos, race baiting, fanning the fires of racial "victimhood", racial quotas, and race-based political policies are tearing the country apart.

God's people are supposed to be better than that. Don't forget, the Tower of Babel catastrophe that confused the languages and began the races was a curse. Mankind had become so arrogant and self-sufficient they thought they didn't need God. But in Christ, the curse is being reversed. "There is neither Jew nor Greek [pagan – other races!], there is neither slave nor freeman [God doesn't judge by your social status], there is neither male nor female [God is not sexist, either], for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28) God's original design for humanity did not include different races. It is sin and its consequences that are tearing us apart in racial prejudice and bigotry.

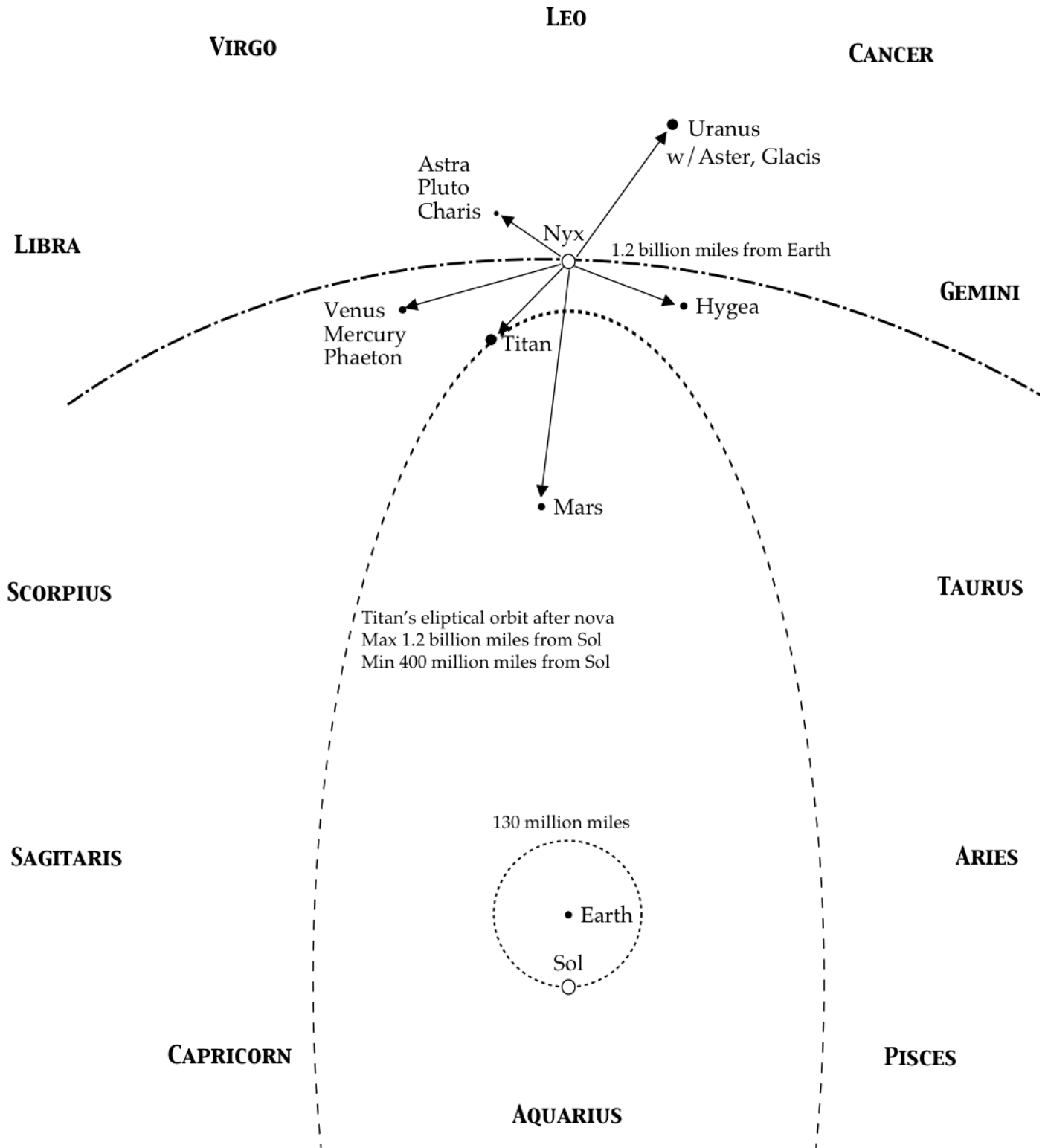
What about if we work to heal that? What if we choose to be "color-blind", judging only by a person's character rather than the color of his skin? What if we refuse to excuse immoral behavior just because someone is of a minority race, but rather hold all people to the same high standard of moral excellence that God requires of us? We are all of one blood – all equally children of God and equally precious to Him. We are all equally called to believe God's Word, accept His free gift of salvation, and learn to walk according to His commandments, and we will equally go to hell if we reject that call. Let us who are called Christian stop being so sensitive to a person's race, and instead be sensitive to the state of one's eternal soul.

Date BC	Timeline for Volume 2		
5106	Creation of the universe. Adam formed from mud	3600	28th Mars flyby. Crust develops fatal cracks
5040	The Fall, Nyx goes Nova. Adam driven from Garden	3570	Noah sent on fifth warning trip. 120 yrs to Flood
5039	Cain born. Nyx breaks up into many “planets”		29th Mars flyby. God restrains damage in mercy
5038	Titan achieves catastrophic 120 yr orbit	3550	Japheth born of Noah. Design phase for ark
5037	Abel born	3547	Shem born of Noah
5019	1st pass of Mars, threatening Earth	3546	Ham born of Noah
5016	Mars achieves a 3 yr catastrophic resonant orbit	3540	30th Mars flyby. Worst in history. Atlantis sinks
4980	Cain kills Abel. 1st Mars destructive flyby	3535	Design and tooling for ark done. Construction begun
4978	Enoch born of Cain	3522	Ark main ribs all completed
4976	Seth born of Adam & Eve	3520	Ark keel completed
4920	2nd Mars flyby 120 AF. Terrible catastrophe	3518	Ark ribs all riveted to keel
4871	Enosh born of Seth	3514	Ark crossribs riveted in place
4860	3rd Mars flyby 180 AF. Worst catastrophe	3511	Ark flooring framed
4804	Lamech kills the man who struck him	3510	31st Mars flyby. Terrible, but ark survives
4800	4th Mars flyby. Enoch’s revival. God shows mercy	3507	Ark crown beam riveted in place
	Golden Age. No war, no weapons. World Peace	3501	Ark roof joists all completed and in place
4781	Kenan born of Enosh	3500	Noah – vacation. Jubilee. Noah’s sixth warning trip
4740	5th Mars flyby 300 AF. Kenan’s miracle	3492	Ark hull sheathing completed, first layer
4711	Mahalalel born of Kenan	3481	Ark hull sheathing completed, second layer
4646	Jared born of Mahalalel	3480	32nd Mars flyby. Worse even than 3540 BC
4500	9th Mars flyby. Severe earthquake. Tubal-cain dies	3466	Ark roof sheathing completed, both layers
	Enoch’s revival has waned. City of Enoch destroyed	3460	Ark internal flooring completed
4484	Enoch born of Jared	3459	Ark chines completed. Begin garden expansion
4419	Methuselah born of Enoch	3456	Ark stone anchors completed
4232	Lamech born of Methuselah	3455	Lamech dies age 777. Noah’s seventh warning trip
4200	14th Mars flyby. Major cataclysm. God’s warning		begins; takes 3 years. Anchor lines completed
4176	Adam and Eve die, age 930	3452	Mars captures Glacis, now has four moons
4119	Enoch translated into Heaven		Noah’s son’s wives come to New Eden and marry
4080	16th Mars flyby. Earth’s crust begins to crack	3450	Methuselah dies age 969. The Deluge
4064	Seth dies age 912		33rd Mars flyby. Closest, worst pass ever
4050	Noah born of Lamech; “This one shall give us rest”		Crust breaks up. Glacis shatters. Polar ice formed
3966	Enosh dies age 905. Revival at Eden		Vapor barrier collapses. S. American Andes raised
3871	Kenan dies age 910. Culture degrades rapidly	3449	Himalayans raised. Mars takes 1/3 our air & water
3816	Mahalalel dies age 895	3448	4 children born to Noah’s 3 sons; many later, too
3813	Noah sent on first warning trip; calls to repentance	3447	Arphaxad born of Shem
3812	Uranus returns, collides with Titan; the gas giants	3433	Total 17 sons & 16 daughters to Noah’s sons so far
3811	Aster collides with Mars; knocks it out of orbit	3418	Noah gets drunk. Ham’s son Canaan is cursed
3810	21st Mars flyby. Earth’s crust opens at Athens	3394	Heth (progenitor of Hittites) born of Canaan
	Worst disaster. Culture very wicked. No repentance	3391	Enmar (Nimrod) born of Cush son of Ham
3795	1st close pass of Saturn. Earth passes through rings	3360	36th Mars flyby. Mudslide carries ark downhill
	Atlantis becomes an island. Shallow Tethyan Sea	3359	Enmar (Nimrod) rises to power in Shinar
3780	22nd Mars flyby, now on 30 yr cycle	3336	Semiramis born to Heth
3765	2nd close pass of Saturn. Earth passes through rings	3324	Enmar declares himself a god. First false religion
3752	Noah sent on second warning trip; calls to repent;	3321	Enmar raises an army, begins conquest of Shinar
	warns Athens area that crust will sink	3312	Cainan born of Arphaxad
3750	23rd Mars flyby. More crust sinks	3309	Enmar completes conquest of all of Shinar
	Mediterranean Sea is formed. Athens destroyed	3302	Enmar marries Semiramis, who joins his religion
3735	3rd close pass of Saturn. Earth passes through rings	3300	Venus w/moons near collision w/Jupiter; get tails
3720	24th Mars flyby. Major cataclysm		Semiramis changes new religion to planet worship,
3705	4th close pass of Saturn. Earth passes through rings		becomes Ishtar. Begins construction of temple
3691	Noah sent on third warning trip, to Atlantis	3280	Enmar tries to get materials for temple from Aratta
	Some repentance. Hygeia collides w/Saturn	3270	39th Mars flyby. Enmar forces Aratta to contribute
3684	Eden attacked, destroyed. Jared dies age 962	3258	Fabulous temple finished for Ishtar at Eridu
	Violence fills the earth. Men don’t heed warnings		Enmar moves to Uruk, begins building campaign
3675	5th pass of Saturn – no longer close. 30 yr orbit	3257	Cainan joins Ishtar; is disowned by Arphaxad
3666	Noah sent on fourth warning trip, most extensive	3249	Enmar controls world; his sons Assyrian city-kings
	travels 5 years, to every culture. No repentance	3240	40th flyby is benign. Satan loves Enmar’s religion
3660	26th Mars flyby. Noah is mocked. No repentance	3210	41st Mars flyby. Canaan dies at 231
3630	27th Mars flyby. Cities of Atlantis flattened	3208	Nimrod begins building tower as planet observatory
3628	Athens defeats Atlanteans. Worldwide warfare		calls it Bab-ilu (gate of god), at Uruk, N of Eridu
		3195	Damu (Dumuzi) born of Ishtar on December 25th

