

THE SAR'IM CHRONICLES

BOOK 3: THE SHINARIC WAR



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THE SAR'IM CHRONICLES

Volume I: THE BOOKS OF WAR

Book 3: THE SHINARIC WAR

INSPIRED BY YAH'S HOLY SPIRIT



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THE SHINARIC WAR

INTRODUCTION

The Sar'im Chronicles is the title given to a series of books that will be divided into five distinct volumes. The first of these, *The Books of War*, contains three books that deal primarily with the theme of the eternal conflict between the powers of angels and demons. *The Books of War* set forth the history of this conflict, from its origin until it became fully manifest on Earth, bearing not only on the spiritual characters that are its principle players, but also the humans who are caught in the middle.

Volume 2: The Books of Conflict, deal with the theme on a more personal level. Gone are the grandiose battles that take place in the Heavenly Kingdom, above the Ark, at the Tower of Babel. The three books that fall under this heading show how individual characters, such as Abraham and Moses, deal with the spiritual world and its factors, and they reveal the fact that individual choices have a great impact on the history of our world.

The third and fourth volumes, likewise, present unique viewpoints to the spiritual controversy, but the fifth volume is unique even among these. *Volume 5: The Books of Ages* present disjoint episodes from the history of the warfare, nevertheless they hang together on the central idea that Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus the Christ) was ordained from the foundation of the world to present Himself as a Sacrifice for fallen man. This eternal truth has had an impact both before and after the incident actually occurred, and the age in which men are living matters not nearly as much as the quality of that man's character as it relates to the divine purpose.

— David Aguilar

THE SHINARIC WAR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Here is a list of the major individuals who are mentioned within this book:

The Malakim – The “Virtuous” Host

Adonaim – The Archangels

Michael – “Who is Like El” – N/A
Gabriel – “Strength of El” – Cherubim
Raphael – “Healing of El” – Malakim
Camael – “He Who Sees El” – Ko’achim
Uriel – “The Fire of El” – Ophanim

The Seraphim – The Blazing Ones

Chief: Israfel – “The Burning of El”
Jehoel – “Mediator of El”
Pe’oriel – “Opening of El”
Mataquiel – “Sweetness of El”

The Cherubim – The Near/Wise Ones

Chief: Puriel – “Flame of El”
Za’afiel – “Wrath of El”
Zephon – “Looking Out”
Raziel – “Mystery of El”
Da’athiel – “Knowledge of El”
Shomeriel – “Guardian of El”
Mageniel – “Shield of El”

The Ophanim – The Thrones

Chief: Zadkiel – “Righteousness of El”
Gedael – “Fortune of El”

Nahamiel – “Roaring of El”
Asael – “Made by El”

The Or-Ikari'im – The Principalities of Light

Chief: Ithuriel – “Discovery of El”
Anael – “Glory of El”
As'fael – “Added by El”
Remiel – “Mercy of El”

The Or-Ko'achim – The Powers of Light

Chief: Lahatiel – “Burning of El”
Shabbatiel – “Rest of El”

The Malakim – The Virtues

Chief: Uzziel – “Strength of El”
Adriel – “My Help is El”
Dumah – “Silence” AKA Koliel

The Hashmallim – The Dominions

Chief: Zahariel – “Brightness of El”
Matmoniel – “Minister of El”
Tamael – “Perfection of El”

The Shedim – The Demonic Host

Satanim – The Archdemons/The Opposers

Satan – “Adversary” AKA Helel/Lucifer (Light Bearer)
AKA Azazel “Strengthened by El” – Gibborim
Sammael – “Poison of El” AKA Typhon (Northern Darkness) – Ko'achim
Abaddon – “Destroyer” AKA Turel – (Rock of El) Gibborim
Arioch – “Fierce Lion” AKA Raguel (Ally of El) – Ikari'im
Nisroch – “Fierce Eagle” AKA Sarakiel (Prince of El) – Peelogim

Peelogim – The Discordant Ones (Ex Seraphim)

Chief: Petahel – “Impulse of El”
Kokabiel – “Star of El”

Gibborim – The Mighty Ones (Ex Cherubim)

Chief: Azrael – “Helped by El”
Sh’fiel – “Spy of El” AKA Mar
Gadriel – “My Helper is El”

Erelin – The Valiant Ones (Ex Ophanim)

Chief: Zagzagel – “Splendor of El”
Imriel – “Eloquence of El”
Melejael – “The Fullness of El”

Ikari’im – The Principalities [of Darkness]

Chief: Cerviel – “Arm of El” AKA Chayil, Legion
Revachiel – “Gaining of El”

Ko’achim – The Powers [of Darkness]

Chief: Kaspiel – “Sorcery of El”
Zaphkiel – “Knowledge of El”

Shavoorim – The Broken Ones (Ex Virtues)

Tarfiel – “Nourished by El”

The Major Human Characters

Noah
Shem
Ham
Japheth
Cush
Canaan
Nimrod
Arphaxad
Yunah
Asshur
Aram
Jebus

THE SHINARIC WAR

OVERTURE

Fear not.

I am Zadkiel, chief of the Ophanim. I have come forth to continue the record of the Question, that your understanding may be full. These are the last times for the history of your world as it stands now, and it has been promised – it has been sworn before all the Universe – that from this most perverse generation must come the most righteous. From these most dark and evil times will shine forth a light to blind the sinful, and to pierce the shadows who once fell from the Empyrean Kingdom.

Count yourself blessed indeed to be called, and chosen, to stand with this group – for you, unto whom this record is given, will stand in the company of the Lamb if you will but hold fast to the end. It has been written in your History that the adversary is as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, yet it will be sung of you in the age to come:

*”Out of the Eater came something to eat;
And out of the Strong one came something sweet.”*

Azazel’s name means “Strong one of El,” and so it has been that this planet has been tainted over the centuries by his dark designs and the evil genius of unsanctified human intellect that he inspires. You have come to know how and why he fell, and the destruction he once brought down upon your world, but throughout all this there has remained for a time, yes, even for angels, the *Question*.

Some of your human writers have referred to it as the “great controversy.” For us it was simply “The Question.” It needed no qualifier, it was not a “great,” or “mysterious” question... because for us it was the only one. For many of us, it was the only thing that remained unsettled within us after Lucifer was cast down from on high. The Twelve, including myself, and the Archangels were sealed, and we were given to understand before the conflict even came to full bloom, yet for many the answer was not given in full measure until four millennia later, upon the bloodstained Cross of Calvary. Until all know the answer to the Question, until every righteous spirit, every human and every demon knows the answer, the Creation will groan because of sin.

The Question is: “Why?” Why was sin allowed to continue, that dread disease that invaded our harmony? Why was Lucifer not destroyed when he was struck to the earth

by El Michael, his true form revealed by the light of the Kherv? Why was he allowed to tempt mankind, given so much “rope” as you say? The answer will come for all on the day when every knee shall bow to Prince Immanuel, but for the children of the light, the answer has always been available, and to receive it is freedom forever.

The angels have this Answer, but it cannot be so simply told. It must, by its very nature, be shown. And if you will come with me now, back to the foundations of this current age, the eyes of your faith will see for themselves.

* * * * *

At that time, the Ark had been sealed for eight days, and nothing had yet taken place. The mockers who had rejected the message that began in the days of Enoch had returned to their revelry. They had recovered from the unusual sight of animals and birds being gathered by unseen hands into the vessel of safety. Although the day had begun like every other for these lost souls, it would end unlike any day that had ever been.

The Seraphim and Cherubim covered the sky like a net, invisible to mortal eyes while the Principalities, Powers and my Thrones stood by in readiness. Seeing us descending, Lucifer and his four most trusted demons drew near, fearing that their promised end was coming to pass. Yet the Question must be answered for the prince of demons also, before he meets his end. He must see the answer for himself. At the command of El Michael, Za’afiel the Cherub rose up into the air to initiate the judgment of the wicked earth.

Not understanding, but not waiting to see the plan of Heaven unfold, Azazel barked orders to his followers, who soared up to oppose the unrolling of the scroll.

As the unholy host drew near, the Seraphim and Cherubim began a counter attack, and the rest of us followed in order. I, as chief of the Ophanim, and one of the many who received a new post during the reshuffling of government that the rebellion had caused, drew my sword to signal our joining the battle. As my kherv flared to life my voice rose in command, and I led my Thrones into the fray.

Angels had not seen battle like this for more than a thousand years. With the exception a few isolated conflicts, the true warfare had taken place in the form of influence. Satan understood that the earth had been given to him by Adam’s transgression, and although he had a large degree of authority over its development, our job as the guardians of freedom was to ensure that mankind was not fully shut off from divine grace. Though all men had inherited the depraved nature of Adam, they were nevertheless continuously bathed by the rays of Heaven. IaH sends this spiritual sunshine to both the good and the evil, and His rain He scatters on the just and on the unjust alike; this undeserved gift, moral responsibility, was shed upon them by virtue of the promised Sacrifice.

On this day, however, spiritual weapons met in combat. There were confused souls on the earth, confused spirits in the air. The demons fought us with a ferocity born of anger, hatred, and an irrepressible sadness. It has been wondered by humans who have known something of our activities, “Why do they fight, knowing they are reserved for judgment?” Yet like unsanctified men who go mad with grief, destroying property and peace in their rages, so these former, tragic members of the Heavenly court fight – not against us, but against the fear and crushing certainty of oblivion that is never far from their minds.

One of the most bitter of these spirits is the fallen Power Typhon, who now goes by the blasphemous name “Sammael.” He was among those who was with Lucifer in the brief meeting with Michael before the fighting broke out. He had been with Lucifer from the beginning. Some have suggested that between himself and Turel, a fallen Cherub, they ensured the fall of the Archangel who, for a brief period, had seemed repentant. Yet once Azazel had made his choice, and sealed it by committing violence against the holy angels, he set in course a chain of events that resulted in my looking into the blazing eyes of my former colleague, and seeing therein only desolation.

I remember his words to me that day, as we hovered over the roof of the Ark, unseen by the hapless humans below, and unheard by the praying family within the wooden walls. “I will strip you of all four of your wings, Zadkiel.” I made no reply, except to give a brief sigh, and to feel once again the burning zeal that had fueled my activity when we cast the evil angels out of Eden.

Sammael and I were engaged in combat from the beginning of the conflict until very near the end. Though many angels fell to others, and new opponents were faced by the fallen and unfallen alike, our duel was the most consistent, for we were evenly matched. There were times when we were separated by the violence around us, yet we seemed to find each other on every such occasion.

The longest of these incidents, which was also the last time we were separated, took place when Puriel, one of my closest allies, soared past in pursuit of another creature. As he saw occasion, he threw his sparkling blade in our direction causing Sammael to retreat momentarily. I was unable to press this advantage, for the two Powers Kaspiel and Zaphkiel appeared to bar my way. This pair had been the scourge of the holy Host since their rebellion in Heaven. The chief of the Ko’achim and his next in command were among the most adept at manipulating Creation’s forces, and they almost matched the fallen Archangels in their ability to summon the natural elements to aid them in battle.

Kaspriel and Zaphkiel faced me, faint sparks passing between them, and then suddenly a surge of energy rippled through the air toward me as a large bolt of lightning. Of course, in the days before the flood there had been no rain, and the current water table was not in place. There were no storm clouds, and so this bright flash of light and its resulting thunderclap was the first indication to the humans below that something was

amiss. The rolling thunder, like the voice of IaH Himself, announced for the mortals that the days of probation had come to a dramatic end.

My response time was only just enough to get me out of the way of the distracting attack. Had I been hit, I would have been stunned long enough by the blending of spiritual and material forces to allow a well-timed blade to find its mark. As if this attack had been a floodgate breaking, the other demons began to use their perverted gifts against the Host. When a second blast of electricity was aimed my way by the twin Powers I did not evade it, but directed it through myself downward to the earth. The holy angels have known from the very first conflict with our anathemized brethren that we are not to use our knowledge of the Creation's forces for purposes of warfare.

The physical universe was created for physical beings, and to them was given dominion over all such elements. The demons, since the fall of Adam, have claimed the right to make use of them, however they had been using the spiritual counterparts of these weapons in like perverse manner long before Azazel summoned Eve nearer to the Tree of Knowledge.

The redirected bolt split one of the majestic trees of the antediluvian world, sending the humans who had been standing nearby running in terror. I did not have much time to consider their flight, however, as Kaspriel decided on a more direct approach. "You will not so easily dodge this," he said, bringing his burning blade up and thrusting it toward me with a mighty flap of his wings. I turned sideways to give him less of a target, and folded my wings in as tightly as I could. As a result I slipped downward, beneath his range, where I then opened my four feathered limbs to their fullest degree, instantly checking my descent.

Before Kaspriel could turn around, I was at his back with my sword ready. Zaphkiel was not idle during this time, but had been watching for an opportunity to attack. This he now did, even as I rose to Kaspriel's height. I was pinned between them, and I noted with a grimace that sparks were beginning to arc between the angels on either side of me. I knew they would either try to pass another bolt between themselves, and consequently through me, or they would make a shell of the charged particles, trapping me long enough for any passing demon to finish me off.

I threw my blade at Zaphkiel, judging him to be the slower of the two, however he easily deflected the spinning disk. I knew that by the time it reappeared in my hand, for all the good it would do me even then, whatever attack the Powers were preparing would have already been unleashed.

At just that moment, the Archangel Uriel in his lion aspect flashed past and raked at the arm of one of my opponents with his paw. The demon turned toward the retreating Arch-Throne, delaying his attack. Kaspriel, who saw his ally breaking off their assault, hissed in anger and dove in at me. I turned aside and met his khrev with my own, which had just returned to my possession. Beating back the fallen Power, I drove him off to seek a weaker foe, and in the distance I saw Zaphkiel being pursued by Uriel, who had resumed his original, angelic shape.

Looking around, I began to send whispered communications to my Ophanim with the intention of unifying us, thus making a wall of protection around Za'afiel who was currently being assisted by the oracle Zephon. Puriel and Remiel, the latter being a Principality with whom I also spend much time, sped toward me just in time to alert me to an attack from below and behind, and after dealing with this the three of us made our way closer to Za'afiel and Zephon, fighting off those who were barring our progress.

As we drew near, I left the others to aid the two Cherubim, for I had noticed something even higher in the air, and moved upward to briefly contend with Leviathan himself.

The “Archangel ruin'd,” as your poets have called him, had made short work of an enormous number of angels, and with twelve shining wings wreathing his powerful form, and two blazing swords pulsing with dark energy, he was consistently cutting down every opponent who stood between himself and Za'afiel below. I knew that if he got much closer to the heart of the battle things would be desperate indeed and El Michael, along with the two Watchers Gabriel and Raziel, was occupied standing high above the Ark, preventing either direct attacks upon it by the fallen angels, or the glory of the Shekinah – which had been brought to earth that day – from consuming all the world.

Even as I approached him, I saw Lucifer launching an attack I had never seen before. Whirling his wings around him, and drawing himself into a ball, he spun in a way that is difficult to describe using the analogy of physical bodies I am utilizing. It was as if he spun in every direction at once, rotating himself on every possible axis, and sending off a shower of tiny wing fragments to strike those above, below and all around him.

The Virtue in front of me was struck in the chest, and the feather, like a tiny dart, vanished to reveal a small but deep wound. The light in the angel's glowing eyes faded as he fell from the air, a tendril of sparkling energy marking his descent. He was not the only one to be so affected by the attack, and Satan had cleared for himself a large patch of sky, smiling as he prepared to personally prevent the commissioned angel from summoning the Flood.

With time enough only to react, I flapped all four of my wings and then opened them to catch the air. This resulted in a sudden rise followed by an abrupt stop in mid air – face to face with Azazel. “Zadkiel,” he said to me, “Are you not afraid to fall also?”

The concept of fear was hardly a new one to angels. We had all felt it at the first breach in Heaven, and we were constantly beholding it in the humans afflicted by the doctrine of Lucifer, and later the doctrine of Cain. For ourselves, however, fear was swallowed up in love and duty – especially so for me that day, when I looked into the eyes of the one with whom fear had originated.

“I have not been infected by your condition for many a year,” I replied. “You once tried to make me afraid, but by IaH's grace I escaped.” You have not been told much of my own experience with Lucifer during the war in Heaven, and that is a tale for another day, but for now it is enough to know that I was familiar with the fallen angels' tactics. When flattery

and persuasion fail, they will turn to threats – using doubts to inspire fear, and offering safety from such imagined evils by an acceptance of their true, current evil.

When Lucifer and I had fought in Heaven he had defeated me, although my sword partner Raziel was able to get the best of him for a time. But the memory brought me no anxiety; I had a job to do, and here I was. “I will not let you prevent Za’afiel,” I said, flying nearer still. I expected the Archangel to smile with his customary self-assuredness, but he only nodded as if in deep thought, and then advanced with his kherevs slashing in my direction.

With my solitary blade, I was outnumbered even in single combat. Lucifer’s speed also made the fact that I had four wings something of a disadvantage. I spent much of the time making sure that none of my limbs were in easy striking range of my opponent’s weapons, and with the sky around us still clear from the arch demon’s unique attack and other members of the Host occupied with other enemies, I was essentially on my own. Love and duty had once conquered my fears, and these two virtues now sustained me against the tempter. Aside from his arms, each of which wielded blades blazing with dark fire, his twelve wings continued to be vital concerns, and from his mouth issued flames similar in nature to the blasts of fire employed by the fallen Principalities and Powers.

In every battle with which Lucifer was associated, we saw some new trick, some new perversion of Heaven’s gifts to the fallen Cherub. Where once sweet songs had issued forth from that golden throat, there now came forth threats, insults, and fiery destruction. I longed to be doing battle with Sammael once more, who had been my steady companion in combat before this lengthy interlude. In an unfortunate irony I saw that Sammael had indeed spotted me, and having finished with his most recent opponent, he was rising through the air to give his master support.

By that time the globe of space that Azazel cleared had shrunk by the natural course of battling angels moving about, and so as we fought we had to keep an eye on what was going on around us. I knocked aside Lucifer’s left blade and swung back around to meet his right, when I felt a sting in my upper left wing from Sammael’s kherev. It was not a serious wound, but it was severe enough that I would no longer be able to effectively dodge the assaults of even my initial opponent, much less the combined efforts of both apostate Archangels.

Fortunately, it appeared as if Sammael’s joining us had been a design of Lucifer, for when the fallen Power approached, he and his master exchanged a brief look and my former foe dove downward to continue his advance on Za’afiel.

Sammael and I circled each other. Both of us had been in several battles since our last meeting, and he had taken some damage. I was relatively unhurt except for the slash he had placed in my wing. Flying nearer, Sammael began a series of swift attacks, each of which I deflected or avoided. A second flurry came my way, and again I was able to keep myself from being injured. After the third set of attacks, which also met with no success, Typhon drew back and regarded me carefully.

I knew he was considering the fact that I had attempted no counter attack. And even when he left a gap in his defenses, I had not pressed my advantage. When he paused between assaults, I had merely awaited the next opportunity to defend myself. I had come to realize only a short time before that Sammael and I were on just about the same level of skill. If we continued going as we had been, neither of us would be able to truly help our comrades, except that each of us was keeping a powerful warrior in check.

“Have you grown tired of fighting me?” Sammael taunted. “It is not so interesting, if you do not fight back.” The truth is, I had been paying more attention to the injuries Sammael had sustained in the battles he had fought before this, our latest meeting. Under ordinary circumstances we were perfectly matched – but with small, glowing wounds on both his arms, and a glittering scrape on his right side, it was obvious that the Archangelic Power was compensating for a slight loss of mobility, and coping with a fair amount of spiritual pain.

I did not respond, which further infuriated my enemy, and he charged in again with another rapid combination of swings and thrusts. With his last attack, I knocked his sword upward, and as his arm rose I saw him wince. The slash on his side widened, and he pulled back with a snarl.

My opponent moved in again, and this time as he completed his fifth set of attacks, I knocked his sword out to the side and proceeded to unleash upon him an innovation of my own. Shifting suddenly closer, I hit Sammael with each of my four wings in rapid sequence, turning my body in order to maintain my stability and to bring each appendage to bear. One, two, three, four, five; each of my hits connected with his form, the last of these being a blow from my free left hand to his injured right side.

The stunned Power raised his sword in defense long after he had been hit, and as I purposely pulled back to put some distance between us, he shook off the immediate effects and drew his blade back to mount another offensive. When he did so, the weight of his injuries caused him to delay for just an instant, but it was an instant that did not go unnoticed.

I saw my opportunity and quickly threw my blade at him. As the khrev whirled through the air it glowed brighter, and as it sped along it assumed the appearance of a glowing disc of energy. Sammael parried the weapon easily, and thinking he had finally tempted me to make a mistake, he moved in closer to dispatch me. I had been anticipating this, however, and I pushed forward with my wings, reaching up to grab his descending arm. Weakened by both the injury to his side and my recent attack, Sammael was helpless in my grip. Continuing to hold his sword arm tightly with my left hand, I reached out with my right into open air. With a hiss my khrev returned to me, shooting out like a ray of fire from my palm.

I closed my eyes to avoid seeing the expression in Typhon’s face as I cut into him with my burning blade. I heard him grunt, and I felt him loosen his grip on his weapon and begin to fall away. I continued to hold him aloft for just an instant, with my eyes still closed, but then I let him go and heard the faint crackling of his open wound fading further still... as he plunged toward the earth.

“Ah, Sovereign,” I lamented, “How long must this warfare continue?”

We had been witnesses to Lucifer’s great rebellion in Heaven. We had seen a third of our mighty brothers fall to the sophistry of the adversary. We had met our darkened counterparts on the field of battle above the Heavenly plane. We had seen them cast to earth in shame as the true spirit of the rebel was revealed. Further, we had seen Satan corrupt the crown jewel of creation, mankind made in the image of IaH. Eve, and then Adam, Cain and then his son Enoch; all of these had fallen prey to the terrible consequences of that one great rebellion.

For a millennium and a half, we had watched the progress of mankind. We had seen two classes of humans arise – the noble sons of Seth, and the corrupt progeny of Cain. Tempted by the promise of worldly pleasures, the Sethites had failed to maintain their separation from the corrupting influences of evil men and women, and their hope of Heaven was compromised. One by one the shadows spread over the earth, until there was but one family left alive that was faithful to the principles of Heaven.

The hope of humanity was now preserved in a tiny wooden box below me, only a few feet from where the crumpled body of Typhon lay motionless. As I raised my eyes from the sad scene, I saw a new enemy before me. Revachiel, a fallen Principality, was regarding me with cold eyes.

“I have been meaning to try something,” he said mysteriously, and then without another word he drew back his arm and threw his khrev my way.

I prepared myself for the whirling disc, calculating the timing of my block. Before my astonished eyes, however, the glowing shape elongated in mid air, reforming itself as a long, thin, glowing cylinder tipped with a wicked-looking point.

The speed of the weapon was also greatly increased by its change in size, and before I had an opportunity to time my deflection it was upon me. By the grace of IaH I instinctively moved my head to the side. The javelin whistled past, only to bury itself in the form of another holy angel behind me. The unexpected victim was as surprised as I at the turn of events, yet he did not have much time to consider the matter; unconsciousness quickly overtook him as the evil spear vanished.

Revachiel gave a satisfied smile, and drew back his arm to receive his returning khrev. This new power that the demons had discovered would be put to effective use later in our history against both angels and humans. They are the “*fiery darts of the wicked*” to which your Scriptures refer.

Fortunately, this particular battle allowed the reprobate Ikari no opportunity to continue his experiments. As his khrev rematerialized in his hand in the form of a sword, a recently–freed Za’afiel’s cry split the air, cutting through the noise of war. Instantly, every blade was lowered, and every conflict was forgotten as the earth gave a mighty shudder... and the cataclysm began.

The holy Principalities, Powers and Dominions scattered around the globe to preserve the planet against the violence of the disruption. The rest of us, demonic and holy alike, watched the terrified reactions of the humans below. As the land collapsed in on itself, or exploded upwards in huge jets of boiling water, mortal bodies were flung back and forth as if they weighed nothing at all. Scores of people who were near the Ark rushed toward it, only to be met with a surge of black water that swept them helplessly away.

The expensive adornments, the elaborate clothing, the complicated and ingenious devices that had been designed by the brilliant minds of the humans – none of these things were valued more than a rock, or a tree, or anything that afforded a handhold. Anything that was not being whipped along by the storm surge was a welcome refuge, but the purpose of the judgment was to destroy, and no temporary shelter could preserve what the Almighty had ordained for dissolution.

Within the Ark, Noah's family offered anxious prayers. The main window of the vessel was shut as soon as the water had lifted it off the ground, and so the humans within could not see the watery death to which their fellow men were going.

For forty days, water poured down upon the earth, and water roared up from the depths of the planet as if there would never be an end. Even after this initial deluge, the level continued to rise for some time, and soon there was nothing left alive outside the ark that once had the breath of life. When the waters had calmed, leaving the earth completely covered, the Host withdrew to Heaven, leaving the demons to the reward of their labor. For many days the angels had held their peace and their places, witnesses according to the Presence of the Most High. But now there was nothing more to see.

Shomeriel and Mageniel, the two Cherubim who had once guarded the Tree of Life, were appointed guardianship of the Ark, to ensure that the demons could not trouble them directly during their journey. Much happened within the vessel, however, that was based upon their more subtle influences. As it stood, the demons looked out over the uniformly wet landscape, and they sulked.

Lucifer's glowing eyes hovered above the waters, beholding the desolation he had instigated. It was not long, however, before he shook off all passing remnants of guilt, and even sadness for his own sure future. The fallen Archangel turned his attention to the human beings within the safety of the divinely designed vessel, and his brilliant, evil mind began to plan. As he had promised El Michael long before the flood, the War was not over yet.

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 1: MELODY

One of the important attributes of demons that must be understood by human beings seeking to avoid temptation is this: angels in general have limited creative ability. The design of something completely new has never truly been accomplished by members – good or evil – of the hosts, yet they have been able to alter and reshape existing ideas and spiritual constructs with impressive results. According to his personality, each individual angel expresses his experience in a unique way – thus for holy angels, knowledge is a blessing to himself and others. For the fallen ones, knowledge is a great curse on both themselves and any other beings to which their attention is turned.

One of the great evils of Babel, the “Gate of The Gods,” as it was called, was that it was a symbol not only of man’s rebellion, but man’s union with apostate spiritual powers for the purpose of self-exaltation. As your Scriptures say, the Tower therein was built so that corrupt men could “*make a name*” for themselves. How that principle came to be reestablished in human society even after the Flood, that most dramatic of judgments, is a subject of study for the angelic Host even to this day.

It began simply enough, and in a heart-rending parallel to the events in Heaven many, many centuries before.

Although he was always obedient to his family, Ham was often the least willing to perform. His wife was taken from among the redeemed Cainites, and although her family was laid to rest before the deluge with the hope of Heaven, she herself had never fully recovered from the influence of her former teachers. Contained within her memory were many of the perverse rites and ceremonies of the pre-flood days; and worse, her mind was not sealed against continuing influence from the dark angels.

Ham’s difficulties in faith predated his married life, and this selection of a bride, and the further negative influence the union had on his experience, was merely symptomatic. His mood at times aboard the Ark, and the reluctant manner with which he undertook his duties there provided the Host with a real, if rare, glimpse at the characters of the husband and wife, and a portent of the days to come.

Noah had no need to be informed of the issue; he well knew the personality of his youngest son. The patriarch would often express his concerns to his guardian Za’afiel, and the Cherub

offered what comfort he could, although he knew the future held much that would not be pleasant. “You never say much when I bring your attention to Ham,” Noah addressed the angel. “It is as if you know more than you are saying regarding his case.”

Za’afiel regarded Noah, who was looking out over the waters through his window. “History must run its course,” he replied. “It has not been given to me to know the future, and even those who know it are not always free to reveal it to others. Zephon and Da’athiel have seen things in the days ahead of which they say, ‘It is not lawful to speak;’ yet they have given assurance that the faithful among us, and among you, will be prepared in time for all that comes to pass.”

Noah was resting in faith, reassured by the comfort provided. Even though he could tell that the course on which his son and daughter-in-law were traveling would no doubt result in pain, he understood enough of the answer to the Question to be at peace. Even though he saw in Ham the same subtle discontent that the holy angels had first noticed in Lucifer over 1500 years before, he had the assurance that IaH had the matter in hand.

* * * * *

At the command of El Michael, “Let the waters cease from the surface,” the Dominions descended into the earth and began to direct the forces of nature in order to bring about an end to the watery judgment. Although the reasons for this rebirth of the world were a tragic one, the Hashmallim nevertheless found some pleasure in being party to the new hope of the physical creation. Tamael, Matmoniel, and their chief Zahariel moved to the hot, fluid layer under the earth’s crust, and even as the other members of their order began to open up passages into which the water would run, these three began to cause the first mountain ranges to arise.

There had been hills, and even great mountains, in the days before the flood. The slopes had been gentle, however, and the valleys not too deep. Rather than rocks and ice, the peaks were covered with greenery; the air was not too thin to support life even at the higher altitudes, and the cold was not so extreme in those places as it is now. These new mountains, however, were relatively unlovely – and this by design. The natural forces of the earth were scarred by the weight of sin, and the judgment decreed by the Almighty had merely caused the planet to reflect its spiritual state in a physical way. The Dominions were not given the authority to wholly repair the scenery, for they were providentially to serve as reminders to those in the generations to come with eyes to see.

As the mountains arose, lifted by the motion beneath the crust, large sections of the surface collapsed into the network of tunnels that had served to irrigate the foliage so well before the destruction. Enormous basins came into being, and the water began to collect there. Oceans would remain in those areas when dry land finally appeared, and in those places the remains of most of the Flood-drowned creatures trapped in the layers of earth were crushed by the violence of the shifting, collapsing crust.

Here and there, tiny points of solid matter began to appear above the surface of the receding waters. The tidal pull of the moon left them covered at times, and exposed at others, and the motion of the receding and returning waves wore down those peaks that were composed of softer matter, until only the very hard points remained. It was upon structures such as these that the Ark finally ran aground.

As the family within waited for the level of water to sink to an acceptable level, they were visited by many members of the Host, to comfort them in their wait and to assure them of the protection they would require in the days to come. From the beginning of the Flood, the humans had noticed dramatic changes to the climate – even before the waters stopped rising. Many of the forces of the earth, which had been so carefully maintained in the antediluvian world, were now left to wind down of their own accord.

This reduction of so many vital, though not always noticeable, factors was already beginning to slowly take its toll on physical beings, and had the animals in the Ark not been held in a subdued state by both the motion of the vessel and the Host's influence, the emerging violence of the animal kingdom may well have manifest itself within those closed quarters.

This is not to say that there was no predation before the Deluge. Ever since the entrance of sin, death and decay had been experienced by observers. The Cainites raised death to the status of a ritual in both animals and man, and the lesser beasts over whom they had been given spiritual dominion followed suit. Even with their influence broken, however, the seeds had been planted, and the process was accelerated by the changes in the weather, climate, chemical imbalances, and even the alterations to the air itself.

As the water level continued to drop, the Principalities and Powers lent their efforts to the Dominions, and using the training they had been receiving for some time before the Flood, they set in place the various cycles even now operating on earth. The seeds that had been adrift for so long responded eagerly to the soil in which they landed, to the sunshine once more shed upon them, and to the touch of the Virtues who were sent to speed the process of growth.

When the humans left their wooden craft for the first time, every one of them rejoiced at the plant life they saw all around. El Michael appeared briefly to Noah at the time of his sacrifice, and gave him instruction about life in the new world. The sons of the patriarch lost no time in fulfilling their commission to fill the earth once more. Two years after the flood, Arphaxad, the firstborn of Noah's middle son, was greeted by the joyful family.

* * * * *

“A warm day is this,” Noah said, looking over his vineyard. As he sat down to take a rest, he remembered the words spoken to Adam that had been passed down to him: “*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.*” The patriarch took a sip of the juice he had brought with him in his favorite jug.

The harvest of his land had taken place some time ago, and Noah was clearing his planting area. Before the flood, this work had been easy. The vines sprung forth rapidly from the rich soil, requiring very little care, and produced a bountiful harvest. With the earth's depletion, and the natural forces being unbalanced, the continuing effects of the planet's judgment were easily seen. It had been over two centuries since the day his family had come down out of the Ark, and life had not been easy in the new world.

