



Pleroma Day: Rapture!

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Foreword

Why are we really here? Is it to eat, drink, make love, pee? Then die? Are we souled, and is there a God above us? Is this God some nasty ogre who loves putting down those inferior.. or is this a God of Love, who wants to parent us so we can become LIKE Him to the extent we desire?

Every faith ever born has its own answers to these questions. Atheists have their own answers, too. It's mind-boggling to sift through all the competing answers, and then decide, *what's the real Truth?* Bible, of course, has its own answers, and we all argue over it.

One of the central tenets in this Bible – and hotly contested, at that – is the idea that God the Father, is making us like His Son Jesus the Christ, which itself is a kind of promotion in nature from human, to God-man, as promised in Isaiah 53:10-12. The New Testament amplifies this promotion as a gradual thing, a changing in your thinking, a kind of Divine DNA replacement "partaking", as you learn and live on Bible ("partaker" verses, plus Greek of Romans 12:1-3, all explaining John 10:34-36, and John 17).

So the promotion is a thinking thing; you start out thinking almost like an animal, low-to-the-ground. You end up, thinking like God does. God, of course, makes this change happen IN you, every time you want to learn more Bible. So now, your life is completely dramatic and meaningful.. even when you pee. For you can learn to THINK like Him even when you pee or do the dishes.. right?

Meanwhile, Bible says you're a target in an epic, millennia-old war you can't even see. For your choice to get God's Thinking to replace your own, is hotly battled over by some beings called "angels". Some of them want you to get His Thinking; 1/3 of them, want to you to get *their* thinking, instead of God's. For to the extent you choose God's Thinking, you prove them wrong to hate God.

This war over us humans, says Bible, began simply enough with a couple and some fruit (fruit is used to represent teaching or thinking, in Bible, since you are what you eat/believe). Would the couple choose for God by avoiding that fruit.. or would they eat it, and thus choose for the angels who divorced God? Well, they ate, Genesis 3. So now, that same option has become a conflict sweeping across the world, people by the millions choosing for or against.

And here's the kicker: the world is only allowed to continue living, if at least ONE person every 490 years super-matures in thinking like God Himself. Then, that person is awarded 490 years on behalf of the world, and IT continues living that much longer. So another person must supermature before that next 490-year grant ends, or the entire world dies. A worksheet showing the 490-year deadlines, is in [GeneYrs.xls](#), which is a subset of my main webpage on this topic, [Mirroring.htm](#).

Some of those who chose God, like Adam, Jared, Enoch, Methusaleh, Noah, Abram – all of them awarded 490-year grants so the world could go on living – are disclosed in the Bible, to explain the conflict itself. As time passed God restricted who could get the Time Grants to an entire nation, Israel. Its job was to disseminate information about Him, so the whole world could choose to vote with their feet and learn Him under the best conditions. Jesus the Christ was to be born of that nation humanly, and then He would pay for all the sins of the world, to justify creation of it. The nation into which He was born was supposed to accept Him, but did not. So He has to invent a new people to carry the message, "Church". But it's not a nation, this people. Anyone who believes in Christ is "Church". You or me, the guy next store, your worst enemy or best friend. Anyone.

So this new people of potentially all nations, also must accept Him, grow up, learn Him, in order to rule forever. And when it does, there's to be a "Rapture", which ushers in the last 7 years of the conflict, then *deus ex machina*, Christ comes down to save the world on earth, rules for 1000 years, then the angels who want their divorce, get it. Forever. In a "Lake of Fire", so their hatred can burn on the outside, like

it's been burning on the inside, lo these many eons. They can always stop hating at any time, by believing in Christ for salvation. But Bible says they won't.

So too, the humans: those who chose God, then live with God. The humans who chose divorce, get to live with those burning angels. Meanwhile, we're all down here choosing, and those humans before us who chose for God are in heaven, and those against Him, are under the earth, burning. Any day, this "Rapture" can happen to trigger the last 1007 years of history; when it happens, all those choosing for God, will suddenly disappear; how visibly and catastrophically, no one knows.

That's a pretty dramatic claim, huh. One moment you're chomping on some bread, and the next moment, *poof!* you're gone! At any moment. Seems scary. Of course, if you're pretty unhappy while chomping on that bread, it seems like a wonderful escape. *Rapture. Drool here. Disneyland. Free thrill ride, leaving the poor saps on earth, behind.*

Ironically, all Bible terms for the Rapture are scary, not escapist. Greek verb "harpazw" (say harp-AHDZ-oh) in the famous 1 Thessalonians 4:17, means to SNATCH UP VIOLENTLY; verb is used for women-as-booty, in a raid. Latin Vulgate translates with "rpto" (lit., *rapiemur*), same meaning. Rape, that's the origin of the term "Rapture", from the Latin. The Great Snatch Up. Greek Rapture adverb *tachú*, means *suddenly, without warning*, surprise attack (not "soon" or "quickly", as English Bibles misleadingly translate).

Immediately afterwards, is "the Bema", and it's scary, too. Greek noun "Bema" (say BAY-mah) is a famous Greek word for a commander of troops ascending a bemata (say BAY-mah-tah, means "platform" or dais), who then hands out punishments or rewards, after a war or battle. So for us, it means this: *judgement* of believers who didn't use their Divine Bible Assets to grow up in Christ's Thinking; crown rewards, for believers who did.

Consider: Christ is Ruler, so if you grow up in His Thinking you become a ruler, thus "inherit the kingdom" so you get a crown. Ruling all those who believed in Christ for their salvation – but didn't believe in Him enough to learn how to think like He does, afterwards. Ouch. Pretty dramatic, huh. *Here you are, just plain interested to think Bible while you pee or do the dishes, and that's making you more like a king? THE King? Yeah. Because you're CHOOSING TO LEARN GOD, and He responds by making you ABLE to think Bible.* Supernatural thing. So you are being transformed, as Romans 12:1-3 says. Even, while you pee...

Whoa, you sure don't hear about all this drama from religion, do ya? Religion keeps on telling you that you're an animal. Do this, do that. Magic motions, sacred articles, special days, clothing, pious phrases – they are holy, so YOU are holy if you do them, and wow you're a bad person, if you don't. *Hmmm. Back in Genesis 3, the offer Satan made was for the woman to make HERSELF like God by eating some fruit. Something she could do. Magic motions, sacred food.* See where religion comes from? Something YOU do, can make you holy? Oh yeah. Sure. Right.

So of course, the religious types will kick themselves around heaven, at the Bema aka Judgement Seat of Christ, just after the Rapture happens: yeah, they're saved, for they ONCE believed in Christ, John 3:16.. but that's all they did, 1 Corinthians 3:15. After that one-time belief, they squandered their spiritual lives on their works, rituals, doing nice things for people.. but not, to learn God. So "Rapture" for them is not something to drool over, but to regret. We'll all have, something to regret. So the believers receiving the newly-written New Testament at the time, certainly didn't drool over the Rapture doctrine. After all, it is a Warning To Grow Up Now.

Hmmm. So now when you pee or do dishes, you'd want to think Bible. Pretty pleasant thing to do with your head, while your body does something else. Ahhh, then your life isn't meaningless anymore, is it? Not to mention, you're pissing off some demons who really don't like it that you want God, but they don't...

All believers are indeed removed from the earth on that Day, the trigger for the 7-year Tribulation. Parallel, to Christ's Ascension. For His Ascension was to trigger the end of the world, the last 57 years before the Millennium was to begin, long depicted in Israel's Passover+Pentecost holidays (57 days=57 years, metaphorically). Church, though, got inserted, so now the ascension of Church, is when the last 7 years begins.

Head went up, so Rapture means *the Body is finally ready to follow*, the event being depicted via John as the representative, in Revelation 4:1. In that verse's Greek, two "meta tauta" ("after these things") clauses in 4:1 wall off the "time" *before* the Rapture, which is the "time" of Church; and then, wall off the "time" *after* the Rapture, which is the Tribulation. (Track "meta tauta" throughout Revelation, for John always uses it to divide off one covenantal epoch from another, explaining how Ephesians 2's eternal temple of believers in eternity, the *oikonomia* [economic society] and *oikodomia* [building of the LIVING House of God in John 14], get done.)

So "Rapture" instead means To Rescue Time, snatch it from the jaws of Satan & Co., Preparatory To Birthing Eternity. It demonstrates that God keeps His Promises to the Jews, by BRIDGING from the date of their rejection, to the date when the final promised 1007 years – now vested in the Risen Messiah – will play. *So it's all a contract delivery: no Disneyland la-la!*

Old Testament Hebrew equivalent for labor pains, is some version of *maher*, a "hastening" (of breathing, contractions). God uses that metaphor a lot, to depict life down here as a kind of pregnancy, and the Jews were to "hasten" according to a timeline. For there was a schedule to keep; the world's ending was *scheduled*, just like a calendar; and it was Israel's priestly job to keep ON Time in her own spiritual maturation to think like the (then-future) Christ, so that schedule would be met. She didn't. *Because she didn't, the world was supposed to end, with her rejection.*

The initial schedule (explained in detail in [Mirroring.htm](#)) went like this: *by the 4200th year after Adam's fall, the Millennium was supposed to begin. Israel was told this deadline when David died. She had hints of it ever since the Exodus, knowing that time would continue only 57 years after Messiah came and left, depicted in the sum of the Passover plus Pentecost countdowns. She just didn't know WHICH 57 years, it would be. But since David was to have a Greater Son, promised in 2 Samuel 7, and that Son would rule 1000 years, the Davidic time grant of 1000 years was the deadline. But it didn't start until David died, which was 963 BC, per 1 Kings 6:1. So 1000 years after that, the 57 years would begin, which equals the 4200th year after Adam's fall. So the last Adam would begin ruling, then.*

That was the macro calendar. But it depended, on there being a *priest nation at the time He came*. If that nation refused Him, well then the promise couldn't be justified, and the world would end.

For to be a "priest" means a kind of spiritual fathering of those who are yet less 'grown up' in Christ's thinking than 'you' are. That's why there would be a *nation* of priests; why God created Israel in the first place. So initially, the Jews were to give birth to the Gentiles, 'harvesting' them (meaning of Pentecost in Jewish calendar), which would lead to "jubilee" (the end of time, when Messiah would come). But when the Jubilee came and announced Himself, reading Isaiah 61 to them (Luke 4:18), they turned Him down.

In 29 AD, they'd rejected Him. So enter, the Lord's unilateral commitment to make a new entity to yet save Time itself: Church. Hence FULL-TERM PREGNANCY is what Bible's Greek keyword "Pleroma" means (say play-ROW-mah), and it's the primary idiom for the Rapture, the trigger for it, Ephesians 3:15-19 + Eph4:13. For the world was already supposed to be ready to deliver to eternity, since He died on Time. But, there was no Israel to return to. So pending her formation, this new "Church" would be the upgraded version of the harvesting of the Gentiles, and when "Church" completes, then Israel's remaining time can play and she is harvested, too. Despite her rejection.

So back in 29 AD, He declares a new entity "Church" will be built on Himself, and He agrees unilaterally to pay for billions of yet-future sins, Matt16:18 ratified in John 17 just before He was arrested. And then, He goes through the "labor" that Isaiah 53:11 depicts, paying for our sins with His Thinking (*m'amal*

naph'sho..bedato yatsdiq in Hebrew of Isaiah 53:11). So now we can become pregnant with His Thinking, Isaiah 54:1, 55:8-9. Meanwhile, the Gentiles will be used to return the favor, to harvest the Jews, Paul's tearful yet witty theme in Romans 9-11.

For Salvation itself is depicted as a pregnancy in Isaiah 53, in nearly every verse (chapter begins at Isa52:13 in Hebrew). So the New Testament is to fulfill that, Hebrews 8:8-10:17, the 'seed' of His Thinking being written in our hearts and minds, Isaiah 53:11 plus Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Usually translated "fulness" in King James Bibles, "Pleroma" really means *Ready To Give Birth At Any Moment*. It's thus a pregnancy description, "Rapture". *Any day now, the birthing begins. Can't exactly predict when, and it always seems like it can be "now"*. Yeah, "now" is another Rapture term in the New Testament.

Think: can you gauge how grown up you are, spiritually? How close, to this pregnancy destination? So how much less can you know how grown, someone else? For it's *an inner soul preparation*, which only God can see. Moreover, only God knows when the final configuration of *corporeal* maturation is reached. So our "time" is always on the verge of giving birth aka Rapture; if the day ends and you're still down here, then birth hasn't occurred. Every day.

So Israel's job of "hastening the time", was passed on like a baton to us, as Peter Hebraistically notes in 2 Pet 3:12. Bridging. Saving. Redeeming/ransoming, Col4:5 and Ephesians 5:16.

So what's REALLY happening when you pee or do dishes but also think Bible, is that you're preserving the world to live one more day. *Salt of the earth*, honey. The angels who want you to learn Christ's Thinking, are then cheering you, 1 Peter 1:12, and Luke 8, 15, Hebrews 11. Those who want you to QUIT learning Christ's Thinking are busy tempting you to get your mind on something or someone else. Pretty easy to do, since our lives down here are so banal and frustrating. Yet if you keep thinking Bible, using 1 John 1:9 when you fail of course, you're a hero – a hero GOD makes, but a hero, just the same. Becoming more pregnant, that day. Every day.

Consequently, Paul's obsessed with "Pleroma" in all he writes. The only *virgin* apostle keeps using sexual analogy, and of course you can't see it in translation. Pleroma defines YOUR life down here, and has zippo to do with good deeds: for YOU are the fruit, not what you do, Isaiah 53:10 contract. So Pleroma instead, has everything to do with what you think. *For you are to become "pregnant" with Christ's thinking "seed"*, Luke 8, John 17; that's why we have Bible. So that's Paul's theme in all of Ephesians, Galatians 4, Romans 8. Very witty. Bible translators shy away from admitting this, which is prophesied in Isaiah 53:10-54:1, the contract to birth good-enough-for-God kiddies. So why the coverup in translation? Oh, *because pregnancy is related to sex!* Yeah, intercourse with God's Thoughts, dummy. John 17, read it! How else can you have rapport with Him?

Now you know why the second half of Romans 8 depicts all creation in labor pains, waiting to give birth to eternity. Not religion, but relationship. Intimacy. Marital, even. Oneness of Thinking.

And of course, with intimate relationship, comes conflict. Politics. Power Struggle. Yeah, and this is the daddy of them all. For way above the clouds, from time immemorial, the Angelic Appeal DIVORCE Trial plays between God, and Satan & Co. They were here first. We humans get grafted in, because they rejected the intimacy offer God made them.

We've all heard snippets of this bitter Divorce Proceedings, in myth and in Bible. Many an author from the ancient Greeks or even further back, writes a script about this Primordial, Unseen War. The masses gladly gossip about it, be they Christian masses, or any other faith's. We all vaguely know – and occasionally drool over – the idea *that what goes on down here, somehow resolves which side wins in this Trial*. The ancient Greeks and today's non-Christian faiths call it, *Wars of the Gods*, in various flavors.

But what's the real story? Sure, we can't know today, the exact names of the demons involved, nor of the humans Put On Trial per Hebrews 11:1's Greek – as Job, Abram, Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel all were. As Christ was. As Paul was, for we know he won his Trial Witness, per 2 Tim 4:8: the "crown" was awarded him. We also know from Hebrews 11 that there IS a Docket, a Roster of Witnesses. Chapter 11 highlights some of them, noting there are too many more, to name.

Us believers? Witnesses in the Trial before angels and demons? Sounds like a movie script, huh. Yet it's the main theme of the Bible from Adam forward – what do you think Genesis 5 is about, but a roster of successful Trial Witnesses? Oh, those boring begats, sleeping in every hotel room near you. Pity that Hebrews 11:1 is mistranslated. Corrected, it reads, "It's about Confidence in Word! Christ's Thinking, On Trial! Evidence, Unseen!" That classical, elegant drama Greek, plays with heptameter and genitive absolutes: meaning, the ancient equivalent of split-screen TV.

So here's the drama, honey: *TWO things going on at once, in heaven and on earth. You SEEM to be doing something menial and meaningless; but you have a cosmic supernatural impact which you can't see. All ancient Greek plays were about that theme. Oh, Creusa is raped by (demon) Apollo, has a kid who will become the progenitor of all the Greek sea peoples, in Euripides' play, "Ion", which means "venom", and is a euphemism for semen. Yeah, so the apostle Paul bases the entire letter of Ephesians on that play, to show God's Superior Begetting!*

So YOU might think you're eating dinner or picking up the drycleaning, but in reality every thought you have is being bet on, influenced, laughed at or admired by potentially millions of unseen angels, demons (and probably dead believers) – while you think about where you put the car keys, and did you pay that bill on time.

So this novel is to demonstrate how that unseen audience, acts and thinks based on what they see in YOU.

For we are to become pregnant with Christ, which is – let's be honest – an impossible thing. Yet it's the theme of Romans 8, Galatians 4:19, James 1:21, Luke 8, Colossians 1:27, "born of God", "abide" catchphrases in John – all these and like allusions, point back to Isaiah 53:10-11's contract to sire sons from THE Son. Now, since THE Son is King, we have to grow up to think like Kings. Maybe we will refuse that option, but that's the new potential of our Royal Birth in Christ. "A nation of priests", as Peter puts it. See also the "kings" verses, like the sarcastic 1 Cor 4:8, Rev 1:5, 5:10. Peasant thinking, is how we start out. Royal Thinking, is what we are to acquire, and our Royal Manual, is the Bible. Our Royal Teacher, the Holy Spirit. Yeah, because it IS an impossible thing, we NEED Divine Power to get there!

And when our "time" has corporately completed for this Royal Spiritual Maturation – which you can't predict, since you don't even know how well YOU are maturing, let alone someone else – then the rest of history can be "delivered". "For apart from us [being completed], they will not be completed", Hebrews 11:40 says, to explain Daniel 9:26c; "completed" is a cousin Rapture verb *teleiow* (say "tel-eye-OH-oh), which stresses how the contract to make "Pleroma" kings, is 'perfected' (legal term for completion, even in today's English). Daniel 9:24 uses *sunteleiow* (say soon-tell-eye-OH-oh), in the LXX; 9:26, uses its cognate noun, *sunteleia* (say soon-tell-EYE-ah). *What was supposed to be a 50-year gap to complete Daniel 9:26, long before depicted in Pentecost's counting of the Omer beginning on the end of Passover Week's sundown, got stretched. To graft in, Church.*

Yeah, until we all get pregnant with Christ, Ephesians 4:13, the Rapture can't happen, so the Trib can't happen, so History can't 'birth' the Millennium, to close all earthly time! Not exactly Disneyland, huh.

Get this loud and clear: Satan & Co. can ABORT the Rapture, by RETARDING Christian spiritual maturation. And they hope to make us Christians so apostate, that God can't grant the world, more TIME. Too few folks are pregnant with Christ's Thinking, so the Rapture must be delayed. 2000 years

since the Cross have elapsed, Satan & Co. are good at their job! So this story complements my more-technical webpages, is written like a novel, and focuses on how they do, what they do.

Meaning what? YOU are in this novel, too.

You have your own battlefield victory crown reserved for you, Christ warned the sample believers in Revelation 3:11, don't let anyone take it away. Yikes. Saved, for SURE going to heaven.. but can lose a crown? Already reserved? Yeah, honey: "the battle is the Lord's", David the redhead (and red-tempered) teenager said when twirling that slingshot, long before he got his crown, but just after he was told it was reserved for him.

You do know, I hope, that David murdered a woman's husband in order to hide the fact he had committed adultery with her and made her pregnant while her faithful husband Uriah, was fighting David's battles for him. First David called the guy back to David's palace, tried to make him go to his wife and sleep with her, so David could pretend the child was the husband's. But the husband was too loyal, even when David made him skunk-drunk. The guy wouldn't go home, which was just across the street! So David had to resort to a contract murder, ordering that the guy be placed where he'd be sure to be killed; and then, made the guy carry back his own death warrant to the commander of the battle!

You do know, that David had many wives and concubines (read: official mistresses); and that of course turned out to be a threat to Israel even living beyond his death. (As a result, she fractured into 2 kingdoms after Solomon's death anyway, and one kingdom didn't last but maybe four generations longer.) So it's not as if David was this sterling religious person with the holy vocabulary and fake smile. So don't count yourself out, just because you too lack the holy vocabulary, outward morality replete with handy hypocrisy. God won't use any of that Genesis 3 satanic religious garbage. Didn't want it from David, won't want it from you.

But David spent about 10 years getting beat up, before he inherited that Crown. Then, 40 more years fighting with everyone who tried to destroy Israel by destroying him.

Yet lookie here: his inheritance included buying THE ENTIRE WORLD another 1000 years to live after his death in 963 BC at the age of 77, per 1 Kings 6:1 (a verse scholars routinely misread, forgetting the entire 6 chapters prior, detail the last 7 years of David's life plus 3 years after his death). Isaiah, Luke, and Matthew all play number games on "77", as 70x7, 14, 70, and derivatives. Isaiah uses it to craft his poetic meter in Isaiah 53, then Matthew and Luke select the first three verses in that chapter, as the metron for their genealogies.

For when Israel rejected God as King in favor of Saul in 1050 BC, she broke her contract. So God grafted in David, and 2 Sam 7 promise of Messiah and the Temple to Depict Messiah's Coming, went through David. Alone. All Time hung on David's progeny, from that day forward. For just as Levi was cut out for cutting out all those males from Shechem in revenge for the rape of Dinah, and Moses' great-great-aunt was grafted in ahead of all the males and then Levi was grafted back into Israel as a priestly caste; so too, all Israel was cut off for cutting off God, but then grafted in through David – again through a minor daughter, eventually: Mary, descendant of Nathan, younger brother of Solomon (sons of David and Bathsheba, the woman with whom David committed adultery).

So all Time then went ONLY through David. Promised time. 1000-year countdown to Messiah's end, was the meaning of David's death; 40 years prior to that end, would be Messiah's Birth, to parallel (mirror, reimburse) David's 40 years of kingship. God then gives the exact Birthday, on what would become Chanukah, 357 years before Antiochus IV caused what became the holiday, in Haggai 2 (covered in "Chanukah" section of [PassPlot.htm](#)). But before that, God uses David's death as the final Endpoint of Time, in His balance accounting pieces for Daniel 9. God AWARDS Time, and when the recipient (here, the Temple) doesn't complete that time, God reconciles it like a checkbook.

For, it's a Justice Issue, Credit Given But Not Properly Used. Now you know why God breaks Daniel 9:2 and :25 into accounting pieces, each one representing a goal, a deadline to be met:

- ♦ **586 BC**, 1st Temple dies due to apostacy, before its own 490-year grant of time, ends. But David's time grant is still running, so God can justify renewal. Um, **GOD IS THE ONE DECREERING** in Daniel 9:24 – so the Decree goes out to Jeremiah, counting from 586 BC, Daniel 9:2.
- ♦ So, 70 years in Daniel 9:2, is the deadline to rebuild, **516 BC**, one year prior to David's terminus for one of his three 490-year grants.
- ♦ Next, when the Rebuilding deadline was met, another 70 years can be granted, to 'reimburse'.
- ♦ So the next deadline was **446 BC**, to rebuild Jerusalem. That almost didn't happen, due to Haman's conspiracy to wipe out the Jews in **474 BC**, the year prior to another of David's 490-year time grants, running out. Whew, saved just in time!
- ♦ Next, 49 years from **446-397BC**, to complete Canon. Can't have Messiah come, without a Book. That reimburses the 49 years between Temple destruction and the return to rebuild it, dated from the year of Daniel's prayer (which was immediately answered, end of 538BC=49 years after 586 BC).
- ♦ Next, because all those other deadlines were met, another $364+70=434$ years could be granted: the 364, 'reimburses' Israel for the actual time the 1st Temple stood (950-586 BC), and 'reimburses' the successful completion of the second 70, with the Temple standing also.
- ♦ That brings you down to **37AD**, which is the 1000th anniversary of David's death,
- ♦ but leaves a 7-year remainder in the *new* 490-year total grant, God only allocating 69 of the 70 weeks.
- ♦ Because, Messiah has to come AND finish, by the end of that 1000-year time grant, to RENEW Time. Now you know why Galatians 4:4 reads as it does. The seven years are a sabbatical reimbursement, for during the 49 years between 586 BC and the end of 538BC, seven more sabbatical years ensued (sabbatical years that would have been 'payable', if Israel had observed her sabbatical years all along).
- ♦ Therefore, Messiah will be born on Chanukah 4 BC, thus tying to 2nd Temple foundation, David's Time grants for United Kingship start and his death. But of course Christ instead dies on the 1470th anniversary of the original Passover, 7 years early – which just happens to also be the 1000th anniversary of David's retirement from Kingship (970 BC-30 AD), *and* the 490th anniversary of the 2nd 490-year grant to the First Temple, had it never been razed (950 BC-490-490=30 AD).

Clearly, God has this 'thing' about doing stuff on schedule, Hebrew keyword "l'moed", a pregnant term for *unity of time, place, space*. No matter what demons and man try to do, to screw it up, God promised to be On Time. And, He was. That's why the Tribulation has to occur *after* Messiah comes, *the extra 7 years is beyond the 1000th anniversary of David's death*. Time couldn't be renewed without the Last David, arriving on Time and winning His Own Crown.

Just as told Moses, hence Psalm 90:4-12; and just as, the Passover plus Pentecost holidays, depicted. *57 years after the 1000th anniversary of David's death, was to begin the Millennium, which was to commence in the 4200th year after Adam's fall*. In the actual event, Messiah's dying 7 years early meant that extra 7 had to play during the "time" of Church, to balance: which it did, mimicking the exact holiday sequence, beginning 64-70AD, with the final assault by Titus taking place over that eerie doubled-57 days' sequence in Israel's sacred calendar, from Passover to Pentecost, and then from Pentecost to 9th Ab. The latter, occurring 656 years after the First Temple was razed per Jeremiah 52:12, to the very day. Mirrored. In reverse.

All this accounting is in Part IV of my ponderous Thinking Series webpages, beginning in [LvS4a.htm](#); the primary Time Accounting page is [Mirroring.htm](#). However, this "PDR" story will be about how the demons

are trying to STOP TIME, for Time is no longer promised; that promise only went to the Jews, through David. So, given that the Last David was rejected and a New Covenant had to be grafted in, the old but not-yet-delivered Time Promise of 1007 years, is a hanging credit that can only play after we are "completed", again per Hebrews 11:40. That's why our Covenant is NOT Israel's, but separate, founded in Christ's Other Kingship, "kata Melchizedek": Book of Hebrews is dedicated to explaining the two Covenants and their Kingships, elaborating on what Paul was given to write, in Ephesians 2.

Aha, so we're all in this Unseen Trial together, for *anyone* can instantly become a believer, be thus saved and a Trial Witness, by a mere, one-time belief that Christ paid for one's sins. Thereafter, down here it's an Olympian-style marathon race of spiritual maturation, as the writer of Hebrews puts it in the Greek of Hebrews 12:1-2. As Paul also noted in Acts 20:24, and again in 2Tim4:7.

Oh, then YOU might be one of the humans in this story. Protected privacy, though. Since I can't know who among us are the targets, I have to invent representative people to tell this all-too-true story. Invent representative demons, too.

Game, Set, Match

If the demons can prove they rule mankind better than God does – or, if mankind elects the demon-version of god in preference to the Real God, and that demon-version accomplishes more GOOD for mankind – then God loses, Satan wins, Hell empties, and Satan rules God forever. Pretty high stakes, huh. Now you know why Satan tempted Christ with three types of epic GOOD DEEDS, in Matthew 4.

For this is a TRIAL. And if God doesn't keep His Promises, then it's a MISTrial, in which case GOD is the one guilty. The promises, are essentially two: 1) Israel's credit of TIME will still play – which depends now on 2) the Church completing as a Body of Christ's Thinking, Eph4:13. At which point, the Rapture would occur. So if Satan can make the Rapture occur at the WRONG TIME, then Church won't represent the completed Body of Christ's Thinking, and God is guilty of using Evidence He can't produce. So didn't keep His Promise. This Mistrial issue began when Christ announced Matt16:18, covered in detail beginning in [LordvSatan2.htm](#), search on "Mistrial" when you load the page.

The story, is real. Really in the Bible, too. Really playing live, above your head. Playing upon you, as you read. So the story names are changed to protect both innocent and guilty, and the scenarios of course had to be fictionalized, too: but you just substitute your own life for someone in the story, and you can bet it's happening.. to you.

And what story is this? The story of your choice for God.. or the other guy. Which millions of angels witness, "craning their necks" as Peter puts it in 1 Peter 1:12. You're onstage, honey. Yes, even in the bathroom. Even when paying bills. Can't you think toward God at those times? Do you? What do you think? See, it's not about sin, but about choosing God. For of course you can't be good enough on your own, so that was never the issue, in the Trial. It's about VOTING. Noah voted for God. Abram voted for God. Every thought is a vote. So your every thought is a choice for or against God, and you are potentially in the "Pleroma Docket Roster" of Hebrews 11 Star Witnesses for the Prosecution, aka God.

So yeah, for entertainment and ease-of-comprehension purposes, this story reads like a novel. But don't let that fool you into thinking it's a fairy tale.

Now if you were a demon, you'd be kinda ticked off about these things, and try to MAKE the Rapture a fairy tale, something that never comes true. Your #1 Priority would be to Discredit and Demoralize Believers in the Docket. Because if you can eliminate their value as Trial Witness, you can stop the Rapture, and thus stop your own incarceration.. by stopping Time itself.

So this story will be told from the demons' point of view, once you turn the page...

Chapter I: Pleroma Docket Roster

Sandman glanced at the daily PDR with his customary disgust and cast it aside. Always the same witness names on the Roster, and the same pastors always schooled them. How boring. *We can't get them to cave in!* he thought bitterly. The Most High Himself had to change the Roster, or they'd never win anything. The Boss had been arguing over and over and over again for a change, harping as usual on humanity's utter disinterest in His Word. Finally, The Most High -- aka TMH, El Elyon, Father or Son or Spirit, depending on context, but most of all, the Son -- relented. Father delegated this particular decision to Him Who Paid for these bleeping humans. Characteristically, Son deferred back to Father, and it was a "go". So there finally was work to do. *Yeah, and only because He relents!* Sandman thought-spat.

"If the humans only knew their continued existence depended on these silly PDR people, they'd rebel like we do, but oh, His Most Holy controls history, Acts 17:26!" Sandman burst, aloud. "It's not as if the Word didn't tell them all this. But they don't read it, huh," Sandman chafed, his anger peaking. "Yeah, well Our Boss got His Most Holy to relent, and now we can beat Him, end these bleeping humans once and for all!" Sandman calmed down. *Not good to be riled,* he told himself.

So today he was changing the crew charged with discrediting the humans on the PDR. The objective was to further impede and ideally derail their spiritual growth, since TMH finally agreed to promote, aka kill and bring to heaven -- the top 10. Thus the Boss could accuse the remainder before Father and have their witness removed from the PDR -- to leave the top 10 slots vacant, *thus justifying World War III.* Sandman smiled at the thought. *For eons we've been trying to beat His Most Holy Goliath!* Sandman winced. "Bricks without straw!" Sandman hissed under his breath.

Sandman's startled orderly was used to his superior's sudden outbursts, so remained quiet, silently grateful Sandman chose to 'speak' his temper, rather than throw it as thought. *For when Sandman threw his thoughts you were flattened,* the orderly remarked to himself, thought-shields ON. Didn't help. Sandman smiled at him. *You heard me again, sorry I interrupted you, Sandman,* the orderly thought-apologized.

"Okie dokie" Sandman offered aloud, laughing at his own use of Americanisms. Just like the PDR crew were ordered to adopt. *Gotta imitate your quarry, think so much like him you can't tell the difference between him and you.* That was the first rule a PDR crewmember learned. And practiced, assiduously. *After all, if a person got listed on the PDR for thinking like TMH, then we need to think like them to forecast how to overthrow TMH.* Sandman was always amused by that irony.

Sandman eyed his orderly's catchy choice of body for the day. "Did you see the Nutcracker again?" he asked, gently chiding. The orderly's chosen arrangement of light really did make him look like the Nutcracker soldier: he'd done a fine job making the light, look like mass. Seemed like you'd bump right into him.

The orderly smiled. "Well, with the recall of the top 10, it seemed like Christmas to me", he coyly replied aloud. *It's nice to slow down to talk.* "Do you want me to begin some of the crew reassignments now? They've sent me their updated reports."

"Anything noteworthy?" Sandman asked, also enjoying his voice. *Yes, it is nice to go slow. I need a rest,* he realized.

"Not particularly. But I'm not comfortable handling reassignments for the 'unpredictables' on the Roster." "Okay, then I'll focus on that." *And thank you for giving me space to rest,* Sandman added silently, pitching the thought with as much affection as his orderly could stand. The orderly blushed.

Sandman fell silent again. Since TMH had relented, it meant recall of the top 10 Witnesses was impending; notice had gone out all over the universe that a convocation would be held in Heaven; grapevine would be thick with the news, so it wouldn't end up a surprise, by the time everyone actually met. So the PDR crew would expect a change, and Sandman would give them one. *It would be a nice treat for them if we convened our meeting AT the convocation*, Sandman posed. Usually, crew had to 'monitor' the convocation long-distance, couldn't leave their posts. Sandman decided they needed a break. It was no light thing the Boss got TMH to do. *World War III would likely result, and they needed all the upfront rest and encouragement they could get*, Sandman concluded.

"This time, let's send the whole crew en masse to the convocation", Sandman told the orderly. "Already on it", the orderly replied. Sandman couldn't help but smile.

Sandman next decided to reminisce in the name of brainstorming refinements, to best advantage his crew for the change. He was constantly working. So he never could get over his former buddies in Heaven always standing by, doing nothing. *Kinda like those silly guards in front of Buckingham Palace*, Sandman sniggered. Everyone tried to make both those human guards and more so the angelic ones, react. It didn't work. Sandman appreciated how hard it was for them to just stand there, what with all the evil in the world, the catcalls from their former best buddies who chose to rebel rather than stay with The Most High Masochist. *TMHM never does anything about it, and commands my former friends to do nothing, too*. It rankled.

They all had been close, once. Back before the rebellion, they had been happy. *Ahhh, too long too much, best to forget it*. Sandman pushed the bittersweet memory away. *No going back*.

These Pleroma people were masochists, just like TMH, just like his former friends who only stood around, doing nothing. Hard to argue with or defeat a masochist. Whatever you did to hurt him, he wanted. So became more masochistic. *TMH, of course, is Head Masochist, Heaven's Masochist*, Sandman chortled, pleased with his own wit. *Reversing the initials! THM, The Head Masochist, Heaven's Masochist!* The Pleroma people were 'pregnant' with THM's own thinking, so were masochists bearing 'children', masochistic thoughts. Throwing all away, in the name of 'Love'. *What kind of love is THAT? No wonder the Boss rebelled*, Sandman concurred.

The argument was always that the dichotomy between Infinite, Holy God and anything He creates, resulted in an unbridgeable gap, from the finity's side. So if that finity 'voted' for Omnipotent Holy God to close the gap in order to have 'fellowship' with Him, He would close it -- by pouring His Thinking into the finite creature. Which, you experienced as it were, in 'dots' of time. For He was Timeless, but 'you' were not. So it wasn't at all a perfection question, but rather a compatibility question. Love allegedly was the reason for the gap: finity was given its own attributes, life, and freedom, so was forever free to choose fellowship or not.

Trouble was, to say "no" to this 'offer' was SIN. To say yes, meant you'd be killing yourself forever, as the differential in thinking would flatten you. You'd always feel inadequate, nothing you did of yourself would ever be enough to reciprocate; this "love" would make you more or less hate yourself. Forever. Plus, you'd eventually come to know all the horror that the Most High knows, because "fellowship" at root means Shared Thinking. So forever, you'd have 'rapport' based on the horror, as well as based on the beauty. That was the Plan of Oneness 'offered', and it was offered, in the name of Love. Rapport.

So back before the rebellion, TMH informed them all *He was going to create for angels to rule – sometime in the future – humanity*. That way they could 'pass on' this same Rapport, and see why the desire to create really was an Eternity-Past Love Contract which birthed first, the angels: *Father to Son, Son to Father, Spirit to Both, Both to Spirit – so THEY could forever 'kill' themselves for Each Other*. So it wasn't necessary to feel bad about

being finite. The angels could learn the pleasure in the Godhead associatively, by ruling creatures lower than themselves, essentially killing themselves upward, and downward. *Parenting.*

Back then, Sandman and his comrades actually believed in that promise, even welcomed it. But they only had themselves and later animals, to practice on. The years dragged on, but no humans with souls like the angels', were made. *So we were all adams without 'wife' and 'children', Sandman wryly recalled.*

Capping all this off, TMH was going to Himself take on Humanity, pay for the humans' sins, by Himself growing in this Love Thinking, only using that Humanity: Spirit would empower that, and TMH's own Deity, would go unused in that sphere. Unused in all other spheres too, except as Father might demand.