3180	42nd Mars pass. Tower of Bab-ilu (Babel) destroyed
3170	Ancient Egypt becomes a civilization. Many other cultures founded about this time
3105	Damu killed. In his honor, Ishtar institutes Lent, Easter, Sunday worship, Halloween, Valentine's day
3100	Noah dies age 950
3090	45th Mars flyby. Ham dies age 456
3010	Narmer rules upper Egypt. Early Kingdom Dynasty 0
2970	49th Mars flyby. Japheth dies age 580
2947	Shem dies age 600
2946	Arphaxad founds Ur, "Region of Light," at Bab-ilu
2909	Arphaxad dies age 538. Ur has prospered
2899	Menes unifies Egypt; capital at Memphis. Dynasty 1
2870	Shelah born in Cainan's fourth generation
2828	Cainan dies age 484 at Ur
2805	The Kasday at Ur are conquered by Chaldeans
2740	Heber born of Shelah
2730	Jupiter & Saturn nearly collide. Orbits changed
2715	Saturn flyby. Takes half of crust to make Moon
2700	58th Mars flyby. Greatest calamity since Flood
2672	Hotepsekhemwy begins 2nd Dynasty in Egypt
2670	59th Mars flyby. Earthquakes destroy Bubastis
2610	61st Mars flyby. Great Rift Valley formed
2606	Peleg born of Heber
2519	Senakhte begins Dynasty 3 in Egypt
2476	Reu born of Peleg
2460	66th Mars flyby. Stern warning. First Pyramids
2430	67th Mars flyby. Ur decimated. Early Kingdom wiped out in Egypt. Snefru begins Dynasty 4
2426	The Hatti rule Asia Minor. Hittite Empire powerful
2410	Shelah dies age 460
2400	68th Mars flyby. Snefru dies. Khufu rules Egypt
2344	Serug born of Reu
2340	70th Mars flyby. Khafre dies. Menkaure rules Egypt
2336	Heber dies age 404
2334	Sargon of Akkad rules most of Shinar
2326	Userkaf rules Egypt, begins Dynasty 5
2267	Peleg dies age 339
2214	Nahor born of Serug
2220	74th Mars flyby. Isesi Djedkare dies. Unas rules Egypt
2190	75th Mars flyby. Teti Sehereptawy begins Dynasty 6
2137	Reu dies age 339
2035	Terah born of Nahor
2014	Serug dies age 330
2010	81st Mars flyby. Old Kingdom ends; chaos in Egypt First Intermediate Period begins in Egypt
1964	Nahor II & Haran born to Terah by 2 wives
1959	Abram born of Terah
1949	Sarai born of Terah
1923	Lot born of Haran
1920	84th Mars flyby. Haran dies. Terah leaves Ur
1910	Nahor dies age 304
1897	Four kings of Shinar conquer land of Canaan
1890	85th Mars flyby. Thera Volcano. Great famine
1887	Bethuel born of Nahor II
1884	God first calls Abram age 75. He leaves Haran
1883	Abram & Sarai kicked out of Egypt; go to Bethel
1882	Abram & Lot separate. God's 2nd call of Abram
1881	God's 3rd call of Abram. Rescues Lot. Melchizedek
1880	Amorites attack and conquer Mesopotamia
1878	Amorite King Sumuaburn begins Babylon at Accad

1874	Mentuhotep II rules Egypt. Middle Kingdom begins
1873	Ishmael born of Abraham age 86 & Hagar
1860	God covenants w/Abram. Circumcision. Abraham 86th Mars flyby. Sodom & Gomorrah destroyed
1859	Isaac born of Abraham age 100 and Sarah
1858	Moab and Ben Ammi born of Lot age 65 by incest
1856	Isaac is weaned. Ishmael age 17 & Hagar go away
1843	Ishmael is 30. Hagar gets him a wife from Egypt
1839	Rebekah born to Bethuel. Laban born 3 yrs later
1834	Sacrifice of Isaac age 25 on Mt. Moriah
1830	87th Mars flyby. Terah age 205 dies in Haran
1826	Amenemhat begins Dynasty 12 in Egypt
1824	Abraham age 138 marries Keturah
1819	Isaac age 40 marries Rebekah. She is barren 20 yrs
1800	88th Mars flyby. Worst since destruction of Sodom
1799	Jacob & Esau born to Isaac age 60 & Rebekah
1792	Hammurabi, 6th Amorite K. Babylon, reigns 42 yrs
1784	Abraham dies age 175
1783	Lot dies age 140. Job is born
1776	Esau age 23 sells birthright for pot of red stew
1729	Jacob age 70 steals Esau's blessing; flees to Laban
1722	Jacob age 77 marries Leah and Rachel They have 10 sons over next 14 years
1708	Joseph born of Jacob. Israel . They leave Laban
1695	Simon and Levi kill all the men of Shechem
1694	Benjamin born of Jacob age 105 & Rachel. She dies
1691	Joseph's dream age 17. Sold into Egypt
1681	Joseph thrown in prison 3 years. Rebekah dies
1678	Amenemhat III makes Joseph age 30 ruler in Egypt.
1671	1st year of great famine in Egypt.
1669	Jacob (Israel) age 130 takes family down to Egypt
1665	Pharez born to Judah
1653	Melchizedek returns to heavens. Job age 130 is tested
1652	Jacob dies, age 147. He is taken to Canaan & buried. Job is healed; meets Joseph, who writes his story.
1630	Hezron born to Pharez
1620	94th Mars flyby. Thera erupts. Minoans decimated
1616	Egypt Middle Kingdom ends. 2nd Intermediate Period
1598	Joseph dies age 110. No Pharaoh in Egypt 6 yrs
1595	Amorites in Babylon fall to Hittites; both weakened
1592	Job divides inheritance among 7 sons & 3 daughters
1581	Venus in decaying orbit – watched closely & feared
1570	Hittites & Amorites weak. Mitanni drive Amorites out of Mari. Kassites take N. Babylonia.
1560	Mitanni take N. Syria; drive Amorites into Canaan
1550	Amorites conquer Canaan. Capitals: Lachish, Hebron They ally with the powerful Anakim and Jebusites
1543	Neferhotep I, "Pharaoh who knew not Joseph" establishes Nubian "taskmasters" – early Hyksos
1531	Bathiah adopts Moses born of Amram & Jochebed
1502	Hittites stronger, ally w/Kizzuwatna against Mitanni
1493	Joshua born of Nun son of Ephraim
1491	Moses age 40 flees to Midian
1489	Caleb born of Jephunneh. Moses marries Ziporah
1454	Venus first close flyby, pulls Phaeton off. New orbit
1452	Phaeton hits Bermuda. Arabian & Sahara Deserts Land of Uz all burned up. Job age 331 finally dies.
1451	Exodus March 15-21. Amalekites take over Egypt
1450	Israelites begin 40 years wandering in wilderness
1411	Aaron dies age 123. Moses conquers Sihon and Og Moses divides inheritance in land. He dies age 120

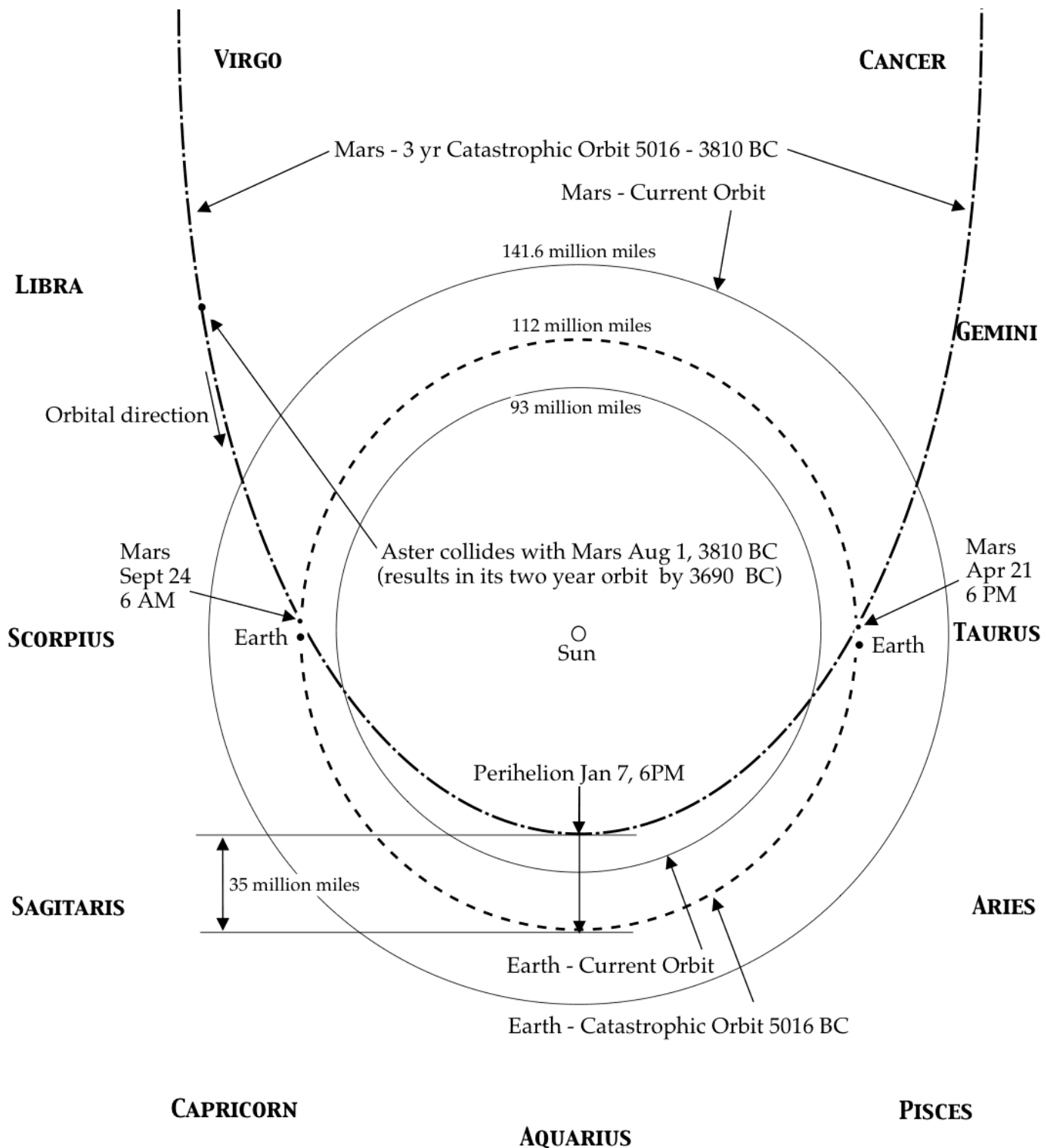
Sol / Nyx Binary System at the Fall – 5040 BC



At Creation, an Earth-centered System. Sol and Nyx rotating around Earth on opposite sides of Earth.
 Earth suspended electrostatically and gravitationally between two suns.
 Sol larger, brighter, hotter, yellow, at 130 million miles from Earth - rules the day.
 Nyx about 2% the size of Sol, cooler, silver/white light, at 1.2 billion miles from Earth - rules the night.
 Explosion of Nyx at the Fall in 5040 BC produced Titan, Mars, Hygea, the Venus/Mercury/Phaeton trinary,
 the Astra/Pluto/Charis trinary, and Uranus with moons Aster & Glacis, plus many other moons, comets, & debris.
 In 5020 BC Mars slingshots around Sol to develop a 3 year catastrophic orbit crossing Earth's orbit.