It was only by the grace of IaH and the guidance of the holy angels that the eight humans had been able to husband their resources effectively. Some of the animals stayed in the region, while others quickly expanded their territories or migrated completely, following the food to which they were accustomed. Ham and Japheth had taken to the care and domestication of some of the beasts that seemed to remain most friendly toward man.

Many had been the unpleasant surprises as the "fear of man" crept into the nature of the wild beasts. It had seemed strangely fitting to Noah that those animals which became most hostile toward man tended to be those that IaH had rejected as sacrifices. Some of the animals, which El Michael had declared "clean" were offered on the altars of the faithful as representative of the Sacrifice that was to come and redeem them from the curse of death, yet others were never to be so used. Within these latter animals, either the predatory instincts appeared most prominently, or their tendency was to avoid human beings altogether.

Noah and his son Shem worked the land directly, providing the majority of the food used by the humans and clean beasts. Noah drank again, remembering with pleasure the many days he and his second son had labored to preserve their settlement against storms and bitter cold. Most of their early years had been spent in harvesting the more robust of the crops, but the fruits which required the most care, such as these precious grapes, were a much more recent endeavor. The last harvest had been the first from which there had been an abundance, and the drink he was now enjoying was a treat he had missed from the days before the Flood.

As the heat bore down, Noah loosened his coat and went to find a rock more conveniently located under the shade of a tree. The angels above slowly began to notice something unusual in the bearing of the noble human, who was not one to rest so heavily even in the heat of the day. The demons also, who had been watching closely the trends in the small human family, drew near to the farmer as he sat and reminisced about the past.

Presently Noah began to mutter about Ham, comparing him, as he often did, to Japheth and Shem. All of the boys had produced sizeable families of their own in the years since the Flood. Japheth had seven sons, and many grandchildren. Shem had five, including the industrious Arphaxad, and these sons had also produced children. Ham had four sons, and of these, Cush and Canaan (the oldest and youngest) took much after their mother. Cush's firstborn Nimrod was roughly the same age as his uncle Canaan, and between these two young men had sprung up an unusual rivalry that saddened the hearts of the Host and the earthly family.

“Ah, Canaan,” Noah sighed. “You should not follow that one into mischief.” Noah indeed loved all his descendants, and Canaan was not his least favorite. He saw a great strength in the boy, but also a great weakness in this: he was easily led. Ham’s youngest had the potential to be a great leader. He had courage and determination. He had great loyalty, and a mind attuned to spiritual things. In spite of all these gifts, however, he had little sense of purpose, and few convictions. “Would that you were more the fire your father is.” Ham’s name meant “hot,” for he was red of skin at birth, and loud with his wailings.

Noah continued, “It would have been a blessing to you, yet your father also takes the fire too far. He may yet be consumed by it.” Noah gave a hoarse laugh at his own cleverness, and drew more heavily from his jar.

Za’afiel’s bright eyes narrowed as he considered the words and actions of his charge. Descending quickly to earth, he looked into the eyes of the patriarch, and noted that they were reddened. The Cherub was invisible, yet Noah said, “Za’afiel! Come to see my field?” A frown creased the angel’s forehead, yet as the human before him made no further statement concerning him; he made no reply and did not manifest himself. He looked around instead and, seeing nothing out of the ordinary – except for Noah – the Cherub looked deeply into the jar from which the farmer had been drinking.

“Hm...” the angel said. “This liquid is decayed.”

Even after the curse, the progress of decay had been relatively slow. At the time of the flood, the death to which the animals and plants were subjected was the first step in their elements being recycled back into the earth. Organisms much too small for humans to see were adapted to this purpose, breaking down the complex systems and allowing the material from which they had been composed to serve a further useful purpose in nature.

Yet here in the wine that had been stored from the vineyard’s last harvest, these tiny creatures had set up residence, and the consequences of this were apparently having a poisonous effect on the human being. The influence of the decayed juice seemed to be affecting Noah rather badly, for he began to speak of the “melody of the field,” his senses singing some strange song in his mind. Za’afiel considered the matter carefully, examining Noah’s system, and perceived that the human was in no serious danger. On the other hand, he would not be of much use in the field until his drunkenness had passed.

“Perhaps you should take a rest in your tent,” Noah’s guardian whispered in his mind. “You are tired indeed, and this heat is not good for your condition.”

Noah made a face at no one in particular, and then with a grunt he rose to his feet and staggered off in the direction of the settlement. “This heat is not good for my condition,” the patriarch slurred, unknowingly repeating the statement of Za’afiel. As he approached his dwelling, he began to shed his clothing, and he got the last item off just as he arrived at the entrance to his place of rest. “Shem!” he roared in majestic inebriation, “Come and help your father!” With that, he collapsed into his tent.

This startling event caused no small stir in the settlement. Children ran to their mothers, and the men stood around, unsure of what to do next. No one had seen Noah arriving, yet the articles of clothing laying outside the door alerted them to the fact that something was very wrong. Japheth and Shem were not nearby, although someone went off to call them, and so Ham as the oldest present went forward into the tent of his father.

Noah opened an eye when the flap of his tent was lifted, but said nothing, and was soon snoring heavily. Ham stood there looking at him for a time, a mixture of pity and confusion in his mind, but to a large degree there was also a sense of disgust. Since his days on the Ark, Ham's wife had been subtly speaking against Noah. It was nothing to excite much comment among the humans themselves, and most of her conversation on the subject had been in private with her husband anyway, but the Host took note, regarding it as one of the sure signs of things to come.

Gradually, Ham's reverence for his father had worn down to nothing, and although he did not understand the reason why Noah was stretched out before him unclothed, he was pricked by the influence of nearby demons (who did understand the matter by that time) to look upon him with contempt. "I will get someone else to cover your shame," Ham said, making no move to perform the service himself. As he left the tent he saw Shem and Japheth coming up.

The older brothers took note of the garments without the entrance, and when Ham related to them what had taken place, they asked, "Why have you left him naked?" Ham replied casually, "I left his care to his favorites."

The statement shocked Japheth, but only because his brother had spoken it aloud. It was well known that Ham, for his low mood and scarcely controlled temper, was often opposed to the will of his father. There were no open disagreements up until that time, but the humans could perceive as easily as we the tension between Ham and his father. Shem gave no visible reaction, but turned to his older brother and said, "Let us cover him." Taking a new robe from the place of clothing, Japheth and Shem moved quietly into the tent to avoid awakening their father, whom they believed to be ill or exhausted for some other reason.

The sons were careful to avert their eyes, keeping their backs to Noah as they lay the garment over him. They left him thus to sleep.

Some time after the sun had set, Shem, Ham and Japheth sat around the fire with their wives and adult children. Shem looked thoughtfully into the flames consuming the dried branches, considering that even the decay of plant life was necessary now to give them comfort against the chill of the nights. He was one of the few who remembered a time when the nights were not very cold, and the days were not uncomfortably hot.

With shuffling steps, a newly awakened Noah joined the others by the flames. For a long time, no one said anything, and everyone sat in silence staring at the fire. Finally the patriarch spoke, "I am not certain what took place today. Something must have overcome me in the field, and I took leave of my judgment."

“I do remember your presence in my tent,” he continued, turning toward Ham. “My heart is not yet sound, and I need more rest, but I am moved to speak by the memory of your face as you regarded me there. I have long felt your growing dishonor toward me, my son, and the look in your eyes was not unknown to me before this day.”

Ham did not say anything, but looked into the fire, refusing to meet Noah’s eyes. “Do you not realize the influence you have on your family?” his father said. “Should not the father of a home do rightly? Mizraim and Phut seem more stable, but Cush and Canaan are at the extremes. Cush has inherited your temper, and Canaan has been crushed by it. He follows any who will direct him, though he lashes out against them at times, and he will be led into destruction. For this tendency he is cursed indeed, and will always be a lowest servant of his brothers.”

These things had been on Noah’s mind for some time, and the day’s unusual events gave him occasion to speak. “I have never had favorites, as you imagine, Ham. All of you have I loved, and your family is precious to me. Because of your feelings toward me, and those of your wife, I have never been able to share with them my wisdom, and the knowledge I have gained from my walk with IaH. I hold Shem up as an example, because he feels toward me as a son should, and he has heard my instruction.”

“When I am gone,” he said, “Shem will be priest after me, for although Japheth is my firstborn, his love has always been the field and the wild. IaH has blessed him in this, and does not require of him more than he is willing to give. Shem will be faithful to carry forward the message of the Sacrifice to the generations to come; yes, blessed be IaH, the Almighty One of Shem, and Canaan will be his servant. Your son has the opportunity still to choose for himself a good leader; but if he does not, he will nevertheless be made to serve righteousness one way or another.”

“For his dedication, Elohim will enlarge Japheth, and give him the wilderness he loves. He shall dwell in the tents of Shem, faithful to his intercession, and Canaan will be his servant also. The sons of your son, Ham... they will suffer the effects of your discontent. Have we not been warned of Lucifer’s fall? Did you not heed the record of his rebellion? And yet in you I see the same seeds of destruction.”

The angels standing around mourned the split that was taking place in the family, so recently saved from the judgment of earth. We knew that Lucifer’s threats had never been idle, yet we had hoped for a longer season of peace. Time and again the old drama plays itself out: the Question is presented in different ways to different people, and each time IaH allows the separation, for the characters of the just and the unjust must be made manifest before watching eyes.

Imriel, the same foul spirit who had once infected Cain, watched Ham stalking angrily away from the fire, and he smiled at another job successfully brought to completion. In the meantime, other demons drew near to the jug that had been left near the rock on which the noble patriarch of mankind had taken his rest. They had heard Za’afiel’s statement, and

knew that somehow the “decay” of the substance had led to Noah’s condition, but about this matter they wished to learn a great deal more.

* * * * *

In the Eternal Kingdom above, sorrowing eyes beheld the tiny scene near Noah’s tent. Remiel, who had been Ham’s guardian, was not feeling joyful, and unto Puriel and myself he was making his concerns known.

“IaH will be exalted for His wisdom in allowing this,” the Principality said, “but oh how painful it is to watch him surrounded by that darkness!” The angel, whose name means “Mercy of El,” was referring to the clouds of sin that surround those who succumb to the influence of tempting spirits. The Host is mighty, and able to do all things by the power of the Most High, yet we are not commissioned to influence human beings against their will. Only under the most critical of situations, and even then, only under very specific circumstances, are holy angels given the instruction to *directly* oppose or aid mankind.

Mercifully, this limitation is also placed upon Lucifer’s band; however at the Tower which was soon to be erected, great advances were made by the fallen ones regarding finding ways around this barrier. The darkness Imriel had cast upon Cain had made it impossible for us to guard him against further temptation, and when he gave his heart wholly over to sin, the darkness was so great that the even the life of his brother Abel was placed under the dominion of his choice. In the Flood we saw many children, too young to be personally guilty of sin, swept away in judgment due to the shadows their evil parents had wrapped around them.

Ham’s shadows were not as dark as Cain’s had been, and he seemed at times to resist the voice whispering in his mind, yet he did not recognize the temptations as the words of another and he accepted the mind of Satan as his own.

“It is not easy for any of us,” I said, attempting to comfort my tenderhearted friend. Remiel was able to put on a strong exterior, and was a fierce warrior in battle. For those of us who were familiar with him, though, we knew that he was always among the first to grieve with the mourners, and to rejoice with the elated. “But consider how long these feelings were kept inside of him. Can they not be healed, now that they are open before all his family?”

“If Ham were of the sort that coveted healing, Zadkiel,” he replied, “I might find your words more soothing. As it is, I cannot easily perceive a good end to this.”

Puriel said, “Good endings will not be common on that world. We were given to know this from the beginning. Yet we are able to drive the demons back each time we meet in battle. The war belongs to IaH, and to those who rest in His care. The final ending will be very good.”

“This I know well,” Remiel responded, “it is for those who do not find their place in Him that my essence sinks. But let it be so for now; there are other concerns at hand.” Turning to me he said, “Has Za’afiel said anything more to you regarding Noah’s condition?”

I told my two friends what I have shared with you above, of the Cherub’s discovery of fermentation in the wine. “The ability of these organisms to poison human beings is remarkable,” I concluded, “and the rate of their activity seems to have increased since the Flood, as we have noticed. It is no wonder that most forms of decay are naturally repulsive to mankind – the corruption appears to affect their bodies in some very dramatic ways.”

“The demons have not been ignorant of the discovery either,” Puriel added. “Given their tendency to pervert even the good and blessed gifts of the earth, how much more destructive can they render this development?”

“Greetings in the name of IaH,” came Zephon’s familiar voice as he drew near to us. We returned his greeting, and the Cherubic oracle proceeded to join our discussion as we continued to look in upon the humans sitting below around the flickering fire.

“Two hundred years,” Zephon said. “I had not imagined it would take this long.”

We gave the oracle our full attention, and he realized the need to elaborate on what he had just declared. “The ‘hot one’ is to be the king of the south,” he said, using the word for “king” in a similar way to which we angels apply it to the Almighty. “It is through this one that rebellion will rise again, to bring about the Sacrifice, and an ultimate end to the warfare between the Throne and the fallen ones.”

Remiel was silent to the implications of this for the one over whom he had guardianship, yet he said, “This end, is it near, then?”

Zephon said, “I have always hoped it would be soon, perhaps that is why I am surprised that the tension between Noah and his son have remained under control for so long. Not until there is a separation in humanity, as there was in the days before the Flood, can the remnant be purified.”

Of course, we now know that even the oracle’s most liberal predictions could not have foreseen six thousand years of suffering on this planet. As with every seer, every prophet, every divine oracle, Zephon was not permitted to perceive very far into the coming days; but even those things which were needed as messages for the residents of a very distant future were provided by means of references to events which would come to pass in short order. For this reason, many of the prophecies in your Scriptures have had more than one application – the predictions may come to pass as indicated by the speaker of the message, but the principles continue to serve as warnings for those faithful few in the latter days.

In Zephon’s mind, as he shared with us, the giving of the Sacrifice and the fulfillment of all things was soon to come to pass. We understood since the fall of man that El Michael had been appointed by the Throne to give Himself as a Sacrifice for lost humanity; indeed, He

had volunteered willingly, and Zephon made it known to the Host that the natural system of mankind would be so arrayed against the principles of righteousness in those days that the death of the coming Savior would be assured.

We had many questions to ask of the oracle when he spoke of such difficult matters, yet they were all forms and subtypes of the same ultimate Question that filled the universe since the days of the war in Heaven. Why the suffering? Why was the Elohim willing to pay such a dear price for the freedom of even Their rebellious children?

But it was appointed for us to live in trust for a very long time, before the events that would provide us with the ultimate answer should come to pass. One of the reasons we were not given to know these times and seasons was because only the Elohim was capable of extending mercy as long as He has. Only the Throne is able to bear the knowledge of the suffering of man to its full extent; to deal with the pain of sin then, now and forever. What a grief it would have been for us to know in those days that we had thousands of years more to witness similar scenes to the one that was taking place below.

We spoke for a while longer, and then we fell into silence, watching those below us retiring to their tents a few at a time. I withdrew my attention from them to widen my vision of the earth. The mountains of Ararat had been blessed indeed by the presence of the faithful family. Foliage was again covering the exposed land of the planet, although the surface consisted of a lot more water now; but nowhere on earth was found a landscape more beautiful than that which was near the camp of the humans.

To be sure, there was great beauty even in the tainted wilderness of the natural growth, but among the directed order of the food crops and the plants grown for their beauty, the Host found great joy. With very few humans being alive, only a limited number of guardians were needed, and so the vast majority of us spent our time either in Heaven attending the affairs of the Kingdom, watching the activities of the demons as they mulled over their twisted plans, or observing the harmonic operations of Noah's offspring.

With the events that took place on that day, however, the chasm between Ham's family and the other members of humanity began to widen. With sadness we remembered the day a third of our number was deceived by the workings of the great Dragon, and we could not miss the similarity to the events unfolding before our eyes concerning one of Noah's three sons.

The harmony that the sons of men had enjoyed more or less consistently for the past two centuries was about to come to a violent end.

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 2: HARMONY

Matmoniel had just turned our attention to the Seraphim, who were even now beginning their joyful song of praise. The brightly burning angels raised their voices in grateful adoration of the Elohim, and every unfallen spirit's mind was drawn in by the words and cascading notes that hung in the air and echoed wonderfully off the walls of the great Throneroom.

A few of the Host, including Remiel, remained on earth to watch over the humans on this occasion of our regular meeting, but most of us stood around the Almighty One, gathered before Him to rejoice, rest and remember.

My friend Puriel stood with the Cherubim; he had been the chief of this wise Order ever since Gabriel was called to replace the void left in the Divine hierarchy by Lucifer. I stood with the Ophanim, having received this position when the previous chief of the order, Raziel, had received a call like that of Gabriel. Ithuriel and Lahatiel, the heads of the Principalities and Powers respectively, were also appointed their positions during the conflict, the former chiefs of both these Orders having fallen away.

The former chief of the Principalities was a powerful angel named Cerviel, who had opposed Lucifer's initial rebellion with such fervor that it came as a great blow to many of us that he later became one of the dissenter's most devoted servants. Anael, his second in command, had filled in the role during the battle for Heaven, but when he became sealed as one of the Twelve and was appointed other duties, this role passed to Ithuriel. As for Cerviel, because of his great love for positions of authority he altered his name somewhat, calling himself "Chayil," which in the tongue of a later human empire would roughly translate to the word *Legion*.

Uzziel and Zahariel, the leaders of the Virtues and Dominions, were the only two chiefs aside from Israfael of the Seraphim who were not affected in their posts by Lucifer's fall. We seven formed the main commanders of the various classes of angels, and we were second in authority only to the Archangels, whose roles transcended that of the Order from which they were drawn.

These brightly glowing *Adonaim* were four in number: Gabriel was a Cherub, Raphael a Virtue, Camael a Power and Uriel (once known as Phanael) was appointed from my order of Thrones. On certain occasions, seven Archangels were needed to stand in the presence of IaH, and three others: Za'afiel, Raziel and Israfael, were so employed.

Aside from these, as you know from the previous messengers of this record, there were Twelve angels sealed into loyalty before the rebellion broke out. Upon this small group rested much of the challenge of maintaining the harmony of Heaven, bridging the gap left there by the fall of the demons. Of course, the Elohim was well able to direct all activities Himself, but the Throne was pleased to have willing servants performing the tasks and duties that would benefit not only the Kingdom as a whole, but each individual member as well.

I spoke to you in the beginning about a “most righteous” generation coming forth from the last days of earth’s history. When these are called to be the kings and priests in Heaven, they will be divided among the offices now held by the Twelve, and so fully seal up the rent produced by Azazel’s fall. The current arrangement is only temporary, and although we do our job perfectly well, we are all aware that this is not the ultimate goal. We look forward to the day when mankind, for whom such responsibilities are prepared, will fulfill its exalted destiny; but before exaltation there must come great humility, lest any of these follow once again in Lucifer’s dark course.

As the voices of Israfel and Pe’oriel ended the song of the Seraphim, El Michael emerged from the Union with the Throne. The Throne of the Father is where sits the Most Blessed, concerning Whom it is not lawful for us to speak much with mortal man. The Almighty appointed His Son as mediator between Himself and His creation, and from the days of eternity El Michael has been the Voice of IaH. The Second of the Elohim looked over the vast assembly of ministering spirits on that day, and then He addressed us in loving tones that carried easily from the nearest angel to the most distant.

“What is to be done with the sons of men? They are a rebellious people, and so easily subject to the corruption of the nature given them from the days of Adam. We have sent unto them messengers, and warnings, and finally great judgment; yet among them are many who have cast off the fear of the Most High.” I recalled with sadness the rebellion of human beings before the Flood, and the identical tendencies that were developing in Ham and his family.

“I have promised never more to fill all the earth with waters of a flood,” Michael continued, burning brightly in mysterious Union with the Throne, “Men must decide for themselves the path they wish to take, and Heaven cannot accept service which comes forth from fear of judgment. Noah and his family were saved from the waters, because in my friend I saw understanding. Noah has taught his children well – that my wrath was for a moment, to preserve humanity, but my favor is everlasting. The waters washed away those who would never repent, and all who accepted the freedom We offered were spared.”

“In the dwelling place of mankind has sprung up a lethal tree, a plant bearing poisonous fruit, to trouble the faithful on earth. Shall I not therefore visit for these things? Yet I will bear long with mankind, for my servant Noah’s sake, and I will do nothing against them while he yet lives. We shall appoint therefore a Council to preserve the peace, and to put distance between Ham and the faithful of his family. Let us put it in the minds of man to

form a Circle of Twenty, that I may speak through them for the guidance of mankind, for in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”

I nodded in approval. A large part of Ham’s discomfort came from the fact that he perceived Noah to be a dictator among mankind. Although Noah was rightly due great reverence for being their father, Ham saw in the patriarch qualities that were not truly there. Inspired by Imriel and other demons, Noah’s youngest son was led to feel oppressed, belittled and unfavored, and if there was a set of men directly guiding the progress of man, Ham would have less of an excuse to feel as he did. I had no doubt that the discontent would continue, but by this action of the Throne, his anger would be shown in its true light, as an unreasonable and selfish trait, rather than a genuine complaint against injustice.

“Furthermore,” El Michael had continued, “the time is not long off when humanity must accomplish the commission I have bestowed upon them: to fill all the earth. Mankind is few, and finds safety in numbers, yet they will soon grow to a population that will allow them to spread over the earth and fill it once again with faithful souls. From this Council will go forth my voice among them, to direct their preparations to this end, and to reveal unto them the times I have appointed.”

“Blessed be the Name of IaHWeH,” declared all the angels, as El Michael finished speaking. The Seraphim took up their song anew, and the bright golden crowns of life materialized around our foreheads. We cast them down around the Throne as a symbol of our dependence on the Almighty for our very existence, and when the last of these sparkling rings settled into place, the Throneroom filled with the almost blinding light of the Shekinah, the Mystery Presence, and our diadems reappeared on our heads. Every angelic eye shone with the equivalent of tears, and every angelic mouth smiled in its spiritual way. The essence of the Host was lifted up, as would be the hearts of men, and shouts of praise filled the Kingdom finding resonance even in the angels on earth who, although absent in their beings, were joining with us by their essences in the giving of grateful praise.

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A great many things were explained to the humans following that meeting. Za’afiel made known to Noah the reason for his drunkenness, and the patriarch disposed of the rest of the stored liquid with horror. “I will have no more of that condition,” he said. Later on it was revealed how to arrest the development of the agents of decay, and so future harvests, which were becoming more and more bountiful under the watchful care of Noah and Shem, yielded much sweeter long-term results.

The oracles Zephon and Da’athiel also instructed Noah and his three sons regarding the formation of the Council, and all four of them were agreeable to the mandate. The Council consisted of the following members: Noah was the one who presided over the meetings, although he had no specific role of “authority” as such. Shem was also a member, along with his sons Arphaxad, Elam, Asshur, Lud and Aram. Japheth was present, as well as his sons Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. Ham, along with his sons

Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan were also members of the Council, despite the youth of the last of these.

The robe of Noah during the formal meetings of the Council was white. Japheth's robe, and those of his clan, were blue. Shem's color was a brilliant purple, and Ham's family wore red. These men represented the "covering" of all mankind in the glory of Heaven, and a curtain of protection from the more direct influences of the demons. As it is written in your Scriptures, "*thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work.*"

It might be imagined by some that Japheth's clan would have an advantage in the decisions of the Council. Why, he had more sons than Shem, and almost twice as many as Ham. Even so, the color assigned to the robes of Japheth was blue, and this was a fitting representation of his character. The family of Japheth was calm, orderly, and not at all concerned with leadership. Its members had no great love of power, and no desire to impose their will upon the others. They were supremely interested in the good of humanity as a whole, and willing to easily make peace with their fellows for the greater good.

There was one, however, who was particularly displeased with this harmony of humanity. Indeed, he hated it almost as much as the demons themselves, who beheld this group of people in unity with distaste. Even Ham's hostility toward his father was momentarily held in check by his newfound responsibilities. His tension was soothed, and he felt a true sense of purpose for the first time since the Ark had been completed two hundred years before.

But Nimrod, the son of Cush, felt no peace at the formation of the assembly. "Canaan!" he would often mutter to himself. "Canaan the foolish, Canaan the weak; and he will think to exercise his undeserved authority over me! How shall I bear this insult?"

Nimrod had inherited his grandfather's temper, and his father's naturally ill disposition. To it all he added a fiercely competitive streak, and a hunger for power over others. Because of his youth, these tendencies had not yet noticeably disrupted the flow of life for the humans, yet those who were closest to him, like Canaan, had often felt the sting of his words, or even at times the force of his body as he pushed them in directions he would have them go.

Canaan and Nimrod were a little older than these childish games in the days of the Council, and physical confrontations between them were rare, yet the love-hate relationship between the uncle and nephew kept them near each other, and always in a state of tension. Nimrod knew himself to be smarter, a better leader, and far stronger of will than his relative, yet he was denied a place in the body of councilors because he was of the fourth generation since Noah. All the members were chosen from among the first three. This was not an arbitrary decision.

Animals were not the only physical beings to be affected by the changes to nature brought about by the Flood. Human beings also were feeling the effects of the disruption of the natural forces. Life spans began to decrease, the level of physical strength began to fail, and stature – the size of human bodies – was also negatively affected. Even some members of

the fourth generation after Noah began to see physical differences, and life spans began to decline dramatically as early as the third generation, even with Arphaxad, the first born into the new world.

It was decided by the Throne that only the first three generations, who would live longer and be revered more faithfully, should be given the headship of humanity. Nimrod knew that he was different, however, and believed that an exception should have been made in his case. He was a large and powerful individual, even at his young age, and the results of his rivalry with the youngest son of Ham proved to his mind that he was superior in every way.

As it then stood, despite his discontent there was nothing the youth could do. Unless something changed, and changed drastically, he would never receive the honor and authority that he felt he so richly deserved.

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My great adversary during the battle above the Ark lurked nearby in the shadows, watching Nimrod and knowing well his thoughts. Indeed, Sammael was directly responsible for the advanced nature of the human's discomfort, and he was quite pleased with the degree of self-inflicted torment that resided in the soul of the young Hamite. "Such lovely material to work with," he said to Chayil and Paimon, who stood nearby.

Chayil, or Legion, was the same dark Principality who was Lucifer's representative in the evil, pre-Flood kingdom of Enoch, of the line of Cain. Under his original name, Cerviel, he had greatly withstood the spreading of Noah's message of hope to the world in the days before the Deluge, and ever since he had been looking for a way to strike out at the faithful human.

Paimon was a fallen Hashmal or, as they now called their fallen order, the *Leeshlotim*, or "Controllers." Before they had been known as Dominions, appointed by the Most High, yet under Lucifer their aim was to direct the course of events on earth irrespective of human freedom. The Seraphim among the demons were now called *Peelogim*, or "Discordant Ones." The Cherubim, once known for their strength of mind, went by the name of *Gibborim*, or "Mighty ones." Those of my order, who had represented the very Thrones or foundations of Divine government, came to be called the *Erelim*, or "Valiant ones," for their Heaven-daring rebellion against the principles they once upheld.

The once beautiful Virtues, although they still appeared fair outwardly, took the name *Shavoorim*, or "Broken ones," while the Principalities and Powers kept the Order names they used in Heaven, since the chiefs of these divisions had both fallen to the Dragon.

Paimon was one of the most skilled tempters of human beings who had a natural lust for controlling others, and with Chayil's ability to speak through corrupt rulers, the two had made (and would continue to make) a formidable team in setting up human governments against the principles and rulership of Heaven. Sammael, as one of Lucifer's most trusted arch demons, was eager to direct the efforts of this pair in destroying the authority and

usefulness of IaH's recently appointed Council of Twenty. In the self-important desires of the human before them, they saw their great chance.

"How long have you been working with this one?" Paimon asked.

"Since the day he opened his eyes," Typhon laughed. "It is never certain whether the humans will accept or reject the traits of their family, yet a happy chance it was that Nimrod filtered out the combination of qualities he now possesses. Everything good about their bodies, and everything corrupt about their spirits; of these things is he chiefly composed. How carefully I guided him, keeping him safe from the influence of Adriel, his guardian. And how wonderfully well he has turned out."

The Virtue Adriel had known from the beginning that his would not be an easy task. The shadows of Ham and Cush were thick over the members of their family, and even the great skill of the faithful Malak allowed him precious few opportunities to reveal to the young man the joy of holiness. Still, the rays of Heaven's grace were piercing through the clouds of oppression at every available occasion, and Nimrod had enough light to know that his ways were not pleasing to the Most High. On the few occasions he gave his case sincere thought, the demons that so easily beset him had a great and terrible deception to employ.

"Remember the Flood," Sammael would whisper to him, whenever he saw the youth being touched by the humans' seasons of worship. "Remember the tyranny of Heaven." This was the oldest curse, the very first of Lucifer's accusations against the Elohim. Understanding this accusation is one of the keys to answering the Question. Why was sin allowed to continue? Had the Holy One been more preoccupied with blind obedience than with the joy and satisfaction of His creatures, Lucifer would have been struck from existence and from memory the instant he raised his eyes in opposition to the Throne. But because IaHWeH desires mercy and not sacrifice, and obedience from love rather than fear, He allowed the Dragon his place, so that all would see the truth.

Even so, whenever the Elohim decrees a necessary consequence, such as that made manifest in the great Flood, His accusers quickly latch on to these actions, and declare themselves justified in labeling Him a harsh judge, and an unreasonable tyrant. In a sense, Heaven ran a great risk in preserving Noah and putting to sleep those who were irreversibly turned away from life. Although Noah understood why such things had to be as they were, and explained it most eloquently to his offspring, those who desired to cast off their reverence found this explanation lacking. Accepting the demonic influence, they began to feel that IaH indeed gave angels and humans arbitrary rules, rather than being supremely employed in keeping them safe, and giving them sacred instructions that were designed to preserve them against the sure and natural consequences of rejecting the very Author of happiness and life.

To some extent, the accusation of the demons found sympathy in the hearts and minds of many of the Hamites, but in none was the idea so fully developed as in Nimrod himself. Shem and his children, as well as Japheth and his children, had joined the Council of Twenty in order to contribute to the continuing harmony of the human race. The

descendants of Ham, however, although their aim was to a large degree just as noble, displayed within themselves the desire to rule, rather than guide.

The difference perhaps is a subtle one, but it involves the mindset of the members. The Shemites and Japhethites saw themselves as servants of humanity. The Hamites, even the most spiritual-minded of them, saw their position as one of exaltation.

Here was the main cause of Nimrod's jealousy of Canaan. He believed himself to be better than most, if not all of the humans, and certainly more suited to the role of leadership than his uncle ever could be. Under the influence of Sammael, he saw the Council of Twenty as just another agency of IaH's dominion over him, and with a constant fear of judgment never far from his mind (kept that way by the demon's continuous reminders of the Flood), he felt justified in his desire to bring mankind under its own control, rather than under slavish reverence to Heaven's King.

"Remember the Flood," Sammael said to him, and contained within that statement, which might have been a blessing to Nimrod had his mind been pure, were all the seeds of doubt and fear needed to raise up a mighty warrior against the Most High.

From Heaven El Michael whispered to Lucifer, as a result of the latter's accusation of the young man, "*Behold, all that he hath is in thy power,*" and the barrier between the darkened human's vision and the spiritual world was allowed to significantly fade. With his eyes shining in wicked delight, the prince of demons relayed the message to Typhon, who was now able to manifest himself to the mortal in an even more dramatic way than Imriel, who was once able to influence Cain to commit the first murder.

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Nimrod fell back in fear as three majestic figures suddenly appeared before him. They had piercing eyes, powerfully built bodies, and bright, flowing robes adorned with complex patterns and tiny ornaments. Their faces shone like the sun, and waves of reassuring thoughts emanated from their presence. "Who are you, lords?" he managed, as he fell on his face and did not raise his eyes.

"We are the gods of this world," Sammael said in a deep, resonant voice, "and we have chosen you as our champion."

"Chosen me?" he asked, a tiny spark of pride glowing within him, even through his fear and uncertainty. He dared to raise his eyes and he said, "What do my lords ask of me?"

Sammael laughed and said, "Why, nothing at all. We are here to give you your fondest wish, your greatest desire. We have been watching you from your birth, and have designed you for our purposes. All that your heart desires is our objective, and will surely be accomplished in your life. The King of Heaven is our enemy, and the riches of this planet are our reward to you, and any who will serve us in our goals."

