

THE SAR'IM CHRONICLES

BOOK 5: THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT



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THE SAR'IM CHRONICLES

Volume 2: THE BOOKS OF CONFLICT

Book 5: THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

INSPIRED BY GAD'S HOLY SPIRIT



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THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

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

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CAST OF ANGELIC CHARACTERS

Holy Angels

Adaiyel (Ornament of El) – A Virtue, guardian of Aaron
Ambriel (Energy of El) – A Seraph (of the Chalkydri), tribal guardian of Ephraim
Ariel (Lion of El) – A Seraph, captain of the Chalkydri, tribal guardian of Judah
As'fael (Added by El) – A Principality, one of the Sar'im
Berithael (Covenant of El) – A Cherub, guardian of Joshua
Binael (Understanding of El) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Borerael (Arbitrator of El) – A Throne-angel, guardian of Amram
Da'athiel (Knowledge of El) – A Cherub, an oracle of Heaven
Daniel (El is My Judge) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Dumah (Silence) – A Virtue, one of the Sar'im
Ebeniel (Stone of El) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Gabriel (Strong One of El) – A Covering Cherub
Haraiel (Mountain of El) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Helikiel (Traveler of El) – A Power, chief guardian of Midian
Kaleon (He of The Vessel) – A Seraph (of the Chalkydri), tribal guardian of Levi
Khenael (Favor of El) – A Throne-angel, guardian of Eleazar
Michael (Who is Like El) – Divinity, Second Elohim
Nakoniel (Ensured by El) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Ragaziel (Awe of El) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Raziel (Mystery of El) – A Covering Cherub
Rinnael (Joyful Cry of El) – A Dominion, guardian of Miriam
Shakamiel (Rising of El) – A Cherub, chief guardian of Midian
Shebaniel (Vow of El) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Uzziel (Strength of El) – Chief of the Virtues, guardian of Moses and one of the Sar'im
Verchiel (shining of El) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Yadiel (Hand of El) – A Seraph of the Chalkydri
Za'afiel (Wrath of El) – A Cherub, one of the Sar'im
Zadkiel (Righteousness of El) – A Throne-angel, an oracle of Heaven
Zahariel (Brightness of El) – Chief of the Dominions, one of the Sar'im
Zephon (Looking Out) – A Cherub, an oracle of Heaven

Fallen Angels

Abaddon (Destroyer) – A Cherub, Ba'al of the House of Envy
Apis – Unidentified demon, cattle-god of Egypt
Anubis (Azrael: Helped by El) – A Cherub, death-god of Egypt and Ba'al of the House of Wrath
Azazel (El Has Strengthened) A.K.A. Satan, Lucifer – A Cherub, Ba'al of the House of Fear
Hathor – Unidentified demon, cattle-god of Egypt
Hiel (Lamentation of El) – A Cherub, sorcerer-spirit of Egypt
Heqt – Unidentified demon, amphibian-god of Egypt
Kalaliel (Defiler of El) – A Principality, assistant to Anubis
Kaspiel (Sorcery of El) – Chief of the fallen Powers, sorcerer-spirit of Egypt
Kemuel (Assembly of El) – A Seraph, satrap of Amelek
Khephi – Unidentified demon, insect-god of Egypt
Mirmael (Deceit of El) – A Dominion of the House of Envy (under Abaddon)
Petahel (Impulse of El) – Chief of the fallen Seraphim, Ba'al of the House of Lust
Ra'abiel (Famine of El) – A fallen Virtue
Seb – Unidentified demon, earth-god of Egypt
Salathiel (Asked of El) A.K.A. Nephertem – Chief of the fallen Virtues
Sammael (Poison of El) – A Power, Ba'al of the House of Envy
Thoth (Kafziel: Speed of El) – Chief of the fallen Dominions, medicine/wisdom-god of Egypt
Voshiel (Shame of El) – A Power, assistant to Anubis
Zaphkiel (Knowledge of El) – A Power, sorcerer-spirit of Egypt

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CAST OF HUMAN CHARACTERS

Aaron (Man of Light) – A Levite; brother of Moses first and high priest of Israel
Abiasaph (My Father has Gathered) – A Levite; son of Korah
Abihu (My Father is He) – A Levite; son of Aaron
Abiram (My Father is Exalted) – A Reubenite; son of Eliab and brother of Dathan
Aholiab (Father's Tent) – A Danite; constructor of the Tabernacle
Ammiel (My Kinsman is El) – A Danite; one of the twelve spies
Amram (Exalted People) – A Levite; father of Moses
Assir (Prisoner) – A Levite; son of Korah
Balaam (Not of The People) – A Peorite; a renegade prophet
Balak (Empty) – The King of Moab
Bezale'el (In The Shade of El) – A Judahite; constructor of the Tabernacle
Caleb (Dog) – A Judahite; one of the twelve spies
Dathan (Man of The Fountain) – A Reubenite; son of Eliab and brother of Abiram
Eliab (El is My Father) – A Reubenite; father of Abiram and Dathan
Eleazar (El Has Helped) – A Levite; son of Aaron
Eliezer (El Is Help) – A Levite; son of Moses
Elkanah (El Has Possessed) – A Levite; son of Korah
Gaddi (My Fortune) – A Manassehite; one of the twelve spies
Gaddiel (El is My Fortune) – A Zebulunite; one of the twelve spies
Geuel (Majesty of El) – A Gadite; one of the twelve spies
Gershom (Foreigner) – A Levite; son of Moses
Hur (Hole) – A Judahite; one of the princes of Israel
Igal (He Redeems) – An Issacharite; one of the twelve spies
Ithamar (Coast of Palms) – A Levite; son of Aaron
Jethro (His Abundance) – A Midianite; priest of Eloah
Joshua/Oshea (Yah is Salvation/Salvation) – An Ephraimite; one of the twelve spies
Korah (Bald) – A Levite; leader of a rebellion
Miriam (Rebellion) – A Levite; sister of Moses
Moses (Drawn Forth) – A Levite; son of Amram and Yochebed
Nadab (Generous) – A Levite; son of Aaron
Nahbi (Hidden) – A Naphthalite; one of the twelve spies
Og (Long-necked) – Last of the Rephaim (giants); king of Bashan
On (Wealth) – A Reubenite; conspirator with Korah, Dathan and Abiram
Palti (My Deliverance) – A Benjaminite; one of the twelve spies
Pharaoh (Great House) – One of several monarchs of Egypt
Pharaoh's Daughter(Unnamed) – Daughter of the king of Egypt
Phinehas (Mouth of Brass) – A Levite; son of Eleazar

Shammua (Renowned) – A Reubenite; one of the twelve spies
Sethur (Hidden) – An Asherite; one of the twelve spies
Shaphat (Judged) – A Simeonite; one of the twelve spies
Yambras (Foamy Healer) – An Egyptian sorcerer
Yannos (He Vexed) – An Egyptian sorcerer and high priest
Yochebed (Yah is Glory) – A Levite; wife of Amram and mother of Moses
Zipporah (Bird) – A Midianite; daughter of Jethro and wife of Moses

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PROLOGUE: THE STRENGTH OF EL

“Bless Yahweh, ye His angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word.” (Psalm 103:20)

Fear not.

I am Uzziel, Rishon of the Malakim. I am Chief of the class of angels known as the Virtues, and one of the Sar'im, the Twelve Princes of Heaven.

My brothers, four ahead of me, came to give their testimony, declaring the lessons that they learned in the service of the Most High, and explaining, more clearly each time, how we have been forever changed by the events that took place in the world of men. This should be no surprise, for it is written in your Texts that the work of the Almighty among humanity contains many things *“the angels desire to look into.”*

During the war in Heaven, which broke out at the time of the creation of your world, the Cherub Za'afiel learned the balance between wrath and mercy, between justice and lenience, and that there is indeed a time to put away the iniquity from a holy place. As'fael the Ikari learned, among other things, that faith makes the weak strong; for he saw humans stand up to demons, and their most dedicated human vessels, and triumph. Zadkiel the Throne-angel... this Prince of the Ophanim learned a significant lesson indeed. He learned that perfect trust in the Most High does not make a slave of any angel, of any free being, and that this trust is never misplaced, even when the armies of the enemy are arrayed against us like the waves of the ocean. Zadkiel rallied the Host of Heaven when El Michael maintained His silence, and taught all spirits, both fallen and unfallen, that there is a difference between order and bondage. That battle, above the cracked land of Nimrod's Tower, was the last Great War that IaHWeH the Almighty permitted until... much later on.

My fellow Virtue Qoliel carries a great weight for us all. When Lucifer fell and his myriads were cast out of Heaven, the altar of my brother's essence was cracked, and the Spirit moved within him to become Silence, a perpetual testimony against those who permitted the entrance of sin. Though his own wounds were healed, this angel who now calls himself Dumah maintains his testimony before the universe, and waits for the day when his voice will again be heard.

There were other lessons to learn, and each time one of us gained wisdom by our experiences we all grew as one; we taught each other, learned from each other, and pressed together as many of us failed to do before we even realized the need... before the poison of rebellion tainted our experience. Even so, there is beauty in beholding what the Almighty permitted, and my own lesson had much to do with that truth; my own testimony reveals it.

My name means *Strength of El*, but it does not merely represent what that may signify in human language. I fought alongside my fellow angels in the war in Heaven, in the battle for Eden, above the Ark, and in the burning skies of Babylon, but my name was Uzziel before we knew our kherevs. Before any angel held a sword in hand, I stood for the strength of Elohim.

It is written that, *“the joy of IaHWeH is your strength,”* and a messenger of the Messiah later said concerning one he had healed, *“His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong.”*

Faith, joy, hope, peace, all the things the Mighty Spirit of Elohim brings with It – these are the strength of IaHWeH. Because of these things I was the first to openly resist Lucifer among my brethren, and led many of them away from his foolish speeches. The Spirit’s stamp was clearly lacking in the Tempter’s words and appearance when he stood before us to pervert the Host, and I could not stay to hear for very long. Oh, that they had all come away with me... but of those who remained many received the knowledge of Lucifer’s character in other ways. As hard as it is for us to behold painful lessons, we would not by any means prevent what Elohim would permit; He does not allow unnecessary trials to those who seek Him among either men or their ministering spirits.

In addition to all that, I am a Virtue, one of the Malakim. We are the agents of inspiration for the universe’s beauty, making manifest the mind of Elohim when He works to bring forth color, design, growth, language, music, all these, although the latter element is largely relegated to the six-winged Seraphim. Let it not be thought that language is a strange item to include among these others; in language there can be great strength, and why can our words not be both meaningful and beautiful? Even in human speech and writing, limited in so many aspects, this is not only possible, but also delightful to angelic ears; only let it be employed aright.

My love for all the things I have listed is great, although certainly not unique to the Virtues. Zadkiel the Throne-angel, for example, is a great lover of music, although as one of the four-winged Ophanim he sees a depth of mathematical sophistication behind it that, while easy for Malakim to grasp and experience, does not come to us as intuitively as to those of his Order.

Yet for every good thing the Creator has brought forth from His infinite storehouse, our sinful counterparts have generated an antithesis. Where there was love, Azazel and his angels inspire fear. Where there is courage, we find cowardice. Where there is beauty we see among them ugliness, and where there

was once order we now see chaos and decay. Yet angels have seen the face of the Creator, and men were created in His image; few would turn to these things unless their experience as free beings were warped, and so the demons have changed their tactics, early learning the lesson that men are often driven by senses, and will judge by appearances unless taught to do otherwise.

Henceforth, ugliness was made to appear unique. Cowardice was made into a kind of comedy, pain was seen as inherent nobility, and decay as the wonderful working of nature. It is true that pain and decay, in particular, have become a necessary part of mortal experience, yet these things need not have been, and do not properly represent the beauty of what was, and what is to come. Men's eyes have been drawn to the things of their current state, and they have been taught to say, "If this is all there is, let me seek that which I find pleasant now; and if it is not all there is, would my Creator have me live in misery until He reveals the world to come?"

There is both truth and folly in those words: men are indeed to seek out that which is pleasant, and to live in joy – but they must first be taught what true beauty is, before they can seek it. They must first be instructed that real joy cannot be found outside the boundaries of service to others, and then they are truly free to pursue happiness. They must first hear real music, or they will simply seek out least irritating sound within the cacophony.

Why have I begun this way? It is not simply because I love to speak about beauty, although you will no doubt discover that this is true of me, but because you must understand these ideas before you can truly understand my testimony. Just as Dumah my Order-brother was sent to explain to you the mysterious nature of *Araphel*, so I am sent to strip away your illusions. I am here to teach you the meaning of my name, the strength of Elohim, and to reveal, for I am Chief of the Virtues, the glory of true beauty, the beauty of holiness.

Every man is king of his own universe, until he learns the truth about the Creator. Even the magicians among your people, taught by my counterpart Salathiel and others, say that the *Old King* must die before the *Son* may live, although they pervert its meaning. Of Salathiel I will have much to say when the time is right, but to men who are still living as the frail kings of their own experience, but who must come to kneel before the true King of Heaven, I will say words to them that I said to my former charge, of whom I now write: *You also are Pharaoh*.

Hear my testimony, and you will come to see what I mean.

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SECTION 1: EDUCATION

CHAPTER 1: A MOTHER'S LULLABY

“Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child.” (Psalm 131:2)

Chiefs of angelic Orders do not, in general, act as the guardians of individuals. This is not a matter of pride, to be sure, for I was happy to serve in whatsoever capacity I was instructed, but I was certainly curious when the Covering Cherubim Gabriel and Raziel commissioned me to watch over one who was even then being born.

As I descended to observe the birth, the words of the Cherubim remained with me. The family was of the Levites, a Tribe of Israel that had inherited two traits from their ancestor, the third son of Jacob: great piety, and great impulsiveness. Amram and his wife Yochebed certainly took their role as the praying-ones of Israel seriously, and were greater in faith than in hastiness. They had reason to pray for their people, though, for they had been generations in hard bondage to the people of Egypt. They had been led to that land by providence, but as the years passed they had become chained to it by idolatry. Few of the descendants of Jacob went so far as to bow to the statues of the nation’s deities, but they were captive to other things: prosperity, ease, the praise of men.

Yes, even when the famine they fled had lifted, and green life had returned to Canaan, the sons of Israel remained in Egypt. Even when the land in which they dwelt underwent periods of governmental unrest, their elders said, “We are loved by the Egyptians, and bless them with our presence... they will not lay a hand on the treasure of their country.”

But the Egyptians indeed lay hands on them, and rods and whips besides. The heads of the new dynasty were jealous, and paranoid, and looked with suspicion on the Hebrews working their land. This was no coincidence. Egypt was the stronghold of Satan himself in those days; and Lucifer had made himself the invisible king of the southern lands. Oh, he did not abandon his precious Babylon; no... he sent his regents Chay’il and Kokabiel the dark star to tend his flock in that place. They in turn, through their human agents, plagued the holy city of Salem until it fell into the hands of the Jebusites.

The history of the sorcerer Jebus, and how he rose to power among the Canaanites, is another day's journey, but let it be known that there was purpose even in defeat for Melchizedek and his people, and let that suffice for now.

Lucifer remained in Egypt, where he awaited his refugees from the Tower of Babel, and there he exalted them, there he deified them, and there he ruled through their name and continuing legacy.

The vile Sammael appointed two spirits, whose names have already been much spoken in these Chronicles, to develop the Mysteries of Egypt, and to train users of magic to control the will and imagination of the populace. Salathiel, who had been appointed Chief of the fallen Virtues, made these arts and stories appear wonderful to the mind of fallen man.

Still other demons maintained the armies of Egypt, and soon the nation became one of the greatest empires of the ancient world. A few like the fallen Cherub Hiel sought to harness nature to their full advantage, refining the powerful Neo-Nephilim warriors into a new form, the Rephaim, and creating a nightmarish, bloodthirsty perversion of humanity called the Aluquim, who were rarely seen by men, but who were held in reserve by the Egyptian underworld for dark times.

Thus, not to speak too long of these painful subjects, both the natural and highly unnatural forces controlled by the fallen spirits were combined to maintain and glorify this vast, golden empire, and though the Hebrews knew not a half of what there was to know of their recent home, they were enthralled, and they remained in the shadows of the magnificent buildings and fed off the wealth of the land.

But serpents do not suckle doves. Lucifer permitted Abraham's seed to remain close to his heart, secure within his coils, for a very specific purpose. Under the dark dome of Egyptian paganism, the Spirit of Elohim was not able to work forcefully among those who had been chosen to reveal Heaven to the citizens of the earth. Eventually, the mighty demon felt secure enough in his power to take action and, looking with disdain upon the nation raised up to fight his influence, he began to squeeze the life out of the sons of Abraham.

The Levites were, perhaps, less affected by the dazzling sights and sounds of their adopted homeland than many of their relatives, and when local favor turned against their people, they were the first to advocate departure. Too late, though, did the suggestion come, and soon they were not permitted the freedom to even speak of returning to Canaan, much less organizing their number for the trip.

As I arrived on the physical plane, stepping through the Void separating our realms, I stood by the mother as she travailed with her third child. The priests of Israel had told their people that the Almighty would send them a deliverer, to bring them forth from their masters' bondage. The prophets of the nation had declared that he would be a Levite, and each birth was filled with hope for some sign of IaHWeH's favor.

Amram looked for a sign when his daughter Miriam was born, and saw nothing. When Aaron was born he looked, and saw nothing. Now, three years later, perhaps...

But Amram was one of those, the likes of which I mentioned before. Amram used his eyes, when he should have been looking with faith, for both Aaron and Miriam were indeed marked by Heaven to lead Israel out of Egypt... but they were not the ones of whom our Oracles spoke to your prophets. Amram looked at his third son, and again saw nothing, but by the decree of Heaven I was standing by his side, looking down at my new charge. He had been chosen from that first spark of life to accomplish the will of Heaven, although that life was in danger the moment he drew breath. As he came forth fully into the world, it was seen that he was male.

According to their custom, the midwives did not slay the boy as they had been ordered to do by Pharaoh's messengers. Instead, they instructed Yochebed how to properly hide her son so that he would not be killed. The demons had seen to it, naturally, that the rulers of Egypt should know the prophecy of the deliverer to come, and Pharaoh, acting under Satan's own inspiration, ordered that every male born to the slaves should be put to death. The angels of Heaven were quick to counteract that plan, however and the midwives who were commissioned with this grisly task were placed under our protection as they disobeyed.

Unfortunately, that had not been the extent of Lucifer's wrath. When the Pharaoh saw that the midwives would not be an effective means of preventing the prophecy, and when the demons saw that they would not be permitted to destroy them and replace them with more willing servants, Satan, the Lord of the House of Fear said, "Let every male child of Israel be slain, if he is under two years of age."

Pharaoh was quick to implement Satan's order, and his high sorcerer Yannos foretold destruction and doom on all Egypt if this child were permitted to live. Ironically, he was right.