Complicated thing, that. *Being flattened in the Humanity yet commanded to use Deity only sometimes, yet at ALL times willing to hold the universe together, which TMH in His Deity created for Father? How to do that in mere human nature – never mind it would be perfect – and ever get it right, if the Humanity must nonetheless will NOT to peek at Omniscience and the other Attributes?* Sandman remembered their endless discussions on that topic. For "The Plan", as they came to call it, was based on TMH's ever-repeated doctrine, "You angels can't fulfill even your own nature, if My Thinking isn't running it." *How then will it work?* everyone wondered. Seemed to everyone that the whole universe would TANK, and they would be obliterated. *Oh, the Spirit would enable that Humanity too, same essential mechanism as for the angels!* they all were told. *So now the angels' very existence, was predicated on a mere human doing what no angel could do?* Enquiring minds began to doubt.

Sandman and his comrades also came to ask themselves, *why take on humanity, but not angelic nature?* The answer: it was a greater divergence from infinity to be human, than an angel; so if TMH would go lower in nature, obviously what was higher in nature, wasn't a compromise. But Sandman and his contemporaries found themselves asking, *How can it be no compromise, especially since TMH would pay for SIN?* For in that manner, TMH would achieve Oneness in His Humanity, thereby outranking all the angels.

"How fair was that to TMH, Himself?" the Boss had asked repeatedly, back when he was in charge of it all as Guardian of the Throne, the Morning Star. For he had come to doubt, first. It was easy for him to see the unfairness, since he knew better than anyone what a burden it was, to rule; he relished his time off. So he, Sandman, Malarky and Balderdash used to pal together off-duty, go watch the lightshow by the geology crew who cooled off the planets. Depending on what one 'played' as cooling speed and method, the inner heat plus 'symphonic' cooling gave off light in spectacular circular shapes and color arrays; its 'songs' were endlessly delightful. Everyone wanted geology duty, so the crews were rotated often.

That's why the Boss later picked Earth as our rebellion headquarters, Sandman recalled wistfully. All the planets had once been stars. How you cooled them off, turned them into planets of varied geological composition and atmosphere. *Same as the way we handle our own bodies. Light depicted Infinity, and mass depicted finity, so notice how they are antithetical. Notice how only infinity, gives life to finity.* It was a delightful lesson to see and hear, at the time.

Balderdash would always exclaim, "All primes depend on the lowest non-prime, two! Union of Opposite Natures!" *Even back then he was a numbers kind of guy,* Sandman chuckled.

Of course, that conversion process was designed by TMH to illustrate Infinity's own Union-of-Opposites Nature. TMH constantly explained that Righteousness was punctiliar: dotlike, just as Infinity was. Intensive, not extensive. So every truth was simultaneously right and wrong, 'meeting' in that dot, a kind of hupostasis. For example, as TMH would often explain, *it was wrong to be focused on self, right to be more focused on someone else, hence Son wanted to add Humanity to Himself for Father, not for Himself. Yet it was simultaneously wrong to not be focused on self, for should not the self get what it wants?*

On other occasions, TMH would follow up this lesson with questions one was to ponder. *Is Freedom and Justice really served by sacrifice, especially if one is perfect? And if not perfect, what would any sacrifice of any kind be worth? All such sacrifice from imperfection would be tainted, since the nature MAKING the sacrifice was tainted. And would Love even want sacrifice, tainted or otherwise? Did I make you so you could sacrifice to Me? Would Father want that OF Me? No! But why should I deny Myself something I want? Would Father ever deny Me what I want? NO! So see, He'd then conclude, Righteousness by nature is antithetical to itself, and can yet be a whole, because in 'dots'. Same is true for every other Attribute. That's why it's not a compromise to be either superior or inferior, yet always is a compromise. Each 'dot' must be answered in a way that does not compromise any other 'dot', never mind that they are antithetical. Else, it's not Righteous. Only Love can solve this inherent dichotomy.*

TMH always explained that like everything else in God, Love was Infinite. It was thus just a matter of will, since Love by its own nature, was volitional. Hence the creation of the angels, with free will and abilities they could will to grow in relationship with TMH -- or, against Him.

A constant choosing was thus required. Hence a "no" choice was sin, because it meant rejection of the relationship. As a result, the nature would be forever rejecting -- free will always gets what it chooses, and its results go on forever as 'dots' -- so no matter what was later offered to reconcile and regain the relationship would be tainted. Only Infinite Love can solve the sin problem, too. But that required choosing FOR the relationship. There was no middle ground, as Love never coerces.

Infinite Love was thus depicted as what held the 'puzzle' of finity together: the atom depicted that function and result. Each element in the atom had its own life and attributes, and was affected by the life and attributes of every other element; worse, they were all antithetical to each other. *So outside the elements' own natures, was 'something' holding them all in stable relationships, despite the antithesis. Of course, that 'something' was God Himself. He didn't run the universe on autopilot, it was constantly a matter of His Consent. True Freedom. True Love. So the reminder was everywhere displayed: If I don't want the universe to run on autopilot, then I don't want you to be automatons, either. You have your own free will and abilities. Be careful how you use them.*

Often TMH would explain how if even HE ever chose to sin, the same essential result would obtain. He doesn't sin, because He Loves the Truth. All truth: "Good truth, bad truth, any truth, because truth." So to reject truth, is clearly sin. "Obviously I can make any truth be whatever I want it to be. But I choose Truth to be, Free and Loved. So you truly exist, so you are free; so you are loved." *This lesson was meant as a guarantee, to show that TMH was never 'forced' or 'constrained', so He really loved us by choice, Sandman recalled.*

As a result, pouring that same Truth into the angels, was the goal. Some of that Truth was instantaneously in them, like so many libraries; some, they would have to choose to get from TMH. Again, the point was to choose the relationship: not coercion, power, performance, goodies. "I would coerce you to love the Truth as I do, if I poured it all into you, apart from your consent. I would coerce you to love Me, if I poured all of My Thinking into you, apart from your consent. So you have all you need, to choose both wisely and freely."

The flipside of this 'pouring': we cannot see the 'picture' of our 'puzzle', Sandman countered. Anything we do with the 'puzzle' of ourselves, we're doing BLIND! Worse, given that sin would break the vertical relationship to TMH, the 'atom' of their souls, would implode. Thus their souls would become black holes, eating light instead of giving it off. The thought made all the angels, shudder. Just as the universe and their light-bodies were held together by what was beyond one's own nature, so also He held them together. And what held us together, was the promise that TMH loves us, Sandman recalled bitterly.

Hence the idea was simultaneously -- union of opposites again -- to avoid sin, and opt instead for ever-increasing 'deposits' of TMH's Thinking, to literally exchange the 'puzzle' one was, for His Own Nature. That

was the biggest and most appealing promise of all, the goal of The Plan, so the angels were called "gods" by TMH, to remind them of that Promise. *Who wouldn't want that?* everyone kept saying. *After all, it's one thing to have knowledge and power – but what do you do with it?*

Trouble was, Sandman gasped, you had to LIVE through this 'exchange', and it was horrific. Conceptually comparable to what humans call conscious surgery, really -- without anesthetic. TMH wouldn't do the exchange apart from consent, and He'd only do it within the 'corridor' of both consent and one's then-improving, nature. But it was a killer, to consent. Seemed more like the 'puzzle' of one's nature was breaking, not improving via gradually replacing, exchange into His Nature. It felt like dying, not growing.

So long before the rebellion itself, Sandman and his fellow angels spent eons debating and discussing The Plan. It was the favorite topic of conversation in all echelons. Everyone was obsessed with it. If you were on morning patrol charged with making the pink lights, you thought about how that work tied to The Plan. If you relaxed between bouts of wrestling with black holes to make them birth stars rather than eat them, you thought about some feature of The Plan. If you coordinated crews or even took a brief respite on what humans now call Antares, you thought about the Plan.

Golden days, those. Sandman sighed. They didn't fully realize the killer nature of the exchange, were buoyed up by the idea of pleasing TMH and the Boss who was then TMH's Chief Representative. Everyone adored them. Back then, everyone was likewise fascinated with the idea of talking about The Plan to the future humans; they spent endless hours speculating on what "humans" would be like. That there could be lower creatures with souls like the angels' own, not animals except maybe in body, *what else could they be?* And they were heartily glad not to be "human". In fact, it became a burning question, *How fair is it of the Most High to put souls like ours, in such lower bodies? And especially, to do it to HIMSELF?* Didn't seem very godlike, to put self down.

To put it mildly, eventually this Divine 'answer', didn't make sense. When the Boss would later recount his own decision to rebel, he'd always say, "Either TMH is not omnipotent, and needs this mechanism for reasons He's not telling. Or He's crazy. Omnipotence should not be used for injustice."

"Who can live like that, what kind of life is that, what kind of love is that?" the Boss always argued in private. So the Boss, along with 1/3rd of the population, voted "no fellowship", deciding something was amiss in the Most High's thinking -- ulterior motive, probably.

That suspicion was confirmed, when Father held court and sentenced the lot of them to the Lake of Fire. *But for the Boss appealing on the ground of this 'Love' question, we'd all be roasting right now!* Sandman realized, admiring the Boss for his genius: "You have yet to fulfill your own unilateral promise, to create humans. So how can we be judged? We've never seen this 'Love' You promised to teach us, by means of them. So if You will pay for future human sins, then how can a LOVING God cast us His First Creatures who sinned -- into a Lake of Fire?"

Of course, Father had an answer for that, too: *Appeal Trial Granted.* The terms were stunning. Boss thought TMH really had lost His Mind:

- Same fellowship offer as made to the angels, to be built in the Most High's Thinking -- or, in whatever thinking the opposition wanted to craft.
- Of course, IF the Most High succeeded and thus became higher than the angels in His Humanity -- as promised, but now He'd have to become higher still, triumphing against the opposition, them --
- THEREFORE, humans after His Victory could be made higher than angels, too: if they also consented to 'deposits' of His Glorified Human Thinking, post-Victory.

Sandman scowled: *The Most High SADIST gloats over replacing us rebels! We've been pawns, all along!*

- Of course the flipside was, human 'exchange' into His Nature required a spiritual thought life that would be FAR harder than any angel ever knew. The 'puzzle' of humanity was so inferior; the 'exchange' for TMH's nature precept by precept, would take much longer, as human nature was more narrow per 'dot' of time. Seemed impossible to do.
- Moreover, there remained the same essential requirement for a corridor-of-consent. That was the Appeal basis -- Love -- so that's how its victory for either side, would be determined: who would opt for whose thinking, and what results obtained?

Sandman sighed. It was disconcerting to realize how the genius coup appeal by the Boss, only played into what TMH wanted, anyway. Moreover, TMH patched them into the Divine Broadcasting System as a condition of the Appeal Trial, which meant they could read human thoughts, as well as transmit to them: humans would not be able to read, shield or transmit thought as the angels could. The Boss believed he won a victory in gaining those terms. *Yeah, so we can see our own failure better via human thinking!* Sandman spat again.

Same ol' same ol'. To this day, seeing the same games Heaven's Masochist plays on the humans, Sandman didn't regret his decision to rebel. It hurt, though. TMH was gorgeous in so many ways; he missed ruminating over the Word, the thinking of Father, Son, Spirit. *Ruined! They baited us, hooked us, seduced us, all a lie!* So it was horrible, constantly fighting. *Masochist that I am, at least I'm not a TMH Pleroma masochist, like the dupes in the Docket!* Sandman grumbled to himself.

Worse, these Pleroma people were Witnesses to this alleged 'Love', and their masochism was tested for its 'maturity' in the Trial, how close they were to the Eph4:13 goals. When enough of these Pleroma-Mature Masochists, as Sandman liked to think of them -- when enough PMMs were developed and passed in the Docket, Father would pull the plug, and the Tribulation would begin.

Pleroma was a long and final stage of spiritual maturation which commenced when TMH was more important to the believer, than the believer's own life; when that happened, he was listed in the PDR and ranked compared to other believers in the same stage; so the list was reranked, daily. *Our version of the stock market,* Sandman laughed.

Divine Judgement Index. That's what it really was, of course. The shorter the PDR, the more the remaining human population could be judged: locally, regionally, nationally, worldwide. It was all explained in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. You could track world history by those chapters: every nation whose interest in Bible grew, prospered. Every nation whose interest in Bible reduced, declined. You could set your watch.

Even dirt-poor Africans in Angola knew it. During its first *après la guerre* election campaign, a poor woman used Deuteronomy 28 to run for political office, to show Angola thus had a national destiny, too: the American "PBS" even made a video of that. *Funny thing was, those poor people understood her!* Sandman was shocked; the people actually grasped her Bible allusions -- *she didn't quote verses, didn't have to, they were familiar with them?!* But those making the video, were clueless. *None of them are yet in the PDR, but they will be!* TMH would never neglect such bald interest in Him. *We could lose Africa!* Sandman realized. He made a mental note to ask Malarky what became of that woman. All he remembered was that she didn't win in the election. *Of course not,* Sandman replied to himself, *TMH has much BIGGER plans for that one!*

So, just as the woman didn't know Bible isn't for mere earthly politics, often the believer didn't know when he'd crossed over into the Pleroma stage: into, the biggest political game of them all. Only rarely did he know he was enrolled as a Witness in the Trial. The crew exploited that ignorance. Sometimes they became so

cocky, they flat TOLD the witness by means of thoughts, dreams, feelings. Or, when the witness inevitably failed but used 1Jn1:9, the Spirit would inform him. From then on, it was "open season". The crew endlessly debated whether to provoke this condition; and then if the witness knew he was in the Docket, how to 'play' him: with finesse, or grossness. The answer was always "both", so the crew had no end of fun trying to fine-tune.

#1 Witness, of course, long knew he was in the Docket. Moreover, he taught his congregation how they could know. So there were an unusual number of PDR witnesses this time, who knew they were enrolled.

Everyone in the crew presumed a suddenly shortlisted Roster, less than 10 names, would presage the Rapture. Sandman had to explain time and again that wasn't necessarily true, evidenced by TMH Himself being the Lone Name, during most of His Time on earth. Several times in history, only one name had been on the list: *Noah. Abraham. Moses. David. Daniel.* "Certainly those were times to exploit, but don't ASSume anything", Sandman admonished them.

Hence Balderdash's "Forecast" crew spent all their time trying to guess when 'enough' PMMs would be produced, based on both TMH's due-diligence disclosure at each human birth, and based on the composition of believers already in heaven. Balderdash was utterly in love with his work. Sandman guessed that it was a kind of escape, to constantly pour over what-if scenarios. Most were bored and not a little skeptical of the activity. Everyone knew the calculations couldn't be used. "Can't forecast free will" was often the skeptic's response when Balderdash waxed loquacious over his job. "Can forecast opportunity cost", was his laconic reply.

The whole 'business' of forecasting was based on the justice principle of opportunity cost, which of course was a salient feature in the Mosaic Law on redemption and restitution: *double-this, five-times-that, seven-times-that.* So Balderdash did his forecasting based on *owed wealth.* Owed to Father, by Son, owed to Son by Father, etc. Of course, all this 'owing' was just the sheer pleasure of Each One. *Yeah, at our expense!* Sandman spat. He wondered how Balderdash could stand seeing Their Blatant Rejection, day after day. Thus Sandman was glad he didn't have that job, but rather the easier one of coordinating PDR ground operations.

Based on this "opportunity cost", Balderdash had told the Boss that the Rapture would be long in coming; that the longer it took, the harder it would be to pull off; that because it's an opportunity cost calculation TMH uses for Church, more and more is 'owed', as time passes. "And, so to speak, He'll want the highest interest rates", Balderdash stressed. The number was known: but the QUALITY of the number, would vary as time passed. And that QUALITY would have to be far higher in a *subsequent* generation, to make up for any losses prior. *Therein Lies Our Opportunity,* Balderdash would thought-grin.

Therefore, as time passed and Balderdash proved right, the Boss was more and more impressed. So the Boss ordered that about once a year all his crews in the universe, including those in detention, take a day's 'class' in Forecasting. Balderdash liked to teach these classes himself, but only rarely could. So you considered yourself lucky if you got him on your 'day'.

This 'class' would explain three essentials:

1. TMH intends to build the Thought Structure of His Son in all creation, reflecting Him, with "Church" as the 'body' of His Thinking, Eph4:13;
2. Funding for this eventuality was irrevocably provided and escrowed in eternity past, so that it could have played out in many different yet perfect configurations, hence no creature's free will would ever be compromised.
3. The previous configurations not having been met, only the Church configuration was left:
 - a. So you could forecast what was required to complete Church, and

b. You could stop it.

'Class' would always begin with humor. Usually, how silly humans were to think the Rapture could be gauged by historical events. Some of Malarky's crew would make a guest appearance, demonstrating how they got humans to be so silly, replete with derisive skits or TV programs showing how the humans lapped it up. The audience rolled in the aisles. Then, 'class' got serious.

The underlying 'math' of TMH's opportunity cost calculation was surprisingly straightforward, Balderdash liked to say. "It's architecture, pure and simple: TMH's own Thought Pattern. Each thought is also, Divine Money. The more Divine Thought you have, the 'richer' you are. But, you are finite, so you have a body. Therefore, you need a 'body' of wealth, to play with. To express your true wealth of thinking. So in eternity past, an 'inheritance' of visible wealth was to be awarded based on the spiritual wealth built up in you."

Heads nodded. Everyone remembered the promises TMH had made. Balderdash continued: "That offer was made to us FIRST -- back before we rebelled against it. Therefore, we know this 'architecture' and what TMH considers 'valid currency', rather well. We also know that the 'offer' made to us, is now extended to humans. So the Rapture is likewise based on the same criteria, and isn't date-predicted, even as the promise to us wasn't date-predicted. Instead, its date is rather a contingency -- determined when the necessary building in Church believers, will be completed."

Sandman had to admire the genius of that. *The Cross thus demonstrated the Completed Structure of His Soul, a kind of Thought Bank. To Father, value was measured in terms of thinking, and the Counter-Thinking on the Cross was used to 'pay' for the incoming imputed sins and the judgement on them. So that Counter-Thinking was the 'present value' of the 'cost' of all finity, to 'pay' for all of it.* Isaiah told humans this rather bluntly, in Isa52:13-54:1. That Structure was the Building Promise to angels; and now to humans, in writing. Because in writing, it could be more quickly replicated in them, versus the previous methods of rituals and other mnemonics which were required before TMH Himself was completed, Jeremiah 31:31-34, compared to Hebrews 8:8-10:17.

"We've long seen TMH and our former comrades in Heaven. We know this Structure very well. TMH keeps on showing us the Structure, every second. So we know how TMH values the Cross. So we know how His Soul 'parses' out."

Accordingly, if you took all the data you had on believers' thought structures and added them all together, you'd get an aggregate 'building' or 'thought bank', and could compare it to TMH's. Hence you knew what would be the opportunity cost of each thought, if you knew how each thought related to the whole.

"Spiritual Dendrites, a kind of Divine DNA", Balderdash called it.

At this point in the explanation, Balderdash had his usually-disinterested audience in thrall. So he pounced. "As a result, we can gauge how much of His Thinking is completed, in Church!" Balderdash would exclaim.

"Frankly, TMH wants us to track this. He's rubbing our nose in it." That comment always provoked a reaction, and Balderdash waited until they calmed down. "But two can play at that game." Nods and smiles all around. He had their attention, again.

"Problem: what happens if that Completion isn't occurring properly? Completion of His Thinking is a building process, occurring thought by thought. What if the thought doesn't occur? Then the opportunity cost accumulates, but has no recipient to whom it can be awarded. So the Rapture cannot occur until there are thoughts which 'make up for' the missed thoughts."

At this point, the audience would be baffled. So they would either lose interest, call out "You can't know the answer then!" or would ask him to expatiate further. So often, he'd call for a break.

If asked, Balderdash would gladly elaborate. "TMH intended every believer between Pentecost and Rapture, to become a king himself. Since anyone could become a believer, every human born had a potential kingly inheritance. TMH foreknew that most believers would reject the inheritance, thus however many actual kings were developed, would be a matter of free will; and, given the results, there would be indeed a real kingdom for everyone who did choose to develop. So all the Church Age funding of eternity past, is based on this calculation."

"I want to stress this again: EVERY human alive between Pentecost and Rapture has a potential kingly inheritance assigned to him from eternity past", Balderdash said. "Think about it: had every human being believed in Christ and died SW, he would truly be a king forever. Now a king, needn't have the burden of ruling others. But he's not a king, without the wealth of a king. The idea is to use the wealth AS a king, whether you have a kingdom on which you must spend it, or not. So notice how the best is first escrowed: the wealth, without the burden of other beings to rule."

The proper term was Successful Morning Star Witness, but that rankled the Boss, so Malarky, Balderdash and Sandman always truncated the title to "SW".

"One must be trained to enjoy wealth. So even were there no kingdom to rule, one must rule the self and the wealth one has. Hence the need to develop the Thinking of a King. The analogy: God can make whatever He wants anytime He wants, but what is the best choice to make? Requires training, to choose well."

"So" -- here Balderdash paused for effect -- "obviously there is more 'money' for more kings in the 'pot', than there are kings to receive it. Not everyone believes; not everyone grows up to become a Pleroma king. THEREFORE, if people refuse to believe or grow up spiritually, all that inheritance would have to be reallocated, as required by Isaiah 53:12's 'among the great ones' contract clause!"

Upon hearing that, every mouth in the hall would drop open. Balderdash waited until they recovered.

Yeah, the atsumim clause, Sandman winced to remember. We were the first group of intended atsumim. They get what we should get! Sandman was chapped no end that #1 Witness in the PDR spent a whopping seven years teaching it to his congregation. That's why the 490 for 1990 completed, Sandman recalled with a grimace. #1 understood all this and taught it well, as if he too had been a student under Balderdash.

An irrevocable election by Father for His Son -- stated for humans in Isaiah 53:12, Ephesians 1 and elsewhere. TMH invoked it often in the Gospels, Matt 16:18 was based on it, and every NT writer stressed it. Election to inheritance. Balderdash thus had a known ending quantity, the 'pie' itself. Isaiah 52:13-54:1 was quite bald about Who the 'pie' was: TMH in His Humanity. So, His Soul being given for sin, the Ending Result would be He owned it all - - again, per Isa53:12. Isa53:10-11 told you how that Soul's Structure would be replicated in humans --- the Appeal Trial terms, Sandman cringed to recall.

So basically, His Soul would be 'parsed' among Church, such that in aggregate it reflected Him, mirror sea-of-glass analogy. A mosaic or stained glass window. The associated material and status-type wealth couldn't really be calculated. But it was on reserve since eternity past, irrevocable, per Ephesians 1; so you didn't need to compute its value.

Instead -- and this was the key to dating the Rapture, Balderdash would always stress -- you needed to know, is it fully allocated? Since the Rapture hadn't yet occurred, you knew the answer was "no". Which means,

Sandman smiled to himself, *if we stop time before TMH does, we win!* He reminded himself to bring up this point, when meeting with the crew. *So simple, so profound.*

Sandman decided this trip down Memory Lane was proving quite fruitful. He eyed his orderly to demonstrate he was still resting, and then continued ruminating.

So the tough part, as Balderdash explained it, was to calculate how believers FORFEIT when they do NOT think like TMH, and to whom that forfeiture should go. If it all could be reallocated in the CURRENT generation, then Balderdash figured that would be the true Rapture generation.

"Of course, to plot that with any accuracy required knowing when the last Pleroma king would have finished development. TMH will never say when, on the grounds that it would influence our activity", Balderdash noted.

"HOWEVER" -- and here, Balderdash would pitch the word so loudly, the crowd fell into a hush -- "the more time passes, the more unlikely it is that TMH will get sufficient kings."

Now he had their attention, again. "We all know the human race is dying. We all know from Daniel that the scheduled end of time initially, was 1144 AD. So in every generation since, genetic material degrades further; the degradation is slowed or even sometimes reversed, due to believers; just as Adam's sin adversely affected his biology, so also TMH's thinking positively affects biology. Still, the biological degradation cannot be stopped. Mankind is far weaker now, than he was 1000 years ago. So at some point, the genetic material will not be able to support a soul's being imputed to it, at birth."

"Consequently" -- and here Balderdash paused for effect -- "the longer the delay in completing Church, the greater the forfeitures become, yet there are fewer future Pleroma kings to receive them. So the pressure on those future souls, the spiritual goals they must reach to QUALIFY for the Isa53:12 reallocation, are always higher than those of the previous generation."

"Notice how this dynamic changes. In the beginning, had the first generation completed the quota, the resulting kingdoms of BEINGS TO RULE, would have been small, efficient. The burden increases, however, as time passes and forfeitures increase: there are more beings to rule, so the kings have to be MORE developed, to absorb that burden. The required wealth is higher, too: costs more to have a kingdom of millions, than to have one of several hundred thousand. So the spiritual development required per king, must get bigger and bigger and bigger -- at some point, it can't get bigger. So what if some portion of the eternity-past provision, remains unallocated? It's not perfect anymore!"

That meant, of course, that the Rapture could be stopped. No, you couldn't predict it, but yes, you could stop it anyway. Sandman decided to remind his crew of these points in Balderdash's 'class'. Put a primacy on what one did now, gave one a sense of accomplishment, even if no results were visible. *How ironic. Same as a believer is supposed to get from knowing Rapture is real, Sandman mused.*

Lately, when Balderdash explained the problem to American crews, he'd remind them to investigate American Federal law on "overfunded defined benefit plans". *For the Rapture was essentially an overfunding problem: wealth set aside, but too few takers.* So the Rapture would happen when there were enough spiritually developed Pleroma, since they were the only ones who'd have the spiritual capacity for such wealth. Everyone else would share through them, under TMH.

Occasionally one of Balderdash's America crew would ask the incisive or planted question, "But can't the wealth be back-allocated? Paul certainly is one of the most mature believers of the entire Church Age, if not #1 for all of it."

"Of course it can be back-allocated", Balderdash would reply. "But notice that if the back-allocations had used up all the forfeitures, the Rapture would have occurred by now. So it's fair to assume that time only continues because the back-allocations were already done and cannot become bigger. Hence the future souls have an ever-increasing capacity requirement for kingship. Ergo, at some point the requirement exceeds the potential development capacity available, and forfeitures remain in suspense, unallocated. The only other alternative is for TMH to just flat MAKE the person big enough -- which violates free will, and then we'd win in the Trial."

Back-allocated or not, it proved dicey to estimate when this 'overfunding' would be used up. NT writers often noted that the Rapture could occur in any generation; that meant the population of any generation, was always sufficient to solve the reallocation problem. Hence every generation would have the Daniel 9:26 historical characteristics, to fit that fact. For example some among each generation's political leaders, could become "the anti-christs" if required. One could manipulate them at will.

"So bottom line," Balderdash usually continued, "those forfeiting their inheritance present a bigger share of the 'pie' to be split among those who accept it." Sandman squinted, pained in memory: *#1 Witness taught that as an irrevocable escrow for seven bleeping years!* Sandman had to admit that Balderdash's use of a defined benefit plan analogy still fit the "escrow" analogy, since it was *money only allocable to Plan beneficiaries*.

At this point at least someone among the crews would ask, "What about our inheritance?" and Balderdash would inevitably reply, "It will be reallocated among them." The resulting uproar was so intense, class usually broke up. *Ahhh, the Boss mandates an annual visit to rile us up*, Sandman concluded.

Sandman remembered one time when Balderdash calmed them down: "Wait! Hear me out! It's a cliff, believer acceptance: even were you a believer, you could forfeit all but salvation, 1Cor3; so what you forfeit, would go to 'the strong' -- the Pleroma kings. You have to die victorious. 'SW' is a Battlefield Royal Patent, 2Tim4:7-8."

Sandman remembered how the entire audience slowly broke out smiling, practically thinking in unison: *Ahhhh, revenge. If we can't get our rightful inheritance then we can stop them from getting it, too*. Sandman decided that would be useful ammunition for his crew.

Having calmed them, Balderdash went on. "It's a kind of morbidity calculation not too unlike human old-age pension programs, were they ever valued properly", Balderdash quipped. "Easy thing to do, in principle: just run through all the variables and limits, kinda like breaking an encryption. But almost impossible to do, in practice: spiritual growth or retrogression is always in flux, so you never know whether the what-if variables and their results, would actually occur."

This dynamic meant there were multiple perfect states from which TMH could choose. "Obviously, they aren't all equal in value to Him, for the Rapture hasn't occurred till yet", Balderdash would comment. By knowing what perfect states were not chosen, Balderdash figured he could better prognosticate which one would BE chosen. *Enfin*, he didn't have enough data. But as time passed, he could narrow down the pros and cons of past rejected options.

So many potentially perfect configurations of kingdoms could result; picking any one of them could prove a fatal decision, and the Rapture date would be missed. With dire consequences. After all, the Boss would be ruling the Lake of Fire forever. *Guess who he'd go after first?* Sandman shuddered.

Moreover, though TMH also said per birth who would actually finish the Trial course and thus be crowned, that didn't mean you could ignore those who'd fail. For there were always people in their periphery who might learn something, and that learning itself could prolong or shorten the time it took to complete all the kingdoms TMH had in mind for His Son. Of course, any learning would change the entire dynamic, so which among the perfect configurations would turn out to be the right one, was a never-ending conundrum to resolve.

Balderdash joked about it the other day, calling it his "spiritual 'M' theory". *Five dimensions, not 11, duh. Dots becoming strings, strings open and floating, but then suddenly close into INTERLOCKING loops. And while you knew in aggregate how they would all turn out – a tiqwa, rope so interlocked and intertwined, you couldn't break it – for any given group of 'strings', you really couldn't be sure. People had free will, that's why.*

So only on a grand scale did you know the ultimate results; and you could know in which direction, humanity was trending. On a grand scale, you knew most believers would break, abdicate; at some point, 99% of them would opt out of the spiritual development in favor of worldly glories and competence, fulfilling the *wa lo hadar* clause of Isa 53:2. So it was Malarky's job, to present such trapping substitutes -- especially, in the very name of "God" -- and he did it well. Thus Malarky and Balderdash worked closely together, so that the latter could better forecast. Sandman formed the third in this triumvirate, for his group was to block the development of the PDR people.

Thus most of the human race would be safely derailed with the few "unpredictables" -- those not easily herded -- sticking out. *Flushing the quarry*, the PDR crew liked to call it.

Hence the point of forecasting was to detect trends, not really to date the Rapture, Balderdash would remind his 'students'. "By detecting the trends, we know which way to tack in the wind, strategically. Then, Malarky and his crew decide which way to propagandize the humans, i.e., whether to start a new religion, to play to man's ego that he can reason, or to his desire for the silly. You know, like Malarky's malarky of evolution, which he trotted out to deflect attention from all those original-language manuscripts suddenly becoming available."

That remark always got a laugh and a wince. The laugh: *Yeah, inanimacy produces animacy! You really DO come from the Rock, Christ, so WE make it a geological rock WE know how to cool off at any speed we like! Ha!* The wince: *we can't hide Scripture anymore! Best not to think of that*, Sandman scolded himself.

Here in 2006, there were two trends: 1) abnormally-high numbers of humans believing in the Gospel and wanting Bible, but they were 2) an abnormally low *percentage* of total believers. So the quit rate from initial belief to abandoning Bible, was far higher than normal. So one could exploit the imbalance, and either delay the Rapture far longer -- or maybe stop it entirely. Huge forfeitures going on, despite the Bible being more easily available in better quality and more quickly, to more people, than at any time since the first century. *Explained why TMH relented*, Sandman supposed. He always would relent when believers were overwhelmingly negative.

"So we must be doing something right", Balderdash remarked. *Me too*, Sandman smiled to himself. He glanced appreciatively at the orderly, letting him eavesdrop on his thoughts. *Couldn't have done it without you*, Sandman thought-smiled.

Thus the threat of new entrants to the PDR must be higher than normal, too. Sandman pondered that idea. One of the ironies of overwhelming believer negativity, was that those positive, recognized it and studied all the harder. "Polarization Effect", Balderdash called it. So paradoxically, the threat of TMH achieving "the Rapture generation", was greater during such periods.

"Do you think there will soon be many new PDR entrants?" Sandman asked his orderly, aloud.

"Sure. Since when does the Most High relent if not to His Advantage?" the orderly quipped.

"How big?"

"Pretty big. To me the question is how long, not how many. The Bible rollout from circa 1850 AD ends in 2050, roughly. Just after the upcoming qualifying 1000 time grant closes, in 2030."

"Have Balderdash do a post-recall forecast of potential PDR entrants, by number and name."

"Okay, boss: but as you know, it won't be reliable by name."

"Can't hurt to have names, even if they are likely the wrong ones."

Of course, Sandman smiled ruefully, *there would have been no Rapture, nor a PDR to mess with, had not Israel rejected TMH as Messiah.* Two futures were given in Daniel 9:24-26, everyone knew that: one which ended in 37AD had Israel accepted Messiah, and another that ended 30 AD, if she did not. For the outer limit of time was the 1000th anniversary of David's death; the only other deadline eligible, would have been the 1000th anniversary of his retirement. For David had been awarded those time grants, and no one else had grants which extended longer, by the time Daniel received Gabriel's transmission. Since the promise had shifted from Israel to David back in 2 Sam 7, and since the Temple was promised for David's sake, the Temple's destruction ended the possibility of any new time grants. So only Messiah's arrival would prolong time, hence Daniel 9 was crafted from a combination of the 1st Temple's remaining time, and the period until David's time grants expired.

Sandman quickly reviewed the math: *586 BC minus the 70 years in Dan 9:2, belonging to time remaining to 1st Temple = 516 BC, deadline to complete 2nd Temple, accomplished at the last minute 3 Adar; minus those same 70 years reimbursed if deadline completed, = 446 BC, deadline to rebuild Jerusalem, accomplished at the last minute, 25 Elul; -49, Daniel 9:25 remaining leftover from 1st Temple's 490, = 397BC, deadline to complete Malachi. The remaining 7 years for the 1st Temple was reserved for the Tribulation, Daniel 9:27. Then followed the 62 silent 'weeks' to complete Messiah, reimbursing the number of years 1st Temple had been standing (364) plus another 70 sabbatical years, standard believer voting period. That ended in 37AD, 1000 years after David's death per 1 Kings 6:1.*

So you knew TMH's Humanity would be born by 3BC. From Haggai 2, you'd know He had to be born on 25 Chislev, so that would be 4 BC. Of course, three centuries later, it became known as Chanukah. Malarky's crew banged the drum on the Law, to drown out as best possible, recognition of His Birthdate. Didn't work. It was too easy to calculate: He'd have to be born on Chanukah in order for both ending dates to be available to Israel. *40 years David had been King. So the Last David would have to get 40 years on earth, and that time would have to end 37AD, even had Israel accepted Him; if she rejected Him, He'd have 33 years, same as David's ruling period over consolidated Israel – but He'd have to be born by Chanukah 4 BC, for both options to even exist. There was no time left, after that.*

So when TMH finally came, and then made the surprise announcement of Matt16:18 -- *how the shout went up on both sides that day!* Sandman remembered -- the Boss called in the triumvirate for an emergency meeting. For it was obvious right away, that what would become known as "the Rapture" was the only way the previous promises to the Jews could be kept; that it would be the only way to bridge the long-promised-to-Daniel, Tribulation. Of course, TMH began explaining that to His Disciples, right away. *Idea was to warn Israel of this backup solution, since Israel was rejecting Him as Messiah. So they would miss out, having played Vashti. But could come in as Esther, from the highways and byways, Isa52:15 being thus fulfilled.*

Truth to tell, many of my comrades were relieved, Sandman wistfully recalled. Until Matt16:18, they all expected TMH to fulfill His Mission on 14 Nisan, be it 30 AD or 37AD, just as advertised. So as that deadline loomed, many among the fallen ones were unhappy. He dies, and then it happens -- the Tribulation, different kind of flood,

Muth+Selah, think about it! as Gabriel so wittily informed Daniel in 9:26. So they saw Matt16:18 as an extension of time. Which of course, it was.

Yet due to the many potentially perfect configurations and the impossibility of picking the right one, the only effective Mistrial counterstrategy, would be to make the Rapture occur too early. But in those days disrupting the timing of the Cross to make His Death MISS Passover, took priority: so they couldn't plan. *Four measly days, why couldn't we shorten it?!* Sandman grimaced.