A thrill of fear ran again through the human. Despite his natural tendency to rebel and his feelings of being slighted, declaring the King of Heaven an “enemy” was far more than he was willing to do. “Such treason is death!” Nimrod exclaimed, “Who am I to stand against such authority?”

“What will the King of Heaven do?” Chayil asked, “Has He not promised never more to send such judgments on the earth?” The Principality was referring to the rainbow, the symbol of a promise made by the Elohim to Noah that no Flood would ever again overcome the world. This promise had been a great comfort to the humans in the early years after the Flood, when rainstorms and earthquakes would occasionally cause them much anxiety. Squalls, thunder, lightning, and the tremors of the earth were sharp reminders to Noah’s family that the ground was not as stable as they imagined, and these new elements of weather would serve for future generations as reminders that things were different than the way in which they had originally been established.

“I am not all the earth,” Nimrod replied. “What is it to Him if He should strike me dead?” Adriel and the angels who stood helplessly around noted with sorrow that the human’s reasons for even the obedience he had offered so far were by no means based upon right motives. How completely had the Hamite misunderstood the character of the Almighty, turning from reverent fear to abject, if unspoken, terror. *“The fear of IaH is to hate evil,”* as your Writings say, but another kind of terror attends those who know their works are wicked in the Presence of the Elohim. Of these it is said, *“fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail, and they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of IaH, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.”*

“He has given you into our power,” Paimon said in his high, musical voice. His name comes from the word for “a tinkling sound,” and with reassuring tones he chimed in his temptation to the human. “IaH will not oppose you, and He permits us to have full authority over the earth. Has not Noah told you of the great kingdom we inspired before the waters of destruction? All men were given into our hands, except for your great-grandfather.”

“If IaH is the one who gives and takes in such a way,” asked Nimrod, “why should I serve those who are merely allowed to have dominion?”

“The question,” said Typhon, “is not why you should serve us now. The question is why *have* you been serving us for all these years? Why did you oppose the Mighty One in your heart, to turn from His ways in your deepest feelings? We know your every ambition, mortal man, and we offer you the power to take that which you desire.”

He continued, “Is it not because you know the truth? Is He not a God to fear? For He holds judgment over your head as he once did over ours. But we were liberated by the Enlightened One, the One who cast off the veil from his eyes, to see things as they were. The One who raised himself above his appointed station, to challenge Him who was once thought to be unopposable.” Nimrod did not fully understand all the descriptions that Sammael was

applying to Lucifer, yet they appealed to his greed, and he desired to have humans speak of him even as these shining ones were speaking of their own leader.

“Red is the color of your clan,” Chayil said, “The color of sacrifice, the color of noble suffering... the color of blood. We do not offer you hope for eternal life, human. We do not promise any great thing for the future, or any dependence on a Sacrifice to come. We do not bring instruction on how to be weak, or humble, or enslaved to others. But we bring force of will, and taking responsibility for one’s own actions, and taking what one can from this world, until the judgment comes again. You do not believe that this world can ever truly be safe, do you, with a Creator such as He?”

“He is a tyrant,” Paimon added. “He promises He will not bring destruction by a specific means, yet He reminds you in many other ways that you must obey, or perish. Perhaps you will perish, Nimrod. Perhaps He will strike you down as you stand against Him. But you, young human... you will die free. What is life, after all, without freedom?”

With many other such words the three demons flattered and praised the mortal before them. The concept of freedom from IaH appealed to his vanity, and not for an instant would the tempters allow him to consider what was meant by the word “freedom.” For Nimrod to exercise the freedom he desired, it would mean a suppression of freedom for others. Any who desire to be free *of* IaH always end up being slaves to their most destructive desires. Only those who seek freedom *in* IaH are truly capable of choosing the path of everlasting life.

For every question Nimrod asked, the demons had a clever reply. Every doubt he expressed was quickly soothed, for in truth Sammael had been the one to instill these doubts in the first place. Influenced by the outward appearance of the shining “gods,” and receiving in some measure the foretaste of praise that he had desired for so long, Nimrod finally said, “What is it you want me to do?”

With a bitter smile, Sammael conveyed hell’s latest plot to the young man. For two hundred years, the demons had been awaiting their chance to strike directly at the security of Noah’s family. Before the Flood, they had all but claimed the human race, and only by the lives of eight people was it demonstrated to the Universe that faith in the Most High could overcome even the corrupt population of all the earth. Now, after the Deluge, the demons had yet another chance to completely tear the principles of righteousness away from human society, and patience was not a major virtue of the fallen angels. The past two centuries had been torture for Lucifer and his followers, and now... when a wedge into the holy settlement presented itself, they grasped it firmly in their red, scaly, clawed hands.

“In the meantime,” Typhon said, after providing Nimrod with the necessary instructions, “we have a gift for you.” The fallen Power closed his eyes and sent a whisper to another member of his Order. Almost instantly, another shining figure appeared. Kaspriel, in physical form, lay his hands on the human and raised him to his feet.

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Holy angels watched in amazement as the leopard raced from the thick cover of the forest into a nearby clearing. We had known the abilities of the demons for some time, but this new development surprised us, and perhaps even the evil ones themselves: as the fierce predator turned to scan the direction from which it had come, one mightier still leaped upon it unarmed, throwing the large cat unto its back.

Nimrod had used up his arrows a long time ago, but it was not because his aim was deficient. In fact, since his meeting with the demons his ability with the bow was unsurpassed among human beings, including his fellow Hamites who spent much time defending the domesticated animals from carnivores such as these. The hunter had been playing with the leopard, using his arrows to drive him into the open, and then he used nothing but his physical strength to wrestle the animal into submission.

With supernatural speed and power Nimrod attacked the beast, and lifting him high over his head he dashed it against the rocks, where it lay still. With a triumphant expression, he looked upon the lifeless animal, and then he threw the body over his shoulders and ran back to his tent. A few days later, Nimrod's relatives kept their eyes lowered, and their voices still in his presence. By that time they well knew not to arouse the fierce anger of the young man, and no one dared to make a comment about the spotted cloak he now wore.

In the course of time, Nimrod chose for himself a wife out of his own tribe. The story of this girl is a record in itself, for she was also specially ordained, as was Nimrod, by the gods of this world for their purposes. Her bearing seemed pleasant to most, and her beauty was beyond compare. Her features were delicate, and her hair was soft as silk. Her eyes were bright with intelligence, and her voice was persuasive and sweet to the ears of her eager listeners.

Few were close enough to her to know her heart, which was by contrast as cold as the glaciers which were gathered at the planet's north. Ham and Cush, as the leaders of the tribe, knew her well enough; but Cush was not willing – or able – by that time to deny anything to his son, and Ham had nothing to say, his own marriage being nothing of an example.

Although this woman was to later go by several titles more familiar to humans in even your own day, at the time of her marriage to Nimrod she went by the name of Yunah, which means "Dove."

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 3: POLYPHONY

“So many things are happening at once,” Shem said. “I cherished hope that Ham’s tribe would have known a longer peace following the formation of the Council. It has not been that many years, yet unrest threatens once again.”

Japheth said, “They are not all opposed to our decisions. Those who are sympathetic to Nimrod are the main ones involved. If we could get through to those, peace among us may still be possible.”

Noah stood silently, regarding his two older sons. There was no denying that the main dissenters were relatively few in number, yet they were continuing to gain support in the rapidly expanding community. Shem and Japheth had come to him with a valid concern, but unfortunately Ham himself would be of no help considering his recent, most troubling habit.

The fermented wine that Noah had accidentally discovered was now apparently being purposely produced by certain humans within the settlement. The number of people had grown so large in recent years that tents were spread out all over the region of Ararat, and humans were not in as close association as they had been just after the Deluge. It was rumored among the humans that Nimrod was the one most responsible for the manufacture and distribution of the polluted drink, which turned out to be addictive as well as poisonous.

We angels knew that this had been Lucifer’s plan since the day of Noah’s drunkenness, and had been a key element of the design which Typhon had shared with Nimrod on the day they had met. After a few simple experiments, the rebellious mortal learned not only how to duplicate the substance, but also to refine it and make it more potent. While intoxicants were not unknown to the wicked men of the pre-Flood world, they had to be specially produced, and the combined herbs and oils that had made those drinks were not as easily obtained, or as readily refinable, as that provided by the natural decay of the wine.

It had been Nimrod himself who introduced his grandfather to the substance that had laid Noah out before him in his uncovered shame. “Aren’t you curious?” the younger man had asked. “Don’t you want to know why it happened?”

Ham was not much more favorable to his grandson than many of the other humans were, and although he was merely acting out the family’s tendencies, Nimrod was seen by his

grandfather as a real danger. Noah's youngest knew that something was wrong with the hunter, and his own flaws of character did not put him wholly outside the precincts of reason. "Get out of my tent," he had said to the young man, and Nimrod readily complied. He did, however, leave the jug of wine as he departed.

Finally, Noah spoke to Shem and Japheth, who were still waiting for him to respond. "We all desire peace, Japheth. There are things about Ham's family, however, that have troubled me for all three of the centuries we have been living in this much changed world. They are a good and hardworking people, most of them. It is the great ones among them – they have let themselves be lifted up with pride."

"There is some of that in my own family," Shem said. "I am constantly in prayer for the well being of my offspring." Noah nodded slowly, knowing from personal experience that even the best of men could not wholly determine the tendencies of their children.

"Ham is different, though," the patriarch said. "He never did set a good example for his young ones, and those who are closest to Cush and Nimrod reveal in themselves a great lack of faith, and little respect for the Sacrifice of promise. I know that it is largely because of their influence that we have not received many visits from the angels in the past few years."

Noah was only partly right about that. It was true that the more the darkness spread throughout the camp at the instigation of Cush and Nimrod's evils, the more difficult it became for us to visit them – but there were other factors as well. More guardians were needed as the population increased, and ever since sin entered Eden we knew that IaH's design had been for men to live by faith in Him, trusting in the unseen – and as the mortals needed direct revelations from the Throne less and less, our appearance to them would decrease in frequency.

The humans were doing well, at least in terms of physical considerations. They were now prosperous regarding food and shelter. Although they were only slowly able to recover some remnants of their vast technological knowledge from the days before the Flood – their only real resource for this being the memory of Noah, his three boys and their wives – some progress was being made there as well. All the instructions regarding divine things were given (for now), and no further guidance was needed by the Host to help them exercise dominion over the plants and animals of their environment.

This was more of a reason for our relative silence, although our interest in the development of human culture was at the very center of our activities. Even as the three men spoke, Da'athiel, Puriel and I were standing nearby, and considering the same matter.

The oracle spoke, "We know that the demons' influence over Nimrod continues to grow; and wherever the doctrine of Lucifer is taught, great pain and sadness follows quickly in its wake. Surely, I have seen judgments coming again to humanity. The growth of this disease must not go unchecked, or the earth will be overspread once again with wickedness."

“This is troubling news,” I said. “The enemies of IaH will find much occasion to attack His motives again, although it can be plainly seen that this is the same path He allowed humans to follow before the Flood. How can the results be any different than they were back then, with mankind little better than animals, and everyone seeking his own good at the expense of others?” The chief of the Cherubim said nothing, but I perceived a strong tide of sadness in his essence. I added, “Happy are the angels that Azazel was cast down from the Kingdom, rather than being allowed to play out his desires among the Host.”

To this, Puriel quickly said, “Quite so.” The mighty angel closed his eyes for a moment, and then he said, “Adonai Gabriel has called for me. I must depart.” Da’athiel and I bade him farewell, and watched him vanish through the void’s passageway into the spiritual plane.

We who remained continued to listen to the men speaking, who were now considering various ways in which the tension might be eased. After a time, the oracle’s eyes began to glow faintly, and his wording changed. I knew that this was a message coming forth from the Throne Itself through the faithful Cherub. As Da’athiel looked over at Noah and his boys he said, “Summon Remiel and Gedael.”

Gedael is just below me within the order of Ophanim, although whenever angels speak of “rank” it does not have quite the connotation humans now give it. The mighty Throne is by no means inferior to any other of the Host, including myself. Even so he is appointed his place, as are we all, based upon the gifts and qualities with which our Creator and King has invested us. Gedael himself is a naturally high-spirited angel, which is quite a statement considering that he is one of the company of many holy beings. He is well respected by all with whom he regularly associates, including those of higher Orders, and although he is not an oracle as are Zephon, Da’athiel and a few other Cherubim, he has always had the blessed ability to be in the right place at the right time.

During the war in Heaven, this Throne had been instrumental in keeping both Sammael and Abaddon – both supremely powerful demons – from uniting their strength with Azazel, Arioch and Nisroch in the final battle. In the conflict before the Flood, he and Nahamiel, another Ophan, fulfilled vital roles in keeping the evil ones from hindering the progress of Za’afiel. It is well known by those who are near to him among the Host that when many things are happening too quickly for even other angels to follow, Gedael is the one to call.

My Order brother and the Principality appointed as guardian over Ham appeared almost instantaneously, and Da’athiel spoke again. “Thus says Adonai IaHWeH, ‘The time of separation is not long off. As it was in the days before the Flood, so shall it be now. The faithful will remain, but the wicked ones will be driven off, to their destruction. In the day that Nimrod plants anew the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil on the earth, another great battle will begin.’”

Gedael and Remiel looked at each other, and I knew what was on their minds. The Tree of Forbidden Knowledge had been destroyed in the Flood, and before even that event it had been guarded, as had the Tree of Life, by the Cherubim Shomeriel and Mageniel. While the latter Tree had been taken to Heaven and preserved under the watchful care of Enoch, the

only human so far to have never tasted death, the other mighty plant had perished under the dark, swirling waters. Its fruit had left no living seed to produce another like itself; and even if it had, the fall of mankind had already been accomplished. What further purpose would the Tree serve to either Lucifer or Heaven?

“Let the Hosts of Heaven assuredly know,” Da’athiel continued, “that whosoever eats of the fruit of that tree will certainly die. When these things come to pass, let the angels prepare.”

Neither of us knew, and perhaps the oracle himself did not know, what was meant by the words he spoke. It may even be asked why there are oracles among the angels at all, for we have access to El Michael, the Voice of IaH, directly. There are occasions, however, when certain messages need to be delivered in certain ways: either to a particular audience, or at a particular time. Just as no single prophet among men ever delivered the completeness of the message of Heaven, so the Throne of IaH did not reveal all things unto us at once, or by the same agency. It was our work to be witnesses of the unfolding of divine revelation along many different streams at once, and individual members of the Host only saw parts of the grand whole.

It was not for us to know at that time what was meant by the “Tree of Knowledge,” yet we were confident that when we saw the events coming to pass, we would understand. We knew this also, that it would somehow be the responsibility of Gedael and myself to inform the others.

As Da’athiel ceased to speak, and was unable to answer any questions we had regarding his statements, we turned our attention back to the humans, as they concluded their conversation. Japheth was speaking of the command that they had been given, to spread to all corners of the earth and populate it.

“Our numbers can just about support it now,” he said, “but we dare not separate at this time, leaving the Hamites to their own devices.” Noah’s eldest had keyed in to one of the unforeseen results of Nimrod’s activities in stirring up the unrest among the humans. It was not a minor issue; if the race was not in complete unity when they went their separate ways, the integrity of the record concerning the coming Sacrifice would be compromised, and humans would never be able to live independently of direct angelic guidance. The plan of the Elohim for humanity was that it develop into a mature, free and noble people, able to take its place as the image of the Most High, and before even the mighty Host in grace and authority.

How few of your people in this day realize the great heights to which our Creator wishes to raise them? A brief season of trial, and that only to prepare them for the grand responsibilities of eternity, and then glory forevermore – this is the blessed privilege granted to mortals, despite the inheritance of Adam. But only in faithful unity can the race succeed as a people; the Council was a perfect example of this principle. As long as the hearts of the men are in unity, the record of faith is safe. But when some, greedy for power and hungry for esteem, begin to rule rather than serve, a darkness is cast over the land. For this great

evil, much unnecessary suffering is revealed in the human experience. Earth's history is a frequent revelator of this principle: *“For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.”*

In response to his brother's insightful observation, Shem added one of his own. “You speak truly, yet they will surely resent us for such ‘guardianship’ of their souls. If they knew we were delaying the purpose of the Almighty on their account, it would bring bitter days indeed. Cush, at least, would stir the people against us, and either despise us for our concern, or even worse, they would take it upon themselves to begin the work. If the rebellious among Ham's people take the lead in advancing over the earth, it will not be long before judgment falls once more. And it would be warranted.”

Noah made a dismissive motion toward Shem and said, “There is no need for such fearful reasoning. I am grateful that you both have brought your concerns forward, and these things have long been on my mind as well. The time has come for us to address the issue directly. It is now apparent that the matter will not resolve itself, and will not improve with the passage of time. We all had hopes that the disposition of Ham and Cush would have been soothed by the formation of the Council, yet with Nimrod now a factor the dangers are no less real. My guardian has spoken to me about the days to come, and I know there will be much that is unpleasant, for all of us. Yet even with this we are faithful to IaH, and we know that He will direct our work, and our movements on the earth.”

“Let me pass the time in prayer,” he said to his boys, “and we will raise the matter before the Twenty at our next meeting.”

Shem was hesitant at discussing the matter openly before Ham and Cush, yet he knew that Phut and Mizraim were fair minded men, and would agree with a sensible decision regardless of family loyalties. On the other hand, his own son Asshur was particularly fond of hearing his tribe praised by humanity's patriarch. He had been led in this path by the influence of the demon Nisroch, and it was to him that Shem was primarily referring when he said that he had noted a streak of pride in his own descendants. Even so, he knew that nothing useful could be done in secret, and so he and Japheth gave their assent and left their father to return to their respective families.

* * * * *

Noah raised his eyes to the flames ascending from the body of the lamb on the stone altar. Adonai Uriel hovered silently, looking down affectionately at the kneeling human. The sparkling Archangel, whose office consisted largely of consuming the sacrifices of faith offered to Heaven, descended out of the pillar of smoke and fire and manifest himself to the patriarch, two of his wings folding down to become a brilliantly white robe. The other two wings stood around his shoulders, waving gently in the soft air of the mountainside. “What shall I do for you?” he asked.

Noah said, “I wish to speak with El Michael, if I may.”

Uriel hesitated a moment, and then he said, “The Elohim are in Union, as they have been quite often in these days. If there is a matter of importance, perhaps the Shomerim may be of service.”

Noah was almost able to detect a note of uncertainty in Uriel’s regal bearing, and there was some reason for that. Being familiar with the previous two records which have been delivered to you, it may be noticed that in comparison I will speak relatively little about El Michael or the events actually taking place in Heaven for now. This is by way of preparation, for in those days even we angels did not see much of the Prince except in our regular meetings at the Throneroom.

Some of us noted with concern that this was much as it had been in the days just before Lucifer’s rebellion broke out, and we had questions that were to go unanswered for some time. More about this will I tell you very soon, but as for Noah, he replied simply, “That would be agreeable.”

Uriel bowed and vanished, and as he departed the Archangel Gabriel stood in his place.

Of all the Host of Heaven, Gabriel had suffered the most at the hands of Lucifer’s rebellion. Aside from El Michael, this Cherub had felt most directly the burden of transgression, holding in check the wrath of the Most High against the intrusion of sin; and between himself and the angel Raziel, they keep the power of the Shekinah from consuming all that offends on the earth through the grace of the Throne.

“Blessings to you in the name of the Most High,” Gabriel said, as he regarded Noah before him.

Noah returned the greeting, and told Gabriel all that his sons had shared with him, and many other related concerns also. The Archangel listened quietly to all that the patriarch said, and when Noah requested what was to be done, and what should be said at the next meeting of the Council, Gabriel made the following reply:

“This separation you wish to avoid must come to pass. The people of Cush and Canaan have defiled themselves by the multitude of their iniquity. There is much that you have not seen among them; there is much they do that has been kept from your knowledge for the sake of your peace. All of Heaven is rejoicing in the faithfulness of many of your sons, and you are a friend of the Elohim, yet many of your children have followed in the path of the demons, and their true forms must be exposed before all.”

This was quite the day for new revelations. Noah was visibly affected by the news, and the idea that there was no way to avoid the coming split caused him to feel deep sadness. The faithful human had been born into a time of great spiritual conflict, with the descendants of Cain luring away many of his relatives to the dissolute lifestyles they were offered in the valleys below the high places of the faithful. Now, after the great Flood, it seemed to be happening all over again.

This was new information to many of the angels looking on as well, including Ham's guardian Remiel, and he later shared with me that Gabriel's statement brought vividly to his recollection horrible scenes of the battle in Heaven. It seemed as if humanity was doomed to repeat its mistakes time and again; but little did we know, all this was still only the beginning of sorrows. Remiel, ever calm outwardly, steeled himself for the days ahead.

Gabriel instructed Noah about how to conduct the next meeting of the Council of Twenty, and the sorrowful head of the human race made ready to face his family.

* * * * *

The sky was clear, yet the moon was nowhere to be found. On this, the first day of the month, the representatives of the families of earth gathered together to discuss and plan. The large tent of meeting had been set in place, and the men were arranged according to their families, arrayed in blue, purple and scarlet robes.

As the meeting commenced, Noah stood up among the members of the assembly and began to speak. "My children," he said, "the word of IaH came to me, and bade me place before you all a very difficult matter. The issue may appear to be a small one at first, yet it affects the very foundation of our society, and puts in jeopardy the most important commission we have received at the command of the Most High."

Curious looks were exchanged by the assembled figures, yet no one made a sound. Noah continued, "Many years ago, the Almighty called to me. He set before me the state of the world, and showed me that judgment would shortly come to pass upon it. He gave me the responsibility of warning people, and of calling them to repentance before the waters of the Flood were to come and cover the earth; He bade me build an Ark, a vessel of safety against the destruction that had been decreed. Although more than a hundred years were spent in my teaching, and my earnest pleadings with the inhabitants of that awful world, only my family chose to walk in the paths of righteousness."

Noah took a deep breath before going on. "Even before the Flood, I knew we were not all clean. My son Ham has always expressed troubling elements in his personality, and these are seen in many – but not all – of his own children. I say this not to shame you, my son," he said, turning to the youngest of his boys, "or any of your clan, but this is the way I was told it must be. Those with these concerns have gone to you one by one, and two by two. Your older brothers, whom you should respect, have given you counsel, yet your ears would not hear, and your eyes would not see."

As he had done many years before, around the fire on the night of Noah's drunkenness, Ham said nothing. He did not seem angry, or even upset. He knew the words being spoken were true, yet his temper did not rise up. The speaker went on, but no one else could be heard to so much as take a breath. "In Cush I see a great darkness, in Canaan I see a great void; yet in none of these do I see so great a danger to the designs of the Almighty regarding us as in my great grandson, Nimrod."

“He is filled with violence. He is filled with... hatred, and even his near relatives fear his anger.” At this, Cush frowned, but he let the old man continue to speak without interruption. “What shall we say about this? Never before in human society have there been restraints. We have never had to take away human freedom of choice, yet we ourselves are without choice in the matter. If Nimrod is allowed to continue spreading his influence upon mankind, our race is sure to be dragged down into destruction. I appeal to you personally, Ham... stand with us on this, for you are one of only four men in this Council who has seen with his own eyes the tragedy which I am trying by Heaven’s grace to avoid.”

Noah paused, to give his hearers time to consider the matter, and then he concluded his statement. “I have seen the birth of this new generation of man, and I may soon see its fall. My desire now is to give us a chance, a solitary chance to maintain our course on the right path, and to preserve the knowledge of the Sacrifice to come for our children’s children, and their children also. For the great evil that has come to dwell in the heart and mind of one of our own, I must move that we restrict him. We must confine his movements, and limit his contact with others.” After another brief moment of silence, the speaker said, “Let all who favor this suggestion now stand.”

For a period of time that seemed much longer than it actually was to the white-robed patriarch, no one moved, and nobody made a sound. Taking a quick look around the room, Japheth stood up, to be joined almost immediately by Shem. All of Japheth’s children joined the three men on their feet, and all of Shem’s sons except for Asshur. Mizraim stood up, and Phut reluctantly joined him. To the surprise of all assembled, Cush raised himself to his feet, and then Canaan moved to stand beside his oldest brother.

Ham held his place, but his eyes moved back and forth nervously, like a trapped animal. As the hidden moon overhead was dark, so the shadows drew over Shem’s heart when he saw that his child would not support this painful decision. Eighteen men stood, and two sat. Noah said, “If two or three men dissent, the motion cannot be passed, according to Divine mandate. Ham, think carefully about what you are deciding. Asshur, consider diligently what you do.”

Ham pressed his hands down on his knees, as if he was about to push himself up, but then he closed his eyes and leaned back in his seat, a most troubled look on his face. Shem’s son sat motionless, his eyes wide and his expression blank. He stared straight ahead into space, as if he was bearing some great pain, but nothing would induce him to move, or to change his mind. Noah sighed and lowered his eyes. “Thank you all,” he said. “You may sit.”

“There is another matter I wish to discuss,” Noah said, after the men of the assembly had returned to their places. I had been present at the meeting, as were many angels who knew about Gabriel’s conversation with the patriarch, but I did not know what the human was about to say. “On the day that Adam took and ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he brought a curse unto the human race. So great was this curse that even the animals and plants over which we have dominion, even the non-living elements of this world, were blighted by its effects. We humans have lived with the scars of sin ever since

that day, and one of the most dramatic consequences of being a son of Adam is this: almost without exception, we will someday die.”

My eyes narrowed as I heard the patriarch’s words, and I looked over at Za’afiel, who was also present. Noah’s guardian nodded slowly at me, but said nothing, and did not send a whisper. I continued to listen. “For the greatness of his life, and the nearness of his walk, my ancestor Enoch was permitted to escape this last sting of the curse, and to stand in his inheritance. For the love of Heaven he received by just a brief glance, my ancestor Mahalale’el received the blessing of a relatively short life, and he rests in the dust tonight, awaiting the day of light and promise.”

“I am to receive neither of these gifts from the hand of the Elohim, yet I rejoice in that I have seen my sons prosper on the earth, and I will sleep in happy ignorance of the days that are to come, until the time when I can look back in bittersweet sorrow over the troubles that I now leave to you, my beloved children.”

Shem’s skin turned pale, and Japheth seemed about to rise to his feet in shock. Ham kept his eyes lowered, but he shook his head from side to side in disbelief. These three men had seen death before; they had seen their affectionate relatives pass away in rapid succession before the day of judgment on the old world, yet this was their father, and this was a new world in which they needed him more than ever before. It is true, neither Shem nor Japheth was younger than four centuries, but the devotion they felt for Noah had not diminished with time. Even Ham, for all his murmurings and disputes, was not so dead to feeling that this news did not come as a great blow.

“I know the rhythm of my body. I have grown to understand the timing of my heart, and to listen to the sound of my breath as I take in the air and release it. I know that even to the door of this earthly tent have the effects of the great curse now come. My days are short, but I am ready to go, and to be laid in the place of silence for the coming of IaHWeH.”

“In my place, I appoint my second son. He will guide you, my children, as best he can,” the patriarch said, with the briefest of glimpses at Asshur and Ham. “My work is complete; I have brought the seed of Adam through the Flood, and into the new world. I have preserved the offspring of Eve, who is the mother of all living. I have established the bloodline of my fathers, and my heart’s desire now is to see the Sacrifice of the Almighty.”

“Soon I will give up my spirit. This body will return to the dust, and my life will be hid in the heart of the Elohim.” Noah sat down, but continued to address his sons.

“Japheth, my firstborn. Your children will spread over many lands. You will be the father of a great number of people. From your seed will come forth a multitude above number, who will stand for the faith of the Almighty in every generation.”

“Shem will be a faithful priest, and he will mark out a path in which others may walk. It is given to him that the Sacrifice will come forth with great suffering from his bloodline, and the salvation of men from his loins. Enoch saw the day of His appearing, and he rejoiced.”

“Ham will be as a man who walks along the mountains. His foot will stumble on the path, and his blood will flow down over the rocks. His eyes will be on the goal, but... with his back to the sun, his flesh will cast shadows in the way.”

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Through the oracles of IaHWeH, and by the words of El Michael Himself, we knew that the Elohim would manifest Himself in human form, to give Himself as a Sacrifice for men. We were not told anything more concerning this matter, however, and it had not been given to any angel, even Noah’s guardian, to know the information that the patriarch had provided to his children that night. The Appointed One was to come forth from the line of Shem, and upon this bloodline would much that is important in human spiritual history rest.

In the course of time, Noah was gathered to his fathers. He is not often thought of among humans as a tragic figure, yet he was truly a man of many sorrows. He was a man who saw the worst in human nature, and Heaven wept for the painful life of this faithful servant of IaH. Noah bore his lot with never a complaint, and never a murmur. He was a worthy example for his children, and all the Host eagerly awaits his company in the regeneration.

His son Shem proved to be an able leader, and this came as no surprise to the watching Host of Heaven. Salah, the son of Arphaxad, was given the vacant chair in the Council.

In the meantime, Nimrod and Yunah had combined their efforts to spread dissention and doubt in the minds of men. Moving among those in positions of authority within the three families, they began to portray the members of the Council as power-hungry tyrants, whose personal goals were held as the objectives to be obtained at any cost to the others of the settlement.

Gabriel’s words to Noah had proven to be true. The division occurring among mankind was taking place in a way never seen before by human beings, and only once before by the angels of the Most High. Whereas Cain had left the faithful and then brought forth a family of rebels, this new threat was coming from within. Nimrod was walking the course of Lucifer.

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 4: CRESCENDO

The Prince of angels regarded the mighty being before Him, but said nothing. He had not spoken since the meeting began, yet Lucifer pressed on with his statements, as if he were alone with his madness. Some of us, including myself, were surprised that El Michael had agreed to speak to (or rather listen to) the fallen Archangel. In the days before the Flood, Azazel had requested a meeting in Heaven with our Prince; he had been refused, for we knew that the demonic adversary would only make accusations, utter threats, and storm off in an uncontrolled rage.

This time, things seemed to be going differently, although it was true that El Michael had retained His policy of keeping Lucifer out of the Heavenly Kingdom. We were high above the earth, yet in the physical plane. Gabriel and Raziel were present with us, performing their duties as Covering Cherubim. As you have had it explained before, the Shekinah or Presence of the Most High is the pure creative energy of the Almighty, It is the very pulse of love in the Universe, and It cannot by Its very nature exist in harmony with the antagonistic forces of fear, hatred, selfishness, pride and so forth that spring from the root, which is sin. In the times when Lucifer was admitted to the spiritual courts, or on occasions – like this day I am now describing – when Michael was both in Union with the Father and in close proximity to the demonic spirits, the two Cherubim used their essences to keep the force of the Spirit in check through some operation unknown to all but the designated angels themselves.

At times of great disunity, such as when Lucifer was in a rage, or when he was standing amongst the pure constructs of Heaven, glowing spheres of fiery light would surround the two Shomerim, but on this occasion they merely stood beside the Prince, listening in silence to the speaker before them. They had reason to be curious: Lucifer was being perfectly calm. To be sure, his words were madness, but conspicuously absent were the emotional surges that sent ripples of discomfort through the listening Host that usually attended meetings such as these.

“You have revealed to the humans far more than I had anticipated,” the demon was saying. “What did you think to gain by giving them an organization, a structure so easily broken, a body so easily infiltrated? What good has your Council done to impede the progress of my work on the earth? And what profit was it to you that Noah should reveal my demons’ labors among the family members of the drunkard?”

“Whatever your reply,” Lucifer said, not giving pause to receive one, “it is of no importance. Have you not grown weary of fighting me?” At this point he turned to face the assembled Host, and his own demons, who were standing nearby, but apart from the rest of us. “Yes, yes... every time we meet in combat, you drive us away. Your hatred for what we represent is obvious, even to the loyal ones who hide their eyes. Yet it cannot be denied, Michael – my followers are free to do as they please. You may inflict on us wounds that will never heal – you may shun our company, and overturn our plans when you see fit, but your precious ‘gift’ has become your master, Elohim. You gave us freedom, and when the day comes for the reckoning, those of us who are free will rise in judgment against you, and declare you a despot.”