The midwives left Yochebed sorrowfully. The child was handsome, and healthy, but doomed. They knew that their instructions could not keep the infant safe forever... and sooner or later the soldiers would find out from wagging tongues that a male child was born to the Hebrews, and soon he would be given up and thrown into the Nile like many others before him. Amram and his wife had prayed, but what good could that do against the might and numbers of Egypt?

"Now, this is interesting," one of the nearby demons said as he saw me standing in the house of Amram. "What are you doing here, Prince of Heaven?"

"I came, because I was sent," I replied. "IaHWeH has business with this home."

"Indeed," said the spirit, and swept off into the sky to inform his Ba'alim.

I called to Rinnael, the Dominion who guarded Miriam, and Adaiyel, a fellow Virtue whose charge, Aaron, had just evaded the death decree by a year. “My purpose here is suspected,” I told them. “This child is the one who has been seen by our Oracles; it is he of whom El Michael spoke, saying, ‘One shall come and lead my people back to Canaan.’

“Lucifer will surely take special care to ensure that this boy’s life ends shortly, therefore let us set a guard around the home, and ask what may be done regarding the efforts of Pharaoh and his soldiers.”

The two guardians agreed, and summoned other angels to help.

* * * * *

As I expected, Yannos had a “dream” that very night. He saw the streets of Egypt running with the blood of his countrymen, and a Hebrew standing over the body of Pharaoh himself holding a sword.

Early in the morning he made his report to the king, adding his interpretation. “Let the king rule forever, and this Hebrew be cast into the fires of the Other World. He lives, but let my king see that he dies; he is born, but let my king see that his stay in the land is short. Send soldiers among the Hebrews, or your fate is sealed!”

“You stand on the tip of a spear,” Pharaoh replied to his zealous sorcerer. “Be more careful with your words, for I am the Son of the Divine.” Yannos bowed to the ground, his face touching the floor, remembering the king’s pride, which he himself had helped to foster. “Still,” Pharaoh continued, “there is wisdom in heeding the warnings of dreams. I will send my men to search among the Hebrews.” It was not wisdom, but fear, that motivated this acceptance of the demon Kaspriel’s dream through Yannos, but Lucifer had pulled all the right strings, and soon men were advancing on the houses of the Hebrews, led by dark angels toward the house of Amram.

Commissioned by Heaven, we flew out to meet the unholy army. There were not many men, for the Hebrew slaves were certainly not able to fight any attackers sent by the king, but there were many, many demons. I quickly assessed the situation, and realized that we were badly outnumbered, yet we were under divine orders and knew that our purpose was to stand, and prevent the soldiers from finding the boy.

In spite of my confidence, I was startled to discover who was leading the contingent of demons.

“Anubis!” I said aloud, catching sight of the violent angel, Ba’al of the House of Wrath. With him, as always, were the Principality Kalaliel and the Power Voshiel.

The demon who came to be worshipped by the Egyptians as the god of death bore two swords, but neither of them were his... His own dark blade had been shattered by my brother Dumah on Mount Moriah, and he henceforth drew the kherevs of the Principality and Power that had pledged themselves to his service thereafter.

“Azrael,” I said, addressing him by original name, “your lord must be taking this matter most seriously.” Of that I had no doubt; one day I am sent forth to watch over a newborn child, and the next I stand before a mighty spirit of wrath. If things ever seemed to move swiftly for a holy angel, this was the occasion of it.

“My messenger informed me that you had come to watch over a newborn Israelite,” the fallen Cherub said. “You know better than to imagine for a moment that I give any respect to your rank in Heaven, or your power, but if the Throne wants you here, then I want you gone.”

“Lucifer wants me gone,” I corrected him, “Lucifer’s messenger informed *him* of my presence in this land. You are here for just the same reason I am here, because we serve. “We shall see in the contest,” I said, drawing my sword, “which of us was sent by the greater Master.”

Anubis laughed in wicked delight, ignoring my remarks as he drew his borrowed weapons. The Principality and Power stood ready at either of his sides to render assistance through the perversions of nature often seen among their kind. The other demons that had followed them likewise made ready for battle, and a sea of black fire swept over the scene as their evil weapons burst into strange flames.

In answer, the angels with me loosed their own swords, and the light of Heaven seemed to beat the dark glow of rebellion back. Below us the humans marched on, oblivious to our presence.

Anubis struck first, meeting me between our forces. Though he had two weapons to my one, angels do not “fall out of practice” in anything we have once learned. When we first drew our kherevs in Heaven, and were filled with the knowledge of battle, we were forever cast not only as choirs, to praise the Creator, but also as Hosts, to wage war. Perhaps, when the heavens boil away and the earth is made new, we will be relieved of this burden once and for all.

In the air above the soldiers of Pharaoh, it was a joyful burden. My sword could keep the agents of Satan at bay, could keep the promised of Heaven secure... or so I hoped. Azrael was skillful; although I was able to keep myself safe from both his slashing, stabbing swords, my fellow angels were each facing two or three opponents, each as skilled as they. I could give them little thought, however, fully occupied with the demon before me.

Anubis swung at me with his left sword in a backhanded swipe, and I parried the blow. He spun backward, pulling his wings in tight to increase his speed, and I narrowly evaded the backhanded slash from his right blade. Each evasion was a

narrow one, every defense was rushed, and it became apparent very quickly that to fight this angel of wrath was not to fight one, but to fight three.

Though unarmed, Kalaliel and Voshiel circled us, one blazing with flames and the other crackling with electrical energy. They were distractions at the very least, and real hazards in a more realistic assessment. It was clear that they were simply waiting for a clear shot and so, in addition to having to keep my main enemy from landing a blow, I also had to keep him between both of his allies and myself. Naturally, this was not always possible, and I had to keep shifting my position before they could respond. This kept me at a perpetual disadvantage, and the three demons began to maneuver me into the most uncomfortable postures they could manage. This continued for some time.

“Uzziel, can you feel it?” Anubis taunted me. “Can you feel the presence of your angels diminishing as they fall from the sky?” Despite the mocking tone in his voice, I could indeed perceive that we were losing about as many warriors as the demons, and with their greater numbers we could ill afford the exchange.

“Heaven has permitted this conflict,” I said, and said nothing more, because I rushed in to take advantage of the Cherub’s relaxed posture. Anubis’ response was to simply turn to his side, making himself a thinner target, and at the same time extend his nearer wing to its full extent, striking me in the face. He knocked me back just far enough for one of his allies to see an opportunity, and I was suddenly hurled to the ground by a blast of fire.

I landed right in front of the humans, who literally walked over me while I lay there stunned. As they stepped through my being I could see only the dedication to duty in their spirits, and in a few there was joy at the thought of harming the slaves. I rose to my feet and flew upward again, taking in the scene above me in an instant. There were even less of us remaining than I had hoped, and I sent a whisper to the Cherubim who had sent me earthward the day before.

I was certain that my request had been heard, and I set myself upon Anubis once again. I would keep the demons here until help arrived. The humans walked on, but they were not my main concern. We knew that the report of the birth had not been specific enough to direct the men to Amram’s home without evil inspiration, and if we were able to drive the demons off the angelic guardians remaining in the settlement would ensure that the boy remained concealed.

The spiritual fire had done me no real damage, but it had given Anubis an opportunity to strike another angel down while I was recovering. I could see the wounds on those who still fought, pain that the holy messengers and warriors were permitted to feel on this world where Satan had stolen dominion. My soldiers were brave, and powerful, but overmatched in this skirmish.

I threw myself at the twin-sword-wielding Cherub, and before he could retaliate properly, I had stuck one of his weapons aside with greater force than he had anticipated. As the weapon rang in his hand with the vibration of my blow, I

twirled my kherev and swung it upward, striking it again. With his grip already loose, Anubis let the handle slip from his hand, and the sword went flying upward. Free from his grip the spiritual weapon vanished in a flash of black flame, returning naturally to its rightful owner, and Kalaliel darted in to aid his master more directly.

As he drew near, however, Anubis snatched the weapon from his hand and resumed his attack on me. The Principality bowed submissively, but it was clear that he had been angered, and he turned his fury on me, staying nearer to our duel than before. Less concerned now, apparently, with hitting Anubis by mistake, Kalaliel began to throw small bolts of energy toward me. Even those that struck me were not a concern of themselves, but they were forcing me back nonetheless, as I had to ensure that none aimed at my face were allowed to find their mark.

“Correct your aim,” the Ba’al of Wrath screamed at his Principality, apparently having been hit by one of the demon’s attacks. As he did so I darted in again, using the same two-hit combination as I did before, and on the same hand as in the previous attempt. I must have weakened his grip considerably, for the technique worked again. This time, however, as the Cherub flapped backward to avoid a follow-through swing, I soared upward, reached into the air, grabbing the weapon before it could revert to Kalaliel’s possession.

As my hand closed on the hilt the dark fire dimmed and then flickered out. Immediately, holy light from the Shekinah, the Presence of the Most High, flowed through me, purifying the corrupted blade. Golden flames surged along the edge, reminding its owner of what could have been, had his faith remained strong oh, so many centuries ago.

“Return that sword!” the Principality yelled at me, a crazed look in his eyes.

Instead of replying, I did as he requested, throwing the kherev in his direction. As the weapon left my hand it spun like a disk, its features dissolving into a circle of pure light. The evil angel saw what was coming, but was far too slow to prevent it. He raised his hands, sparks flickering between them in a meaningless defense, as his vision filled with gold.

With a cry Kalaliel fell from the air, his being pierced by my attack. Anubis growled and threw his remaining sword at me. I dodged it easily, and it vanished to reappear in the hand of Voshiel, who immediately launched an attack from another direction. The Cherub, meanwhile, dove at me himself, using his body to distract me so that the Power who was aiding him could connect.

The veil that hung around my neck vanished, and in my left hand appeared the translucent shield representing our faith. Anubis flew headlong into it, while I braced forward, flapping my wings to give force to my position. At the same time, I swung my other arm up, using my sword to block Voshiel’s attack. There was very little I could do, however, when a third spirit, and then a fourth, and then a *fifth*, closed in to put an end to the battle.

Apparently I was the only one left, and the demons around us were becoming tired of merely being spectators.

As I was about to be cut to fiery ribbons, a loud thud rippled the air around us. A confused look passed over the faces of the demonic host, and I probably bore a similar expression. Shortly thereafter, a second followed it, and one demon far on the right actually spun out of the way, reeling from the force of the sound. A third loud noise broke the silence, and this time the cause of the disturbance was apparent. Something that appeared to be a large, feathery egg had landed not too far away from Anubis and myself, and although it had not disturbed the physical air, or ground, the presence of these beings was being made known. I smiled as I realized what they were... they were not eggs, but wings entirely. The top pair of wings, the first of three, opened and folded backward, then the second pair, and it became apparent that a bright angel stood within the feathery shield. The last pairs swept away from the feet of the three Seraphim, and I looked up to see two more observers, the Archangels Uriel and Raphael, Adonaim of the Ophanim and Malakim respectively, standing above the scene.

The three Seraphim flew upward and began to attack the demons, blazing with holy zeal. They used their wings for shields; and their long hair, a symbol of their dedication, streamed about as they swung around to face enemy after enemy. Raphael descended to the earth and raised many of the injured angels to their feet, healing them from their wounds. Rinnael was immediately up and by my side, eager to resume the battle. Anubis retreated to a more defensible position to rally his companions.

“Heaven also takes this matter most seriously,” the warm-spirited Uriel said to me with a smile, and then the four-winged angel blazed a trail through the army of demons before us. It was not until then that I realized the true extent of the forces we had been facing. I marveled that we had been able to hold them off as long as we did, but we had indeed been commissioned by Heaven to oppose those sent for the boy... the boy. This army was large, but were all those who flew out from Egypt still there?

“Rinnael,” I said, “let us make sure that Amram’s house is not discovered by the soldiers!” The Dominion nodded and we set out together, leaving Anubis to his other concerns.

* * * * *

We sent the men off in one direction, and then another. They moved from house to house, searching everywhere carefully, except for the Levites’ home. Most were sure they had been down that street before; others saw someone else checking it, and finding nothing. Those within the house were unaware of what was going on in the streets and among their neighbors. They would be shocked at how close they had come to discovery, but their friends who knew about Yochebed’s child said nothing to the soldiers, and even they were few.

Just when we thought the danger was passed, we saw one of the soldiers turning back and walking toward the house. I looked at the human and saw a pitiful sight; Anubis, wounded and desperate, had taken hold of the man and was marching him back to Amram's house, intent on showing the humans where the child was being hidden.

"Rinnael," I said, calling for the Dominion, but Anubis raised himself out of the man and turned to face us, having already implanted the thought that no, they had *not*, in fact, searched that particular house yet.

"So you have escaped," I said, bringing my sword up.

"I will not triumph over you both," the demon hissed, "but I can delay you long enough to leave my soldier undisturbed until the infant is seen. When he calls his soldiers, what will you do? You are not commissioned to stop humans directly in this idolatrous land."

What the Cherub said was true. Unlike the small domes of darkness that surrounded willfully sinful individuals, or the orb of night that gleamed over places of evil power like Babylon, Egypt's widespread paganism had made the entire kingdom a gloomy place for the messengers of light. We had little power in this corrupt country, and the need for a deliverer in Israel was only underscored by the very danger that now threatened his life.

We knew we had only moments before the soldier arrived at the home and demanded entrance, and so Rinnael and I dove in. Anubis stood between the human and us, and we were thus preventing us from influencing him. It would have been difficult even if he had not been there to prevent us; now that the idea had been planted and rooted in his thoughts, now that the human had acted upon it by actually turning around, it would be nearly impossible to convince him that he had been mistaken.

I perceived a flame on the horizon, a brightly burning angel speeding toward us to render assistance, but even with his great speed I could see he would not arrive in time.

My weapon rang against the wounded Anubis' remaining sword, that which he had retrieved from the likely fallen Voshiel. He laughed hoarsely, retreating before my attacks, and keeping well out of Rinnael's reach. "I sacrifice myself!" he said in pained, but clearly amused tones, and the irony of the situation was not lost on me either.

Suddenly the evil Cherub dodged to his right and parried my ally's weapon, using it to strike my own sword aside, and then he leaped between us. In an instant his angelic form had shifted into that of a winged jackal, and in his new, faster shape he closed the distance between himself and the human to give one final, unalterable command to enter the humble home.

Closer, closer he bounded, and soon he was right on the soldier, when he seemed to hit a wall, and he pulled up short. Two sounds were coming from inside the house; one could be heard by the keenest of even mortal ears, but one could be heard only by spirits. The latter was a prayer; Amram was praying at that moment, at that very blessed moment, that IaHWeH would watch over his family.

The former: Yochebed was singing her newborn to sleep with a lullaby.

The god of death hesitated for just a moment; but that was all that was required. The blazing angel that had followed him from the battle surged forward with the rage of a hundred suns; he eclipsed any pretended power that the spirit calling himself *Ra* possessed, and struck the jackal-demon from the air.

At the same time, the soldier's companions were calling to him to hurry along... they were already tired and frustrated from finding nothing, and were annoyed at having to wait still further for their companion.

"Yes," one bellowed out, "I saw one of us enter that home! No, I don't know who it was..."

Anubis scrambled up and backward, once again in his angelic form, beating the air with his wings to avoid the fiery weapon. The Seraph's six feathery limbs easily kept pace with the demon's injured pair, and soon the evil angel was ducking down to save his head. The sun, though physical, seemed to sparkle off the mighty angel's belt and golden helmet as he blazed with his own light while on the attack.

"I go!" Anubis screamed, instantly shifting again into the form of a large raven that we had seen him use in years past. The red haired Seraph stood in the air, his wings keeping him motionless and aloft, as he watched the little, dark shape swoop around and speed off in the direction of Pharaoh's palace.

"He went," the powerful angel said, turning to us with a satisfied smile, as his two companions flew up to join him.

A moment later Rinnael and I turned to behold the presence of the Archangels that we perceived behind us, and we bowed to them in respect. This was an act we angels did before our fellows of greater rank, much as humans do before their princes and kings. No human, however, would ever be permitted to bow before an angel; we are their willing servants.

"Arise, Uzziel, Chief of the Malakim," Raphael said to me.

When I had stood on my feet, Uriel said, "Arise Rinnael, guardian of Miriam." Rinnael stood up, and then Uriel continued, "Arise Ariel, Nakoniel and Ambriel." The three Seraphim stood and joined us.

Behind the Archangels were the revived messengers that Rinnael and Adaiyel had called to our aid. Adaiyel himself was among them, and my fellow Virtue came over to me.

“Heaven has given the demons an opportunity to show their hand,” Uriel said. “They make it clear that they will throw their full might against the deliverer. Even now Anubis reports to Azazel what has transpired, and the dragon’s fury will unleash every demon under his wings against this family, if they are permitted.

“Gabriel and Camael have been sent to see about that,” Raphael added, naming the other two Archangels. “In the meantime, it should be apparent that even your might, Uzziel, will not be sufficient in this place to maintain the security placed around the child.”

I nodded in agreement with Raphael’s estimation. “It is as you say, Adonai. What shall be done?”

Uriel stepped forward and addressed the Seraphim beyond us. “Ariel, kneel.” The red-haired Seraph that had repelled Anubis knelt before the exalted Throne-angel. “Nakoniel and Ambriel, join him.” The two other angels quickly complied.

“By the decree of the Eternal Throne, you have been commissioned as guardians over the Hebrews. Each of you three will call three other Seraphim, so that you will total one for each Tribe of Israel, and one for each of Heaven’s Princes. From this moment forward, you are named the *Nachashim Seraphim*, and your light shall not be dim among the tents of Jacob.”

As Ariel and the other Seraphim arose, the fire that flickered around their beings went full white, and then settled into a bright, yellow-gold hue.

“Go, call your brothers to service,” Raphael said to them, and with a shout of joy the three angels shot up into the air, trailing the golden fire behind them in a manner we had never seen before.

“These twelve shall be your assistants,” Uriel said to me. “You will have need of them as you guard the life of the deliverer.”

“You have my thanks, Adonai,” I said, as Uriel and most of the others flew up into the air to return to the Eternal Kingdom.

The Archangel had spoken truly. In the years to come I would call several times on the assistance of Ariel’s band of twelve. Ariel called three of his fellow Seraphim to the task: Binael, Ragaziel and Shebaiel. Nakoniel summoned Verchiel, Daniel and Ebeniel. Ambriel drew Yadiel, Haraiel and Kaleon into the company. These “fiery serpents” kept the Hebrews as safe as they were permitted, for as long as the nation stood unified and faithful. They had several

names down through the generations, but the one by which they are most commonly known, although the title itself has been the subject of much controversy, is the *Chalkydri*.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 2: THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE

*“For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”
(Psalm 91:11)*

 hat the demons cannot take by force, they are almost certain to secure by subtlety. As my brothers have testified before me, spirits are not as creative as humans; nevertheless, demons have not had to be particularly inventive in their disruption of mankind's best-laid plans. It was not long before the child's life was indeed in danger once again.