Mars Catastrophic Orbit after the Fall – 5016 -3810 BC

LEO



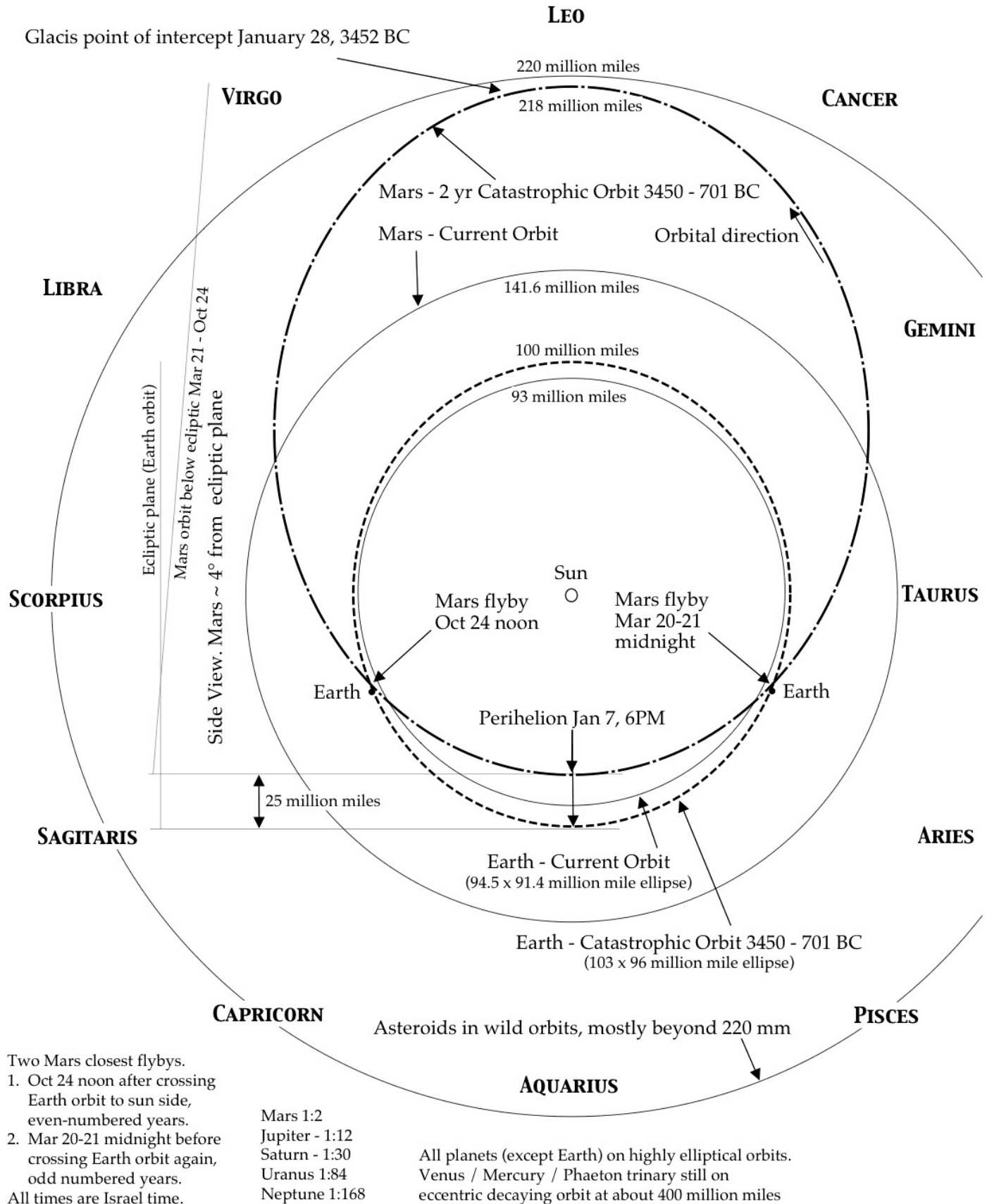
Mars settles into a three year stable resonant catastrophic orbit in 5016 BC, crossing Earth's orbit Sept. 24 and Apr. 21.

Venus / Mercury / Phaeton trinary on a decaying orbit averaging 500 million miles from Sol.

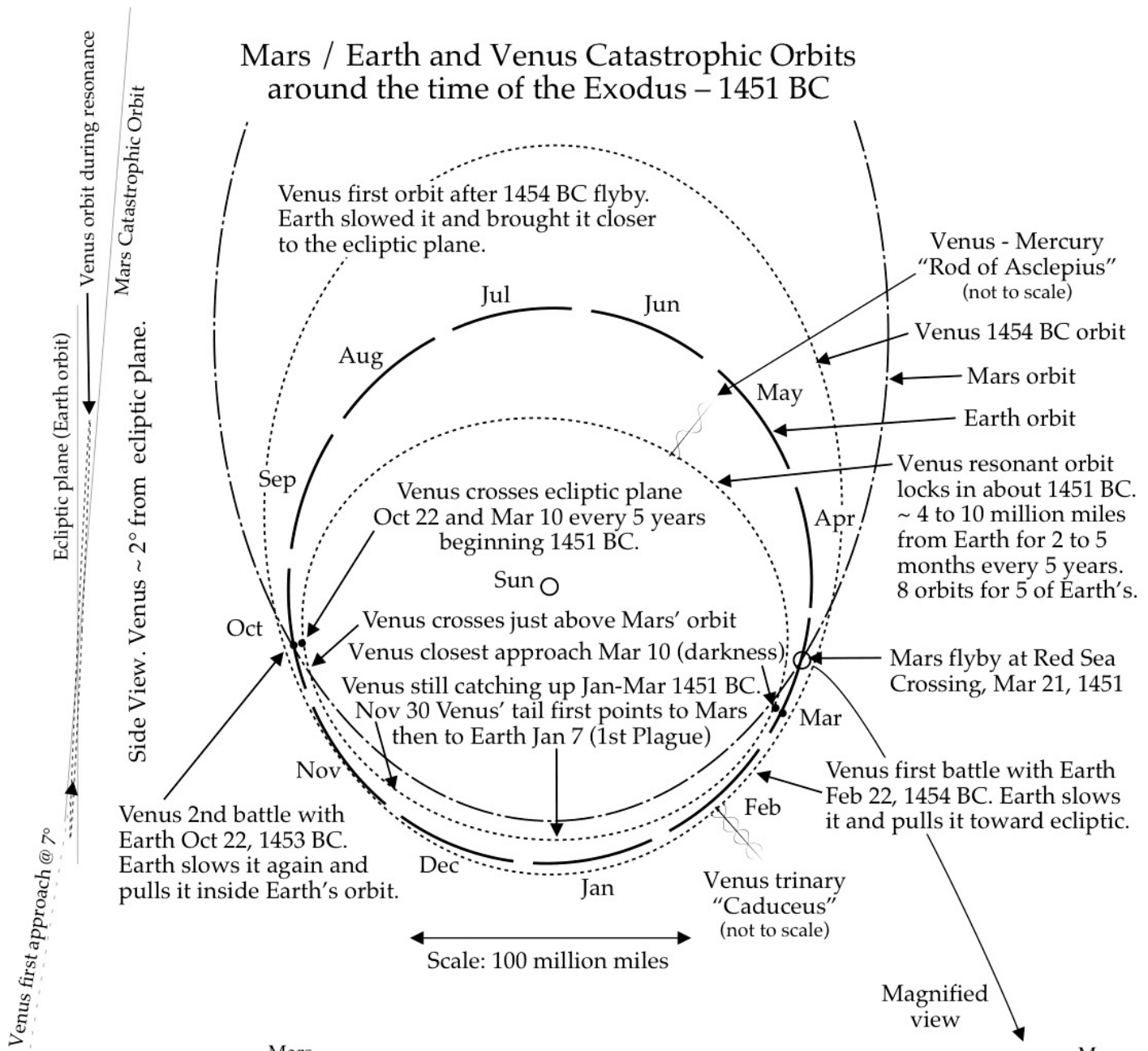
Uranus - (w/Pluto, Charis, Aster, & Glacis) in deep space 1227 years; returns in 3812 BC and collides with Titan about one billion miles from Sol. This causes Titan (w/many moons - 120 year orbit) to break up, forming Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, and a new smaller Uranus, all on non-resonant, decaying catastrophic orbits.

Solar System becomes exceedingly complex. Orbits from 3810 to 3450 BC involve too many planetary interactions to draw.