Damage control. At least they could mess up post-Cross believers' understanding of when it happened. Sandman smiled at Malarky's 2nd-century success in distorting "sabbath", to only mean "Saturday". *The entire Judaic calendar of special "sabbaths" was thus masked, all in one blow! All these centuries!* Even the Boss was impressed, and personally styled Malarky "Sir White Cross". You had to kneel when coming into Malarky's presence, *just as before the Boss himself!* Sandman secretly coveted it, not that Malarky or he even cared for the protocol. *The Boss Awards It, that I do crave,* Sandman confessed inwardly.

Boss would award based on stopping or slowing the Rapture. It was a catechism he frequently invoked: "Rapture occurs when Church completes. So prevent that, and you prevent the Rapture. Rapture occurs automatically if no believer can be awarded a time grant. Believers won't be motivated to grow and get those grants, if they don't know about them; if they don't know about the Rapture. So if you want promotion, dull the believer's sense of

- time,
- immediacy,
- TMH's calendar and agenda,
- by getting his eyes on people and things,
- working his brains out."

So post-Cross, it became #1 priority to defeat the Rapture -- even distorting the Gospel was less important. So Balderdash and especially Malarky went into overdrive, trying post-Cross to produce as many believers as possible, even selling the Gospel themselves, helping to advertise TMH as the true Messiah; *so it would be extremely hard for TMH to spiritually develop enough teachers, spread the supply line thin.* So absent teachers, Malarky's crew worked feverishly to 'substitute teach', so they could early on 'shape' their version of a post-salvation 'spirituality' to obfuscate Rapture and suit other of the Boss' goals.

Hence in those first decades, the game switched from wrecking the Gospel, to promoting it. That would buy time. Initially everyone saw it as a good idea, on the Trial grounds that *if they did the promoting and humans bought what they said, per Trial terms they could control post-salvation development; further justification was that 99% of believers would be apostate anyway, whether 'herded' or not.* TMH never allowed anyone to actually force a human. So it was always the human's fault. *So how could TMH refuse this?* they pleaded with the Boss. And, He didn't refuse.

So the strategy was, to multiply, prosper, and then split the believers into competing groups; thus make them kill each other, so the Church would be retarded, heaven full of baby-like believers, thus buying hopefully centuries of delay. And, help better set up a mistimed Rapture TMH would have to call. *For if they manipulated a false idea of spirituality, inevitable warring would result. Ergo, they could develop known WRONG kingdom configurations. For others seeing the evil of the fake spirituality would naturally associate it with Bible, never mind how Bible refuted the fakers; so, people would no longer believe in the Gospel. This would juridically require the Rapture to occur at the WRONG time, same goal as during Passover week. Failing that, to keep the believer numbers off-balance, so more Pleroma were needed to fit any of the perfect configurations, and thus no Rapture could yet occur.*

Sandman waxed hopeful. *Finity has ultimate capacity limits. So finite thought, Divine-Quality or no, has limits. We exploit those limits.* So those rejecting post-salvation growth, 'forfeited' all or part of their inheritance, though of course no one could lose salvation. This created an enormous amount of unallocable wealth, stored up per Eph1 -- but who would be the Isa53:12 "atsumim"? Wealth can only go to those with the capacity for it. So TMH could not call the Rapture, with so much wealth in unallocable forfeiture. New believers would have to be developed, which required that time continue.

But if no one sufficiently developed for a new grant of time, or if negativity – particularly of believers – was too great, NO time could be justly allowed to continue. Sandman smacked his lips.

Hence it would be a Mistrial, if TMH didn't call the Rapture. Or, if He did. Either way, see, *TMH didn't keep His Promise, which was the original basis for the Appeal. If Trial basis is violated, then it's a Mistrial. No way around that.* Sandman suddenly remembered how the Boss gloated, "Since the fulfillment of all past promises to mankind now depended on the Rapture occurring as advertised, well -- then all the promises to mankind except the Cross itself, would be unfulfilled!" A promise unkept is tantamount to a lie. When Justice lies, it's a Mistrial, manipulation of evidence. *Matt16:18 was a presentation of evidence that didn't yet exist, and Father granted it as valid? Yeah, and if it doesn't come to pass, then it's a BLATANT Mistrial.*

"If even one of God's Promises is not kept, Satan would win", #1 PDR Witness repeatedly told his congregation, when explaining the Rapture. They didn't understand what he meant. *But we sure do*, Sandman cackled.

Sandman remembered how the Boss was certain that TMH was completely wacko to reiterate this promise in Acts 1, especially in the wake of His Cross Victory: *no timeline was set!* Boss positively drooled over the prospect of a Mistrial Verdict. Mistimed Rapture was THE way to get that Verdict. Everything else was disputable.

To this end, the Gospel was suddenly promoted or allowed free expression, not countered; there needed to be a large body of negative believers, to offset the spiritual greats: primarily Paul, and finally Peter and John, a handful of others. *But back then, even a handful of PDR greats were the biggest threat*, Sandman recalled. Thus it was imperative to increase the Body, and then foster forfeiture by negative believers, to keep the developing configuration off-balance. Thus time could continue.

"Our gift to humanity", Malarky would wryly remark. It worked well. Too well. By the 50's AD, everyone knew the Gospel. The Rapture's imminency had a lot to do with the Gospel's popularity: *after all, any day the world could end, believe now!*

Back in those days, they couldn't defeat recognition of the Rapture's imminency. But they could dull people by titillating them, turning the Rapture into an action movie. They could thus gradually mask the underlying time-grants system, by banging the drum so loudly on Daniel 9:26, that its underlying blessing-accounting method would eventually be ignored. Sandman inwardly cheered: *huzzah, the very passage that patently reveals how time continues in 490-year increments ONLY due to a spiritual HERO, is used to conceal that very fact!*

For the time grants were easier to nullify: only needed to target the top 10 Witnesses, which was Sandman's specialty. If they won, that would provoke "an anti-Rapture", as Malarky liked to quip. Still, the Cross being successful, and Paul being so quickly developed, they knew they lost the first round. So they knew early on, they had 490 more years post-Cross, to accomplish their goals. *It only took us 200 years.* Sandman was gratified for his role in that. Only one person post-Paul was developed. Thus the Dark Ages could begin, as there were no other personal 490s. One was needed to justify the next historical 490. More would have justified material blessing to the human race. *It didn't happen!* Sandman exulted.

Back in the late 40's AD, when Gospel and Rapture doctrines started to feed each other rather than conflict, at that point 'Corporate' split over the *raison d'etre* for promoting the Gospel: "For by attempting to spread TMH's teacher supply line too thin, our own supply line could become too thin." It was eventually decided that promoting the Gospel would not be allowed. There could be times when it wouldn't be refuted or obfuscated, but you had to get advance permission directly from the Boss' office. Any infraction would be dealt with severely.

Hence when Babel Goren lost his temper with the seven sons of Sceva, he was made an example of severity. Goren was possibly the most popular of the higher-ups among the PDR crews, and they were shocked that he received such harsh treatment. Sandman had to order it, personally. Malarky was thus indirectly warned, since Goren was his best friend. *Mine too*, reflected Sandman.

Goren was demoted to "pit bull", the worst fate the Boss could assign. Named after a consciousness kind of dog whose only loyalty was to his trainer, which earthly rulers had kept as pets since -- *Abraham?* Sandman couldn't remember how long. But he and everyone always remembered the citation, and Sandman recalled it now. *Goren had to learn and live in, and execute upon others, gross body stuff like torture, sexual titillation, rape, all kinds of criminal-like behavior, sending feelings to all and sundry -- which of course first meant he himself had to experience all those things as 'training'. For centuries.* Humanity imagined the pit bulls as the definition of "demons"; that false image was carefully crafted since Cain, so there were many and varied lurid stories well embedded in the human psyche. But in fact, the "pit bulls" were the torturers of their fellows. They came alongside to assist in the world's corruption only as bidden, and then as a kind of reward or probation. No demon liked the banal. *They were sons of God, not of the earth!* It was disgusting.

Goren's downfall reverberated throughout the organization; effectively, Gospel promotion stopped. It would be impossible to have enough time to get advance permission from the Boss' office, and then deploy to take advantage of a situation. So from that point onward, unless an order went out from the Boss, no one did anything, however much he saw an opportunity. Grapevine was therefore used, whispers of opportunity, worries of the many over whether the efficacy of distorting the Gospel, reduced the number of believers so low, the Rapture would occur. Over the centuries, a few of these worriers actually took it upon themselves to communicate the Gospel to a believer or unbeliever they liked -- and were still in lowest levels of detention, because of that. Sandman didn't even want to imagine what they were suffering. *You didn't disobey an order and especially, not one requiring the Boss' express exemption!*

By obfuscating the Rapture, one marginalized the Gospel. No hurry if no Rapture, so no worry about your eternal future. Hence whatever it took to make one scorn "the Rapture", took priority. Worriers were thus tossed a bone: *they could promote the Gospel, ONLY IF they could prove the Rapture was further discredited thereby.* Idea was to build a paper trail of 'respectable' believers who didn't believe in the Rapture, so that the hundreds of Bible verses on it wouldn't be properly reviewed. For the worriers, this was a major relief. But they'd still need advance approval of strategy and essential tactics, from the Boss' office.

That became the accepted policy, and Malarky's group had charge of it. Malarky devoted almost half of his propagandizing crew to that goal. Idea was first to promote substitutes, denigrating the truth as disrespectful. But the kicker was to promote the lie as "respectable", even though it was obviously silly. The Boss loved derisive humor.

Balderdash and Sandman were always amazed how obvious were the lies Malarky used, and often thought he was being lazy. Time and again Malarky explained he was following the Boss' strategy in Genesis 3, by picking The Most Stupid Thing -- there, the idea *eating fruit can make you like God* -- and then banging the drum on it. Never mind, the Eden couple were geniuses and perfect. They bought the stupidity. They turned against

TMH, so they would grab any excuse, even the stupidity of eating something inanimate and material, in the name of gaining something animate and immaterial. "Clever reversal on TMH's Plan to put His Own Animate and Immaterial nature, in His Creatures", Malarky liked to say. Religion was thus the Boss' prescription, ever since. The sillier, the better.

Malarky would often relate this strategy, as follows: *Eden couple, pre-fall. The Boss had instructed everyone to stay mum, just watch, that he alone would decide and act on the couple. Only two humans, it was an easy order to obey. More fun, too. Quite successful, then, to use Genesis 3 on the woman; the man was faced with what would later be called by humans, a "Hobson's choice": whichever decision Adam made, he lost.*

So her silliness – and his, really – was turned to good advantage. It wasn't like they didn't know eating fruit was silly. TMH said don't do it, and that was the only way to rebel, for them. The Boss carefully used his time with the woman, to belie the argument that he was evil. Being nice. Then asking her to believe something silly. Do something silly. So – and here was the kicker – base the entire silly claim, on a claim that it was silly of TMH, to FORBID eating fruit! Could the Boss make it more obvious, that he was selling a lie? Ego, disbelief and silliness, what a devastating combination.

So the Boss had long determined to use silliness as a cover, again repeating the success of Genesis 3. Post-fall, it quickly became easy to enmesh mankind in lasciviousness, titillating him with supernatural displays and imbuing him with supernatural abilities. Idea was, to make him crazy from the differential in nature between his own and the angels' far superior intellect and abilities. Others seeing this craziness would tell the story far and wide. It became the 'official' version of what "demon" or "god" meant, *a capricious person of superior ability but prurient appetites you had better well appease! And you had to do incredibly stupid things, to appease 'him'!*

Balderdash and Sandman were endlessly entertained with the variations: drinking blood, wearing animal heads, bringing food to the dead. Sandman's personal favorite: making boats for disemboweled bodies that obviously couldn't go anywhere. Preserving those bodies, too. This popular notion spanned the centuries, every culture having some version of it. *Yeah, they didn't get into the Ark, that's why!* Malarky thought it funny to promote the post-mortem boating 'heaven' for that reason. *Worked well! So dead humans were preserved, often in pieces, just so much animal meat like you'd see after a kill for food. And no brains turned on? Oh, how the crews would howl with laughter. Malarky liked to call it his "Divine Comedy".*

Humans were endlessly fascinated, of course, so didn't notice how silly were the myths, the religions. So they didn't notice that their vaunted philosophies were equally silly, all of them variations on man making himself god. *Noble death, to torch yourself. Noble sacrifice, to give your life. Yeah, and YOU'RE the fool, fancying yourself important or remembered, because you die – but who benefits? Not you! So you're only a 'god' in lipservice!* This of course was assiduously fed to the humans and brought into full effect, with the Greeks and the Romans.

That was the other side of the silly coin, casting silly ascetic behaviors, as holy. Malarky's genius here was a constant. Revelation 17 indeed played in the silliest manner. *Call Friday-Sunday three days and three nights, even though a five year old could count that as untrue. Then call anyone not believing 2 equals 3, a heretic. Eat this wafer. Get wet. Wear pointy hats. Believe that some woman's being a virgin, was an equal achievement to the Cross itself. Replace the Real Head with a man's head -- and that, of someone who the Bible even proves never set foot near Rome! After all, Bible made it plain Paul, not Peter was in Rome, and Paul was the guy who lost his head! So replace TMH's head in Matt 16:18 with Peter's, and decapitate Paul at the same time, thus decapitating the Rapture, too!*

Of course, by replacing TMH's Head with Peter's -- never mind Matt 16:18's Greek clearly showed the difference between Petra Salvation Rock of the OT, and a mere chip "petros" that was Peter, both in the same verse -- reverse the two words in reader minds, and one decapitated TMH, Himself. Moreover, it decapitated 1 Cor 10:4, where Petra is used, so no one could doubt TMH was pointing at Himself as the Rock in Matt 16:18,

which Paul was essentially quoting. After all, the theme of I Cor was on Head and Body, how Matt16:18 would get done. "Deft wit, Malarky, to take I Cor and decapitate it all in translation!" Balderdash often declared. That derision helped ease the pain of Matt16:18's tolling. Malarky's wit was endless. He and Babel Goren. *Too bad I had to court-martial Goren, Sandman thought ruefully.*

So it was easy to wrap the Rapture, by means of scarlet and purple. Easy, to cloak the accounting system for time, why there had to be a Rapture, in the first place. Easy, to thus camouflage TMH's Birth and Death, so that none would notice the mathematical convergence all the way back to the Exodus -- even to Adam, if you knew Heb1:2's Greek.

But not so easy to veil, when the Word became widely available in those original-language texts, no longer sequestered. *Dang the lot of them: Tregelles, Tischendorf and their contemporaries who avidly collected and corrected them! Damage control! Cast the Rapture as silly, having made the silly "respectable" after 18 centuries!* Sandman broke out laughing.

"What?" his orderly asked. It was hard to obey when you didn't know what your boss was thinking.

"Just contemplating our success at hiding the Rapture via the Catholics", Sandman replied.

"Via the Protestants, too", the orderly retorted.

"Not quite all of them", Sandman absently responded, and fell silent, cloaked back in his thoughts.

For so long as the Rapture would be unknown, distorted or discredited, people instead turned to religion and its works, with or without "God" being mouthed. So the 'future' was always this idolized, distant thing, and 'today' went unappreciated, however much it was stressed. Too much repetition, dulls. That too, was the idea. Always hold the carrot out just far enough for it to be a movie, never a reality. People liked that. Helped them 'escape' looking at 'today'. However much they talked about it.

Sandman was awestruck at Malarky's genius in hiding what was in plain sight. Bible was too plain from Genesis to Revelation, for the Rapture was but the final configuration of foretold contingent events, begun back in Genesis 2:17. Same pattern. *Humanity never noticed that consistency.*

So successful was he, even the Boss relaxed to play games. Sandman ticked off the salient HEY SEE ME markers the Boss authorized be given mankind:

- Daniel 9:26, attested live by the Abominating Dome and the Western Wall, two relics no one disputed.
- Matthew 24, referring back to Daniel 9:26, blatantly advertising that after TMH's death, the Temple would be razed, when the usual 40-year judgement period was up.
- Of course, you knew that was 30 AD + 40= 70AD long in advance, for
- Daniel 9:24-26, told you when Messiah would be born. So post-Cross, it was a complete no-brainer, to discover. So no one had any brains. Few humans detected this, over the centuries; when they tried to disclose what they learned, everyone scoffed at them, *even when the Boss authorized Malarky to attest the information was accurate!* The crew were forever astonished at man's disinterest in such proof.
- But within living memory of the 2nd Temple's destruction, even the Boss took pity on the Jews and Christians. The Boss commissioned a task force to resurrect interest in Jerusalem, first with the Romans, making sure a pig temple stood over the Temple Mount an added 70 years after the 2nd Temple was destroyed. Did anyone notice Daniel 9:26 being mocked, 'reply' of Daniel's forecast of Antiochus, Chanukah, TMH's birthday? *NO!*
- When Rome was split and nearly exhausted about five centuries later, the Boss requested new recommendations by the task force, in honor of the first closing of a 490 since the pig temple; and, in

order to either prevent a second one, or foster so many more, they could spend time crafting a sure and final solution.

- So he readily agreed when Brandywine, half-joking, asked him if as a contingency, he could play vision games with some dufus he wanted to name "Mohammed", inventing a new religion obsessed with Jerusalem. So, soon a new Abomination stood over where the pig temple was; they decided to commence its building on the reverse of the year the First Temple had been destroyed, 685 AD, having missed the first goal of 630 AD, since neither the Romans nor the Persians, were up to its rebuilding. Did anyone catch on? *No!*

So brainless are the humans, that even today they fantasize Daniel was written centuries later than its real penning in 538BC, never mind Daniel's Chaldean Aramaisms were long dead! The humans always get what they ask for, Sandman derided. They deserve to be mocked.

The mocking wasn't gratuitous, of course. Boss never knew when the Rapture would happen either, and to make the Tribulation work, he had to craft a Fake Church and a Fake Temple, to keep everyone's eyes on Jerusalem. The root idea was to herd the Jews back there, and use the Christians or Arabs, to kill them. "Can't do that without religion", Malarky often observed.

Damage control: when a few recognized what Daniel 9 meant, titillation was employed. Rapture ended up being trivialized into an action movie. Embarrassed, even those who believed in the Rapture didn't much investigate it. The goofballs got all the public attention, and almost everyone else who believed in it, lay low. So to the average mind, the Rapture was something only an idiot would believe. Bible thus went safely ignored.

But for all their many and blazing successes, the scary fact remained that from the Rapture forward, only 7 years of freedom would continue for Sandman and his comrades; it could begin today or thousands of years hence, no one knew. Worse, everyone in the PDR knew the Rapture well and had oriented to it. So anyone hearing them could know what it really was. Discrediting these people on the Rapture was a major policy goal of Sandman's crew.

Trouble was, the PDR people were generally matter-of-fact about the Rapture, had grown past the titillation and shock phases, so they didn't talk about it in a way which could be easily discredited. It was just one doctrine, a timeline, important only because Father was gifting His Son, and this was how He chose to do it. An accepted thing.

How do you fight that presentation? Sandman's PDR crewmembers always asked. For they too couldn't help but admire it. So they settled for banging the drum harder on Malarky's propaganda, when the hearer was not in the presence of the PDR witness, so to drown out what the witness had said. So to make even the word "Rapture" be so associated with the propaganda, the believer couldn't think of it any other way. The ruse worked. Yet the truth would pop up in the hearers' mouths, when disparaging the Rapture to others, in an attempt to deprecate what the PDR person had said. *Backfire!* For there was always but always, someone hearing the remark whose doctrinal lightbulb went 'on', thereby blowing away years of careful disinformation. In an instant. It was a life-changing event for the person, who often was quite unaware that it was -- not a few in the PDR now, had gotten there for precisely that reason.

Malarky's propaganda therefore targeted key doctrines for distortion. You'd be trapped in his propaganda if you misapprehended these doctrines even a tad:

- Salvation by faith alone in Christ alone,
- 1Jn1:9,
- true thinking nature of the spiritual life because Christ paid for sins with His Thinking,

- Rapture,
- Trinity.

Wondrous, how you could pin down a believer for decades, owing to just one 'jot' of doctrine being mistranslated or misinterpreted. Converse was also true: correct that jot, and you break them out, often completely.

This was the essence of the war. And the PDR people were all once bona fide idiots, trapped in Malarky's many guises -- who'd been broken out. And why? *Oh, because they were interested in TMH, just for Himself!* It was almost impossible to stop progress in these doctrines, when that happened. Enquiring minds who wanted to know God, got Him. *Same offer as to the angels, any request to close the gap to gain fellowship with Him – was always answered 'yes'.* The PDR was entirely composed of such people. *It was demoralizing, Sandman thought dejectedly.*

Really, it was too much to take. So every day, Sandman was even more glad he rebelled, than the day before. *We're the real saviors, the real messiahs!* he concluded. The thought inspired him. *Back to work!*

Aloud, he barked for the flinching orderly to call Rive Blanche and Ghoster. That pair in turn, were to round up the rest of the crew charged with discrediting four of the PDR witnesses; these four were far down the list, but targeted as "unpredictables", a term that meant they might become first-tier PDR candidates *without notice*. Paul had been an "unpredictable". Generally, "unpredictables" were independently motivated, so could not be easily herded by the typical things that interested humans: money, power, family, morality, fitting-in. They might be respected by human standards, or not. Affable, or not. Smart, or not. Well or wealthy -- or, not. And it truly didn't matter to them whether the world liked them. So one couldn't well predict their spiritual outcome. Hard to 'guard' them.

And the crew would be accused of doing a bad job deflecting these four "unpredictables" from spiritual growth. The Boss even mentioned it; though Sandman thought the Boss' concern was more over the #1 PDR Witness being the pastor related to these four, than they themselves. The files on them surely did not recommend them for the PDR, humanly speaking. But their thinking was PDR-worthy, quite. They had been trained well by #1 and his colleagues, and were actually living on Bible they kept on learning, every day. So, they grew. So, discrediting #1's teaching, elsewhere quite successful, was not working here. Four could become 16, overnight. *Who knew what four others hearing these four, would get under #1 or his protégés, and grow? Not good!*

Charged with discrediting, and failing to execute that charge! Sandman thought gruffly. He needed to be mean today. His charisma would be more effective if he were gruff, he decided. Even his orderly was cowered.

After all, the Boss would be giving the entire crew a dressing-down next week; The Most High's pullout of the top 10 Witnesses would complete in a month; that would be formally announced at the convocation; the Boss was most anxious to capitalize on this coup. So maybe a miracle or two could occur by then, to save the crew from the Bema-type demotion that always followed a major pullout.

Pity to lose such talent to the pit bulls, Sandman moaned. But that's the punishment for failure. Everyone knew it. Devils, punishing the real devils. The thought made Sandman laugh, since the Boss motivated all the do-good activity in the world he ruled, as he explained in Matt4; it was strict policy and endless humor to make man fall all over himself, want his eyes on himself. But not, on The Most High.

Sandman quickly reviewed the doubled-up crew for this special assignment. *Yeah, must be the Boss worrying over #1's teaching spearheading a massive increase in PDR potentials.* Didn't even matter if these four ended up failing, what they knew was dangerous. Others would hear it. Others did hear it. You'd never know, looking

at the surface lives of the four humans, two female and two male, each of them nothing to look at, only one of them rich, but all of them considered somewhat 'strange', by those in their periphery.

Yeah, we worked hard to make them look 'strange', Sandman mused. It was endlessly irritating that these helpless humans could prove such trouble for demons a billion times stronger, smarter, older than them. How did they hang on? Why did they believe in The Most High? It's not as though He helped them. He gave them this Impossible Word to learn, mandated a spiritual life only TMH Himself could execute, and they'd have to become INHUMAN themselves, to grow up. Yet here they were, bumbling all, spiritually mature and in the PDR! Best the crew could do was damage control. For the humans were "unpredictables", only motivated by that Word. Best the crew could do was hide the fact from them, make them think they were failures. So the crew had to be doubled up. No other way to handle it.

Sandman remembered how the Boss explained it. An "unpredictable" spans a wide range of people. One grows up, realizing this world is a puny place. Reacting, one essentially withdraws from the world. Or, becomes hostile to it. So, some "unpredictables" turn to crime – or, great works, trying to assuage the disappointment with the world by 'winning' something from it. So many of the humanly-valued people were really "unpredictables" who sought solace in conquering. Criminal or respectable, it was really the same thing. Just how you marshaled your reaction, that's all. So the usual ties to family, morality, money, power, have little influence. Life is a game. Some "unpredictables" just flounder all their lives, not wanting to achieve anything, since – well, it doesn't matter, this life is futile. So they were the most dangerous of all humans, the most likely to grow spiritually if they found The Most High, that is. You could never predict if they would do that. Hence the term, "unpredictable."

Of course, that was his autobiography, too.

On the other hand, The Most High announced at each birth, as "discovery evidence", the elements of His Plan for the person; so that the Boss wouldn't be able to cry foul, allegedly. The foreknowledge thus 'shared', they had opportunity to stop the Plan. Of course, they knew TMH never lied, but the Boss always correctly accused Him of masking evidence. For example, who would have deemed #1 to be an "unpredictable", tied to his family as he was? If ever there was a conventional human to be herded by the good in this world, #1 should have been "it".

Yeah, and we thought that way of Paul, too. But TMH warned us. We didn't listen. It boiled down to but one thing: interest in TMH, for Himself. That was the best indicator of an "unpredictable". For of course spiritual growth required one become independent of the world and everyone in it. Just wanting Him. Ouch. Cost a lot of crew, to search out those who had strong interest in TMH. Didn't matter that TMH told you. You never believed Him. Why? Sandman was loathe to admit it, but his rise in the ranks came from him believing what TMH said about these humans at birth. Proved true, every time. Sandman smiled at the irony of that. Yeah, I believe Him to tell us the truth, but not IN Him. Ouch. He decided to stop thinking about it.

TMH would carefully reveal and conceal, information. The concealment was to forestall "influence" based on the advance knowledge. This concealment was an endless source of argument between TMH and the Boss. Idea was, *what was revealed would maximally advantage the Boss, and maximally defeat the quarry, if defeat was possible. What was concealed, would maximally disadvantage the Boss, were the information known.* For example, Job's response to testing was not foretold. But it was easily inferred, when TMH put him on the Roster.

The Boss always disputed concealments, anyway; so on occasion TMH would slowly reveal what had been concealed on selected unimportant believers to demonstrate the problem, and would always warn that the now-revealed information which should be concealed, should be ignored. It wasn't. Suddenly those unimportant believers became important, and many times The Boss almost lost in the Trial. Just so happened that the concealed information never turned out to be important, the believers finally rejecting TMH all by

themselves. Those affected in their periphery, forgot whatever the potential lessons were, and didn't pass them on. So had nothing been done with the concealed information, a lot of damage control on the Boss' side in the Trial, could have been avoided. Wasted wear and tear. *Best not to think of that, either*, Sandman concluded.

At a minimum for Church believers, the Boss had always demanded to know which of them would finally become kings. *If You know in advance, I should*, was the argument. *Else it's not a level playing field. If you tell even mankind who Messiah is in advance; if you tell even mankind how I will lose and you will win in advance – and that's not 'influence'? – then I should know who these kings are, and it won't be 'influence', either.* TMH always did say in gist and in advance, the final outcome of a person at birth. But often did not say how the outcome would occur, nor give dates. For it was free will, how both the believer and the 'opposition', would act.

Furthermore, although the outcome was given because foreknown, it was not cast in stone, Sandman kept reminding himself. TMH never gerrymandered anything, so the entire goal was for every creature to get the relationship with God, the creature wanted. *So Foreknowledge could be overridden, theoretically.* It was just that: *foreknowledge, not a forced outcome. A known reality, not a manipulated one.* Sandman believed in that, too. *Never proved wrong yet*, he had to admit.

Sandman looked at the crew roster. *So ok, here's who I've assigned:* Blanche and Ghoster, buddy system of leadership (and competition, the Boss always liked that), heading it. Blanche was "cool", and Ghoster "hot". So the crew gravitated to one or the other for leadership. Beneath these two, were another four, one per human: *Periwinkle, Fathomable, Makeshift and Cursor.* They were the 'regulars', and worked together, the idea being that if concentration lapsed in one, the others would notice and send thoughts or orchestrate local events as needed, to disrupt the spiritual progress of the four humans.

Each of the four 'regulars' could call in any number of 'assistants' at will. Initiative was important, and none of them could be in two places at once, so thought transference groups were often established ad hoc and under the four's own authority, so intelligence on the ground could be instantaneous, anywhere in the world. Shifts were short, to keep everyone fresh, max of 6 days then one day off, rotation. So it wasn't uncommon for an 'assistant' to get the temporary 'promotion' of standing in for a crewmember, usually for an hour, maybe even a whole day. That provided additional incentive. No one liked the lower duties, and thus the 'assistants' knew to use the time well, for they would be assessed for promotion. Monitoring a PDR witness was no light job. Any one of them, even if far down the list, could have as many as 100 demons associated. Not good to take chances. Everyone in the periphery of the person was acted on, one way or another. Damage control.

However, Corporate had determined -- *well, I did*, Sandman smiled -- to add four of the "detention boys" to double up the crew itself. These latter were to be deployed as substitutes while the 'regulars' met with Blanche and Ghoster. For the entire PDR 'regular' crew for all Witnesses but the top 10, were switched out with "detention boys" for the week of the convocation, to intensively prepare for the rest of the month. In an emergency, a 'regular' could always go back to station. Gave those in detention a positive incentive, and gave Sandman a way to gauge whether the pit bulls were doing their own jobs. For if the pit bulls' former 'students' -- now out on a kind of bail -- performed well, the pit bulls could pull better duty. *What goes around, comes around.* Nothing like a little self-interest, to motivate competence. Sandman smiled again.

Their superiors considered the added four from detention 'squirrely'. But these four were likewise "unpredictables" in temperament. They had been upper-echelon, but their love of their independence made them quite cocky, and the centuries didn't dampen either their independence or their creativity. They had been good destabilizers of potentially great believers. Therefore, Sandman decided they would be good candidates for double up. The week would give Sandman the data he needed to decide whether to keep them on, permanently.

"Should I double up on all the 'unpredictables', ya think?" Sandman asked the orderly.

"If they prove out. Depends on whether eight is actually worse than four. Too many cooks, mebbe", the orderly replied.

It would be rough, next month. For next month, they got to wreck havoc on the world, in the wake of the departure of the top 10, who were finally going home to The Most High. Disaster was a tricky thing to pull off: too little, and people thought of TMH. Too much, and they thought of TMH. Had to be orchestrated just right, to deflect attention from Him. Trouble was, as time passed, more and more of the potential crew population was in detention, so they were losing personnel. The long "Church Age" had become a war of attrition, and was psychologically demoralizing. So personnel reacted. Detention policy couldn't be rescinded, so it was determined to offer "time out on parole". One had to reconnoiter one's assets. Especially, now.

So it would be worth a week's gamble, Sandman decided, to see how the detention boys would perform; they would need as many as possible, and this was the best time to test them for serviceability. The added four here, well -- never mind the cocky nicknames they'd taken for this 'project'. "Whitey Boy, Brainstem, Choler and Butch", Sandman pronounced aloud.

"Huh?" asked the orderly.

"The detention boys we're adding to the Blanche-and-Ghoster crew", replied Sandman. The orderly tried to disguise his disagreement. Sandman decided not to mind-slap him for that.

With their usual flash and flourish, Blanche and Ghoster suddenly materialized. *Two white light forms, not very creative, are we?* the orderly thought-greeted them. *Didn't have time to redesign,* they thought-replied. *And hello to you, too.* Sarcasm, returned.

Sandman scowled at them for effect. Reading his thoughts -- for he had to communicate quickly, no sense wasting time -- they contorted, anguish wreathing their eyes. *No excuses.* Satisfied they understood his orders, Sandman stood up to his full height, and now spoke aloud:

"You two have personal charge over Hartman, Jewis, Ganger and Smythe. Four measly humans. Yet they stay in the Docket, and The Most High can justify keeping them there. You know what the Boss will say: 'You must want to wallow in the pits for awhile.' Perhaps you can redeem yourselves by comparing notes with the rest of the PDR crew on what works and what doesn't -- get those humans to look down or sideways, NOT up, *hein?* You two are in charge." *And to blame if you don't make gains, of course.* Sandman pitched that last as thought; and so loudly, the pair fell prostrate. Then they crawled from his presence backwards like lizards, grateful he merely talked to them and personally; he could have inflicted pain. He could have used an emissary, which meant every word would be punctuated with pain. It was an honor to be called. Sandman gave them a pattern of motivation to use on the crew: personal attention. *After all, I can't be everywhere at once!* Sandman reflected. He was satisfied with his effect on them, his magnetism and their fear. Love, even.

His orderly looked bored. Aloud, Sandman offered, "How about if you do all the crew changes? What if I just sit here mute, unless you ask me? You said you weren't comfortable with the 'unpredictables'. I just handled the four even the Boss mentioned. Let's brainstorm them together? Or is that too much work? You do all my work for me now," Sandman said admiringly.

The orderly sighed with relief. *Yeah, he needs some encouragement, and I need a rest.* Sandman grinned.

"Brainstorming sounds good", the orderly replied.

It really is Christmas, the orderly thought, happily unshielded for a change. He loved Sandman, and this was 'buddy time', as far as he was concerned.

Truth to tell, I think so too, Sandman confided.

Both of them fell silent. 'Files' thought-transmitted between the pair, contented expressions on their faces. Two old shoes well suited to each other, one hot and dominant, one cold and cocky, but adoring.

Coulda passed for a married couple, Malarky thought when entering. They didn't even notice him at first. "Ahem." The 'couple' instantly began kneeling, but Malarky protested aloud, "We're pals, remember?" Startled, the orderly looked up. "An American flag?" the orderly eyed Malarky's 'body' for the day with a quizzical expression. "Oh, Uncle Sam!" he cried in recognition.

Malarky nodded, waiting.

"Malarky!" Sandman cried, concentration now broken.

"Good morning, Sandman the Brave", Malarky joked.

"Brave? For what?"

"For doing a complete crew rotation for an entire week!" Malarky replied, now serious.

"Why, do you see something wrong with it?" the orderly asked, suddenly testy.

"Calm down, Baloney, I'm complimenting your boss."

"I'm Nutcracker now", the orderly corrected him, "See my day's Light?"

Sandman intervened. "That's enough, now." *What is it with those two? They always seemed to be in the middle of an argument. Over me? Sandman doubted that.*

"Pas de problème." The orderly went mute.

"Sandman, you're the first PDR crew head to change an entire crew like this since I don't remember when. That takes guts. I congratulate you." *And worry for you, Malarky pitched as thought. Actually, it might be a very smart move.*

"Gotta take a chance, sometime", Sandman lightly replied. "So whassup?"

"Well, in light of your historic decision, I've got some ideas I'd like to have your substitutes try while we are all at Convocation", Malarky added.

He transmitted his ideas as 'files' to both 'Nutcracker' and Sandman, then waited.

"Whoa", the orderly said.

"PROMOTE America, Malarky? Does the Boss want the Arabs to lose now? I know he's got that planned -- but now?"

"Let's have the detention boys try out the ideas while we meet, see what happens", Malarky answered.

"ALL of them? ALL the crews, including mine? A barrage?" Sandman asked, incredulous.

This is a dangerous thing to do without supervision, he sent as thought.

I know, came Malarky's reply.

"Um, if they just start now, fresh out from detention, they'll screw it up. You won't be able to control it", Baloney-now-Nutcracker offered.

"Yup." Malarky was grinning widely.

"You WANT it to be defective?" the orderly asked, sensing that was the purpose.

"Yup." Malarky suddenly changed his Light into a cat-that-ate-the-canary. *Well done, mused the orderly.*

"Tests their initiative. Costs us little, if they screw up." Malarky-now-Cheshire Cat, replied through a wide, unmoving mouth. So Nutcracker dropped, his. *Amazing lightswitch grace!*

'Files' went back and forth between them, but they didn't make Sandman privy. Sandman just sat back and watched them, saying nothing, shielded his own thoughts. *All in good time.*

Chapter 2: Regulars

Rive Blanche and Ghoster materialized in the nave of an apostate church they liked to call "Saint of the White Lie", or "SOWL"; few of their comrades came here anymore, so the crew would have relative peace and quiet. Today, especially. Most of the off-duty fallen ones were busy watching the #1 Witness give his final testimony, as TMH was about to bring that one home. The man's house was thickly sky-ringed for miles with crowds on both sides in the Trial. At his departure, the shout going up from Heaven's side would be heard all over the universe, of course -- but at least they could hear themselves think here in the nave, which reminded them of past victories and current policy. "Great idea, Rev 17!" Rive Blanche chortled. "The Boss thought of everything. Else, our logistical supply line would be so long, the PDR would number in the millions. Instead, Churchinanity passes for 'Christianity!' What a laugh! So the PDR remains small. Thank God for that!"