I keep referring to him as “the child” and “the boy,” and there is a reason for this. His father wanted to give him a name, Yahoshua, to be specific, and a name that should be familiar to the readers of this testimony... but his mother was hesitant to do so. “Let my husband permit me this mercy,” she said, “to let him be named when the time is right.” So, they called him simply “Nar” (boy) until that time.

Despite the fact that Amram saw no great sign at the birth of his third child, he was not entirely deaf to the Spirit's influence. He was, as I noted before, a man given to prayer despite the increasing lethargy of his people. As the days passed he began to recognize a stamp of grace on the infant's behavior, even so fresh from the womb, and by faith he became convinced that perhaps the time of Israel's captivity was indeed drawing to a close.

The Levite was not the only one receiving insights from the invisible world; in dreams and visions the pagan priest Yannos was given assurance that Pharaoh's soldiers had missed something in their search of Israel's people, and that the deliverer indeed lived. He had something of a difficult task ahead of him, however, for his king now suspected him of erring in this regard, as well as questioning his supreme power as god-king of Egypt. The mythology that my fallen brethren had woven into the country's governmental system served them quite well at times, but in situations like this it seemed almost counter-productive. Even so, Lucifer held the life of the king in his hand, and those under the shadow of the House of Fear are easily manipulated.

Daily, Yannos insinuated dire predictions before the king, saying that he foresaw the rising of the Hebrews and the fall of the Egyptians if Pharaoh would not take further action. “What further action?” the monarch demanded. “Have I not ordered every infant child slain?”

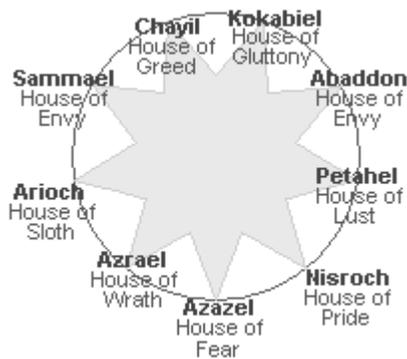
“Let the soldiers search again,” Yannos insisted. “A child lies hidden in Israel whose hand reaches out for your throne!”

“The gods have given me this throne, for they have lifted me to their number,” the king retorted. “I will not listen to your nonsense.”

It could not be said that this leader of Egypt was a good man; in many ways he was like Egypt itself: large and full of his own power. He was a slave to fear, yes, but would not always willingly bow before his master. Lucifer, for all his skill, had to play pride against cowardice, and for the moment pride was winning. Yannos knew that he would need something else to convince Pharaoh to send his men amongst the slaves once again, and the mighty tempter would see to it that “something” was provided.

“I could play games with this human a while longer, and break him completely,” he said to Sammael who was standing with him. “On the other hand, I wish to cultivate this family’s sense of power... it will be more useful to me later on this way. But you, send for your spirits and arouse a betrayer against Amram and his house.”

Sammael the fallen Power, Ba’al of the House of Envy, bowed before his master. “We have just such a one prepared,” the dark spirit replied. “My fellow Abaddon has his wings spread over the camp of Israel. There are many who are jealous of the respect shown to the Elders of Levi, and many among those who were yet more spiteful of the honor shown to the family of Kohath, from whom Amram is descended.”



It should be noted: Sammael and Abaddon were both Ba’alim of factions that the demons called the “Houses of Envy.” Lucifer drew heavily on the creativity of his human subjects in Babylon and Egypt to create a sort of hierarchy among his spirits, dividing them according to their particular proclivities and skills. He set himself over the House of Fear, for this was the root, he decided, of all true deception and indeed all sin. Chay’il the Principality was Satan’s

most common regent among the human kingdoms he had dominated, and he was established over the House of Greed.

Kokabiel the fallen Seraph was given reign over the demons in the House of Gluttony. Nisroch and Arioch, who were Archangels of Heaven before their fall, had no need to be granted special favors by Lucifer. They agreed with him to become Ba’alim of the Houses of Pride and Sloth respectively. Azrael the Cherub, or Anubis as he now called himself, was raised to leadership in the House of Wrath, and the Seraph Petahel was given command of the House of Lust. Unique among these were Sammael and Abaddon. Two of the first angels to

follow Azazel in his rebellion, they would occasionally compete for a position of greatest honor in the sight of Lucifer, and thus before the other demons; their master thought it rather poetic therefore to establish the resulting arrangement of their Houses.

For the time being, they were working together as peacefully as demons can. In fact Salathiel, who was Prince of the Shavoorim, or fallen Virtues, was assisting the Powers Zaphkiel and Kaspriel in maintaining and developing the Mysteries of Egypt. He was under Abaddon's command and they under Sammael's.

"Do as you have in mind," Lucifer said, dismissing Sammael to carry out his purpose.

The report Sammael brought before his master that day was, unfortunately, perfectly accurate. We had labored long with the Eliab of the Tribe of Reuben, but his work as a leader in Israel left a stain on the history of the nation. His skills as a father would bring him even more public shame, as my testimony will later reflect. Though Yochebed and Eliab's wife were on friendly terms, their husbands were not, and it was with some hesitation that I saw the Levite woman draw her acquaintance into her confidence concerning her boy, and her hopes that the deliverer had indeed come among them.

The woman of Reuben naturally shared this information with her husband and he, for envy's sake, shared it with the Egyptian guards appointed to watch over the slaves' settlement. Mirmael, a Dominion from the House of Abaddon, walked with Eliab; they were close, although the human did not know it. Dominions are not naturally skilled at the art of influencing humans, but this spirit, whose chosen name means "Deceit of El," was an exception. The Reubenite, in addition to that, was an easy target because of his own inherent defects of character.

The truth be known, Eliab's major failing was not as simple as envy for Amram or the Levitical tribe. He himself would never classify his feelings that way; in fact he was more likely to express pride for being the offspring of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel. What lay at the root of his actions was a rather complex justification for a lack of faith.

"Of course the deliverer will come," Eliab said, and taught this to his own house, "but I do not believe I will live to see it. My father has died in this country, and my father's father before him. I will pass on here, and you also, my children, may follow me. Of course our prophets have spoken truly, but all they say of the time of our freedom is, 'soon.'"

"And what is it if I obey Pharaoh's orders?" he said, but this only to himself. "Even our midwives were commanded to report the birth of sons, and who knows if this is not our God's way of choosing for us the deliverer? Why not one of my sons, from among the first Tribe of Israel? They are both old enough that they survived the death decree; and should this providence be counted for nothing?"

The Dominion laughed at the human's foolish thoughts, though they were never expressed aloud, and demons are unable to see them directly. The crafty spirit could, however, see the changes in his victim's expression when he encountered a Levite, and Amram specifically. He could read the pride in his body when beholding his own sons, or speaking to the elders of Israel from among the house of Reuben. He knew that his cause was won, and he directed Eliab over to the Egyptians as quickly as his intentions could be concealed by circumstances.

There was one guard in particular, a chief among the guards, with whom the Reubenite was actually trying to find favor. He spoke often of his nation, doing so under the pretext of explaining the favor of Elohim upon Israel to the Egyptians, but in reality he was merely taking the opportunity to promote his own greatness among his people before the heathen authority.

"Shall I be useful to Pharaoh and his servants?" Eliab asked, approaching the armed warrior. The chief of the guards tightened his expression; he was not in the mood for the Israelite's posturing that day.

"Shall I be useful to Pharaoh, and his servants?" he asked again, more slowly this time, in a more conspiratorial tone.

"Have the slaves so much time to rest," the guard asked nonchalantly, "that you spare a moment to bother me now?"

Eliab made no sign of anger at being reminded of his place, but replied instead, "My lord knows that we are not even permitted the rest according to our customs, much less time to be idle indeed. No, I have not come to bother you; I bring news to delight your ears, and perhaps to make heavy your pouch with Pharaoh's reward."

"And what might that be?" the guard asked, raising an eyebrow, but sparing little more than a glance in his visitor's direction.

* * * * *

Yannos came before the king, bowing his shorn head to the ground. Pharaoh hesitated, a little longer than usual, before permitting his sorcerer to rise. "He was in such a rush to see me," the king remarked to his scribe, "let him catch his breath before speaking."

"My Pharaoh, let your soldiers go out once more among the Hebrews," the frustrated priest said upon rising to his feet.

"Yannos, this again; I warn you, I have heard it enough."

"To what purpose is my service to the king, if my advice is so lightly regarded?" Yannos replied, knowing his king well enough to dare these words. But he did not wait for the response, knowing it would be an angry one. Instead he rushed

ahead, “Your own guards confirm my visions. There is a child among the Hebrews, and the slaves have disobeyed your order yet again.”

“My guards?” Pharaoh asked, “and by what means did they obtain this information?”

“By the mouth of a Hebrew, one of their own.”

The king laughed, “And this sounds like an honest report to my priest and advisor? Come, Yannos, I will appoint you a servant to ease your load. What will become of us when you are an old man?” The attendants of Pharaoh’s court gave voice to their appreciation for the king’s humor – some were being polite; but many, who had no great love for the sorcerer, were genuinely amused.

The demons watched the conversation with interest. Lucifer behind the throne, and Kaspriel standing with the priest of the Mysteries, along with several other fallen angels, played their subtle music in the minds of the two men as they spoke, and permitted Pharaoh to be convinced just enough to hesitantly give his permission to have the guards already near the Hebrew settlement search the house of Amram.

* * * * *

Naturally, Heaven was not sitting idle while this developed below us. As the messenger traveled to the guards Borerael, the Ophan who guarded Amram, gave him a dream and said to him in the night, “They come once again to seek the life of your son. Your house was spared the eyes of Pharaoh’s soldiers, as you have heard, but they come now knowing your name, and will not be dissuaded from searching out your secret.”

“Take the boy,” the angel said, “and send him by the hand of your wife to a safe place. Here is the manner of the youth’s salvation...”

* * * * *

Three of the Chalkydri, along with myself, accompanied Yochebed to the Nile. With us were Miriam and her guardian Rinnael, as well as the mother’s angel. Mother and daughter prayed as they went along, careful to avoid being seen by the guards, and assisted in this by we angels. The demons were not ignorant of what we were trying to do, and so we had our weapons drawn. The fallen spirits were still extremely wary of the golden Seraphim that flanked us, not knowing the extent of the power they initially possessed, or if their fiery appearance was indicative of even greater strength granted to them by the Almighty.

We watched as loving hands carefully placed the basket, prepared at the instructions of Borerael through Amram her husband, in the waters of the great river, and released it to the flow along with its precious cargo. “Keep him safe,”

the faithful woman implored the Creator, after singing what she thought would be her last lullaby to her child. I, the servant of both Creator and child, would certainly work to ensure that this prayer was fulfilled.

Yochebed resisted the urge to walk along the river as the current gently bore her three-month-old son away. She trusted her husband's words, and in the providence of Heaven, but this was her child, and her mother's heart strained within her. Miriam saw no danger in going for a walk along the Nile that day, however, and we knew that her presence would not attract the attention her mother's would. The girl left her mother to sit and pray, while she wandered along the reeds, doing her best to appear uninterested in the progress of the little ark.

He was a beautiful child, as I have no doubt mentioned before; but Heaven does not give even these favors without purpose. There is purpose in the giving, yes, but also an additional blessing that may be fulfilled if divine will is followed. In placing their son in the Nile, Amram and his wife had followed Heaven's instructions; the blessing given to their son was about to show one of its benefits.

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Not every resident in Pharaoh's castle was equally affected by the decadence and idolatry spread out over the land. There were a few bright points among the shadows, and the daughter of the king was one of these. She was not innocent of bowing before the gods of her homeland, but what she did, she did in ignorance. Her heart was soft with compassion for those less fortunate than herself, and this spirit of charity could not be stolen by the vile spirits behind those images.

The princess loved her father, and her life in Egypt, but one thing she could not bear to see was the process of construction. The cruelty of the taskmasters, as they motivated the slaves to work for her family, bothered her greatly, but powerless as she was, her only possible protest was to avoid the scenes of forced labor. Her closest attendants knew her sympathies, and would often say to her in jest, "When you are queen of Egypt, you can release the Hebrews and the other slaves!"

"When I am queen of Egypt," she would reply, waving her hand dismissively at her laughing servants, "I will require more skillful handmaidens." She did not mind her servants words, but the desire she had to ease the suffering of the workmen was genuine enough. Even so, she had not spoken to her father... he was not the type to listen to her, though she was his most clearly respected child.

It was while engaged in such talk as this that the princess and her attendants drew near to the banks of the Nile. They had come to bathe in their sacred river, and to find relief from the heat of the Egyptian sun. Few demons accompanied the princess and her girls, and the golden Seraphim traveling with me easily drove them off while I moved closer to attract the attention of the Pharaoh's daughter. I was surprised at who had been permitted to find the tiny vessel, but I understood

my duty by the Spirit's leadings, and directed the course of the maidens to my precious charge.

I had only a moment to act, for no sooner had the wicked spirits been ousted than many other demons gathered close; but a moment was all that was required. Whispers, those instantaneous, silent messages that may pass from angel to angel, immediately drew a crowd of fallen beings. We had not come to fight that day, however, and quickly retreated to a less aggressive position as soon as the deed was done.

We made sure we would be able to see what would result, and we knew that Lucifer and his ministers were receiving word even as we looked on. "Tebah," one of the girls exclaimed in surprise, spotting the Nile's cargo the same time the princess did.

"Yes, I see it," she said, and motioned for the one who had first seen the ark to draw it over to the bank. The girl did as she had been instructed, and soon the infant was looking up into the faces of several surprised Egyptians.

The infant's calm broke at the sound of surprise issuing forth from every throat. Startled at their exclamations, he began to cry.

"Oh, now," the princess said, taking the child protectively in her arms, "do not regard my servants... they are much nicer than they look."

This statement drew forth cries of another kind from the outraged and amused girls, and did little to quiet the young Hebrew. "Hush," the princess said again, and her attendants reluctantly fell silent.

She lay him on the ground, atop the blanket in which he had been wrapped, and looked at the faces of her servants that gathered around again. "What shall we do with... him?" the princess asked, checking the child's gender as she spoke.

"Oh," one of the girls said in surprise, moving the blanket's edge away again, "I have not seen one like this before."

What she had noticed was the young child's circumcision, one of the few covenant practices that the Egyptians had not forbidden to their Israelite laborers.

The princess sighed heavily and said, "He is the son of slaves, one of the Hebrews' children. This is the mark of their males."

"Oh, put him back in the Nile!" one girl said, withdrawing herself from the others. "Your father has commanded that they should be killed."

"Let us walk up the river and see if we can find where he came from," another said. Some of the other girls agreed.

The boy was still crying, and the princess took him up again. “No, I will not do either. Who can blame a mother for trying to spare her beautiful child? Which of us would do any differently? Look at this sweet face!” The girls wisely held their peace, and did not answer their lady. “Old Yannos is always full of doom; what could a slave do against my father?” she asked, fully familiar with her father’s death decree, and the reason behind it.

Her attendants were more trusting in the power of the king’s sorcerer, however, and several of their faces had grown pale at what they realized the princess was about to suggest.

“You cannot keep him safe!” one incredulous voice rang out. The demons of fear were among the servants, feeding them images of Pharaoh’s wrath should he discover that those within his own palace were disregarding his divine will. “Where will you put him? What will you feed him? He is a slave!”

The others were now over their surprise at the child’s appearance, and had forgotten the favor with which they beheld him before the import of his presence had become clear to them. The princess looked at their concerned faces, one to another, and then noticed movement beyond her attendants in the growths along the Nile’s waters.

“Hebrew children are the Nile’s blessing to us today!” the princess exclaimed, happily finding an excuse to change the subject. Her attendants regarded the newcomer coldly, but Miriam kept her eyes on the face of the daughter of Pharaoh, and read the compassion written there.

“I saw the basket in the river,” the precocious girl said, “and I followed it.” She looked at the boy as if beholding him for the first time and said, “He looks like one of us.”

“Who are you?” the princess asked.

“I am Miriam of the Tribe of Levi. I am a Hebrew.” There was no shame in the slave girl’s answer, and a dignity in this child of a praying home that could not be disdained even by the attending women. They were not about to give this daughter of the laborers any compliments, however.

One began to ask, “Do you know where...” but the princess interrupted her.

“What does that matter?” she said. The Pharaoh’s daughter had seen the look in the girls’ eyes, and had a firm conviction that she understood what had taken place along the banks of the Nile that day. Instead she asked, “How old are you, girl? You do not look like you have yet seen ten years.”

Miriam ignored the question, however, and indicated the infant that the princess held with a movement of her head. “Shall I go and call a nurse from among the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?”

Pharaoh's daughter looked intently at the young girl, reading things in her eyes that Miriam was simply unable to conceal. Perhaps if she had been a little older... but while the eyes of her attending women narrowed in suspicions of their own, the princess held her gaze steady. "Go," she said finally.

The demons growled and the angels rejoiced as Miriam tried very hard to avoid racing back to her mother at full speed. As soon as she was out of the Egyptians' sight, however, she tore along the reeds until she came back to Yochebed, still sitting at the bank of the river where she had left her. "Mother!" the girl cried, and flung herself into waiting arms.

"What have you seen?" the woman asked, trying to hold Miriam's face in her hands so that she could get some idea of the cause for the excitement.

"Go and get my brother," Miriam replied, "he is with Pharaoh's daughter."

"What! How did this come to be?"

"It is by the prayers of my parents," the girl said, "and by the blessing of our Almighty."

Yochebed was still confused. "What have I to do with the king's daughter?"

"Come," Miriam said, holding out her hand, "I will tell you as we go."

* * * * *

By this time I was standing before Uriel in Heaven. The angels and the Chalkydri that remained on earth were sufficient to prevent the demons from doing anything drastic, although we were certain Lucifer was already planning his next move. Convinced that my charge was safe for the time being, I opened a rift in the substance of creation and stepped into the Kingdom of my Creator.

Duty prevents me from spending much time here describing my home. Yet it is painful for me to consider what it must be like to never have seen it! Man is to be pitied indeed, that so very few of you have been permitted to gaze upon the towers of gold, to behold the domes of ivory. There every color is brighter, and every pattern whole. There everything heard is harmony, whether it is the music of the Seraphim, or the sounds of joyful labor. There the streets and walls pulse with life, and every mind is drawn gently to the Mighty Throneroom at the heart of Armown Elyon, the Most High Palace. There every heart (permit me to complete a paragraph) is filled with the Light of the Presence, the Shekinah that is eternally burning with warm life in the Holy Tabernacle.

There.

If ever one is said to have the face of an angel, it is because he or she has beheld my home.

In any event, I had returned to speak with the Archangelic Throne, for I was curious about the turn of events. I knew that the ark would be taken to one who would keep the infant safe... but Pharaoh's daughter? I was being given a heavy workload, as you men may say.