Mars Catastrophic Orbit after the Flood – 3450 - 1450 BC

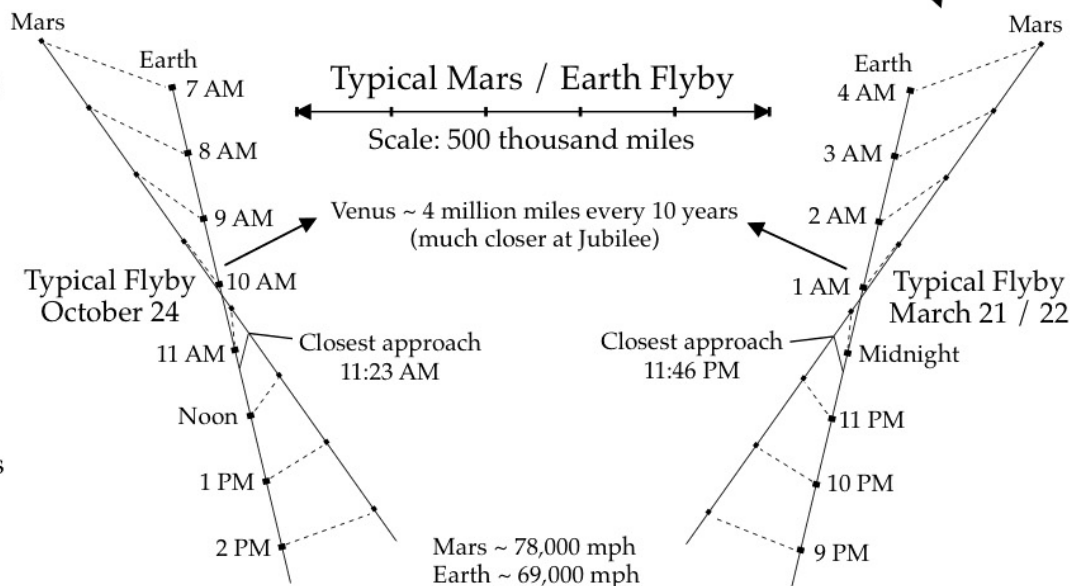


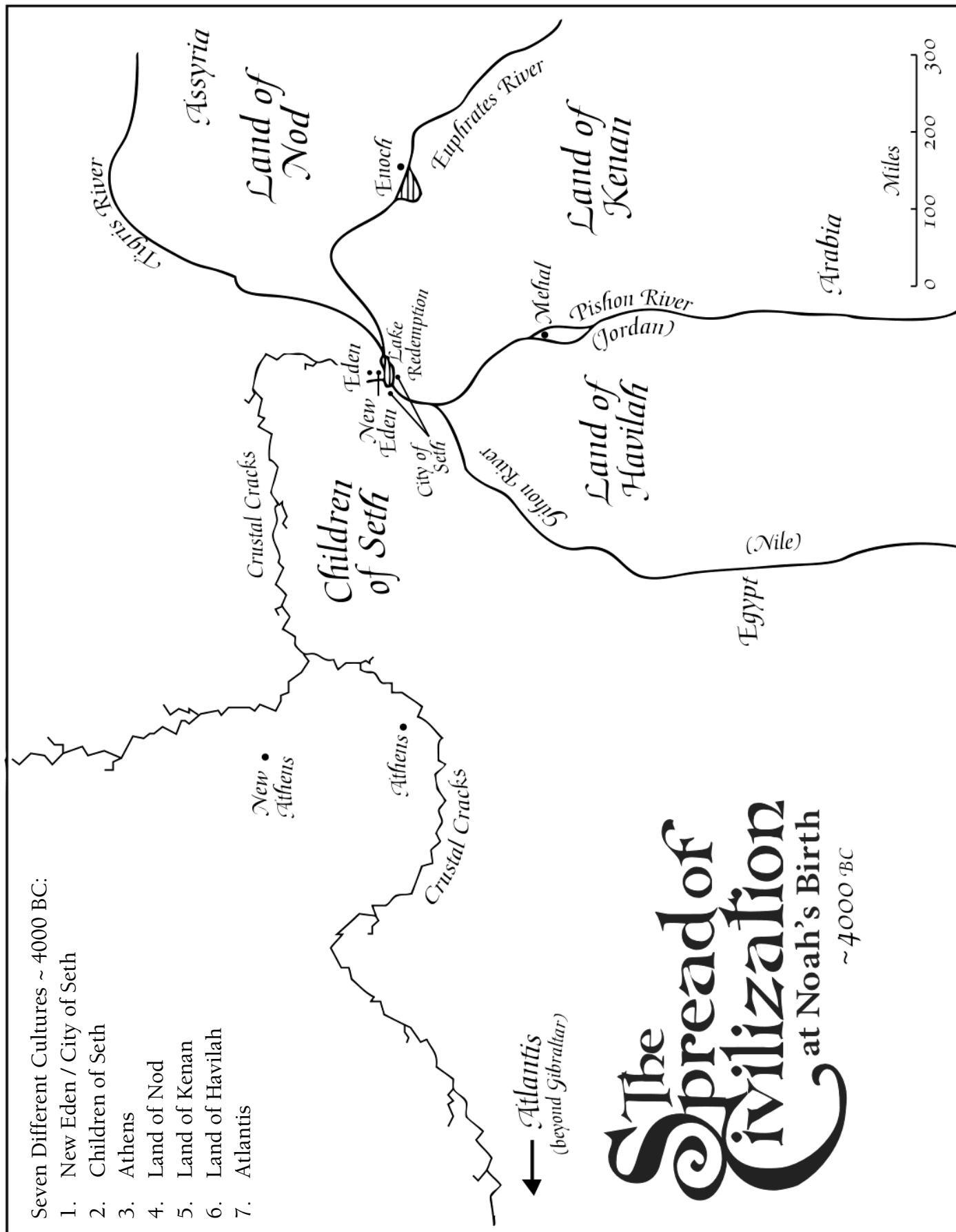
Mars / Earth and Venus Catastrophic Orbits around the time of the Exodus – 1451 BC



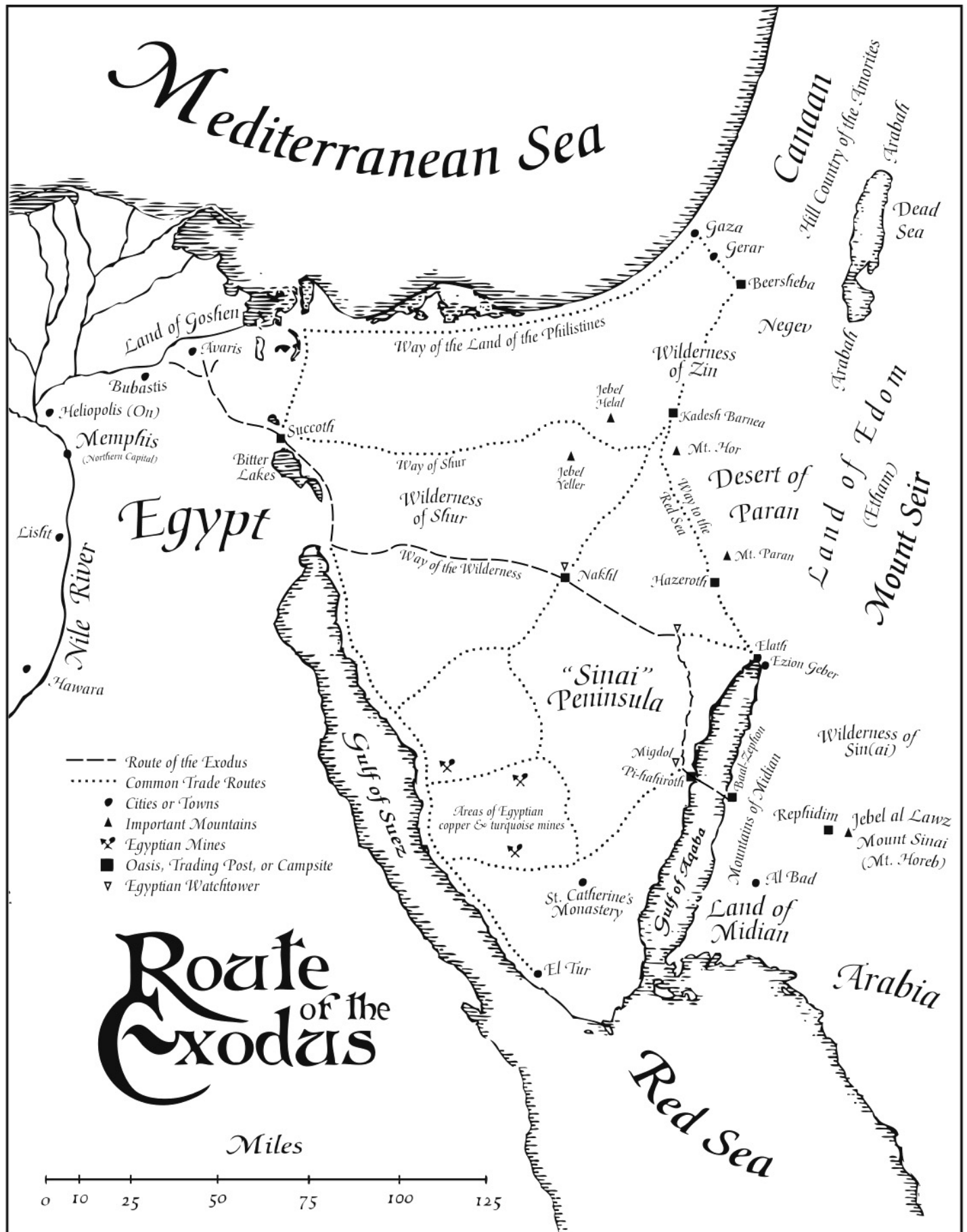
The Plagues on Egypt

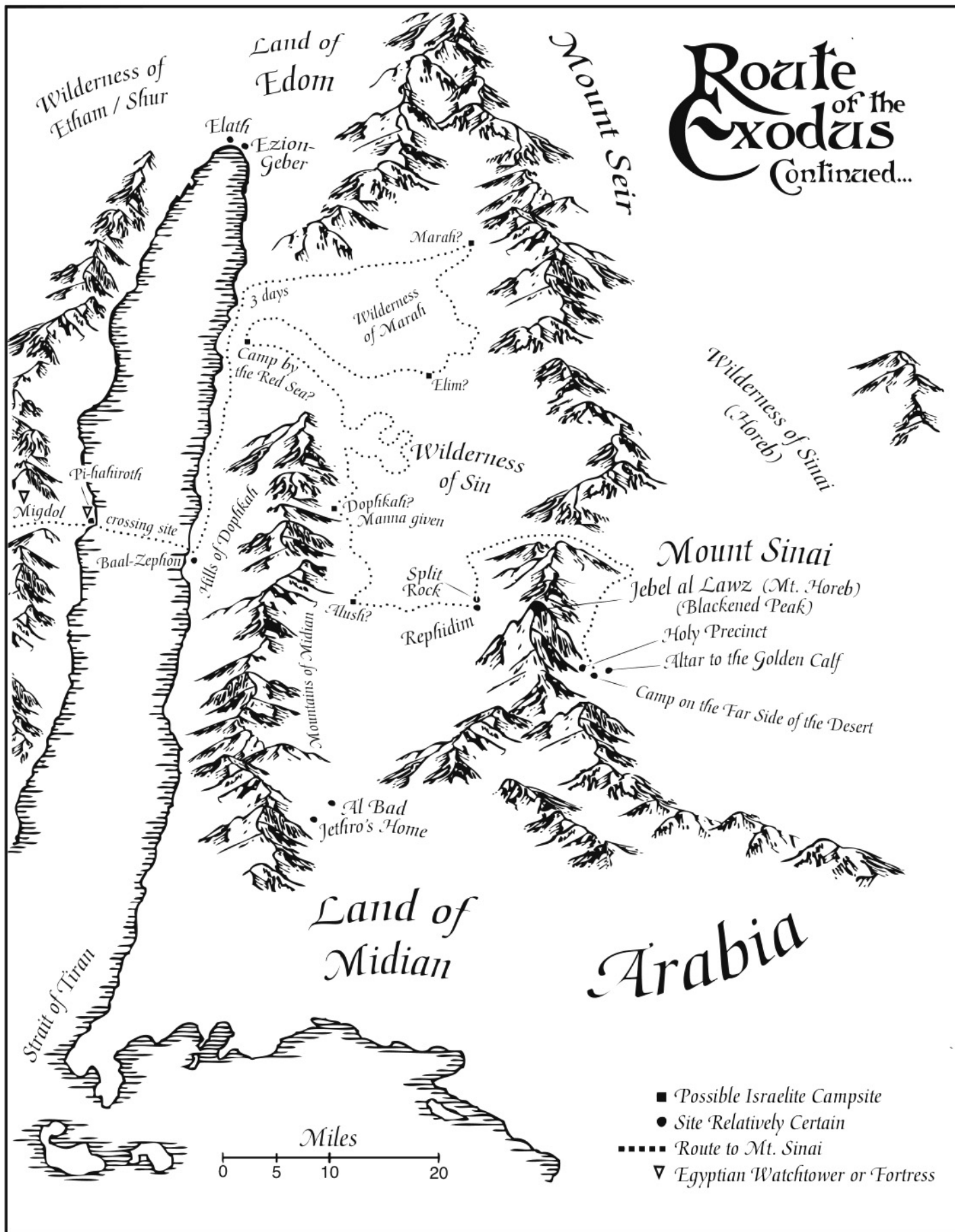
Jan 7	Blood
Jan 22	Frogs
Feb 9	Vermin
Feb 16	Insects
Feb 23	Pestilence
Feb 30	Boils
Mar 2	Hail
Mar 3	Locusts
Mar 10	Darkness
Mar 14	Firstborn die (Passover)
Mar 21	Army drowns in Red Sea
Jun 15	Amalekites take Avaris











ENDNOTE

Names at the Exodus (See maps pages 313 & 314)

Names and locations can get confusing during the story of the Exodus, because the same places were known by different names by different cultures and at different times, as you will find if you carefully read the story in any version of the Bible. This is my guess at a possible scenario to get them straight.