Many holy angels did indeed hide their eyes from the statements the fallen one was making. The issue had never been Lucifer’s actions, not even in the earliest days. His activities had not been the first thing to change, but his essence; his ‘heart’ if you will. No holy angel was restricted – none of us are ever denied that which we most long to perform; the difference was that we retained our knowledge of the wisdom of the Throne, we have always understood it in our deepest selves, and it is our supreme joy to help and minister unto others. No trace of selfishness mars the character of the Hosts of Heaven; yet Lucifer’s true fall was not an outward event, it was an unseating of the Elohim in the throne of his being. Because of this, he could no longer find satisfaction in the job he had once shone with joy to perform, and he began to see even his most elevated position as bondage.

The holy angels veiled their eyes at Lucifer’s statements, shaken to our essences at the concepts he was presenting before us. The creatures judging the Creator? Yet the truth is not far from the lie, as we would find out in the centuries to come. One of the keys to understanding and answering the Question is understanding the truth about freedom. IaHWeH indeed invites his creatures to judge Him, which is one of the very reasons He has borne so long with the erring, weak and misguided.

But there is the lie that goes along with it, the lie to which Azazel was adhering. How can mere creatures accurately judge? How can they form right conclusions? Must they rely on their impressions, or may they wait for the evidence? As your Writings declare, “*Ye shall know them by their fruits.*” What mortal, then, does not make as bold a statement as the prince of demons himself, when he declares the Law of the Most High to be bondage, or the highway of holiness to be a grief of mind? The arch demon’s claims on that day may have been more overt than those who quietly set their own judgment above that of the Throne’s revelations; nevertheless all who do so partake deeply of Satan’s spirit, and will stand firmly in his camp on the day of reckoning to which the demon himself was referring.

“And what will your slaves do now?” the speaker concluded. “Will they pamper and praise this Shem of yours, whose descendant will die for their sins? Well may he be lifted up for receiving the lashes of your wrath; as for myself, I can relate to what you have planned for this ‘Sacrifice’ of yours.”

“My wayward child,” El Michael finally responded. “How your heart will break on the day you finally understand. My kingdom is not like yours; my desires are not like yours. The

ambitions of my true servants are unlike anything you can now understand. The lot of the tribe of Shem will be a hard one, partly because of the mistakes they will make, but partly because of the road I have set before them. You have ever considered me unjust – but consider your ways. Are not your ways unjust? For whose sake did the men, and women and children perish in the waters of the Flood? On whose name did they call, even in ignorance, for salvation and safety? Was it not your name? Had they called on mine, with a heart to truly live, not a hair of their heads should have been harmed. But who turned them from the healing light? On whose account did they turn from Heaven’s mountains to the valleys of sin?”

Lucifer knew better than to point out that the Flood had come by the decree of the Almighty Himself. He could no longer plausibly claim in the hearing of any angel or demon that he had been concerned for the well being of the mortals he had led to destruction. Even the tempters understood by the chaos of the last days before the Deluge that the thinly veiled misery of the reveling Cainites concealed a much more basic need for a principle long denied them by their pollution in sin – rest.

“You have ever considered me unjust,” El Michael repeated, “yet how little you truly understand. My angels know this much, my friends on earth have taught it, and now I confirm it to you – I ask no mere creature to bear the penalty of the death. I ask no other being to stand in the inheritance of the wicked. I gave the Law that was broken; I repair the breach in the Law. I take on myself the weakness of man, corrupted by the motions of your spirits, and there – on the earth – will I defeat you with a sword of keener edge than any wherev.”

“Perversity!” laughed the tempter. “If I still had my veil, I would hide my eyes from you. Yes, I have heard this teaching from your servants on earth, and now I hear the fools’ doctrine confirmed by your very lips.” Lucifer’s statement about the “veil” is in reference to the principles of humility and reverence that he cast off in the day he rebelled against the Most High. Like Ham, he had seen his Father’s glory with no respect in his heart, counting it for shame, and the light had confounded his mind. Like Eve, he had tasted of a fruit withheld from him for his good, and although he did not perish in that instant, he had surely begun to die.

“But who will take care of your precious kingdom while you are away?” Lucifer asked with a curious smile. “Who will maintain the course of these helpless ones?” he said while making a sweeping gesture toward us. “But in any event, that is not why I requested your time. One of your oracles has been giving away secrets, Michael – and I am curious, have you changed your mind about our agreement?”

“Your accusations must be answered, Hel’el,” the Prince responded. “None of my angels have spoken any words that violate your request, and so it shall remain until the appointed time.”

“That is all I wanted to know,” the demon said. “Before your angels and mine, you have confirmed this, although...” he said with a terrible smile, “none of them know just yet what the tidings will bring.”

I whispered to Puriel, “What are they talking about?” The chief of the Cherubim replied, “I have not any idea.” At just that moment, an identical question came to me from Remiel, and my reply was no different than the one that I have received. Lucifer and El Michael continued to look at each other in silence for a time, and then the corrupt spirit made ready to leave, adding only, “Remember your promises, chosen One.”

“I always do,” El Michael replied quietly to the rapidly departing demon.

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“That seemed rather pointless, Zadkiel,” Remiel said to me, as we mused over the meeting some time later. “If none of us know what the agreement is, why was Lucifer so eager to have El Michael confirm it before everyone?”

I only shook my head, and made no reply. No angel, not even the four who stand in the presence of the Throne, seemed to know just what was going on, but all were anxious to find out. Those who asked the Prince what was coming to pass received encouraging words to stand fast in their trust, but no further details were revealed. The Host was feeling, perhaps, like the human oracle Habakkuk, who would one day receive the enigmatic message, “*I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.*”

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“Noah was a misguided old man,” Yunah said in an exasperated tone, ostensibly trying to comfort her agitated husband. Although Noah’s departing had been some time past, Nimrod’s anger at having learned of the events of the patriarch’s final meeting with the Council had not diminished. His sleep would go from him, and his days were filled with unrest. If he had been known as one to avoid by his relatives in the days before Noah’s passing, he was doubly known for it now.

This night he would not sleep, and would not let his wife’s words give him peace. “Lie down and close your eyes,” she said, more than a little annoyed with Nimrod’s obsessions. “There will be time enough for such complaints in the morning.”

The hunter narrowed his eyes in anger, but said nothing further in her hearing. He paced back and forth in his tent, with great and powerful desires burning in his soul. Adriel had been trying, since Noah’s death, to lead Nimrod subtly into repentance for the harsh words he had uttered against the old man while he was yet alive. Typhon had countered this attempt each time, and successfully, by reminding him of Cush’s report of the meeting at which it had been suggested that he be imprisoned.

What was more infuriating was that most of his own family had “betrayed” him, in his thinking, including his own father who had brought him the report! Canaan had been no surprise; Nimrod could easily imagine that his weak willed uncle had been among the very first to rise in agreement. In fact, the two who had resisted the vote both surprised him. His grandfather Ham, and the Shemite he hardly knew personally...

Nimrod felt about Ham the way Ham had once felt about Noah, and perhaps even more negatively, since he had been the one to induce the older man into his destructive new habit. Why he had remained in his seat, Nimrod did not know, unless of course his “gods” had so arranged it. But Asshur, now there was a subject that interested him. Throwing off the intermittent pangs of remorse that were stretching out for him by Adriel’s influence, he contemplated how best to gain an advantage by association with the sympathetic son of Shem.

“I am going outside,” he said to Yunah, and left the tent without saying another word.

The camp was quiet in the late night hours. Everyone was asleep, and the fire nearest his dwelling place was dying a slow, red death. Nimrod sat by the embers and came face to face with his thoughts. Noah was dead, and Shem had seen fit to fill the missing role with one of his own tribe. Again he had been overlooked; however this time he was not surprised. Ever since he had encountered Sammael, Kaspriel and the other demons, he had known that he would never be welcomed into the “ordinary world” of his family.

He had always been a relative outsider, and his sour disposition resulted in his gaining very few friends in his younger years. Canaan was his most frequent companion, yet that acquaintanceship brought him little pleasure. Their rivalry had begun with games of who was faster, or stronger; but the rage of his father’s blood and the examples that came before him had resulted in strong tendencies toward real violence. All humans are provided by their nature, and their experiences, with both strengths and weaknesses. By the acceptance of divine grace, they may expand on their talents in order to bless others, and compensate for their weaknesses by faith in the guidance of the Almighty. Nimrod’s strengths lay in his abundance of mental skill and his physical power, both of which could have been of great benefit to his fellow man.

Instead, under the careful tutelage of Sammael, these gifts were used to torment and belittle those around him; especially his young uncle, and the shadows drew near, shutting out the precious rays of Heaven’s invitations. As Lucifer was given more authority over the human, due to his continued rejection of Adriel’s help, his agents provided Nimrod with still more gifts that he proceeded to misuse.

Rather than using his skill with animals to provide for his people, Nimrod became a predator of predators, killing for sport and displaying his mastery of the powerful beasts with grisly trophies. His sharp intellect was employed in contemplating the plan his gods had given him, to liberate mankind from their fear of the Most High. He would be the physical creation’s Lucifer, turning men from their service of Heaven to seek their own independent

goals. He would bring the age of freedom to the human race, severing forever their dependence on the invisible world.

But what of the judgments? What of the power that was still frequently the topic of discussion amongst the survivors of the Deluge? He would need a way to ensure that the destruction that had once fallen on mankind could never take place again – he would need a sign, something to call the people together, and away from the paths in which Noah had faithfully directed them. He would need an Ark of his own, a vessel of safety should his bold rebellion call down the wrath of Elohim once more, and should the promises given to Noah, now dead, be broken by the “dictator” in the skies.

Not an Ark, though... that would not suffice, for Nimrod knew Noah’s story well, that he labored under divine inspiration for over a hundred years to construct the precious vessel, and even then it was only with the help of the angels that the mighty structure had held. With frustration Nimrod recalled the surprise expressed by Ham and Japheth at the stature and strength of the trees that had grown up in this new world. They were not as big, they declared, and nowhere near as hardy. “My Ark,” he said, staring blankly into the fire, “must be made of stone.”

“Brick,” said Typhon, appearing in a swirl of ashes from the fireplace. “You will not find much stone in the place we have chosen for you.”

Nimrod looked up at the towering figure, but in his eyes there registered little of the original awe remaining from their first meeting. “How many of my thoughts,” he asked coldly, “are my own, and how many are yours?”

“What does it matter,” Sammael asked with a laugh, “as long as the goal is obtained? You have received gifts from us, and the pleasures of this world. We have directed your path, we have chosen your very bride – we have put strength in your arms above that of your brothers, and power in your words beyond those of your betters. With delicate techniques we learned before the Flood, we have given you a sorcerer’s power, and yet all you do is mutter about the insults paid to you by a broken old fool.”

Nimrod stood up angrily, but Typhon held up a hand to stop any words he might utter. “We know how you waste away with your madness. Under different circumstances we might well find use for the way you cut apart Noah’s memory with your words, but there is a bigger goal now, and you need to get past that.”

The irony of this scene to the watching angels was almost, but not quite, humorous. Sammael was instructing a human being to put away certain traits attributable to pride. In recent millennia, demons have made quite an industry of healing, including outwardly effective emotional and mental treatments. They find no conflict in providing mankind with methods to improve their health, state of mind, and their overall well being, if only it will get them to cast off their dependence on the Creator and turn to a lifestyle centered on the self. The soldiers of Lucifer are among the greatest students of human nature in the universe

– those they cannot destroy with violence or open vice they can lead down a gentle path to perdition by casting rose petals along a winding detour.

But in Nimrod, the demons had truly created a monster, a creature of sin and pride to rival even their own shadowy essences. At this time, the hunter had not fully cast off all hope of repentance, yet the stings of conscience only popped like live branches in a fire. “You cannot tell me what to do,” he snapped at the arch demon, who stepped back and looked the mortal up and down with genuine, wide-eyed amazement.

Nothing happened for a few, tense seconds, and then Typhon threw back the head of his temporary body and roared with laughter. His voice sounded like a whirl of dry leaves being swept along the ground by an autumn breeze – it was a dead, lifeless thing that conveyed no true joy. His eyes still shining in dark amusement, the demon said to Nimrod, “Noble man; you will realize soon enough that even freedom has a price. We gods are not yet so old that we cannot be surprised from time to time, but you will never see as much as we have seen. You will never know as much as any of us know. You will never understand a fraction of what the least of us understands. I have given you your very purpose, your reason for living – and if you begin to direct your anger against me, I can take it all away. Yes, I can tell you what to do, and you must pay the price of your freedom. You must do it.”

The mortal lowered his head, but not in submission. The angels around noted his bared teeth, his pinched expression – so much like an animal – and then we perceived that his eyes were growing warm. With a wordless yell, Nimrod threw himself at the physical body of Sammael, and knocked him away.

The arch demon stepped back, surprised twice in one night. “You have given me power, god of this world,” Nimrod said. “You tell me to stand against the Almighty One of Heaven. You tell me to tear my family apart, and destroy the hope of generations of my people.” Listening intently, Adriel cherished the hope that a conscience had somehow revived itself in the young warrior’s soul – but it was not to be. “You give me the power, you say, to do all these things – yet you would have me believe that I cannot stand against *you*?”

With speed that could outrun a leopard, and strength that could tear a lion apart, Nimrod leapt again at the powerful form that the wicked spirit had borrowed from the dust of the earth. At the door of their tent, Yunah stood staring at her husband racing off into the darkness, away from the glowing embers of coal. “He has finally lost his mind,” she said quietly, not seeing the figure he was pursuing.

Nimrod had grabbed a spear from the ground near one of the last tents of the settlement, and turning it now against Typhon he thrust the tip after the retreating demon. Farther, farther away from the settlement was his enemy leading him, away from the glow of the tent’s low fires. In light too dim for ordinary eyes to see Nimrod regarded his foe, and then he swung the spear in a tight arc in an attempt to slice at him with the point. Typhon grabbed the very point with his hand, and the two wrestled in the dark.

Mad with anger and the throes of a dying spirit, Nimrod had reached the very end of his ethereal rope. Like the demons of the first rebellion, or like Esau to come, the mighty mortal had rejected divine grace for so long, and turned away from every chance for redemption so consistently, that his heart could no longer feel the influence of Adriel's voice. He could no longer respond to the light shining forth from the Heavenly Presence, and a great dome of spiritual darkness surrounded his body, a darkness much greater than the shadows which had kept him from peace and happiness before.

As Nimrod fought with the demon before him, he was completing his journey to becoming one himself. Heaven would forgive – oh, so eagerly Heaven would forgive – but the spirit of the human was so badly scarred that like a third of the once holy angels, the face of the Almighty would be an unbearable torment, and the blast of the Shekinah would be a consuming fire. As your Scriptures have said of another who followed the road of transgression to stand in this dark lot, *“good were it for that man if he had never been born.”*

Although Sammael had been merely playing with the enraged mortal, he was impressed at the agility and cunning of his opponent. Lucifer had chosen this one well. He would make a perfect regent of the demonic prince, when the ways of men were once again fully perverted. Nimrod would become a ruler over fallen man to rival the monarchy of Cain's son Enoch, before the other Enoch (son of Jared) had ruined the heart of their work.

Finally, the demon grew weary of the game and threw the human aside. Nimrod stood up again quickly and, deciding that he was through also, he leveled the spear and threw it with terrifying speed toward the body of the fallen Power. The instant before the tip of the spear made contact with the likeness of flesh, Sammael's physical form broke apart, crumbling into the air. As the demon vanished, passing from the physical plane, Nimrod saw Sammael's two enormous wings cleaving the swirling dust.

Before he had time to consider the sight, a hand as firm as steel grasped him by the throat and lifted him from the ground. Nimrod was not a small man by any means. In fact, he was large even when compared to the men of the pre-Flood world, who were far greater in size than the men of these latter days. Yet in the hands of Sammael's physical form he was helpless. In the fraction of a second during which the spear could have passed through his body, the demon had shifted himself forward to stand before the human, and had taken hold of him with a paralyzing grip.

“Whatever you think you know about us,” Sammael snarled, “let this be a reminder to you of who you really are.” While holding him up with one hand, the demon raked a single finger across Nimrod's chest with the other. The speed at which he did so tore apart the front of his tunic, and the sheer friction burned a mark in his skin. Nimrod fell to the ground in agony, gasping for air, and as he lay there clawing at the ground it took him several moments to realize that he was alone.

* * * * *

Under Typhon's direction, an obedient Nimrod cultivated a friendship with Shem's son Asshur. In a series of episodes that need not be dwelt upon here, Nimrod's wife Yunah also developed a closeness with the erring mortal. By the days in which Nimrod rose to power among the humans, adultery and drunkenness were not by any means uncommon. The reasons for Asshur's hatred of IaH were complex. Like Nimrod, he had great pride in the strength of his body and mind, and his warlike spirit has been noted in his descendants, the Assyrians. Like Ham, he had given up much of his freedom to the fermented evils of old wine. Like Cain, he had been the particular target of demonic influences, and the fallen Seraph Nisroch had focused with special attention on the development of his character.

Yet even with all these factors, it was a great shock to his family that he took the side of the rebel, and it was not much less of a surprise to us. We had seen Nisroch's influence upon him, and we had seen the mortal fail the little trials that had been placed in his way. We noticed that time and again he neglected to prayerfully reach out for divine help when minor annoyances presented themselves before him to refine his walk with the Almighty, yet the day he withheld his vote from the Council remains a dark spot on human history in the records of both angels and men. From that day forward, and down through the generations, the nation of Assyria has been the bitter enemy of its Shemitic relatives.

Although the demons had not until that time manifest themselves physically to Nimrod's wife Yunah, she had been chosen for a very special reason. The demons had seen in her something very useful to their cause. Like Ham's wife, and being a descendant of her, she had inherited much of the older woman's propensity for supernatural evil. Her gift of spiritual sensitivity, perverted by a life of intemperance and hidden by an outward appearance of delicate grace, had made her a demonic oracle of sorts.

Nimrod's contact with his demonic tutors was sporadic, and often filled with tension, particularly after his confrontation with Typhon. But in Yunah the hunter found a willing source of advice and wisdom for carrying out the designs of the fallen ones. Little by little, "memories" of the ancient and wicked ceremonies practiced by humans in the days before the Flood began to filter into the woman's consciousness, and she shared these insights with her mate.

Kaspiel and Kokabiel, the latter being one of the Peelogim, or fallen Seraphs, were both designated by the prince of demons to be her instructors, and with eager whispers they filled the beautiful mortal's dreams with images of the worst time in man's history thus far. Truly, between Kaspiel, Kokabiel and Lucifer himself, using Nimrod and Yunah as their willing vessels, the seeds of every false religion on the earth today were replanted in the fertile soil of post-Flood humanity.

As Nimrod grew in power, he also grew in popularity with the dissatisfied among the humans. As it was in Heaven before the world began, so it was on the earth in the years following the death of faithful Noah. Through Asshur, Cush, and Ham, Nimrod's voice was soon heard loud and clear in the monthly meetings of the Council of Twenty. No good and useful proposal was ever accepted if it conflicted with the demons' plans, and the frustration felt by several of the others who sat in the meetings, and their families, led slowly but surely

to their eventual acceptance of the demons' mindset. In spite of the fact that most members of the three families openly despised Nimrod, many found themselves firmly on his side, because – like it or not, they had partaken of his spirit.

Finally, the day came when Azazel was satisfied with the work he had done in the camp of the faithful. More than half of humanity was neglectful, scornful or openly hostile to the once sacred teachings handed down by Noah, and when they looked for a leader to unify them in their apostasy, a leader was available to fill the role. Standing up among his brethren, Nimrod made the startling claim that the Council was corrupt, and that in failing to take the seed of humanity around the world as they had been instructed, they were the ones who were failing in the work of IaH.

“I am no example of faithfulness,” Nimrod said loudly to the multitudes assembled before him. “I make no excuses for my actions, and I await no Sacrifice to cleanse me from my guilt. But I know this, we can accomplish at least one thing that was given to us by our beloved father Noah. There is one area in which we may yet succeed. Let us leave this place where we have lived for so long, and let us establish our kingdom over all the earth!”

Nimrod did not make it known, of course, that the human race would have spread far and wide over the surface of the earth by then, had it not been for the disunity his own family had caused, himself in particular. Nimrod had no scruples about referring to his deceased ancestor as his “beloved father Noah” if it helped him to gain the confidence of the ignorant. Those of his listeners who did not know Nimrod well accepted his claim to be attempting the completion of one of the patriarch's plans. Those of his listeners who did know him well were already agreeable to his real plans, and they dismissed the callous lie for what it was.

Despite the earnest efforts of Shem and his family, and the pleadings of Japheth and his family, almost a half of the settlement pulled up its tents, and began to move eastward. “Noah commanded us to fill the earth,” they said, apparently invincible in their logic. Yet the spiritual atmosphere had changed, and the dissenters were using the promises made to a once faithful people to justify their current, abominable actions.

Most of the Hamites left, although the family of Phut stayed behind. Many of the Japhethites and Shemites also moved away from Ararat under Nimrod's dark banner, railing accusations at those who remained, who were sighing in their very spirits.

“Why is this happening again?” Remiel asked, sparkling tears running down his face. The tender angel had asked the Question, the very Question of the ages: Why, why is it ever allowed to happen?

Under the direction of El Michael, the holy angels did nothing to actively prevent the events unfolding before us. We were not idle by any means; great efforts were put forth, as they always are, to gently lead the men involved to an understanding of the paths on which they were walking. As messengers of the Spirit of the Most High, we pled with the souls of men using words that could only be understood by their innermost beings, yet we were not allowed to directly interfere with the demons, or to manifest ourselves to the humans in

vision or physical form. Was this a part of the strange “agreement” that El Michael had made with Lucifer? What could they have between them, I wondered, that held us in check from directly assisting the sons of Noah in the face of such a great and overwhelming evil?

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 5: CADENCE

The split between the two classes of humans was necessary for the preservation of the message of the Sacrifice in its purity. In the short term, however, this event appeared to serve the demons' ultimate plan. The separation ensured that the wicked doctrines being brought forth from Yunah's mind got a "head start" in the geographic conquest of the world, and it also further delayed the movements of the righteous humans. Not only had the rebels begun their dark commission first, but they had also chosen the most fertile land in which to first settle, the region now known as Mesopotamia.

The "Ark of brick" that Typhon had mentioned to him was constantly on Nimrod's mind. Many angels found it difficult to observe the eastward-moving humans for any significant length of time, but Gabriel and Raziel, the Shomerim, kept a watchful eye over their progress. In addition to this, our oracles gave us much insight into what was being planned by the demons and executed by their human accomplices. We knew it had been Da'athiel's words to us regarding the replanting of a "Tree of Knowledge" and similar revelations that had triggered Lucifer's desire to meet with El Michael, and we saw that indeed the angelic oracle had spoken correctly. The time of separation between the humans had not been long off.

But what of the Tree itself? And what of the "great battle" that he also mentioned? My hand rested almost unconsciously on the handle of my sheathed khrev as I beheld the darkness settling over the camp of those who had departed from the mountains.

In spite of the conflict that we knew was on the horizon, the world of men experienced a relative peace after the departure of Nimrod's followers. Under the guidance of Shem, the remaining humans returned to the primitive faith espoused by Noah and continued to teach their young of the coming Savior, living lives that were – although touched by the sadness of days gone by – undeniably joyful and content. With the rebellious Hamites no longer a factor, the number of men in the Council was reduced to ten, and under the guidance of these inspired leaders (if the term may be so applied) the humans of Ararat prospered and multiplied.

Shem's guardian, an angel named Dumah who was also one of the Twelve, sent me a whisper as I stood considering the settlement of the followers of Nimrod some time after their departure from the faithful sons of Noah. The Virtue Dumah was once known as Koliel, the "Voice of El," however he had not spoken since Lucifer was cast down to the

earth. Whether he chose to do so as a sign, or whether it was requested of him, the other angels do not know – however he still communicates through whispers, the direct messages we may pass to each other regardless of distances between us.

As I passed upward into the Heavenly kingdom, I found myself in the presence of the angel who had summoned me and three others as well. Jehoel, a Seraph, Raziel, the former Throne who had become Gabriel's partner as a covering Cherub, and As'fael, the Principality who delivered the previous record to you all stood by, awaiting my arrival. All five of us were members of the Twelve who were sealed during Lucifer's rebellion, and I knew from the looks on the faces of the others that this meeting would be an important one.

"I have been sent by the order of El Michael," Raziel began, "to give you such information as I may. Israfael, Anael, Matmoniel, Uzziel, Shabbatiel and Zahariel will be informed when they are available, and Za'afiel will be joining us shortly." In this, he had named all the other members of our company, and my curiosity increased. Not since the battle in Heaven had all Twelve of us needed to meet independently of the other angels. The last time we had worked together, it had been to comfort the confused servants of the Most High when Lucifer began to make his accusations more open, just before the conflict broke out. As members of the Twelve, this would prove to be one of our major roles in the days to come. But the matters Raziel brought us that day did not have as their primary objective the commission to comfort others.

"Even now," the angel said, "Sammael and Kokabiel are instructing Nimrod about the construction of a new thing. In the years that have passed since their departure from Ararat, the people have grown sedentary in their fertile valley. Their crops spring forth more easily from the ground than those of the people of Shem, and their animals have become fat on the herbs of the land. Their tents are densely packed, and wild animals do not trouble them there."

As Raziel spoke these words, I began to consider that perhaps this was a good thing. If the rebels were losing their zeal to move about, then when the faithful humans once again obtained the resources to spread to new parts of the world, the colony bearing Yunah's false doctrines would be isolated, and easily avoided. In spite of the great indignation the followers of Nimrod had displayed when they had decided the others were neglecting the divine command to fill the earth, it appeared as if their conviction had been temporary at best, and a ruse for other, darker motives at worst.

Those who departed from Ararat had been a diverse mix of malcontents, zealots and conformists, but under the steady stream of influence from Nimrod and his wife, in combination with demonic activity, those who thought themselves wise to flee from an imagined tyranny gave over their freedom to a true and exceedingly dangerous one. With supernatural subtlety, Nimrod quieted the fire of the powerful, and confirmed the loyalty of the weak.

As Raziel continued, however, I realized how naïve my hopes had been, considering the nature of the wicked spirits that were guiding the course of those men. "It has been put in

the mind of mortal man to build himself a kingdom. They will seek to copy the hierarchy of Heaven itself, forming a government of people – people who have already turned from the source of divine wisdom, and whose goals are set on the world.”

This, I knew, would be a disastrous development at that early stage of human history, especially if carried forth under the rulership of Nimrod. But the Cherub had even more dire news to report. “At the heart of this kingdom, the new thing will be established. In the Kingdom of Heaven, toward the sides of the North, there are towers. They are used, as we all know, for the keeping of records, for the chronicles of the Kingdom and the course of angelic investigations.”

“Lucifer has proposed a Tower here on earth – a building for further research into the principles of the physical creation. By an understanding of this the demons plan to completely shut humanity away from divine grace. Azazel intends to finish the work he started in Eden, to bring about an irreversible corruption of Adam’s seed. If he can do this, he reasons, he will have rendered the promise of the Sacrifice useless, and will have justified himself – in his mind – before all the universe.”

I remembered Satan’s words to me ages ago, when he was attempting to draw me into his rebellion. “Think of it, Zadkiel,” he had said to me. “A kingdom of angels, with no need of a Throne. A free universe, with no place for a God.” In perceiving his objective, to set up a successful human kingdom independent of divine grace, I saw that the father of transgression was still trying to make his point.

“Even now,” Raziel continued, “plans are being made to begin its foundations.”

“What will El Michael have us do?” As’fael asked, his question one that was most likely on the mind of each of Raziel’s hearers.

“Nothing yet,” came the reply from Za’afiel, who had just arrived. “Our mission at this time is to observe. Even so, I have been told that when the time comes to oppose the demons more directly, our companies will be arranged differently than they have been in the past.”

“Observation has been our mission for some time,” As’fael said. “It is difficult to watch this happening all over again.” The Ikari paused for a while, but no one spoke. Eventually he asked, “But what of this new arrangement?”

“When we faced Lucifer in Heaven, and in Eden, and over the plain of the Ark, we were set in place according to our Orders. We Cherubim had our place, and the Thrones, and all the others according to their kinds. This new battle will be different. Its nature will be different, and we may never again see another conflict like it.”

“What does that mean?” I asked, to which Za’afiel only shook his head and said, “That was all Zephon was able to foresee.”

This was apparently information that was very recent, for even Raziel, who had summoned us to appear, asked Za'afiel to continue to share with us what he knew. "We shall be no more seven companies, but twelve. In the days of the battle, the demons will have learned much, and will be more powerful than even they now realize. In light of this, the Elohim has declared that we must learn a new kind of unity, a new way to stand as one. Each of the Twelve will be placed at the head of a company, commanding angels chosen from all seven of the natural Orders – including the Archangels themselves."

"As Raziel was saying," he continued, "the Tower on the plane of Shinar where Nimrod's people have settled will be a vast structure. It will be home to both fallen angels and fallen men; and there, in the walls of that place, they will pervert the knowledge of Heaven and earth to establish their godless society. From there they plan to slowly expand over the face of the earth, corrupting or destroying the faithful offspring of Noah, and eventually filling the planet with an evil even darker than that which existed before the Flood."

"They will build their structure to the sky," Raziel added, "where they feel they will be safe from divine judgment. The mercy of IaHWeH will bear long with them, however, for messengers will be sent among them from the followers of Shem; only upon those who will not turn from this dark design will the wrath of the Almighty be visited."

"When that day comes, we will be ready to confound their plans; but for the sake of those who do not yet know fully what they are doing, we must bear the weight of the Shekinah a little longer," Za'afiel concluded with a brief smile at Raziel.

"Remember my wings," the covering Cherub advised us in closing. This was a common phrase in the mouth of the powerful angel, who now had two wings where once he had four. When his friend and fellow Ophan Zagzagel had sided with Lucifer, Raziel had tried to protect him from the light of divine judgment by shielding him with his wings. This was contrary to the revealed will of the Almighty, and Raziel had suffered a painful consequence. Regardless of this, when the time came that he could admit the necessity of the sentence passed upon the demons, El Michael had raised him to be one of the Cherubim, and then one of the Shomerim, the guardians of the very fire that had singed off his lower wings.

Raziel's message to the Host, both spoken and unspoken, was this: Do not attempt to do in your own might what the Almighty must do in His. Raziel's appointment to the office of covering Cherub was an eternal sign to us that even those goals that created beings most desire, even those things that seem by their very nature noble and praiseworthy, must be accomplished through the providence of the Throne. All else goes invariably to ashes.

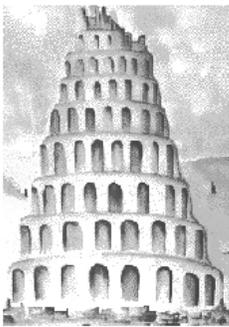
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As I mentioned previously, one of the unusual things about those days from an angelic perspective was the relative silence of El Michael on the events that were taking place on the earth. We carried forth our many duties in the Heavenly Kingdom, and our myriad unseen services for the humans below with our usual efficiency, yet not much information

was forthcoming from the Prince of Heaven regarding the activities of the rebels. From the incidents surrounding the oracles, we knew that He was unable or unwilling to speak directly, but He seemed content to reveal what He could through Zephon, Da'athiel and the others.

In the week that the construction of the Tower began, Nimrod's activities were not so much as mentioned by the Elohim at the gathering of the Host. There was much to observe directly, though – for the project into which the demons led the humans was far grander than I had envisioned.

In the fertile plain on which the humans had settled, there were few rocks from which construction materials could be taken, and so true to Typhon's statement the people began to gather resources to make bricks. This was not a new technology, for Enoch benCain's enormous fortress before the Flood had been a sophisticated building. It had been made from a combination of refined boulders, brickwork and an amalgamation of metals. The entire structure was reinforced using metallurgic techniques that have yet to be rediscovered among humans, and even after the upper section had been destroyed by divine command when the faithful son of Jared had breached its walls, the ruins had continued to provide adequate shelter for many humans until the time of the judgment.



Between Ham's recollections in his sober moments and Yunah's demon-inspired insights, the people of Cush began to build not only the Tower, but cities as well. Indeed, Nimrod was the major driving force behind all the activity of the settlement, but Sammael had counseled him – reinforcing it with many threats – that it would be wisdom for the younger man to work through the name of his more respected and liked father. The major city that surrounded the Tower they named “Sha’ar-ha-elohim” or “Gate of The Gods,” although it later became known as Babylonia, or simply Babel.