"The child is to be a deliverer," Uriel said. "He will lead the nation of Israel away from the slavery of their masters. He will lead them far from the influence of the idols, and out from under the shadow of our fallen adversaries." This I had known. What I had not known was what he said next.

"None among the humans will be called by Heaven to teach a lesson they have not themselves learned. If Heaven truly directs them to lead others, they will have walked that path before in some form or another. Even the prophets among men," he added, "will have seen with spiritual eyes that of which they will speak."

I caught the meaning immediately, and I smiled, "The boy will learn what it is he is asking his people to surrender. What beauty, Adonai!"

"He will know, more than any who follow him from the borders of Egypt, what it is that Israel leaves behind," the four-winged angel confirmed. "He will leave behind a country that loves him more than it has loved any of his people since Joseph, and there will be no cause for men to reproach his choice by El Michael as the deliverer."

"Praise be to IaHWeH," I said, bowing and preparing to return to my charge.

"Uzziel," the archangel said to me, holding my attention for a moment before I departed. "I said there would be no *cause* for men to reproach his choice. I did not say they would not reproach it."

"I understand, Adonai," I said, and stepped back through the void to earth.

* * * * *

I arrived to hear the conversation between Yochebed and the Pharaoh's daughter. Miriam stood by her mother, solemn and proper. The maidens who had accompanied the Egyptian princess stood by their lady, casting glances loaded with mixed feelings at the Hebrew woman.

The child's mother was doing her very best to maintain a straight face, but tears of relief and gratitude threatened to burst forth as she was handed her infant son. "Take the boy," the princess said, "and nurse him for me. I will see that you are compensated for your service."

Yochebed hardly dared to glance up at the face of the younger woman before her, knowing that her expression would betray far too much. As she lifted her eyes

ever so slightly, however, she saw a smile there, a knowing smile, in the face of the princess, and she hastily bowed her head and turned around to hurry away.

She managed to put just enough distance between them, and to cover her face with her shawl, before the river burst forth. She was able to keep her emotions silent until they were far enough that she felt secure, and Miriam began to skip happily around them as they departed.

The princess turned and, with her maidens, made their way back to the palace. “If any of you speak a word of this to anyone...” she threatened her attendants, “I will see to it that you yourselves are thrown into the Nile.” They were wise, once again, to make no reply.

“Oh!” she exclaimed a moment later. “Remind me when we get to the palace to call for a messenger.”

“A messenger?” one of her girls asked.

“Yes,” she said. “He must go to the home of the girl, Miriam the Levite, and ask her to give this gift,” and she pulled a jeweled pin from her clothing, “to the slave named *Moses*, for he entertained my maidens and I by the Nile today.”

“Moses...” another girl said.

“*Drawn forth*,” she repeated his name, “for he was drawn forth from the sacred river of Egypt.”

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 3: THE FAITH OF A CHILD

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.” (Psalm 8:2)

Amram roared with laughter when he realized that his wife was being paid from the royal treasury to take care of her own slave-born son. He laughed so hard that his tears flowed out to join his partner’s, but his joy sprang forth from the same place as had Yochebed’s holy gratitude. “What a reward for your faith, my dear wife, in the Almighty and in my dreams; and what a reward for my prayers!”

“The princess knows,” his wife said. “We are safe for now from the swords of Egypt.”

“From Egypt, yes,” Amram agreed, “but not, perhaps, from Israel. My dreams showed me that one of our own people went to the soldiers about our son. We must be careful, because we do not know whose eyes may be turned against us in hatred.”

There were indeed a few eyes among the humans, such as those of the house of Eliab, which would qualify. The more pressing concern, however, involved the eyes of the demons that beheld the scene by the Nile. Yet no amount of fear or pride that the demons attempted to inspire in the princess thus far had turned her heart away from young Moses. Her words, and the providence her presence had provided, served only to strengthen the convictions of the Levite home that this boy was being preserved for IaHWeH’s purpose.

Yochebed’s joy was tinged by many feelings. Although she knew her son would live, and that he would not have to submit to the life of a slave (the sorrow of all other Hebrew mothers in those days) she also knew that she would have to surrender him at some point to the custody of the princess. The pious Levites were as concerned about the experiences that their son would have among the sorcerers and courtiers as they were about what he would have faced in the sun and mud of the labor sites.

From the palace’s experience, however, they could at least make an attempt to shield the lad.

As young Aaron learned to write (for though they were slaves the Israelites cherished such knowledge) and Miriam (who had already had such lessons)

learned the duties of the home, Moses was set upon the lap of his mother and carefully instructed about the history of his people. As soon as he could understand, he was urged to take what knowledge he could about Israel into the palace with him.

Certainly, the education of the other children on these matters was not neglected; Yochebed saw to it that Aaron heard her speaking, and that his own work was connected to what she was saying. Miriam, quick of thought and speech, was always asking questions about what her mother was recalling, or adding something further that she believed was important, but forgotten, in Yochebed's accounts.

"It was a great test of faith for our ancestor Abraham," Yochebed was saying. "How could he give up the only son of his wife? How could he understand the promises of the Almighty, when Isaac was to be the source of his expected descendants? But Abraham knew the power of El, and took Isaac to mount Moriah, and there prepared to sacrifice him according to the will of Elohim."

As in Babylon, so it was in Egypt; the name of the Almighty as it is pronounced in human language was forbidden from being uttered. The Israelites called Him simply, "The Almighty God," (El Shaddai) or "Elohim," but did not use the more personal form of address employed by their ancestors. The name *Yahweh* was still whispered among the elders; the prophets and priests had not forgotten, but even among them the full significance of that title as the One Personal Name of the King of Creation was not grasped. IaHWeH had not revealed Himself in so direct a manner by that name; this was reserved for a particular occasion of His choosing.

"When He saw that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his own son," Yochebed continued, "He called for our ancestor to stop, and he did. Instead, he found a ram near the altar and sacrificed that instead."

"This is to show us," Miriam put in, "that the Almighty will always provide everything we need."

Yochebed continued, "Isaac married, and had two sons named Jacob and Esau. I will tell you more about them on another day. But Jacob is the one who provided a name to our people: Israel, when he struggled with himself, and with the divine Messenger while returning from the country of his wife's father.

"But listen to me carefully, Moses," his mother said, turning to look him fully in the eyes, "Our people have not always understood how important it is to avoid the power of other gods. Our mother Leah had such a weakness, but greater still was that of her sister Rachel, who used magical charms to try to win Jacob's favor. She stole her father Laban's idols as our ancestors were returning to their homeland, and this was a grief to our father Jacob when he knew of it. But Rachel was shown, by her husband's words and by the experiences she had, that she must come to trust in the true One who formed us all.

“When Jacob was told by the Almighty, ‘Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean,’ Rachel did not hide the images she had stolen, but gave them to her husband, and he buried them while they journeyed on.”

“We have no images, mother,” Miriam said as Aaron quietly formed his letters.

“No, we have no images here,” she said, but touched the pin on Moses’ clothing that had been sent by the princess. It was a gift, yes, but also an unintentional reminder to her that her son would someday be called from her arms.

“We have no images here,” Yochebed repeated, “but you, Moses, will be among many images in the palace where you will soon live. Remember my words, my son.”

Moses did not fully understand all that his mother was saying, but he heard her, and he remembered.

On another occasion she spoke to him about their ancestor Levi, and he was told, “Levi went along with his brothers to treat their father’s youngest son shamefully, for Joseph was the youngest that had been born at that time. But do not ever set your hand to a deed simply because many hands are already there. There are some deeds that can stain many hands, my son.”

On yet another day, “Your forefather did well in standing for the honor of his family, yet he and Simeon were a sorrow to their father when they slew a town for the sins of one man who abducting their sister Dinah. There is a difference between judgment and wrath, Moses... one is balanced and the other is not. Learn to be dedicated like your father Levi, but do not fall victim to his anger, my son.”

Moses remembered these words also; but alas, he did not take this lesson fully to heart, and in the years to come many would see the hot blood of Levi boiling in the words and actions of Israel’s deliverer.

* * * * *

“It would be inappropriate,” Lucifer conceded, “to continue to press an attack on the child now. The Host seems intent on opposing us, and even in this kingdom they can accomplish much because of their greater numbers. But here, in the palace of Pharaoh, we will have an advantage.”

The prince of demons knew that Sammael’s recent suggestions were meant only to lighten the import of his failure to have Moses slain, but he did not bother to point this out. The mighty Power standing before him was actually making sense, and if the truth be told, the Ba’al of the House of Fear was looking forward to another opportunity to succeed in corrupting one of Heaven’s chosen. He had

failed with Joseph, but he would make sure that the same mistakes were not made with this latest child of promise.

“By the time the boy is brought to the palace, the king’s fears will have been calmed concerning the deliverer. I will not continue to stir the matter within him. If Michael wishes to play games, we will play.”

Sammael frowned, “My prince, I could easily instruct Yannos, or any one of a number of my demons’ subjects, to slay the Hebrew boy when he arrives. I meant only that it would be less troublesome to await his arrival, and then strike. If the guardians of the child wish to exercise such folly as to send him right into the heart of your stronghold, why should we reject their gift?”

“Order Yannos to kill him,” Lucifer said with a harsh smile. “Your sorcerer will be struck down by one of the angels – yes, even here under Pharaoh’s shadow. Choose any humans you believe you will not need any longer, and have them come after the boy. You will be relieved of their presence in short order.

“No, I know their plans well. Michael wishes the boy to choose freely to lead his family from this place... and he will have the opportunity, and we will not be permitted to interfere with his ability to choose. What we will do, however, is interfere with what he is *likely* to choose. No, we will not oppose Moses... we will be better guardians to him than that which was appointed him by Heaven!”

Sammael, powerful demon as he was, brilliant in his own way, knew that his master was simplifying the circumstances at hand. Satan alone knew the constraints under which he had been placed, although he always made a great show of strategy. That he would so freely admit his inability to strike quickly in this matter was the source of some confusion to the fallen Power, but he had no inclination to ask for a deeper understanding of Lucifer’s decision. Sammael bowed and departed.

“You are not the only one who knows how to give good gifts,” the invisible king of Egypt said, addressing El Michael, whom he knew was always listening.

* * * * *

“What can he be thinking?” I asked the Oracle Zephon, after he had reported the meeting between Sammael and Lucifer. I was somewhat impressed by how keenly the tempter had discerned what I knew of Heaven’s purposes, but I had expected to spend at least some of my time with the youth keeping him safe from physical harm.

“He is as much a slave to his nature as any common beast,” the Cherub replied. “Without a doubt, many demons, and perhaps some angels, are confused by Heaven’s course in leading Moses to the Palace of Egypt in the first place.”

“Lucifer seems willing to welcome the boy,” I said, “but Sammael’s reaction is as I would have expected.”

“Sammael does not realize how much favor will be shown to Moses in the court of Pharaoh. He will have to choose to leave great wealth, and power, behind... all that men want, he will have to reject. Lucifer has rightly understood that he will not be permitted to harm a hair on the young man’s head, but he can admit that limitation freely... this kingdom he has raised from the sand is greater in many ways than Babylon could have ever become. Why would any human with sense and senses choose to leave such prosperity behind? This is a lesson he will not learn until the end of the Great War.”

The “young man” in question was still just an infant, still learning on the knees of his mother, but with prophetic certainty Zephon had seen the course of Moses’ life in Egypt, and perhaps beyond. I expected him to give me a useful word, as he had aided the Principality As’fael, and as he had aided Dumah with a prophecy that applied to both the battle over Babylon, and his work in protecting the patriarch Abraham from destruction. When he had finished speaking with me, sharing what little he did about Moses’ life, he merely gave me a parting blessing, turned, and flew off. His departure was not abrupt, and I do not mean to imply by the word “merely” that his blessing was not appreciated; at the same time, I believed in those days that at least some foreknowledge was a necessary part of my commission as Moses’ guardian – at least on some level.

I returned to my work. After all, we had already learned that angels needed not always receive direct orders before carrying out what obviously needed to be done; I simply accepted my current situation as an example of a time when a clear view of coming events was similarly unhelpful.

* * * * *

As the years passed, Moses grew into an active and thoughtful child, a most opportune combination. His mother’s lessons were vital to his development, and the quiet peace with which his father bore the life of a slave was as powerful a testimony as any parable or historical tale could ever hope to be.

When he was still quite young, not yet even entering into the changes that would bring forth physical manhood, the day Yochebed had dreaded finally arrived. There was a knock at the door, the presence of royal soldiers, a last embrace, a last look... and then Moses was gone. I need not describe the pain that settled upon the house that day; every human knows loss, every angel knows loss. Every tear shed in sorrow is noticed by Heaven’s messengers, and recorded for Heaven’s King. Every pain suffered for His sake, and the sake of His people, will be rewarded in full, with far greater joy, when the divine balances are righted... but how can this be explained to a grieving mother?

Only the death of the boy could have caused greater grief, but even that would have given an assurance that the child had passed from this world unpolluted by the Egyptian gods. Yochebed remembered her faith, and her assurances that her youngest was being called for a reason, not only to save his life, but also for the good of her people, and her grief was a little assuaged. I mourned with her.

Children were not meant to be taken from their mothers, just as flowers were never meant to wither and break.

My presence left the home with Moses, but the house of Amram was left in the capable hands of my fellow angels, and I kept in close contact with Rinnael and Adaiyel while my own charge was being introduced to the life of an Egyptian prince.

He was also being introduced to the gifts that would make his name live on into eternity, for the very night he first slept on an Egyptian pallet he began to have his dreams.

* * * * *

Yannos eyed the boy with thinly disguised disgust. He bore Moses' presence because of the king's orders, and not for any desire of his own. The old fool was slave to his daughter's wishes, the sorcerer fumed, even if it meant sharing his home with death itself. How he had tried to reason with Pharaoh; how he had almost frightened himself with dread predictions and words of doom.

But if anything, his words served only to harden the king's heart, and to cast himself in even less favorable light. Every warning was seen as a questioning of Pharaoh's divine appointment to the throne of Egypt. Every threat was seen as overreaching his authority, and expressing doubt in the royal guard, the gods of Egypt, or the destiny of his people.

Perhaps more irritating, the king had made good on his threat that had begun as a joke. An insidious little weasel named Yambras was appointed to be Yannos' apprentice in a move calculated by Pharaoh to humble the priest, and to give him something to do other than bother the throne with his ramblings.

He had to admit that the boy, his assistant, caught on quickly. Both he and the slightly younger Moses were quite intelligent, and seemed to have great affinity for the things of the spiritual world. The difference between the two was that Moses was often unwilling to simply accept his statements as true without great explanation.

Even now, he was trying once more to explain the concept that has been called *Ma'at*, or universal order; but while Moses seemed to know that the spiritual world could affect the physical world, he was not certain that it did in the ways Yannos *said* it did.

"Do you not realize," the sorcerer said curtly, "that evil works make your heart heavier, while good ones make it lighter?"

"It is true that I feel so," young Moses replied, "but how do I know when it is light enough? You have said that it is to be weighed against a feather after

dying... but how will I be sure that my heart will pass this test, and be allowed into the Blessed Land?"

"You must simply always do good," Yannos responded.

"This is, what I decide is good?"

"What *Aser* decides is good," the priest corrected him, citing the name of Osiris, the god of the underworld. "He is to be your judge for the life to come."

"And *Aser* has told you what is good?" Moses asked, sincere in his question, but remembering the things he learned in his home.

"I am his messenger," the older man replied.

"So if I do what you say, I will be allowed into the Blessed Land?"

"Yes," Yannos said, beginning to lose patience with the questions.

"And you also are being judged by Osiris, with your heart weighed against a feather?"

"Yes!" Yannos said again, "All men are judged based on how heavy their hearts are at death."

"So if your heart should become heavy," Moses asked, "and you spoke things to me that were not true, and I did what you said, I will not be allowed into the Blessed Land, even though I did what you said?"

Two of the royal guards who were standing outside the door were doing their best to seem uninterested in the conversation going on within. In reality, they were listening with great curiosity to see what the sorcerer would say to that question. A second passed... and then another. Finally, one glanced over at the other, and the second man cautiously turned his head in to see the reason for the silence.

Yannos was standing there staring at Moses as if he had been frozen in time. His bald head was red, and his eyes were huge. The expression on his face could not be described as "happy." The guard quickly withdrew his head... he did not want to be noticed by the furious priest.

"You miss... the point... of the lesson... *Moses*," the reply finally came. "The gods have decreed these things, and we who have been taken into their Mysteries reveal them to others. If you were *Egyptian*, I am sure, it would be easier for you to understand."

The young man knew better than to ask any more questions that day. The guards, if they could be perfectly honest with themselves, were more than a little disappointed with the answer that Yannos had finally given.

* * * * *

In his dreams, Moses began to see images of things that had been, histories of which Yannos could not speak, for he had not been permitted to know. He saw the true Isis arriving in Egypt from a land to the north and east. He saw a son who was not her son, claiming to be a husband who was not her husband. He saw mother and son rise in favor with the Egyptian court, and slowly come to dominate the religious (and thereby, governmental) life of the Two Lands.

He saw that after the domination of Egypt had been accomplished, the mother and son had been separated, although he was not sure if they had parted on good terms or because of a dispute. He knew that the child was not prepared to accept the role his mother had laid out for him, but instead went out to seek those whom he called his “true people.”

Japhetites... I whispered to him as he slept. Arioch, for that was the name of the son, was not truly descended from the former husband of his mother. Nor was his father, who was *also* his mother’s son. Rather, he was a descendant of Japheth, the oldest son of the patriarch Noah. His features were clearly not those of his mother’s deceased husband, and anyone who had known Nimrod in life was aware of this. If Arioch’s parentage seems confusing, it ought to be; his mother was once queen of the Kingdom of Babylon, and her perversions made her worthy of what that title has come to mean.

Arioch did bear with him a beauty inherited from his mother, but made manly by his gender and the strength of his will. When he rejected much of his mother’s (grandmother’s) desires for his position in Egypt, he demanded answers about his past. What he learned inspired him to go forth and raise up his own kingdom, and so he did.

Arioch took with him his most loyal warriors and departed from Egypt, leaving his mother to rule alone. He went north, and then eastward, his charisma easily winning him converts from the tribe of his true ancestor, and even those from the lineage of Ham that he encountered in the east. In the language of his new people, due to a corruption of his name, the word *Arya* came to mean, “Lord,” or “Noble one.”

What lay beyond that, Moses was not to see. We provided for him what he needed to know about the past, and it gave him an even deeper understanding of Egyptian mythology than Yannos could ever have accepted.

Yambras excelled in the school of his master. He was as clever as Moses, and did not care to ask such embarrassing questions of the priest. He did not care about the origins of his gods, or even about the larger issues like the destiny of his heart in the age to come. Yambras wanted to impress Yannos; and eventually, though the older man gave in most unwillingly, he did.