The entire **Sinai Peninsula** was claimed by Egypt, but we don't know what they called it. Thus when I refer to the peninsula, I let its modern name stand, though the actual Mount Sinai is not there.

Various regions in the peninsula change names depending on the nearest culture. As the Israelites started out along the **Way of the Wilderness** they crossed what the Egyptians called the **Wilderness of Shur** – their pathetic pronunciation of the Seir range of mountains in Edom on the far side of the desert.

When the Israelites passed Nakhil, they entered the influence of the Edomites, who called this same area the **Wilderness of Etham**. This is a general name for the vast area extending for many miles south of Edom and around the south end of the Mount Seir range.

The **Wilderness of Marah** is a much smaller area in the center of the Wilderness of Etham. It has water, but the water is bitter and undrinkable. Marah is Hebrew for 'bitterness' so I assume this area was only known as the Wilderness of Marah by the Hebrews and the Midianites (who also spoke Hebrew).

As you go south in the Wilderness of Etham, the Mt. Seir range peters out, though it remains a hilly wasteland. A little further south, another range begins. This area was known from the beginning of time as the **Wilderness of Horeb**, after its largest 'sacred' peak, **Mt. Horeb**. It meant 'holy mountain' way back then. Even God Himself called it Mt. Horeb, since it was holy to Him, too. Remember that the area was first populated by the descendants of Amalek. They also called it Horeb, but the name Horeb was there long before the Amalekites. Some Arabian cultures still call it by that name, though it now just means 'dry desert'.

In one sense it's all the same wilderness. There are no boundaries. Just like the area between Egypt and Edom changed names, so the area south of Edom changed names from Etham to Horeb, depending on which culture was dominant and whose side you were nearest. Nobody knew or cared just where the Wilderness of Etham morphed into the Wilderness of Horeb.

But the Amalekites perverted the holy mountain. They were an idolatrous culture, with many planetary gods and goddesses. They dedicated Mt. Horeb to their moon god, Sin. The worship of Sin was always from the west side of the holy mountain, facing east toward the full moon as it rose in all its glory behind Horeb. So the wilderness there became commonly known as the **Wilderness of Sin**. Even the Edomites called it that (derisively), though they never forgot the original name Horeb.

Midian tricked the Amalekites to vacate their land back about 1790 BC. Midian, a son of Abraham by Keturah, did his best to cleanse the land of idolatry. He renamed Sin to Sinai, meaning, 'Sin is Confronted' or 'Sin is Exposed'. God rather liked that name, and from then on He often called it **Mt. Sinai**. I think He got some chuckles over the play on words – at the 'Holy Mountain' (Horeb) 'Sin is Exposed and Confronted' (Sinai).

The wilderness area on the 'backside of the desert' (the east side of Mt. Sinai) is where the Israelites received the tablets of the law, which 'confronted their sin'. They believed, worshiped YHWH, and swore to follow Him and Him only the rest of their days. Therefore, Moses used the Midianite name for this area – the **Wilderness of Sinai**.

However, the 'frontside' of the desert, west of the holy mountain, developed a different story. In this wilderness, two miles west of Mt. Horeb, is a towering 90 foot tall rock, now split in two. It sits atop a hill rising 200 feet above the valley floor – obviously a perfect 'high place' for idol worship. Back when the Amalekites owned the land, the bravest of the Amalekite priests of their moon god Sin would climb this rock and worship Sin from its peak. That turned out to be exceedingly dangerous. After several fatal falls, they carved a narrow ledge on the side of the rock and attached rope railings to make it safer to get up and down. We know this rock as **Rephidim** (railing, banister). Moses renamed it **Massah** (trial, temptation) after the Israelites grumbled there about their lack of water, thus 'tempting' the Lord. After the big battle with the Amalekites, Moses also called it **Meribah** (strife). In his mind, the influence of the Amalekite idolatry had never been fully eradicated.

So as Moses thought back to all the complaining, strife, and faithlessness of the Israelites during their journey through that valley, he refused to call this wilderness west of Mt. Sinai by its Midianite name, the Wilderness of Sinai. He insisted that they call it by its old Amalekite name, the **Wilderness of Sin**, and thus it is to this day. As with the Edomites, Moses used this name in a derogatory way, not in honor of the Amalekite moon god, but in shame of the sins of the Israelites while going through it.

ENDNOTE TWO

Spin of the Earth's Crust at the Flood (From page 104)

The Reader with an analytical mind may have trouble conceptualizing this aspect of my story, as it is incredibly difficult to visualize two spheres, one inside the other, each rotating, but on different axes.

The inner sphere is, of course, Earth's core. It rotates roughly about our magnetic axis, which does move around a bit but never very far. The circulating molten metals in this core maintain our magnetic field. The reason the magnetic poles wander around is those molten metals circulate a bit unevenly. This molten core is exceedingly massive, and like a big gyroscope, its spin axis never changes much, even when 'pulled' by a passing planet.

The outer sphere is Earth's crust. Compared to the core, it is very thin and nowhere near as massive. It did change! Most of us think the crust is firmly grounded to the core and rotates precisely with the core, but that is not so and never has been, for several reasons.

The first reason is obvious. The core is liquid. The crust floats on top of it. As the molten core circulates around, there is always a little drift here and there of the crust on top. Now that the crustal plates are broken up, this results in continental drift and occasional mountain building, earthquakes, fault slippage, and so on as the crustal plates ram against each other or slide past each other.

The second reason is not at all obvious, unless you understand how Earth was created. In the beginning, God made two crusts. They were both continuous spheres, strong, flexible, and a bit porous. The inner crust mostly spun with the core, though it did drift around a bit. It was separated from the outer crust by a subterranean ocean of warm fresh water (roughly equivalent in volume to all our present oceans). Though this outer crust would end up spinning the same direction as the core and the inner crust, it was always a bit slower, giving us a longer day. In addition, whenever there was a flyby of another planetary body, this outer crust would spin sideways due to the passing planet's gravitational / magnetic / electrostatic forces and gyroscopic precession. That would put Earth's equator in a different place with each planetary flyby.

Usually this sideways spin was not too much – maybe 2 to 5 degrees with each routine planetary pass and 15 or 20 degrees with the closer flybys. Since Earth was protected by a high vapor barrier, the 'greenhouse effect' kept the entire surface of the earth warm. So you were comfortable no matter where you lived. If you didn't like living near the poles, it would soon change again anyway, as it was slowly drifting all the time. This makes it difficult to tell a story, as 'north' is rarely north. So, I decided from the first to always tell my story using the directions we use now, as if the inner and outer crustal axes always lined up properly with each other. That convention worked well, until the Flood.

Just before and during the Flood, the Mars flybys were exceedingly close, causing that outer crust to spin back and forth as much as 110 degrees! That causes my story of Noah's ark circling the globe to get very confusing.

To complicate things further, the Flood was before the Ice Age and before the moon. The Americas still nestled up against Africa and Europe, and the land I call Pacifica still covered 3/4 of the globe. So during the Flood the equator, which intersected Chad and Saudi Arabia, also crossed Venezuela, which was touching Liberia back then.

One further complication: a very close planetary flyby sometimes causes the magnetic poles to flip polarity, changing the crustal skid direction for following passes.

We cannot know for sure just where Mars went past. But we have some good clues. A close flyby exerts a huge pull all over this thin outer crust. The result is, it crinkles along the center as the sides are pulled together, forming mountain ranges in big arcs. Most mountain ranges are in such arcs. They show how much the crust spun sideways as Mars went overhead. If the arc is smooth (as with the Himalayas) the crust was spinning freely. If the arc has uneven bends or straight segments (as with the Andes), the crust may have grounded during parts of the flyby.

So, with all that background, here is how I picture the Flood scenario. Mars approaches along Earth's equator, which at that time crosses Terra del Fuego at roughly 90 degrees from where it lies now. Glacis shatters, but the ice has not yet hit Earth. At Mars' closest approach over Peru, the grounded crust breaks free and spins wildly sideways, causing Mars to first head 'west', and then (as the magnetic poles flip) head 'east' towards Arabia. Thus by the time the ice from Glacis hits Earth, the outer crust has turned so magnetic north is 10 degrees towards Alaska from our spin axis north pole, not far from where it is now. That is where the deep space ice falls, creating our polar ice caps. This -250° F ice piles up some six miles high, covering most of Alaska and northern Canada, Siberia, and Greenland. Some of this space ice has remained until quite recently.

I know, it sounds insanely complex and impossible to make into a plausible story. But I have several important things in my favor. First, Noah didn't really care where the magnetic poles were as long as the ark stayed far away! Second, the huge tides and winds that built up during the approach of Mars continued to follow Mars as it departed, pushing Noah's ark to our new 'east' and not encountering the mountains of ice falling on Earth's new poles. Third, (and most important), the outer crust had firmly grounded to the inner crust after that October flyby, so the following Mars flyby the next March (and succeeding flybys) didn't change the equator much after the Flood. It intersected Israel and northern Iran, 30 degrees from where it is now, and remained near there for many years. That allowed Noah's family to prosper around the plains of Iraq as the Ice Age gripped most of the earth with glaciers.

Paul A. Lindberg

A Brief Autobiography of the Author

I was born in 1947 just after the War. At the time, my parents were zealous Christians going to seminary and preparing for the mission field. We first went to China, but in 1951 had to leave because of the Communist crackdown on missionaries. In 1954 we returned to the Orient, this time to the Island of Formosa off the coast of China. I loved it there, both the land and the gentle, kind, Oriental people.

In my teenage years we returned from the mission field. My parents started an Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the Seattle area. I was only seventeen when a missionary family from the Orient came to visit our church. It was clearly God's leading that I fell in love with their oldest daughter. I married her six years later, right after my tour of duty in the Vietnam War. She has been God's blessing to me ever since. I could not have written these volumes, indeed I could not have accomplished much of anything in my life, without her faithful love and support.