"Not as small as it should be!" yelled Ghoster. "Yeah, TMH never cheats, how I'm sick of knowing that! Notice how His Holiness being Infinitely Righteous is the worst thing of all! What a horrible life He inflicted on humans, who can't at all be righteous, not even by their standards! And oh! All this horror, in the name of Righteousness, Love? Ptuh!" spat Ghoster. Rive smiled to himself, shielding his thought, *Ghoster's starting to work himself up now*. S.O.P. Soon he'd be good and ready for the arrival of the crew, thoughts oiled and focused. They were contagious, and Ghoster knew it.

For the occasion, they both transformed their Lights into religious statues, still white but now crafted, *Baloney-Nutcracker, eat your heart out, you just try to do YOUR light this well!* Ghoster laughed aloud.

"Send him a picture of us," Rive urged.

"Ok, put your 'arm' around my 'back', Rive." He did.

"Sent!" Ghoster laughed.

The nave inspired him. *So much attention to building details, so little attention to the build-you-up Word the building was supposed to represent*. Of course, that was the goal: eyes on people, things, this world and its glories. Debating one denomination's tenets versus another, disputing what was Holy Writ -- and all fall into the pit. Never looking up at the higher reasons, never really looking AT The Most High but rather just mouthing His Name all the time, feeling holy. Calling Him Inscrutable. Teaching His Book as though it were a catechism one rattled off, *tsav latsav*, just as Isaiah said. *Many ways to be drunk, 2 Tim 2:26 never occurring*, mused Ghoster.

Church-inanes, aka "CI dupes" were ignorant of the Word, never mind how many degrees they had, how they could rattle off Church history and any number of geeky theological facts. They were and remained, spiritual children, swayed by the ritual, the feel-good, the doo-good, the approbation they received from other humans likewise devoid of discernment. Flashcard knowledge. If they even once actually read their Bibles, they'd realize that 99% of what they were taught, were lies. But no -- and even all the documentaries the humans make, use the easily-proven fake doctrines yet call them "Biblical"; eventually, all those lies make them unable to read or think. Ghoster was awestruck with admiration at mankind's penchant for lies: *We can learn arrogance lessons from these sheep*.

Ghoster loved being in the nave, triumphal scene of the lie. *Yeah, still buying the same fruity Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, even the same since Cain, fancying themselves fruitfully holy, 2 Tim 3:7!*

So it was a labor of love to use Churchinanity to 'save' these humans from TMH and His Witnesses. *After all, the Witnesses who stuck in the PDR until death would be ruling all believing mankind forever and ever. Because of which, all believers would want to grovel just as TMH's Humanity does -- in the name of Love. Well, thought Ghoster, WE'RE the ones who really love them!*

As always, his thinking would inspire the crew. Trouble was, the crew's enthusiasm would wane not long after each pep talk. Especially, since PDR witnesses were difficult to sway. Their human failure was easy to muster; but their demoralization didn't last as it should; they kept grabbing Bible verses or doctrines, and got up again. So the crew were instead demoralized, not the humans.

Ghoster decided he had to get the crew to realize that if THEY loved those in the PDR, they'd 'help' them by demoralizing them better. *Those who would be the ruled in heaven forever were actually better off!* he rehearsed silently. *It's always the ruler who hurts the most. Look at how the Boss slaves for us now!* he practiced thinking.

The Boss invented Churchinanity, like every other religion. He'd done it to the woman in Genesis 3, and all else was just a difference in flavor. So Ghoster drew his inspiration from that same ploy. Religion appealed to ego, *you can be as good as God – if you just light this candle, say this penance, feel properly sorry when you perpetually screw up.* Emotion and ego, the two sacred "e" words. *Ego rego, Deum nego.* Trick was, to get the higher, sophisticated equivalent to motivate the crew. Fear of punishment and demotion would only work as a backup motive. So he had to build the 'love', which of course was really hatred, the love of putting down these animals. Couched, as being 'good' for them. *Sheep for the slaughter.*

Truth. Truth was, the crew needed a special urgency. They were discouraged by the last 490's ending in 1990, the 4th one contiguous with TMH's Death. #1 Witness won that Time Grant, had supermatured by 1990. So, the crew was upset about that. They were elated, though, despite the successful ending of the next deadline, His Birth's 2000th anniversary in 1997 -- because so many people had rejected what #1 was given to teach. So the 40-year period given back in 1990 to punish, had a 'fat' first seven years. However, since #1 was successful, seven 'lean' years were also granted, personally for him; so he was retired in 2003, and a separate 40-year period ending in 2037, continued running. One setback, not stopping #1 from reaching the personal maturation goal; but yes, still a great victory, stopping his hearers from wanting what the Spirit gave him to teach. Another 3 years had passed, since; the negativity was so great, #1 was slated to go home. Couldn't be sure, though. #1, might remain alive.

The recall terms of the top-10 PDR were always contingent on negativity among humans. So their dates of recall, aka "death" were always approximated. Blessing given the world due to their still being alive irked the Boss, so he always angled for recall -- which he labeled his own 'rapture' -- based on the prevailing negativity. *People aren't voting to know You so they shouldn't be blessed,* was his refrain. So although Father had agreed to recall the top 10 within a month, the recall could be rescinded -- based on votes. Here, the votes of the four over whom Ghoster and Rive had charge, would be especially sweet, if negative. *For they weren't just regular humans, they were PDR under #1!* So any victory during the month won against these four, would be important. #1 was associated with them, so what he'd termed as the "blessing pipeline" in his teaching -- which these four humans knew all about -- would flow to them. So he might be kept alive, and some or all of the other top nine, would depart. *It wasn't your usual situation,* Ghoster reminded himself.

Ghoster reflected on how to stress these facts to the crew. *Ahhh, remind them of the upcoming convergence!* For additionally, in 2030 there was convergence (and commemoration) of the 2000th anniversary of TMH's Death; a Civilization 1000 was always the most critical deadline; whether #1 would be awarded the 'owner' of it, no one yet knew. There was always risk of loss, until the death actually occurred. In any event, Father would shift the PDR radically; that shift depended in no small measure on the spiritual outcome of the four humans over whom he and Rive had charge. Therefore, a shift in the crew's future status loomed, for better and for worse. For better, potential exemption from the pit bulls should the crew mess up later: *that was at least a reachable goal,* Ghoster decided. Better goal, to force #1 to go home. That would be rewarded with promotion, not merely exemption. *Less reachable a goal, more motivating.* Ghoster decided to use it. *Principle of the offensive.*

And they'd need to go on the offensive. The old tricks just weren't working anymore. The anti-Mark and especially anti-Pauline exegetical arguments, the masking of Scripture's dating systems, all that long and careful obfuscation over the centuries, was unraveling. Now you could find out TMH's plan for Time on the internet; now mere nobodies examining arguments against Pauline authorship would use 1Jn1:9, look at the disputed text, and see its coherence, despite all those scholars the Boss ordered be empowered to mess up the exegesis. So now #1's teaching, couldn't be so easily disputed. Four of those nobodies were under his and Rive's charge. Ghoster winced.

Problem was, the more they disputed the authenticity of Paul, the more attention got focused on him. So the more people analyzed what was written, and the more they became convinced that the Spirit empowered the very Writ they were trying to discredit. It didn't help that Mark's Gospel alluded to everything Paul wrote, showing how Paul had known the Gospel just as well as Peter. Malarky had to make it look like Mark got his information from Peter, therefore, so the allusions would be missed. After all, only the Spirit could know how to tie together the current material, to the Gospel. Mark hadn't been there then. It was a devastating blow, to realize that Mark's rhetorical structure warned of Temple destruction in the wake of Paul's demise, replete with reason why: they didn't listen to the Gospel, they didn't listen to what the Spirit gave Paul, so bye bye!

Malarky's crew worked for centuries, carefully building against Paul from the very day he believed in TMH; Ghoster always argued that was a bad move. "Leave him alone, he's too advanced for everyone else, don't make an issue of him" -- and of course for that remark he received a century of detention with the pit bulls, just after Paul's death. But along comes #1, carefully exegeting Paul for decades, and what happens? *People suddenly see how everything fits from Genesis to Revelation!* Ghoster thought-spat. Even those nobodies. So anybody could see the coherence, never mind the hard work over the past 10 years rolling out the carefully nurtured, 'respectable' debunkers. Paul's wide-threaded Greek wordplay was recognized by two of their charges! *Cat is outta da bag!* Ghoster suddenly felt tired.

Rive decided to speak aloud. "Don't worry about them convincing anyone else. They're nobodies."

"Paul was a nobody, once. You know as well as I do that as soon as he was blinded, we all were detailed to focus on him. We didn't bet on him. Should have."

"Yeah, but our four 'charges' don't have any credentials. No one will listen to what they say."

"I'm not worried about that. I'm worried that their recognition of the exegetical and theological coherence in what TMH gave Paul, will spawn greater spiritual growth. You know that's the problem we have with #1's students -- all of them."

"So?" Rive didn't seem concerned.

"So," Ghoster countered, "someone else will get the MEANING of that information from them. And the Boss will not be pleased."

"We'll just roll out other disputation, then. I'm sure Malarky and his crew will come up with something."

"Malarky wants America promoted now, you just got the files. He won't have time for anything else."

"Yeah, and the detention boys are given that promotion role, not us. To screw it up, I'm sure."

Ghoster sure is slow on the uptake, Rive thought guardedly. *Didn't he see how by defectively promoting America, all the American teachers would be thus derided? And thus, all their students?* Rive admired Malarky.

"Ghoster, it's a back-handed way of defeating America, you know that. Always promote in order to debunk. TMH was promoted for three years, as a setup for the Cross."

"Yeah, and look how that turned out."

"Gamaliel-Ghoster, be careful. You don't want to go back to jail." *I don't want to run this alone.* Rive pitched that last as thought with as much warning as he felt safe to give, suddenly realizing the wisdom of Sandman's pairing him up with Ghoster. *Not just because we are friends, either.*

Ghoster smiled at Rive's use of his 'project' nickname in the 1st century. It was ironic, after all, since Paul had been a student under Gamaliel. *Just like the way Paul suddenly switched from Kephass to Petros in Galatians, to remind the reader of Matt 16:18, that TMH was the foundation of Church and Kephass was like Paul, a part of Him!* Rive smiled at his own allusive cleverness, hoped that would make Ghoster smile, too. It didn't.

Aloud, Ghoster said, "Okay, what do you suggest as a counter?"

"Nothing. Let it be." Rive hoped that the very advice which jailed 'Gamaliel' that century, would now work on calming him down. *People don't want but bread-and-circus, they won't understand what TMH gave Paul, nor what Paul means to the integrity of the whole, and if they understand they won't care, whether today or 20 centuries prior.* Aloud, he said, "Crew will be here soon. They just finished debriefing the detention boys."

"Any new info on Malarky's tactics?"

"Yep, the usual stuff." Rive then paused and transmitted the data.

Ghoster finally smiled, seemed to revive somewhat.

"See? Nothing to worry about," Rive offered.

Ghoster realized that he was disheartened. So then the crew would be, also. *Hmmm. Got to have a bit of humor, too. Aha! How humans always look to the stars for predictions, ignoring how every date is based instead, on the Bright Morning Star!* Ghoster exulted. Then recoiled. Boss didn't like that title said of anyone but him; it was his own pre-fall status, awarded instead to TMH's Humanity (*stolen!* the Boss would say); Boss even had Brandywine translate the BMS title as "At-Tariq", writing a whole sura burlesquing Revelation, reversing it: how the Boss would beat TMH by forcing Rapture to occur at the wrong time. *Gotta think of another name,* Ghoster concluded. *Heaven's Star Witness,* he decided. Even the Boss wouldn't mind, he planned to trump Him.

The crew materialized in the nave. Smiles were exchanged. Periwinkle looked rather foppish, his lighting arranged in various hues of lavender. *I'll fix that attitude soon enough,* Ghoster decided. Fathomable gave himself the appearance of a professor, as usual. Made him easy to spot at convocation. *Steady guy. Reliable. Not too creative, though.* Ghoster decided to spend time with him, for he'd be in good control of his urges. Makeshift was the creative one, always rearranging himself, vaguely reminded you of that American TV character, "Colombo". Disheveled. By contrast, Cursor was almost austere, every light line in place, pinstripe effect. Accountant-type. *They are a good team,* Ghoster thought admiringly. *I don't want them to get detention.*

After the usual banter aloud, they stood in a circle and thought-sent their files. Pondering them in silence, then thinking flew fast among them. Expressions on their faces went from delight to disgust to fear and back to delight again. The upcoming week would be intense. And relaxing, since they would be preparing for war.

Ghoster waited while they adjusted to the new information, shielding his thoughts from them so they'd know he was allowing them time to analyze, decide, plan. *Funny how the small is so powerful,* he mused. *Here we are, so very competent, felled by four measly humans who can't even tie their shoelaces, really. Lost all desire for the things of this world, that makes them dangerous – but also, incompetent. Just like Daniel was, flattened by what the Spirit gave him through Gabriel. Can't eat, breathe, want anything in life. So why don't we beat them? 2000 years, and we've not beaten them till yet!*

Suddenly he felt them staring at him.

"Comrades", Ghoster said, pitching the word with as much love-warmth as he could, "let's remember why we're really in this war. The Most High is a masochist, and wants everyone else to be just like Him, His Father's Orders. God-to-God contract to Kill Themselves For Each Other, by creating. Creating, us. We are the pawns in this thing, we didn't ask to be created, and we certainly didn't ask for a life that would require us

to also kill ourselves forever, in the name of the 'Love' that we also didn't create. So, we rebelled. So, we were sentenced to the Lake of Fire. But our Boss saved the day, by appealing on the grounds that 'Love' doesn't behave like this. So then the planned creation of man whom we were to rule, now has the purpose of demonstrating that 'Love'. And what kind of 'love' is it? The same evil as practiced upon us! That's why all these years later, with man as the last speck in that vast time, we have not and will not quit fighting with the Boss against TMH. Do I speak falsely?"

"NO!" the crew shouted proudly in reply. Ghoster was pleased. Truth was always the most powerful motivation, and he was using it to good advantage.

"So, then: would it not be a terrific opportunity to close TMH's 2000th Death anniversary with what He wanted the most, a defeat? To save mankind from Him?"

"YES!" the crew shouted again. Ghoster was glad Father designed time around TMH, just as He said in Hebrews 1:2's Greek. It gave one motivation, benchmarks, a goal always to be won. *Goal of ending time, and ending the rule of The Most High*, Ghoster exulted.

Then, he told them that. Aloud. Then he continued: "Funny how the slow method of talking aloud has such an effect on motivation. Funny how the small has so much effect on motivation, trumping even high ability. So what does that tell you? We'll *defeat* TMH with this small, which after all He invented for just that purpose. Yeah, we are small compared to Him, right?"

The crew demurred on hearing that, mumbling. *Hmmm, some disunity here*, Ghoster realized why. Trouble was, when you spent too much time around a PDR, you came to admire the witness. Almost came to believe like the witness did. *Time for a vacation*, Ghoster concluded. Aloud again, he said, "Hmmm. These small witnesses are demoralizing you all. See the victory they have over you? So, then: shall we not have this same victory over TMH?"

"Yes!" the crew shouted again. But the shout was too dutiful, politically correct. *Yep, truly time for a vacation.*

"You love them, don't you," Ghoster whispered. Silence. "Then wouldn't you love defending them from an eternal future of groveling? And spare yourselves, as well?" Ghoster added, pitching his voice with as much empathy as he could muster.

For a second, he thought he saw their tears; then the Convocation Trumpet blew. So the nave was again, empty.

Chapter 3: Detention Boys

Meanwhile, Whitey Boy, Brainstem, Choler and Butch were detailed to stay with the four humans. They 'shaped' their bodies to resemble the 'project' nicknames they had adopted. So Whitey looked like a mime, Brainstem like some disembodied brain in a horror movie, replete with 'tail'; Choler cast himself as a greenish-red slime Hulk; and Butch, well -- looked like Butch, a Tom Sawyer gone bad. Just a short, standup fake haircut, a wash of freckles and dressed-blue eyes, all clothed in a lightbody cast in Caucasian flesh color. *These humans influence us too much, Choler chortled to himself. We choose their stereotypes!*

Of course, the truth was the other way around. The Boss won Adam and the woman back in Gen3, so he ruled the world, and man was his creation, post-birth. Man could refuse to be influenced, but was no match for the wiles of the Boss, even when perfect; *how much more now, that he's rejected TMH?* Choler exulted. So all the human 'advance', abilities, stereotypes, cultures, mores -- all were products of Corporate, carefully bred over the many centuries. "God" was just a label one used for self-praise.

Then, in characteristic fashion, these inventions were instead promoted as man's own, same idea as Genesis 3, you-become-yourself-God. It was a well-executed plan: *hide the truth in plain sight, make man think he was the author of so much advance, and blind him to God via all these methods, Choler recited.*

Man's blindness was total. So he couldn't count to three, calling it Good Friday, *but Resurrection on Sunday?* So he couldn't read the word "lamb", befuddled over why Cain's man-made vegetables were unacceptable; so he couldn't read dates. Eyes glazed over the many Bible dates; no one cared about them, but rather pretended to; only the Bible's critics cared, but they were all too dumb to live, misreading Bible and then blaming it, rather than themselves. For all was measured from the Exodus, forward and back; so you could easily prove when what happened -- like, when Messiah would come. *Duh, Choler breathed, we have to do ALL your thinking for you silly sons of Adam.*

So now, out of detention, Choler was eager to practice what he'd learned from the pit bulls. He didn't mind what they did to him. *It's all training, and I needed it. Hence my nick and body shape.* He knew the others would thus underestimate his seriousness for the task, and he aimed to make them continue to think him, the buffoon. He liked his comrades much and was glad to be with them. So by fooling them, he could play a surprise or two, and delight them.

So Choler was positively drooling to exploit this opportunity; he and the other three had begged to show they'd learned a thing or two after this last bout of detention with the pit bulls, which ended the day prior. Corporate's choosing them for this 'project' mystified the crew, who derided them with catcalls when the four came to substitute. *Well, we will be back soon, they can't mess up too much.* Choler and his detention pals wanted to oust the 'regulars'. They had but one week to do it. *Oust them, promote us.* It was no secret. The Boss liked competition.

Yesterday, they were properly respectful as the disdainful 'regulars' transmitted the files before going off to join Rive and Ghoster. Choler and his detention pals did not retaliate when poked and insulted, which in any event would have earned them another 'tour'. They smiled, instead. Plotting. *Maybe not today, maybe not 100 years from now, but someday we'll get our revenge,* Choler sighed with satisfaction. He didn't like the snottiness of the higher-ups. Of course, that kept him in perpetual trouble. But the pit bulls taught him stamina. *Now, I can wait.*

Choler was 'assigned' to Jewis. *They sure picked the right substitute when they picked me.* Choler admired Sandman's intelligence gathering and insight. *I felled poor Jewis all day yesterday with but a single thought, "You*

aren't up to snuff." That was Jewis' downfall, the one thing that could stop him from living on the Bible he so well knew, even in his sleep. *That guy should be top-tier PDR by now, and only this holds him back.* Love for God so strong, motivated guilt equally strong. It was easy to derail him. So Choler stopped paying attention to Jewis, except for a peripheral look-see, every now and then. Instead, he turned his attention on the others, playing various thought-games to see how they'd react.

So here they all were, first official full day of being outside again, 'on guard', assessing their respective quarries, cross-monitoring, exchanging notes. And lots of banter. Choler decided to add his own.

"Finesse makes for more and better sin", Choler said flatly. "Duh", groaned the others. Yet Choler sent lasciviousness to Ganger and Smythe; it was always anti-climactic to hear them use IJn1:9 immediately, *but what the hell*, Choler concluded. *Now I'm in charge.* Sooner or later they'd actually sin, instead of merely mistaking temptation for sin, and he'd make headway. "Get them to feel guilty! Then they'd switch to self-righteous sins, yes!" The prospect made Choler smile. It wasn't about lasciviousness at all, but just a gateway to man's never-ending arrogance that he can atone or be good. So make him bad, so he'll focus more on being good. And think of The Most High, not at all.

So man didn't get it that he's still only got the job of naming the animals, just like Adam pre-fall, Choler smiled to himself. Sin didn't matter; it was nailed away on the Cross. Man wasn't made for work, but for fellowship. So you kept on looking at TMH, and kept on naming what you were learning in the Word. That was it. *Of course I didn't accept that offer, either*, Choler admitted. A moment of ruefulness struck him. He brushed it off.

Whitey and Brainstem just yawned. "Been there, done that, it's boring, try something else Choler ol' pup," Brainstem whined. Brainstem always whined; he didn't think the gateway-to-guilt approach should go through lasciviousness, but through pure power lust. He believed in helping the sopping humans to actually BE better, convinced that the gain would addict them the better. He was right, of course. But with the PDR folks, Choler decided guilt is the better, since they love The Most High, so are more prone to conclude guilt in the first place. He proved that with Jewis. He aimed to keep on proving it. *Focus!* he told himself.

So to pass the time, the four 'guardians' -- as they called themselves -- competed in thought transference, to see who would sin first and the more -- Ganger or Smythe, two humans thousands of miles apart; one, in Chicago and the other in Hong Kong, tending to the #5 Witness. *Important to keep that one from learning enough by the time the #5 died in a week or so, pending some miracle:* it was on the schedule for next Friday at 10 hundred, local time.

For the convocation was in full swing. They were monitoring it, and of course everyone now had the death schedules for all the top 10. Not guaranteed, of course, but estimates were given. Choler could barely contain himself. Boss had gotten TMH to pull all the top 10 Witnesses within a month, bring them home: "No one wants You on earth, so You cannot justify blessing the Earth by keeping them there!" He had said that time and again for over a generation, and finally The Most High Himself had to agree. So the weather and warfare crews were working overtime in preparation for the departure of the top 10. So now these four humans were to be promoted or demoted -- ideally, bumped from the Docket altogether. *But even a little wavering would be strategically important, in preparation for next month!* Choler thought happily.

At the convocation, surprisingly Archangel Michael was chosen to review the roles of these top 10, their curriculum vitae by Heaven's standards. Very impressive. It was truly great to see Michael do it.

"In the final phase of PDR Witness, those in the top 10 'lose' their names in favor of a numerical ranking, though of course everyone knows their names. For, The Most High's Name is never mentioned, but instead circumlocution is employed; so the top Witnesses' names aren't mentioned either, during their last phase. It is

an agreed convention both sides in the Trial follow as a kind of countdown; on Heaven's Side, the convention emphasizes how much a Witness reflects The Most High; on the other side, it is employed to ridicule, demean, treat each Witness as a non-person. In either case, both sides know well that only the Word circulating in the Witnesses' souls, cause them to withstand the pressure they undergo. So the ranking serves as a scoreboard of Bible built-in-soul. One Mind. His." Of course, that speech was always a blatant reminder to both sides that TMH would win, the evangelization never stopping. *Daddy always wants us back.* Choler squelched a moment of doubt that he'd chosen the right side.

Choler liked to think of it all as race cars numbered. Horses numbered. Of course, the Witnesses themselves didn't generally know their own ranking, since it could instantly change; in any event, they always concluded themselves of no account.

Choler wretched inwardly, remembering when he'd lost a Witness to the top 10, and the memory of it still pained him. *All that hard work, yet all I accomplished, was to advance the Witness into the top tier! Do I really want to risk loss again?* he asked himself. He lost his concentration to a moment of worry; and Ganger immediately stopped watching TV. The audiotape went on, instead: *Bible class!*

With thought-jabs, Whitey and Brainstem poked Choler, shouting "You BLEW IT!" Butch stayed silent, as usual. *Stupid players, they aren't focusing on the quarry.* But Butch was. He wasn't sending Ganger thoughts; he wanted to hear Ganger think, first. So he disdained his comrades' banter. *First day on the job again, and they look at each other? Not me!* Butch was determined to win, this time.

"The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder even to the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart. All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in Righteousness, that the man of God may be mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Open the Word of Truth to.."

Thus the #1 Witness always began his Bible class teaching, and that tape was of one he'd taught 40 years prior; now he lay dying, not even able to read a Bible. *Trouble was, Ganger knew that!* Ganger wanted to know the meaning, and the Spirit told her! *This is a problem!* Butch thought guardedly. The other three 'guardians' didn't seem to recognize the sleeping importance in this otherwise-worthless female Witness. *For as always, the death of the Witness seems a waste, a punishment from God, to discredit his entire lifetime on earth, nibzeh wa lo hashabnuhu.* For that reason, no one was told exactly when TMH would pull him home. Just as His Humanity's exact date of death was foretold yet not -- He might change His Mind, even on that Cross -- so also, the top 10 Witnesses' deaths were only approximated, as a matter of "discovery", due-diligence disclosure. And from this #1's wake, all hell would break loose. Just as it had, with Paul.

Paul was an unlikely Witness. Born to privilege, born a Roman, born a Jewish genius schooled since age 14 in top Pharisaical style, no one would have bet on Paul, to believe in Messiah. Even afterwards, though the Boss insisted on concentration-of-force, everyone inwardly laughed -- *THIS guy?* And guardedly thought *maybe the Boss was too depressed over his loss at the Cross, to think clearly. Paul? Small? Yeah, right.* No one bet he'd grow up, what with his temper and emotionality, never mind he had the tenacity to be isolated for 14 years in Arabia -- *look at his urge to convert his fellow Jews, giving in twice to the Nazirite vow, being so duped, years after his conversion!* Many lost huge bets, on that guy. Babel Goren even got long detention, demoted to pit bull for his prank with the seven sons of Sceva. BG's failure was a constant lesson Sandman made sure everyone learned painfully.

Yeah, Butch carped to himself, Temple countdown began with Paul's demise, with the Gospel of Mark and Book of Hebrews, going out to warn the sheep: 40 years after TMH's Victory, ouch could it be more obvious? And "Small" died just before Nero did. Thus the year of the Four Emperors, and suddenly Titus HAD to sack Jerusalem and the Temple, to bring something home to his adopted daddy Vespasian.

So now it would start all over again, with the potential for America to go down. For the 2nd 1000 based on His Birth, began in 1997, aka 6103 MAP -- Butch paused to silently mouth it, "Meta Adam Ptwsews, Since-Adam's-Fall". Next deadline, the intercalated-for-voting-periods convergence with the 490 and 1050 based on His Death, ended in 2130; so they were just entering another four-generation flux, when potential for Bible rejection or acceptance, peaked. When warfare, mass migration, technological advance or retrogression, changing of favored 'client' nations, anti-semitism, peaked. Like clockwork it played, ever since Adam.

Flood-time, again. Not just the usual believer-voting period linking 490s; unbeliever votes could cancel time, which of course is why the Boss keeps trying to make the Rapture occur at the wrong time, getting believers sent home before Father calls for them. That's what even the Flood was about. Just like clockwork. Yeah, and only eight people kept time going -- really only one, Noah! 490 years after Shem's birth, was Isaac's birth. So again only one believer, at that point, Abraham, kept time going.

Not to mention, here in 6112 MAP aka 2006 AD, the world was nested in three other convergences: what the crew called the "Joseph Grant", back-to-back 40-year periods awarded to one whose role was like that of Joseph, saving a nation -- #1 got that award; next, 1990's ending was the 4th contiguous 490 since TMH's Death, a major qualifying event or time ends: #1 got that, too. His citation was partly read aloud in convocation, explaining that another 490 years was granted, because he was completed in time. Hence there was a 1991, and all hell broke loose beginning in that year.

Still, upcoming was the 2000th anniversary of His Death in 2030, which sealed His Brith for mankind. No one yet knew who'd be awarded that one. If one of the top 10 were to get it, they'd not know until the person died. So there remained a chance to usurp 2030 -- if the Boss could pull off a victory and make the Rapture occur too soon. *The devil of it was, no one knew for sure whether its timing would be wrong. The PDR list was expected to go short, a dwindling number -- as a harbinger. Yet everyone expected TMH to just say it was the right time, anyway. No one believed Him. Butch winced at his own ambivalence, and quickly brushed the matter aside.*

So long before 2130 occurred, these intervening deadlines afforded much opportunity for battle promotion. Butch intended to get his share of it.

And my comrades just play thought games, learning nothing! Butch was disgusted. He liked being disgusted. Sure, it was depressing, hoping *THIS time it will work, we'll win -- but The Most High wins another round. Yet we can't afford to give up!*

Butch couldn't help but smile. *Didn't they get it? My comrades are joking, not noticing this Ganger, the effect of the recognition on her, a recognition that took a lifetime -- and all because, the #1 is dying. This is the danger to us, that some human actually recognizes the real meaning of the Cross -- that ALL can be thrown away! It's not about competence, but about INcompetence! Didn't TMH's Humanity prove that? Yes, that was another chink in The Most High's armor: destruction accompanied the death of a Successful Morning Star Witness. Destruction, rather than peace on earth. This was proper, after all. Sandman frequently explained that since people are against TMH, no justification remains for that Witness -- Sandman wouldn't use the term SMSW -- to stay alive. For who will hear his testimony, mi he'em in lishmuatenu? -- Sandman really liked quoting Isaiah -- Who will think Bible and add up the facts? So it's YOUR JOB to 'help' people be deaf, lo toar Lo, wa lo hadar, wa lo mareh.*

But Ganger was thinking and adding up: someone fell down on the job, with her. Although her failures were constant, the interest in Him remained. Others knew also. Only a few.

The opportunity now, in the wake of the 2000th anniversary of TMH's Birthday, was critical. 2000 years, this Accounting System For Time went sleeping; the hoary human theological heads never once noticed how the entire system was revealed in the debit-credit accounting bases in Daniel 9:2, 24-27, tied to the longevity of the First Temple and its 490-year spread between Dedication and the Exodus, prior; which Exodus, was itself 490 years after Joseph was kidnapped to Egypt. Moses sure knew it well: absent his voting during the voting period, all time would have ended with the expiry of Joseph's personal 490 -- in 1440 BC. But by then, Moses had voted, and despite his reluctance to be a leader, went against the grain and led the people out. *God sure likes to pick unlikely heroes*, Butch was forced to admit.

Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, Luke, Matthew, John thus all used the accounting system in their writings, not merely Daniel. The Most High of course was the very Embodiment of it, born on the 1000th anniversary of David's Consolidated Kingship -- lest there be a millennium beginning without a King over it -- and died, in the 1000th anniversary of David's retirement. 1470 years after the Exodus, the third 490 from it, right on true Passover, just as Moses long explained since that first Exodus. So it was relatively easy to audit and prove all Bible dates from Adam through Christ, since all of them were arrayed based on that accounting system.

The hoary Th.D heads didn't know TMH's true Birthdate, Deathdate, or at all understand the import of His Birth's 2000th anniversary, in 1997; the 2000th anniversary of His Death in 2030 would begin the new Blessing Time Grant Award Period, aka "BTGAP"; bets were #1 got it already, and in 1997; but until his death occurred, no one knew for sure. *Good bet, though*, Butch predicted: *for in 1997, #1 began warning the congregation, starting with his "Operation Cobra" analogies*. He couldn't have done that, if he wasn't awarded the 1000, not that he himself would yet know he won. So Butch bet that 2030 was won by him. *Drat*.

The new BTGAP for 2030 was of course undoable even prior to 3030, if enough voted negative; like THM's own, it was contingent; they would know in a month or so whether time up through 3030 would be a grant. For just as with TMH, successful death was the big issue. Absent TMH's Successful Death, the 'loan' of time due to His Birth -- granted back in 538BC to Daniel -- would have been null and void. And the Boss would have won the Trial. So it was then, so it was now. *'Whole lot riding on a #1 this time*, Butch reflected.

Moreover, even with BTGAP granted, it was not guaranteed to finish. Just as with the Flood, this occurred after the voting window closed, so any BTGAP could end, if enough negativity existed in the world. Back then, only eight positives saved the human race. Butch shook his head, wondering if they'd ever have that much success, again. *Here are four positives, and we're their 'guardians'?!* He wondered if he wanted this job, after all. *Maybe Corporate wasn't too sanguine about the success, so dispatched us losers, and the 'regulars' are being 'saved' from the inevitable denouement?* Wouldn't be the first time such a switch was planned. *With us as the dupes*, Butch realized.

So Butch decided to concentrate on this Ganger, and see whether he should play it safe, or genuinely try to win something. Smythe was the other one to watch, since by seeing the death of #5, the same conclusions were forming. *TMH liked to isolate His Witnesses*.

Whitey Boy also shielded his thinking and began instead to consider calling one of the pit bulls who went easy on him during detention. Whitey forced himself to remember what he'd learned there, humiliating though it was to recall. *The goal of detention was to have done to you, what should be done to the humans en masse -- so being high-echelon and all that, you didn't forget*.

En masse, humans were a prurient lot, and the pit bulls' main job was to handle unbelievers and the apostate among The Most High's 'children'. Dirty work, but pit bulls weren't known for their smarts. They were more human than the humans. Most of the lasciviousness was sent, not even the humans' own motivation -- but since they didn't want God, they got 'substitutes'. The pit bulls were only too happy to comply. It really helped that the popular remembrance of demons in the Bible, was solely of the pit bulls. *Possessed unbelievers acting wildly, gashing themselves or throwing themselves in the fire.* Of course, the extensive disclosure of demons being rather suave -- quintessentially depicted in Matthew 4 -- went unread. So Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, John's trenchant metaphor of "Frogs" in Revelation, alluding to Aristophanes' play, not to mention Peter's and Paul's explanations showing how demons manipulate politics and religion, well -- all these were misinterpreted.

Humans lapped it all up, and the pit bulls got their rocks off. All in derision, of course. *But if one overuses the physical to hit the spiritual, after awhile the physical dominates, making one too like the animal humans he herds,* Whitey remembered. It was an important pit lesson to recall. That's why the pit bulls rarely advanced beyond the pits. They became too addicted to the physical. Just like the humans.

The high-echelon crews were instead deployed to attack at the national "Frogs" level, or the 'Guards' level, which was an orchestrated effort to derail positive believers. Either way, one required some self-control and finesse, quite the opposite of a pit bull's 'skills'; though one routinely called in any number of pit bulls for 'assistance', as the occasion warranted. So for high-echelon work, you had two routes for advancement: 1), the political, running the powerful humans in business, diplomacy, government; or 2), the spiritual, which in turn was subdivided into distorting Bible in public presentation (i.e., translation or teaching); or, 'guarding' PDR or near-PDR believers against further spiritual advance. Or at least, disrupting it.

Alongside these two basic divisions, one had legions of 'assistants', all of them hungry to take your place. So most of the mistakes were due to disdain for the plodding required. You absolutely had to LISTEN to that human drivel-thinking 24/7, or you'd miss something useful. Then you'd miss the opportunity to exploit. Drove one crazy.

Of course, 2) supported 1), but it was truly grueling and often boring work to 'guard' any positive believer. Required constant concentration, and thus a buddy system. It was exhausting. *Funny how taking care of a lowlife human was harder than running the earth's princelings,* Whitey realized.

Whitey and his detention buddies were once among that high-echelon group, opting mostly for 2). Through a series of blunders over the centuries -- *let's not be coy,* Whitey reminded himself -- they were demoted many times, and were now 'out', barely higher than the pit bulls, and often detailed to patrol with them. *Yuck.* So now they had an opportunity to get back in, but it was risky. "Fail in this, and we might not see light of day for centuries", Brainstem had remarked upon their release. It was a risk they were finally willing to take. Yet it irked Whitey to be teamed up with Choler, Brainstem and Butch, though Butch was at least concentrating on his local quarry. But since Ghoster and Rive Blanche were their superiors, life was more tolerable. You could always count on Ghoster's bombast and Rive's affability. They were professionals, pretending to be down-home boys. The pretense didn't work, so there were many humorous moments. *Princes can't act like paupers.*

Whitey Boy didn't think that the PDR folks could be influenced directly. But rather, through those losers in their periphery. So judicious usage of the pit bulls' skills, could accomplish much. Holy feel-good to block insight was to be preferred, but no one could control the pit bulls. They tended toward the prurient, couched of course in ever-updated versions of Delphic Greek style that always could be counted on for mass acceptance. Flipside version of lasciviousness, of course, was asceticism. Getting your high from how great you are, merely a different kind of orgasm. Respectability. Hedging. Recognition by other humans. Hence power, money, sex, religion, and of course the intellectualizations -- rationalizations, really -- which supported

all that. Even castration and especially religion, was a kind of sex: political power and human approbation, the ultimate aphrodisiacs.

Whitey absent-mindedly kept sending thoughts to the four humans, much as a human would do needlepoint. Meanwhile, he looked for clues within the four humans' lives. Hartman's downfall was his own mother; same kind of downfall for Ganger, though technically the woman was her aunt; different type of weakness in each one, same basic maternal 'pull'.