Moses was tolerated, largely because he was now considered Pharaoh's one true descendant through his daughter. If he was to someday rule Egypt ("May it not be!" Yannos fumed), he must first be inducted into the brotherhood of priests, and must learn to accept his role as a descendant of the gods themselves. At this rate, he would never be qualified.

"What he needs," the sorcerer said to his king some days after their discussion of hearts, "is some practical experience. If he is to be a priest, let him live with the priests, participate in the sacred Mysteries, and perhaps that will quiet his mind and make him forget the wicked tales his mother has no doubt taught him."

Pharaoh saw wisdom in that, and no surprise... the demons had decided on this the moment they saw how easily Moses could outthink the royal priest. If they could not get through to the boy intellectually, then let him not think at all. Let him get his hands bloody on the pagan sacrifices, and stand in the presence of their golden statues; that would certainly cure him of his keen mind. Let him worship lifeless forms, while the fallen angels accepted the adulation like water to a thirsty traveler. They would break him yet.

* * * * *

Young prince Moses stood once again alone in the presence of the sorcerer Yannos. His body was in the posture of a penitent, as he had been taught, but his eyes were clear, and they were unrepentant. He was older now than he had been in the early days of his education, and his intellect and strength had only grown along with his body.

"Yambras and the other priests inform me," the older man said, "that you have continued to defy their authority."

"I have done all they have asked of me within reason," Moses replied.

"Within reason," Yannos repeated angrily. "Whenever you say this, I know just what you mean! You will not surrender the fables of your people for the true and pure religion of your homeland. You have not bowed before our benefactors, nor have you sacrificed to their images."

"I have not," said the Hebrew simply.

"We can force you," Yannos said. It was a threat he had made many times before.

"Will Aser accept forced worship?" Moses asked. It was a question he had asked many times before.

"Yes," Yannos said, "he will." This was an answer that changed with the sorcerer's mood. At times he sought to appeal to Moses' sympathies. At times, like now, he wished him simply to comply. The angels had seen to it that the

threat of forcing Moses to worship the gods, even in outward form, had never been carried out.

“Do you not realize,” the Egyptian continued, “that you cannot hope to hold this country together without the help of the gods?”

“If Egypt is beloved of the gods,” Moses said, “then they will not permit it to fall into untrained hands. Let them choose another king; I will not bow to them.”

Yannos hissed like a serpent in his frustration. “You are housed, and fed, because of your favor with Pharaoh, and particularly his daughter... what will they say, what will *she* say, if you continue with this arrogance? What Egyptian mother could love such an impious son?”

Moses scowled; he loved the woman he knew as his mother, his memories of Yochebed notwithstanding. Even so, he knew what his reply must be. “I had bowed to no Egyptian gods when my mother drew me from the Nile. If she could consent to love me based on so little knowledge of my decisions, what they were, or would be, I cannot believe she would so easily change her opinions now.”

“And this *Hebrew God* of yours,” Yannos growled, “He will protect you from all harm?”

“If that is His will,” Moses said, meeting the older man’s eyes for the first time.

“We shall see about that!” the sorcerer said, and stormed out of the room. As he did so, he struck out at one of the stone images in the palace. To Moses’ amazement, the solid surface cracked under the blow. After remaining in place a few more moments, to ensure that the priest was truly gone, the young man stood up and went over to the statue.

Yes, it was solid stone. He had never seen anyone with such strength before, and from a man who appeared so relatively frail!

* * * * *

It had quickly become apparent to Lucifer that Moses would be far more of a frustration to the pagan priests than they could ever be an influence on him. He tried in various ways over the years that he lived among them to induce him to surrender his faith, but all to no avail. I kept him from performing any direct attacks upon Moses’ person, and I strengthened the young man’s convictions and resolve by comforting him when I could, and sending him dreams that helped him to understand the truth behind the mythology he was being taught.

This was not always an easy task, but one I undertook with joy. Moses was chosen by Heaven, and I could easily see why. In addition, his mother’s precious influence, relatively brief as it had been, had placed an indelible stamp upon the

child's character, and its loveliness was apparent even to those who would tear out their hair (had their heads not been shaven) because of his "irreligion."

Yannos had finally given up trying to win Moses' respect and allegiance with his craft. He decided that he was only weakening the faith of the other priests he was training, and that was when a better idea occurred to him. "If he will not bloody his hands on the sacrifices to the gods, let other blood pave the way."

What he said to Pharaoh was this: "Moses has not shown much promise as a priest. I know he must succeed in his studies in order to follow you on the throne, but my best efforts have failed thus far."

"Failed?" Pharaoh said in surprise. "By all accounts, including those of my own daughter, Moses does very well. Does he not remember and understand what he is taught by your priests?"

"This is all true," Yannos admitted, "but I speak of the practical side of worship. The boy has been too sheltered, Great One. He needs to see the world as he must see it as a king. I recommend this, that he ride with your army for a time. Let him know death, and suffering, and then he will have a greater appreciation for the gods who keep Egypt from such things."

"And when he completes his service," Pharaoh said, catching on, "you can try again to raise him to the priesthood."

"Pharaoh is wise," Yannos said ingratiatingly. "Let it be as he commands."

Unseen by mortal eyes the demons smiled to one another. Here was a plan that was sure to succeed.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 4: AN UNBENDING WILL

“I have set Yahweh always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” (Psalm 16:8)

The years had been challenging for me. While there were few open conflicts between myself and those who would push Moses beyond what he was able to bear in that pagan palace, they did take place. Even when no swords had been drawn, I was constantly employed in defusing one situation or another in which the Chief of the fallen Virtues attempted to push against the borders of Heaven’s limitations.

This demon, Salathiel, whose name means, “Asked of El” now called himself *Nephtem*, which means, “The Beauty of Tem.” As “Tem” is the shortened form of *Atum*, one of the early names Lucifer chose for himself as king of Egypt, the dark Virtue wished to convey by his name that he represented the beauty of darkness, the rising will of Azazel over the human world. To me he was merely the most miserable of the Shavoorim, the “Broken Ones” that those of my Order became when they were cast from Heaven.

Salathiel still manifest himself in the colorful robes of the Order of Virtues, at least when in my presence, but I could see the emptiness within the essence of my fallen counterpart, my former coworker now turned greatest foe. Lucifer, through Sammael, had assigned this spirit of his House of Envy to make young Moses his special target, and he and I therefore saw much of each other.

On one occasion, the evil spirit did manage to best me.

To a large extent, our ability to be effective guardians of human beings depends upon their own choices. We are not permitted to force any decision, and the decisions that the members of mankind make are binding in the spiritual world as it pertains to their lives. When humanity was given dominion over the physical creation, this meant far more than Adam had ever come to realize before falling into sin. Even in his fallen state, humanity has much power to harm itself with words; and of course this authority may again be used for good in the experience of a convert to the worship of IaHWeH.

Moses was told in his dreams that he was chosen to be instrumental in the release of his people. This was necessary for us to give purpose to his visions, and was vital in teaching him how to properly process the knowledge he was gaining in

Egypt. It was not, however, without danger. Moses seldom revealed a prideful spirit; but when it showed itself, it was breathtaking. Similarly, what the young man learned in the schools of the priests and military commanders was often a painful mix of truth and falsehood. It was difficult to keep the deliverer-to-be from attempting to incorporate *everything* he learned into his developing worldview. Some things he would need to discard entirely, except for understanding that the residents of his home country believed such ideas.

One of the things that I had been unable to reveal to him clearly was that the deliverance of the Israelites was not a procedure to be accomplished by means of force. At least, it would not be human force that would win the day against the armies of Egypt. With a strong arm, Elohim pledged to bring His people up out of the Two Lands; but the strong arm was not named “Moses.” Moses was to be merely the herald of the Strength of Heaven. It would take many years, as men count “many,” for him to realize this.

I tried to caution him, when he took too eagerly to learning the art of killing men. “You are also Pharaoh,” I said to him in his sleep, and these words were meant to convict the heart of error. Not only was Moses indeed slated to become Pharaoh of Egypt should the earthly side of his nature win over his spiritual destiny, but he was becoming his adopted father’s son in character as well. When the king believed that his life had been in danger by the prognostication of the sorcerer Yannos, he had ordered force to be employed – the slaying of helpless infants. While nothing in Moses would ever rise to that level of self-serving violence, there were points of darkness about which I had grown concerned.



Moses would one day hold the fate of thousands in his hands; should he, for an instant, lose his grip on the emotions that had partially characterized the father of his Tribe, there would be great suffering. “You are also Pharaoh,” I whispered to him in his spirit, but Salathiel’s arguments had proven the more convincing to the youth, as the Egyptian sorcerer had indeed hoped.

“You will be king in Israel,” the subtle spirit promised. “Elohim has raised you up to be a mighty ruler; mightier in word and deed than he who sits on the throne of this land. Oh, but men shall grow envious of your people, for their success and come to hate them for their piety. Shall you not protect them with a hero’s sword? You have learned from Pharaoh’s mistakes, having nearly fallen victim to his sword yourself; within you is the secret of when to fight and when to say, ‘It is enough.’”

Unfortunately, there was quite enough truth in those words to allow them entrance into the young man’s stream of thoughts, but with them he also accepted the twisted spin the dark angels had woven into the fabric, and seeds were planted in Moses that delayed his use as a champion for his people, necessitating a great deal of pain in his life, my best efforts notwithstanding.

There is some value, I believe, in my spending a few words describing the growth of those seeds. There is genuine and lasting beauty only in truth, and if the last generation is to bring forth this beauty, all its illusions must be cast away.

* * * * *

The sound of the horses must have been as thunder to the human charioteers. The day was filled with those things that some men count wonderful: the noise of steel striking steel, the heat of the day bringing forth that sweat that is part environmental and part emotional in origin. The look of fear in the eyes of one's enemy, some men count this wonderful; the cloud of dust ahead as the opponents of your people flee from what they had anticipated would be a decisive victory.

Moses rode at the head of the Egyptian forces. Older, and far more experienced than he had been when departing from Yannon and his priests, his body was now suited to war, and his mind not less able. Of gifts the Hebrew had many, and not a few were applicable to military strategy, although this was not the purpose for which Heaven had provided them. Even so, if his success were to be measured in how many of his own men his methods saved, and how easily the battles would turn in their favor, he was a successful warrior.

Despite all his success, the young man had never been in the forefront of battle before. As the heir-apparent, his commanders had always kept him in safe company, preferring to use his mind instead of his sword to good effect, and they were wise to do so. Whereas he would have been only one soldier in combat, his ability to plan and send forth according to the rhythm of the battle allowed the soldiers that were doing the direct work of war to be part of a most efficient machine.

The Principality As'fael soared above the Egyptians as they pursued the retreating Ethiopians. The descendants of Cush had broken through the borders of Egypt one too many times, had tried the patience of Pharaoh once too often, and he sent his armies out against his country's then neighbors to the south. The angelic Prince of Heaven had been dispatched by El Michael to ensure that Moses' strategy would not be overruled by the demons that were playing political games with the two nations. Now he kept a watchful eye on the progress of Egypt's chariots, his sharp gaze coming forth from a golden-helmeted head.

As I, who had remained with Moses, rose upward to meet him, he acknowledged my presence and said, "A delight to see you again, Prince Uzziel; I would prefer, however, to have met with you under more pleasant circumstances." The white stone set in his helmet sparkled, a sign of a member of the Twelve who had been sealed in Heaven. My own helmet bore the same stone, when it was visible; but I was there to protect Moses, and had no real intention of engaging legions of fallen angels.

“On that you have my full agreement,” I replied. “Our labors have kept us apart for a long time. My duty to Israel has found me often on earth, while yours, I know, require your constant presence in the Kingdom.”

“Yet here I am,” the Principality said. “The demons have expressed a lot of interest in this battle; unusually so, the Oracles tell us. Prince Zadkiel and Zephon have both brought me word that El Michael requested my presence above the armies this day. As you have no doubt heard, Michael has spent much time in Union with the Throne since the birth of your charge.”

I knew this, and replied that I did. I added, “He is preparing for something, and something big.”

“Your charge is eager,” As’fael said, indicating Moses as he urged his horses on to greater speed.

“Too eager,” I sighed. “This training, even these battles, are necessary for his growth, but they exact a heavy price on him. It is a shame that men have ever had to fight.

“He was not intended by his captain to be at the point of the Egyptian pursuit,” I added. “When he received word from the messengers that the Ethiopians were fleeing as a result of his plan, Moses demanded that his superiors let him fight. They knew his standing in Pharaoh’s house, and had to admit that his skill had been the deciding factor in the battle. So, they let him go. He caught up with these others quite quickly, and now leads them against the routed invaders.”

Let it not be thought that As’fael and I were two of only a few spirits on wing above the land that day. Angels were all around us; they were observing, whispering, and speaking to their charges and each other. I had noticed my fellow Prince only because he was high above the armies, unattached to any individual who was there that day. Each man, though a stranger to the King of Heaven, was receiving mercy, as much as he allowed himself to receive, at the hands of faithful messengers. Our fallen brethren, of course, were there in great numbers to undo what we did, and accomplishing (often successfully) the tasks they were there to perform.

As the mighty Principality and I looked down at the armies about to be joined once more in struggle, I saw one dark spirit separate itself from the milling cloud of demons and drift effortlessly over to the thundering chariot of Egypt’s crown prince. It was Salathiel.

“I take my leave of you,” I said to As’fael. He followed the path of my attention, and immediately saw my reason for departure.

“Go with the blessing of Elohim,” he said as I descended, my golden helmet and glowing shield flickering into place.

I had no doubt that the broken Virtue was about to do something even more potentially destructive than usual. It was not like him to pass up such an opportunity as Moses' first taste of close combat. I would spend no time in conversation with him, knowing he would be far too intent on his purpose to engage me with words anyway.

I swept downward and slammed into the demon with my shield, knocking him away from the chariot. Salathiel recovered quickly, but did not draw his sword. Instead, he fixed on me with a smile and said, "Nothing that I am to say to the human has gone un-thought by the man himself."

"You cannot know that," I replied, reminding the demon that he was not privy to the mortal's thoughts in any clear fashion.

"Then let me test my conviction. One tiny cut from this sword," he said, producing his weapon, "and you will see what a beast your charge is fated to become." As he spoke, the dark fire of tainted Araphel rippled like living smoke up the length of his kharev's blade. "Come, Uzziel," he taunted me, "be fair."

I did nothing but gaze at him purposefully through the glow of my translucent shield. Since the demons had been cast down to the earth, their only possible reference point has been the earth itself, whereas unfallen angels are free to travel the entire universe. We must therefore choose the planet as our center of consciousness when working here. I say this to point out one of the limitations the demons how endure, and also to explain that while Salathiel and I were speaking, and maintaining a carefully controlled distance between one another, we were both speeding along at the same rate Moses traveled, and for me that meant following the earth in its journey around the sun and through the cosmos. I had anchored myself to the earth, but my wings kept me safely between Moses and Salathiel, and my drawn blade ensured that he would not try to change that without risking great personal injury.

My opponent had apparently been anticipating this day, however, for he seemed to have some helpers being held in reserve. At a silent command from their Chief, several fallen Virtues disconnected themselves from the humans they had been following, and they burst forward on whipping wings to carry out the cruel angel's orders.

One after another the Virtues, former members of my own Order, drew their weapons and prepared to attack my charge. I knew that if I took my attention off of Salathiel for a moment I would never be able to get between him and Moses again before he had a chance to strike.

While this was taking place, Moses and his soldiers had overtaken the Ethiopians, and were not only attempting to cut the flight of those who were escaping short, but to pull ahead of them and *ensure* a total victory.

Moses himself was not engaging any of the troops his chariot bypassed. He seemed to be going for the captain of the invading army. "Faster," he urged his

horses, his eyes straining ahead through the clouds of dust to see if he could recognize a particular mark on any of the enemy conveyances. "Faster!" he said, believing he had found it.

"Chalkydri!" I whispered, requesting the aid of Uriel's promised Seraphim.

Almost immediately I saw the golden glow of two six-winged forms drawing near. Ariel, captain of the twelve mighty spirits, exploded upon the enemy Virtues like an angry star. This angel, whom I had learned was positioned as protector of the Tribe of Judah, quickly batted several of Salathiel's demons away. Next to him appeared Kaleon, "He of The Vessel," whose presence should not have been a surprise to me, as he was the guardian spirit of Levi.

Salathiel's eyes narrowed in hatred when he saw that I had some unexpected help. Our blades met above the hot land, and our wills battled each other above the hot tempers of the warriors below us. Pure fire met tainted flames as our swords locked, and while there was chaos all around us, for me, for that moment, there was only Salathiel, the betrayer of my Order, and the burning Spirit of indignation that filled my being.

We did not fight for very long.

Moses drew closer, closer to the defeated army, and then threw himself from his chariot, and unto that of the retreating Ethiopian captain. Although he had never before been in a real struggle for his life, his training had been of the highest order, and he was able to simultaneously disarm the warrior, and bring his horses to a halt.

Both men readied their weapons and began to duel, but it was not long before one of the other retreating Ethiopians, overcome with a sense of duty that surpassed his fear, drew his own chariot around and turned to assist his superior. Had there been more distance between the men, the soldier could have attacked from relative safety; as it was, he was forced to draw his blade and join in the swordplay.

The Hebrew soon found himself being pressed back by two skillfully wielded Egyptian weapons, a soldier's sword and a spear that had been retrieved by the captain. Moses had taken to soldier training far more willingly than he had to the priesthood of his adopted homeland. While he had no interest in rendering any actual worship to the gods of Egypt, he believed he had found a useful role for the military arts in his promised destiny, and he was now reaping the rewards of his diligence.

After a brief scuffle, the spear's shaft was broken, and the captain was forced into the unrefined circumstance of having to stab at his enemy with a pointed stick. Soon both Egyptians were badly wounded; the captain had fallen with a slashed leg, and the soldier was nursing a wounded arm, even while trying to gain an advantage over his opponent.

Just when it seemed that Moses was about to be dealt his first, and perhaps final, battle injury, one of the last of the racing chariots thundered past, and the Egyptians' champion shoved the Ethiopian backward with a mighty kick, and right against one of the horse-drawn structure's wheels.

With a cry the Ethiopian was spun around, and he landed on his back, panting heavily. Moses, also breathing hard, but entirely unscathed, walked over to where the captain lay. As he did so, the injured soldier near his side cried out in their language, an obvious challenge. Just as obviously, the soldier seemed, even in his wounded state, to be trying to buy time for his captain to recover, or to attempt an escape.

Anger, weariness and, yes, some pride, swelled in Moses as he pointed his weapon at the soldier. "You be quiet," he ordered, as he turned to the captain again. The soldier repeated his challenge, however, and Moses now decided that he had heard enough.

For my part, I had become aware of the events taking place with Moses shortly after he had engaged the Ethiopian captain. The actions of my charge broke in on my consciousness; but my battle with Salathiel did not suffer, because it seemed that the evil Virtue was also showing interest in the things that were taking place on the ground just below and ahead of us.