During my eighteen years as a Boeing engineer and while raising three lovely children, God was teaching me how to know His voice. My godly parents had raised me with the firm knowledge that I belong to God, and I don't recall ever doubting that. But that was just the first step. I was twelve when I first became aware of, and dealt with, my own sinfulness. But it really wasn't until I was about thirty that I began to realize that God is much more than a Genie in the sky who protects me and grants me wishes. He wants a relationship. He wanted me to grow up, stop playing games with my life, and learn to know Him. He wanted me to learn to hear and obey His voice, learn to understand His ways, learn to appreciate His wisdom, learn to respect His majesty and authority, and learn to worship Him in spirit and truth.

So it was out of the comfortable Presbyterian churches we had been attending, and into a wild and woolly Pentecostal church, where everyone spoke in tongues and prophesied and worshiped up a storm in services that sometimes went on for hours. We both hated it; never felt so uncomfortable in our lives. God almost had to drag us back there every Sunday for a whole year. There was another church much closer to our home; I pled with God for permission to make that our home church instead. But He said no, and we were learning to heed His voice. Every Sunday when we would pray for direction, God would tell us softly, "Go back to Maranatha Chapel today." We obeyed. We still hated the rowdy services, the wild (and too loud) music, and the boisterous people. But we were learning to love the preaching of the Word of God by those truly filled with the Spirit of God! This was no longer a detached intellectual theology, but a life-changing spiritual journey, and we were on it. The Word of God came alive to us; no longer just something to understand, but something to be and do, something God wanted us to live.

The turning point in my life came one day when I was praying and fasting about some burdens I carried. God Himself came and spoke to me, as clearly as I'm speaking to you, and I knew I'd never be the same again. He first quoted back to me a verse I'd learned as a child: Matt 11:28-30. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls; for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." I waited, listening, but He had stopped. So I responded, "Okay, Lord, but I already knew that one." Still nothing more. Finally, just to try to keep the conversation going, I asked, "What is Your yoke, Lord?"

His response was instant and powerful. “My yoke is my love for My people. If you will carry it, I will carry all your other burdens.” I was shaken. I managed a weak, “Yes, Lord!” but He was not through. “Go now! Love My people at Maranatha Chapel!” He thundered. The interview was over. God “set us into the body as He desired” that week, and poured out upon both my wife and me a deep love for His people at Maranatha Chapel. Soon we were experiencing the most joyous worship in our lives, and maturing spiritually at breathtaking speed. I would never be the same again.

For seven years God had us in this spiritual “nursery,” learning to know His voice and follow wherever His Holy Spirit leads. It was glorious, truly a baptism into the nature and character of God and an immersion into His ways. Our Presbyterian baptism (I was sprinkled as an infant) was no longer enough. Now we were really baptized (immersed). Now the focus of my life changed. “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.” (Rom 8:14) I went through their “School of Prophets” training, like a spiritual “seminary.” Now my greatest delight was (and still is) to hear and obey the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Of course I prayed for the gift of tongues – the real one, not some mindless babble of baby noises. I never really received it, though God gave me enough of a foreign language to confirm that the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12) are still valid. God had a better gift for me. I got my first computer in 1978, and He told me to sit down and write. My first book, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus*, was the result. It is now obsolete (I was sure that Christ’s “Second Coming” would be within the next seven years), but it was good training.

In 1984 the Lord led us to leave Maranatha Chapel. A pastor and his lovely family came to live next to us, and we were led to support his new ministry at a nearby Baptist church. He was on fire for God and filled with love for the Holy Scriptures and all that God was doing to bring revival to the little congregation there. This was an exciting time, as we prayed, encouraged, and saw them growing in every way. For the first time, this little congregation was seeing God working in a personal and powerful way in their midst. God had His church back!

Sadly, the elders there weren’t willing to give it up. They first threw me out, for believing in the gifts of the Spirit and suggesting that someone with a sick grandchild should go to the elders to ask for prayer for healing in accord with James 5:14-15. (They told me that miracles had passed away with the first century apostles; now we have doctors instead.) Later they threw out our pastor, too. Within a year, that church was gone. They had “quenched the Spirit” (1 Thess 5:19) and God had “removed His lampstand.” (Rev 2:5) They disbanded and sold the building to another congregation.

In 1988 I left Boeing for a homeschooling tour of the country with my family. But instead of returning after the trip was over, the Lord told me to “work for Him.” I began writing nearly full-time. The Lord always provided enough other jobs to pay the bills, such as some computer consulting, editing and book publishing, and finally a part time job with Provident Electric, developing and using a computerized estimating system.

My next major work was *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. It is a delightful childlike primer portraying me just sitting at the feet of Jesus, asking Him questions, and writing down His answers. After that, I spent a year compiling, editing, rewriting, and publishing Brother J. Preston Eby’s Kingdom Bible Study series titled *The Seven Spirits of God*, a deep and profound series of sermons in End-Time Revelation. I later wrote a booklet on health and another on the Kingdom of God, using each for adult Bible study classes at church.

For a year or two we had church at home with a group of like-minded friends. It was good, and profitable for all, but I had a young family, and my kids needed the interaction of a regular congregation.

We began visiting churches in the area and made it a family project to pray together about each one. The Lord led us to a Southern Baptist church, where we have remained since 1992. Not surprisingly, our pastor friend and his family joined there too after being thrown out of the other church. It was pretty small back then, but it has since grown into a vibrant, loving congregation, eager to hear and do God's will in the community.

In 1998, after my class on the Kingdom, I began to write a new adult class study on the Feasts of Israel. This turned into a major study on the entire Old Testament. It quickly became far bigger than just an adult Bible study class, as I discovered how little we all know about the Old Testament, and how much that impacts our understanding of the New Testament! I realized that we Christians held onto a false picture of the Bible story, so I began rewriting that, too, not realizing what a huge undertaking that would be.

Now, twenty years and over 30,000 hours later, my life work is complete. I've recently retired. I now have a publisher, Redemption Press, and a website where anyone can go to read my books. It is at: "www.GodsPlanoftheAges.com," since the Feasts of Israel, more clearly than anything, reveal God's master plan of redemption throughout the ages.

Author's Personal Testimony

I was born a Christian, or so I thought, as my parents were good Christians and I'd always been an obedient child. However, when I was twelve I had a supernatural experience which changed my life. I had walked to church by myself. When the preacher gave the "altar call" I knew I didn't need to raise my hand, as I was already a Christian. Imagine my surprise when I looked sideways and saw my hand up! I yanked it down, but I was too late – the preacher had spotted me. After church I tried to slip out, but he caught me and asked if he could pray with me. I told him he didn't need to, as I was already a Christian.

"Well," he responded, "Let's pray again together just to be sure." So I prayed with him, telling God I was sorry for my sin and asking Jesus to come into my heart and forgive me. At the time, nothing happened, and I was just glad to escape. But as I walked home I began thinking about it. I realized that although I had asked God for many things before, I'd never asked him for forgiveness, as I didn't consider myself a sinner. I was the "good boy!" Suddenly I was overwhelmed with all the ways I had grieved God – my pride and self-centeredness, my selfish, greedy, covetous attitudes toward all my stuff, my unkindness and lack of compassion for others, some "little white" lies and some stuff I'd stolen from the dime store – more and more things flooded my mind. I began to cry.

I was still crying when I got home. My godly parents saw, but recognized it as a work of God and thankfully backed off and didn't try to interfere. For two weeks I cried, day and night, at school, on the bus – I cried myself to sleep each night and woke up still crying. My whole world had turned upside down. Before it had always been "the other guy," but suddenly I was the one who was damned to hell if I didn't get right with God! I pled with God for forgiveness, but only felt more wicked. I reread all the promises of God's blessing in the Bible that had once comforted me, but now I saw that they applied only to those who are forgiven, and not to sinners like myself. I was desperate. I cried out, "O God, if You're there, please let me know that You've forgiven me!"

Suddenly with that prayer – peace. Joy. Assurance. Not just God's forgiveness but His love flooded my soul. God instantly transformed my wicked, deceitful, self-centered heart into a heart that truly loves what He loves and hates what He hates. I've not always been perfect since then – indeed I've had many more lessons on what it means to walk in "the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." (Psalm 23:3) But like a good Shepherd, He has led me, and from that day to this I have never entertained the slightest doubt that I belong to Him, that He loves me, and that He has a place for me in His eternal Kingdom.

Author's Statement of Faith

Just so you don't think I'm some weird off-the-wall kook out to make a buck on a racy novel, here is a brief statement of my faith. This is what I really, honestly believe:

God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, mercy, love, and truth. There is only one God, but He has revealed Himself to us as trinity: the eternal Father YHWH, Yashua (Jesus Christ) His Son, and His Holy Spirit, one in essence, character, and glory, three in function.

Man's chief purpose in life is to please and glorify God and enjoy Him forever. No one can be truly happy or fulfilled in life without acknowledging God as the Source of life. He made us and sustains us. Our life is in His hands. His claim of ownership is absolute. Until we bow before His Lordship and seek to do His will, we will not know true joy.

Since Adam's fall, man has been utterly bound in sin, self-centered, unable to please God, and devoted to destruction. He cannot save himself and has no hope unless God redeems him. Our sin nature totally blinds us to God, who alone can open our eyes.

Yashua is the Word of YHWH the eternal Father, the full expression of God into the space-time realm. He has always been fully God. He became fully man at the incarnation, born of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. Animal sacrifices in the Old Covenant pointed to the perfect sinless sacrifice of Yashua on the Roman cross, which paid the penalty for the sins of all who believe and receive Him. His sacrifice is totally sufficient, once for all time, for all the sins of mankind. No other sacrifices are required in the New Covenant. After His death and punishment for our sins in hell, Yashua was resurrected, restored to power and glory, and given a name above every other name by the Father. He ever lives to intercede for us, for He is the only mediator between us and the eternal Father YHWH.

All who will not believe and receive Yashua as his personal Savior from sin must pay the full penalty for their own sin. Sin's penalty is death, but this is not primarily physical death. This is soul death, spiritual torment in hell, the 'lake of fire', assigned by God's perfect justice in strict accord with their own wicked deeds. Salvation is only by faith in Yashua. But punishment has nothing to do with faith; it is always according to deeds.

The Holy Bible, in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the written Word of God, word-for-word inspired and inerrant in the original languages. The New Testament rests foursquare on the Old with no conflict. However, by itself, the text is dead. The Holy Spirit of Yashua gives it life. Anything the Holy Spirit says to us will rest foursquare on the Old and New Testaments with no conflict. God did not stop speaking with the canonization of the Bible, yet He will not, He cannot, contradict Himself. On the other hand, man's translations, verse or chapter divisions, punctuations, paraphrases, and theological interpretations of the Holy Scriptures are not necessarily inspired. Wherever they make the Bible to contradict itself, they are demonstrably uninspired.

The Holy Bible is clouded to those who will not believe. It is clearly understood only by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The proud can read the Scriptures, pray, and still get nothing from God. The humble repentant heart that is seeking God cannot read the Scriptures without getting something from God, for His Word by His Spirit, even with no human intervention or explanation, is totally sufficient for our salvation and redemption. I take every verse of Scripture literally unless it is clearly intended to be otherwise.