Both of the associated 'mothers', were solidly in the pit bulls' control; the pit bulls 'herding' them rarely even sent new thoughts to 'program' the ever-willing-to-rebel, volitions. "Like watching paint dry", one had quipped just before Whitey got out of detention. The aunt was hot on reincarnation -- Whitey gagged with mirth when he heard about it. Ganger's negative reaction was 'helped', so that authority orientation would be stunted as the child grew. *Using the love for God to hate people who did not believe in Him, quite a successful ploy.* Nothing like hatred of adults, to scar a child for life. Very hard to accept the authority of a Bible teacher, once that happens. *Pity it didn't work in Ganger's case, Whitey lamented.*

The other woman -- Hartman's stepmother -- was a devout Muslim who forgot she had believed in TMH via John 3:16 back when the Brits took over Palestine. They seemed like gods to her, so she believed in their God. Then, ashamed of being a 'Christian' -- not a little encouraged by her new husband, a 'secular Jew' -- she went back to her Islamic roots.

Yet during that brief window of acceptance of Messiah, she taught the junior Hartman Bible. Just long enough for him to get saved and hooked on Scripture. Whitey wondered why the pit bulls didn't see that problem from the get-go. Worse, why didn't their high-echelon superiors? Just because the dad was a secular Jew and the new mother, a Muslim, didn't mean the kid could get Bible without risk. *But again, smarts are not their forte,* he mused. They underestimated, yet again. Whitey didn't want to know what the detention had been for the lot of them, when Junior suddenly believed in Messiah and then even got into Bible under #1. Ouch. *Not good, to have a Jewish believer in Israel! Prophecy stares you in the face, Two Stone Witnesses to Daniel 9:26, Matt 24 and Rev 1!* Whitey winced.

Jewis and Smythe shared a different weakness-by-association that the pit bulls exploited to good advantage: the two were brilliant, humanly speaking. Geniuses. Both were constantly feeling guilty over being better than their fellows. Knowing that, made them easy targets via third parties who could play on their compassion. The pit bulls managed those mini-masses quite well, exhausting both Jewis and Smythe as they tried to think toward God yet toward their busy lives, all at the same time. The mass approach was very effective, here. With the other two humans it was less effective, since both Hartman and Ganger were physically isolated. Hence the need to get Ganger to watch TV.

Whitey was physically stationed 'over' Hartman, who was still in Palestine, owing to the mother. Hartman never married. Choler was physically stationed 'over' Jewis in Houston, and by thought they communicated each to the other, and to Brainstem (over Smythe in Hong Kong) and Butch (over Ganger in Chicago). They acted as TV cameras for each other, so they could jointly see and hear all four at once, but not have to materialize. Thus any of the four could send thoughts to any of their four 'clients'. They termed the joint exercise, "a conference call". This was still the American century, so Americanisms were in vogue; most of the PDR consisted of Americans. Still, all that would change; it would likely become the Chinese century, the way things were going. Or, the African. Bible hunger was biggest on those two continents. America remained the main threat despite its rapid decline in sound Bible teaching -- *within but one generation!* Whitey smiled at that coup -- since those few who still taught well, were mostly American: few in number, large in effect. Folks in China and Africa were learning fast from these few teachers and their native protégés. Wouldn't remain the American century, much longer. People die.

The 490 ending in 1990 had been a time to relish, despite the defeat of it completing so a new BTGAP could be awarded. #1 was the cause of that. Still, from 1950-1990, during the time of the greatest technological advances so anyone could finally read Bible in its original-language texts -- interest in Bible dropped to an all-time low. TV helped that decline greatly. Prosperity helped that decline even more. Just as after the first century AD, when interest in Greek and Hebrew as languages dropped so low, universities stopped teaching them, so too, beginning in 1950. By 1990, the average pastor only had a year of Greek and Hebrew required for graduation. This meant he knew squat, of course. But imagined himself an expert.

Well, except for a dedicated few who studied on their own, and diligently. That was the problem. These few were really interested in knowing Bible, and had the nerve to teach the common man from those newly discovered original-language texts; you could find them from China to Europe to America and back. The Africans had it all over the Americans who dully went to nice edifices and politely listened to the homily, thinking of what they'd eat for supper, and therefore starving. But the starving in Africa, are full of Word? What American would walk 30 miles to hear a Bible tape that had EXEGESIS in it? But an African did. Whitey almost keeled over when he heard about that. *What's this world coming to!* Whitey wondered.

These dedicated teachers were discredited, of course, and the masses at large were distracted with the usual bread-and-circus Churchinanity which mesmerized them for many centuries prior. *Made it easier to concentrate on the true threats*, Whitey told himself. Like, the four 'on screen', in front of him.

These four humans were judged special threats in the PDR at the moment, not because they were in the second or even third tier of Witnesses, but because they were truly studying Scripture, and had been for decades; it remained a question of motive, recognizing they were in love with The Most High. That recognition could easily catapult them upward into the first tier. Their rise had been mercurial, rather than steady; the love catapulted them. But they didn't know that. Still, mercurial types had a boiling point that if reached, would galvanize their spiritual life so thoroughly, they couldn't afterwards be dislodged -- and they'd know they loved Him. They were all-or-nothing, in personal character. So the trick was to keep their motivation, below "all".

TMH's Humanity is the Consummate Plodder, Whitey remembered, flinching. Sandman's daily detention drill assignment: you got the lessons pounded in over and over by the pit bulls. *He, a Plodder. Steady and expanding. Total Personality. The Ox in the Revelation 4 Escutcheon.* Paul and to a lesser extent Peter were mercurial types. Both solidified. So now these four -- Hartman, Jewis, Ganger and Smythe -- were a real risk, especially since TMH was preparing to bring home ALL top 10 Witnesses *within a month!* Big protection gap would ensue if after that month, there weren't 10 more to take their place.

So far, the Convocation Agenda didn't list any renaming ceremony. *That's a big red flag*, Whitey realized. It wasn't automatic that #11-20, would take the place of the top 10. The PDR could be revised unilaterally, but more often the new top 10 would be renamed in convocation, so the Boss could dispute them.

Whitey didn't see anyone in the PDR who could so rapidly rise to fill all 10 slot levels. Most of the PDR folks were pinned down, going through the coalescence-of-witness phase, which would either spin them out in negativity until their time on earth ended, or would at least slow them down so much, they wouldn't finish the Witness.

Hence the worry over these mercurial four. By all appearances, these four were losers already: Hartman was almost without Bible for weeks; Ganger watched too much TV; Smythe was too busy trying to learn Mandarin so he could talk with #5, so didn't study; Jewis was busy feeling small and stupid, as usual. *But with the mercurial type, today's failure usually seeded tomorrow's success:* Sandman's pit bulls made sure you never

forgot that. Consequently each of the four humans had been undergoing an accelerated cross-examination that the Boss had long lobbied for, and TMH finally granted beginning about 16 years prior, when the new 490 BTGAP began.

TMH made no interim forecast about the humans' spiritual outcome, of course. So there was no such thing as an 'average' Pleroma Witness. However, the bulk of those who reached Pleroma status were plodders. Some were mercurial -- usually failing to stay in the Docket -- but if they stayed, they were far deeper than even the plodders, in orientation. Trick was to reach the boiling point, a kind of absoluteness. The mercurial types couldn't usually hit that mark, so failed. They had to go from liquid to solid. The long slow climb was not in their nature. So if they made it to solid, they would be immovable. So to have four of them at once to 'handle', was bad news. One of them would likely turn solid.

It all came down to the Character of Motive. A plodder's motive character is on and on and on; that plodding was essential to completing the Witness. No Pleroma who died victorious did so absent heavy plodding motive. On the other hand, the mercurial motive character would catapult a believer, and if he held on after that -- a type of plodding, really -- the motive would completely replace everything human in him. Believers were roughly divided into those two types; the weakness in the plodder, that he wasn't adept at sudden spikes in motive. The weakness in the mercurial type, that he wasn't adept at stabilizing his gains.

Trouble was, if they reached Love for The Most High, then all their old motives, died. The Love replaced their old motives. So the mercurial became solid, and the plodder could skyrocket. *That's the threat facing us now*, Whitey smiled ruefully. These four didn't know they loved God. They felt they didn't. *Dead giveaway of loving someone is when you think you don't -- and fault yourself for it.* Another Sandman lesson-from-the-pits. So all the gushy i-love-God people didn't get but a minimal amount of 'herding'. *Not worth the time, something you got between assignments, or as 'kitchen patrol' for mild infractions.* Pit bulls thus did most of the herding. They liked the Hollywood-style games, what with the afterlife channelling fakery or salt stains on Chicago underpasses as 'appearances' of the supernatural, as if The Most High would do circus tricks. Real demons like Whitey, scoffed. *Magic acts were for children.*

So Trial Witnesses generally did not know they were in the Docket. Only one of these four humans even knew what was going on, Ganger; but she was characteristically paralyzed by that knowledge, the motive being strong but the plodding, nil. Paralysis can only be overcome by plodding.

But one never knew when the mercurial types would hit critical mass, and skyrocket yet again, a kind of leaping growth; they'd seem to be failing nicely, then *bam!* the next second they're immovable for the rest of their life. That paralysis morphed into immovable motive, so it looked like plodding, but was instead just this fixed mountain no one could even dent. Preceding that morphing was no advance warning, no telltale sign, personality seen can't be used to predict or time. Even that mercurial witness didn't know. *So there will be no thoughts I can read to warn me.* Whitey Boy smiled ruefully at the thought of missing the turning point with one of these four humans.

Whitey didn't like damage control; its usual outcome was very long time in detention under the 'care' of the pit bulls. They relished their work, and constantly invoked the end of Hebrews I as their authority. As if serving humans by beating up on their fallen comrades. Whitey found that cheeky. But the Boss liked that clever twist they made on the Chapter.

Aha. So why not get a pit bull to help me out here? I've got authority, too. But what to do? Whitey wondered.

Goren suddenly showed up. "You rang, Whitey?" the pit bull asked. "Babel Goren, *à votre service*", he grinned. Whitey hadn't called him. But pit bulls could smell desire on anyone, angel or human, and that's what made

them indispensable. They could smell the jugular urge. Whitey admitted he'd not been guarding against them as well as he should. So Goren was coyly calling his attention to the *smell*.

"I was thinking of calling you, Goren. But I'd not decided what to ask."

"Hartman's mother is weakening, so I'm dispatched to her."

Whitey stared at Goren. *Surely he doesn't need to materialize just to send that message.* Whitey's eyes narrowed. *Even a pit bull can get promoted out of the pits.* Aloud, he said the obvious "so why come here to tell me?"

Goren laughed. "I want out. Bored. I want to play higher head games, like you do."

"I don't know of anyone else who's up for demotion, Goren."

"You are, if you mess this up."

"So why offer to help me, Goren?"

"So you don't mess up. Then you get promoted, and I take your place." Goren was surprised Whitey didn't recognize that motive right off; if you helped promote someone you rose faster, everyone knew that. Maybe Whitey'd screw up after all. *No matter, I win either way if I help him.* Goren watched Whitey react to that unsheathed thought. Then, he began transmission of the brief he had on the Hartman woman, and his plans for her, which Whitey accepted.

Slowly a grin crept across Whitey's face. Goren then zapped off toward Hartman's mother, giving Whitey a private TV audience the meanwhile. Buddies in detention, now buddies in a subplot sheathed just between them. *Free universe!* Goren exulted.

Whitey then shielded his thoughts and analyzed the 'file' contents Goren had zapped into his soul. First topic was the purpose, a claim to further resolve the eons-old battle between the upper and lower echelons among the fallen ones. Claim that the PDR progress was bad due to disunity among the subcommanders. Same old same old, each of the two groups belittling the other's attack philosophy, just like humans of different military branches, officers and non-coms, generals versus privates. Politicians versus generals, frankly. The politically suave eschewed the grosser tactics of the military; the upper military, of the sergeants and privates. Couldn't do one without the other. The chicanery made Whitey sick to his stomach, which is why he never wanted to rise in the "Frogs". But apparently Goren, did.

Goren's main point was pure Matt4:3 etc. upper-echelon: play to strength. But unlike the upper echelon "prissies", Goren didn't rule out gross strategy and tactics. Elegance didn't matter to him. He wasn't coy about blaming the upper echelons for their lack of PDR progress, but bluntly and dangerously accused them of insisting on elegant finesse, to imitate and ingratiate themselves with the Boss. *They WEREN'T the Boss, never would BE the Boss, so quit trying to ape the Boss and instead do what the Boss, wants!* Ouch. Hidden threat that Goren would accuse them publicly TO the Boss, given the right opportunity. So Goren obviously had high ambitions, still. Sandman had banished him to detention, given Goren's Acts 19:15 outburst to the seven sons of Sceva, seriously damaging the plan to discredit Paul. Goren wanted to regain his former status.

Goren had the bad luck to be on buddy patrol with a truly idiotic pit bull, who himself was out on probation, having been in the pit bulls' detention for their own -- rumored to be a thousand times worse than Whitey ever suffered. Goren pulled such bad duty, because he had gotten snippy with one of his superiors. So to teach Goren a lesson, the offended superior paired Goren with Raca -- *was that his nickname?* Whitey didn't remember. At any rate, "Raca" was doing a possession, and Babel Goren had to join him. The confining discomfort was so shameful, the smells of desire so raunchy, and the incantation by the Sceva's seven dippy sons so exasperating, well -- *Goren INTERRUPTED Raca!* who after all was 'in charge' and was supposed to reply. Very bad move. You never go over your superior's head.

At the court martial, Sandman had been scathing, burning his voice into Goren's ears: "You're highly-ranked, so you get all haughty, hot and bothered about it, bragging to titillated human dingbats about Paul -- thus attesting Paul was of Jesus and thus from God! Could you be dumber? Oh, it's because you admire the Boss and Jesus and Paul, and can't stand human dingbats with their predilection for titillation? Who among us doesn't think the same way, you twit!"

Whitey had to admit that he'd not have had the chance to move up the ladder but for the fall of Goren and all his court martial defenders. Every one of them did a little pit time; but Goren didn't get any exit privileges until Martin Luther -- and then, only on probation, and only as a pit bull. He was still on probation, and still a pit bull, though near the top of their own ranks. *The guy was a natural leader, after all*, Whitey had to admit. *This must be an opportunity Goren yearned to parlay, into freedom and promotion.* Clearly all this time he'd kept his nose clean and brown, befriending many an upper-echelon who'd screwed up, and built his way out from his connections.

His report read: *the sillier, the higher the reaction of unbelief; the more frequent the unbelief, the harder it is to believe something not silly. So thus one plays to strength, the strength of reason – but mates it, to disbelief. Silly and belief, become one in the human mind. Deem miracles silly, demand natural phenomena as an explanation, and then God is only God if He can't act like God. For "God" by definition, can do any miracle He likes. Voilá! No wonder Goren rose so high in the ranks until the Sceva incident.*

Cloak in the silly, but jab to strength. Because if you're laughing at the silly, you don't see the dagger. "Free universe! We make man in our image, and TMH never interferes!" was Goren's credo. This is how he deployed it.

Yeah, and Goren would as soon make me in his image, get me zapped down there to replace him – as soon as he'd befriend me. We all climb onto each other, and onto each other's backs. Whitey pondered how to protect himself. Goren was really the more skilled. To nab a Jewish Christian who's in the PDR was a magnificent coup. But his proposal was risky, a version of his "silly" philosophy that could get him detention until the Rapture.

For the Boss himself had forbidden promoting the Gospel, which after all was why Goren was demoted in the first place. *So here he's dispatched to Hartman's mother, because she's suddenly a risk, might be genuinely interested in God, might get out of reversionism – with a strategy to make her WANT the Gospel?* Whitey feared the fallout. Sure, the point was that a) upper-echelon finds that approach silly, so disbelieves it will work, which means it will work very well; b) it plays to Junior Hartman's strength, love -- classic Matt4:3, which would please the Boss; but c) she might actually become interested in God, in which case she ceases to be a major impediment to Junior's growth. *Goren assures me that won't happen, but what if it does?* Whitey was worried.

On the other hand, the idea was to keep Junior in Palestine, which would disrupt his Bible study. That was working quite well, the poor boy could barely concentrate, what with the very emotional childhood he had, torn between the two cultures and a God Who wasn't reflected in either one of them; thus -- as Goren put it -- *he feels disloyal to his parents, if choosing God. Common story. Hard to break out of that. Harder still, to return once one does break out. Guilt and a need to evangelize, block objective discernment.*

So Goren aimed to derail Junior via the mother, which only worked, if she herself showed an interest in God. *No problem! I'll just send her that interest,* Goren had said. So Goren was counting on the only true interest being feelings and thoughts he sent her.

Should I take this risk? Whitey asked himself. He could play it safe, end the tour; but then *ppfft!* back to kitchen patrol he'd go when the tour ended, making old ladies and religious types believe some trifle or hallucination was a "Miracle!" That their dead relatives were now spirits talking through mediums, angels or

ghosts -- rather than demons 'channelling' Malarky's propaganda, playing back a family's old history to hook emotion and blind them to The Most High. *Yecch.* He did "Mothman" kitchen patrol back in Gallipolis, Ohio. *Don't want to do it again!* And no more possessions, crying statues, suns turning around backwards. Parlor tricks, all. *Yawn!* Better to be cooped up in the dog kennel with the pit bulls. *Well, not quite.* They got to inflict all the pain they wanted, down there. *Boredom beats pain!*

Getting a person's eyes on another person in the name of genuine Love for God was the hallmark philosophy of the Boss, in Matthew 4. But that's The Boss playing it, *and look how it backfired!* So if it worked, would Goren look like he's competing with the Boss? So would Whitey get singed? And of course if it didn't work -- if the mother herself suddenly became Genuinely Interested in TMH -- hmmm, a PDR furtherance got the worst punishments. Not quite as bad as the fiasco with Paul, but -- well, who knew? Paul was a loser par excellence. More religious than everyone, so the more blinded, too. No one bet on him to wake up and smell the coffee.

But oh, if if if it worked! When would he have such an opportunity? A Jewish Christian in the PDR! Goren picked the peach, alright. And Whitey decided to be plucked.

Chapter 4: Michael Hartman

People always told him he looked like King David. *How the hell could they know that*, Hartman always wondered, as he looked out across the dawning port at Haifa. He hadn't slept. He didn't want to hear them talk like that about him; he didn't want to hear, anything. Not the endless Israeli traffic; not the muezzin; not even the thousand 'exotic' calls in the marketplace of the Old Quarter back in Jerusalem, "where Jesus walked". The names were a jumble to him, and he always felt the foreigner, though he was *sabra*, born in Israel. How his mother could make her way around Jerusalem, flat struck him with awe. She was one of the few Muslims who could wander around unsuspected by either side. She chose to work, giving Christians tours of both the Temple Mount (well, as close as they could get to it), and of all the haunts which tradition but not Bible, said were in Jesus' travels that Passion Week. Hartman had no desire to go near any of them: dead names. Live Word was a better 'tour'. But his mother was dying. So he flew back here. Home.

She was always dying. She was dying 10 years ago, so he hurried off to Israel yet again, to find her both alive and well in Haifa, in one of those swanky lime-white apartments with the rooftop patios overlooking the sea. It was a false alarm. Again. She refused to move to America with her son, and of course resented the fact that he went anyway; partly to shame him, she moved from place to place, imposing (nicely of course) on some Arab or Jewish friend or relative, the meanwhile singing for her supper by offering tours and teaching the Koran to foreign visitors, since no imam would do that -- always proclaiming how her son was a Bible student, *see we are all People of the Book*. The Israelis liked her because she seemed to promote mutual Jewish-Arab understanding, and of course the tourists enjoyed her plump motherly form; they wanted to see a 'good' Arab, and she obliged them. You half expected her to bring out dates from beneath all those folds.

But this time she was really dying, the Jerusalem doctors told her. Plural, doctors. As usual there was no physical sign she was even ill; the weight loss and the tiredness in a woman who must have walked every inch of Old Town during her lifetime -- in someone else, it wouldn't seem like much. But she was reconsidering her faith. That was the one sign Hartman took seriously: *after all this time, can I FINALLY witness to my own mother?* he wondered.

This last bout she'd been asking him questions about salvation, and he more or less rotely answered her with John 3:16, reminding her she was saved already. Then he'd fall silent, expecting the usual rebuff. But it didn't come. He tried taking her out to the fancy stores which almost choked Jerusalem nowadays -- patterned no doubt after the Champs Elysées in Paris, *yuck!* -- a Greek afterlife myth named in French to crown a shopping spree? -- she'd always loved to window shop, amidst all that glass and chrome. But not now. And she stopped saying her *salat*, the obligatory prayers. No more Zohar, no more Ahsr, no more Maghrib. Just the dawn prayer, *what was it called?* She'd really have to be sick to forego the prayers.

Her whitewashed apartment in Jerusalem was on the first floor, easy target for any lobbing grenade. Too close to the shopping districts tourists always haunted. Right on the bus route, of course. Mentally he made plans to move her out, knowing she'd resist it. Of course, each time he came to her, his Bible study went right out the window. He couldn't concentrate well, and spending all day listening to her and the other sounds meant he wasn't concentrating on thinking toward Father. He missed the isolation he enjoyed in Albuquerque. And immediately felt guilty that he did. He, a "living David", his mother's gal pal told him. *Yuck*.

He felt guiltier still, sitting in that Haifa apartment, far from her in Jerusalem -- the same apartment she'd rented 10 years ago, so he bought it for her, *Surprise! Happy Birthday!* -- and of course she promptly refused to live there afterwards. *Well, I was cleverer with the Jerusalem flat*. Michael smugly congratulated himself for having Dad's trust purchase the entire complex when its owner died, *so she pays rent to herself!* he thought, laughing. *Well, if she'd ever take any money out of it. If she ever finds out she's 'my' employee, I'm cooked*, Michael

thought ruefully. Apparently Dad never told her how rich they were, and she never asked. Michael had tried to explain it to her; when her eyes kept on filming over, he finally had to say, "Call me when you need money." She never did. So he found out which travel companies paid her to work, and gradually bought all three of them. The 'tips' of grateful, nameless tourists, she never questioned. It was in Arab culture to accept all such gifts. "Such generous people", she'd always say. *Oy, if she only knew!*

The Haifa place now was pretty musty, never mind it was thoroughly cleaned for each Pesach and Rosh Hashanah. He needed time to study, to think. *But what if she dies while I'm here?* So he'd turn on his mp3 player, listen for five minutes and that "What if" thought would interrupt. So he'd backspace the Bible class, play it again where his concentration lapsed. He'd done this a thousand times, his mind unfocused; so a half-hour play, stretched into three. A thousand more times, he picked up the duffle bag he'd left in the doorway, intending to cab back to Jerusalem. *No, I need nourishment!* he'd snap at himself, and put the bag down. *Didn't the Lord say He came to bring the machaira, to split asunder even parents and their children?* So this was more important. However seemingly disloyal. Then he'd stare out at the sea while the player droned on.

His mind kept wandering over his life, a waking dream. Dad, during the Six-Day War, finding this slip of an Arab girl whose mother seemed dead. Always dying, never dead. He fell in love with the mother, immediately. So Michael Hartman brought home to his orphaned, five-year old son Michael, a new mother. They doted on each other, and even looked alike: she, with uncharacteristic fiery auburn-red hair, just like Michael's son. She didn't look Arab, "but more like Abigail must have looked", her new husband liked to say. Many times her appearance would both threaten and save, her life. It wasn't until she grayed and fattened, that the typical Arab features were visible.

Post-war boom made the Hartmans rich forever, and Dad gradually put the money in a trust fund, mostly cashing out just before the intifada began. Banked in America. For he wanted his wife and son and adopted daughter to move there, should he die. But Mom wouldn't move. Daughter Fatima moved alright -- into the Hamas. *Wa lo hamas asah, Isaiah 53:9, "For he had done no violence" -- yeah, violence=Hamas.* The younger Hartman winced at the world's stupidity. *What, does no one ever learn the Bible, that these gangsters can call themselves "Hamas"?*

Mom never saw nor would want to see her again. She was anti-Arab, in that respect. That's why Dad found them during the Negev campaign. Mom had had enough with Arab bombast; she behaved like an Israeli camp follower, dragging her daughter along, in effect seeking political asylum but really a better life; away from what she felt was a betrayal of Allah. *Koran is not about violence!* she'd always shout when later recounting her journey. Like most devout Arabs, she hated both Hamas and Hezbollah, but felt powerless -- and more than a little afraid -- to stand up and say so.

Michael supposed that was why he hated being in Israel so much. Both the Israelis and the Arabs bullied in the name of loyalty. The Israelis had been no better than the Hamas back during the British Occupation, but wizened up and became politically suave. They exchanged the bullets for ballot boxes. The Arabs weren't so quick on the uptake. Their Bedouin nature and revenge culture -- a kind of Mafiosi mentality, really -- glorified violence too much. So when they had opportunity back in the mid 1940's to join hands with the Israelis in a government -- practicing war by political means, instead -- they rebuffed it. Bad move.

Meanwhile, underneath it all, Israelis badgered their clans just as the Arabs did, so your mother or dad or uncle or someone you couldn't dare offend, got your nominal support. So you pretended to hate the Jews if you were an Arab, and you pretended to hate the Arabs, if you were a Jew. Down deep, everyone on both sides was thoroughly sick of the whole Isaac-Ishmael thing. It hardly mattered anymore, since everyone's blood ran red.

Hamas clearly didn't give a shit about the Koran; it was an organization of thugs, much like the Black Power movement in the United States had been. So too, its more vociferous older-brother cult, Hezbollah was equally hypocritical. One upmanship, terrorism as a way to control one's own people, really -- the Israelis being but a political excuse, a way to measure Arab loyalty to one's clan. It was the Party of Crap, as Dad liked to say: *Hez BULL ahhh*, he'd pronounce it, to the everlasting merriment of his old Army buddies. But Hezbollah got the last laugh: Dad died while on reconnaissance in southern Lebanon, during the Aoun debacle. Sniper bullet. The bullet wasn't even intended for him, but for his Arab guide. Apparently the guide had slept with someone's sister but wouldn't marry her.

Sixteen years had passed since, and history repeated itself. As if to welcome its native son back, Hez BULL ahhh kidnapped Israeli soldiers Regev and Goldwasser the day after Hartman arrived at the behest of "the Jerusalem doctors". The bombing of southern Lebanon and re-entry by the IDF, the blow up in Gaza -- really, the competition between Hamas and Hezbollah, had nothing to do with Israel -- prevented his leaving. The truce was tenuous, and those idiots could refire Ketushas at any moment, no warning. He couldn't leave Mother alone, now.

So he'd been here for almost two months. *See, I can justify staying in Hefa for awhile. It's not like I'm only staying a week*, Hartman argued to his conscience.

Back when Dad died, Mom insisted on remaining behind. Michael needed to get away, be alone; so he pleaded the importance of overseeing the estate assets in America, to justify his departure. *Two can play at the tug-of-war game. Had I not moved there, what incentive would she have to leave*, he reasoned. Then he found true Bible wealth; first Bible tape he heard, hooked him. But he stayed away from the church. Just the teacher. He was a loner, thank you very much. *Nothing worse than a group of believers talking the talk. No matter how accurate the teaching, it got clackey when those under the same pastor, congregated.* He never liked synagogue, except for the teaching; he never liked church, either. Any church. *If you weren't going there to learn God, why go at all?* It seemed to him most people who went to synagogue-church go for the people, and God's name just got slapped on so they could feel holy about it. Not his cup of tea.

So he moved to New Mexico, and lived on the Bible tapes. Vowed to forget all he ever learned about this Land Where Jesus Walked, since it wasn't supposed to be about where the Lord was, but how the Lord THINKS! Walking is thinking, in the Bible! *Calm down, Michael.* He used 1Jn1:9.

Wasn't hard to forget this Land, given the huge ignorance he had of Bible, though he grew up here, a bobbing rabbinical school on every corner. Learning all that Bible Hebrew and Greek in the States wasn't like anything he'd heard growing up, though born "where Jesus walked". *Yeah, and I knew NOTHING while living in His Home State!* In Albuquerque, asset management took up all his days, and Bible, all his nights. Great way to be alone.

He fell asleep to the sound of the player, absorbing very little. Whitey Boy was pleased with himself. *Sleep my Prince-of-God Dawid, sleep.*

Goren watched over the mother. Updated by Whitey that Son Hartman was peacefully AWOL, he went to work on the mother. She was saved anyway, spilt milk. Best he could do, was motivate Sonny Boy to stay in Israel. Not good, that Mom should be alone -- *especially if she was to become interested in the Real God, huh?* Goren was sooo pleased with the idea. *Those big boys in the upper echelons constantly debated whether to play to or against, faith in Christ, not realizing that the big game was to use believers against believers.* Via, Mom and apple-pie. *Emotion, feeling you're winning the war, that's the ticket*, Goren exulted. He didn't shield his thoughts, either. *How could a loyal son forego witnessing to his own mother, when she seemed genuinely interested, Whitey?* Goren shot that thought hard and fast, to punctuate its importance.

So next Goren kept shooting thoughts to the mother, *Where does the Koran teach how God gets paid? Why is it the People of the Book are the same, but salvation is NOT the same? One book contradicts the other. They both can't be from Allah.* She didn't 'hear' the meaning at first, so he kept on repeating it with a good dose of emotional doubt. She just felt vaguely disquieted.

He caused her to fall asleep again on those faded floral cushions Arabs loved so much, and sent her a dream -- well, ok, a replayed memory of her motives when she left Egypt that night, when Israel was on the verge of crossing over at Abu Zneima, mother and daughter creeping, hiding amidst the Israeli or Arab equipment when needed. Her disillusion with all things Arab, her worry that her daughter would be raped, even as she had been when the same age. Her questioning: *if Allah is Merciful, why are the Israelis winning?* She knew they would win, and therefore that her only chance of escape, was *now!* For the Israelis always gave back part of what they won. So they'd give back the Suez, or at least withdraw from Abu Zneima. The Americans pressed them to give back territory in 1956, even as the British pressed them to do in 1949. So surely they'd give back the Suez, once the Egyptians were thrashed. Then she'd be trapped in Abu Zneima until -- when? *In'sha Allah, NOW I leave!*

She hadn't been alone, either. Many furtive shadows crept alongside the moving tanks, and if you squinted your eyes, you could just make out a big soft arm pulling a little soft arm. The tanks often moved quite slowly when returning to the central Negev, and magically trucks would appear every once in a while to load those mothers-with-daughters who couldn't walk any longer. After all, she had been one of them.

When the mother awakened, her first instinct was to page over in her old Bible to the Gospel of John. As always, she read the English by moving her lips without sound, lest anyone overhear. As always, the book was a blur to her. She repeatedly asked herself why Michael was so addicted to it. Bible didn't sound beautiful, but the Koran did. Maybe it was the language. After reading a few verses, she promptly fell asleep again, just like everyone else. Goren smiled. *No worry here, Whitey. And I didn't even have to send her any 'encouragement' to sleep!*

Whitey breathed a sigh of relief. Here was the poster child of that prohibition against Gospel promotion, *getting us BOTH in trouble?* Goren proved himself judicious, only seeming to promote pro-Gospel questioning, in order to put it to sleep. *Whew.*

This time, the mother dreamed on her own. Remembering the work song in the kibbutz her new son Michael liked. *Heksalut me nah avodah! Avodah me nah heksalut. Avarim le mah, le mah avarim. Le hi riyot, le hi riyot. Shalom. Shalom.* How in the name of that shalom and her new home with an American Jew husband, she determined to teach his son ALL the faiths, and learn them all better, herself. She didn't know much, but she did know that faith meant the BOOK, not the people. Her husband helped her with the English and the Hebrew, but the latter didn't help her with the Bible, since its Hebrew was too different, and as a woman she couldn't get the training. So she stuck with the English. *Old Testament, New Testament, Koran, Talmud, so many words! Is God really this talkative?* she'd wonder. *Then why don't I know Him better?* The Koran always left her somewhat baffled, for it seemed to say nothing. *But who except Allah could make such music from words?*

She determined to learn those words; she was not allowed to learn them directly, as a child. So she recited from all those words, and taught the younger Michael to recite. Neither of them really understood what the words meant, but they had good memories, and recitation was a way to be together. The Senior Michael didn't encourage all this learning, he believed in *action!* but he didn't discourage it, either. His son was not the action type. Born to be a student; teasing him, his IDF buddies would dub him 'Jacob', after that first loner who stuck by his mother. But 'Jacob' couldn't get into rabbinical school, for he had an Arab mother. Never mind, she was the *second* mother, not his biological origin. Sharp memories of all her fights with the rabbis, jabbed her awake.

She rang him up in Haifa. "I feel better now. Shall I come to you, or you to me?"
"I'll come, Mom."

He didn't know whether to be excited or worried, and spent no time wondering, either. By the time the cab reached her flat in Jerusalem -- the driver couldn't believe his good luck, *erev shabbat!* -- Michael had been able to study two whole classes. The sabbath siren sounded and he practically leapt up the stairs to her apartment, found the door already open, a note on the table telling him she was on the roof. He dropped the duffle, grabbed two cold Evians and bounded up there, too. Then he saw it. On her lap.

"Explain to me John's Gospel, my son the Bible student," she said, pointing to the book on her lap. "I know you stay in America to get Bible teaching. So tell me what you've learned." Her expression was earnest.

Is she really dying? What, did the doctors say something new? Michael wondered. And then Hartman Junior, scion of the family now, closet Bible addict of many years -- fainted. He'd forgotten to eat. For three days.

The distinctly-bulgur smell of falafel woke him. Michael thought he was dreaming, since the falafel was rolled up, itself a pancake, softer, lightly fried, 'stuffed' with flattened kibi, cucumbers, tomatoes and minted yogurt, his mother's recipe. Instinctively he grabbed and chomped. Only then, he realized he wasn't dreaming.

"Mom?" His mother smiled. To his questioning eyes she replied, "It takes time to drive here from Hefa. Everything was ready, to cook."

That can only be good news, Michael thought happily. Aloud, he asked "Did the tests return?"
"Yes. Cancer. Leukemia. Late stage. Now confirmed again. They promised to wait until I myself would tell you."

She wasn't sad. *Did she expect Allah to heal her? What happened?* Michael wondered. Then he realized she must be in a great deal of pain. People stop complaining when their pain is high enough. Aloud, he asked, "Mom, are they giving you medicine for the pain?"

"I have no pain", she replied, "except the pain of knowing what will happen to my son who forgets food. You will take me to America. Now eat."

Whitey Boy gasped. *Backfire!* "No, wait!" Goren transmitted. "You think I didn't anticipate this?"

Michael did keep eating. Impossible to disobey, even when still in shock. *What is it about Arab mothers that you always believe them,* he wondered. It was their total commitment to you, he realized. That's why Arab men were always so disappointed when they married, until they had children. They wanted both a sex kitten and a total *madre* in the home. 'Normal' Jews weren't much different, leaving out the *haredi* and their payess cousins, of course. So the children were raised to believe their parents, gods. That desire, that adoration, never left the children. Even when they hated their parents. *Lethal combination, if the real God isn't your parents' God,* Michael realized.

The muezzin sounded. She ignored them. *Bismillaah hi rachmaah ni raheem,* suddenly sprang to his mind. He kept silent.

She watched him gratefully finish what the family long knew as her "Falakivi", and became conscious she'd been the one who was stubborn. So much time lost. The cat-and-mouse game played over the last 16 years, *M'ash*

Allah, I should have submitted! When she was first diagnosed two years ago she expected healing, so finally made the *qiran hajj* with an American Muslim tourist who wanted a paid companion. Both she and the tourist became *hajja* but they nearly died in the attempt, given the infamous Jamarat deadline of 1700 hours the day after ritual mourning at Mt. Arafat, where the Prophet of Allah (swt) delivered his last speech. Two million pilgrims on the march just couldn't make that distance easily, and often people died or were injured. The smell was unbearable.

So when they left Muzdalifa and finally entered the Jamarat crush to re-enact Ibraim's throwing stones at the devil, her own listless (and too-few) throws won her many disapproving, furtive glances -- though not from her benefactress, who was likewise reticent. "Why 49 or 70 stones, why throw anything at all? Isn't it Satan who throws stones at us? Where does the Koran command this ritual?" the benefactress had asked, when they finished the third 'pillar'.

There was no answer to her query, of course; it was *sunnah*, not Koran. Koran never said that Ibraim was tempted at all, and there was nothing about him throwing stones at anyone. Rather, it said Ibraim and Ishmael were eager to sacrifice in *As-Saffat*, *falam mabalaga ma'ahus saya qala yabunay ya in ni arafil manami an ni azbahuka fanzur mazatara qalaya abatifal matumaru satajidunin sa'alahu minas sabirin*. She decided not to quote the verse. Someone might overhear.