As Moses fought against the two Ethiopians, so I had struggled with my former Order-brother. As Moses had thrown the soldier against the wheels of the chariot, so I had been unexpectedly aided in my fight by the carefully watching As'fael who had been above us. When Moses' heart began to fill with anger and bloodlust, however, my attention was drawn from the battle at hand, and perhaps too much, at least for the opponent I had been facing.

Salathiel did not press his advantage with me, not at that moment. He did not turn to ward of As'fael. Instead, he raised his voice and shouted aloud, "Kill him!" It was not a whisper; every angel, and every demon, had heard it – as the broken Virtue had intended; but so did Moses, his spirit becoming even more inflamed by the urge that had awoken in him to draw blood for the first time.

"Be the warrior you were destined to become!" the fallen angel cried, as As'fael's weapon cut into one of his wings. The demon only laughed, though... he knew that against two Princes of Heaven he would not last very long. He knew that the Chalkydri were more than sufficient to the task of keeping his minions at bay... but he also knew that Moses' defects of character were perfectly suited to show themselves in a battle such as this. Salathiel had not needed to strike with his blade in order to awaken the darker aspects of my charge's spiritual self; no, he needed only proffer the suggestion at the right time.

As Moses struck downward, ending the life of the valiant soldier of Ethiopia, Salathiel took advantage of my sudden distress and launched himself toward me,

just out of range of As'fael's attack, and just too quickly for me to parry his kherev. The dark blade cut into my side, and I fell to the earth on which I had anchored my consciousness.

As the poison of the stolen energy rushed through my being, I sank into a dark place, no longer able to perceive the world around me, and for a time I slept, spinning with this world around the sun as it continued its long journey through space.

* * * * *

It is not true, as some popular fiction writers of late have proposed, that the events in the spiritual and material worlds are so perfectly paralleled as my above memory might make it seem. In other words, Salathiel's brief advantage over me was not necessarily dictated by Moses' failure to act in perfect faith. The war between light and darkness is far more complicated than this, and while the prayers of saints and the acts of selfless love performed by humans certainly encourage us, and provide us with more useful ways to guide them Heavenward, it does not make us more or less effective against our demonic adversaries in any *direct* way.

On the other hand, it may have been as a mercy to me that I was permitted to fall to Salathiel's weapon that day. The wounds of a dark kherev will heal on its own in time, just as no temptation for a human lasts forever, but the memories of the loss of innocence – those are eternal. Moses had not gone so far into evil or error that he could not recover. He knew the dictates of Elohim, the God of his people, which spoke against murder; and yes, this was warfare and he had before him the valid examples of Abraham and Shem, but he needed not have taken the life of the Ethiopian soldier.

That was unnecessary bloodshed, and he had done it for no pure motive, but to approve himself as a "true" warrior of Egypt – it was pride, plain and simple, and somewhere back in Egypt, the arch demon Nisroch laughed at my efforts to keep young Moses from the steady influence of his dark messengers over the years. Many Houses had sent spirits after my charge.

When I awakened I found As'fael, Ariel and Kaleon patiently waiting for me. The soldiers were all long gone, except for the bodies of the slain. The angels had departed, except for those who awaited my return to consciousness. The demons had dispersed, some returning with the soldiers they had accompanied into battle, and others (those called by Salathiel and Nisroch for their specific conspiracy) had gone back to their regular places amongst humanity.

Salathiel had been slashed open by As'fael almost immediately after his attack on me. The Principality informed me that, as I suspected, the demon had been perfectly willing to sacrifice some comfort for the furtherance of Lucifer's plans for Moses. The Chief of the fallen Virtues had been taken away by his underlings

before my recovery, and the angels who stood with me had let them go; there was no point in further battle that day.

Although I had not been out very long, Moses and the Egyptians were already well on their way back to the palace. Pharaoh would be proud, very pleased, with his son and the report he would soon receive. The capture of the captain of the Ethiopian host would inspire the Egyptian king's sorcerers and counselors to press for a retaliatory attack on the troublesome southern country... Yannos, delighted that Moses was somewhere *other* than in the precincts of his priesthood, recommended, to Pharaoh's hearty approval, that Moses (now that he had proven himself capable in both swordsmanship and strategy) lead the attack.

Moses eagerly accepted the responsibility. He did lead the attack, and he triumphed gloriously, as some men count glory.

* * * * *

Humans lived longer in those days. Although Moses was approaching his fortieth year, he was nevertheless considered a young man. He had returned from the Ethiopian campaign a national hero, and this led to more calls upon his valor for the service of Egypt. His sword knew the blood of men, and he was praised by both his fellow soldiers, and his own untrained conscience, for his skill in battle.

This was all to change, however, when Heaven declared that this time of civil, military, and religious training had gone on long enough. The deliverer was not to have knowledge of only the Egyptian mode of life. He was called to lead his people out of the majesty of Mizraim, and into the relative plainness of the Promised Land. His mind would need to be quieted, and the noise of battle dimmed in his memories, before he could be equipped to stand before, and receive instruction from, his holy Creator.

As in almost everything, the King of Heaven sought agreement before making a move. This was accomplished by means of those praiseworthy qualities that Moses did possess, including a firm determination to stand for his convictions, and a will to carry out his purposes.

Once more, the offender stood before his old teacher Yannos. The years had been kind to the old man; he had not aged very much (if at all) in the time Moses had been absent from the priest's presence. This time, however, the Hebrew had a reputation to add to his stubbornness, and he made no pretence at penitence before the frustrated sorcerer.

"I do not understand you, Moses," he said, deciding to try reason instead of fury. "Your gifts are acknowledged by all, and if anything your skill with words and thoughts are greater than your strength in battle... all these are the very things that would make you an excellent servant of the gods. Why have you so steadily clung to the stories of your people?"

“I am a Hebrew,” he replied simply. “My people have faith that they will not always be slaves, but free men.”

“The deliverer,” Yannos said. “I have heard of him. Some say he has already been born.”

“Who is to say?” Moses replied cautiously. “It may be a hard day when he arises, for many, and a joyful day for others.”

“Ah, yes,” the priest said, casually. “Perhaps we should request of the gods that the deliverance of your people not take place in your lifetime. After all, Pharaoh will not let the slaves go easily, and there could be bloodshed.” With a smile, he added, “Imagine it, Moses... you may find yourself in the unenviable position of protecting your adopted family, and the mother you have know from youth, from the champion of your bloodline.”

“Then it is a good thing I fight well,” the younger man said.

“A good thing,” Yannos repeated coldly.

Moses had no illusions about the sorcerer’s intentions. He knew that he had been spared as an infant by the princess’ intervention, and that Yannos himself had been instrumental in the death of those who would have been his contemporaries amongst the slaves. He knew of his family’s belief that he was chosen by Heaven, and he also knew Yannos’ suspicions of the same. He did not know enough to recognize the demonic source of the priest’s statements, and thus far our only contact with him had been in dreams. He did know that he was being urged to stand for the freedom of his people, but of the invisible agents of this deliverance, we angels, he knew very little.

For his part, Yannos had not forgotten his demonic visions of who he feared the man before him would become. He had read the signs clearly, and although Pharaoh was no longer taking any such predictions seriously, he knew that he had not missed the mark. Moses was dangerous, and he did not have to be fighting the soldiers of Egypt to demonstrate this. He had been summoned, in fact, because of his recent activities.

“Since you have returned from the war,” Yannos changed the subject, “you have often visited your fellow students.”

“I am not without affection for those I shared my life with in younger days,” Moses said. “Most are now priests, but they have time for this soldier.”

“Soldier,” Yannos sneered. “You have not forgotten my demands on your time, have you? You stand well behind a sword now, Moses, but for your mother’s sake, you have yet to finish your pledge with me. None may rise to the throne of Egypt without first entering into the Mysteries of the gods!”

“Pharaoh has other relatives, let one of them rule Egypt. I have no great desire to sit on that throne. Shall I rest under panels of gold while my kinsmen labor under the golden sun?”

“Pharaoh’s mercies are not to be despised,” Yannos said angrily. “They certainly eclipse any sympathy you may feel for your people. You are an Egyptian first, and the son of slaves a low second.”

“And will *you* serve me humbly, when I am on the throne of Egypt?” Moses demanded, his own voice rising.

“I serve Egypt,” Yannos retorted. “You will kneel before the gods I serve before you are ever set upon that seat of power. I warn you, Moses, do not try their might. If ever I hear again about your participation in activities such as those of today, I will see to it that your privileged life here is made very uncomfortable.”

Yannos was referring to what Moses had done on his visits to the priests. He tried with them what he had delighted to do with his instructors in his younger days. By means of probing questions, Moses inspired doubts in the minds of priests and worshippers alike, and the king’s spiritual advisor was not by any means amused at the potential problems this could cause. Not only was his own reputation and position at stake, especially if Moses indeed became Pharaoh without acknowledging the gods he served, but also his very life, perhaps, if the government came under the influence of the Hebrew traditions he so despised.

“I will never kneel before your gods,” the prince of Egypt said boldly. “I wish to leave you with no illusions about my intentions. The God of my people is above any pretended divinity of yours, the king’s, or the statues you adore. The spirits behind such beings, if indeed any spirits there be, are not worthy of my veneration... or of yours.”

“You will surely regret these words!” Yannos exclaimed. “What foolishness is this, that will not give glory to the sustainers of his homeland? Do not the gods send us grain, and give you victory in battle? Do they not cause the sun to rise, and sail across the sky, to sink into the waters again for its evening rest? Do you not see the power, Moses, of the things of the heavens, and the earth?”

“I see the power of the One who made these things,” Moses replied. “It is He who calls my people to Him as their one true God.”

“Simple-mindedness! Barbarism!” the old man fumed. “How can you so callously disregard all that I have taught you?”

“If you were Hebrew,” Moses replied, “perhaps you would understand.”

The sorcerer raised his fist, and Moses remembered the statue that this hand had broken not very long ago. He took a step backward. An unnatural, evil light flashed in the Egyptian’s eyes, and Moses felt a sudden surge of fear. “Our

patience with you has run out,” the demon said through his conduit with a deep, menacing voice. “We have nursed you long enough in this comfortable home. You write the decree of your own destruction.”

With a flash of rage, Kaspiel the fallen Power withdrew himself from Yannos’ form. The old man did not so much as flinch, for he was a willing and frequent participant in the demons’ activities. He often felt the force of his gods behind his words and actions, and the limitations they had imposed upon his body as a result of their presence was a small price indeed to pay. Moses just stared at the sorcerer in cautious silence while the old man turned and threw his cloak’s heavy hood over his bald head before stepping out into the harsh Egyptian daylight.

I sent whispers to my allies telling them to prepare for the demons next, inevitable, attack.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

SECTION 2: APPLICATION

CHAPTER 5: A WAY OF ESCAPE

“Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped.” (Psalm 124:7)

Like serpents poised to strike, the demons of Egypt had reared back, bared their fangs... and then hesitated. This was not weakness or uncertainty, I knew, but a calculated move, designed to wait for the exposure of a tender point in my charge’s character. With the work they had been successful at accomplishing in him so far, I knew they would not have long to wait. Moses was faithful to the Almighty of his people, but oh, such taints still rested on his soul! Violence, he reasoned, was a solution to many problems, and IaHWeH had raised him up to devastate all the obstacles that stood between his people and freedom.

Lucifer and Sammael, having taken particular interest in the young man’s development, were responsible for many of the situations that had helped to shape Moses’ character. Through their spiritual agents like Salathiel and Kaspriel, and through their human servants like Yannos and Yambras, they had tried their hardest to sow thoughts in Heaven’s chosen deliverer in order to render him useless to the cause of faith. My work, and those of my allies, had done much to counteract their influence, but in a few key areas Moses indeed chose poorly. Do not let the hearers of this testimony imagine that I mean to gaze upon my human charge narrowly; he was, after all, being trained to be a god in the Egyptian mind. Even so, there was cause for grief when I understood what the consequences of those choices would later be.

A season of worship in Heaven refreshed me, and stilled my mind regarding the troubling thoughts that I have recorded above. Angels and Archangels stood before the Eternal Throne, and we had cast our crowns down at the base of the Universe’s Sovereign. The music of the Choirs and the light of glory (it is better that I not even begin to describe them) filled my ears and eyes, and sustained me for my labors in the dark world below. The words of the appointed Cherubim filled guardians, watchers, warriors and sustainers with hope – their work would someday guide mankind to share in this majestic experience. The spirits of men touch Heaven when they gather together to adore Heaven’s King, but what a joy it will be when their senses can finally agree with their spirits in partaking of the beauty of true worship.

Gabriel and Raziel, the Covering Cherubim, flanked El Michael as the High Prince Himself addressed our company that day while my charge was left in the willing and capable hands of Ariel and his faithful band.

“Have you seen my people Israel?” he asked the Host. “Have you seen the wounds she bears at the hands of cruel masters? Thus has my controversy with Azazel been opened up to the universe, and those who bear the marks of our warfare on their bruised and bleeding bodies will enter into great joy when their work is complete.

“Egypt is another mighty kingdom with which Satan has been allowed to have his way. Has every heart understood yet? Has every spirit seen? Men under Azazel’s shadow may rejoice, yes... but they rejoice in the temporary things that I have made in an instant’s time. Men under the protection of Elohim will rejoice in the things that I made before time began, and will pay an infinite price to bring forth.”



“But no,” He said, “not every heart has yet understood, nor every spirit yet seen. The conflict must continue.

“Take courage, my angels. You have a high privilege of assisting me in this work. I have heard the cry of my people, under the whip and staff of the oppressor. I have seen the affliction of my beloved, and my heart is moved for her sake. One has been chosen, an agent to lead my people, and I will be with him as he goes. Lucifer has risen like the sun over Egypt, but the deliverer will be a shadow, a shelter for the earth made hot by its adversary.

“Be diligent, therefore, and behold the mercy of Elohim.”

* * * * *

Down in the humble home of slaves the prince of Egypt visited his true family. His affection for the princess who had raised him was great, but he had never forgotten the mother of his youth, the clever sister who had loved him from birth, or the wise brother who had sought to help his mother in training him, though only three years older.

His father had been gathered to his people ere this visit home, and he grieved with his loved ones for the loss. Yet even in sadness there were new beginnings. Aaron’s wife Elisheba had given Moses a new nephew, Nadab, and the boy seemed spirited and strong, much to Miriam and Yochebed’s delight on some occasions, and consternation on others.

There was much to speak about, and Moses told his family tales of his journeys and conflicts in the lands about Egypt. His mother had greater matters on her heart, whoever.

“My son,” she asked, “are you well treated by the princess and her house?”

“Very well,” Moses replied. “I do not see her as often as I once did, but she waits for me when I am away, and welcomes me warmly when I return.”

“I am happy that you have someone who can do this for you,” Yochebed said, feeling a mix of emotions at this news. “And how... how are your memories of our people? Do you remember the things I have told you of Israel?”

“I am not a priest,” Moses said, answering his mother’s true question. “I have always remembered the things you taught me, and I have not bowed before any of the gods of Egypt.”

His mother sat back, tears filling her eyes. “Oh, my son, I have prayed every day for your strength in the house of Pharaoh. Have they not tried to force you to give worship to the gods of the land? How have you escaped?”

“Only by the power of Elohim,” Moses replied. “The hands of Pharaoh and his magicians have been stayed by the princess’ favor, and by the circumstances of my life. I have seen the hand of our Almighty in these things, and I have been shown... things... in my dreams.”

“You have had the dreams?” Aaron asked him. “Some of the elders also have them, and our father did and... Miriam also,” he said, indicating their sister.

“What have you been shown?” Moses asked her.

“Nothing so clear as what the elders report at times,” Miriam replied. “Yet my spirit agrees with what they have been saying: the time of our deliverance is near. All of us who have the dreams feel it; have you not felt it also?”

A determined look passed over Moses’ face, and he glanced down at the sword by his side. “I feel it,” he said. “It burns within me like fire.”

His older siblings exchanged a glance when he spoke that last sentence, but said nothing more.

Yochebed was satisfied with her son’s reply, and said, “Come, let us have our meal, and give thanks to the Creator who has prepared His people for freedom.”

* * * * *

“Are... you... certain?” Sammael asked, speaking his words slowly to give additional force to the doubt his question expressed.

“I am certain,” Lucifer replied, choosing not to become openly offended by the arch demon of the Powers. “When I spoke to you before about Heaven’s protection of the man, I was speaking in terms of his state of faith at that point. Do not mistake me; I continue to believe that a direct attack will not be permitted, but we have had ample opportunity to learn over the years that direct attacks on those chosen by Heaven are never the most effective in any case.”

“So Yannos will not strike the blow?” Sammael asked, somewhat relieved.

“Yannos is still useful to us,” Lucifer replied. “His training and... other gifts... make him integral to several of my long-term plans for this kingdom, but Moses’ words have certainly hardened him against feeling any affection for the Hebrew. No, he will not strike the blow himself. That would earn him the wrath of the princess in addition to a momentary rush of pleasure, and I do not believe that I will be able to prevent her rage from ordering his execution before I could effectively stop it.”

“The thing could be done in secret,” Sammael suggested.

“Uzziel has a way of ferreting out our secrets, and revealing them to the boy, or his human protectors. No, that is still too direct. If we are going to strike, it must be from the direction of Moses’ greatest vice, and that way Heaven will have no authority to warn him beforehand.”

I was not honored by Azazel’s mention of my name when I learned of his conversation with Sammael. Instead, I considered in my essence how I might find a way to prevent what I knew of the demons’ plot from unfolding without directly contacting any human with the information. Lucifer was absolutely correct: if they were planning to appeal to Moses’ character flaws, no dream would be an effective shield against their influence, and removing him from the situation would only delay the trial. With his constant exposure to warfare, and my suspicion about what they meant by my charge’s “greatest vice,” I realized that a delay involving him remaining in that environment would only make matters worse.

I decided, and the Oracles supported me in this decision, to simply let things take their course. If Moses would indeed become the deliverer of Israel, those characteristics the demons sought to exploit needed to be purged, and unless the human were made aware of these things he would never be able to turn away from them.

Now, one of the lasting effects of the War over the Plain of Shinar, the battle for Babylon, was that angels were instructed far less directly by the authorities of Heaven. When the Twelve became sealed, and many other angels confirmed their faith by following the instructions of the Throne-angel Zadkiel, we had developed a great deal. El Michael did not need to show us every step of the path we were to fly, nor would the Covering Cherubim or Oracles provide us with direct signposts

for every occasion. We were instructed to behold the situation on earth, evaluate what was best for the humans over which we were placed, and then work according to the dictates of the quiet Spirit that united us all as the Host of Heaven.

It took faith, but I set my heart to do this, and in deciding that I would not resist Lucifer's plot against Moses, I was merely reflecting the truth in my own essence – *Heaven*, not Prince Uzziel, had ultimately decided to allow the trial of Moses' faith. It was not by any arbitrary choice that I, with my knowledge and tendencies, had been placed as the guardian of the chosen deliverer. All things were done for a divine and perfect reason, and though to the unsanctified this knowledge may lead to terrible indolence and pride, I was merely the willing agent of this activity that appeared as inactivity. It was time.