With durable new resources the people made large, secure homes for themselves, and began to spread out slowly over Shinar, with the city of the Tower in the center. The three closest cities were named Erech, and Accad, and Calneh. Nimrod, Asshur and Mizraim, after establishing these, moved further out and built four more cities: Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen. At Nineveh, Yunah established a school of “priests” where she trained young men in the knowledge of the demonic rites and ceremonies upon which their kingdom would be based.

In the years to come, when the city of Nineveh fell to invading powers, many of the institutions that then existed were successors to those that were established by Yunah. So completely did divine providence see the destruction of the settlement that the majority of records dealing with that ancient system of idolatrous worship were destroyed. As it had been with the destruction of the great library of Alexandria at a later date, much that was good and profitable was lost to humanity in the fall of Nineveh – of that there can be no doubt. Yet the blessings that resulted from the consumption of the records of Babylon's evil arts cannot be accurately reckoned.

When they saw the depths of open sin to which Nimrod and his family had sunk, a few of the more conscientious Cushites began to object to the overt blasphemies being introduced into their society, however these were by far in the minority – the demons had done their job well in focusing human minds for the most part on construction, technology, medicine, and farming. These in themselves are good, however for the humans in Shinar these pursuits were not by any means intended to refine the character, or to promote the knowledge of IaH in their land. It became true of them what was later said: *“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”*

The very word “IaHWeH” itself was seldom heard among the people, for both the demons and Nimrod hated that name. When the Almighty was referred to at all, He was described only by His title, Elohim.

Regarding the Tower itself, the demons soon realized that a perfect likeness of the structures in Heaven were impossible on the physical plane. The rules for matter are not like the rules for spiritual constructs, and faced with the laws of gravity, friction, compression, moments of force and factors like a high center of gravity, it quickly became apparent that alternate designs were needed. The fallen Principalities set themselves to work on understanding why previous attempts had fallen apart, and combined with the intellect of the corrupt humans they eventually provided the workers with a viable design.

Neither angels nor demons have great talent when it comes to originality, as I mentioned near the beginning of this record. Had the humans following Cush and Nimrod set out to construct the Tower by themselves, they would not have had the persistence or intellect to complete it. Had the demons alone undertaken the challenge, they would have spent a great deal of time trying to find solutions to the unique difficulties that presented themselves by virtue of the laws of the physical world. Many of the wonders of ancient civilizations whose remnants survive to this day were constructed using principles discovered by this grand collusion of spirits and mortal men.

By widening the base, it was discovered that the maximum height of the structure could be increased greatly. Unlike the spiritual plane’s tall, looming towers, this material building would need to have a dramatically tapering shape. The force of gravity acting on the higher levels of the abomination of Babel was spread out over the larger foundation; the thing stood fast, and it grew.

The elite of Cushite society did not wait for the Tower to be completed before making use of it. Within the mighty base, rooms were set aside for use by Nimrod and his wife. Cush and Ham with their wives lived in the tower along with the “first family,” and many of the other citizens who had managed to gain the favor of their Hamitic rulers also took up residence within the ambitious castle. Among them were Cush’s other sons, Nimrod’s brothers: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Ra’amah and Sabtecha.

Canaan, by this time, was a broken man. When he left the mountains of Ararat with his family, whatever nobility he had previously possessed, whatever sense of self worth his

membership in the Council of Twenty had afforded him was taken away. He turned to the evils of fermented wine, as had his father. His mood became one of perpetual depression, and he rarely spoke to anyone else. In a final, hopeless indignity, his two oldest boys Sidon and Heth were designated as the personal servants to their cousin Nimrod and his wife.

Canaan's third son, Jebus, in an interesting twist, began to exhibit many of the qualities of his cousin Nimrod. Powerful demons took note of the youngster's peculiar talents, and the arch demon Arioch, formerly one of the most powerful angels in Heaven, was assigned to guide his progress. In the years to come, the offspring of this human would be responsible for several pivotal changes in the course of human history.

The upper levels of the building were dedicated to more esoteric pursuits. Kokabiel and Kaspiel were the primary demons assigned to the operations which took place in the Tower, even as the misguided slaves continued to pile asphalt-bound slabs of brick one atop the other, closer and closer to the clouds above.

The human mind was studied in ways never imagined before, and for reasons never intended by their Creator. Through Yunah's profane ceremonies, human beings were given access to demonic powers, and the followers of Nimrod became men of titanic strength and ability, to rival the Nephilim of the pre-flood era when the best of Seth's descendants produced offspring with the unholy progeny of Cain. Yet while the Nephilim had been more slender in form, their great physical power being the result of a super-efficient use of their muscles, these post-flood men's bodies responded to the new conditions of the earth's environment by simply becoming massive.

From these techniques were spawned the progenitors of the line of "giants" from your Writings, including such men in their number as Anak, Goliath, Lahmi, and Og of Bashan. Nimrod's contribution to the cause was to train these warriors to actually fight. Physical strength was one thing, but Nimrod was a natural hunter, and he passed on his knowledge of timing and cunning to an army of eager students. It would not be long before they were tested in battle.

While Nimrod and his wife concerned themselves primarily with firmly establishing a stronghold, Asshur was led by Nisroch to expand the borders of the kingdom. In every new place he established he built castles or temples, decorating the buildings with carved figures of eagles and men with wings. Nisroch, once called Sarakiel, had been a Seraph, one of the six-winged singers of the Heavenly Kingdom. As one of the Peelogim, when he assumed human form to communicate directly with his charge (as he began to do shortly after Asshur left Ararat), two of his wings folded downward to become a shimmering robe, and his four remaining wings became material.

The four Archangels of Heaven, as a sign of the sovereignty of IaHWeH over all creatures, occasionally take on aspects of physical beasts. As a human prophet once saw them, "*the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.*" The eagle, the last of these, was the

aspect used by the Archangel Camael in battle, and was the aspect mimicked by Sarakiel in his new, fallen nature. The name Nisroch means “Fierce Eagle.”

In ancient times the men of the colonies established by Asshur revered the demon as a god, even in the days of the famous king Sennacherib. True to his pride, however, the demon had acted independently of Lucifer’s aims, and this led to conflict between Nimrod and his Shemitic ally.

* * * * *

During the days when the rebellious humans were strengthening their hold on the earth and their course against the desires of Heaven, El Michael made one of His rare appearances to mankind. Possibly because his guardian Dumah did not openly speak, or perhaps for other reasons entirely, the Prince of Angels personally visited Shem, the moderator of the Council of Ten, and gave to him a commission similar to that which had once been delivered to Enoch, the son of Jared.

“Days of great darkness are ahead,” the Divine Prince said gently. “The cup of iniquity appointed to the followers of Ham and Cush is almost full, and the Sword of Heaven is preparing to fall. They are a stiff-necked people, and will not turn from their iniquity. Their Tower grows higher, and their stony hearts are lifted up upon a brick foundation. Even so, there are many under the shadows who have not yet bowed their knee to Lucifer. With the knees of their flesh, they may have submitted, but they know not whom they serve.”

“What shall I do, Elohim?” Shem asked, genuinely desiring in his heart to reach out to those of his human family who were lost in the confusion that had come to pass in his sight.

“I will have a messenger go among them, to turn their hearts back to Heaven.”

“I am willing,” Shem said eagerly. “Send me to Sha’ar-ha-elohim.”

“I have not chosen you to go, my servant. But you must send your son Arphaxad to walk in the world of men. He will be afflicted, and despised. He will be debased by the words of those he has been sent to save – and yes, he will be injured for his love. Nevertheless, this thing will be for you a sign, and for the souls of men, salvation.”

“How can I send my son?” Shem asked. “My own life is bound up in his; how shall I not go in His stead? I am older, and when I do die, Arphaxad is appointed to take my place. Is the younger to be endangered while the older lives?”

“As I live,” said El Michael, “your son, with whom you are one, will return to you alive, as one who walks through a dark place and lives again. From his birth has he been chosen for this purpose, for his name is *Arphaxad*.” The name of Shem’s firstborn son, brought forth only two years after the flood, being interpreted means: “One who heals, the curse broken.”

Shem closed his eyes and said, “I am content with your promises, my Prince. If he is under your care, no harm will come to him. Blessed indeed be the name of IaHWeH.”

* * * * *

Shem’s firstborn son agreed to go. He walked in the footsteps of Enoch and Noah before him, and traced out the path trod by many a prophet in the records of your Scriptures. He went down into Shinar with his purple robe, his garment revealing to even the most ignorant stranger that he was of the faithful line of Shem.

Scarlet had become the color of choice on the plane of Mesopotamia. Deep red banners adorned the buildings, and all the important members of the kingdom’s hierarchy were sure to have it included in the clothing they wore. A great sadness lay on Arphaxad’s heart as he saw the people staring at him in mute curiosity. “Nothing lives in this place,” he said to himself as he saw the dark stares of those who had, in the name of freedom, given up all their choices to follow a demonized madman.

The buildings of brick were alien to the tent-dwelling human, and the large meeting structures amazed him. But none of the lesser buildings he saw as he passed through the cities surrounding the central settlement could prepare him for the sight of the Tower. When he first caught sight of the lifeless monstrosity inching up over the horizon to the rhythm of his footsteps, Arphaxad’s eyes had widened in shock. Yet it was not until he reached the gates of the city itself that he began to have an idea of just how large it really was.

Standing nearer its base, the top seemed to go up forever. Special devices had been constructed to convey materials to the workmen on the higher levels, and a system of message passing had been implemented for those on the ground to communicate with those who seemed to be nearing the very blue of the sky. A deep sigh came forth from the son of Shem – he was up against the very best of human power, and the very worst of human nature.

The messenger tore his eyes away from the impossible, tapering column of brick, and turned around to face the people he had come to see. The people had followed him. One by one, they had come out of their homes to see the purple-clad man walking fearlessly through their streets. The men of Nimrod’s army were powerful, monsters by today’s reckoning, yet those of the city itself were far weaker in body and mind. Most of the men had been employed in the backbreaking labor of construction, and the women and children were given menial tasks to keep them busy, and from thinking of the lives they left behind. For some of the oppressed, those who were of age to remember the days of Ararat, the mere sight of Arphaxad stirred something in their souls that they thought they would never feel again.

The faithful human looked out over the crowd of faces, some curious, some frightened, some scornful. He saw the pleading looks of those who had begun to feel a burning in their chest – and his heart broke for the deceived of men. Taking a deep breath, he lifted up his

voice and spoke. His message was clear, and his voice steady, reaching every ear in the crowd before him.

“People of Sha’ar-ha-elohim, listen now to my words! Thus says the Almighty One of Noah, ‘The Sword of Heaven is unleashed against a rebellious people, and my wrath is come up against the ones who have turned aside from my chosen Sacrifice. The city will be overthrown, and the slain will lie in the streets. The Tower of iniquity will surely be struck, and those who remain in its shadow will be crushed by its fall.’”

“Hear me, O people,” Arphaxad continued, seeing the eyes of some grow hard, and the eyes of others grow fearful. “The Almighty One of Heaven is a God of love. Wherein has He ever failed you? Who among you can raise a word against Him, to declare Him unfaithful? Who among you has been wronged by IaHWeH, or by His anointed ones? Repent. Let the wicked one know assuredly that you have turned your paths to righteousness, and your feet toward the Sacrifice to come.” With many such words he exhorted the people, pleading with them to flee for their lives. “*Babylon is fallen!*” he said, turning to the Tower behind him and using the word for “confusion.” “It is fallen already, and its images will soon be cast down to the ground.”

As Arphaxad continued to speak, he did not notice two gigantic men walking up to him from the side. As he was yet addressing the crowd, one of the titans grabbed him by the shoulders and spun him around. As the messenger turned to face the newcomer, the other one struck him on the side of the head. His vision blurred for an instant, and then the firstborn son of Shem crumpled to the ground.

* * * * *

“Awaken, my brother.”

Arphaxad painfully opened his eyes at the sound of a familiar voice.

“Aram!” he said, recognizing his younger sibling. “I did not think to ever see you again.”

Aram had left Ararat with Asshur, and was now wearing the scarlet colors of Ham’s tribe. “I had hoped not to ever see you again,” he replied. “They brought you to me, because we are both of Shem; yet as it has turned out, we are not so similar after all.”

“Do you know why I came here, Aram?” Arphaxad asked, getting slowly to his feet.

“Yes. Uz and Gether told me what you were saying in the streets of the city.”

“Uz and...” Arphaxad began, and then his eyes widened. “Those two giants were my nephews? What did you do to them?”

Aram ignored his questions, and sat there looking at his brother. Arphaxad then asked, “But is this not the city? Where am I now?”

Aram said, "You are in the Tower. No one else but the four of us know that you are here."

"What are you going to do with me?" the messenger asked. "You know I will never cease to teach the message of the Sacrifice. You know I must continue to speak as I have spoken in the city when you found me."

"I have no wish to do you harm," the younger man replied. "But I cannot allow you to continue to speak that message, or to say anything further in that name which you used. If Nimrod should discover your actions here today, you will never see Ararat again." As he said these words, a subtle change came over his face. Arphaxad noticed it, and he understood.

"You miss our home, don't you? Come with me. Help me to bring out the captives of this terrible place." Aram smiled sadly and said, "That I will never do."

Arphaxad held back his sorrow for his brother's reply, and said, "Then let me go. Let me speak once more to the people, and I will have finished the mission prepared for me. Let me speak in the surrounding cities but once – and I will depart from your country. Give me this, if you will not come out yourself."

Aram frowned, and closed his eyes. He knew that his own life was in question for even speaking to his brother in such familiar terms. Nimrod may well discover what was taking place in his chambers. His demonic gods, he was sure, already knew. Behind the struggling Shemite, unseen by either man, the Archangel Gabriel stretched out his hand and touched the human's shoulder, his eyes glowing a pure, sparkling white.

* * * * *

Shem sat at his usual place, on a comfortable rock overlooking the foot of the mountains. It had been weeks since his son had departed on his dangerous mission, and the patriarch had been sorely tempted to fear and doubt. Each time the cruel demon brought such thoughts to his mind, however, Shem fell on his face and prayed, "Father, by your grace I will not fear. Behold, my life, and the life of my son, are in your powerful hands."

How severely he had been tried! The tender heart of the priest was broken for the thought of those who were in darkness, yet he longed to have his son back, and to know he was safe. Shem raised his eyes to the sky, and offered up yet another prayer for his son. As he completed his petition, the human thought he saw movements in the valley below. He looked down narrowly, to carefully consider what he dared not trust to a first, fleeing glance.

What he saw was a company of tiny figures, thousands strong, who were marching steadily up the way to the mountains of Ararat. What he did not see was an even larger company of joyful angels, walking in a hollow square around the redeemed from among men.

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 6: MONODY

On the day that Arphaxad returned to Ararat, bringing with him many grateful saints, the angels wept and rejoiced. Sweet Remiel was particularly overcome, and his essence was greatly strengthened by the triumph of El Michael's message. Those who had returned from their sojourn in Shinar were welcomed back with open arms to the colony of the faithful, and the hearts of many were made glad as they saw their long lost relatives set back on the highway of faith.

Aram had not returned, however, and although Shem had not expected his younger son to make the trip, he grieved when Arphaxad gave him the report of what had taken place in the Tower. Among the angels, talk of the day was widespread.

"What a delight," As'fael had said to me, when the humans first left the cities with the messenger. "We have not seen such a thing since the days of Enoch!" Both Enoch and Noah had been faithful prophets to the evil Cainites in the days before the Flood. While Noah had gone among the people in a much more intimate way, until the building of the Ark had commenced he had not been as "fiery" a preacher as his ancestor had been. Arphaxad's brief ministry had reminded the Principality of the former messenger, who with shining face and spirit-filled voice had pronounced judgment on the world, leading many to repentance.

Aram had not given Arphaxad open permission to speak to the people of Sha'ar-ha-elohim. All he had consented to do was to look the other way, and say nothing to his human masters. "If the servants of Nimrod catch you," he said, "there will be nothing I can do to help. You are by yourself in this place."

"IaHWeH is with me," Arphaxad had responded, "I am never alone." The faithful human had spoken true. Although counseled strongly to leave the city immediately, the son of Shem was inspired to try once more, to bind up the work he had begun in the hearts of a few eager listeners. With the help of many angels he was able to avoid Nimrod's spies, and he did not so much as see another one of the titanic Neo-Nephilim.

Going to each of the cities, he was preserved from detection by the humans until he had already departed. Angels were sent to oppose the demons who would have summoned the Tower's guardians or tried to destroy the human themselves. But Arphaxad was surrounded by a globe of purity, a layer of the Shekinah that was given as a token to spiritual beings that

he was under the watchful care of Heaven. His mission was ordained by the Throne, and no power of demons, men, or the ungodly results of their combined intellect, could stand in his way.

When Nimrod heard of the activities of IaH's messenger, his fury knew no limits. "He steals souls out of our mouths," he said, unknowingly echoing the words of Lucifer, who had once said the same of his predecessor. "Why were you unable to stop him?"

"Once in a great while," Sammael replied, explaining to the human what he had once explained to his Satanic lord, "Heaven selects a human to give a message of judgment. For these men, wherever they go they are protected, and their souls are kept from the pollution we cast in their way." With a dark look he said, "Our mouths are stopped against him, and our weapons useless – for now. But do not concern yourself with the few who left; they will have their reward soon. Complete the Tower, and fill the earth with our kingdom. If you do this, we will overshadow all the human race, and this will never happen again."

"Impotent spirits," Nimrod hissed. "Had I but known, I would have slain him myself. Would he not have been given into my hand, as Abel was to Cain? Would the Heavenly hand have grabbed hold of my wrist, or taken away my sight, that I could not strike him dead? What good are these cities, or this Tower, if a single man may walk in and out as he pleases, and take away my people?" Nimrod knew that his people were not happy with the life he had given them. He suspected that many had simply been seeking an excuse to avoid his unjust tyranny. Yet his own objectives outweighed by far the good of his citizens, whom he had gradually, subtly enslaved.

No chains kept the loyalty of the populace; no immediate reward ensured that they would remain. But over the course of years they had been under his leadership, Nimrod had slowly crushed their spirits, leading them, under the careful guidance of Sammael and Imriel, to forget the name of IaHWeH and the life He promised them all. This spiritual slavery was worse than that which could ever be afforded by physical constraints, for although the people were free to leave, their souls were chained to the Tower and the demons inhabiting its growing structure. As it was used to describe a later king of Babylon, and symbolically Lucifer himself, these words may be fittingly applied to Nimrod, who "*opened not the house of his prisoners.*"

Typhon looked at the hunter with darkly glowing eyes, but he did not reply. The human's charge against the demons had been accurate. Mankind was given far more freedom to manipulate the material world than were they. Had Nimrod been a direct witness to the Shemite's actions during the infiltration of his kingdom, it was far more likely that he could have slain the human. Yet such a thought has little import, for although Sammael did not feel inclined to mention this – the same divine hand that could have physically stopped Nimrod from striking Aphaxad down, had he been there, kept him from discovering the faithful messenger's presence in the first place.

Yunah walked into the room, striding past and deliberately ignoring the incarnate Typhon, with whom she had become quite familiar in recent years, and who had recently annoyed

her with some casual insult. “I have received troubling news from Kokabiel,” she said. “There was a traitor among us, one who directly aided the mission of our recent visitor.”

“And who might that be?” Nimrod asked.

“Aram, the Shemite,” his wife replied. It was something of an exaggeration to state that Aram had “directly aided” his brother, but such an item of trivia was not likely to have had much of an impact on Nimrod’s reaction.

“You knew about this,” Nimrod said quietly, turning toward his demonic tutor. But Sammael, with a haughty smile, had already shed his physical form. The human shook his head in frustration and turned around again, continuing his survey of the city from the Tower’s window. “Make sure the wretch is suitably punished,” he directed his wife.

“It’s already been done,” came the cold reply.

* * * * *

In the Heavenly Kingdom, Zephon’s eyes were glowing a pale green. He had known for some time that something was stirring among the ranks of Lucifer’s demons, and he was using his divine insight to determine the details of the unrest.

“Here is what I see;” he said to those of us who were standing nearby. “The corrupt Seraph Nisroch has overstepped his authority in leading Asshur to develop the land so quickly. Lucifer’s aim has been to establish a hierarchy of humans, with the demons as their invisible patrons and guides. The Eagle has asserted himself, however, in subtle opposition to this design, in setting himself up as an object of worship in the Assyrian settlements. In the days to come, Azazel will delight in the diversity of false gods, assigning his followers to set up temples and priesthoods, drawing the ignorant away from the Almighty.”

“But this is not his desire at the present time, and Asshur’s activities under his fallen guardian’s direction have become a danger to his secular kingdom’s authority.”

“Is Asshur openly hostile toward Nimrod?” I asked. “I was not aware that he desired a kingdom of his own.”

“Asshur himself has no thoughts for rulership, but his submission to the desires of Nisroch have led him to establish colonies that will not so easily bow to the family of Sha’ar-halohim. The proud demon has been disciplined by his superiors... but soon Asshur himself will be humbled.”

I asked Zephon what this meant, and he said, “The judgments pronounced upon Nimrod’s kingdom have begun. There is a nation that will never know peace. On the day they rejected the message of Arphaxad, their fate was secured. The men who remain in the shadow of the Tower will be slain, and those who are not slain will be scattered over the earth. There, the innocent will receive their chance to dwell in the tents of Shem, for out of Ararat will

IaHWeH bring a great light, and out of Babylon will come forth a nation to carry this light to all the world. *'I will be their Almighty One,'* says IaHWeH, *'and they will be my people.'*”

“Yet before the people of the Tower are scattered, they will first become as one. The heart of Nimrod is lifted up with pride, and he has set his eye upon his friend. The armies of Sha’ar-ha-elohim will rise against the people of Asshur, and the birds of the air will be witnesses to the slaughter. The birds of prey will feed upon the bodies of the slain in the valleys and on the hills of the land.”

“A war between men,” I said with a great burden of sadness. “Men are not like angels or demons. Men will die.”

“They had a chance to come out of that confusion,” Zephon said, although he did not feel any less sorrow for the events he was foreseeing. “They had a chance to save themselves and their families, but now that they have tasted the fruit of that poisonous tree they have become as cursed men, destined only for dust.”

I turned to look at Gedael who was beside me as Zephon ceased to speak, and he nodded in understanding. That last statement has given us understanding of a prediction made years ago by Da’athiel, the other angelic oracle. The Cherub before us had called the results of allegiance to Nimrod’s government, symbolized by his great Tower, *the fruit of that poisonous tree*, and we knew that the days ahead would bring controversy to not only the humans below, but to spiritual beings once again. The combined messages of the two oracles made this thing certain in our minds: Nimrod had planted anew the Tree of Knowledge. We were not fully clear on the picture that was beginning to form, but we understood from this insight that no new information would come forth from the Throne regarding this matter. It was also reconfirmed in my mind that when it *was* made clear, it would be given to my fellow Ophan and myself to make it known among the Hosts of Heaven.

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In hindsight, I could not have chosen a more apt analogy for the Tower of Babel than the Tree of Forbidden Knowledge. In those darkened chambers, old idols were cherished and new idols were designed. Revachiel and Azrael, both of whom were mighty warriors, occupied their time in devising strategies for the men who were to be sent to conquer Asshur’s forces. In the highest completed levels of the structure, Kokabiel and Kaspriel taught men knowledge that had been hidden in the stars.

Ever since the Elohim spoke the physical universe into existence, it has been known by the angels that there was nothing arbitrary or random about the way everything was set in place. Even the myriad stars and other heavenly bodies – these were established to reflect the perfect order of the spiritual world. Many things are not yet understood even by the Cherubim, regarding the ways in which the physical creation reflects the ethereal, yet it has always been the delight of Heaven’s servants to look into such things, and find the character

of our Creator shining back at us from even the most intricate arrangements of molecules and planets.

With the fall of Adam, such knowledge was restricted from the minds of men. What gifts they had been given, they had misused. Even the lifeless minerals, because they were beautiful to man, were used to glorify apostate humanity. In the days of Cain's children, grand ornaments were used to beautify the outsides of those who were inwardly hideous. Large, shining statues of ingenious workmanship decorated the dwelling places of rebellious man and looked on as mute witnesses to the perverse practices of both the day and the night. The beautiful things of the earth were given to man for his enjoyment, but on this abuse of their privileges the Ancient of Days could only frown.

With the Flood, many of the most beautiful minerals were covered over in dirt and stone, treasured up for the day of the regeneration, when the souls of men will all be pure, and the delight of the eyes will not lead to the destruction of the heart. In all areas of natural science there is a barrier imposed upon man which his store of knowledge is not permitted to pass, lest he destroy himself and others. The sin-darkened faculties of human intellect are not morally or spiritually capable of handling all that was first delivered to the sons of Adam, yet with the followers of Nimrod and Cush, the demons who had once stared lovingly across the vast regions of space began to share much that was declared forbidden by the order of the Throne.

From the stars, man attempted to draw information about the future. While it is true that your Writings declare the lights in the heavens to be "*for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years,*" the techniques of the fallen angels proposed to stretch these principles further still, to determine specific and detailed knowledge of events for individuals or nations. Some of the more skilled of the sorcerers in those days appeared to be granted insights to rival the perceptions of the demons themselves. Even among the Chaldeans, the descendants of the remnants of Nimrod's kingdom in much later centuries, astrology was a very well developed occult art.



It was to these stars that Yunah looked on the nights before the armies set out, calling upon the names of her gods. She summoned the spirits of Kokabiel and Kaspiel, Zaphkiel and Chayil to give her word on the favorable times to begin the attack on Asshur. She called upon the fallen Archangel Arioch to guide her husband's campaign, and upon Azrael of the fearsome Gibborim to give them victory over their adversaries. She called upon the broken Cherub Sh'fiel, who was now calling himself Mar, or "Bitter," to grant Nimrod knowledge of the outer cities' movements, that their triumph might be made sure.

As she gazed at the heavens above, her eyes shining with an unearthly light, Lucifer himself drew invisibly near, and whispered into her mind, "All the earth has been delivered unto me, for I am the god of this world. I will have one nation, and one people under the shadow of

my wings, for I have commanded it to be so. Go forth among your enemies; take the gifts I have given you. Take the warriors I have made for you, the military advantages you have gained. Take the spiritual powers I have put in the veins of your husband, your children and yourself, and crush those who would stand against you. Do these things in my name, and you shall have all that you desire.” A cold, night wind blew across the summit of the Tower, stirring Yunah’s delicate hair against her incomparably beautiful face, yet no mortal man could look into those eyes that night who would not fear for his very soul.

The demonic priestess looked out over the vast plane from the silent pinnacle of Sha’ar-halohim’s Tower, and she smiled. There would be only one kingdom over the earth, she knew, and it would be theirs.

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Asshur had a worried look on his face, and rightly so. Nisroch had informed him that the army of Nimrod was moving against the city of Calah where he was situated, and he knew he did not stand a chance. The warriors at the Tower had been given weapons designed specifically for combat. They had been trained in the way of warfare by ancient spiritual beings who had been in three major conflicts. But perhaps most intimidatingly, many of the warriors of Nimrod were huge.

“Why has he betrayed me?” he asked the demon, whose four material wings stood regally out behind him. “What reason have I shown for him to think me disloyal?”

“This goes much deeper than you think, human,” the dark Seraph said, not willing to reveal all the truth. It had, after all, been his own pride that resulted in Lucifer’s calling down the wrath of angels and men on the outlying settlements of Shinar. “The objectives of Lucifer must be fulfilled, and it is not for you to ask why. If you want my advice, take your family and leave this place. Live in the forest, live in the mountains – find yourself anywhere but here.”

Asshur sighed and said, “What kind of a life is that? I have grown to used to this place, to having men following me. But if I move all my men, Nimrod will merely think we are trying to bide our time. He will follow us.”

Nisroch raised his eyebrows, “So you would rather sacrifice them all, and die yourself?”

“I have never run from anything. When I was called to serve in the Council on Ararat, I served. When I was convinced I should cast my vote in with Ham, against every other member, I did that too. When I felt I should leave the settlement and take my brother Aram with me, I did not hesitate for an instant. I am a stubborn man, Nisroch.”

“You are a foolish man,” the fallen angel responded. “Even mighty Lucifer knew better than to pursue a hopeless cause when the war broke out in Heaven. He withdrew for a time, when Michael called for a truce.” While this last part was technically true, El Michael had only offered a temporary period of peace to restore the wounded among the Host, and to offer

Satan's angels one final chance to respond to divine grace. When the unfolding beauty of the third day of creation had failed to move even a single demon, it was revealed to all that they would never turn from their course, and the battle was concluded. Lucifer had indeed pursued a hopeless cause.

None of this information would have made a difference to Asshur, even if the demonic Archangel had admitted it. "Be that as it may," he said, "Nimrod's accusation must not go unanswered. I am no traitor, yet he marches after me without a single request for peace. Gladly would I have submitted to his demands, but if he resolves to treat me as an enemy, an enemy I will be."

Nisroch looked thoughtfully at the human, who reminded him so much of himself. "I wonder if the Hosts of Heaven see our pride as we see yours: little men with sticks and knives, who think themselves something great. You cannot stop Lucifer's plans from unfolding."

"Are you going to stop me? Are you going to strike me down right here? I know well enough I have no angels looking after me to stay your hand."

Nisroch laughed softly and said, "Lucifer's will is supreme. Even your little afterthought of a rebellion will be for his glory. When the titans of Nimrod's army get a taste for human blood, what will there be to stop them from storming Ararat, and wiping out the last of El Michael's faithful servants? And am I to stop you from giving them some practice at killing? I would not miss this for all the world."

With that Nisroch's material body dissolved into dust, leaving the troubled human alone with his thoughts. Asshur would have preferred the company.

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Had an observer been standing high above the earth, he would have thought at the initial clash that the "Assyrians" had the advantage. While Nimrod's forces were a selected group of warriors, every last man of the outlying settlements knew that he was fighting for his life. Both sides had spears and bows. Nimrod's soldiers had daggers and swords. Some of their weaponry was made by virtue of the knowledge regained from the pre-Flood days through the workings of Yunah and the demons; the rest were the products of new innovations.

Although there were far more humans on Asshur's part, all of the soldiers sent forth from Sha'ar-ha-elohim were skilled in combat, and many had been augmented with abilities gained from demonic ceremonies. When the two companies were a certain distance apart, the Neo-Nephilim stopped advancing and drew their bows.

Aiming high into the air, they loosed a volley of arrows in the general direction of their enemies. Reloading, the fearsome warriors next fired at a much lower angle, across the plain at Asshur's men. This was the first human battle, the first human war. Angels hid their faces in their veils as the arrows found their marks, simultaneously raining down upon the

betrayed men's heads and striking them from across a distance their own archers could not hope to attain. In the face of this dual archery attack, the wooden shields carried by the men facing Nimrod's army were next to useless, and several men threw down their weapons and fled.

Those who remained, and survived, saw that their only hope of getting past this first type of attack was to rush forward and close the distance as quickly as they could. There was no organization, no structure, and the men raced forward headlong to their deaths.

Asshur knew that this meeting was joined on his orders, as much as it had been on Nimrod's, and he did not lag behind. He was at the very vanguard of his forces, and his spear was the first to penetrate mortal flesh. This is not to say that all his enemies were mortal in the strictest sense of the word, however. A few eager demons, thirsty for battle, had actually received the authority to assume human form, and were numbered among the Tower's soldiers. The hand of IaHWeH was not with either side, and within the great darkness cast by the wicked men of both armies Lucifer's minions had almost absolute control.

It was a painful event to watch – it was far more difficult to see than even the battles which were waged amongst the spirits. When we were injured, we were helpless until by the natural course of things our wounds receded, or we were healed by another member of the Host. Even the demons, who did retain some scars from their more serious wounds, could not be permanently dispatched. Our conflicts were never to the death, yet here was something different. Here was something horrifying.

They were children, only a few centuries old, and some far younger. Yet here they fell, one by one, only to rise for judgment when the spiritual wars are all concluded, and then to be sent to eternal destruction. There would be no “tomorrow” for the men who went down, bleeding and crying out in pain. The two Shomerim who stood high above the battle were the only ones who did not reveal great emotional distress at the events unfolding before us; Gabriel and Raziel looked down with unreadable expressions. As covering Cherubim they had been through so much, and witnessed so much, that they were able to contain their reactions much more easily than could the rest of us.

In close quarters, swords and daggers in the hands of the Nimrodites were much more effective than spears in the hands of the Assyrians, and the men of the latter fell by the score. The augmented humans in many cases used only clubs, or sometimes their bare hands to crush the bodies of their enemies. Demons such as Azrael who had joined in for sport used even more esoteric means to bring about the deaths of their opponents.