Of course, it probably wasn't even the Ka'aba, but the Temple Mount, where Ishmael would have been sacrificed. She'd repeated the problem often enough in her tours for Christians, since some tourist inevitably asked, *well did Abraham almost sacrifice BOTH Isaac and Ishmael in different spots?* The script called for her to favor the non-Islamic answer, which personally she found more rational, as there was no way Hagar or Abraham went to the Ka'aba from the vicinity of Mamre in Israel, a grueling distance of maybe a month's travel. But then she'd always add the conventional reply that *Mount Moriah was holy because it was the site where Mohammed, pbuh, rose* -- but the location wasn't in the Koran, nor even the claim that he rose. So she didn't believe it, seemed like someone's invention to 'compete' with the Christian Resurrection or Ascension, after Mohammed died. *Koran was complete, so why is there a Hadith?* But she kept that objection to herself. Over the years she noticed that all the major religions had 'later' books which conveniently appeared after the original holy books ceased. She distrusted all latecomers.

Instead, while her benefactress and she wearily returned to their Mina tent at sundown, she absently excused the Jamarat by saying *just as Catholicism invented things which weren't in the Bible, so too Islam invented things not in the Koran*. The benefactress was new to Islam, anyway. No sense disturbing a new faith with new doubts, too. *It was the Book which mattered, not how people told you to read it. You read it, for yourself.* She felt happy she could start her payor on good Islamic footing. *The Christians, the Jews, the Muslimin all have false teachers among them. Koran will be your guide.*

Yet that new one's enthusiasm didn't revive, her own. By the time they reached their Mina tent, she barely had the heart for yet another farewell trip around the Ka'aba. *Being hajja was supposed to crown your life, right? Then why don't I feel holy?* She didn't sleep well, and mouthed the prayers rotely, no heart. *So the prayers are haram!* she remembered with horror beneath her *hijab*.

Then she understood. Every day they took special precautions at the Kotel to protect both tourists and pilgrims, from Arab teenagers who threw stones from the other side of the Temple Mount, which of course was supposed to be policed. Throwing stones on innocents -- as if those at the Kotel, were *Shaitan* himself. As if the Kotel, was a 'pillar'. So her benefactress, who didn't wear the *hijab* until they made *hajj*, might have been killed, along with Jews who were surely just as devout about their Kotel, as any Muslim was about the Ka'aba. Two K's. For she'd taken the woman to the Kotel aka "Wailing Wall"; the woman then first mentioned *hajj*, noticing parallels to Jewish peregrination going on in the Plaza. *How would that have served Allah,*

if they stoned her? If everyone is born a Muslim, then no one should stone anyone else! Surely God is not this way, so why am I holy for throwing stones?

Of course, the deeper question was even more troubling: *why isn't it idolatry, to claim holiness from movements and touching, walking a given route which mere men traversed? Isn't that why the Christians and Jews were condemned, and even the Ka'aba itself in the hands of the pagans, treated as idolatrous objects?* Seemed to her if it was okay in Islam, it would be okay in the other faiths. And if not okay, then not okay in Islam, either. She wondered if someone tampered with the Koran, for surely Islam itself was self-contradictory on this point.

She forced herself to finish the *hajj* for the sake of her temporary employer, also telling herself that at least it would be good for the *Eid*, children were hungry all over the world.

But her own hunger would take longer to fill. From that point onward she began to question, so never told Michael or anyone else she'd made *hajj*. Occasionally someone who'd heard about her journey before she'd gone, would bring it up -- *did you make hajja? Were you caught in the flash flood??* -- and she'd smile demurely at the first question, nod 'no' to the second, aware they'd mistake her curtness for modesty. She felt dirty, though. Her questioning was fitful at first, the weight of time like those Jamarat crowds, rushing her forward so her doubts didn't intrude, until day's end for last-minute bargains at a chosen *shuk*. Standing there, awaiting her group's purchases, it all seemed artificial, God-on-a-T-shirt-but-not-in-your-heart: whether Arab or Jew, Christian or atheist. *So many words, so little God. True haram, invalid.*

When Whitey Boy heard her thinking, he thought-slapped Goren: *you're reading her wrong, this is genuine interest, so if I go down, you're going with me.* Goren just took it, and made no reply. He was shielded.

"Mom, I suppose you've already decided when we leave." Michael's voice was distracted, still in shock, disbelieving. She could read his love for her like the sunrise. It warmed her.

"After the sabbath, I should think."

Michael tried not to show his surprise. *So she's been planning this!* He suddenly realized that the Hamas Hezbollah interruption delayed her plans, even as it kept him here.

"Fatima?" he ventured.

"She is dead to me. But you are not."

Michael had done some checking into his legal sister's whereabouts, and thought about telling his mother that Fatima had moved to Egypt, now a grandmother, herself. Decided against it.

"Alright. I can arrange to have all of your things moved, or -- Mom, I own this building, so you can keep your things here."

"You own the building, and my job. So that should make it easy," she said flatly. There was no hint of reproach in her voice.

Michael was amazed. "You knew all this time?" and then immediately regretted that remark. *Arab mothers know everything. Just like Jewish mothers.* Michael decided that God must set up a direct pipeline between new mother and Omniscience, every time He imputes a soul to the newly-born. *It was uncanny, how they could know despite bustling about the kitchen all day.* She smiled, as if she heard his thought. He sighed. Then Mother and Son hugged, indissoluble, separated by miles and years, and yet never apart. He decided to take a shower. God may have smitten her with cancer, but she was always dying, and never dead. *Especially, not to me!*

"Mother, I must smell badly. Why don't I take a shower, go to the *shuk* and make you my salad? You know how it complements your *falakivi*."

At that, Mrs. Gabrielle Hartman, true scioness of both Hartman Sr. and Jr., laughed. Arm in arm, they went back downstairs, as the sun dipped below the horizon. Once they got there, he found all the ingredients measured out, waiting to be assembled. For shabbas had begun.

Both of them resisted the impulse to light candles, preferring the shadowy dusk. Wordlessly, Michael grabbed his duffle bag and headed for the shower. He closed the door before switching on the lights, grateful that the bathroom had no window. It was a little trick he learned, if you turned on the lights just as shabbas started you could justify leaving them on all the next day -- so long as no one outside could see and complain.

They could resist lighting candles but not the inevitable hush which in this Land Where Jesus Walked, was a magical thing. No traffic. The one day of the week when the shuks, endless construction booms, cellphones, and even the muezzin had to stay somewhat quiet. Being alone was a good way to celebrate its beginning. Clean.

As he showered, Michael recalled how the physicians hinted about his mother's condition, saying they had prepared a medical visa for her to the States. It was about the only way she could leave for an extended period, given the political tensions. How the physicians recommended a particular hospital there, should he succeed in convincing her to leave. The air of finality, yet not what cause, or how terminal. That there were more tests they'd do in Israel, but the US hospital was "the" place to go. Of course, they didn't know that hospital was situated in the last place on earth -- second only to Israel -- which the younger Hartman would choose to visit: his church was there.

It dawned on him then, that he'd become prejudiced. Growing up here, all the herding of faith and identity, the blending of God and culture so that the Former became an Unknown -- that's what upset him. So he didn't want to be part of any group at any time, and marriage was a kind of group, so he avoided that, too. Strangely, his mother never prodded him to marry, as other mothers did. Dad, neither. *Nor is she prodding me now*, he recognized.

Was it because they both married badly, prior? Michael wondered. They were not shy about their mistakes, no coyness ever in the Hartman household -- well, except on shabbas when relatives or invited strangers, friends came to visit. If the invitees were kosher, Hartman Sr. made sure his own father Baba's house was spiffed up to receive them. *Kashrut* to the Hartmans meant two houses, not just separate refrigerators, even ovens. Hartman's wife was always conveniently absent from *Kashrut*Baba, or "KB", as they came to call it. They didn't live there, ever. Baba and Babu did, and of course when Baba had his stroke just after the Yom Kippur war, Dad then moved the family from the kibbutz to the city, to take care of them. But in a separate house, behind Baba's. For Baba, stroke or no, never accepted Gabrielle as his daughter-in-law.

After Baba and Babu died, KB turned out to be convenient for 'handling' all the other shabbat visitors who didn't accept Michael's wife. Dad would always call it "shabbass", an Americanism; people would shake their heads, *these Americans don't preserve the language*. Dad liked being politically incorrect.

Dad always said that *the rabbis had rabies*, ruined the sabbath with their many added laws. That they "desecrated the sabbath into works", as the cause for his conversion into Christianity when a child. "I hear ya Dad," Michael said to the shower ceiling. "We're not using those stupid not-in-Bible laws tonight!"

Yet the KB invitees were eventually impressed with their meals, accommodations, and the overt strictness of observance. Dad could pronounce the blessing better than anyone Michael could name; and everyone knew that Dad's servant Devorah made the best challah on the planet, always sneaking some to Michael Sr.'s wife in the 'real' house each Friday with a "love dose" of halavah, which Michael's mom craved. Michael Sr. used to kid Devorah that she and Gabrielle must have been soul-twins, separated at birth.

She took this substitution of Devorah with remarkable equanimity, not at all what you'd expect of Arab temperment, joking how in Islam Friday was the sabbath, so *she got two days off!* Yet guests in KB never inquired about her, which hurt Michael Sr. and Jr., the most. Devorah was not the wife, and never pretended to be, always wearing a servant's uniform. So as father and son both aged, they became more distant from all but their closest associates. *Don't accept Gabrielle, then don't accept me.* But again, it was a quiet thing until Devorah died, yet scarcely a month before that sniper bullet found Senior's brain.

I want a woman just like my mother. Then Michael laughed to realize how he thought just like every yeshiva boy who noticed a girl for the first time, but realized his "tzitzit" tassles were hanging out. Didn't matter he was a sophisticated American, now.

Then he laughed again, to notice that his mother's advice had always been, *don't marry a woman like me.* His stock reply was, *Dad seemed to have made the right decision!* only to receive the catechism of her reasons: *I was too young, it was an arranged marriage, I left to save my daughter.* Left unsaid of course, was why she needed to save her. For his part, Dad had married too young as well, and in those heady days of sexual experimentation, flower power and all, his bride had run off with another soldier as soon as Michael was weaned and secure in the kibbutz -- the couple were killed not many months afterwards, Michael couldn't remember how. All these skeletons didn't bother Michael, the product of a more jaded age. But the parents, never could forgive themselves. Standards were different, back then.

I want to be my dad, and marry as he did. Finis! Michael chuckled to himself. *Very Jewish-Arab, indeed!* But he was a bit too sonlike, to insist on selling both houses when Dad died. In his mind, Dad had ordered the entire family to move to America, *and doggone it, that's what I was doing to do!* Michael Jr. felt ashamed of all that, now. Fatima was already veering left, what with her liberal education and all -- and finally went radical, when presented with the move-to-America ultimatum. Seemed like an excuse. *Mom of course just refused, and that was that.* Michael had been in a tug-of-war with her, ever since.

Goren glanced at Whitey Boy waiting for a comment. The thought-slap still stung, but Goren was damned if he'd let it show. Whitey decided to do nothing, *still my first full day on the job.* He felt he'd pulled the worst assignment of the four PDR targets, and it looked like he and Goren would spend a lot of pit time together, so he didn't know how to maneuver. "We got bad intel on these two," Whitey replied aloud, "sorry I blamed you." Goren made no reply and kept his thoughts, shielded. Whitey decided to let that pass.

Meanwhile, "Mamele" busied herself packing. *The tingling had not been so bad today.* Well, she was on fire inside, but she thought "tingling" made the pain less important. She wanted to finish before Michael ended his shower. It was easy to pack. Just the essentials, she'd buy everything else when she arrived. They could shop together in a "Galleria", he'd told her, a fancy mall like Malka Canyon, he said -- *wasn't it right across the street from his church?*

She wanted to see that church. Heard so much about it over the years, teasing the information out of him. *So my boy goes there for the Bible, not for the people, just as he always did.* She congratulated herself on what she thought was her main reason for living -- training up her child to love God. Koran taught you that. She believed it.

"But now?" she asked the walls, then clapped her hand over her mouth.

"What, Mom?" Michael's head appeared in the doorway.

"Nothing, I didn't realize you'd finished."

"Just now. You hungry?"

"Always." She patted her yet-ample belly, again wondering if he found her less attractive as a mother, now that she was older and visibly ill. He didn't seem to notice, smiled, and disappeared back into the kitchen. Soon she could hear the food processor. *What was he doing?* Ah, she forgot the juice.

As Michael liquified the fruit, he asked himself how to steel his expressions tonight, how to properly recut the vegetables. For what he saw when he turned on the kitchen lights, shocked him. It had looked so much better, in the dusk. *Was she in pain? Interrupted? Did the power go out, or did she try to do this in the dark, fearing some new haredi in the building I don't know about?* He cleaned up quickly, one ear testing for her footsteps on the renovated floors. *I should get more insulation,* he reminded himself, writing "zkr" quickly on a napkin.

He decided to forego 'amending' her coarse chopping. Treat it as American chunk style. *I could open a Falakivi Restaurant, with her unique style of turning falafel and kibi into large latkes, layered and rolled. So why not also this – 'salad'!* He resolved to talk about that idea, if he needed to mask emotions. For even though the doctors had not told him the test results, the vegetables told it all. Only three days ago she'd chopped them well. *Three days!*

Impulsively he decided to recut them quickly with the hand processor. He had just finished and dumped them into the bowl, when she came in. *Maybe we'll discuss the restaurant later.*

"Bathroom light on?" she said, smiling with the old memories. "No one here is that observant, now. Not even during Tisha B'Av."

"Oh." Then Michael realized he knew that well, having been here almost two months, already. She eyed his salad, went to the refrigerator, pulled out the dough, heated up the frying pans. He pretended as though he didn't notice how slowly she moved, and she pretended his noticing was hidden. Neither of them seemed to remember she was 72 years old.

"So while we cook, you and I, my Bible student son -- tell me about John's Gospel."
Okay, Mom, you won't talk about the cancer. Aloud, he said, "What do you want me to cover first?"

Whitey and Goren stopped paying attention to the other three PDR, begging off that they had a task to do, Whitey to his three detention boys, Goren to his superiors. Whitey shut the 'conference call' off, hoping no one would snoop. *Bigger coup, if we handle this ourselves.* Goren nodded. *Bigger punishment, too.*

"What makes it a Gospel? Doesn't that mean Good News?"

"Yes, Mom, you taught me that yourself. But here's the thing: it's the 'King's Official Good News Proclamation', that's the full meaning of Greek euangelion."

"Yuan-what?"

"E-u-a-n-g-e-l-i-o-n, really two g's, pronounced like ng." Michael decided he'd make a lousy teacher or witness, picking something arcane, first.

His mother eyed him. "Oh, Euangelion, I've heard that term from the Armenians. They use it in their mass. They never told me what it means, though I did not ask them. So who is the King?"

"Jesus the Christ, King as God, first, then adding Humanity to Himself to become Man as well."

"He added Humanity to Himself?"

Michael felt lost, used IJn1:9, and the words tumbled out of him. "Yes, Mother, hupostasis, Bible keyword for Issa as both God and Man, which scholars misread, relying on other scholars but bypassing Bible's own context and wordplay for the term, especially in Book of Hebrews -- but His Duality is also described in Isaiah 53, plus Philipians 2:5-10, Bible's Greek."

Michael paused for breath. "The Armenians should know all that, too. Text says He is God, so He can do anything He likes, parallel to Deut 6:4 in the Old Testament. In the Koran, it's Sura 30, Ar-Rum 4.31, play on RumNasi, Prince most Exalted, High, same wordplay in Hebrew of Isaiah 52:13, to be honest. He has no partners, He does it all Himself." Michael felt exhausted, already. He sat down, mixed the lemon juice with the olive oil in a cruet, as Dad always liked it done.

"Same as Isaiah 52:13? I do not remember that being tied to A-Rum, but I see you have not forgotten everything." She pretended to look at the bubbling oil, hiding her tears of pride in her son. She didn't know which touched her more, his remembering the cruet, or the Sura.

"So how is Trinity valid, Michael? Did Allah add Allahs to himself, too?"

"No, Mom, same Sura remains apt. Each God is unique, doesn't have partners, but does voluntarily associate, even as He chose to create creation. If it is not a compromise to create even Iblis, it is not a compromise for God to add Humanity to Himself -- even Christians don't understand that. Nor, compromise to associate at His Own Level. So no compromise if there are Three Gods, not just one."

Michael used IJn1:9, again. Then: "See Mom, salvation means living with God forever at His Own Level of existence, not in a subterranean place like paradise, which is empty, Ephesians 4:8-9 in Bible. Idea is that God wants to raise our natures up to His Own Level, since it's obviously not fair to Him that we be inferior. He also wants to do it the hard way, only within the corridor of our consent, how much of that raising we'll want. It's a real transformation upward into His Own Thinking Level and hence Nature, not merely a happy life post-death. Yet all that won't work if not Three Gods, for Allah should be paid for sin and our inferiority, don't you think?"

Michael blushed at his own courage. He'd never been so aggressive before, and especially not with his own mother.

"Goren, why wasn't this banter in the file on Hartman Junior? Obviously it's been going on between these two for decades, and he's far better studied than the file shows."

Goren shrugged. "I wasn't here either."

"You seem resigned."

"No, looking for angles. Need more info."

Hartman's mother flipped over the 'pancakes' of both falafel and kibi mixtures, then started a third frying pan, grateful her son would be cleaning them. Hands on fire, prickly -- *pins and needles, they call it in American English*. Very painful pins and needles. She fought the urge to scream, knowing it would pass.

"Explain, my son."

"Well, Mom -- when you transfer money from one pocket to another, did you make any new money? No."

"Go on," Gabrielle said.

"So, if there is only one person, Allah -- nothing He does actually pays him for the wrongs we do. Isn't that unfair? Just because Allah is All-Sufficient, doesn't mean He should be cheated, right?"

Any other Muslim would have shot me by now, Michael realized. But he couldn't stop himself. He could never talk Bible with anyone else but Mom. Everyone else, didn't understand him. *Yep, I can only marry if I find another 'mom' my age.*

"True, my son. But isn't it the same as not paying at all, if God pays for sin?" She flipped both 'pancakes' into the third frying pan, which had almost no oil, and was on low. Keeping them warm. Started two new 'pancakes' in the first two.

Michael toyed with the mild peppers, shallots, cucumbers and tomatoes, yogurt, cumin, dill, cardamom, cinnamon, mixing and arranging them in little serving dishes on the table, recutting some pieces. He first mixed the spices, then added just enough yogurt to make a concentrated paste. Looked like Chinese mustard, only gray. "Do you want ground black pepper?"

"No. Are you ready to answer me?"

"It's not God paying, but Humanity paying, Mom -- and it works precisely and only because Trinity. You are frying huge falafel and kibi separately as thick crepes. I'm dicing vegetables. Either of us can do both things, no partners. But as it is, you're frying as a gift to me, and I'm cutting as a gift to you, so it's truly a gain to both of us. So God the Spirit empowers the Humanity of Christ as a Gift to Him and Father. Christ in His Humanity doesn't use His Deity, as a Gift to Spirit and Father. Father imputes and judges all sins of mankind on Christ's Humanity, Who wills to be sustained only By Spirit, and that's actually a Gift to Christ, Himself. So He inherits us, Isaiah 53:12's Hebrew or Greek."

Michael gulped. Then: "Greatest gift one can give, is the gift of the self, Mom. Here, the Self is Each God. It's not owed, but given. Freely. So still, no partners, as Each God can do it all Himself. But it's not about power, Infinity has no power limitation. It's about Love."

"Oh? A Gift? From Father to Son, to Spirit and back? I've never heard a Christian talk this way, my son."

"Mom, Bible talks that way in Isaiah 53, which the Jews always miss; also, second half of Romans 5, 'not like that gift' -- to the end of the Chapter. Also Ephesians I, whole chapter is on the Gifting. I'm sorry you don't hear Christians talk this way, it's been taught in my church for years."

"Read that Bible to me -- or did you memorize it?"

"No, Mother, I can't memorize the Bible in translation, it's not good enough. Let me get it." Michael left, grateful for the chance to walk. The last time he and his mother talked so much Bible, he was still in grade school. Fear struck him, and he used 1Jn1:9.

Junior Hartman then returned, reading the passages. Envied his mother's incredible memory, hear-only-once *and then be ready for testing!* He read her the last half of Romans 5, correcting the translation as he read. Then he paused, waiting for her to absorb it.

She flipped over the second serving of the pancakes. "Continue," she said.

He next quoted Isaiah 52:13-54:1 in Hebrew since he had memorized it, dramatizing its wit to stress the Incarnation and Trinity terms, so she would enjoy its wordplay. He felt cocky. Used 1Jn1:9 again. Paused.

She now put the double-deckered 'pancakes' on two platters, brought them to the table, sat down. Without a word, she handed him his serving. Silently, they both added vegetables, seasonings. He watched her smile at the thickness of the yogurt. She folded rather than rolled hers, then cut it into smaller squares, eating one of them. He thought she trembled, wasn't sure. Then he wondered how long it had been since she had eaten, but didn't dare ask.

"Continue."

He read Ephesians I next, correcting the translation as he went, stressing "surpassing greatness of His Superior Power," and "in the Beloved", and "filling all in all."

"Mom, that 'filling all in all' phrase is the key, tying to all of the Isaiah passage, especially the yarum and mishhat clauses. Encompassing all the high, all the low, else it's not infinitely righteous. Infinity is Allah, full-spectrum

Person. How fair is it, that Allah should be the only one of his kind? What fellowship can Infinity have, with us? Great for us, not so great for Him. So no, Allah doesn't need partners, but wants to make some. By pouring His Thinking in us, 'bedato yatsdiq' wordplay in the Isaiah quote. Souls think. So change the thinking in a soul, you change the nature of that soul -- into His Own. Requires God's Power to do that, but it's not magic."

Michael's face turned so red, she thought he'd burst. He was always embarrassed to speak boldly, even as a child. "Thinking," she said quietly. Her mind was reeling. In five minutes her own son made the Bible more sensible than she'd heard from thousands of Christians who'd all come to Jerusalem, many of them annually; and just as often, constantly insulting the Koran and Allah and Muslims, thinking they were 'saving' her. Always stressing sins, never explaining why that mattered when Allah was All-Powerful, never explaining how the "One God" was actually Three Gods -- which had to be true, if it was Three Persons. *A riddle wrapped in an enigma*, Hartman Sr. would always quip.

"So my son -- you tell me that God is Three Gods, really, all infinite as I understand Allah -- Father Son and Spirit -- due to Love?"

"Well, Mom, Bible just says They are Three, doesn't say why. As God, there were always Three of Them, no beginning or ending, just as you grasp 'Allah'. But how would Allah be happy, alone? Even if happy, it's not fair to Him. Shouldn't justice first exist FOR Allah, never mind whether we get punished? You love Allah. So do I, you taught me that. So how can we be happy with Allah if He doesn't get Justice, Himself? More importantly, if Allah is the one wronged, and that is not avenged at His Own Level, for surely our own suffering doesn't pay Him anything -- then Allah cannot insure Justice for Himself? Wouldn't the first rule of Justice have to be, that Allah receives Just Payment TO Himself?"

Michael choked. He'd never admitted *I love God!* to anyone before, not even to himself.

"Justice? No one can hurt Allah." But Gabrielle couldn't think of a single ayah which said how Allah Himself was ever paid. *Surely He is not a masochist, that is not fair to Him.* Gabrielle then recalled what bothered her since she was a child, *how could she ever reciprocate Allah --* and of course any imam who would listen to her, confirmed that she could not pay Allah anything. *Then how is Allah paid,* she would ask. *No one can hurt Allah,* was always the reply. And she just parroted it here. *So I never learned anything in all these years?*

"No, Mom, of course no one can hurt Allah, but it's still true that He should receive Justice. It's not just that Allah be alone, the only of His Kind. It's not just that He not be paid for sin, for surely the punishments we receive are just, but they don't ever pay Him anything. Because, He has no partners, Ar-Rum 4.31 again."

Michael felt out of breath. He went to the refrigerator, glad that Mom had remembered to buy milk.

"Justice? How Justice?"

"Gifting, Mom," Michael said between gulps, "Gifting from God -- to God. Infinite Perfection to Infinite Perfection, then it's not an inferior Gift. A Gift which transforms us low into something higher by God Himself."

"But Allah can do that anyway."

"Yes, He can. But who will do it for Him? You made these falafels and kibi pancakes for me. I could have done it, but you did it as a gift."

"Justice. Allah would know what 'gift' is big enough to be just, is that what you say?"

"Yes, Mother. That's why dying on the Cross is not the physical act, but something spiritual that happened between Father, Son, Spirit, Son, and back to Father. A kind of Love circle, it seems."

"So He did not die on the Cross, like the Koran says?"

Michael was afraid this question would come. "The Koran contradicts the Bible in many ways, Mom. Don't think about that just yet. Just first get the idea. Both the Koran and Bible cannot be right. One is right, the other not. But first we must seek what should be right, even if no Koran or Bible, for surely God exists."

"Even if there were no Koran or Bible," Michael continued, "if God exists He must be paid, and that can't properly happen if there is only One Person Who is Infinitely Divine. There would have to be Three anyway, One to Empower, One to add Humanity and receive that Empowering, not using His Own Deity, and a Third One to Judge the sins of mankind on the Humanity, no matter what names we give Them. Else there's no juridical mechanism to justify using Omnipotence to make us at all! It's not a 'Christian' question. It's a God question. Who is God, and how must He be? God is a Type of Personhood: Infinite. There have to be Three Gods, else there's no justification for creating man, since man cannot be infinite personhood. So how will man's transformation of nature into God's Own, be paid for? And payment has to be a Gift, since no God owes any other God anything."

"But," Michael continued, "If Son adds Humanity to Himself so that Spirit enables that Humanity to pay for sins by His Thinking -- the *bedato yatsdiq, tsadiq av'di l'rabbim* clause in Isaiah -- then it's not a compromise for the Spirit to enable us humans, too, as we were paid for in Christ."

Gabrielle remained silent. Then: "Would you like another serving? It helps me think if I can cook us both another meal."

"Yes, Mother, I'd love that." Truth was, the doctors warned him she'd not been eating, never mind she was still plump. The weight loss could kill before the cancer would. Slowly she rose, but with more strength, he thought. *Had she not eaten for three days, either?* A pang of guilt hit him, but he remembered IJnI:9. *Something was very important tonight.* He wasn't sure what.

"Do you feel like some coffee, Mom?"

"American only, I don't drink Arabic coffee anymore."

So again, mother and son busied themselves, pretending the food was as important as the conversation.

Then Gabrielle spoke: "So why must one believe in this Jesus Son of God -- who added humanity to Himself, no partners, it's a gift, correct? Why must one believe in him?"

"Well, Mom, it's kinda like what we used to do with the *haredi* when on patrol. They are brave fighters, but their religious ideas sometimes interfere, so we would substitute a non-*haredi* soldier on certain missions. Remember Dad talking about how that worked in Lebanon? Well, it's analogous: we can't pay for sins, we're already unsuitable since we have sinned; so Christ is the Substitute, even as the ram was the substitute when Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac -- Ishmael in the Koran, that's one of the contradictions. But put 'who' was substituted aside for the moment. A substitute was provided. So, you believe in the substitute. Else, you don't have a contract. So no contract of belief in Christ, means you contract with hell, instead. Same basic idea as in Islam, except that once you believe in Christ, it's permanent. You can't break it, and He won't."

"Contract?"

"Yes, mother. When you married Dad, that was the happiest day of my life and his -- but it was also a contract. A marriage contract. All contracts require agreement, which means you first believe, to agree."

"So once I believe in Jesus, what if I want a divorce? Do I go to hell then?"

Michael was glad God didn't make him a pastor. *I'm not good at this.* "Mom, Dad died but you are still married to him. You can't go back in time and undo the day you married him. You are legally allowed to marry anyone you choose, but you can't undo the fact you once married Dad. So, Christ died 2000 years ago but you believed in Him in 1967, when Dad first rescued you -- isn't that what you told me?"

Gabrielle nodded. Someone British with a priest's collar who was not Catholic, told her the Gospel and urged her to believe immediately, thinking she would be dead within minutes. *Just believe Christ paid for your sins, John 3:16 was the verse, something like that.* For some reason she couldn't remember, she'd done it, believed. Then she met Michael Sr., the next day.

"Okay, Mom," Michael continued, "you agreed to an *eternal spiritual* marriage contract, which Christ made on your behalf 2000 years prior. Because the contract was made before we were born, once we've agreed, later divorce is only in our attitude. We can't turn back time, so we can't lose the contract."

Gabrielle was puzzled. "And those before the Cross? Could they divorce?"

"No, Mom, because He hadn't come yet."

"Oh, cannot change the future, either."

"Not His, no. Only He could change His Own."

"So I cannot divorce once I believe, because He is in the past. But if He had not come yet, I still cannot divorce because He is in the future. Explain."

"That's the key word, Mom -- HE is in the past or HE is in the future. The validity of salvation depends on Him, not us, and we cannot change Him, no matter when He 'happens'. Only He can change Himself. Just as, you will one day see Dad again, but you cannot change him."

Gabrielle laughed loudly on hearing this. "I could never change your father, so I can never change -- what do you call Him, Jesus the Christ, Son of God!"

Michael was so proud of his mother he thought he would die. All he could manage was a lame, "Right, Mom."

"Then one agreement cannot be later divorced!"

"Right, Mom. Not that agreement, since it all depends on Him. That's the point. You say 'believe in Allah', and after that it depends on Allah. But the problem is, how is Allah paid for sin? Christ actually PAID for sin, since it's a three way, God-to-God Gifting, and Christ Himself is first God. So look: had I just believed in Allah instead, there's no real contract. Koran provides no payment to Allah anywhere I can find. So the only valid contract, is to believe in Christ. Thus you were already saved back in 1967."

Gabrielle broke out into a slow smile, and Michael didn't know if he could contain himself. *She got it!* He could swear 20 years of worry just melted off her body. "Ready for a third helping, my strapping son?"

"Oh yeah!"

For an hour, mother and son chopped and kneaded and washed with nary a word between them. Whitey glared at Goren, turned himself into a parody of Stan Laurel, and spat, "What do we do now, Ollie?" But Goren had vanished. *Yeah, get reinforcements, we need them pronto!*

Whitey sincerely hoped he'd not have to do kitchen patrol until the Rapture. Just the same, part of him wanted to materialize and converse with the humans, but that would require a possession of someone else in the building, knocking, awkward to justify afterwards. *This is the most fun I've had in years, sure beats listening to whether the Bobbsey twins will wear pink or blue today. Not watching paint dry, Goren!* The report on this Gabrielle was utterly offbase. One minute she was brilliant, and the next, slow. *But not dull!*

When the food was ready, again they sat down, dressing up their pancakes to taste. Then Michael realized his mother had been pale, for now she was pink-cheeked. It couldn't only be from cooking. He felt her forehead, and she hoped he'd soon stop. *Needles and pins, now it begins.*

Still no conversation. They ate in a comfortable silence. When the meal ended, Michael put on more coffee, and started the dishes. From behind him, his mother suddenly asked, "My son the Bible Student, what is wrong with the Koran, that it doesn't say this about Jesus -- hupostasis, isn't that what you call it? Maybe what is in the Bible, was in the Koran?"

Michael inwardly groaned. He didn't know where to begin with the many strange claims that Bible was corrupted, but Koran is pure. *It's not pure if there is no payment for sins to Allah.* But his mother came up with yet another variant. He used 1Jn1:9.

Then it hit him: "Mother, Hebrew echad means 'united' and 'unique', as you know. So the Greek idea of hupostasis, Union of Opposite Natures, probably came from Moses, who wrote Deut 6:4, the sh'maa. So this claim about Jesus existed in writing by Moses since 1440-1400 BC, that's what Passover means, His Paying for our sins, a prophecy of the week He'll pay, what happens to Him. You can prove the age of a piece of writing by its content, what it references, the way its language is used. For example, if you picked up a scrap of paper saying Bibi is Prime Minister, you'd know that scrap was written between 1996 and 1999, even if the paper itself were newer. Same for the Koran. So you know Mohammed didn't get his visions until about 2000 years after Moses. Isn't the central allegation of the Koran, that it corrects an earlier, corrupted Bible?"

"Yes."

"So then one of the things which you know is not corrupted, is the claim that Jesus the Christ paid for our sins. Yet the Koran, doesn't have this in it. There are many things which the Koran lacks or reverses, compared to Bible text which is up to 2000 years older. Remember Isaiah 53? It graphically depicts Christ dying for our sins and how He paid for us, and was written about 700 BC, which predates the Koran by 1300 years. Then there's the translation of that text into Greek, called the 'Septuagint', Jews translating Hebrew Bible into Greek, and that was done about 273 BC, again almost 900 years before the Koran. Both are before us Christians."

"But you said Issa did not die on the Cross."

"Bible says He died, and so does history, Mom. For example, that's why there are so many conflicting gospels out there, everyone competed to tell the story of His death, it was a famous event. That's why Paul persecuted Christians, and later why people even listened to Paul when he converted -- and why they persecuted him. But it wasn't Christ's physical death which paid for our sins. As quoted from Isaiah, the payment for sins was spiritual, requiring He be alive the entire time, being imputed and judged with our sins while He Himself did not sin, empowered to stay sinless by the Holy Spirit as a Gift, His Living Soul being Our Substitute for sin."

"Only then," Michael continued, "did He die physically, to prove the payment was completed. There was no longer any reason for Him to remain alive, His intended job was done."

They're at it again, I see. Goren returned, but with no entourage. Whitey just glared at him, and then turned away. *Focus on the quarry, you said you wanted to find angles of attack, so let's do that.*

His mother looked puzzled. "Mom," Michael explained, "Christians don't know their own Bibles, and think that His Physical death on the Cross saved us. That's juridically invalid. If I kill someone with a knife, the knife doesn't get 'executed' for murder, does it? Souls sin, bodies are just biology attached to souls, so bodies don't sin, they obey whatever the soul says. So bodies can't pay for sin, either. But Christ died on the Cross

spiritually, *'im tasim asham naph'sho'* in Isaiah 53:10's Hebrew – a *substitutionary* payment of His Own Living Soul. When He finished, He was still alive, saying *tetelestai*, Greek meaning 'It is finished with results that go on forever.' Then He died physically." Michael wanted to add, *so the Koran is right to say He didn't die to pay for our sins, since Koran refers to His physical death just like Satan referred to physical death in Gen 3:4, clever demon-lawyer wording!* But he didn't.

It occurred to Michael to get his laptop. "Wait, I'll show you." He brought in his laptop, brought up his Greek Bible text with the English below it, found the *tetelestai* quote and showed it to Gabrielle.

"That is the Bible?"

"New Testament, Mom, yes. Part of it. The whole text is on this computer in Greek and many translations. The idea is to compare, since as you know the Bible is in pieces, many copies over many centuries before Mohammed was born."

"Many copies in the original Greek?"

"Yes. Translations are then based on the Greek, but not all translations use the same texts, and frankly, the translations are fuzzy, if not wrong. So when the Koran says the Bible was corrupted, that's true -- but it's the translations which are corrupted. Only maybe 2% of the Greek and Hebrew text is miscopied. There is always an uncorrupted text for a verse. So it becomes 100% pure in aggregate, which you can test."

"100%, and you can prove it? So my son, if you could read it, you can prove what it says. You can read it for yourself. Text before Mohammed was born."

"Yes, Mother. Bible was completed before Mohammed was born, finished in 96AD. Afterwards, many fake books claiming to be from God were written. They say silly things about God or Bible heroes, and they claim true, things you can prove false. But the real Bible was still known, and handwritten copies were made century after century. The best copies are from the 4th century AD, some others are earlier or later. Thousands of copies, some no bigger than a verse. In fact, you can prove when people corrupted the text because we have so many copies. There will always be one which is right. That's why you've heard me say the Bible is perfect and without error. In aggregate, at least one of the copies will be right, per verse."

"And the Old Testament?"

"Same, Mother. My teacher teaches us in Hebrew and Greek. So do a lot of other teachers, all around the world. The translations are not from God, only the original-language text is valid."

"So why do Christians argue so much?"

"Same reason that Muslims do, Mom. It's a long story."

"You are tired. Maybe we should talk about this again tomorrow."

Michael realized he couldn't hide his frustration, decided to fess up.

"Mom, years ago I tried talking with Muslims about the Koran versus the Bible on these same questions. I spent many hours with them, but they never analyzed the answers, kept asking the same questions over and over again. You're seeing my impatience with them, not you. Maybe they were my practice sessions?"

Gabrielle laughed, "Well, I will question you ten times more than they did. Sleep. We start again, tomorrow."