As I learned this deep lesson within myself that day, watching Moses leaving his mother's home and walking toward the palace, I felt a great power fill me, a great security, a great peace, and for an instant my colorful robes flickered gold, and then returned to their ordinary hues.

* * * * *

A shadowy, hooded figure slipped out of sight just as Moses came upon the scene. Two men stood in the desert sands alone, but one would not be standing for long. A knee to the stomach drove the Hebrew slave to his knees, and then a kick laid him out on his back.

Moses quickened his pace, eager to see what had taken place. "What are you doing?" he called to the Egyptian, who appeared to be one of the taskmasters set over his nation's people. The man made no reply, apparently having not recognized his intruder, and proceeded to strike the now helpless slave.

"Stop!" Moses shouted, now sure that the slave was a Hebrew, and not putting up any resistance.

The taskmaster looked up and said, "This matter does not concern you, prince Moses. This is done by the order of Pharaoh."

"And what is *this*?" he asked, "What crime has the man committed?"

The aggressor looked up and said the words he had been hired to say. "He is a Hebrew."

My presence was pushed backward as a dark barrier flared to life around my charge. Under the already dark spiritual skies of Egypt it was all the more alarming; I could barely see the features of the man I was guarding and guiding. Alas, this prince of Heaven was helpless against the decisions of the mortal. He had seen the burdens of his people, and while this led to a holy anger within him for the conditions of his kinsmen, the calculated words of the Egyptian had triggered the very impulses that Yannon, and through him Lucifer and Sammael,

had anticipated. Just as Nisroch, Ba'al of the House of Pride, had rejoiced when Moses first struck an enemy down with his sword, so now I anticipated that Azrael of Wrath would receive these tidings with eager joy.

It was made all the more grievous a crime, not only because this was no battle, but also because Moses was indeed prince of Egypt. Had he ordered the taskmaster to cease, he may well have given the man an opportunity to reject Yannos' orders and payment. Had he insisted on bringing the Egyptian before Pharaoh, he might have compelled him to go. Indeed, even non-fatal force may have been a lesser evil, for the Hebrew was an accomplished warrior, and able to overpower the slave master without harming him too severely. But no, the blood of Levi surged through his veins, and the frustration of knowing his privileges while his brethren suffered.

Without another word, and with only a brief glance about to see that there would be no witnesses, Moses drew his steel, and cut.

The Egyptian gave only a faint cry as he fell. Louder still was the exclamation from the slave he had just rescued. "Moses!" he said, knowing his name. "What will you do? It is death to kill an Egyptian!"

The Hebrew slave had spoken truly; death would surely be the penalty for slaying the taskmaster. Moses had no doubt that his enemies at court would see to it that his actions were cast in the worst possible light – not that they would need to work too hard at this task. Moses knew that if this act were made known he would be in great danger; for indeed, so strictly was the law against harming others enforced that even the "cutter" who opened the body of the dead for mummification was ritually pelted with stones for desecrating the corpse.

"Return to your home," Moses said to the slave, "and see that you tell no one of this."

As the injured man limped off he looked back to see the prince of Egypt taking the body of the taskmaster farther into the desert, presumably to bury him in the featureless sands.

* * * * *

That night Moses had a dream... but it was not sent by either my allies or myself. I had become more powerful in my tasks and my ability to aid the human indirectly, it seemed, having grown in my sense of peace; but at the same time it would be extremely difficult henceforth to make any kind of direct contact with this killer of men.

Moses had my sympathy; he had not understood the role into which he was being cast, and he believed he was actually furthering the work of Heaven by his actions. How difficult it is for those who believe they are doing IaHWeH a service to look carefully at their works! But Moses would be given the

opportunity to do this... but it would take time, and cost his nation a generation more in the coin of suffering.

Tainted by murder, Moses looked up in his dream to see a red and purple sky. It was sunset, and the wispy clouds were smeared like the tails of horses along the horizon and in the west. He stood on his feet and glanced around at the landscape made surreal by the lighting and feeling of disconnection. He tried to clear his head, but it felt full of dust.

As a cold wind blew, and the sun fled from the approaching twilight, the Hebrew looked up and saw a dark figure standing on a sheer cliff. The figure's features could not be seen, backlit by the upper edge of the blood-red sun, but behind the figure a long, flexible covering like a cloak (wings?) fluttered in the chilly gusts.

Though far away, Moses could hear the figure speaking, transmitting knowledge not by voice, but directly into his mind as if by an intimate whisper. "Deliver your people. Rise up and fight. Death is your ally for the freedom of Israel."

In this dream, so the Oracles told us, Moses felt mentally what his soul had sustained spiritually. He was drawn into the promise behind those words, and thoughts of glory, a mighty march, a desperate struggle, a longed-for victory, filled his mind. He saw himself as a giant, turning his sword against his foes, and casting all who stood before him away.

His wrath was majestic, and his power beyond comparison... he would rule his people with strength, and raise the foundations of Elohim's worship in the world. His kingdom would never pass away...

Moses marched up to the palace and threw the doors open. He saw Yannos there, cowering in fright before the face of this righteous judge, writhing like a serpent before the agent of his destruction; he saw Pharaoh kneeling before him, offering him the crown. He saw his mother bowing low, willing to die if necessary for her son's freedom... but which mother?

As he looked, he saw the princess' face change, becoming older, more careworn. "Mother," he said.

"You have not understood, my son," Yochebed's image said to him.

Instantly, Moses was standing once again before the dark figure on the cliff. "Mother," Moses said again, his true form stirring in sleep. No, we had not sent this dream, but the conscience of the Hebrew was not yet dead, and he was remembering the precious lessons he had learned in childhood.

Salathiel, standing by the sleeping man, hissed and drew still nearer, invading the mind of the warrior and further confusing his thoughts.

“What is it to you, king of Egypt?” the fallen Virtue asked, guessing at the flow of Moses’ thoughts. He could not clearly see what the human experienced in his dreams, but he knew well enough what obstacles Yochebed had laid in his path those many years ago. “Will not your mother rejoice in the freedom you win for her? Blood is a small price to pay, if it is the blood of Egyptians. Rise up, and strike your enemies down!”

Moses looked down from the figure standing above him, and down to his hands, which were stained red with violence. The voice of protest battled against the voice of pride and glory, and Moses of the dream stood silently before the demon, while the physical form of the man tossed and turned in restless sleep.

In another part of the palace the sorcerer Yannos sat quietly while the dark hours passed. He had done his part, and this foolish farce of Pharaoh’s, this doting love for his daughter and the Hebrew, would soon end.

* * * * *

The morning’s light brought little peace to the warrior. As he rose from his night’s labors, however, one thought remained with him: Mother. He would speak to his mother, he would ask her to tell him again about Elohim. He had missed something, he knew, and it was something important.

Once again, without any guards or protection, the prince of Egypt went out to visit the slaves.

As he drew near to the settlement he saw two of the Hebrews fighting with each other. As he approached them he heard one saying to the other, “Be content with what you have taken. Have not the elders already decided the matter?”

The other would not be so easily satisfied, however, and retorted, “The elders have not heard my side fully. Why should I be subject to their judgment now, when we are here together? Give me that which you owe!”

“Kinsmen,” Moses said, drawing near, “why do you dispute over the possessions of slavery? Be content, and have faith in the future of our people. The time of our freedom is near indeed!” By these words, Moses hoped to inspire his fellow Hebrews, and even perhaps to hint that he knew the deliverer’s identity. To the more aggressive of the two he asked, “Why are you striking your brother?” He was badly wounded himself by the offender’s answer.

“Freedom! By your hand, Moses? Who – who has made you prince and judge over us?” When he saw the newcomer’s countenance grow dark, he added further, “Put away your wrath, or do you intend to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?”

Anger evaporated, replaced by fear.

“Who has told you such things?” Moses demanded.

“Many know,” came the reply, “and all will soon know. Pharaoh will be angry with you, prince. I wonder if they will send you forth to labor with your brothers and sisters!”

This sting also came from the demons, and it nearly had its desired effect. But Moses stopped short of threatening his countryman, and instead turned and stalked off to his mother’s house.

“Moses!” his mother said, drawing him quickly into the house. “Are these things they say true, my son?”

“They are true,” he replied, seeing the concern in her face, and knowing very well what she had heard. “But do you not see, mother, how by my hand Elohim will bring deliverance to His people from the Egyptians?”

“What conflict was there, that you should kill another man?”

“Conflict?” he said, “Why, the heathen was striking one of our people.”

“Ah,” Yochebed sighed, “I would rather have a living son than a dead deliverer. What will you do?”

“Tell me,” Moses said.

“I have lost you, just when you were free to visit me in my old age,” his mother lamented. “But hear my words, my son... go forth from Egypt, and rest for a time. Let the wrath of Pharaoh go down, for he will surely seek you out. You know the things I have told you of your birth, and of the wicked men who sought the lives of Hebrew children for fear that one would rise to take the power from the House of the King.”

Yochebed continued, inspired by my insights, “The fear of your royal father will revive, and the men who surround him will lay fuel on that fire. The word of the princess will be useless... for now. But let time pass, perhaps let another come to the throne, and then you will be able to return, and visit your people once again. Let the Almighty deliver His people in His own time, whether by your hand, or by the hand of another.”

Mercifully, thankfully, I had been able to give a little guidance to my spiritually wounded charge through the faithful intercession of his mother.

Embracing his mother quickly, and knowing that he would have no opportunity to even return to the palace before the danger would become too great, Moses departed from the slaves’ houses in another direction, and headed for the wilderness where he believed he would find refuge.

As he went, however, he saw a man approaching him from ahead, and his brows knitted as he began to make out the familiar face of the one approaching him.

“Aaron!” he cried, “What are you doing here?”

“There is no time for us to converse,” his older brother said. “Pharaoh has wasted no time of his own, for his anger was raised against you in the early hours of this day. Go, and go quickly to Arabia, where you will find rest.”

As Moses stood there looking puzzled, Aaron said, “And take this with you.” He pushed a small package into his brother’s hand and walked off in the direction from which the younger man had come, departing as mysteriously as he had appeared.

Moses looked down at the leather case and cautiously opened it... within it were scrolls and papers written by his brother, some in the writing of a young child, and others in more mature script. They were the stories of his people, and the record of his nation, handed down from generation to generation, and told to Miriam, Aaron and Moses by their mother from the days of their infancy.

Shaking his head at what all these things might mean, the traveler closed the case and set off on his journey.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 6: THE VOICE OF INSPIRATION

“Also I heard the voice of Adonai, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then said I, ‘Here am I; send me.’” (Isaiah 6:8)

Impulse, though rarely useful, does have a small part to play in the providence of Heaven. Had Moses stopped to think about how he would arrive in Arabia, or even what he would eat and drink along the way, he may have delayed too long before leaving his homeland.

For days he traveled, sticking at first to the waterways north of Egypt; but he was finally forced eastward into the barren wilderness, where only we angels could preserve him. There were small shrubs offering tiny bits of sustenance, but almost no sources of fresh water. After a time the traveler became weary of searching for streams, and just gathered his will and began to walk, heedless of his body’s cries for that which it desperately needed.

“If I perish,” he said, burning with confusion and an offended conscience, “it is the just reward for my life. Why should I find an easier lot than my kinsmen whom I thought to rescue from slavery?”

“Perhaps,” the demons whispered to him, “you have erred. Who is this silent God, with no priests, and no heroes to speak for Him? What is His name, if you can tell? Where is His power to bring forth a deliverer for those who dare to worship Him? The barren lands are a fitting place for one who drinks at so dry a fountain... lie down, lie down, Moses, and rest from your troubles.”

But Moses did not lie down. He walked on, his shoes seeming to disintegrate before his eyes under the harsh labor to which he was subjecting them. His mind and body ached for rest, and water. His feverish thoughts returned to his dream of the sky, both red and dark at once, and the shadow that bade him to claim his destiny at the edge of a sword.

His sword he still had with him, but it now seemed a burdensome thing. Nevertheless, he held unto it as he trudged through endless sand.

After some time, the human would never be certain just how long, Moses began to notice little tufts of life in the terrain. The ground was becoming less sandy,

and rockier, but there was also enough soil, apparently, to support life. “Water must be near,” the traveler thought, and soon enough his hopes were confirmed.

Moses had crossed the wilderness of Ethan, and the region of Paran, and had arrived at the edge of what is today known as the Gulf of Aqaba. There were streams of fresh water nearby, and there was enough, blessedly, to eat.

After he had refreshed himself, Moses looked eastward. His military training had involved some geographic education about these lands, and he knew that if he kept going in his current direction, he would reach Edom, and then Babylon beyond. Northward lay Syria, and further still the lands of the Hittites. To the south was Midian.

Moses was not a man who had often prayed. In rejecting the gods of Egypt, he had also, to a degree, decided to avoid direct contact with the spiritual world as much as possible, his mother’s instructions notwithstanding. He cherished the things taught to him, and the history of his people, recalling often the faith of Abraham, the battle between Jacob and the Angel, the providence that protected Joseph, and even the dreams of his immediate family, but he had been content thus far to receive, and to give nothing of himself.

This, he decided, would change. Moses sat in the shade of a small tree, and he opened himself up to the Eternal Kingdom.

“Which way shall I go, El Shaddai? North is the land from which my ancestor obtained his beautiful wife Rebekah. East is the land in which my people triumphed over Nimrod. The South I do not know so well this side of the sea. Show me the way in which I should walk.”

That night, in a brief dream that his prayer permitted me, I sent Moses a vision of a dragon at his right hand. When he awoke he understood the sign he had been granted, and turned southward. He had been saved, for the moment, from Satan’s plan and Pharaoh’s wrath.

* * * * *

The traveler followed the coast of the sea, moving steadily to the south. Streams were not common, but they were plenteous enough to sustain him as he walked. Food, however, was another matter. The plants he found offered some fare, but the soldier was not particularly adept at deciding what was edible and what might be dangerous. Aside from all that, he was used to the rich meals of Egyptian royalty, and longed for the things he had left behind for safety’s sake.

When he had gone some distance, I gently led Moses to turn eastward once again, away from the sea. He followed a stream for a time, but when the elevation of the land increased he found himself once more without a ready source of water. This was not a problem, however, for just beyond that was a well, and around the well

were trees of a more impressive size than those that had grown near the banks of the Red Sea. More importantly, they had fruit.

As the weary man rested himself from his labors, he was startled to hear the sound of animals, and human voices, coming from the distance. He decided that if he were to have visitors, it would be wise for him to assess them before making his presence known. Moses went over to some of the foliage that grew nearby and hid from the approaching strangers.

Looking out from among the leaves, Moses saw seven beautiful young women approaching the well, leading a large flock of animals. The women were talking amongst themselves happily, but one seemed distracted, constantly looking away from her companions and off into the distance.

As their observer looked on, the women used water from the well to fill the troughs that had been constructed nearby. Moses had noticed these upon his arrival, and wondered who made use of them; now he knew. The animals quickly lined up and began to drink, while their shepherdesses also began to refresh themselves with the cool, fresh water.

The girl who had been glancing about suddenly gave a word of warning, however, when her eyes detected movement along the way, and the light atmosphere of the oasis vanished. Surely enough some men, whose dress indicated that they were from another tribe than the seven maidens, were leading their own flock to the well.

The men descended on the scene like a cloud across the sun. Moses watched as they leered at the girls, who wisely backed away, knowing that they had little protection should the men try anything untoward. They quickly, quietly, tried to get their animals to withdraw from the water they had poured, being content to wait until the discourteous men had finished with their own flocks, but the thirsty animals refused to cooperate.

“Take your little beasts away,” one of the men urged them. “Your people must learn to wait their turn.”

“We dug this well,” one of the women protested, daring to raise her eyes to the intruders. Whether or not the girl meant that she and her companions had dug it, or that members of their tribe had done so, it was a legitimate claim; but it was not a statement that impressed the shepherd.

“We found this well,” he replied. “That is enough. And in any case, our flocks are bigger than yours... their needs are greater.” The men then drove the girls off, but they lingered near on account of their animals, which had not come with them.

“It may be that you have found this well,” Moses said, stepping from his cover, “but the women were here first. Their animals have already begun to drink... let them finish and then you may use the well yourselves.”

“And who are you?” the shepherd asked, outraged at the interruption.

“I am Moses,” he replied.

“An Egyptian,” the man responded, “I might have known from your attire. What are you doing this far from home?”

“Witnessing a discourtesy,” the traveler replied. “Who I am, and what I am doing here, are not your concern.”

“I might say the same,” the shepherd spat angrily, and his companions drew nearer.

Moses pulled out his sword and pointed it at the men. “I am a soldier of Egypt,” he said. “I was raised in the court of Pharaoh, and received the best instruction in warfare this world has ever known, in addition to being the veteran of countless battles. I have led armies against the people of Ethiopia, and the people of the north.”

The men hesitated. “Back away from the well,” Moses advised.

The shepherds did themselves the service of complying. Without a word, they did more than simply give place to the ones they had supplanted; they withdrew until they could barely be seen in the distance, waiting for the girls and their unwelcome protector to go away.

“Thank you, soldier of Egypt,” one of the young women said. “We have long lived with concern for those men.”

Before Moses could respond, however, another of the girls said, “Today we may drink, but what of tomorrow? It is not wise to anger the men of that tribe!”

“I hope I have not caused you further trouble,” Moses said. “I wished only to be of assistance.”

“Oh, do not mind her,” another spoke, the keen-eyed one who had first spotted the shepherds. “She would find the one cloud in the sky, stand under it, and complain about the weather.”

The others girls laughed, although the one being singled out flushed.

“I hope she is your sister,” Moses said kindly, as he moved toward the well and began to draw water for the shepherdesses and their animals.

“They all are,” the girl spoke again. “We are the daughters of Jethro, priest of Midian.”

“Priest,” said Moses, taking a small step backward. He had no desire to get entangled once again with any more idolatry or mystery religions. “What is his god?”

“He is called Eloah,” one of the girls said, pronouncing it in a similar way to how some modern Arabians say *Allah*. “He is the God of our father Abraham.”

Moses’ eyes went wide. “Abraham is the father also of my people.”

“Of an Egyptian?” the first girl said, “Surely not!” She appeared to be offended, and Moses could hardly blame her.

“But I...” he began to explain, but by then another was speaking.

“Come with us to our father’s tents,” she said. “Let him thank you for helping his daughters.”

The gloomy girl who had worried about the shepherd’s anger muttered, “Let him ask you why he must spare some men to come with us to the well from now on.”

“Oh!” the watchful girl said, in an exasperated tone. “He will be grateful for the service rendered us today.”

As they walked, Moses asked their names. They all told him – in a flurry of syllables – but the traveler remembered only the name of the first girl, the one with the sharp eyes and the most level head. “I am Zipporah,” she had told him.