God sends His Holy Spirit to live within the soul of each Believer to: convict of sin; encourage righteousness; release grace for us to walk free from sin's bondage; build faith; lead us into all truth; glorify Yashua in us; assure us of our salvation and eternal destiny; and inspire us to live as Yashua lived – in obedience to the eternal Father and in harmony with God's laws. Only those who are being led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

God's purpose in creating the universe is not to save us from sin! That's just a detour. His purpose is to form, mature, and perfect a many-membered Bride for Himself, to use His Bride to call the rest of humanity to Himself, and to ultimately bring her (and all who heed her call) to the Father in eternity. This call (found in Rev 22:17) will eventually reach out to everyone, even those paying the punishment for their own sin in hell.

God never fails in His plans and purposes. Ultimately every created being, whether in heaven, or on earth, or in hell, shall see the glorious perfection of His Plan of the Ages. When they do, they will bow in willing submission to Him. Yashua, the only way to the eternal Father, will then banish all rule, authority, and power and turn over His Kingdom to the Father, that He may be all in all. Thus the many-membered Bride, finally perfected in unity with Christ, will return with Him and all His brothers and servants to the Father.

God is eternal. The spirit He fathered in each of us (who He created in His own image) is likewise eternal. However, the world, heaven, hell, and nearly everything we know are temporal, with a beginning and an end. Even the Holy Bible and the Kingdom of God are temporal. Yashua is the only way from the temporal into the eternal.

Satan, the adversary, is leading the Great Controversy against God, claiming that his own ways of self-serving deception and force are somehow better than (or at least equal to) God's ways of self-giving love. Satan has already lost. At the end of the ages he, together with everything he 'fathered' and all who followed in his rebellion, will be destroyed in the lake of fire. Finally death and hell will also be destroyed, once every penalty for every sin has been paid and all the works of Satan are destroyed. Ultimately only that which God 'fathered' will remain in the universe, for that which God 'fathered' cannot be destroyed. Then all shall see that everything Satan did, indeed everything anyone did, only worked out according to God's perfect plan as purposed from the dawn of time.

God is awesome. To know Him is to fear Him, and fear to cross Him! Yet He does not want us to be afraid of Him, but rather to draw near to Him, to develop a love relationship with Him, so that He can live His life boldly in and through us. God wants us to live like Yashua did, always led by the Holy Spirit to find and do the Father's will, thus allowing His power and authority to work through us. Thus the fear of God is the most beautiful, awesome, joyful experience, for in the fear of God we trust, even rest, in His awesome greatness and His infinite love. Those who develop a proper fear of God do not fear man, or nature, or even Satan or demons, for they are all under God's authority and power. God's children can simply walk by His Spirit and do His will, trusting Him for the results.

That is what I've tried to do throughout my story. In some cases I believe I've succeeded, as I stare in awe at what I can hardly believe I have written. To God be the glory forever for all that He has accomplished through me. In other places I see something that is muddled or unclear. It doesn't ring with the purity of the Spirit of God in and through me. It is clearly a mixture of the holy with the profane. Though I write with authority as if I know all truth, yet I tremble in my boots, in fear that my own deceitful heart may have misled me. I wrestle with it, but I am just a man. I do not have all wisdom and knowledge. I have somehow accepted a lie somewhere, whether in my interpretation of the Scriptures, my research or knowledge of history, or even just my own thoughts and desires. I do the best I can, but I finally realize that I cannot fix it. Not until God has worked His perfect work in one more area of my life. Perhaps that part, dear Reader, remains for you to clarify, for we need one another. At the least, I realize that in showing me my weaknesses, God is keeping me humble, so that He can continue to use me. So please, dear Reader, just enjoy my story, giving praise to God for the good parts and forgiving my errors. I hope and pray that God will use this to complete the Reformation that was begun with John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, and John Calvin, and help prepare the way for the soon returning in great power and glory of Jesus Christ, Yashua haMashiach, for His Bride.

A few notes on my Illustrator, Nate Santa Cruz

Nate is a young aspiring graphic artist. While still in college (when I first met him), he had already put out some impressive works of computer graphics, T-Shirt art, and fine art drawings. I was impressed enough to hire him. He transformed my crude, hand-drawn illustrations into works of art, and I am grateful.

Nate has a fervent faith, and an intense desire to please the Lord Jesus in all he does. He loves beauty, truth, and justice, and has a good eye (and a good heart) for each. He has served me in redrawing all my maps and my “Seven Levels of Heaven/Hell” and “Ark of the Covenant” drawings on his computer to make them legible.

Nate also loves history. He was intrigued when I explained how my story corrects our common misunderstandings of the past. After reading portions of my book, Nate got very excited about being involved in such a work. From the first, he told his friends, so they also became interested in reading my book.

I can see God’s hand in leading me to Nate Santa Cruz and his friends. I trust that God will continue to lead each step of our paths, and will guard His work through us so that it becomes a blessing to each of you, my dear Readers.

Eternal Torment? or Ultimate Reconciliation?

I firmly believe that the Holy Scripture is the inerrant Word of almighty God, word by word inspired and perfect in its original languages. However, raised as I was in traditional (Free Methodist, Orthodox Presbyterian, Reformed Presbyterian, and Baptist) theology, I could see conflicts in Scripture, as if God were contradicting Himself.

One of these conflicts involves the commonly accepted doctrine of eternal damnation for all who do not accept Jesus before they die, resulting in the eternal torment of the wicked in hell. Some Scriptures do seem to give that picture. But others claim that ultimately “every knee will bow and every tongue confess...,” Jesus “won the keys to death and hell,” “the last enemy to be destroyed is death,” “for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive, but each in his own order,” “that God may be all and in all.” Do a word search on “all” in the Scripture. It will amaze you how many times it is unqualified, such as where the church is called “... His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all,” “all Israel will be saved,” “Christ is all and in all,” and “through Him to reconcile all things to Himself.”

One solution to this conflict is to qualify all these “alls.” Maybe the writer forgot to add, “all who believe in Jesus before they die.” Sometimes that is implied by the context. Or perhaps the writer assumed you would know he was only talking about Christians in his epistle. Another solution is to claim that of course every knee will bow – the wicked will be forced to bow before being hauled off to hell. And of course Christ will be all in all, for all the wicked will be “destroyed” in hell (speaking of an unending destruction, a “living death,” if such is possible). Scripture does affirm in many places that the wicked will be destroyed.

In this book I propose a third solution. The Bible simply means what it says, and God doesn’t need us to “correct” it for Him. Yes, only those who believe in Jesus will be “saved from the wrath to come.” Yes, everyone whose name is not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire, the second death. And yes, that evil nature will ultimately be destroyed and every sinner will be reconciled back to Him, so every knee will bow to Christ and thus glorify the Father. Those statements are only in conflict if you accept the old Roman Catholic dogma that your eternal destiny is sealed at physical death.

But is that doctrine scriptural? No. Salvation is only by faith in Christ, the Savior. He Himself insists that, “No one comes to the Father [is saved] but by Me.” (Jn 14:6) and “... unless you believe that I am [Messiah] you shall die in your sins.” (Jn 8:24) You cannot be saved just by believing in some generic future messiah as the Jews in Jesus’ day did when they offered the lamb sacrifice. You must actually believe in Jesus as the Messiah. “There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which you must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) So if your eternal destiny were sealed at death, no one who died before Jesus could be saved! Jesus refuted that when He talked about “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt 8:11) and “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...” (Matt 22:32) Scripture makes it clear that even the great heroes of faith who came before Jesus “died in faith, without receiving the promises... because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” (Heb 11:13 & 40) At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, whether they are in heaven, on earth, or in hell. (Ref. Phil 2:10) Clearly, salvation is an ongoing process which begins on earth and continues, even after death, until one’s faith can be perfected.

Please note that I have just eliminated the need for the unScriptural old Roman Catholic “age of accountability” theory. Those who die before they’re old enough to understand the gospel don’t get a “free pass” into heaven. I propose instead that children and the mentally disabled go to the nursery in Hades to learn of Christ, and cannot get into heaven until they do believe and receive Him. I hate it when theologians’ own wrong doctrines force them to invent some other way of salvation in violation of the clear words of Scripture.

The Scripture maintains that although Salvation is only by faith in Christ, yet judgment is always according to our deeds. It seems quite reasonable to me that though Jesus only paid the price for the sins of those who will believe in Him, and those who deliberately reject His Holy Spirit's call must be cast in to hell to pay the price for their own sins, yet eventually, when that price is paid, they may well become believers, too.

I know this is a controversial interpretation. But there have been many since the days of the early church who believed in the ultimate reconciliation of all things (though most of them were tortured and killed by the Roman Catholic Inquisition in the Dark Ages). One purpose of my book is to complete the Reformation that was only started by John Wycliffe and Martin Luther. The God of Wrath of the Old Testament is the God of Love of the New Testament, but you can understand this only when you realize that His terrible judgments are corrective and redemptive. Always. It is a vile slander against His good name to claim that His wrath on the wicked abides forever, when Scripture makes it clear that His anger is but for a moment, while it is His mercy and lovingkindness that abide forever. (Ps 30:5; 106:1; and many others.)

Theologians feel the doctrine of eternal torment is important “to put the fear of God” into people, and impart an urgency to spread the gospel message to the lost. True. But look at the other side of that coin. How many hear that gospel message and reject it because this “God of love” who wants them in heaven with Him is such a sadistic monster as to eternally torment the vast majority of His children? Could you really love a god who condones an infinite amount of pain in punishment just for the sin of failing to believe in Jesus, even for someone born in sin, with blind eyes and a hard heart, who never heard the gospel?

Yet that is exactly what religionists expect us to do. They quote Romans 1:20 to say that even those who never heard the gospel, who are “dead in their transgressions and sins...” (Eph 2:1), are “without excuse” because they should have seen Christ in His creation. So God is perfectly just in casting them all into hell.

Well, yeah. Seeing God's glorious works ought to cause everyone to seek to know and worship the Creator. But face it, most don't. They “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” in their self-focused pride. For that, the passage in Romans is clear, they must be punished. But eternal torment? “... how can they believe in Him whom they've not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher?” (Rom 10:14) You and I instinctively know that it would not be just to torment someone for not receiving some gospel that he's never even heard. Jesus knew it too, for He said to the Pharisees to whom He had just revealed Himself, “If you were blind [talking about those who had never seen or known Him] you would have no sin...” and later, “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now [that I have talked to them] they have no excuse for their sin.” (Jn 9:41 and 15:22) That's why the only sin which cannot be forgiven is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which is willful rejection of the Spirit's call after He opens up their understanding of the gospel. Every other sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven. (Matt 12:31-32; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26) God is “... not holding their trespasses against them...” (2 Cor 5:19)

Please understand, my goal here is not to stir up controversy. I do not want this to cause arguments, strife, or disunity in the church. My goal is to defend the honor of God's holy name, and to present the Bible as the infallible Word of the God of infinite love, who cannot lie, or make a mistake, or contradict Himself. I've heard too many people curse God because of the way He supposedly deals with sinners.