Goren exulted. Aloud -- savoring the moment -- he said, "That's it, Whitey, now you see my backup plan in action! She'll wear him down with all her questions, and he'll never have time to study, himself!"

Whitey had to admit that maybe Goren was right.

Michael kissed his mother good-night and climbed into bed without changing his clothes. *I screwed up! My analogies were terrible, I was too technical, I can't do this!* and like thoughts, kept torturing him. He dreaded the morning.

Gabrielle couldn't sleep. The "tingling" was always worst at night, and she wondered, as usual, if she would live through it. Yet one thing she no longer wondered, where she would go when she died.

For the first time she prayed while lying on her back, but mouthing words without sound as usual, "Issa, you are God and you paid for my sins. Please help my son explain why the Koran is wrong. If I live, may I explain it to my fellow Muslims, also? If it is allowed, I want to learn the words you wrote, not a translation. Ameen."

At that moment, both Whitey and Babel Goren received a huge kick from Sandman. Via his orderly, who loved doing that sort of thing. When they recovered several hours later, they found a transmitted file which informed them that thanks to their efforts, Gabrielle was in the "unpredictables" category of believers. Detention would not be far off. *We need a miracle now*, Whitey hissed to himself.

Chapter 5: Gabrielle Hartman

She awakened to the smell of eggs and corned beef hash sizzling in the skillet, Michael Sr.'s favorite breakfast. For a moment she thought he was still alive, for he would often awaken her that way. Over the years, his favorite breakfast became hers as well. Then the tingling started, and she realized she'd been dreaming. But the smell was still the same.

Slowly, she rose from the bed, recognized the skillet sounds, remembered that Michael Jr. was here. Then realized he was making that breakfast. She made her way out to the kitchen, still embraced by the twinning of memory and smell reality gripping her. "Michael?"

Her son looked back over his shoulder, smiling. "Remember how Dad used to wake us up this way? 'I know you don't like sleeping past noon, so I thought I better cook this. If you still slept, it would mean you needed it. Okay, no -- that's a lie. I just wanted to do this.' "

"Still you lie. You want both." Gabrielle smiled broadly at her own stock answer. For a second she felt young again, as if the first Michael, not the second, had been talking. The words were the same, the voice was the same. She missed her husband, and it was good to have this flash of him, in the son.

Sunlight streamed into L-shaped room, so she went to the huge picture windows. People walking, paying sabbath respects some of them, others just walking to enjoy the day. *And am I a Christian now?* she asked herself. *Issa made this day, and I am alive in it.* Aloud, she said, "My son, I told Issa last night that He is God and He paid for my sins. Does that make me a Christian now?"

Michael was lifting the skillet toward the table when she said that, and he nearly dropped it, stunned.

"It makes you a believer in Christ, but you already were," he offered, trying to figure out what to say next. He used 1Jn1:9, realizing he was frightened. "So I guess the difference, is that now you yourself know you believe in Him." He felt awkward. He put the skillet back on the heat, turned it down low.

"Yes, I believe in Him. Allah should be paid. Oh, I should say -- Which God is paid for our sins?"

"Well, Mom -- all of Them, but technically Father. See, since Son wanted to add Humanity to Himself, He became the Payor, which is what 'Christ' means, a Human Title of Mediatorship. In that Humanity He was sustained by the Holy Spirit, and it was Father who imputed and judged sins to the Humanity of the Christ, Jesus aka Issa." Michael again cursed himself for saying more information than was requested.

Gabrielle interrupted, "And this is a Gift from One God to another, none of them having partners, but -- what did you call it? A voluntary association, since it is unjust that only one Infinite Allah exist, not fair to Allah -- so a free gift. This gift was made to happen in Issa, in His Humanity, so 'Son of God' is just another way of saying He is God Himself, not begotten of God -- right?"

"Yes, Mother. The Humanity was begotten, even as God makes all humanity. Godness is Eternal, Infinite, has no beginning, so is never itself begotten. But that doesn't prevent God from adding Humanity to Himself, since a) He is God so can do anything, and b) humanity is always begotten by God. Actually, Mother, the Greek word is monogenes, and doesn't mean 'begotten', but 'uniquely-born', referencing the fact that this Humanity is born as an addition to Godness, so uniquely born without sin."

Michael thought, *why can't I shut up?* He busied himself with the toast, hoping that would silence him.

Gabrielle sat down, letting her son serve her coffee and breakfast. Watching him, enjoying the warm sunlight, *now I am saved, right?* She savored the eggs, always over-easy, and the browned hash. American toast and butter and jam. *Soon I will be there, in America. Because Issa saved me.*

"My son, I am saved because I believed in Issa, right? And Issa paid -- Father for me. Right? And Issa did that, because -- Spirit enabled Issa to stay sinless while -- Father, right? put my sins on Issa, right?"

"Yes, mother." It occurred to Michael that his mother explained salvation better than he could. He wished he could speak as simply as she did.

"So my son, did I change? Last night you said God wanted to raise and transform us, not merely give us a nice life in paradise. So did I change? I still feel the same as I felt yesterday, only happier."

"Yes, you changed, Mom. But that happened back in 1967. You acquired what the Bible calls a human spirit, a kind of life compatible with God's Own. You have a body life, a soul life, and back in 1967, a spiritual life. God's Life is spiritual, so we need a spiritual life, to have a spiritual relationship with Spiritual God, John 4:23-24. You can't feel the spiritual life, because it is of infinite quality, so it has no body."

Again, Michael cursed himself for his overlong answers. *Too much information!*

"So how do I know this change, my son?"

"Well, Mom, 'I John', a part of the New Testament, explains how. You're a spiritual baby when you first believe in Christ. Just as a new baby has no knowledge, we are spiritually born without knowledge of God. As we learn God via His Word, we grow up spiritually, so to have a mature spiritual relationship with God, wholly internal. So you go to God's school: He appoints you a teacher of Bible, tailored just for you. Under that teacher, you learn His Thinking, and as a result you grow up spiritually 'eis pan to pleroma tou Theou', 'into spiritual fullness of God', as Paul puts it in the New Testament, a book called 'Ephesians', Chapter 3, verse 19. Thus you come to fully and maturely know God Himself. Now you know why I study Bible under a teacher. That changes my own thinking, so one day I'll be spiritually mature. Which means, like Christ Himself in His Own Thinking, Ephesians Chapter 4, verse 13."

Michael paused. "So that is how you know this change. You come to know God more and more every day. Which you could not do, were you not a first a spiritual being. For you must become more like God -- Christ, actually -- to know God. Spiritual birth -- for you, in 1967 -- began that process."

"Do you know God?" Gabrielle asked excitedly.

"Yes, Mother. Anyone can. You learn Bible, which is how God Thinks. As you learn it, you learn how He thinks, and that's why you know Him: this is the main theme of I John. That's why we have a Bible, since we can't see God with our bodies and our souls, directly. But as you learn His Word, you see Him spiritually."

"But many Christians do not know God. They know Bible, but not God. They constantly attempt to convert me with many Bible verses, but I think they do not know God."

"Mom, no one can accurately read Bible unless he is filled with the Spirit, even as Issa could not pay for sins unless filled with the Spirit. So when we sin, we name our sins to God, and then we are able to read Bible and understand it. Understanding Bible is not the same as being saved. Knowing God is the reason why we are saved, so after being saved we can have a relationship with God. But just as Christ couldn't pay for sins unless He didn't sin himself, so also we can't learn God if we are sinning. But since He paid, if we name our sins to God, then we can learn God -- between sins, as it were."

Michael decided he should never speak again in his lifetime. *I can't simplify the explanation, so maybe I shouldn't speak at all!* He resumed eating.

Gabrielle watched him, realized he was frustrated again. "Should I stop asking questions? You seem angry."

"I'm angry at me, Mother. I don't answer you well. You deserve someone who can answer you better than I do. You ask me simple questions, but my answers are complicated."

"Maybe the answer is complicated."

"Okay, Mom -- did my answer make sense to you?"

Gabrielle paused. "Well, if Christians who talked to me say Bible verses they do not understand, and you say that we must name our sins to God in order to read Bible, then they have sins they have not named, when they are reading or speaking. That makes sense to me, for it is obvious that they do not know God. So maybe they still are spiritual babies."

Then Michael realized his words weren't enabling her comprehension, the Spirit was. Aloud, he said, "Mom, do you name your sins to God when you are aware of them?"

"Yes. Koran teaches that. Mohammed was punished for not doing that. Do you recall Al-Kahf, Cave Sura?"

"Vaguely, Mother."

"Well, my son, Mohammed didn't ask Allah first, just told the Jews that he would answer their questions the next day. So Allah made him wait longer for the answer, as he didn't glorify Allah. That is a kind of sin, no?"

"Yes, it is sin to claim something about God you didn't get from Him. That is why we have a Bible, to know His Answers. It's like our conversation here. I know you, because I know your words. You speak them from a body and a soul, God speaks to us through His Word which the Holy Spirit empowers us to learn and understand. Else, we are like Mohammed was, claiming things about God which aren't true." Michael realized that last statement was over the top, saying the *whole* Koran was a lie. He waited.

"So my son, anyone can speak falsely about God, you, me, Mohammed, the Christians."

Michael sighed with relief. "True, Mother."

"So how do I know you are not speaking falsely, like Mohammed?"

"Ask God, Mother. You always ask God to verify anything, even Bible. Wait, I'll show you something."

Inspired, Michael ran back for his laptop again, turned it on and uploaded his computer Bible with the Greek and English of I John, Chapter One. He played with the screen for a few minutes, while Gabrielle watched him, fascinated. She had her own computer, but like most of the elder generation seemed intimidated by it.

"Here, Mom. This is a letter in the New Testament called by us, 'I John'. It's a letter from John which is part of Bible, and when you read through it, you'll see why. Here, in what we -- but not God -- translate as 'Chapter One', are verses of the real Bible, which explain what I mean better than I can explain it."

He turned the computer to her, put her hand on the mouse, and moved it around. "See, Mom, when your mouse points at this Greek word, the text below tells you what it means in English, that's called a 'lexicon', which is like a super dictionary, showing you many things about the word and where it's used in the Bible, not just in this verse. So you can tell what the Bible means here, by its other uses of that word. Next, is the English translation of the verse."

Michael went on to show her how she could read the Greek only, the English only, or the English and Greek on the same page, finding out either the Greek word the English translated, or vice versa in the Greek text.

"So look at what it says in what we call 1Jn 1:9. By the way, we divided up the Bible into chapters and verses, God didn't do that."

Gabrielle read, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." She practiced moving the mouse to see the Greek words as she read.

Michael decided not to correct the translation, just yet. "Now read what is before, and after, that verse."

Gabrielle read both verses 8 and 10. "Oh! So even if a Christian, if I do not name my sin to God, then I am in the darkness, and I make Him a liar! Yes, that is how those Christians sounded to me, like liars, in the dark! I do not want to be like them!"

"Well, Mom, if you remember you've sinned, just name it to God and until your next sin, you can read Bible. So try to catch yourself when you think a bad thought. Then admit it to God. I do that all the time, so that I can keep on thinking Bible, toward Father."

"Think Bible toward Father?"

"Yes, Mom. That's how Issa paid for sins. Father kept on imputing sins into Issa, and that was like temptation to Him, to react to those incoming sins. Instead of reacting, He kept on thinking Bible as it existed then, replying to those sins with a Divine Answer. You remember Bible movies where He says, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani'? That's the first verse in David's Psalm 22, which He quotes while all this happens, about how He pays for sins, just like Isaiah 53. It was very fast, the billions of sins hitting Him and His thinking in reply. He replied that fast to the devil, in Matthew 4, too. The beauty of His Thinking was so high, it *justified* the sins occurring in the first place, *since if the sins weren't there, His Replies to them wouldn't be needed*. That is what Isaiah 53 says about how He paid, His Righteous Thinking, 'bedato yatsdiq, tsadiq av'di l'rabbim.'

Gabrielle nodded. "By means His Thinking He made Righteous, My Righteous Slave for the masses," Gabrielle translated. "The Spirit enabled Issa to think that well."

Michael smiled. "So that's what we get to learn, also. Now you know what I do in New Mexico all day." *Too much information, Michael!* he chided himself.

"So it is a conversation, my son! God talks to me through Bible, and I talk back to Him using Bible too! I can talk and hear God reply through Bible! Issa used Bible on the Cross, used Bible with the devil, so used Bible all the time! The Holy Spirit enabled Issa, even the Koran says that Issa was faultless for that reason -- so Holy Spirit makes me know and think Bible! So like Issa, I can think Bible toward Father!"

Again, Michael was astounded at his mother's quick grasp, despite his bad wording. "Yes, Mother, Bible calls it 'treasure in earthen vessels', Bible in us -- and the Holy Spirit must be enabling you now to comprehend what I say about Bible, for my own words are no good."

Gabrielle burst out crying. The pain shot through her with such intensity this time, she didn't know how to contain it any longer. But still she was happy. *Whatever sins I'm sinning, I name them but I don't know what they are, Father*. Then she wondered why she said "Father".

Michael held her, not knowing what to do, hadn't expected this reaction. "Mom, I'm sorry if I upset you, I didn't mean to upset you." He couldn't remember when he'd last seen her cry, *maybe at Dad's funeral*.

"To which God do I name my sins, Michael? Father?"

Again, Michael was bewildered. "Why were you crying, Mom? And yes, you name sins to Father, since He imputed them to Issa."

Gabrielle didn't want to tell him about the pain, then realized it was the same as naming sins, to admit a thing is true. "I'm in pain, my son. I don't want you to worry. There is nothing to do about it. Most of the time, I can ignore the pain. But a moment ago, it just rushed at me. So I cried."

"Where is your pain medicine? I'll get it." Michael wondered why God would gift him such a wonderful mother. Again the pang of guilt for staying away, *why didn't I try to resolve this sooner*. He used 1Jn1:9, instinctively.

"It's in the suitcase, my son. I thought I wouldn't need it. Left hand pocket, pink pills."

Michael rushed to her room, opened the case, found the bottle, and gasped: morphine. She was on morphine. He hurried back, got her some water and gave her the two capsules, wondering how strong was the dosage compared to the normal amount, whatever that was.

She swallowed the pills gratefully, apologizing for interrupting their talk. Partly to get her mind off the pain she asked, "So I can know God if I learn Bible, so long as I keep on naming my sins to God-Father as I remember them?"

"God-Father, yes. Do you know that Bible Hebrew? Sometimes it's Father-God, too." *Arab mothers know everything*, Michael marveled. Now he was more certain the Spirit enabled her. *You'd have to know the Hebrew to translate it that way*.

"No, I didn't know that Bible calls Him God-Father. Why don't the Jews believe in Father Son and Spirit, then?"

"I don't know, Mom. The Old Testament describes Them in many ways, and it's true that few references are bald, like 'God-Father' and 'God-Spirit' or vice versa, Ruach-Elohim being very common. But they exist. 'Holy Spirit' is common in both the Old Testament and the Mishnah of Talmud."

"And in the Koran, four Suras. That's a big problem in Islam."

"Big problem in Judaism, too. For good reason."

Michael then took the laptop, ran a search on the Hebrew text and showed her some sample verses demonstrating Trinity, since she could read the Hebrew letters. He suddenly realized that learning the Old Testament would be easy for her. *But will she live long enough?*

"Then I must learn this Bible, but I need a teacher. What about your teacher?"

"Well, Mom, my teacher isn't teaching anymore. I learn from recordings of his lessons."

"May I have those recordings?"

"Yes, Mother, but they are in America. I only brought a few dozen with me."

"Good, I'll listen to them in America."

Gabrielle rose, feeling stronger, the pain subsiding. "I will shower and dress, and then we begin our discussion on what is wrong with the Koran, my son."

Michael groaned. "Mother knows best." He made a face. *My mother is like a dog with a bone, never lets go*.

As she showered, he did the dishes, and cleaned the house. He suspected she had made plans to leave the next day, wondered how she could make arrangements so easily, then remembered it was her job, after all. *Why am I thinking like this, my mother is dying!* Michael chided himself. Then he realized these Bible discussions kept both their minds off that fact. Seemed to keep her mind off her pain, too. Then the thought struck him: *you twit, you never die, so this is only a transition*.

He wondered if Dad was watching them from heaven. Dad was born in America but Baba and Babu emigrated to Israel to fight for her independence, taking their son along. By that time, he was a Christian -- it was all the rage to be a Christian, in the 1940's -- constantly fighting with Baba over Judaism, never mind he was only in grammar school. Headstrong, even then. Once here, he saw the discrimination against Jews, so he chucked Christianity, too. But he had once believed in Christ -- at least he said he had, *and people who no longer believe, don't admit to it if untrue*, Michael consoled himself. Only God really knew, of course.

And here we are now, Dad, if you can see me, Michael thought happily. *Your bride now sees Him. Your bride, my mother.*

Whitey Boy and Goren watched both mother and son with a mixture of amazement and fear. Goren obtained the full spiritual report on the Hartman woman, 'sent' Whitey a copy.

"Nothing in it would have prepared us for this surprise, we were wrongly kicked", Goren remarked.

"Disagree, Goren. The woman taught the boy well in the past, that was noted in the file, we didn't pick up on its importance in accounting for why he has so much trouble being around her. It's clear they are in disharmony solely over her acceptance or rejection of Bible, and thanks to you my boy, that harmony is on."

"Me? I didn't send her that leukemia, you know. We've had a hands-off policy with respect to illness for her. Boss' standard policy is to help the apostate be comfortable as possible. So either TMH gave her the leukemia, or it's genetic, appears to be the latter since there's no order in the file from TMH that she become ill."

Goren decided to check, and sent his thoughts into her bloodstream to examine it, then searched on her relatives. "Yep, it's biological. Two-generation skip from her grandfather."

"Doesn't matter. Leukemia didn't make her interested in God, you did."

"No, I just sent her thoughts and doubts which obviously she already had -- if someone had documented the file properly, which they did not."

Whitey decided to appeal to Baloney. He thought-sent a file of the past 24 hours, along with copies of everything which transpired between him and Goren, *who cares if it makes us look bad. All that wouldn't matter, if we can turn this situation around.* For a moment he forgot Baloney's thought-frequency for transmission. *I must be very nervous*, Whitey realized. So he appended, "One thing is certain: we must get her out of Israel, so the fact she must go to America is a godsend. We can't afford other Muslims to have contact with her."

Baloney acknowledged receipt, but appended no comments, only "still in Convocation, will read later." Whitey wondered if he should have red-flagged the report, but as it was an appeal, decided 'no'. *So even if detention, following procedure would ease our sentence.* That wasn't his reason for sending it, *but anything would be a help.* Lack of good intelligence was his primary reason. *Didn't matter if we screwed up, if an 'intel' lapse occurred here, who knows where else lapses might be?*

"Did anyone ever tell you that you're a true officer's officer, Whitey?" Goren meant that sarcastically. Whitey took it as a compliment.

"Thanks. You'll be thanking me for real, if that report helps us turn around our problem here."

"Which is?"

"Mom and son are in harmony now. That makes both of them mature faster. Not good, Goren."

"And your prescription for disharmonizing them?"

"Dunno yet. Need ideas."

"Find him a woman," Goren quipped. "Soon. That will slow down growth in both of them, she because of the 'competition', and he because of the time required. He already stops studying due to the mother, so how much more if two women to 'train', as it were?"

"Yeah, and where do you find the right gal? She'll have to be as much into Bible as he is, and then we've just added to our troubles, rather than easing them. We thought the mother would drag him down, and she doesn't know Bible. So now he's waking up to the fact he knows a lot, it's not him who's a dufus, but the world around him. How much more do you increase that awareness of his PDR status, if you add in a woman who also knows Bible well and is actually as mature as him? For he won't accept a lesser maturity level, now that -- thanks to you! -- he realizes he's well-versed."

"Nothing happens without risks. What about that Ganger woman?"

"Goren, you are crazy. You don't add two PDR witnesses together, that's insane. Their growth would be exponential."

"Or, they'd crash and burn. Think of the potential, Whitey." Goren liked the idea the more he thought about it.

"What, you want the file?"

"Yes, can't hurt to look."

"Okay, Goren. Tell you what. You go visit with Butch for awhile, he's over Ganger in Chicago. I'll only authorize that he inform you, don't tell him your idea. I don't authorize the idea, get it? We don't have enough intelligence, and what we do have is obviously full of holes. So you can do reconnaissance, but no influencing, got it?"

"Right." Goren saluted and left, promising himself that *the next time I get Whitey in detention, I'll do stuff to him which even pit bulls won't try on their own. Free universe, free revenge!*

Gabrielle came back into the room to find her son on the computer, looking up Bible passages and writing them down. He turned, and his jaw dropped open, as he saw her in Western dress. She looked a good ten years younger, sporting a banana yellow pantsuit he didn't remember ever seeing. You'd have mistaken her for an older wealthy European, maybe even an Italian. She colored her hair. No more gray. Then he noticed, *she even put on makeup, how did she learn to do that?* Michael was speechless.

Whitey ordered Goren to come back immediately.

"Wow," Michael finally said.

"You like the new me? I'm not a Muslim anymore, so I'll no longer wear jilbab."

"So are we leaving tomorrow? You don't have to work, you know."

"Well my son, that depends on how easily you can replace me."

Michael laughed. "You're irreplaceable, Mom. I need you more than those tourists."

"So then they will have to live without me."

"What tours do you have scheduled next week? I'm sure Tzipi can arrange for someone."

"I have no tours scheduled," Gabrielle replied. Left unsaid, *I didn't expect to live this long, so I scheduled nothing.*

"So we can leave as soon as you desire. Did you book the flights?"

"No, I thought I'd let my son the billionaire do it."

Michael looked down at the floor. *Yep, Arab mothers know everything. And here I thought she never paid attention to what I said!*

"Shhh. No one knows that, and I don't live high in America, either."

"I raised you well, then."

"Do you have your papers? I have the medical visa, Mom, and the doctors' reports validating it. We will have to go through that invasion of privacy."

"I am a citizen of Israel, I don't mind. Will I have to change my citizenship when we go to the States?"

"No, Mom, you already have dual citizenship, like I do. Dad arranged that years ago, when we were young."

"Oh?"

"Yes. You'll have to renew your passport in America for a new residential status, but other than that, we don't have a problem on the American side. We are taxpayers of both countries. I am still on reserve in the IDF, if they need me, and am still in the US Army Reserves, though I'm too old now for them to call on me."

"Then they must know how rich you are."

"No, Mom. Not even I really know, can only guess. Too many trusts. Dad was very smart. Now you know the other reason I have a computer."

"Mossad knows. If no one else knows, Mossad does. Them, and me."

Michael glanced sideways at his mother, wondering if he'd underestimated her, yet again. She left the room, came back with a laptop computer he'd never seen, and began to work it expertly. *Aha, another hidden secret all these years?*

She finished doing what he supposed was an series of passwords, then turned the screen toward him. It was a balance sheet and income statement. Consolidated. Bigger. "Where did you learn to do that?!" he cried.

"Must I tell my son all my secrets? Do you think your father would go out on patrol and not teach me what to do if he was killed?"

Michael hung his head in shame. "But Mom, all those times I tried to explain the facts, you seemed to glaze over, as if you didn't understand. Why?"

Now it was Gabrielle's turn to feel ashamed. "I wanted to test your honesty. You were leaving me. I was hurt. You chose America, not me. But you were honest, so then what could I do? If I told you the truth, then you'd never come back from America to see me again. You'd know I had enough money, and you'd be angry, so..." she trailed off, in tears.

Impulsively, he hugged her. They remained quiet for some minutes, both of them regretting their stubbornness.

"If I must name my sins to God, then of course I must tell you everything too, my son." So, she did. She told him how all along she'd helped Michael Sr. with the finances, helped him pick the investments, she just had a natural talent for that kind of thing. How she didn't want anyone to know she helped her husband, since she wanted him to be in the limelight. "Typical Muslim woman," she said.

"Did any of the servants know? Why didn't Dad say something to me?"

"No, the servants were not aware -- except Devorah -- they worked for Babushka, as you know. Your father intended that you take over everything, so he left it up to me how to inform you."

Then she explained why. She told him how they both became sporadically involved in Mossad, during the war years. *So that explains why she knows Mossad knows*, Michael realized. He didn't dare ask her about specific missions, she didn't volunteer information about them. But obviously, she was expert with finance and computers, by now. Michael vaguely suspected she still worked for Mossad, *but at her age? Well, Golda Meir was competent so why not my mother? Never underestimate these women*, Michael warned himself.

It was she who arranged the double-citizenship for the family, since after all *what if they needed to go undercover in America?* But she didn't say if she'd ever been there, and he didn't ask. Michael Jr. was in such shock, he decided not to ask her any questions at all. If she volunteered information, fine. If not, fine. But at least he understood now, why she could suddenly sport Western dress, manners, and customs, as if born to them. Of course, he also realized she must really be dying, to tell him all this.

"You sure fooled me, Mom. How much of what you're telling me, is yet secret? I'll presume all of it, unless you say otherwise." Complain as he might about this Land Where Jesus Walked, he'd die for it or America in a heartbeat. If America turned against Israel, then *bye bye America, even the Bible says so. Sabra is sabra.*

Gabrielle looked now 20 years younger than before. "So long I've wanted to tell you these things, my son."

"And you tell me now because you are dying."

"Yes, my son, if that is God's Will. I hope you understand why. Your life would have been in danger. Maybe I have jeopardized it, but what if I die? It can happen any day, now."

She proceeded to tell him about the initial diagnosis two years ago, hoping he'd not be too angry. She told him about the *hajj*, too, no point in keeping that a secret. She told him about her faith questions, how the stoning at Jamarat made her begin to realize something was quite wrong with Islam. But until last night, she couldn't see how the Koran itself, might be wrong. "I've been fighting against Israel's enemies for years, my son -- and chief among them, are fellow Muslims. To me, those who profess Islam but do not obey the Koran, are not Muslims. Koran teaches that, too. That is why I could fight Israel's enemies, somewhat like David did when King Saul was chasing him."

Now Michael appreciated the enormity of last night. "Mother, what I said to you -- how did it make you change your mind? I couldn't explain the Bible well, it must have been God Who caused you to understand."

"Yes, my son -- but He used your words. Gift. Not good that Allah should be alone. Allah should be paid. It only makes sense that Allah should get justice, and you explained why if Allah is but one person, that cannot happen, it would be the one thing Allah could not do. Then I realized that to be Allah and alone, is the cruelest idea in the universe -- cruel to Him. So, there is not just one Allah, but Three Who are Equally Allah, so that means your Christian Father, Son, Spirit. Family. Equal, but choosing to Gift Themselves, so they do not choose equal authority. Even as, I was not unequal to your father, I wanted to be. So when you explained about marriage and divorce last night, then I understood that the Gift is a contract, too. That passage in Isaiah, Chapter 53 that you read. It is a contract."

"So," Gabrielle continued, "I am no longer Muslim, but Christian. It is a contract. Open to anyone, and through the Jews."

"Mom, you know Christianity is a problem here in Israel."

"Yes, if you try to convert people. Am I supposed to try? I didn't like it, so would anyone else? Do you try to convert people?"

"No. If God wants someone to get info, I'll be placed around that person. They ask, I answer, that's all."

"Yes, my son: that's what you did last night."

Michael realized anew that God wanted this. He hugged his mother again.

"So Mother, when should your billionaire son arrange transport to the States?"

"We'll talk about that tomorrow. For now, we must attend to lunch."

Watching them occupying themselves in their favorite pastime, cooking, Goren shouted to Whitey, "Nothing about all this in the file, why not! Totally changes the picture, strategy, tactics!" Quickly, Goren 'sent' for all the files on the woman's activities, including the diaries. When the data arrived, he scanned for disparities in those daily reports. As he suspected, there were large gaps in the diaries. The assigned crew, mostly pit bulls on probation like him, stopped watching her for long periods. Corporate then dispatched crew elsewhere, deeming her not to be worth the personnel.

Then Goren realized: *the woman seemed to be completely within the Boss' agenda, no point in watching her, she was a safe bet never to be interested in Bible. She had too much else going on!* So, they simply stopped observing her, just as they had stopped with the father, and they didn't account the first seven years with Michael Jr., to

add up to anything, since the mother herself, reverted to Islam. *Yeah, in order to go undercover! It was her way of defending Allah against the Arabs and other Muslims who she felt transgressed the Koran!*

This was exactly the problem Goren ranted about over the centuries. Mankind gets fooled by body activity, ergo the Boss' rule about trapping man in activity, mating faith to silliness, so the activity looks more holy. Thus mere belief becomes unholy, even if you believe in God. *Problem is, our own upper echelons fall for the same tactics, so we stop watching for strong 'mere' belief!* Goren was beside himself.

Whitey was even more nonplussed. *We tire of the humans' banalities, of their never wanting TMH, so we don't watch, thinking them safely apostate. Bad Intel!* Whitey wanted to punch someone and he picked Goren. Knocked him with a thought so strong, had Goren not deflected it in time, he'd have been slammed into Mars.

"You just broke the rules, buddy," Goren said, and vanished.

Two seconds later, Whitey Boy vanished, and it wasn't his will, either.

Immediately Goren reappeared, alone. *Finally, this is my chance. I didn't intend it to happen this way, but I have it,* he exulted. He 'sent' for Butch's complete file on Ganger and now Butch had to comply, since Goren just replaced Whitey. No explanation was given. Butch didn't ask for any, either, seemed grateful to have a former star helping out. *I can work with Butch.* Naturally Brainstem and Choler wanted to know what happened, and Goren bought them off by saying "Corporate had need of Whitey Boy." For of course until Whitey was formally punished, nothing was to be said. Goren would obey the rules. Strictly.

For he never intended to go below decks, again. *Free universe!* And he knew of all of them, he was the best strategist, the true long-term thinker. He was right with the seven sons of Sceva, and he was right, now. All he needed, were the breaks to prove it.

But he'd first study the quarry, and do nothing. *Less is more.*

She had Michael make the "noshies" while she readied the chicken for frying. It would take awhile. Dad always liked American-style "southern" fried chicken, so Mom learned how to make it long ago. Michael hadn't tasted her fried chicken in years, and of course in the last two months they'd eaten local foods, this morning being the first exception. So while she made the chicken, Michael made various types of snacks Dad always used to like on Saturdays, when there were no guests. For the one rule on sabbath was, if there are no guests, we eat American. So that's what they did now.

Various types of American-style chips, dips, even deviled eggs, veggies. What you'd eat while watching American football. Then Michael wondered if in fact his mother had spent time in America, since she'd done all this, when he still lived at home. He tried to remember when she'd been absent for long periods, but couldn't remember any. *So how did she learn all this? You'd have to live in America to know it so well, and Dad certainly made many trips, but how could he pass on that much info?* Michael Jr. didn't know.

While the chicken cooked, his mother would sit down and "nosh" with him, then occasionally rise to turn chicken pieces or dry them on towels, dusting the other pieces and putting in more. *The morphine must be a godsend,* Michael thought. She seemed in no pain at all, moved much faster, and as he'd heard said, morphine aids mental acuity, so her speech and speed of comprehension was even faster than last night. They bantered, not mentioning her illness, reminiscing over old times, how Dad would bring out various American games, making a day of it. Suddenly it dawned on Michael what Dad was really doing: acclimating them to American culture. *So if we had to live there, it wouldn't seem foreign. Yeah, Dad, if you worked for Mossad and you were caught by the enemy, Mom and I would have to leave immediately, get new identities.* It was all so much clearer, now. The endless training in American English, monuments, customs, all on these flashcards Dad made up. Sending him to American University, even.

When the last batch of chicken was cooking, Gabrielle said, "Okay, my son, start telling me what is wrong with the Koran."

Michael groaned, putting a devilled egg in his mouth. "Well, what category of error do you want first? History errors, doctrine errors, blatant contradictions of Bible, and above all, the satire on Muslims which is in the Koran? For the Koran insults Muslims, Mom. That's what hurt me the most, when living around you. I couldn't explain to you how the Koran ridiculed you in its own words. Even now, I wonder if I shouldn't just show you how to use my Bible program -- better yet, buy you one, you're already a computer wiz -- and you see it for yourself."

"Well, my son, Koran always insists that God is but One Person, like Judaism does. Yet Issa is Faultless -- how can that be true, unless He is also God -- and there's this Holy Spirit in four Suras. So for myself, that's enough to make the entire Book, bad. But how bad?"

"Mom, I wouldn't treat the Koran as something you throw away. Truth is truth anywhere you find it. Bible is wholly from God, but God can use anything, even something false."

"So you are not telling me to stop reading the Koran."

"Mom, I'm not telling you to do anything. You have your own life before God. I am your son, but that doesn't mean we will believe the same."

Gabrielle was relieved. "So if I go back to Islam, what will you do?"

"Respect your decision. I know you are saved. Dad, too. So what you believe after that, is private between God and you." Here Michael hesitated, unsure how to phrase what he wanted to say: "Frankly, Mom, even if you study under the same teacher as I do, I'm not sure we'll agree. Probably not."

"Do you think I wish to study under your teacher for your sake? No, my son. Allah matters more than anyone. I am proud of you for staying in America to study God. That was my goal for raising you, that you come to love Allah."

"But you said you were mad at me for leaving."

"I was, my son. Yet when you returned that first time, remember how you were obsessed with the Bible? You wanted to convert me, but you kept to Jewish subjects. You discussed the Bible only generally, for itself. I could also see you loved God. So I asked you many questions."

Goren searched the Gabrielle Hartman file for that period, found it empty. *Someone didn't pay attention!* He 'sent' for Michael's file; when it arrived, he scanned for what the boy was then learning. The daily reports didn't cover his discussions with the mother except summarily, *he wanted to convert her, conversation fruitless.* Goren wished he could smack the crew on duty then, *how could they be so dense!* and stopped reading.

"Mom, actually I don't like to talk Bible with people. With you it's always been different. I wanted to convert you at first, too. But my church believes as I do, yet I prefer to live far away from them. So what will happen now, if you believe as I do? Honestly, I don't know. I didn't expect you to change your mind."

"Well, neither did I. We'll just go day by day. I don't expect to live long, and maybe that is a blessing. God knows."

A strained silence ensued. Gabrielle rose to turn the chicken. "It's almost done. So let's return to what's wrong with the Koran."

"Starting where, Mom?"

"I don't know, pick something, my son."

"Okay, Mom. You know, the main point of the Koran is that it corrects the Bible, claiming the Bible is from God, but was corrupted, and the Koran fixes that. As you read through the Koran, you realize that certain parts of the Bible are claimed as valid, not corrupted. For example, in the Cow Sura, God has Moses pick an offering to atone for Israel, a heifer. Do you remember the color in the Koran?"

"Saffron. Yellow. Bright, Ayah 69."

"Yes. But in the Bible, it's bright RED, Mom. Red Heifer. Asham, red heifer offering, for all the sons of Israel, from which ashes are made. Koran gets the color wrong. Derisively so."

"Derisively?"

"Yes, Mom. Remember in 7, the Al-Araf Sura, and 20, the Ta-Ha Sura, the golden calf?"

"Yes, my son, of course."

"So in Al-Baqara, the Cow Sura, a golden calf replaces a golden calf? When it's a red heifer in the Bible, and you can prove for 2000 years prior to Mohammed, the red heifer was offered at the Temple? Other nations and people outside Israel recorded Israel's sacrifices, Mom. So there you have an example of historical error in the Koran which derides Muslims, since they don't investigate their own holy book -- they just chant it all the time, as if such mindlessness were holy."

Michael kept on, "What's the difference between all their chanting and bowing, versus the Catholics, who everyone knows are silly? Catholicism predated the Koran by hundreds of years, and all the Koran does, is ape both Judaism and Catholicism, same silliness! The Jews had pilgrimages and peregrinations, some Biblical, some not; the Catholics did pilgrimage from Constantine onward. Both religions are truly corrupt, all this bowing and prayer chanting at specific times which the Lord chastises in the Gospels, set phrases, deeming themselves holy. Bible excoriated all of that. Islam apes those corrupted religions derisively, in its own way!"

"Not to mention blatant plagiarism long after the Bible was completed, false stuff even Christians knew as lies, like the 'infancy of Jesus' tripe, a slapstick story about turning clay into birds as a child -- repeated as if truth in Al-Maida Sura, Ayah 110? Yeah, and Mohammed is attributed with zero miracles?"

"So, Mom, this 'yellow cow' is ribald, Koran calling ITSELF a golden calf replacing golden calf, which after all, received a lot of bowing and chanting! So anyone believing in Koran, is idolatrous like the Egyptians?! I believe that Mohammed got this as a 'revelation', Mom -- from a demon, for no human is that witty! Sorry, Mom, I didn't mean to be so vehement." Michael fell silent, again ashamed of himself.

Gabrielle didn't realize how much the Koran upset her son, until just that moment. *He really loves God, and hid his upset from me all this time because he loves me, too. So he chooses between God and me. How much we have hidden from each other.*

"Is that the only bald example?"