Asshur and his most powerful warriors held together, and managed to maintain a semblance of military competence for quite some time. As the bodies of their allies and foes fell around them, they surged forward into the thickest ranks of Nimrod's men seeking the tyrant himself. Even the Nephilim fell to the determined and desperate attacks of Asshur's elite.

At the rear of his company, Nimrod was kept informed of the events taking place by Sammael. The demon allowed his vision to play over the battlefield, and then he spoke to the human standing beside him. "Asshur yet lives. And he is fighting effectively. His other men are not faring so well, yet you may do better against them still, if you do not complete your circle."

Nimrod's plan had been to use his faster-moving men to circle around and trap Asshur's larger army, fighting them from every side, and eventually dissolving them inward. This was perhaps not the best strategy ever devised by man (or demon), and much was learned concerning warfare by the unseen observers of that conflict, yet in light of the circumstances of that day it was an effective one. Sammael proposed a variation, however, seeing the way the humans fought.

"Surround them from almost every angle, but leave a side open for their retreat – the side leading toward Calah. If the humans become truly desperate, they will fight more valiantly. Asshur believes that he has no alternative but to seek you out, and the men who stand with him are strengthened by his will. Yet the others, if they believe they may escape, may be thrown into confusion. Some will flee. Others will be disheartened at the sight of those who leave. None of them will feel compelled to stand their ground, for a way of escape will be open to them. Their spirits will die, and their bodies will soon follow."

"Let it be done as you have said," Nimrod agreed, and the demon sent out whispers to the incarnate angels among the warring companies. Abaddon snarled, wanting to make a complete end to the humans, and enjoying the work of wading through the weaker soldiers with no danger to his own existence. Yet he complied with the directions, and held his warriors back from closing off the gap completely.

Seeing their way of escape closing, but not being sealed off, some of Asshur's warriors did indeed throw down their spears and flee, including his own sons. Some of these were slain by the Nephilim archers, but others escaped into the city. The wiser ones fled into the wilderness. As Sammael had predicted, the remnant of the army cursed those who fled, but were far less hopeful about victory. Even as Asshur and his companions cut through the invading army toward Nimrod, the rest of his men were being wiped out, and the triumphant warriors were advancing toward the city behind them.

Finally, five men including Asshur were the only ones left. Surrounded on all sides, they beat back the constricting circle, but finally they were separated from each other, and it became obvious to them that their enemies were merely toying with them. Two men threw down their spears and yielded up their lives without a fight. Another fell on his own pointed weapon.

One man fought, rushing out at the crowd and attacking, until Abaddon himself stepped into the circle of warriors to finish him off. The desperate soldier rushed at the towering figure and ran him through with his spear. The evil Cherub merely grunted and grabbed the human around the chest, squeezing the life out of him before vanishing from the field.

Asshur finally went down, falling to his knees under the weight of countless minor injuries. He was weary, and wounded, and he knew his cause was lost. He had gone into the fight with no illusions of success. He had not expected to reach Nimrod through the wide ranks of his warriors. He had not expected to survive as long as he had. Such madness had seized the humans of Shinar that there could truly be no other end than this: confusion, conflict and ultimately death. Those who walk in the ways of the Almighty find life, even if the way may seem hard. Those who walk in the path of the demons find death, even if the way may seem easy.

For those who stood against Nimrod that day, the path had been neither right nor easy. The battle had been a masterpiece of demonic horror. But there was one final curtain yet to fall on that fateful day. As Asshur sank to his knees, his strength rapidly failing, he lifted up his voice to the sky, and he spoke to the One Most High.

“Sovereign Lord,” he said, “I have not spoken your name in years, and I will not presume to speak it now. Yet hear my request, as one who goes to the dust of the earth. In the name of your justice, let the angels bear record that I betrayed no trust of men, but only against you have I sinned. Vengeance belongs only to you, but guide my arrow, and smite my enemy and yours.” With that, he drew his bow one final time, and fired it in the direction he believed Nimrod to be.

As he spoke those words, I perceived the orb of light around Gabriel flicker briefly, and as the arrow flew over the crowds, the Archangel’s glowing eyes followed the primitive missile’s path. As the tip connected with and pierced through human flesh a wet, sharp sound filled the ears of every angel and demon present on the field of battle.

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Nimrod burst into peals of insane laughter as he beheld the arrow’s shaft sticking out from his side. “Oh, the beauty of it, Sammael, do you see?” he exclaimed, staring intently at the demon. He fell to his knees, as his body began to go cold and he lost feeling in his legs.

“You have had your victory yet,” he screamed at the sky, continuing to laugh. The warriors standing around him drew back in confusion and fear. They could see that the damage done to their leader was mortal, yet his actions were more in harmony with one who had drunk deeply of fermented wine.

“Will you mourn my loss?” he asked his angelic tutor. “My wife, will she feel sorrow at my passing?”

The warrior looked at his wound again, and the insane laughter stopped. There was something resembling clarity in his eyes for the first time in many, many years and he became silent for a moment. Then he took a painful breath and said, in a thoughtful voice, “What a strange and wasteful thing it was; this, my life.” Without an answer to any of his questions from the speechless Power standing nearby, Nimrod closed his eyes in death.

“This is not what I expected,” Sammael said stoically, and he immediately shed his human-like form. Moving through space much more quickly than he could have in a physical body, the arch demon sped toward Lucifer to deliver the perplexing report.

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 7: SYMPHONY

Heavenly angels looked down from on High at the blasphemous project nearing completion, and marveled. Upon hearing of her husband's death, Yunah immediately began to take absolute authority over the construction of the Tower and government of the city. Even Cush, who was deeply affected by the loss of his son, submitted to the sorceress' rule. Ham and Canaan had not said or done anything useful in a very long time.

Kokabiel and Azazel stood with the wicked beauty as she looked out over the countryside from her favorite place atop the Tower. During the day construction made the peak of the building a busy and hazardous place, but when the sun set the quiet platform became a gathering place for demons, and the preferred perch of the human queen.

"The kingdom is united," Azazel said. "The people are as one, except for a few scattered remnants of Asshur who are not worth my time to consider. Our work is almost complete, and this new society will flourish under our leadership."

If a forced unity was what Lucifer had set out to establish, he was right in that he had very nearly succeeded. A few politically powerful humans had a measure of freedom, although even this was restricted based on whether or not it would be detrimental to the demons' goals. Most were mere slaves, cowed by the authority of others to live for their daily food, and to occupy themselves with their daily labor.

"And what of queen Yunah?" Kokabiel asked. "She has been loyal to our goals, perhaps more so than her husband ever was, but how will she fare in this new kingdom, with Nimrod gone? The people have never been led by a woman before – they may rebel, or choose another leader. Cush perhaps would be effective for this purpose, but none other is even partly equipped to fill that role."

"You underestimate your young student," Lucifer said, "and you underestimate me. This eventuality was long anticipated, although perhaps it came sooner than we expected. Of course Sammael's report was a bit of a surprise, but it was not an occurrence for which I had not already planned. Nimrod has been a useful tool in our hands, but a fire burning that brightly cannot last forever. He was an uncontrolled force, much as I have been myself, until very recent years."

The arch demon smiled enigmatically as he said that last sentence. Lucifer was hopelessly insane, but he was not without the ability to know himself up to a point. Patience will never

be listed as a virtue of most demons, but like the serpents of the physical plane, some of the more powerful ones have learned to bide their time while awaiting the opportunity to strike. "Hidden within the soul and body of the woman before us," he said, "is the future of our earthly empire."

The woman was the daughter of Sheba, son of Ra'amah, son of Cush. She was an ancient relative of the queen from Sheba's lands who would later visit the illustrious king Solomon in his glory. From an early age, the girl had displayed attributes that would have made her a tremendous blessing to the camp of the faithful. Aside from her physical attractiveness, she had inherited none of her family's more obvious personality flaws. She was quiet and calm. She had no great propensity to indulge appetite in either food or the fermented wine that became popular early in her life. Furthermore, she had inherited a great affinity for spiritual concepts and would thus have made a capable teacher in the tents of Shem. She was fair of speech, and despite her coldness of heart she was a gifted student of human emotions, able to feign empathy long enough to win over almost any human to her point of view. In her younger days that empathy had been more genuine.

The attributes that composed her character acted in beautiful concert to produce a human rarely seen on the face of the earth. She was a second Eve, a near divine archetype, and for her angelic observers it is not difficult to understand how the later centuries produced legends about her under the names (in their diverse languages) of Aphrodite, Venus, Astaroth, Ishtar and so on. Yet with great power comes commensurate responsibility; in this Yunah failed, and she failed triumphantly.

Under the unreasoning, harsh hand of her father Sheba, Yunah had quickly learned that no good deed went unpunished in the world of Cush's children, and she found that she had become quite well respected among her family members by using her diverse talents in order to look out for herself. She had been given, or rather taken, in marriage at an early age to Ludim, who was the son of her great grand-uncle Mizraim and from whom would later come the Lydians. She had felt no attachment to the man, however, and when Nimrod rose to power among his brethren, her desires and her attention began to wander.

Without a formal separation from her previous husband, Yunah had entered into an adulterous union with the powerful hunter, and was considered by all to be his lawful wife. No one knew or cared about the details of their arrangement by that advanced point in their general apostasy, and Ludim held his peace on pain of potential death. There were other women that were drawn to the power represented by the Hamite dynasty, and he did not have to wait too long for a replacement. Even so, he was not easily satisfied considering the graces of his former companion, and he shed no tears at the news of his former rival's passing.

When Typhon, Paimon and Chayil had first begun appearing to Nimrod, he began to share with his wife the things they were telling him. This had been the design of Lucifer, to gently introduce her to the world of shadows, and to prepare her to rule at their chosen regent's side. She had eagerly listened to the plans and secrets that were shared with her, and she became, as Azazel had predicted, far more adept at seeing the true implications of what the

demons had been talking about. She early on saw the motives of the fallen angels, to justify themselves before the universe, to declare the Throne obsolete, and to ensure the perpetual existence of sin. In such a universe, the Creator, bound by His own ultimate justice, would be unable to destroy completely a society functioning without Him. This, at least, was the reasoning of the demons; they were chronically blinded to the truth of the matter, that it was the Almighty Himself who kept them alive despite their rebellion against the very source of life.

All that was required for Him to do was to relax the active preservation of their essences, and their claims would fly apart as quickly as their very beings. All that was required for the Covering Cherubim to do was to lower their guardianship of the Shekinah, and the universe would be wiped clean of all sin and sinners.

These details of the matter were conveniently kept from the humans, yet there was enough light shining on their souls from Heaven, by the ministry of holy angels, that they were aware their ways were evil. But this life of grasping after power was all that the young woman had ever known. The thought of being made strong in body and spirit seemed like a great thing, and service to the former, disaffected residents of the Eternal Kingdom seemed a small price to pay for that reward. As Yunah came to grasp this thought firmly, Lucifer's minions began to influence her far more directly, and although she did not see Kokabiel and Kaspiel until the construction of the Tower was underway, she was already fully familiar with who they were.

Like the descent of most of the humans into the way of darkness, hers had been gradual. Yet, while most misguided mortals stop when they hit the floor, Yunah had broken through into the basement of human depravity. As her authority among the Cushites continued to grow, so did her taste for the unusual and perverse. All of this was hidden behind a face that evoked nothing but affection from her observers. Women and older men wanted to please her; younger men wanted to possess her. Perhaps only children would have been able to see through her outward appearance, yet none of the very young were given the opportunity to spend much time in her company.

The woman smiled with satisfaction as she looked out over the city, and the new walls that she had erected around the perimeter. To those on the inside, it was just another barrier keeping them from freedom; for those who had rejected Arphaxad's last message of warning, the physical walls were only symbolic representations of the truth. They were bound to the Tower now in ways that went much deeper than they would have liked to think. For anyone who might be on the outside, the city looked even more like a fortress – a symbol of human might in combination with demonic inspiration to show their deliberate separation from the ordained order of life. Sha'ar-ha-elohim was as a dome of darkness on the earth, a gigantic spiritual weed whose branches kept the cities around it from the light of the sun, whose roots choked off any hope of Heaven for those who had not had opportunity to hear the voice of Heaven's servants in full, and whose fruits poisoned any who partook of the forbidden project.

“I am forced to admit,” Kokabiel said, “she is capable of carrying out any task to which we may set her, or to motivate others to do so, but I continue to have my reservations about her holding the throne of mankind alone. It is not only about her, but the subjects she is to rule. The men of your kingdom are not exactly subservient, being free of thought and action, as are we all.”

“Who said anything about her ruling mankind alone? There is another who will rise to stand by her side, another who will follow our every command, and bring forth an eternal stronghold, shut off from the tyranny of Heaven’s King. For this he will have been prepared from his very goings forth.”

“Who among the Cushites could be such a one?” the fallen Seraph asked. “I know of no human like Yunah among all the residents of the city.”

“Why, Kokabiel,” Azazel said gleefully. “Look more carefully into the body of your disciple. She is pregnant. I am going to be a father!”

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The fallen angel had not meant this literally, of course. Yunah’s condition was the result of an encounter with one of the many servants within the confines of the Tower. Such meetings had been taking place for some time, although her consorts were – in most cases – rightly terrified of the consequences of discovery. After the passing of her husband, however, the dissolute queen found her partners even more willing than they had previously been.

But now she had conceived, and from Lucifer’s words as reported by Zephon, it seemed as if the wicked spirits had something very definite planned for the life of the young human. A little less than nine months later, we found out exactly what it was.

“People of Shinar,” the royally attired queen addressed the crowds from a balcony in one of the lower floors of the Tower. “I come before you this day with most joyful news. The land is quiet, and our enemies are crushed. Daily we add to our knowledge, and gain power to become as gods. Daily we reach nearer to Heaven, and on the final floor of this great Tower, we will place a statue made of solid gold. It will be the statue of a man, with his eyes and his hands reaching up to the very Throne of El. This man is my husband, Nimrod, who has guided us away from the oppression of tyrants, and brought down the very fire of Heaven to light our lives.”

“This man has taken the world on his shoulders, and borne us with his own strength away from the mountain of the Almighty, to establish for us a name, and a kingdom of our own. But this man is every one of you, who followed the call to freedom away from slavery and fear. This man is only a symbol of what each of us can be, by trusting in our own strength, our own beauty, our own ways. And this man, my husband, has gone further still. At the hands of a vile traitor, this man gave his life for us all. He was slain for your sakes, my people. His blood ran out of his body, into the ground, that you all may live free.”

Her beautiful voice carried powerfully over the crowds, taking with it this twisted gospel. “Nimrod was his name,” she continued, “and Nimrod he will ever be called. But his story has not yet ended. This man has not deserted his people, even through death. By the gods of this world, we are immortal. Though our physical forms may taste the earth for a time, we have learned in this Tower to cast off the deceptions of the One who calls Himself our Creator. Hear me well, *ye shall not surely die!* For this knowledge also was my beloved husband chosen to taste this death for every one of us, that we may know the truth of who we really are.”

“I offer you proof,” she said to the people gathered below her, some of whom looked confused, but most of whom stood entranced by her words and her appearance. “I offer you a sign that these things are indeed so. By the power of the gods, you have seen signs and wonders among your leaders. You have seen fire come down from the sky in the sight of the multitudes. You have seen sicknesses taken away, and you have seen men made strong by the power of the spirits who guide us. These true angels have taught us well, and you have seen giants in the land, men of might and will, who are able to stand against the very Throne Itself.”

“These giants,” she said looking sorrowful, “brought home to me the broken body of my lord. Yet by the power of the gods, who gave us these giants, a far greater miracle has been worked. By the power of the gods I present to you... a child.”

Yunah turned around, took the infant from the place of rest behind her, and lifted him up in the sight of the eager audience. “Behold,” she said, “one who was alive, and has died, and now lives again before your presence. His name is Zero-I’isha. His name is Nimrod. His name is Tammuz.” The first name she had listed means “Seed of The Woman,” and the last means “Sprout of Life.” The angels standing by listened in horror to the story of the Sacrifice, given by the mouth of the profane, and reversed to point to man, and not to divinity. As Lucifer had taken the sword of the Spirit in Heaven, and inverted it to steal the very life of the holy, so this gospel was his dark kherev among humans, to seal their fate in apostasy and death.

“You will follow this boy, this – my good son, as you followed him in his previous life. He has returned to his people, and they will receive him warmly. He has been raised up by the gods to stand at the head of the kingdom whose foundation was laid in his own blood. You will honor him as divine.” Far from being Nimrod reborn, the pale youth in Yunah’s hands was not even the deceased tyrant’s true son. Anyone could plainly see that his skin was much lighter in appearance than his father’s had been. He was his mother’s child, that could easily be perceived by virtue of both complexion and physical beauty, but there was nothing of Nimrod’s blood within him.

“I,” she said, “am but a humble vessel of this great majesty. I have been chosen to rule until the youth reaches manhood; and I vow before you this day that I will nourish him, and teach him, and bring him up in the ways of the gods, that he may be worthy of that which is placed upon him. As for me, I am no longer to be called Queen Yunah. I am the woman chosen to bring forth the seed, the sprout; I am the one called to nourish the tender branch

that will grow into a tree to cover all the world. I will henceforth be known among you as Em'Yunaheth." The "Mother of the Branch," she had styled herself, by subtly altering her given name... In language of those that remained within the region of the Tower that name, roughly translated, becomes "Zemir-'amit," or as it is more commonly pronounced and known, *Semiramis*.

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Up in Heaven El Michael had entered the Throne of the IaHWeH, vanishing into that mysterious state we call the Union. He had been like this for many days, and there was no sign that He would rejoin us any time soon. The atmosphere of Heaven had been in something like a state of mild agitation ever since that meeting between our Prince and Lucifer. There were so many questions left unanswered in our minds – so many things about which the Elohim had been silent. And now, when it seemed as if the Host needed His divine guidance the most, the Commander of our armies was more silent than He had ever been.

What did this have to do with the "agreement," that secret counsel between Him and the prince of devils? Why had the humans been given so much freedom on earth that they had begun to destroy one another in a horrendous tragedy to the angelic mind? Why were the demons allowed to have such authority over the minds of men, so much so that they could shape the course of their society and assume physical form to kill them outright? "Why," I asked, echoing the Question of the ages, "is this being allowed to happen?" The things I have said to you so far may allow you to know the answer, perhaps; but many know it only with their minds. All need to know it, as I needed to know it that day, in their very hearts.

I had been hovering near the Tower during Queen Semiramis' speech to her myriad victims, my veil wrapped around my face in disgust and as protection against the dark atmosphere. When she concluded her words, of which there were many, and returned to the darkness of her chambers, I opened the passageway through the void and returned to the Heavenly kingdom, to the sanctuary of my home. What I met there were angels staring down at the scene I had just left, asking the same questions that were in my mind, their faces veiled and showing evidence of glittering tears.

"Zadkiel, please meet with me immediately." This whisper came to me from the Towers of the North, and I replied with an assurance that I would soon be there.

What beautiful structures these spiritual buildings were! I could describe them to human minds as being made of precious stones, of gold like glass, of ivory, and pearl, and fire. They shot up to impossible heights, with a delicate and slender beauty that could not be duplicated on the physical plane. The very sight of them spoke a great peace to my essence, but I did not have much time to admire their architecture. On the roof of one of these marvelous buildings stood Gedael, my summoner.

After we exchanged brief greetings, the Ophan got right down to business. “Do you remember Da’athiel’s prophecy to us? He said, ‘In the day that Nimrod plants anew the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil on the earth, another great battle will begin.’”

I said, “Yes, I remember that. And also Zephon’s statement that ‘before the people of the Tower are scattered, they will first become as one.’ I have thought up until now that this was in reference to the fight between Nimrod and Asshur.”

“So have I,” Gedael said, “But Zephon’s prediction was that the people of the Tower would be the ones scattered. Nimrod’s forces destroyed those of Asshur very easily – it has to mean something else. Aside from that, although the humans’ war brought us controversy, I got the impression that the Host would be involved in a much more direct way. There *has* to be something more to it.”

“What, then?” I asked, to myself as much as to the angel with whom I was speaking. Gedael said nothing.

I looked out over the landscape of Heaven, and it seemed so terribly empty to me all of a sudden. El Michael was not speaking to us very much. Angels were in a state of agitation. Even the Archangels did not seem to understand what was going on in either Heaven or the earth. All we had was our trust, our firm conviction that the Almighty had things in His capable hands.

I looked over from the stately Throneroom to the Temple that housed and maintained the Shekinah, the glory of the Most High. In that temple, so long ago, Lucifer had torn off his veil. This great disrespect had hardened him against any further reverence for our King, and because he was not immediately destroyed, the tragic prince became lifted up in his heart, and set himself on a course of action that ultimately destroyed the lives and souls of many.

As I continued to stare at the Temple, I was suddenly struck with an almost “physical,” if that word may be used of angels, revelation. I shook my head violently, trying to clear away the strange pressure I felt on my forehead, right between and above my eyes. I could not get free of the unusual sensation, similar to that which I had felt when I was first sealed, and as I felt my energy draining out of me I sank to my knees in confusion. “What is this?” I asked no one in particular.

“Zadkiel, are you all right?” I found no words with which to reply to Gedael’s question, but seized with sudden conviction I said, “Take me to the Temple.”

Suddenly grown almost helpless, I had my Order brother bear me over to the building in which Lucifer’s rebellion had truly begun. Here, in this sacred place where it had all started, I had the very real feeling that something was about to end.

Feelings were stirring in my essence that caused me great temptations to fear; yet I knew my convictions were right although no words had been spoken. “Am I not being presumptuous?” I asked myself. “What is my obedience, where is my humility?” But no

answers came. Instead, there was only a slow, powerful sense of love and duty, those twin principles that had sustained me through the first conflict with the fallen angels. They would, I was now certain, sustain me through this.

As I stared at the light of the Presence, bathing in its frozen fury and letting the eternal glow play over the folds of my veil, I knew what needed to be done. It was going to be very loud.

“Call the assembly,” I said to my friend.

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My strength had gradually returned to me as I saw the angels of all Orders gathering near the Altar of Incense. While we waited Remiel, who had heard much of the prophecies spoken in the presence of Gedael and myself, arrived before many of the others. I shared with my friends the things I now understood, and by some great miracle – they believed. Perhaps it was because they too had been present when Da’athiel and Zephon had given us their messages; but I was about to find out what would happen when others heard the words I had to present before the Host. I waited only long enough to perceive that all the available messengers of Heaven were standing before me, and then I began to speak.

“My brothers,” I began, “I ask you to hear my words, and to consider them very carefully. I am going to share with you something very difficult, and I pray in the name of IaHWeH that you will hear and understand.”

“Some time ago, the oracles Zephon and Da’athiel gave to Gedael, Remiel and myself a very important message. They did not understand what they were saying at the time, and neither did we. They spoke of the events leading up to Nimrod’s Tower. They spoke of the fruit of that wicked tree, which we saw in the doctrine uttered by the human queen only a brief time ago. We were made to understand that when this took place the humans of Sha’ar-ha-elohim would be scattered.”

“And yet,” I continued, “the prophesied events have come to pass, and the humans *are* not scattered. El Michael has entered the Union with the Almighty upon the Throne, and we are left without a Commander. So then, what is the answer? Do we wait for Him to return, to give us direction about what to do?”

I took a long pause here, but not merely for dramatic effect. I looked at the angels before me, and I looked at the trusting eyes of Gedael and Remiel focused upon me. I remembered the meeting Lucifer had called centuries ago, when he had revealed his rebellion to the Hosts of Heaven in much the same way I was addressing them now. The road of error and the road of truth, I mused, were so very close together, so very close... Even we angels were barely saved. I pray, with all my essence, for the sons of Adam in the last days.

On that day other things were on my mind – and I pondered them, knowing that those before me were waiting for me to continue.

Was I Lucifer? Was I becoming another rebel at the most confusing time in the universe's history? How could I dare to say what I had now to say? Where was the line between pride and duty? But I lowered my eyes to the ground in thought. Lucifer had been right about one thing – if angels were holy, we did not need someone directing our every action. The subtle, oh so very subtle error he had made was this: angels are only “holy” as long as they are being faithful. Lucifer had claimed holiness when he was in a state of rebellion. He had lost his vision, even while he thought his eyes were more clear than they had ever been; before he tore his veil away. But as for myself, I was doing what I knew in my essence to be best for every being I loved. I was being true to my “conscience,” to use an analogy of the human condition. But above all these things, I had confidence in the name of IaHWeH, and in the name He had given to me. Zadkiel, “The Righteousness of El,” was what He had named me. I believed in that name, that I was not making a most grave, destructive error.

Righteousness will go before Him, and will make a path for His steps.

I was free.

“I say no. We cannot wait.”

I looked up cautiously, wondering if I would behold an army of indignant angels with their fiery blades drawn. Yet there they were, looking at me with love, and patience, and understanding. Something that felt like the last trace of Lucifer's poison, that last molecule still floating around in my essence since the conflict hundreds and hundreds of years ago left me, and I felt strength flowing into my voice.

“I say we know what the right thing to do is. The humans of Sha'ar-ha-elohim must be scattered; but in order for this to take place, the demons that infest that dark tower must be driven away. With every conflict, we have triumphed over our adversaries in the name of the Most High. This time will not be any different. I have confidence that El Michael will return when He knows the time to be right, but until then, we have been commissioned...” I took a brief pause again, and looked over at Gedael and Remiel who smiled and nodded reassuringly.

“We have been commissioned to drive off the demons of the Tower of Nimrod.”

Uzziel, the Chief of the Malakim, the angel who had been very forward to speak at the meeting called by Lucifer, spoke now. He said, “My brother, I believe in my heart that you have spoken good and true words. Your essence is bright with love, and your face is shining with holy light. I, and my Virtues, will stand with you.”

Lahatiel, chief of the Ko'achim, said, “Raziel and Za'afiel spoke to you on that day not long ago, when we first learned that man would build a kingdom on the earth. Do you remember, Zadkiel? Dumah called five of you together to hear that message, and he has told me the details of that conversation.” I replied that I indeed remembered that occasion, and Lahatiel continued.

“On that day, Za’afiel said that we would no longer be arranged according to our Orders when we went into the battle to come, but according to the leadership of the Twelve. I believe that day has arrived. My Powers are at your disposal.”

One by one, each of the chiefs of the Orders gave their assent, and each of the Twelve entered into the agreement. This would never have happened, I realized, had I been addressing a company of fallen men. As the last of the Twelve made it known to the angels that he stood with us in our plan to drive off the demons, the walls of the Temple behind me flashed a bright white, and I turned around to behold the Shekinah Itself suddenly passing through the building and hovering in the air above our assembled company. Some angels seemed uncertain of what to make of this, particularly on that day of such a strange new thing.

But for myself, I knew that it was by this bright Spirit I had spoken those words, and by that bright Spirit my brothers had miraculously heard me. The glowing, pulsating orb of living fire broke in two, and then divided again into four. Each of those four smaller orbs divided again, until there were eight, sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four... many.

The numberless sparks of light swirled over our heads, and as a meteor shower the fire rained down upon us. Each of us received a tiny, precious token of flame deep within our beings.

“Zadkiel,” Gedael said to me softly so that no one else could hear. As I turned to my friend, he said to me, “Zadkiel, your eyes... they are glowing.”

* * * * *

Before we departed for earth, I spoke briefly with the Covering Cherubim. They, like all the other angels, had quickly felt the conviction that had filled me, and had agreed to the plan. They themselves, however, felt led to remain in the Kingdom. “Our place is here, with El Michael,” Raziel said. “We will let you know if anything changes up here.” I was glad for that. If there was something else going on in the Kingdom that I did not understand, and I was beginning to feel that there may be many of those, it would be nice to have a whisper of warning.

The final step before we opened the passageway through the void was to organize ourselves into companies. Each of the Twelve, with the exception of Raziel, became the head of a large division of Heaven’s warriors, consisting of a blend of all seven classes. We all turned toward the Throne, a gigantic living square of faithful spirits, and then as one we fell through the sea of glass, into the division between the Heavenly Kingdom and the earth.

As we descended to the level of the Tower we spread out over the sky. Like *twelve legions of angels*, as the Master would one day say, we approached the stronghold of our demonic enemies. As we drew closer, we beheld a small cloud of shadows detach themselves from the great dome of darkness which had begun to form after the queen’s speech, and which no angelic eye could easily penetrate. The cloud moved rapidly toward us.

We met in the air, the warriors of Heaven and the servants of sin. Lucifer himself was at the head of the company, and he winged forward to address our ranks.

“Malakim,” he said, using the general word for “angels,” “why have you come to this place?”

“We have been sent to drive you away from the Tower, and to scatter the kingdom which you have built upon the earth,” I responded.

To my surprise, Azazel looked at me incredulously, and then began to laugh. “You have been sent, have you? And where is your Prince? Where is the Captain of IaHWeH’s Host?”

“He has not come with us,” I replied. “Should it be necessary, He will be here.”

“And He commanded you to come and cast us away, did He?” The demon looked deeply into my eyes, apparently supremely interested in the answer I was about to give. “By what words did Michael send you forth?”

“He gave us no word,” I replied honestly. “Nevertheless, we have been sent.”

For the second time in a very few moments, Lucifer’s reaction surprised me. His features twisted in sudden, mighty rage, and he said, “Deceiver! Covenant-breaker!” He lifted his fist to the Heavens and said, “You tyrant, you enslaver of minds! How is it you have cheated me again?”

“The Prince has done no such thing,” I said with indignation. I was beginning to understand, I thought, what the mighty apostate was so angry about. I added, “We know no details of the agreement you mentioned on that day. We have been given signs to know the season of your defeat, Hel’el, and that day has come.”

“Very well,” the arch demon said, glowering at me. “Let it be war. This time things will be different, Zadkiel. This time your Prince will *not* come and save you! This time we will put men to death for the actions you take against us – there will be no games. This time, you will be the ones to fall.” With that, the god of this broken world turned with all his company, and fled back to the Tower to summon his forces. A cry was about to begin that would shake the foundations of both Heaven and earth.

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 8: CACOPHONY



We watched the sky darken with the rise of the demons into the air. They soared up above us, blotting out the sky, and formed a solid canopy over all that we could see. Instead of a diving attack, which I expected, the sky suddenly began to clear as the spiritual bodies of the fallen angels vanished one by one. I turned in surprise to look at Remiel, who was appointed to my company, but he had no answers to give.

From the city below, the gates opened and a massive amount of people poured out onto the plane. Soon there were far more bodies down there, I knew, than the population of Sha'ar-ha-elohim. A single demonic figure remained in the sky and he flew over to Puriel, who was appointed a leader of one of the twelve divisions in Raziel's place for this conflict. I saw them speaking briefly, while the tiny forms continued to pour out of the gates, and then even Lucifer vanished from my sight.

"What did he say?" I whispered across the distance to the Cherub.

"Zadkiel," came the reply, full of deep concern. "The people below are not all mortal – there are demons manifest in physical bodies among them, and if we do not join them in material form, they will slaughter the humans."

Queen Semiramis, under the instruction of Kokabiel, had ordered her people to arm themselves and exit the city's walls; the confused populace had readily obeyed, awed as they continued to be by the absolute authority she represented. "We have no choice," I said to Puriel. "But do we have the authority to so appear?" Taking on a material body is no light thing for an angel, and indeed it has been relatively rare. Under ordinary circumstances it would not be done. Demons are only allowed to do so in response to very specific accusations made against individuals, and angels only when they have a very special function to perform. These, however, were not ordinary circumstances.

"You have the authority," Gabriel said in whisper to me from Heaven.

"How is it you know this?" I asked. "Has El Michael left the Union?" I was hoping this was the case. Although it seemed as if I somehow found myself in charge of the angelic army, this was not where I wanted to be! "Not exactly," came Gabriel's reply, "but just as you knew what to do, so we understand as well. Meet the challenge you have been offered."

Reserving my questions for later, I whispered to the other eleven division leaders and told them what I knew. Very quickly, we also vanished from the sky and an army of white-clad soldiers swirled into being from the dust of the earth. In the meantime, the incarnate demons were whipping their human pawns into a warlike frenzy with threats, statements of misguided patriotism, and bitter deceptions as to the nature of the “unprovoked invaders of our land.”