Frankly, I don't blame them. Based on what we've all been told, God is really not much better than Satan. Let's assume for a moment that this common doctrine of eternal death and damnation in the torments of hell is true, and look at the demonic fiend that makes God out to be. If that is true, then:

1. God has a serious anger problem. He is filled with infinite, eternal wrath against the vast majority of His own children. And He must be a bit of a sadist, too, having the smoke of their torment forever rising in His presence in heaven.

2. God is even more hateful than Satan. Satan hates everything God is and does. But God not only hates everything Satan is and does, He also hates and eternally torments His own children who were too ignorant or blind to accept Jesus before they died.

3. God's cruelty is also on par with Satan's. He condones an infinite amount of pain and suffering, not just for the wicked criminal, but also for the ignorant pagan, the mentally handicapped who is incapable of understanding the gospel, the child who made one foolish, ignorant, childish choice, and even the infant who is slain in the womb.

4. God is awfully hard-hearted. When those in torment cry out for mercy, God has provided no hope, no way of repentance. Ever.

5. God is unrighteous. He applies the same punishment – infinite torment – regardless of the severity of the crime. (Note: the slightest pain that is eternal is infinite.)

6. God is ignorant of human nature. He doesn't seem to understand that humans are born in sin, inherently self-centered, blind and deaf to the realms of spirit, and totally unable to respond to the gospel call unless the Holy Spirit quickens them.

7. God is impotent. He says He wants to save everyone, but can't seem to manage it. In fact, Satan wins a lot more than God.

8. God is not very smart. You would think He could figure out a better way to reach people with the gospel before they die than using us foolish, lazy humans.

9. God is late. He should have sent Messiah to deal with people's sins way back at the time of Adam. Look at all the people who died in sin while He waffled.

10. God is proud and vain, demanding everyone worship Him – or else!

11. God has to force people to bow before Him. If they won't bow, He forces them down before casting them into hell, just to fulfill His arrogant prophecy about "every knee shall bow." And I thought Satan was the "god of forces!"

12. God is a liar. All those verses in His Word about God filling all in all and all things being reconciled to Him, are just wishful thinking on His part. And then He tries to get away with claiming to be all-powerful and all-wise! Or that He is love! Or that He is the "Father of all who is over all and through all and in all!" What utter balderdash. And He calls Satan the liar! Even Satan can't make up such outrageous claims.

13. God is a failure. He sent Jesus to destroy all the works of Satan, but couldn't manage it. Satan's works, his temptations, lies, and accusations, have done a lot of damage which can never be corrected once those who fell prey to them are all in hell forever.

But no. The God of the Bible is not like that at all. If you can table that old Roman Catholic doctrine of eternal torment and just read what the Bible says, you will find that He really is an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving God, with infinite mercy and compassion for His creation, and that in the end His Plan of the Ages is perfect with Him as the ultimate victor over Satan. So I will do my best to defend His good name, while He goes about quietly reconciling the world to Himself and filling all things with Himself, just as He promised.

There are other seeming conflicts in Scripture, but that is the worst. The good news is that there are ways to resolve these conflicts without violating the clear word of God. That is why I wrote this book. I hope you are able to read it with an open mind to be able to see what the Scriptures really say, rather than merely trying to defend the traditional doctrines that you have been taught.

Evolution? or Creation?

Throughout this book I come down pretty hard on the evolutionist and do my best to reinforce the doctrine of creation as laid out in the Bible. Why? What difference does it make? Who cares what happened so many thousands (or billions) of years ago? Can't an evolutionist be just as good a person today as a Creationist?

No, he cannot. A belief in creation by a transcendent and almighty God is essential for the survival of civilization. No matter how moral and upright an evolutionist is, his faith is damaging to himself and those around him, and if left unchallenged and allowed to reach its inescapable conclusion, such denial of truth will be responsible for the destruction of Western Civilization and our descent into another dark age of anarchy and chaos.

Now that's a pretty dogmatic statement. I better have something to back it up! And I do. The logic is really quite airtight, once you stop to think about it.

1. The theory of evolution directly conflicts with at least one part of Scripture.
2. Two directly conflicting items cannot both be true.
3. Therefore, if Scripture is true, the theory of evolution is false.

That part was pretty easy. But what about those who believe that the Bible is mostly true, but God flubbed it a bit on the science aspect, since He was just talking to primitive savages who couldn't understand the complexities of modern science?

1. The Scripture claims to be God-breathed, inspired by God's Holy Spirit.
2. The Scripture also claims that God is all-knowing, all-wise, and cannot lie.
3. Therefore, if even one Scripture passage is untrue, then God has contradicted Himself. He is thus exposed as a fraud, and none of Scripture can be trusted.

That puts that option to bed. You either must believe all of Scripture, or you cannot rely on any of it. So let's explore the latter. Evolutionists, even 'Christian' evolutionists, have to throw out at least the first few chapters of the Bible as fable.

1. Assume that the theory of evolution is true and the Bible contains some fables.
2. What about the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai? Maybe that's a fable, too. It is quite possible that Moses made it all up, just to control the people.
3. Well, heck. If Moses made it all up, why should I keep the law? If fact, if that part is made up, I'm sure all that frightening stuff about Hell and Judgment Day are made up too, and I can live as I darn well please.

And I'm sure you see where that leads! But what does this have to do with my dogmatic statement about the evolutionist leading society down into chaos?

1. Assume again that the theory of evolution is true. Man came from the animals.
2. Since this denies God's Word, God, if He exists at all, must be somewhat weak, fallible, and ignorant – certainly not authoritative or worthy of our respect.
3. Therefore, though religion may be good to control the masses, I, as the pinnacle of evolution, am too smart to subject myself to some mythical, impotent god.

The implications of that thought should scare you silly! But that is exactly where this generation in America is headed. Let's follow that to its logical conclusion.

4. So I am god, or at least as close to god as has been evolved so far.
5. Law is therefore whatever I say it is, and is evolving as mankind evolves.
6. Some races are not as evolved and must be reconditioned or forced to catch up.
7. Those who will not get with the program must be locked up or annihilated.

And that is just the beginning. Those who truly believe in evolution must also believe in some form of totalitarian or socialist controls, since they know of no God, no absolute law, no absolute truth, no God-given rights, and no Judgment Day in the hereafter to punish evildoers and reward the righteous. At its core, evolution believes that life is heartless, pitiless. Its only purposes are personal pleasure and self-propagation. Thus:

1. Science is the modern religion. Christians ought to be silenced (or worse).
2. Evil doesn't exist, except for the fundamentalist bigoted intolerant Christians.
3. Human life has no value except what we can contribute to society. If a baby or an elderly person is unwanted or useless or a drain on our resources, kill it.
4. We're not responsible for our actions, just victims of society or the environment.
5. Biblical morality is despised. If it feels good, do it. If it's not legal, it should be. As long as it is between consenting adults and nobody gets hurt, anything goes.
6. Education no longer exists to teach young people to think. They might think about God. Now it exists to brainwash them to accept the current social dogma.
7. Conservatives and others with a strong work ethic and desire to care for their families are stupid. They deserve to be taxed out of their gourds to provide for those living on welfare who are smart enough to game the system, and for the liberals who are smart enough to buy votes with the Conservative's money.

Thus mankind descends into anarchy and chaos. It's inevitable once evolution becomes your god. If you do not have an absolute standard for law enforced by a Higher Power, you will have a changing standard for law enforced by the those who think themselves smarter than God. The results are really quite predictable:

1. I must now pay for young mothers to legally kill their own babies.
2. Sexual perversions of all kinds are now protected by force of law.
3. Christians are fined and thrown in prison for 'intolerance' if they try to live by the same moral laws that all civilized societies accepted for thousands of years.
4. Murderers, rapists, kidnappers, and other violent criminals are now defended as 'victims of society' or 'sick' and given light sentences.
5. A man's word is no longer trusted. Everyone is simply expected to be a liar. Especially if you are a politician trying to get elected. Nobody but an accomplished liar can possibly get elected to high office anymore. A Christian (or even just an honest man) trying to get elected, would be laughed to scorn by the godless media. And he would be labeled 'hateful, intolerant, bigoted, and incapable of representing the majority,' since the majority in America cannot tolerate his insistence on moral integrity.
6. Theft of course is always wrong, unless the government does it. Then it's okay.
7. Adultery, divorce, pre-marital sex, pornography, child abuse, and other vices are so common as to be the norm. God's sacred design for marriage is despised.
8. Our government must have a zillion laws, and add another few hundred a day, just to keep people in line, for the unrestrained human heart is deceitful and quick to find ways around the laws created by humans no better than them.
9. The entire public educational curricula must be rewritten to defame our forefathers and make our descent into anarchy sound normal to young enquiring minds.

There is an alternative to this descent into chaos. You won't find it in science, for modern evolutionary science is inherently schizophrenic. True science must believe in determinism, the laws of cause and effect, structure and stability in the natural realm, for science is the study of all the beautiful laws and stability God wove into His creation. But modern evolutionary science must also believe the opposite: indeterminism, chance, spontaneous generation, and the ability of chaos to weave itself, in total violation of all the laws of nature, from a mythical big bang into all the intricacies we see today.

No, you won't find it in science, not anymore. Though before Charles Darwin you could! In fact, most of the major innovations and scientific discoveries of the past were made by Christians, for true Christianity sets science free to discover, investigate, and codify the laws God wove into His creation. The blessings of Western Civilization were really only possible because Christians began to believe and work with the Word of God. Modern evolutionary so-called 'science' is actually a parasite, living off the bounty of the past, but like all parasites slowly eating it up and killing its host.

But there is an alternative to mankind's devolution. Faith in the simple truths of Scripture will bring us back from the anarchy and chaos. Faith that:

1. God is infinite, eternal, all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving, just as He said.
2. God made the universe, us included, and He made it very well.
3. Sin is the cause of all the trouble and woe we see around us.
4. God has two remedies for sin: punishment in hell or the atoning blood of Jesus.
5. Either way, He will redeem us, for He created us in His image and He loves us.
6. Sensing His love, we realize that each human being has infinite value.
7. We respond to His love with our love for Him, His Law, His ways, His people.
8. We learn to hate evil, as God hates it, while still loving the evil person and doing all we can to set him free from the evil practices that entrap him and are destroying him.
9. Thus God develops His own nature in us, His virtuous character and integrity.
10. We no longer need to be controlled by a tyrannical government, as we have now become self-controlled. We don't harm others, for we love others as ourselves.

That, admittedly, is an ideal. We Christians aren't perfect, either, and we do sometimes need discipline. But believe me, our Father God is faithful to do that, too! For He wants us to be like Him even more than we want it!

But I assure you, it cannot happen in America as long as acknowledgment of God is prohibited in the public square and the theory of evolution is taught as fact in our public schools. Evolutionists have become militantly defensive about their faith. They are fighting to preserve the supremacy of their religion, since they are inspired by Satan whose goal is the destruction of all that God has accomplished in our nation. This is a war – a war between good and evil, a war between God, who wants to save us and prosper us as a nation, and Satan, who wants to destroy us. Which side do you choose?

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