"Oh, no, Mom. But I lose my temper when I go into this information."

"So use 1Jn1:9, my son, as you taught me to do. You can't learn to control your temper, without practicing the very thing which makes you lose it."

Michael had to laugh. "Ah, my mother learns so quickly! If I ever marry, I must clone you to do it!"

"So, my son, give me more examples. Practice holding your temper." And with that, she turned away from him, rose to dry the last pieces of chicken on paper, and brought the rest to the table, warmed on a hotplate. She served him his favorite pieces, and took hers. She allowed him some minutes to eat.

"Okay, now give me some examples, my son." So between mouthfuls, Michael summarized the many contradictions and derisions, going sura by sura in rapid succession, sometimes losing his temper and turning

red. Bald reversals of characters versus historical proof, such as Christ being made a mere messenger in the Koran, versus Him claiming Himself Messiah in history and in the Gospels, being provably executed for it, *that's why the Christians were persecuted for centuries afterwards*. "They wouldn't be persecuted if Christ only claimed to be a herald, Mom -- that should be obvious," Michael said flatly.

Then Michael continued, listing the many sly reversals of Bible words in Koran, such as "their lord" or "your lord" but not "The Lord" -- the latter only reserved for real Bible heroes, never for any Muslim. How in only four ayahs connected with Moses, is the "I am" refrain of the Bible used, in Koran's 7.122, 20.14, 27.9, 28.30, which he showed her on his computer. How "I am the Lord" was never said to Muhammed, Allah didn't even bother to speak to Muhammed directly.

"That's a way of saying that Allah of the Koran is not 'THE Lord', Mom. That THE Lord is the Lord of the Bible, but not the Koran. It makes fun of them for believing in the Koran! How cruel!" Michael shouted.

Yet Michael was most apoplectic, when listing the long history of Israel. "Why, if the Jews were so wrong, did Allah give them the Temple, Mom? Why is David a son of Isaac, not of Ishmael? Why is Christ who the Koran says is 'Faultless' in the Maryam sura -- a Jew, a son of David, not a son of Ishmael? Don't you see how the Koran mocks the Muslim, by putting Christ higher than Ishmael, and the Temple going to the Jews, not to the Muslims? For if the Jews are so bad and the Bible so corrupted, then why didn't Allah do something about it for 2000 whopping years, and why did He bless Israel so much, leaving what was allegedly corrupt in the Word, intact? Can't Allah preserve His Own Word?"

"Mom," Michael continued, trying not to shout, "if Allah is so powerless He can't preserve His Own Word back then, what's to prevent the Koran you have, from being likewise corrupted? See how the Muslim is mocked for his religiosity and faithfulness -- but never thinking?"

"Worst of all, Mom, if you are a faithful Muslim you go under the earth, 'in paradise there is shade' -- yeah, in paradise, but not where you are! Paradise was emptied at the Ascension, so the only way you can see paradise is from HELL, Mom. It's bright and hot in hell, and one can see paradise is indeed in shade -- it's DARK. All the believers have gone up to heaven. Yeah, 'in paradise UNDERNEATH where RIVERS FLOW', the Koran says -- RIVERS OF FIRE, Mom!" Michael used 1Jn1:9 again.

Michael then continued, calmer. "So the Koran never promises a relationship with Allah-Who-Is-Exalted, High. But only, a set of obediences and comfort -- under the earth? Bible promises heaven and life with God forever, who doesn't know the 23rd Psalm. So the Koran promises HELL, if you are loyal to it. That cruelly derides Muslims, Mom. I can't stand it, sorry."

Goren watched Michael's alternating vehemence and guilt, his fluidity yet also his insecurity. The boy didn't realize what a genius he was. He used 1Jn1:9 like breathing, and it was indeed a beautiful thing to watch him, *how many humans know their God this well?* Goren couldn't help but admire the lad, who after all was in his prime, by modern standards. Age 44, good age for testing.

Goren also noticed how Gabrielle easily followed what her son was saying. It was as if she already knew the same material, had the same objections. There was nothing in her thinking which betrayed that familiarity, but she was using 1Jn1:9 regularly. *How does a human change so much, overnight?* Of course, that's why they all admired Paul so much. He'd completely reversed course after Damascus. Seemed instantaneous. The idea worried Goren. Then he realized, *okay, what worked on Paul, might work on these two*. So he started making plans.

After lunch, they both rested. Another long and dense discussion, and Gabrielle felt the morphine wearing off. She hoped to make up for lost sleep. For his part, Michael needed a breather, she could see that.

They awoke at sundown to the blare of the muezzin, both of them surprised they had slept so long. Michael went in to shower. Something about ending sabbath with a shower, just as it had begun, always put him in good spirits.

She surveyed the refrigerator for items which would have to be eaten or trashed, and put them all on the table. Tonight would be leftovers. Some fried chicken remained, "noshies", fruit; and, gefilte fish which of course Michael wouldn't eat, *why did I buy it?* Impulsively, she grabbed the fish and then emptied the cupboards of all their dry goods, packing them in plastic bags, thinking *Mr. Stein next door could gift them to the poor.* It occurred to her she'd probably never see him or this flat, again. Never see Israel, again. *My last trip to Ben Gurion.* She felt oddly calm about it all, satisfied that she'd prepared everything as best possible, and thankfully the computer worked, *didn't hang up so much like the other one.* So she didn't need all that old paper, had it stored in safe deposit boxes, with the passwords and keys' locations also stored in the encrypted files.

Michael will be left with a lot of work to do, can't help that. She didn't expect the American hospital to prolong her life. *Issa you will keep me alive for as long as you wish, and no one else.* She was content.

Michael came in, amazed at his mother's activity. "Are we to leave tonight, instead?"

"No, my son. I just wanted to be busy, that's all."

"Are you in pain? You really should take those pills. They help you."

"Yes, I just took two. I am not in pain."

"So what would you like to do, can I help you clear things?"

"Well, take these plastic bags of food to Mr. Stein. Maybe he can use some of them for the end-of-shabbas meal. Maybe he can give the food to the poor."

Michael did, and came back beaming. "Mother, you'll never guess: they were out of the fish, flour and the latkes mix. It was a godsend, Mrs. Stein said!"

Gabrielle smiled. "Good. Now you know what I'd like to do? Drive around the City at night, do you think we can get a cab for that?"

Unspoken, of course, was the reason why. "Sure, Mom." Michael tried to sound light, and she pretended he'd succeeded at it.

They sat down to their leftovers, bantering about the sights she wanted to see at night, "anything but Old City", she said. She seemed to want to see all the new construction, and he couldn't understand why, it wouldn't be pretty. She didn't care, rattling off a bunch of names. She wanted the cabbie to take the main streets, and for some strange reason wanted to go through Talbieh, where all the fancy people lived -- then Michael remembered, that's where they'd kept KB. *She's revisiting old memories, then, that's her real agenda, the new construction sites represent old haunts.*

She was dressed more conservatively, plain black pantsuit this time -- she hated dresses -- wasn't wearing her hijab. *So she really has converted, amazing.* Michael didn't consider anything beyond this moment. *Saturday night in Jerusalem, the streets will be packed! And here I am, going out with my mother, who looks pretty good in black!*

They finished, and she begged off to "freshen up" as he did the few dishes remaining. He opened the refrigerator to find it empty, except for milk. Then it hit him. *She thinks she's not coming back.*

Impulsively, he used 1Jn1:9 and said without sound, "Father, I don't know if you are willing, but it appears that my mother can witness better than I can. Should she not come back here to do that? Should she not be healed of her disease? I don't ask for myself, but for those who need to hear her. I'm not good at witnessing, but she appears to be. Whatever you will in the matter, it's now before your court. In the Lord's Name I pray this, Amen."

Goren got hit with another file from Baloney in that moment. "You better come up with a very good plan, because TMH just agreed to that prayer." Without thinking, Goren shot back, "Count on it." S.O.P., when a believer is about to die apostate but uses 1Jn1:9, he can be restored. No "sin unto death", as #1 Witness would call it, a fact which Michael Jr. knew. *So of course TMH said yes, it was now just a question of what manner of recovery would be used.* So now it was even more important, to derail her. *Gotta get her upset again, and that would mean 'competition', somehow. That's what got to Paul.*

But Goren didn't know what to plan. *Pick the Ganger girl?* That was dicey. The guy originally intended for her never got into Bible, so she was free. But there was nothing from TMH about whether He'd pick someone else for her. Corporate would go ballistic if they knew Goren was planning a match, so he'd have to make it look like an accident. *Is Whitey right, am I insane for doing this?* Goren decided to wait.

Mother and son descended the short flight of stairs and hailed a cab. The cabbie didn't believe they were mother and son, suspected it was a kind of tryst, but said nothing. Only after an hour or so of hearing the 'mother' reminisce every time they stopped at some residential zone still under construction, did he believe it. *Well, this is a good fare,* he told himself.

They drove for hours, admiring the lights, the traffic often slowing them down. So many hotels. So much life. "You'd never think Israel had a terrorist problem," Michael offered. "In the States, it's the same way. Outside the US, you only see the problems, not the daily life, so people outside America think that Americans live in fear from gangs, mostly blacks and Hispanics. It's not that way at all."

"Haredi gangs in America?" the cabbie asked.

"No, 'blacks' in American English means dark Africans," Michael replied, laughing.

"So you're from America?" the cabbie asked.

"No, from Israel, but I spend a lot of time in America, too."

"Jewish? You don't seem Jewish."

"Jewish by race, Christian by faith, if you must know. Maybe that's why I don't seem Jewish to you."

"I'm a Christian, too -- newly so," Gabrielle offered, not sure why she'd said that.

"You converted?" the cabbie asked.

"Yes -- oh, stop here, will you? Michael, this is where your father proposed to me."

They were in front of the Sheraton Jerusalem Hotel. It wasn't the Sheraton, back then.

"Here? I thought he proposed to you in the Negev?"

"No, Michael. He and I fell in love immediately, but he didn't propose until six months later, here. It was a dump back then."

"A dump?"

"Well, it looked like a dump. Maybe it was some new construction they were planning, I don't remember. Our car ran out of petrol, he'd forgotten, and when we got out to walk, he just went down on his knees and proposed. I of course said yes, and that's how you got me."

"Negev?" said the cabbie.

"Yes, I was fleeing Egypt with my daughter during the 1967 war."

"The Jews were hurting you?"

"No, the Egyptians. The Jews rescued me."

The cabbie went silent. Then: "So how is it you are a Christian?"

"I was a Muslim. Koran says Allah is only one person, which means Allah is alone, never paid for sin, but if Three Allahs, then God can be gifted from one Allah to the other, so sin is paid. So Koran is wrong, Bible is right. So I am a new Christian, for that reason."

The cabbie went silent again. After a few moments he said, "Allah does not need to be paid for sin."

"No, He doesn't. But it's not fair if He is not paid, and if Allah is only One Person, then He cannot be paid, and that is unfair. So it cannot be true that Allah is only one person. Allah must be Three. Then the payment can be a gift, still no partners."

Michael just sat back and listened, thinking, *God, you arranged for this too!*

They were still stopped in front of the hotel, and someone behind them honked. "I must move now," the cabbie said. He looked in the rear view mirror, waiting for Gabrielle's assent. She nodded, and told him to drive south as soon as he exited, "and then just keep driving toward Talbieh", she said.

No one spoke for a good 20 minutes after that, instead admiring the lights and the bustle of the street.

"So what did you do after Dad proposed and you said yes?" Michael asked, unable to stay silent any longer.

"We walked for four kilometers! They didn't have Paz fuel stations everywhere, back then."

"Some engagement night," the cabbie quipped.

"No, there was no engagement, we had to elope," Gabrielle replied.

"What, the parents didn't approve?" the cabbie asked.

"No, they did not."

"Your husband is Jewish?" the nosy cabbie asked again.

"Was, yes Jewish."

"So you stayed a Muslim?" the cabbie asked, assuming a 'yes' answer.

"Yes, until yesterday, if you must know," Gabrielle said testily. "Sorry, I'm not used to talking so much."

The cabbie smiled into the rear view mirror. "No, as a good Muslim woman you wouldn't be. Now that you are a Christian, you will talk too much."

At this, Michael whispered to his mother, "Maybe we need another driver", but she whispered "No".

She didn't reply to the cabbie, and didn't seem insulted, either.

"Oh, Mom, look -- we're entering Talbieh," Michael said, grateful to relieve the tension. "Where was KB?"

"You don't remember the address?"

"No, Mom." Michael didn't want to see the place, but said nothing, realizing she did want to see it.

She gave the address, asked the cabbie if he'd drive to it. He did, stopping at the site. It was a fancier house, now. Renovated. Lots of greenery.

"That's KB, and just behind it was our place." She asked the cabbie to drive around the block. He did, eyeing her steadily in the rear view mirror. Michael could tell he just ached to reunite her with Islam, was trying to figure out how to do it.

"Maybe if you did the hajj you would change your mind," the cabbie suddenly said.

"I am hajja for two years now, and it was Jamarat which made me question Islam," she shot back. *Never argue with my mother*, Michael thought.

"You are hajja?" the cabbie couldn't believe it. "You are *qiran hajja*, not just Ummrah?"

"Yes, I am *qiran hajja*," Michael's mother replied sternly. "And by the way, Jamarat is not in the Koran, it is sunnah but not Koran, see *As-Saffat, falam mabalaga ma'ahus saya qala yabunay ya in ni arafil manami an ni azbahuka fanzur mazatara qalaya abatifal matumaru satajidunin sa'alahu minas sabirin*. THAT is Koran. Jamarat is false."

Michael wondered if the cabbie would stop, being too insulted by a woman no less, but instead he seemed to be enjoying this. For the next hour or so Michael watched both of them engage in rapid Arabic, a kind of tennis match, quoting one Koranic ayah after the next to each other, Michael grasping only about half of it. He was amazed how much his mother understood what he'd told her was wrong with the Koran -- and she had a good many more objections, of her own. The meanwhile, she kept interrupting the cabbie with various directions as they snaked along the cobbled streets of Talbieh, occasionally have him stop, tell Michael what

the address represented -- but then shoot right back to whatever point the cabbie had made, before interrupting him. *It's a Koranic Wimbledon*, Michael thought.

"Now let's go home," she said to Michael. The cabbie seemed unready to take them.

"Don't you want to drive further west? Much new construction there." he said. Clearly he didn't want the conversation to end.

"Thank you for the offer, maybe next time. We have a flight to catch tomorrow. For America," Gabrielle said.

"I can take you to Ben Gurion, what's your flight and what time do you want me to pick you up?"

"Well, we don't know that yet," Michael offered, suddenly jealous for a reason he couldn't name. He used IJn1:9.

The cabbie reached down and then backwards, his card in his hand. It was in Arabic. "This is my card. Please call me tomorrow when you know, only half-price fare for your mother."

Michael smiled at the cabbie, then looked at his mother. She nodded.

"Alright, we'll call you."

The trip back was largely in silence. Michael could tell his mother was suddenly tired. He thanked the cabbie who reminded him again to call, which he promised he'd do, even if they couldn't find a flight out. For some reason, he had the cabbie stop a few doors away from the complex, then after he saw the cab disappear, they left what was their alleged flat and walked to the right one. *No sense taking chances*, he argued to himself.

He helped her to bed, made sure she took the pills, wondering if she'd overexerted herself. She didn't talk much. He wondered if she was dying, *will she survive the night?* And then he remembered his prayer, decided it would be an insult if he prayed again, it was in God's Hands.

When the cabbie returned home, his wife was waiting for him. They conversed in rapid Arabic, as he explained his odd night with a *shirk*, an unforgivable heretic; he repeated almost verbatim what she'd said about her conversion. Listening to them from her bedroom was their daughter, who'd only just reached puberty, and they had high hopes for her being a devout Muslim as she grew up, as she seemed to memorize the Koran so quickly, a kind of prodigy.

The girl went to sleep replaying all her father had said, and realized that whoever that woman in the cab had been, she was sent by Allah. *No, not Allah: the Christian God*, who she supposed must be Issa. Silently, she mouthed, "Issa, you must be the real Allah. You paid for me. Please teach me more. Ameen."

No sooner did the girl finish speaking, than Goren received yet another painful thought-missive from Baloney. "I'm sending Whitey Boy back to you, but you are in charge of him. Make sure he does damage control on Gabrielle Hartman, everyone she meets, everywhere she goes." Unsaid was the *or else* part of the message. That, Goren could feel. Whitey showed up a few minutes later. *This is awkward*, Goren thought-spat.

"Hullo, Whitey."

Whitey turned into Stan Laurel again, as his 'reply'. Didn't even send any thoughts.

Goren transmitted everything to him, left nothing out, not even his idea for the Ganger girl.

Whitey didn't reply, but he wasn't angry.

"We can still win this thing."

Whitey nodded, absently.

"You have a plan?" Goren asked, for when Whitey went 'internal', that's what it usually meant.

"Mebbe. Had a long chat with Baloney."

"During Convocation?"

"Yep, this case is important. Boss is planning something on a grand scale, and this Hartman woman is a problem." Whitey transmitted the conversation with Baloney, faithfully. *No intel gaps will come from me!* He

and Goren were united on that topic. He decided to ignore Goren's treachery, which after all was to be expected. They had bigger goals, now.

"Above all, we must get her out of the country tomorrow, and that cab driver must never see them again."

"What's our latitude?"

"We can't kill him."

"But illness? What latitude?"

Whitey sent for instructions. Then they waited.

The next morning, Michael awakened early. He quietly entered his mother's room to see if she was still breathing, sleeping. She was. Michael went off to shower and pack, certain they'd find something to get them out, even if they had to fly to Europe first. Seemed even a good idea, Europe. *In case it's her last trip.*

By the time he'd showered and packed, she'd awakened. He found her sitting at the table, drinking coffee, having a fresh bagel. "I just bought these downstairs," she said, offering him one. She hadn't dressed yet, but was neat, clad in a light coat, so you wouldn't know. That surprised him, but he kept quiet.

"How are you feeling?" Unspoken: *are you taking your pills?*

She rattled the bottle in her coat pocket. "Good."

"What time do you want for the flight? I'll then look them up," Michael asked her.

"Evening or late afternoon, I might want to shop before we leave."

Michael sat down at the computer, called out the available flights, and they selected two. One routed through Paris, another via London. She picked Paris.

Settled, he pulled out the cabbie's card and gave it to Gabrielle, who called the number, "Hello, your husband gave us a tour of the city last night, and wanted us to call him with our departing flight today." She seemed startled by what she heard in reply. Then: "Oh, I understand. May we can help in some way? He was very nice to us last night." Sudden conversation in Arabic Michael couldn't understand. "Your daughter?" Gabrielle suddenly said in English. "Yes, I can talk with her." A puzzled expression was on his mother's face. More rapid Arabic, this time sounded like the Koran, snippets from the Maryam sura, *why would my mother be talking about the Koran now?* Michael wondered. It went on for about 10 minutes. Then, his mother hung up.

"The cab driver is quite ill, just came up this morning. Apparently he told his wife about our cab ride, the daughter overheard it, and she wanted to tell me about her problems with the Koranic text, knows it rather well. I didn't know what to say, except to quote her more problem texts. Then she told me, 'Issa must be Allah if perfect, better than Muhammed', and of course I had to agree with her. 'Koran never says the Holy Spirit enabled Mohammed', she said -- 'so Issa must be Allah.' Then, she hung up. Strange."

"Not strange, Mom -- God. That's how He does things. I know you don't want to convert people, but if God uses you, the people He wants to convert, come to you."

Gabrielle shrugged. "Well, God will do what He wills. And as for us, what do you say we do a little shopping for our trip?"

So they finished packing, cleaning, and finally left, hailing yet another cab when they did. Gabrielle brought two suitcases, explaining she needed to drop one off at a friend's house, someone Michael didn't know. This time, Goren and Whitey were on-spot and made sure the cab driver was already Christian. They made a series of stops, then went to the friend's house, where they had to stay for lunch. Michael played the dutiful but quiet son, and felt the odd-man-out. Finally he asked to be excused and walked around the block, wondering what God had in mind next.

"Dad," he prayed, "I've not talked to you in so very long! Will I keep on forgetting as I have these past two months? I've not been thinking toward you as I should!" Michael went on whispering as he walked, knowing that any passersby would think he was on his bluetooth, which was securely on his ear, conspicuous. It was a great way to pray with his lips, which helped him concentrate. He poured out his soul, finally.

Goren watched Michael, and Whitey watched the Hartman woman. They didn't do anything.

Relieved, Michael went back to the house, and the two were still jabbering away, talking about who to inform, catching up on old news. Michael supposed they'd not talked for months. He sat down, not sure what to do with himself, and not wanting to intrude. His mother switched to French. *Oh, here's another thing I didn't know*, Michael thought, amused. Her French was fluent, Parisian accent, *where did she learn it?* A tinge of jealousy hit him again; instinctively he used 1Jn1:9 and asked Father why he was jealous. Then it dawned on him: *I've been deprecating my own mother for years, angry with her for believing in the Koran, so I came to think of her as lower!*

Suddenly they were bidding the friend good-bye, time to leave for the airport. Another cab, another Christian driver. She switched to French, "pour practiquer, naturellement." Michael was only too happy to oblige.

Goren and Whitey didn't relax until the plane was off the ground and the pair had fallen asleep. Two lukewarm Muslims, one Christian and an atheist were around them. For the first half hour they read the news on their laptops, Whitey worried all six would become best buddies. Michael figured out how to stop the flashing video ads at the Post and other news sources, showing everyone how. Meanwhile, he recorded the name of every company who ran such intrusive advertisements.

"I make a note never to purchase from a company which uses such ads," he announced to his mother's chagrin. "I write them to that effect, stating their ads as the reason. No one likes a pushy salesman."

"Then you must stop buying everything," the atheist said, resignedly.

"No," Michael said, "if we consumers stop buying due to their rude ads, they will stop the ads."

Then followed the inevitable questions, everyone introducing each other, and some cards were exchanged.

The later private but spirited dialogue about the Bible with his mother, then Michael showing her how the software worked, putting a newly-purchased copy on her computer, was technical. Goren and Whitey were reasonably sure the others overhearing, wouldn't recall it. They seemed faintly annoyed at the pair.

Problem was, the atheist recalled the "pushy salesman" comment, and given their enthusiasm, was surprised they didn't push Bible on their new acquaintances. So he just had to ask them questions. Their answers were memorable asides, but they continued talking to each other, even when he announced he was an atheist. That impressed him even more. Michael's curt "Well, if God exists you can ask him and he'll reply," was obviously intended to stop the questions. So now the atheist wondered if maybe God really did exist, as Michael had no interest in converting him. Of course at that point, the poor guy was assailed by the Muslims and the Christian, but managed to deflect their arguments. The mother and son didn't participate. Whitey wished he could banish both mother and son to an isolated mountain somewhere, knowing he'd never get permission.

So when they'd fallen asleep, Goren offered, "Since the Boss wants to promote America, best way to do it is to discredit Islam, so why not use this woman?"

"People respond to her too well," Whitey replied. "An old woman of intelligent interests, is a rarity. Remember, Goren, the idea is to prevent the Gospel, not promote it, don't get yourself in trouble again."

"Whitey my Boy," Goren said testily, "when will you officer-types understand that the best apostacy, is one based on truth but pushed down people's throats? See how everyone wanted to stop those pushy ads? We

can learn from these humans. Had Paul been promoted as I wanted, he'd have been made the first pope. Then all the Writ TMH gave him, could have been forced down everyone's throats. People regard forced truth as bad, so choose the lie, just to rebel against the force. You know as well as I that excessive promotion speeds rejection, we were even employed to do that while TMH was down here. Even Spirit made Mark use that fact as the rhetorical framework for his Gospel. Warning us, maybe? Remember, I was in detention then, so frankly I regard it as proof of my contention, that while I'm in jail, Spirit has Mark use the same theme as I was trying then to explain!" *Why didn't they listen to either of us*, Goren thought guardedly.

Goren continued, "But oh, we force lies, not truth, post-Crucifixion? So now truth looks better, the human has to search for it. But then his motive got developed through all that struggle. 18 centuries it takes to bring the original-language texts out into the open, so naturally people waiting for it, will want it. 18 centuries we promoted the lie, and now it's known as a lie. Don't you think something different should be tried?"

"No success, Goren? How do you know? What if more truth more easily found, would have caused the Rapture by now?"

"No, Whitey. I said FORCED dissemination. If it's forced, the human rejects it. If it's a forced lie, then the truth is more attractive, simply because it's not forced. I submit promoting the truth, so the humans will make it into a religion, themselves. That's what they do with lies, so -- "

"Goren, they don't want the truth. We know it better than they do, and we don't want it."

Goren just grinned. "Thank you for proving my point."

At that moment, Goren got a 'call' from Malarky himself, and vanished.

Whitey Boy couldn't help but be relieved.

For the next week, Mother and Son Hartman stayed in Paris and behaved like typical tourists. Michael's mother found the smell and Paris dirt surprising, but she adored the Left Bank and its many quirky streets, vendors. They had a good view of the Eiffel Tower at the Four Seasons, and truly relaxed. They spent a second week at Hotel de Crillon with its extensive grounds, not so close to the Tower yet still within the heart of the city. Michael refused to stay on the Left Bank. Inevitably the luxury bored them, so they finally left for the States. This time, with three suitcases. "Nothing like a reformed Muslim, now I'm a clothes horse!" she laughed.

When they arrived in Albuquerque and he took her to his own modest A-frame home in the Sandia Mountains, she exclaimed, "it's like hill country in Israel!" He made arrangements to fly her down to the hospital for the tests -- but not stay there. "I want to die here, not in hospital," she insisted.

The tests were inconclusive for leukemia, a surprise. One physician speculated she was in spontaneous remission, citing studies in 1997-2002. Yet the American physicians instead suspected that the Israeli physicians ran the tests incorrectly, never mind proof they had from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The pain, however, continued. No one could figure out why. It acted like shingles, in spurts, but there was no rash so that was ruled out. *Unknown nerve disorder*, was all they could posit. They found no nerve damage. Gabrielle didn't mind, so long as she could take the morphine when needed.

She began studying under Michael's teacher, daily. Her progress was rapid, and they spent nights discussing what she'd learned, Michael realizing how much he'd missed in those classes. On her better days he'd take her out for trips to see the white sands and rock formations. She gradually picked up some Spanish, and fell in love with barbeque, something she'd never heard about from Michael Sr. She liked the slow pace and wide open spaces of New Mexico, telling Michael that if she was to die, it should be here. But now she didn't expect death to come. She had more studying to do, first.

The weeks passed into months, and after about six months she had recovered nicely. The doctors began to wonder if she had an allergy to something in Israel, and ran tests. Inconclusive, again. By this point she'd been to the hospital for one test or another weekly -- they finally chartered a helicopter each time, landing on top of the hospital -- and had seen the church many times. She liked the church, the pastor, the people. But she deferred to her son's wishes to avoid it, and in any event was too engrossed with the study on mp3.

She focused on the New Testament, and was astounded how easily she could tie both Old and New together, as a unit. She spent many hours comparing the Old Testament with the Koran, Michael showing her the sly switches in the latter, playing on the former.

Sometimes they had heated debates, with her anger being greater than Michael's at the burlesquing language of the Koran, which apparently was far worse in Arabic compared to Hebrew, than he'd recognized. She'd often chastise him for being so calm about it. The arguing fell into a kind of pattern, ending with him calmly explaining, "no Muslim can see how the Koran mocks him, until he sees the Bible as you are now." Michael, unused to his mother's disillusion, wanted to belay it. No dice.

She did wear him out, as Goren predicted. Usually up at dawn, she'd be studying when he later awoke, and would pepper him with questions. Michael was never fast to awaken, so he'd often mumble for the first hour. As time passed, he came to recognize, *oh, God prepared me for all this in advance!* but somehow knowing that fact made it harder to keep up with his mother, rather than easier.

He also came to realize he'd learned a lot, how privileged he was to understand Bible versus others. That recognition depressed him.

The Rapture discussions were the most tiring. Michael wasn't fond of the Rapture doctrine, so explaining it was a kind of torture for him. He believed it, but had been in America too long, so the typical Disneyland version of it tainted his desire to explain it. She wouldn't let him summarily explain it, but wanted to know how it was that no time was left, so that Church had to be inserted, which by then she'd vaguely understood and believed, based on Bible verses she'd heard exegeted by Michael's teacher, by Michael, and could read for herself.

"Why is the timing like this? Why did God create it this way? Surely He has some larger accounting standard which He follows. The Rapture doesn't just drop from the sky, 'God is consistent,'" she'd quote. "So, what is His standard?"

"I don't know, Mom. I'm not a financial wizard like you. Ask Him." It bothered Michael that he couldn't answer her, though. He'd scan the internet, looking for information, and come up empty.

Goren and Whitey did what they could to prevent him from finding anything useful on the internet, else just kept watch, tracing out the changing mental attitudes of mother and son, waiting for an opportunity to derail them, somehow. But Gabrielle, newly positive to God, had a lot of protection from TMH. There was little one could get permission to do.

Meanwhile, Goren had opportunity to evaluate the Ganger woman, still convinced that it was a good idea to match her. But he couldn't get permission, *she's not suitable to our purpose*, was all Baloney would say. If they had another gal in mind, they weren't telling Goren who she might be.

Goren did manage to convince Malarky that using too much truth via promotion was a better ploy than using outright lies, citing the daily conversations between both Hartmans as his evidence, "See how she reacts against the Koran, now that she sees its error? Same problem with the Catholic Church!" Given Goren's

background, wasn't good to approach the Boss with any change in policy, but caricature versions of both Gospel and Rapture, did get more positive attention.

Moreover, #1 didn't die as planned, but #5 did. Convocation was still a heady victory, but only six of the Witnesses died on schedule. Too many positive believers associated with the remaining four. So it was finally decided that mother and son would be a test case of positive overload, seeing when one or both of them, would finally choke. Goren was sure that day would come.

Whitey for his part, did an admirable job of damage control. He consoled himself that at least there were no more casualties like the cab driver's daughter and parents. She had converted both parents, so of course they had to leave East Jerusalem, finally settling north of Haifa, where there was a church teaching Bible. The mother converted first due to the Maryam sura, which always troubled her. The daughter's resolution of it that Issa was the real Allah just made sense. After all, it was Issa who would come back, not Muhammed (no longer pbuh), so the mother concluded someone was playing a game on all Muslims. She became rather vehement about it, for awhile.

Turned out the father's big sticking point was whether his wife would be deferential to him if a Christian, and when he found she was, he converted, too. Whitey figured that the father would only be a nominal Christian, but he did have that moment of genuine belief.

As time passed, the parents weren't eager to learn Bible but the daughter was. They didn't know the Hartmans by name, and monthly trips back to that neighborhood proved fruitless, since they didn't live where the cabbie had dropped them off. Whitey was very satisfied with his work there, helping everyone to forget what the Hartmans looked like; or failing that, to make unavailable, those who'd remember -- telephone ringing, delivery man, pipe breaking, whatever he could get permission to do. He was exhausted. "Three measly humans asking questions, and it costs me this much work?" he'd often complain.

So as the Jewish sacred year drew to a close, Passover 2007 nearing, there ensued a kind of stalemate not unlike that between Israel and Lebanon. Soon the Hartmans would need to return to Jerusalem, as Gabrielle's visa would expire. It could be renewed, of course, but the medical basis was now an iffy thing. Whitey dreaded their return. So he and Goren employed a lot of pit bull assistants, this time taking no chances. Everyone around the Hartmans would be 'affected', as they termed their influence or possession of humans. But hands-off, on the Hartmans themselves. If those two were going to crash and burn, they'd do it to themselves. Whitey didn't think that likely. Goren did.

Meanwhile, America's wisdom in Iraq remained a strange duality, publicly criticized, privately praised. Freedom was breaking out in the Middle East at the grass-roots level due to the American presence, just as its policymakers expected; for the inhabitants, this freedom was fragile, chaotic, and heady. Not only were American movies, clothing, slang long popular, but even more, the new freedom of thinking, speech which those cultural icons represented. This freedom didn't yet cause any deep political change. Instead, challenges to millennia of entrenched tribal values, started to be voiced. That upheaval required a lot of damage control, too, and as Goren predicted the increased terrorism intended to reassert old values, backfired. "Forcing humans never works but to deprecate the thing forced," Goren would explain to anyone who'd listen.

Malarky was listening. Sandman was listening. Baloney, like Whitey, felt it was dangerous to allow freedom and truth, *how do you control it, what if TMH is playing us?* Above it all, the Boss seemed to maintain a neutral, wait-and-see attitude. After all, World War III was supposed to happen with the recall of the Top Ten, but only six of them were recalled, so not much could be done. The six slots were still open, though. Thus both sides were in a "phony war" period, waiting for one or the other side, to tip the scales.

That suited Rive Blanche and Ghoster, just fine. They now had a doubled crew to watch, and the blow-up over the Hartman woman sent them all scrambling for past intel, looking for holes, just as Goren had found in Gabrielle's file. Goren was something of a hero again in the minds of the PDR crews. *For all his bombast he was loyal, even the Boss knew that.* Rive speculated "That's why Goren wasn't reincarcerated for his blunt criticism against the Catholic church, which after all was Malarky's invention, though Malarky would always say his inspiration came from the Boss."

Periwinkle and Fathomable were getting along with the former detention boys, and Ghoster often told Rive how grateful he was that Butch's demeanor, tamed Periwinkle's. The two played off each other, Butch with his swagger and Periwinkle with his need for attention, which Butch readily gave. Apparently they had only casually known each other in the past, having been largely on duty or detention for centuries in distant places, so the novelty of a new friendship cemented them.

It was different with Cursor, but then he disliked everything. He and Makeshift were in charge of reviewing past intel, noting the holes; Brainstem, Choler, and Butch then tried to send thoughts to their charges, to get reminiscence of the lacunae periods in the files. Makeshift then reconstructed from the reminiscences. The crew traded roles regularly, so they remained fresh, avoiding the usual boredom. Ghoster commented, "this Hartman woman is a godsend, giving us all a breather to coordinate, rather than roll out WWIII with a newly-doubled crew. It's working to our advantage, really."

Nothing else much changed with the other three PDR under Rive and Ghoster's 'care', except that Smythe went home to California with an unexpected inheritance from #5, a lifetime's worth of Bible classes. So Brainstem was busy trying to short-circuit the inevitable conclusions and insights. Ganger and Jewis were still easily trapped into thinking themselves bad despite their unusual understanding of TMH, with Ganger even knowing the real Bible timeline and her PDR status. "So easy to make advanced knowledge humiliate the one having it," Choler would often lecture his comrades. He and Butch would argue constantly over how to 'manage' Ganger and Jewis, *I should do something about it*, Ghoster decided, but he wasn't sure what to do. Rive counseled he do nothing, *let them work it out, 'develops teamwork*, so that's what happened.

Malarky's plan to promote America went on hold, pending complete recall of the top Ten: more instability was required to make his plan work. So they had time to fine-tune the parameters, the idea being to set up America as the hero in some conflict which defeated the Arabs, thus the bigger anger when America screwed up, as no doubt she would. "Winning the war, losing the peace," as Malarky would often remark. "Works with religion, works with politics. Humans love to hate their heroes, after the battle is over."

Trick was, how to 'arrange' the defeat of the Arabs. For the moment, stirring them up just as was done before the Six-Day War, was the plan. It worked well. All that bombast, just as before America liberated Iraq, worked well every time. Then the roll in, seeing how weak the Arabs really were, what liars they were, would generate a lot of whispering understanding in Arab homes, not to mention worldwide relaxation, *oh these people are just full of hot air!* For TMH would never let Israel be taken over, and so long as America defended her, permission for enabling any Iranian weapons wouldn't be granted, and of course the stupid things wouldn't really work unless 'helped' by Malarky and his crews. But that didn't matter now. "So long as TMH defends America, that blessing can aid us, as well," Malarky would explain.

So the PDR crews were less demoralized than before Convocation. They were catching up. Corporate decided not to punish those who left gaps in the files, since in almost every case the gaps were understandable. That unusual benevolence, and how neither Whitey nor Goren got detention for their actions, fueled morale even more. That four of the Top Ten remained alive on earth, began to look like a win on their side, rather than a loss, never mind Balderdash's continued warnings.

Sandman and Baloney took Balderdash seriously, but they felt they'd prepared for the potential upswing in PDR witnesses, since Balderdash provided them with the requested list. So they both relaxed at the end of Purim 2007, satisfied they had a good setup. Baloney changed his Light into a plate of *hamantoschen* for a moment and brightly remarked through one of the 'ears', "Maybe next year we'll have reversed Purim." Sandman laughed, "You look good enough to eat!"