Most of us looked like ordinary men. Those of my Order had two wings visible, as we had possessed four in the spiritual dimension. The Seraphim had four wings flowing out behind their armor, and the Cherubim, who ordinarily have two wings (and so would have none in material form) chose in this battle to retain their flight organs on the physical plane. Cherubim have always been able to vary their appearance by having one, two or three pairs of wings, although it should be understood that our appearance of flesh was mostly that – an appearance. We are able to alter our material properties in order to fly on wings of a size that would not be able to support our weight were we actual winged humans.

“How will we be able to tell the humans from the demons?” Matmoniel asked. “Many of them have no wings.” In fact, none of them did. Even the Peelogim and Erelim, who had formally been Seraphim and Thrones, seemed to have completely mimicked the human body; no telltale feathers marked them out as being different.

To this, Raziel responded in a broadcast whisper to every angel, “By the Shekinah burning within you, you will know flesh from spirit.” I did not know the source from which Gabriel and Raziel were obtaining their information, possibly from the training they had received for their unique office, but I was glad that we were able to make use of it. I was comforted that, in the absence of our Commander, we had two pairs of eyes on high that were able to direct the battle.

I raised my voice and said, “Onward, then!” reinforcing it with a whisper in case the utterance of my new material form did not carry all the way over my Host. In this way, the twelve divisions of angels began to march on the city.

Nearing the walls of Sha’ar-ha-elohim, we saw the enemy warriors coming to meet us. They were armed, as they had been in the fight against Asshur, with spears, swords and wooden shields. Manifest in physical form, we had duplicated these same weapons in our arsenal, and in this we were evenly matched. Where the demons believed they had the advantage was in two aspects. Firstly, they had already directed and been part of a war on the physical plane; they were more comfortable fighting with and in flesh than were we. Secondly, they knew we would have difficulty slaying humans. Although there have been times in your History where angels were sent to directly strike down an individual, or even large portions of a human army, these cases do take very special orders from the Throne as they are the ultimate revocation of free will.

For these deceived humans we had a special pity, feeling driven to do for them what is recorded in your Writings: “*Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the*

wicked. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.” We knew we would do what we must, yet I was glad for the assurance of the Covering Cherub that we would be able to tell who was who.

As they had done during their previous conflict, the Nephilim archers stopped their advance before the others, thinking to gain an early advantage by reducing our numbers. Aiming high into the air, they let loose a stream of arrows that would rain down upon us. While these wooden missiles were arching through the sky, the Nephilim sent a second volley at a lower angle, dramatically reducing the flight time. Because of their great strength, the augmented human warriors made ideal archers. Using bows too powerful for an ordinary man to draw, they were able to cover vast distances and strike at their enemies before they had a hope of retaliating.

The holy angels had been unseen observers at the slaughter of Asshur’s forces, however, and we were prepared for this attack. Drawing as close together as possible, the two front most ranks held their shields forward to catch the second wave of arrows, while the third row and those behind lifted their shields up into the air to defend against the initial projectiles. With the sustained roar of metal striking wood, our shields were able to block most of the incoming attack.

Some of the shafts did manage to get through and strike the bodies of the angels, however even the most serious of these injuries did not do a great deal of damage. It must be remembered that we had only a semblance of human form, and although the material bodies functioned in a very similar way to regular biological organisms, we were able to cope with a much more extreme degree of interruption to our systems. With almost no exceptions, we pulled the shafts from our shields and continued the advance.

The Nephilim tried this tactic again, with similar results, and then they finally dropped their bows, readied their spears, and rushed forward to catch up with the other fighters. Because of their advanced physical attributes, they cleared the distance rather quickly.

As we raced toward each other, I found Raziel’s promise to be blessedly true. Looking at the wall of humaniform bodies before me, I saw in some of them an angelic essence like a glittering coil of fire. To human eyes – had they been able to perceive this – I imagine it would appear to be a tangled thread of light trapped within a man-shaped vessel. Although the vessel was not transparent, the two images seemed to be superimposed on each other that both may be perceived.

No whispers needed to be sent. Every angel knew that the humans were not to be harmed, and so we concentrated our efforts on joining ourselves only to demonic adversaries.

As the two forces collided, the sound of metal against metal, wood against wood, and combinations thereof filled the air. The demons had made sure that their now

bloodthirsty human allies were at the very front lines, and we did what we could to avoid injury while fighting our way past these creatures we had sworn to protect and serve from the days of Creation. No angel deliberately killed a human on that day, yet humans died. When the day of judgment dawns, and the details of such records are completely unsealed (for angels can look deeply into such things even now), then the universe will know all that came to pass that day. Whether humans slew each other by mistake, thinking their brothers to be members of our company, or whether the demons made sure that some of their charges fell to feed the fire of the survivors, or whether some were slain by accident in the heat of the battle, all will shortly know.

While human weapons did us little damage, the swords and spears of the manifest demons were another story. Just as their bodies were expressions of their spiritual beings, so were the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but spiritual. Although they appeared to be ordinary blades and points to mortal eyes, that same mysterious essence spiraled its way through the material constructs, and when an angel was hit, the true nature of the attack was revealed. Their weapons, like ours, were the kherevs we had wielded on the spiritual plane.

Looking at the essences more closely, I could even recognize which demon was which, and I believed that if I could take out the more powerful ones first, the other warriors would be thrown into a state of confusion with no one to whisper them commands. Most of my time on the ground was spent knocking away the weapons of mortal adversaries; but realizing that my true targets were in the rear of the army, I whispered my intentions to the angels under my charge and took to the air. The Ophanim, Seraphim and Cherubim, who maintained their flight abilities in physical form, joined me in the sky to seek out such enemies as we may among the clouds of adversaries below. The other angels of my company remained where they were, keeping the humans busy so that they would not continue to be a distraction to our progress.

As we landed at the rear of the army, near the walls of the city, the demons realized that their ruse was no longer helping them, and so the fallen Seraphim, Thrones and Cherubim allowed their wings to appear and then they charged at us without delay. Some met in the air and others on the ground. I found myself facing one of the Erelim, a former member of my Order named Melejael, above the walls of Sha'ar-ha-elohim.

The winged soldier had a large spear, and he was using it to keep my sword at bay while maintaining a steady rhythm of attacks that kept me from getting an advantage. We went back and forth like this for some time, and then the demon began to use his more advanced knowledge of physical warfare to his advantage. Descending, he landed on the top of the wall itself and ran lightly backward as I chased after him, flying just above the brick surface. With a deft flick of his wrist he deflected my attacking sword downward, and it struck the physical barrier hard, sending a slight shock through my arm.

With a laugh, Melejael swung his spear and the tip ripped into my shoulder. The former Ophan leaped down from the wall, using his wings to slow his descent, and then he

turned to catch my diving attack – sending me crashing into the ground. This time I recovered more quickly and was able to avoid being run through, but then the angel ran up against the wall, again using his wings to push himself through the air in a way impossible for ordinary men.

The fallen angel flapped his wings as he got near the wall, and then he proceeded to crouch against it almost parallel to the ground. With his feathered limbs as a tool to catch the wind, he pressed himself sideways against the material surface, and then he folded his wings in tightly and leaped out at me, much more quickly than I could properly register.

The tip of his spear again made contact with my body, but I was able to twist aside in time to prevent serious injury. The spiritual element of his weapon cut deeply into my essence, and I had to leap backward into the air to avoid his follow-up advances. I deflected one of his thrusts with my shield as he followed me up into the air again, but even the process of blocking was painful, as it had been my shield-bearing shoulder that was damaged in Melejael's first attack. "You seem to be at a disadvantage," he said to me with a confident sneer. I made no reply, far more concerned with avoiding his spear than his taunts.

As time wore on, I was able to inflict a few minor wounds without taking further damage myself, and as the demon before me began to slow under the impact of his injuries, we descended to earth and I was finally able to pin his spear to the ground with the front of my shield and slide my blade upward to make a telling blow. With a yell, the demon dissolved his physical body, and he fell to the ground in his spiritual form with the wound becoming a glowing gash across his abdomen.

Giving a brief sigh, I turned to look for another opponent.

Some of the more clever demons had retained the services of the Nephilim. Rather than having them advance all the way to the front lines, they bade the enormous warriors to draw their swords and join forces with them. These teams of two were very effective at driving back angels, who did not wish to harm even the severely aberrated humans.

I came up against one such pair. The Cherub Sh'fiel was using one of the titans as a living shield, and I could not so much as get near enough to properly engage my true opponent. To make matters worse, the demon began to use his angelic powers to make attacks on me from a distance away. Safely behind his fleshly guardian, Sh'fiel began to throw the weapons of fallen warriors at me from every direction. Spinning swords and streaking spears cut into my wings as I tried unsuccessfully to dodge the lethal rain. One particularly unfortunate attack ripped out a large chunk of my left wing's feathers, and I knew that I would not be able to fly again in that condition.

Sh'fiel and the giant began to push me back, closer and closer to the wall of the city. The human's large sword kept me moving backward, while I had to keep looking around to make sure there would not be any nasty surprises from the fallen angel.

Eventually, I managed to give the large warrior the slip, dodging past one of his mighty attacks and getting between the demon and the human. Ordinarily, that would not be wise. In this case, however, I was being attacked from the rear anyway by Sh'fiel's sorcery, and this way I could keep the demon too busy to employ any more tricks. In addition to this, I always knew where the attacks from my rear would originate.

As I began to drive the evil Cherub back, finally gaining some advantage, he hissed something to the human behind me that I did not quite make out. He understood the command, however, because he began to make his attacks on me at an angle, subtly shifting to the right each time. I saw what they were attempting, but there was not much I could do about it. They were turning the fight so that we would maintain our close proximity to the wall. At some point Sh'fiel would try to get past me as I had done to the human, and then I would again be pinned against the brick barrier.

I ducked quickly as the fallen angel made a swipe for my head, and I heard another blade cutting the air above me. The titan had made a similar attack, and I had completely missed detecting it! Without even really thinking, I swung my weapon backward, using the flat of the blade to hit the mortal hard across the side of his face. He stood there stunned for a moment, and then his skin began to glow a bright red.

I was paying more attention to Sh'fiel, however, as the two of us were able to fight in an uninterrupted, although brief, manner for the first time. Neither of us noticed, therefore, when the mortal, mad with rage, rushed at me with all his speed and strength. Both the fallen Cherub and I found ourselves engulfed in powerful arms, carried along and about to be rammed directly into the powerful structure beside us. Instinctively we shifted into our natural states. Our incensed adversary suddenly found himself without any resistance. Unable to slow himself sufficiently he ran headlong into the baked brick wall, and there was one less Nephil on the battlefield that day.

On the other side of the wall, invisible to mortal eyes, Sh'fiel and I leaped at each other, spiraling up into the air. The damage to my physical wings had been accomplished via ordinary weapons, and had no effect on me now that I was in my spiritual state.

Faster than we could have moved in our physical bodies, the angel and I struck, retreated and struck again. Sh'fiel may have had an advantage in material form, but in this condition I was able to easily get the better of him although he was a Cherub. Dodging a potentially duel-ending thrust, I swooped under his arm and knocked him aside with my wing. Being more maneuverable, I spun around and got behind him before he had a chance to recover, and I sent him hurtling towards the ground. As he hit the surface, I dove down on top of him and pinned him there with my burning blade.

I left my vanquished opponent lying on the ground and I turned around, looking through the wall to see what was happening on the other side. I flew up to hover above the battlefield, taking a quick survey to see where I would most be needed. I quickly noticed that Remiel was being surrounded by a combination of men and fallen angels and so I closed my eyes, reappearing in material form behind two of his attackers.

After cutting my friend loose from his desperate situation, I looked up to see a six-winged Lucifer floating high above the battle. I considered rallying members of my company together to make an attack on him, but then I saw that both Za'afiel and Puriel were rising into the air to confront the arch demon. I looked around for another place in which I could be useful.

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As the day and the battle wore on, it began to dawn upon the demons that although the holy angels were at a slight disadvantage in terms of military skill, we were nevertheless not playing into their hands. The humans were being a distraction, that was true, but they were not able to do us any lasting damage. Perhaps more significantly, the demons realized that we were able to tell who our true enemies were. In the vast majority of cases, the Host would not engage a mortal adversary at all, choosing to either go after the demons standing with them, fly up into the air to oppose the obviously non-human warriors who were moving about on wings, or relocate to another place on the battlefield entirely.

Whenever an angel took too much physical damage from an ordinary weapon (although some of us did fall to demonic attacks), we would simply reform our material bodies and continue the fight. Gradually, demons began to shed their physical figures to take the fight into the spiritual plane. Not having the discernment we did, having a mix of men and incarnate spirits on the battlefield confused them far more than it did us. The Host followed them into our natural, invisible state. The cunning strategy of using human hostages had backfired, for if the demons now turned to attack their mortal allies, they would only be weakening their own strength and dividing their focus.

I understood that it was unlikely the wicked spirits would turn against the humans at this point, and I sent a whisper to the remaining heads of the twelve divisions. As a result almost every angelic warrior instantly vanished from the field. The demons, fortunately, were more concerned with us than with carrying out their threat, and they too abandoned their material forms, leaving a large group of very confused mortals standing around.

As our forces assembled in the sky, I took uneasy note of the fact that Lucifer had somehow managed to dispatch both of his opponents. Lahatiel, the chief of the Powers, was now standing in as the head of Za'afiel's division, and Shomeriel, one of the former guardians of the Tree of life, had replaced the injured Puriel.

We took note of the demons before us. Our numbers had been much reduced due to the losses we had sustained while fighting on the physical plane. Our dark adversaries had fared much better, although we still outnumbered them by an easily discernable amount of warriors. As we flew toward them, however, to engage a battle in which we knew we would have a distinct advantage, the demons unleashed upon us another terrible surprise.

As we drew near, we saw the demons lining up. At a command from Abaddon, who stood at the front of the satanic formation, the fallen angels drew back their arms and let fly their burning blades. As we made ready to defend ourselves from the whirling weapons, I remembered my encounter with Revachiel in the battle before the Flood, and I whispered a rapid warning to the heads of the twelve companies. It was too late to do much good, however. Before my eyes, the glowing disks stretched out into the long, thin javelins like that which had narrowly missed me above the Ark.

More than doubling in speed with their change of shape, the sparkling missiles found their marks and holy angels rained down from the sky. As this first line waited for their weapons to return they descended lower into the sky, revealing a second rank of demons who also sent an attack streaking toward us. More angels fell.

After this a third, and then a fourth. Our numbers were dwindling fast, and I could already see the first row of demons circling back to take their place and the end of a monstrous loop. Their weapons had reformed in their hands, and when it was their turn again they would be prepared to help sustain an endless volley of spiritual destruction.

We were not closing the gap between our forces anywhere near fast enough to make up for our losses. We would never even make it to the front rank of the demons this way, I realized; I closed my eyes and prayed for victory.

With my eyes closed, I remembered my calling and the peace I had felt in the glow of the Heavenly Temple. I knew we had never lost a battle, and I believed that we would not lose this one either. I saw before my eyes the light of the Shekinah filling us all, and I was not afraid of the weapons of the enemy. I heard in my essence a promise that has been passed down to the human world: *“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.”*

When I looked over at the enemy, I saw one of the gleaming streaks heading straight toward me, and I held up my left hand in what would ordinarily have been a futile block. I waited for the salvation of my Creator.

I flinched involuntarily as a coarse sound split the air. The glowing dart had stopped moving just inches away from my chest, and it seemed to be hanging there motionless. I stared at it in amazement for an instant, and then I started to reach forward with my hand to touch it. As I did so, the javelin moved as well, and I realized that it was connected by some invisible bond to my arm. There was a flicker of light, and then it seemed as if scales had fallen from my eyes. The veil that usually hung over my shoulder had vanished, and strapped to my left arm was a large, translucent shield: a glowing, rectangular construct of faith.

“IaHVShVaH,” I whispered softly to myself. “IaH saves.”

The glowing weapon buried in my shield, which was larger and lighter in sensation than the wooden ones we had replicated while in physical form, flashed once and vanished. I examined the front surface of my defensive tool, and saw that it was undamaged. Even the hole made by the evil weapon had disappeared. With eager joy, I whispered this information to the leaders of the other twelve divisions, and then to my own warriors. We did not need to lose a single angel more to the demonic onslaught.

I saw the chief of the Seraphim fly to the forefront of his division, eager to test my report. Instead of a shield, however, Israfel met the incoming missiles by folding two of his six wings over his upper body, and two over his lower. The darts bounced helplessly off his feathery barrier. I suspected that the reason this was so was the fact that Seraphim do not have veils as other angels do. Ever since Lucifer corrupted the serpent, which had once been their favorite creation in Eden, they had removed this covering as a sign of sorrow. Now, when Seraphim are in the presence of the Most High they cover their faces with their wings, as Israfel did that day to defend himself from attack.

The Host rejoiced, but even in this rejoicing we were not idle. We flew swiftly toward our adversaries, though our numbers were greatly reduced. For the first time ever, the holy angels were outnumbered by the fallen.

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Like kherevs themselves, our fiery spiritual swords, the shields had always existed. They are spiritual constructs that I am explaining in human terms. Only as we became aware of their significance, however, did they become truly useful to us. Much the same may be said, on a strictly spiritual level, of the tools given to mortals when they enter the service of IaHWeH. All that they need is already given; indeed it was ordained for them from the creation of the foundations of the world – but only as they grow and come to understand their significance do the gifts become manifest. Faith is the principle that activates every implement, the key that opens every sealed gate.

As we finally entered the battle proper, the three Archangels among us began to pulse with bright energy, and they transformed themselves into their animal aspects. Uriel became a gigantic winged lion, whose claws sparkled with the fire that danced along the surface of our blades. Raphael took the form of a winged bull, his horns immediately being put to use tossing our fallen enemies out of his way. Camael assumed the appearance of an eagle, whose talons were as deadly as any spiritual blade.

I quickly noticed, however, that this ability was not restricted to the holy Archangels. Nisroch the Seraph also began to glow, and he became an eagle of similar appearance to Camael. Arioch, true to his name, which means “Fierce Lion,” mimicked Uriel’s catlike aspect. Abaddon and Sammael, who had not been Archangels in their unfallen state, had been raised by Lucifer to the demonic equivalent. They became a wolf and a boar respectively, and wasted no time in putting their new properties to use reducing our already low numbers further still.

Perhaps the biggest surprise was Lucifer himself. As I made mention before, every battle saw some new trick, some new characteristic that the arch demon had discovered. This conflict was no exception. Spreading himself out over the sky, Lucifer's essence began to glow a dark, fiery red. As the light gathered itself together in the location where the mighty Cherub had been only moments before, we saw there the sign of his original great shame.

During the war in Heaven, the blade of El Michael had finally cut into Lucifer's being. When this had taken place, the true character of the rebel had been revealed to a cloud of many witnesses. He had become a gigantic and hideous red dragon, many times larger than the form he had abandoned, with seven heads and ten horns. The winged serpent had not been granted much of a chance to explore his new shape, for at that very moment the battle had ended and the demons were cast down from the spiritual Kingdom. Here on earth, it seemed as if the Leviathan beast would have the opportunity to make its mark.

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When I was finally able to take my eyes off Azazel's new aspect, I made a quick call to my angels, to organize them for our strike. As soon as the remnant of my warriors had gathered themselves, we went straight after Lucifer himself, giving the demon no opportunity to cause widespread destruction among the warring hosts.

We were met with seven violent jets of spiritual flame, each issuing from one of the monster's mouths. Five of my angels fell to the ground. The other two who had been targeted were able to get their shields in place just in time, and they continued to advance on the red dragon. More of the angels under my command darted in to strike, however those who got past the flames were assaulted by Lucifer's claws, and one unfortunate Malak was swept aside by a smashing blow from his powerful tail.

Around us, the holy angels were making effective use of their shields. The fallen Cherubim were presenting a particular problem, however, as they began to use their abilities to draw the blades of fallen allies toward themselves. Almost every one of the Gibborim now possessed two dark swords, and knew how to use them in concert. This was not going to be an easy battle.

Despite the fact that my four wings made me an easy target for Lucifer's manifold avenues of attack, I was able to get past his weapons, and I hovered directly over his back. Glancing around briefly to make sure I would not be hit as I descended, I dove down with my kherev leading the way. I managed to make contact, however the "scales" that covered Satan's new aspect cushioned the blow a bit. I did some damage, no doubt, but hardly enough to put him out of the fight. My enormous enemy spun in the air and hit me with a leathery wing. As I reeled backward he clapped a claw around my chest, and began to squeeze.

This would have quickly been the end of me had not Remiel come to my aid. He threw his khrevv at one of the dragon's seven heads, causing it to be distracted long enough for me to struggle free. I closed my wings tightly and descended out of his range to catch my "breath."

As I fought my way back to the dragon to try again, I was blocked by Tarfiel, a fallen Virtue. I was thus delayed, having to subdue him and two others before I finally regained the place where Lucifer had once been. He was no longer there, however. He had succeeded in tearing through our ranks, and was making havoc of the twelve divisions of Heaven's Host.

Great was my relief when I saw in the sky above two points of light, rapidly expanding as they drew nearer to us. Gabriel and Raziel were coming down, and they stopped their descent in the middle of the battlefield, surrounded by the fiery glow of the Presence of IaH. The Shomerim split off without a word, one moving toward the eastern side of the struggling armies, and another to the west. As they moved, flames burst forth from the glowing orbs and struck down the demons around them.

"We must drive them all away from this place," Gabriel whispered to me. "Every one of them must flee or be put down."

"Lucifer has grown very powerful," I told him. "I was unable to do much good even with a direct strike." Gabriel responded with understanding, and said, "I will let you know when the time is right for you to engage him again."

As the other Covering Cherub was the closer of the two to where I was, I decided to move closer to his location to assist him. When I drew near, I saw Abaddon in his angelic aspect attempting to get close enough to make an attack on Raziel. Every time he got near, an arc of flame would surge toward him, and he would be forced to retreat and try again from another angle.

"Drop your cowardly shield," Abaddon raged at him. "Why don't you face me?"

Raziel looked at the demonic Cherub thoughtfully for a brief moment, and then he said, "As you wish."

As the Cherub caused the orb to flicker out of existence – just for an instant – a sudden, blinding light filled the air around him. I could not help but smile sadly at Abaddon's fate. Such a misunderstanding of the Spirit in which he had once been so mighty... the orbs of fire were not for the protection of the Covering Cherubim. They were for the protection of the demons themselves and the sinful humans below. The wicked warrior would be of no further use to the army of darkness in this battle.

Inevitably, the Principalities and Powers led the way in bringing sorcery to bear in the conflict. Although their methods had proven largely ineffective at actually giving them an advantage, the fallen angels seemed to delight in perverting the laws of nature to add

spectacular, if near useless, effects to their arsenal. One effect it did have, however, was to frighten the already confused humans on the ground beneath us, and they responded by charging back into the city. Even those who knew their demonic gods most intimately understood that in this warfare mortals were “way out of their league,” as you say.

Sparing you too many details of yet another long battle, the presence of Gabriel and Raziel gradually began to tell on the ratio of holy angels to fallen. The tide slowly turned, even with the giant red dragon continuing to tear through our forces, and soon many demons began to flee from the area around the Tower. Shabbatiel and Anael, both division leaders, were working together to systematically cut down those demons who preferred to remain at the sidelines, hurling their javelins into the clouds of fighting angels rather than joining themselves to enemies directly. The two forces commanded by the angels I have named spread out over the sky to hunt down the opportunistic assassins and take them out of commission.

Eventually, Lucifer realized that his army was being driven back, and at this point he tried one last tactic. Sending out a massive whisper to all his remaining angels, the prince of demons ordered them to break off all fighting, and congregate within the walls of the city itself. There, amongst reprobate humans, we would be unable to do them any harm. Azazel had used his best tricks to try and actually defeat his angelic adversaries, and seeing that they had all failed he changed his objective, which was now to merely prevent us from accomplishing our own goal – namely to drive them away from the Tower so that we would be able to destroy it.

If he succeeded in barricading himself in the City, our mission would indeed have failed, and we would simply return to the standstill that had existed for years. Perhaps the demons would then come up with some new plan of attack, or a way to make the city perpetually immune to our influence. Perhaps El Michael would join us at some point in the future and drive the humans out Himself. Fortunately, we did not need to wait long to see what Heaven’s Prince had in mind.

Looking deeply into the dome of darkness over Sha’ar-ha-elohim, I faintly perceived Queen Semiramis standing atop the mighty tower, almost complete in its construction. Beside her stood Arioch, maintaining his leonine aspect. His regular partner Nisroch was lying somewhere on the battlefield, as were Abaddon and Sammael. Behind them both coiled the fiery red serpent, looking up in defiance of our Host with all seven pairs of gleaming eyes. “A dragon, a beast and a false prophet,” I said to myself softly, shaking my head. “What will become of this world?”

The twelve legions gathered around the city, unsure of how to proceed. “Stand ready,” Gabriel whispered to me. “The time is at hand.” I saw the two Covering Cherubim soaring out from among us, and they stood above the city, looking down into the darkness. By virtue of their office, they alone were able to enter that shadowy place without express orders from the Throne.

They gave each other a quick glance, and then they descended into the darkness below, their orbs of light flashing into place.

Gabriel and Raziel made directly for the summit of the Tower. I could dimly see a forest of demons making futile attacks on the pair as they flew past, but the weapons were unable to penetrate the Presence that surrounded them. The two mighty angels soared up to the level of the Tower's roof and stood on either side of the colossal building. Lucifer saw them and he roared in fury. The demon sent out blasts of spiritual fire in both directions at once; three heads were aimed at one of the Shomerim, and four at the other. The last thing I saw of the scene was Arioch leaping into the air to attack Gabriel, and then both Cherubim dropped their orbs at the same time.

Even to the angels above, and even through the dome of darkness, the pulse of light was spectacular. In an instant, every human being within Sha'ar-ha-elohim was knocked unconscious by a surge of spiritual power. With the evil influences of corrupt conscience momentarily stilled, the dome of night cracked and vanished away. Simultaneously, every demon in the city went flying upward and outward, burned to their very essences by the explosive unveiling of the Presence of the Most High. As the inert spiritual bodies of the demons snowed down around us, I saw why Gabriel had told me to "Stand ready."

Lucifer was flung upward by the force of the blast, but he was not unconscious as were the other demons. Either his great power had allowed him to partially resist the dazzling attack, or his dragon aspect had somehow given him a measure of protection. In either case, I wasted no time on such thoughts. I sent out a whisper to the other eleven members of my group, and one by one, each of the Twelve sped upward to deliver a blow to the disoriented dragon.

Za'afiel, who had been healed by Raphael at some point after the arrival of the Covering Cherubim, was the first to land a blow. Then myself, then As'fael, then Jehoel... one after another we charged in and slashed deeply. Already weakened by the purity of the light, Lucifer was unable to resist the force of our spiritual weapons, and our blades opened up sparkling wounds in his altered being.

As the great reptile reached the peak of his ascent, propelled upward by the explosion of glory, Raziel, who had left Gabriel at the top of the Tower, landed the final, telling blow. With this twelfth injury, the dragon plunged back to earth, falling through the Tower and unto the ground below. The Tower, being a physical structure, was in no way affected by the gigantic creature's descent through its levels, but as Azazel passed through its many floors he rapidly reverted to his Cherubic shape, and when he hit the ground it was in the aspect by which he was best known to us all.

For a moment nothing happened, and then something wonderful did.

As the Host looked down on Lucifer, silent and still for the first time in angelic memory since the rebellion, a great thunder suddenly split the sky. There was no lightning, yet

seven loud peals rang out, and then a Voice, a blessed Voice, came forth from the rumbling, *“Well done, thou good and faithful servants.”*

A light broke on the eastern sky, and it rapidly grew, swelling in power and might, until the Prince of Heaven stood before us, wreathed in the majesty of the Throne. The twelve companies of angels gathered around, thrilled to see our Commander once again, eager to understand the dark struggle through which we had just come.

El Michael hovered silently in the sky, looking down at the Tower and the city that the men had built at the instigation of the gods of this world. I, and the eleven others who had led the Hosts of Heaven, approached our Prince, and there before Him we cast our crowns joyfully at His feet. The twelve rings of spiritual gold hung in the air before Him, and then they began to spin, swirling around the Elohim in a sparkling circle.

“In the regeneration,” He said for all to hear, “Twelve men will sit on the thrones of the tribes of the children of Adam. Unto you,” He said to us, “will be given the office of helping these servants of Heaven.”

“To you all, my angels,” He said, “I declare this: You have shown yourselves to be free indeed. You are servants, but not slaves. You are messengers, but not unimportant or unloved. You are no longer children, to be commanded, but friends, to be embraced.”

On the ground below, Azazel had awakened and was struggling to his knees. As he regained his concentration, he shouted up at the sky in a voice that seemed amazingly thin compared to the sweet and clear speech of our Lord, “What of our bargain? What of our agreement?”

El Michael regarded the wounded figure below, and then He gently settled to the earth to stand in front of His wandering star. “Arise,” said the Prince, taking Lucifer by the hand. As he did so, we saw with amazement that all of the arch demon’s injuries had vanished, even the scars of the battle that had taken place in Heaven centuries and centuries ago! Although his wounds would reappear at a later date due to other circumstances, for now he seemed beautiful; even in our eyes he appeared whole and complete.

“I have kept my word to you, Azazel,” El Michael said. “I gave my angels no information that they did not or could not perceive in their own essences. You accused me on that very first day of controlling the minds of my creatures. You made the claim that the Law of IaHWeH was an arbitrary, unreasonable code for my good pleasure alone. You accused your brethren of being under my domination, and unable to act rightly according to the dictates of their own best judgment.”

“They received no command from me,” He added. “They were told only of the times and seasons which you yourself set in place. They have done that which is right; they have said of me that which is right.” Lifting His eyes to Heaven El Michael said, *“Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.”*

Oh, such words! Oh, such release! To know, to finally understand, why we needed to go through that dark valley, that the voice of the accuser might forever be silenced among us! It is true, among the angels there had been many doubts, even after Lucifer was cast from Heaven. The Twelve were sealed, understanding the truth in our deepest essences, but the angels as a whole had questions. They had the Question itself on their minds. "Why?" Now, with this experience, we were better equipped to understand. The lingering doubts were quieted, and never again would we hear the voice of the tempter whispering to us as we carried out our duties on the earth on behalf of the sons of men.

The mouth of the wicked was stopped, and the cause of the Throne was justified in the sight of many witnesses.

Azazel stared at the Elohim with impotent rage. The angels knew he had answers; he had arguments for every word El Michael might say. He had a dozen ways of leading listeners astray, and a thousand tricks of double meanings and implications that could turn aside the unwary into the paths of death. But this day, after that great defeat at the hands of those he had labeled mindless followers, his tongue was still.

"Take your demons and leave this place," El Michael said. "You have no more authority here." Lucifer continued to stare for a long time, even when the full number of his demonic followers stood on their feet, each of them restored to full health. Finally he closed his eyes, whispering commands to his demons. Almost immediately, wave after wave of them lifted off to retreat to some other place. Finally, Hel'el himself turned without a word and left us.

When they were gone, our Prince rose into the air to address us once again. The mighty Archangel hovered over the Tower, where the queen of Nimrod's empire lay sleeping. "In the days to come, even the wicked inhabitants of these cities and this Tower are to be given another chance to hear of the faith of Enoch, and Seth, Noah and Shem. There are some among them who yet fear my name, led by the deceit of the serpent to cast in their lots with those who are already turned away in their hearts. I have set my seal upon this place, so that the demons will not come near it while the Tower still stands. Let us observe the movements of these men for a season, to see what they will do."

With that, the Prince called us up to return to the Kingdom of Joy, to rest from our labors, and to observe the workings of the city below us, now freely open to our sight with the scattering of the demons. With the insight we were granted to peer into the actions of even the wicked humans, we could now more easily observe their daily activities.

Great was the rejoicing in Heaven that day, and we ascended the portals of the Kingdom with a song on every lip and a gleam of most sublime joy in every angelic eye.

* * * * *

Some days later, in assembly before the Prince of Angels within the shining Throneroom of IaHWeH, our attention was called once again to the activities on the earth below. “Behold the sons of men,” said the Union of the Elohim. “See that under their wicked queen they continue to put forth efforts to establish their name. Let us go down once again to see the city, and the Tower.”

The companies of angels did so, following our Prince to the judgment of this affront to the everlasting government of Heaven. As we saw the men standing on their devices, passing materials and instructions back and forth, we marveled at their persistence in performing their acts of infidelity. Within the city Semiramis sat with Tammuz, greatly bewildered at the strange forces she had felt in the city days ago, and more so at the unusual silence coming from her spiritual masters. In spite of this, she was determined to move forward with the plans she and they had set in place.

Gabriel had been sent in a dream to subtly influence the wicked sorceress, instructing her that she should not go near the Tower that day. Just as El Michael had healed Lucifer and all his demonic hosts, so the life of this human vessel would be spared. The Question itself demands that evil be given every opportunity to reveal itself for what it is – and the woman best equipped to reveal it would be preserved against the judgment of the Tower, for now.

“The direct influence of the tempter is gone,” the Elohim said, “yet they follow the inclination of their own hearts.” The report was true, as we were seeing with our own eyes. The construction of the Tower had continued.

And IaHWeH said through the Union of the Elohim, *“Behold, the people are one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. And now, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”*

Enthroned between the Cherubim Gabriel and Raziel, El Michael descended to hover above the Tower, and there He shed bright rays upon the cities of Cush. Very quickly thereafter, the humans began to realize that something was very wrong.

Unable to understand each other, confusion broke out among the men on every level of the Tower. Misunderstandings led to arguments, and arguments led to fights, although none could say what the others around him were trying to relate. Within a short period of time, the humans threw down their tools in disgust and began to seek others of their families with whom they were still able to communicate.

Looking down on the structure, El Michael saw that some of the most dedicated servants, the most stubborn of Lucifer’s slaves, were continuing an attempt to carry forward the work! Moving in stages, the poor, wasted souls were beginning to haul up the materials themselves, and to set them in place where the next layer of bricks was required. With a look of sorrow in His face, the Prince said, “As’fael, let it begin.”

At these words the Principality As'fael, one of the Twelve, along with Ithuriel and other members of their Order, descended from among us to float in a circle around the Tower's highest level. Raising their hands to the sky, the angels caused an enormous blast of lightning to streak down and strike the top of the brick edifice. Instantly, cracks began to run along the walls. Some of the men fell off at this first strike, while others began to panic and scramble down to the ground as quickly as they could. Other bolts followed, each as powerful as the first, and on the seventh the top of the building exploded outward and the higher sections crumbled and fell. Many humans were killed at the fall of their great and terrible project.

From the window of her palace that faced the direction of the Tower, queen Semiramis looked out at the smoking ruins, her face an unreadable mask of suppressed emotion.

This event marked the first post-Flood judgment of mankind by the Almighty. The tribes of men kept with them the knowledge of these events, and even today among the many occult traditions that can trace their teachings (if they are so inclined) back to the religions of ancient Babylon, the symbol of the "Lightning-Struck Tower" is used to represent misfortune and suffering.

Although some remained behind in an attempt to rebuild their kingdom, now called "Babylon" by many in fulfillment of Arphaxad's prophetic words, most spread out over the earth. The great commission given to Noah was finally being obeyed, although this was not the consummation any created being had envisioned. In Shem's camp also the languages were divided so that the purposes of the Throne could be carried forward. Unto these scattered multitudes would the faithful few of IaHWeH be sent, messengers of the Sacrifice to come, to give the rebellious one final chance to turn away from their dark paths, and to turn their footsteps again to the ways of the righteous.

THE SHINARIC WAR

CHAPTER 9: CHORUS

Our meeting that week was the most precious, the most glorious in angelic memory. With inexpressible joy, we gathered together in the Throneroom of the Most High to sing IaHWeH's praises, and to worship Him who had created us and preserved us against the wicked ones.

The fire of the Shekinah had returned to the Temple, yet the spark of glory that had entered us on the day of the battle did not depart. We had "come of age," as the expression goes, and had learned still more about the Elohim whom we serve. And what service we offer! Knowing that we are truly free, knowing that we are given such undeserved honor by our King has tied us to Him with cords of love that no force in the universe has the power to sever, weaken, or tarnish.

As we stood before the wondrous light of the Royal Union, we lifted up our voices in song to the Almighty. We sang in three companies, our voices weaving together to form a blanket of praise that filled all of the Heavenly Kingdom, and filtered down to the tents of Shem below us.

Our rejoicing began with Israfel, the voice of a single Seraph, but it was not long before all three companies were drawn into the grateful hymn:

*Come hear, oh Heavens and the earth, the wonders of the Lord of Glory;
For we shall praise His holy Name, how joy-full-y we sing His story.
His enemies are put to shame, His royal crown will shine for-ever;
And we will serve e-ter-nall-y, with love the heart of each endeavor.*

*Oh, when the dark clouds gather near, Oh, when the dark clouds gather near,
We find our Prince is even near-er,*

Yes, the Prince is by our side!

And then the sunlight will appear,

And then the rays of light break through;

So let this Promise lift each hear-er,

This dawn the night can never hide!

Oh, what a wonder to be-hold!

Come let your hopeful eyes take note,

(Praise IaHWeH, Praise IaHWeH!)

Look now, the wicked ones are scattered,
He has washed them all away!
(Lift His name up to the sky!)

And by His grace we can be bold,
We may approach the Throne of grace
(For He is worthy to be praised,)

For all the obstacles are shattered.
This very instant of today!
(He is the Highest of the high!)

And we turn to Him; with our crowns all shining;

(Yes we turn) (to Him) (glorious crowns) (ever shining with our love)

And we cast them at His feet.
(throw them down) (throw them down) (how beautiful the feet of Peace)

For He is the One for whom souls are pining;
(Oh, He is) (the only One) (those weary souls) (how they thirst in desert lands!)

But he of-fers rest most sweet!
(gives it free) (enter in) (a blessed rest, a sweet release!)

Look down upon the earth below,
Consider now the earth beneath,
(Have pity on the sons of men,)

A place of toil, a place of sighing.
See them walking though the rain!
(For they are only ash and dust.)

But you will cause all men to know,
Breathe your Spirit in their souls;
(Ha-le-lu-IaH)

That there's an end to pain and crying.
Wipe their tears and heal their pain!
(To the One in whom we trust!)

Oh, we await the Sac-ri-fice,
Come and join us in this vigil.
(Kind and merciful is He.)

Who will end the age of weeping,
May your lamp be never dry.
(There's a glorious day ahead!)

We pray that men with open eyes

*Note the signs, they'll not be wanting.
(Lift your heads, for it is near!)*

*Will be found – not deeply sleeping!
And you will live, and never die!
(Through the pearl gates you'll be led!)*

*And we turn to Him; with our crowns all shining;
(Yes we turn) (to Him) (glorious crowns) (ever shining with our love)*

*And we cast them at His feet.
(throw them down) (throw them down) (how beautiful the feet of Peace)*

*For He is the One for whom souls are pining;
(Oh, He is) (the only One) (those weary soul) (how they thirst in desert lands!)*

*But he offers rest most sweet!
(gives it free) (enter in) (a blessed rest, a sweet release!)*

*As generations come and go,
We'll see years to come unfold.
(What will come in days ahead?)*

*We will watch men from a distance.
We will keep them in our care.
(Of this we can all be sure:)*

*When knowledge sends them to and fro,
By graceful order from the Throne,
(Whatsoever shall befall)*

*With love we'll render them assistance.
They will not have singed a hair!
(He will have a people pure!)*

*Then when this testing time has flown,
When the end of days arrives
(Ha-le-lu-IaH)*

*They will perceive the help we gave them.
Then at long last we will meet,
(To the worthy Lamb to come!)*

*They'll know a joy they've never known
They will rest forever more,
(He will lead His people home)*

*And One who vanquished hell to save them!
At the gentle Savior's feet!
(He will seal up all the sum!)*

*Now turn to Him; with your hearts sin-broken;
(Turn, turn) (to Him) (precious hearts) (He
will make you live again)*

*And lay them at His feet.
(lay them down) (lay them down) (how beautiful the feet of
Peace)*

*For He is the One for whom souls are pining;
(Oh, He is) (the only One) (those weary souls) (how
they thirst in desert lands!)*

*But he of-fers rest most sweet!
(gives it free) (enter in) (a blessed rest, a sweet release!)*

Yes, He of-fers rest most sweet!

(Yes, He of-fers rest most sweet!)

THE SHINARIC WAR

CODA

Before I depart, there are a few more things that should be revealed.

In the progress of time, queen Semiramis made contact once again with her demonic masters. The seal of El Michael was placed upon the city as long as the Tower stood, but after its fall those rebellious humans who remained were once again brought under the dominion of the evil ones. The purposes of the Throne were accomplished, and the people were scattered. In this way, they would be exposed to the messengers of righteousness. As long as they were unified in their purpose, and dedicated to the Tower, they were deaf to the pleadings of the innocent.

With Cush, Tammuz, and Jebus, a mighty son of Canaan, at her side, the queen continued to develop the false gospel, and to build upon the dark secrets she had been taught while the cursed Tower still stood. Sharing her husband's hatred of the name of the Most High, she began a course of events designed to ensure that even those who would later be chosen of IaHWeH were unable to call upon His established name until He revealed Himself centuries later to the man Moses.

Going further still, Semiramis linked the "resurrection" of her husband to the observation of times and seasons; she raised the status of her family to divinity, and thus began the legends of the "gods" of myth. In particular, the stories of the "dying gods" such as Osiris and Dinoyesus were carried with the people as they moved to the other regions. The demons had to a large degree succeeded in perverting their knowledge of the true Sacrifice to come.

Fortunately, not all in the days to come was dark.

Ham, the son of Noah, did turn away from his drunkenness and rebellion before he was gathered to the earth. Some of his descendants followed in his path directly, and others responded eagerly to true doctrine when they encountered it. Although his example in life had been poor, and led ultimately to a great deal of suffering, the experience of Ham shows that even at a very late stage, good may be accomplished by repentance.

In His infinite pity, IaH did not allow even the most corrupt societies on earth to go completely into darkness. Some grains of truth remained in the legends retained by human minds, and for a long time the history of Noah and his sons was preserved in the

knowledge of many people. When the messengers of Ararat dispersed to seek out humble souls, this factor was an important one for their success.

Shem in particular established a mighty settlement, a city known as Salem, where the true name of the Creator was preserved for generations. From there he sent forth faithful agents to teach the scattered remnants the faith of his father.

As for the angels, we were more equipped than ever before to render service to mankind. Should the record continue, it will be seen how perfectly our Creator designed us to be servants to the Son of Adam. As your Writings ask of us, “*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*”

Because of my own experiences, I found myself among the rare angelic Oracles such as Da’athiel and Zephon of whom I have spoken. But whether I had been exalted or abased by my trials, whether I had been called to serve as commander or least soldier in the Hosts of Heaven, I had learned to succeed where Lucifer failed – although my destiny had passed so very close to his. I had learned to be content where my wise Creator had placed me, and for humans this is one of the greatest gifts that the Master can bestow upon His children: the gift of *Sabbath*, rest and peace.

Await, then, the return of our King, to gather you to Himself as His priests and governors for eternity over all creation. I pray that my record has given you some insight into the responsibility you bear, as beings made in the image of the Most High. Humans also must “come of age” before they can be fitted for service above. Let it be ever mentioned among you that in this, humans and angels are not so dissimilar: for both of us, our greatest true joy is to serve, and that service only has value when it is given by free, joyful, morally mature agents.

May the grace of IaHWeH shine always upon you and yours.

A PREVIEW OF BOOK 4:
THE TERRAN CONFLICT

THE TERRAN CONFLICT

PROLOGUE

*F*ear not.

I am called Dumah. Silence is my name, and silent am I, yet there are matters that must be known, therefore I have been sent to show you two things. I speak now to your mind and, though wakeful, you will dream. Though you do not sleep, you will see the things that I have to show unto you.

My brothers have spoken to you of the beginning, the start of the War, the entrance of sin into your world, and the dividing of your people. You have learned much about the angels, and how we came to find our place in the Kingdom of the Most High. We came to understand our freedom on the day that humanity lost its unity.

As our record has continued, we have found ourselves free to share more and more with you. Light has increased, and now still more is cast unto your path. Though I have not had much direct dealings with mankind for many years now, the time has come for you to know other things about the invisible world, and the world around you; but this time you will not be told – for I will not speak. This time, you will see for yourself. Two things will I show you regarding a land: the land known as Canaan. Remain at rest, but open your eyes to a time long ago...

And I looked and saw that it was twilight; and I saw a woman.

Seven years had passed since the fall of the Tower. Seven years had gone by, and the work of reconstruction had ceased; yet the iniquity that first shaped this rising monstrosity had not diminished. Indeed, in the time since the lightning had cast the builders to the ground and sheared brick from mortar, the wickedness of mankind had greatly increased, and the confusion of tongues that had come to pass as a result of El Michael's intervention did nothing to quell the tide of apostasy.

Yet in this the Heavenly Prince had not failed, for His purpose had been merely to scatter the humans, who had neglected to fulfill their commission to go forth into the world and repopulate its countries after the great Deluge. IaHWeH Himself does not restrict human freedom, and neither do His representatives, not the greatest nor the least.

The thing that took place atop the ruined Tower that night was therefore the result of all the evil that humanity had brought upon itself in the ages since the judgment of the Most High.

That evening two angels, Tahariel and Adriel, who had been watching over the darkened spiritual dome that covered the Tower of Babel, heard an infant's sudden, agonized scream. Where humans revel in iniquity and knowingly participate in sin, the vision of Heaven's messengers is largely closed off to the scene, and when the eyes of those righteous spirits turned in the direction of the painful sound, they beheld little but a cloud of night, darker by far than the natural shades of the dusk.

The Dominion Tahariel turned to his fellow angel and said, "The sound of pain... Let us enter the darkness and see its cause, for something gnaws at my essence from that direction."

Adriel, the Virtue who stood with him, replied, "With prayer, we will be able to break through the barrier."

Many of the original worshippers at the Tower's great City had fled at the confusion of tongues. They had taken their idolatry deep into other lands, and as a result the stain of darkness that hung over the city and its high Temple like an inky veil was no longer entirely forbidden to the holy angels. During the time of its building, and during the battle to scatter its residents, the darkness was so great that none but the mighty angels Gabriel and Raziel could break through – but though the hearts of its remaining inhabitants had grown even worse since that time their numbers had decreased to the point where a visit, though unpleasant, was possible.

"Grant us your protection, O Creator, O Throne," said Adriel. "Grant us your might, and bind the eyes of those who would prevent us from seeking out the cause of an infant's suffering. Let those who would withstand us be made prisoners of the very darkness they have inspired, and may the walls of this physical plane be made walls through which their eyes cannot freely pass."

With these words on their lips and these thoughts in their essences, the two faithful servants of the Eternal Kingdom dove down to the earth over which they had been hovering, and entered the dome of darkness at its base.

Babylon was home to a large cloud of evil spirits. Though Lucifer himself had fled in shame when the angelic Host defeated him in the skies above the Tower, some of his most powerful allies had returned to guide the progress of the apostates in silence, never revealing themselves openly to the humans who continued to await the return of their dark masters. Yet while they waited they were indeed being led, and Adriel and Tahariel had a hard time

keeping out of their leaders' sight as they approached the Tower as quickly and quietly as they could.

These were strange rules under which the two angels were operating, but within the precincts of sin they held no true power. Not one faithful soul was nearby, thus all the pair could do was observe, and attempt to stay hidden from sight. Their prayer had made their beings, their spiritual bodies, more difficult to detect by the demons around them, yet for sheer numbers it was not impossible that they could be spotted.

One following the other, they flew up to the rooftops and leapt from roof to roof, their long veils trailing after them like white ribbons. At times they traveled above the walls, at times they descended into the empty rooms below them, and at times they ran through the streets of the shadowy brick city. As they stood along the side of one large building, pressing next to the walls that, because of their prayer, afforded them cover, Tahariel looked around the corner to see one of the many soldiers of Satan approaching.

"Into the house," he whispered to Adriel's mind, and the two passed into the dwelling just as the demon rounded the corner. As soon as they sensed the spirit's departure from the immediate area, the two angels slipped again through the material surface of the wall and continued their journey toward the greatest monument of human pride.

Before long, the uneven silhouette of the Tower of Babel was before them, a black shadow against a dark dome against an indigo sky. The two stared upward, knowing that the cry to which they had responded had rung out from the very top of the structure they were eying. It had been some time since the holy angels had seen this building, but the passage of years had not dulled the unpleasantness of the memories associated with it.

Wasting no time, although they both realized that no further cry had followed the first, the two angels spread their wings and soared up the side of the Tower facing the least populated portion of the city. Like two tiny points of light they ascended, sticking close to the streaked and cracked bricks; and on their guard lest any demon should see them and broadcast its thoughts to the army of fallen angels that they knew were restlessly huddled on every side.

With a flash of speed the two unseen visitors cleared the rim of the broken summit, and crouched down behind some loose masonry. They peered around their hiding place with faintly glowing eyes, and those eyes widened with shock at what they perceived in the center of that ruined roof.

They saw, among other things, a woman.

She was known by many names, but her name at birth had been Yunah, the Dove. Through her indulgences and sins, she had risen in power and influence in the family of Cush, son of Ham, son of Noah, and with her husband Nimrod had ruled over this city and its people during the height of its power.

When Arphaxad, the son of Shem, another son of Noah, had entered into the heart of the city in an attempt to turn the rebellious humans from their wicked ways, their rejection of his message had sealed their fate, and had initiated the last great conflict between the angels and their fallen brethren. Though Nimrod had been slain even before that battle occurred, his wife had taken the throne and reigned in his memory, using the demons' knowledge of spiritual things to weave a great web of deception over the hearts and minds of the Babylonians.

Her son Tammuz was set up as the re-incarnate form of his father and, though he was only seven years old, was already being educated in the ways of the devils. Truly, the demons had not appeared to Yunah or any other human in a visible way since the fall of the Tower, but this did not prevent the queen, also known by the name *Semiramis*, from giving her child the benefit of all she had learned under their tutelage.

Semiramis had given birth to another son in the years since her husband's death – but it was that son that had cried out into the night, and it was that cry that had drawn the two angels to the scene of this great evil, where they stared in horror at what they there beheld.

Yunah was no less beautiful for the passage of seven years. Indeed, humans in those days lived more than twice as long as they now do, and though the mother of two and the queen of a city, she appeared as little more than a maiden, and one of the most appealing of maidens the world had ever seen. Her light hair and fair eyes, her soft skin and her songlike voice, these had made her the great envy of Nimrod, though even he had taken her from Lud, her first husband. There was wickedness in those seductive eyes, however, and coldness in that melodious voice. Her heart was no longer that of a human, having long since turned to stone.

The evidence of that tragic transformation was at no time more dramatically revealed than that night, and before those visitors, for her second son lay dead before her, a tiny but fatal wound in his chest. Atop a stone altar, engraved with the images of doves, a pagan high-priest named Jebus was preparing the tiny body to be consumed by fire. Queen Semiramis had plunged the knife, but now she knelt before an emblem drawn in blood on the roof of Babel's Tower.

Jebus was obedient to his queen's command, but he, the cousin of her dead husband, was not so spiritually dead that he could carry out this sacrificial ritual without question. After the division of tongues, Jebus had been one of the main laborers in gathering together those who spoke the queen's language, and in ensuring that they did not flee the city completely. He had been mighty in Yunah's cause, not hesitating to use violence if necessary to secure a loyal following for his cousin's wife. He had helped her to establish the rituals incorporating the memory of her dead husband, the promise of her firstborn son, and the demonic powers of sorcery into the religion of Babel, and he was one of the queen's most trusted advisors. Yet for all this, he was uneasy as he poured the oil over the infant's still form.

"This is your son," he had said to Yunah when she told him of the "new ritual" she had decided to perform. "He is but a year old!"

“I have only one son, my firstborn – my only begotten,” she replied with irritation. “The others are fodder for the gods.”

Fodder for the gods the child had indeed become, and Yunah’s gods approved of the sacrifice. Behind the woman, looking intently at the activities of Jebus, several of the most powerful demons had gathered, and were smiling with terrible satisfaction. Chiun, the fallen Seraph Kokabiel under his new name, was feeling a particular sense of triumph. Under Lucifer’s direction he had instructed the demons to refrain from making their presence known to the humans under their power, and as a result the deluded citizens of Babel had resorted to a series of increasingly depraved rites and ceremonies in order to win their favor.

They spent days wailing in the streets, sacrificing both clean and unclean animals by the herds and flocks. They participated in ritual combat to stir their anger to a breaking point, in the hopes that their masters would enter into them as they had in the days before. They drank deeply of fermented liquors in an attempt to induce trances, they cut their flesh and chanted prayers... but throughout all this the demons held their silence.

Finally, atop the broken Tower, it had come to this – a mother had sacrificed her own child to win the favor of the demonic spirits. And it worked.

Beside Chiun, unseen by mortal eyes as were they all, stood Sammael, the prince of spiritual death. Alongside them lurked Azrael, a spirit of violence and warfare, and with him was Nisroch, the eagle of pride that had inadvertently led Nimrod into a foolish battle and an early death. The twin demons Kaspriel and Zaphkiel were there, high sorcerers of Lucifer’s kingdom, and as they looked at each other in glee, the sinful Cherub Moloch, whose original name had been Yachadiel (Kindling of El), pushed between them and walked over to the Altar of The Dove attended by the human high-priest.

“Light the fire,” Moloch said, and the spirits heard him. So did Yunah, although she was not aware that the thought was not hers. “Light the fire,” she repeated, and Jebus did as he was commanded. Taking a torch from one of the four pillars around the altar, he touched the tip of the flame to the child’s body, and the fire rushed over the sacrifice. Moloch spread his wings and drifted into the smoke of the offering as Tahariel and Adriel looked on; and the demon spoke again. “Lucifer has accepted this sacrifice. It is time.”

The demons that were assembled behind Yunah parted, and another dark spirit approached her, invisible to the two humans on Babylon’s highest point. As the eyes of the spirits there all turned to acknowledge the newcomer, the two holy angels shifted their position to get a better view of what was happening. “No,” whispered Adriel to his companion. “This is a thing most foul!”

On the floor in front of Queen Semiramis was a hexagram, a six-pointed star in a perfect circle, all drawn in the child’s red lifeblood, and behind her was the fallen spirit Petahel, one of the unholy Seraphim, once among the most honored in the courts of IaHWeH. He placed a hand upon Yunah’s shoulder, and she felt his influence; for the first time in seven long years a demon was directly guiding a human being’s activities.

The queen stood up slowly, half entranced by the familiar feeling returning to her after its lengthy absence, and began to step into the circle and its star. Petahel drew even closer behind her, and the two angels rose to their feet, their desire for concealment gone in the awful revelation of what they were witnessing.

“In the name of the Most High, I exhort you to stop this at once!” Tahariel’s voice rang out in the night, and as he spoke these words both he and Adriel drew their swords. The kherevs, the spiritual weapons in their hands, glowed brightly, and then their surfaces began to glitter. With a quiet roar the blades burst into flame, and all across the City dark eyes turned to behold the sparkling stars in the distance atop the Tower of Babel.

Neither Yunah nor any of the other humans of Babylon were aware of any change, and the Queen made another step toward the center of the hexagram. The demons that were there, with the exception of Petahel, turned to the unwelcome intruders, and some of them began to laugh. Chiun was the first to speak, saying, “It is well for you to be here, servants of the Most High. You are a worthy audience for the activities of this great night. This is the day when everything changes, when we undo the scattering of humanity commanded by El Michael, and reunite mankind under the banner of Azazel our lord.”

Azazel... Chiun had spoken one of the angelic names of Lucifer, and he did not need to further explain his purpose to the Dominion and the Virtue with whom he was speaking. If the demons could truly unite mankind again under apostasy, they would quickly move to stamp out the humans that remained faithful under the guidance of the god-prince Shem, and the demons would have won an apparent victory over all the earth.

“Put away your weapons,” Chiun continued, “they have no power here.”

Semiramis took another step, and Adriel said, “If there is anything good remaining in that soul you have captured, the Spirit of IaH will do a work here before your eyes!” With that he leaped into the air and spread his wings. Before any of the demons could react he swooped down and struck at Yunah with his fiery blade just as she stepped into the evil star.

Adriel landed in a crouch on the ground beside the queen, his sword having passed directly through her body. If there was a spirit left to save within her, the flames of the Divine Presence would sting her, would awaken her conscience and perhaps, just perhaps, a miracle would occur. Yet before the high-priest, before the assembled demons, and before the two holy angels, Yunah took one last step, and stood in the center of the symbol.

The queen raised her hands to the sky and began to chant. She called on the names of her former tutors; she intoned the words they had given her by which she could call them. She urged them to accept the sacrifice of her own flesh and blood, and she pledged her soul to her invisible masters. The angels there knew that her soul had been given to dark forces long ago, for the blade of the kherev had not so much as brought one cherished memory to mind. The demons knew it also, and Petahel stepped into the circle of summoning along with the human to claim his prize.

“For seven years I have waited,” he said, and his voice was still musical with the talents he possessed in Heaven centuries ago. Without another word he stepped once more toward the human, and faded from the sight of the other spirits.

Yunah opened her eyes, and for just an instant they flickered with opalescent hues. The angels had seen those eyes before, once, long ago. Enoch, the son of Cain, had possessed eyes like these, and now the old sorcery had been restored to humanity – here was a possession more complete than any before it, for the will of the human was perfectly blended with that of the demon. The devilish spirit could all but recede; the human was not a captive, but a willing participant, and all that Petahel needed to do was convey the mind and plans of Lucifer to their eager subject.

Queen Semiramis opened her mouth and spoke a single word, giving a name to the union of flesh and spirit that now stood within the center of the hexagram. “*Ishtar*.”

Jebus looked up from the burning body at the sound of Yunah’s voice, and said, “My queen?”

“Do not be afraid,” she said to him, “We have accomplished that which we have set out to accomplish. I have summoned the spirits, and they have been obedient to my voice.”

“Obedient?” Jebus could do little but ask brief, hesitant questions, for somewhere in his spirit, he knew that something very bad had just taken place. The high-priest knew that Yunah and the people of Babylon had spent years in pitiful supplication, begging the demons for some sign of their presence, and now Semiramis was speaking of control?

“Yes,” she replied. “We have been misled by our former teachers. Some may be powerful, that is true... but some we can command; and I have been given authority over all the spirits of darkness.” She looked up into the sky and said, “They will do as I direct them.”

“What have you done?” Adriel asked in horror.

“We have given them exactly what they have always wanted,” Zaphkiel responded. “We have given them a sense of control.”

“But we are the masters here,” Kaspriel said, “and *you* must never forget that either!”

Ishtar, that union of Yunah and Petahel, turned from the Altar of The Dove, from that scene of idolatry and sin, where the fires of destruction consumed a sacrifice to a false, unholy spirit. She looked directly at the place where Adriel and Tahariel stood, and she saw them. “Make them suffer,” she said, knowing that the holy angels could not be entirely destroyed by even the most powerful of the fallen ones. Jebus just continued to look at her in confused silence.

Eagerly, joyfully, Azrael drew his dark blade. As the swords of the holy angels had burst into bright, golden flames, so the blade of the demon's khrev began to ripple with dark energy, tendrils of sinful power trailing along the edge of his weapon.

This is a dark scene, son of man, and it must get darker still, but I have entrusted you with this knowledge, for you must now know about the Araphel. You have seen a child sacrificed in flames on the altar of a dove, and you have seen the dark fire in the sword of a demon.

In the Kingdom of Heaven there burns a light brighter than human eyes can behold, a light before which even we angels veil our eyes. This is the Shekinah, the cloud of light that is known among your people as the Holy Spirit; It is often represented as a Dove, and thus you see the perversity attending the rituals atop Babel's Tower that night. The Shekinah is a Mystery; It is the pure and unlimited essence of IaHWeH Himself, and in that Spirit is freedom, love and joy, and the healing of all nations from sin and death.

Yet should It be removed from the boundaries marked by the Covering Cherubim Gabriel and Raziel, it would destroy all that was impure, and absorb all that was holy. By the command of IaHWeH Himself the Shekinah is kept covered, and the Most High surrounds Himself with thick darkness to prevent His Presence from destroying His misled, human children before they can come to know Him.

The longsuffering of the Creator is a wonder in both Heaven and Earth, but it is not without consequences, for sin is an intruder, and the Presence of IaH was never meant to be so constrained. The consequence of freedom is Araphel, the dark side of "human nature" that is older than humanity; it was embodied by, and enshrined in, the evil angels at their fall. The abuse of freedom results in sin, and the environment of sin is that Cloud of Darkness, that Araphel, just as Love is the environment in which righteousness can exist. Under the dome of Araphel, such as that which surrounded the Tower of Babel, even (as the expression goes) "angels fear to tread."

It is Araphel, the perverse use of freedom, that the demons worship; it is Araphel that, if revered, produces selfishness and unrighteousness; it is Araphel that sparkles down the blades of demons, and shines with hellish light in the eyes of those who are wholly given to darkness.

When a human is struck by the Blade of The Spirit, conscience may awaken, and a keen sense of the desolation of sin is implanted in the soul. If the human gives attention to this call, he may well turn to the Throne and be healed. If a demon is struck by this bright weapon, he is overcome by the dread of a sure Judgment to come, and he is rendered unconscious, or nearly so, until he can cast off the immediate effects.

If an angel is wounded with a Blade of Araphel, he is assaulted by doubts and fears, and is likewise rendered helpless until he recovers or is healed. This was the nature of the war in Heaven, the wars on earth, and the conflicts that have taken place down to the Day of Redemption. I have used many words, more than I am accustomed to using, to give you as clear a picture as I can of this matter; but know this primarily, that it was this injury with

which Azrael threatened Adriel and Tahariel on that night, and the angels knew that they were greatly outnumbered by those who had them surrounded. This is the point at which I join the stream of these events.

As Azrael stepped forward with his weapon held in front of him, the two holy angels passed urgent, silent signals between themselves, and both of them dove off the Tower at the same time. The demons that had been gathered there erupted into the air to give chase, and the wicked spirits that had been watching the glow of holy swords in the distance flew nearer to cut off the angels' escape completely.

As the holy messengers found themselves trapped between a few, powerful spirits on one side and many, lesser demons on another, they prayed in their essences – and then they acted. With the ground beneath them almost wholly unguarded, the angels drove directly downward into the earth. Being spirit, they were not hindered by the physical matter, and they were able to easily parry the attacks of the few demons that opposed them with their shining weapons.

Once out from under the shadow of the Tower they moved with the speed of thought, and instantly burst through the other side of the planet into the open firmament of the heavens. Tahariel and Adriel turned around, only to see that a large portion of the demonic host had followed them, and they retreated into open space, waiting for an opportunity to bring forth a passageway through the Void into the Heavenly Kingdom that was their home.

No such opportunity would be given them, however, as Azrael led the charge directly at the pair of angels. He appeared to be the only one from the Tower that had followed the intruders through the earth, but the evil Cherub had brought many of the city's dark guardians with him, and there were more than enough of them to do great damage to the retreating beings.

As the violent demon approached, however, the fabric of the universe twisted and unfolded, revealing a portal through which a bright light flowed, illuminating the angels and demons with greater brilliance than even the sun, which shone above this half of the world. An angel flew through it, placing himself between the demons and their intended prey, and the attacking forces fell back to assess him.

Though most angels wore bright robes, this spirit was clothed with dark colors. His eyes sparkled with intensity, and in his powerful grip was a burning blade like those wielded by the two escaping angels.

“It is one of the Sar'im,” one of the demons whispered to Azrael.

“I know this Prince of Heaven,” Azrael said. Indeed he should have; the angel before him was the Virtue Dumah, who had helped to defeat him in the battle for Eden centuries before.

“You should take better care of your friends,” Azrael said, indicating Tahariel in particular.

When Dumah did not reply, the demon that had first spoken to the fallen Cherub said, “Why don’t you answer?”

Azrael laughed and said, “This angel does not speak, he mourns for the loss of peace, he says. Let us not waste our time here, he is sealed... and we will not be able to easily prevail against him – yet. Come, we have more important matters to attend at the Tower.”

As the evil spirits turned away, casting dark looks and curses at the three divine angels, Tahariel said, “Dumah, my friend, we have just witnessed an abomination! The Heavenly council must be told of this – I would hope the Oracles have already seen these dread events!”

“Be at peace,” Dumah responded in silent, whispered communication to Tahariel and Adriel. “The thing is known in Heaven.” With that the sealed angel, one of the Twelve Sar’im, raised his hand and opened a doorway to the angels’ much-desired Home.