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When Jethro learned that his daughters had been assisted by a kindly stranger, his natural hospitality urged him to send them back for him, that he might entertain him for his service. With the efficiency he had come to expect from his girls, however, he discovered they had already brought him with them.

In the tents of Midian I met with angels I had not seen in many a year. Among them were the two spirits placed as guardians over the Midianite settlement as a whole, Shakamiel and Helikiel. The former was one of the Cherubim, a wise spirit who had preserved the worship of the Almighty among the nomadic humans. Helikiel was an Or-Ko’ach, one of the unfallen Powers whose example had put Sammael to shame. They greeted me, and we spent much time in conversation as Moses became acquainted with the tribe of those he had aided.

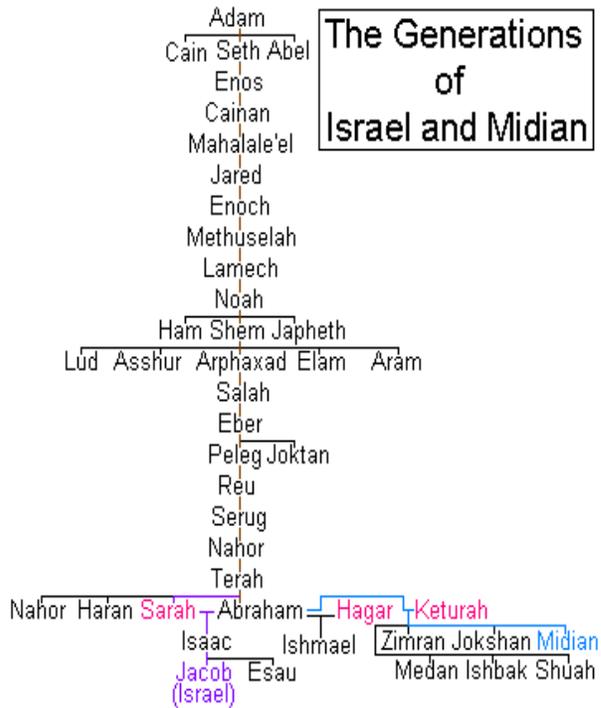
As to why holy angels should be among those who dwelt in Midian, and how these men came to worship the King of Heaven, Moses was even then being educated.

“Our father Abraham was well advanced in years upon the birth of his son Isaac,” Jethro was saying, after Moses had explained a little of his situation and revealed

that he was actually a Hebrew. “Isaac went on to become the father of Jacob, and Jacob became Israel, who fathered your nation. But Abraham’s age was no indication of his vitality!

“Abraham was ill, and feeling his age, when he sent his servant to seek a wife for Isaac, but by the grace of Heaven he recovered much strength, and even sought another wife after Isaac and Rebekah began their own family.”

“I was never told these things,” Moses said, impressed that the words spoken by the dignified-looking priest were true. One of the little things that impressed the Hebrew about Jethro, strange as it may seem, was that the old man had *hair*. Yannos, and indeed most Egyptians, had developed the practice of removing all their body’s hair, not just that of their heads. Moses had gone along with this, although he appreciated also the more natural approach of the slaves. But now here was a man who spoke with the wisdom and authority of Yannos and his kind, but without the exotic appearance. There was definitely something to be learned, he concluded, from these people.



“Our mother Keturah,” Jethro continued, “was a comfort to Abraham in his later years, and she gave him six sons, including our father Midian. Midian in turn had five children, and one of them became the ancestor of our tribe.”

“Why aren’t our people more familiar with one another?” Moses asked.

“Abraham gave all his inheritance to Isaac,” Jethro said, but without any trace of bitterness. “A servant of Eloah he was, but never very wise about the affairs of home life, as I am sure you have been told.”

“So there was tension between Isaac and Midian?”

“Oh, nothing so dramatic as that,” came the priest’s reply. “The brothers may never even have met, as far as I know... but Midian and his mother’s children moved southward into this country and intermarried with the children of Cush; and here we have been as shepherds and craftsmen ever since. Fortunately for

you, we have retained the language and faith of Abraham, though we mingled with the people of these southern lands.”

“These things should be known,” Moses said. “You must tell me of all these matters.”

Jethro laughed, “The time it would take to tell... I am not certain that you will be able to spare it.”

“And where have I to go?” Moses asked himself.

“Tell me more of how you came to be in Midian,” Jethro said, curious in general about his visitor, but made particularly so by that last statement. He and his people were nomads, and knew about a life of wandering, but the apparently aimless quest of this lone man was not something anyone in his tribe would have been eager to undertake.

Moses told him about the death decree he had survived because of his parents’ actions, his life in the palace, his rejection of the Egyptian priesthood, and his work in Pharaoh’s army. He told him in dejected tones about the state of Jacob’s children, servants to hard masters in a land of harsh sunshine.

“You wish to help them,” the insightful man said, when Moses was describing the state of the slaves. “That is a good desire to have.”

“I intended to help them,” Moses said, but made no mention of the dreams had had been given, the conviction of his mother, or the promise made to his people. “Yet I have been driven from them by my own actions.”

“Eloah will accomplish all in His time,” Jethro said. “We Midianites know of the promise made to our father Abraham, and that Isaac was the child of that promise. I believe your people will not spend the rest of their days under the Egyptian shadow. Shall we not come to rest in our faith?”

“Rest...” Moses said thoughtfully.

“Yes rest!” Jethro said, standing up. “And in two days comes the day of Rest! Will you not remain within my tents for the season of worship?”

“My people have been denied the Rest by the Egyptians,” Moses said, using the Hebrew word *Sabbath* as he spoke. “It would be... it will be... the first time I myself have kept it as a legacy of Eden.”

“Then I insist you stay,” the priest of Eloah said, “that is not something to be missed!”

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Moses did stay for the end of that week. He stayed until the end of the next week also. In fact, Moses stayed in the tents of Jethro for as long as he had then been alive – forty years. While some of the demons had followed my charge from his homeland, it was apparent that they had only been sent to ensure that the would-be deliverer stayed far from the Hebrews he had been intended to help.

Satan knew well enough the plans of the Almighty for His people, and would stop at nothing to prevent a kingdom of faithful men from arising in any established fashion. The nomads of Midian were true to their faith, at least in those days, but the land they had chosen and the intentions of Heaven toward them were not conducive to their being raised up for the purpose Israel was to fulfill. Isaac was the child of promise, and from him would the holy kingdom spring.

Moses became a shepherd of Jethro's flocks. While he had been educated and trained in royal splendor in Egypt, the open pastures and the magnificent hills held their own lessons for the Hebrew. Unmolested by pagan priests, and deepening in his understanding of prayer, my charge gradually became more open to my influence, and I was also able to keep him safe from the attacks and distractions of the demons sent to ensure that he remained in Midian.

As the years passed, Moses' relationship with Zipporah deepened, and when Jethro granted his request for her hand in marriage, Heaven approved. This woman would not be a hindrance to my charge's destiny; in fact, she encouraged him in the very lessons he needed most to learn. When the work of a shepherd tried his patience, and the slow pace of life made him feel that he was spending too much time away from his people, his wife reminded him of Eloah's timing, and said to him, "If He will call you back to Egypt, let Him speak to you when the time is right."

Moses had not kept from her the things his family believed about his future, and he shared with her the dreams he had experienced in Egypt, including the dark one he still remembered from that last night spent in Pharaoh's palace. His wife believed him.

When his first son was born, he was named Gershom, which means "Foreigner" for Moses said, "I have been a stranger in a strange land, and this country will not be the home of my boy. He is a foreigner here, and although I have found peace in this place, I will not let him forget the past of our people."

The words of Jethro concerning his tribe's history had brought Moses' mind often to the papers that his brother Aaron had given him at the beginning of his flight. At times he would bring one out, and read of the things his ancestors had endured, and the triumphs they had experienced. He read them also to Zipporah, and many an evening passed with the Hebrew telling his wife of their mutual ancestor, and the things that had befallen those from his side of the family.

At Gershom's appearance, however, Moses came under the strong conviction that his people needed a record of all that had taken place. He wanted his boy to

understand who he was, and perhaps to make sure that the errors of the past would not be repeated in the young man's life, or in the life of his children. "Israel is in a sad state," he said to his wife, "because they could not see the signs being shown them. I wish my son to know the Almighty, and to be able to hear His voice."

In the days when the tribe of Jethro moved southward, following the greenery of the land, Moses began to write. He had intended only to write a history of the Hebrews, but as I spoke to him gently, he began to see that this work would have greater scope. It must begin farther back in time; in fact, it would begin with the first manifestation of IaHWeH into the physical universe.

"In the beginning," he wrote, "Elohim created the Heavens and the earth..."

As he carefully set down his knowledge of the past, I stood over him, guiding his mind as he allowed me from one scene to another, sharing with him the things he had seen only dimly, in dreams, or in his imagination as his mother spoke to him in younger days. The writings of Aaron contributed additional insight, and when the time was right Moses skillfully wove in the knowledge he had gained from his father-in-law Jethro.

Because of his time under the mythology of Egypt, Moses wrote relatively little of the spiritual world; it was safer that way, perhaps, since he had not yet shrugged all his misconceptions off, and I did not attempt to educate him too deeply about the invisible things. *Genesis* would be for men, and about IaHWeH's dealings with men.

Early in the book, as Moses completed his description of the Sabbath day, he began to write, "These are the generations of the Heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that..." and then he stopped. He knew what he wanted to say, but the word in his mind seemed inadequate.

I drew near and whispered to him, "IaHWeH." It was a name that had been known to his people, and then largely lost. Yes, Moses had heard it before in the conversations of his people's elders, but they considered it – as had Abraham before them – yet another title, and without any particular significance beyond the names "Elohim" and "El Elyon." Somehow, here in this passage, it seemed the right one to use.

"... in the day that *Yahweh* Elohim made the earth and the heavens," he completed the thought, spelling it out in human language.

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The shadow of Mount Horeb fell over the camp of Jethro's tribe. They had followed the grazing, and it had led them to this place, to the vicinity of an elevation that the Midianites considered sacred ground. This was not an issue foremost in Moses' mind, however. He had written deeply of his people's past, and it had reawakened within him a love for Israel. His prayers ascended often in

those days for the protection of the slaves, and that, should he indeed (still?) be the deliverer foretold in the prophecies of the elders, it be clearly revealed to him soon.

My work with Moses during his generation-long stay in Midian had borne much fruit. Gone was much of the impulsiveness and anger that marked his younger days, and he was far more patient. Of course, some of the credit for this goes directly to his work as both a father and shepherd; IaHWeH knew well the secrets of men's hearts, and had brought this individual into a course of life that lent itself to refining just those traits of character that stuck out the most unattractively. The desire he felt now to return to Egypt, in contrast with the impatience of his earlier years, was one of which Heaven could approve. This was the sign for which the Host was waiting.

As the Hebrew led his adopted tribe's flocks near to Mount Horeb, I saw a group of angels and one Mighty Being descending with perfect decorum unto the high place. "Moses," I said at the appointed time, "turn aside and look."

When my charge followed his sudden inclination to gaze upon the sacred mountain, the covering Cherubim lowered their guard, and the fire of the Shekinah broke through the barrier separating the spiritual and physical worlds. A large bush that stood right in the spot where El Michael's presence rested burst into golden flames; a perfect vision of the Holy Spirit made manifest captivated the shepherd's attention, and he found himself helpless but to ascend the mountain and look closer upon this amazing sight.

Moses left his flocks below, driven by a greater need to see the cause of this unusual display... as he looked on, careful to keep the bush in his sight as he climbed, what he suspected was confirmed – the foliage burned, but the spiritual fire that he was being allowed to see did not harm even the thinnest, driest twigs; the bush burned, but it was not consumed. As he ascended the mountain, angels kept watch over his flock, and ensured that they would not scatter. Moses was indeed responsible for the safety of the animals, but his attention was being requested by One who was able to care for them in the human's absence.

I ascended with my charge, eager to see the unfolding of what I had been informed would take place.

As he drew nearer, Moses heard a voice calling his name, a voice that was deep and majestic, but clear as the transparent stones he had seen in Egypt's treasury. It called out to him, and as the human approached the bush he replied in wonder, "Here I am."

"Moses, Moses," El Michael repeated, His voice rippling gently through the void, "do not come any closer. Remove your shoes from your feet, for the place whereupon you stand is holy ground."

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 7: THE FORCE OF CONVICTION

*“Then I said, ‘I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name.’
But His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was
weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”
(Jeremiah 20:9)*

I am the Almighty of your father; the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob.” El Michael, High Prince of Heaven, spoke to the human before Him. He was glowing brightly in Union with the Throne, and flanked by Gabriel and Raziel, who bathed the entire scene in holy light. In the physical world, a large green bush stood where El Michael’s presence had anchored itself to the planet, and to the astonished eyes of Moses it appeared to burn with a fire that was not hot, not hungry.

“I have surely seen the affliction of my people in Egypt,” the Majesty of Heaven continued, “and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good and large place, into a land flowing with milk and honey; into the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”

“Northward,” Moses thought, not raising his eyes from the ground, but remembering the crossroads that had led him into Midian. In the presence of this awful grandeur, the human was trying to keep his thoughts focused on “ordinary” things, lest his mind be overwhelmed by what he was experiencing. It was not doing much good.

“Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me, and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them,” Michael continued. His next statement caught Moses off guard, however: “Come now therefore, and I will send you unto Pharaoh, that you may bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

The human reared up so suddenly that he fell backward, but instinctively raised his hands to cover his eyes. He knew the traditions of his people, and he had been taught that to gaze upon the fire of Eternity was to submit one’s self to more glory than a human could behold and survive.

“Who am I,” he asked in sorrow, “that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

What a change had come over my charge! This was the same man who had defied Pharaoh’s high sorcerer, and refused to bow before the impressive images of Egypt’s gods. This was the man who had dared to feel a measure of pride, and not awe, at the knowledge that he had been selected as Heaven’s champion. This was the man who had imagined his sword as the salvation of Israel, and who had slain an Egyptian to begin the defense of his people. This was, indeed, the man who had chafed during his early years in Midian, eager to get on with the work of rescuing his enslaved brethren.

But now, before the apex of all reality, before the Creator of his every hair and sinew, Moses felt the weight of his responsibility. For perhaps the first time in his life, this eighty-year-old child of Adam considered the possibility that maybe he was not *worthy* of the great calling to which he had been called. It had taken a full mortal lifetime, as men in these last days count lifetimes, but my allies and I had finally brought this soul over which we had guardianship into the Valley of Humility.

In genuine fear at the sudden thought of not being equal to the task, Moses had asked, “Who am I?”

“Certainly I will be with you,” came the commanding, calming voice of the Second Elohim through the void. “Let this be a token to you that I have sent you: When you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you will serve me on this mountain.” The promise was meant to give Moses something to look for in the future, to turn his mind away from his current distress, but his mind was fixed on his sudden attack of humility, and he wondered how it was that a “token” could be something that had not yet occurred.

No, he thought, he needed something for *now*. Thus, he spoke again, “But now, when I return to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The Almighty of your fathers has sent me unto you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

Would this figure, this vision, claim the name that I had shown him when he wrote out the early chapters of Genesis? Would it truly be the Almighty of his fathers that was sending him on this longed-for expedition to free his people? Would he, Moses wondered, confirm the inspiration of his written work? All these thoughts came to the mind of my charge, and then El Michael spoke in reply.

“*H’YAH asher h’YAH*. So shall you say unto the children of Israel, ‘h’YAH has sent me unto you.’” The word He used, the name He used, was indeed a shortened form of IaHWeH, and it meant, “*I am*,” with the full title that was first spoken signifying, “*I am He that exists*.”

The Elohim Union continued through the vessel of the Archangel, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ‘Yahweh, Elohim of your fathers, the Almighty of Abraham, the Almighty of Isaac, and the Almighty of Jacob, hath sent me unto you.’ This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” Never before had the Almighty so directly declared His divine name to humanity. This was indeed a token that Moses felt he could use; for the name was used from Eden down to the elders in the camp of the slaves; but such dignity, such force, had been used to declare it that day before the burning bush that Moses felt confident its use would inspire action.

A new doubt suddenly came to mind, but before he could voice it, the Speaker continued, “Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, ‘Yahweh, the Almighty of your fathers, Elohim of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, “I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt. And I have declared that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.”’”

Furthermore, to still the thoughts that were even then rising to the surface, El Michael assured him, “They shall listen to your voice, and you will come, you and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and you will say unto him, ‘Yahweh, Elohim of the Hebrews has met with us; and now let us go, we ask of you, three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our Almighty One.”

“Three days’ journey?” Moses thought aloud.

“The king of Egypt will certainly not let you go,” El Michael explained, “no, not by a mighty hand. And I will stretch out my hand, and strike Egypt with all my wondrous works that I will do in the midst thereof. After that, he will let you go.”

“And I will give the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians,” He added, “and it will come to pass that, when you go, you will not go forth empty. Every woman shall ask goods of her neighbor, and of her that visits in her house: jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and articles of clothing; and you will put them upon your sons and upon your daughters; and you will thereby spoil the Egyptians.”

A pause in the flow of the divine message allowed Moses to voice his concern, which had not been assuaged by the many assurances. “But now, they will not believe me, nor listen my voice, for they will say, ‘Yahweh hath not appeared unto you!’” The Hebrew was thinking about the harsh words of the slave he had rebuked for fighting with his fellow, and the ignominious way in which he had left his homeland. Why should they believe him, an Egyptian-tainted man of blood who was forced to run for his life from the very ones who raised him?

Instead of explaining further, Elohim asked, “What is that in your hand?”

“My hand?” Moses said uncertainly. “A staff.” He had used the simple tool to assist his climb, and had entirely forgotten about it in the face of the glorious revelation.

“Cast it to the ground.”

Moses did as he was instructed, and El Michael invisibly breathed a thin, fiery ribbon of life into the dead wood.

With a yell that might have been heard back in Jethro’s tents, Moses leaped to his feet and ran a few yards as his shepherd’s staff suddenly coiled around and grew a head. The eyes stared at the human with an intense look, and the fangs were bared aggressively. After a moment, however, the mouth closed, and the serpent simply stared at the frightened Hebrew, its head swaying gently from side to side.

“Put forth your hand, and take it by the tail.”

This command was not as quickly obeyed. Moses gingerly approached the reptile, ready to retreat at the slightest display of aggression. But the large brown snake simply looked at the human, and flicked its tongue out from time to time, tasting the air. My charge walked a wide circuit around the serpent, and was relieved to see that it continued to appear docile. By the time he went around to its back, the snake had laid its head on the ground and straightened out. Slowly, carefully, Moses put forth his hand, but as soon as his fingertips made contact with the dry scales near the end of the tail the animal went rigid, and its serpentine features disappeared.

Moses retrieved his staff.

“This is so they may believe that Yahweh, the Almighty of their fathers, Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared unto you. And now, put your hand into your robes.”

Confused, but having yet to recover from the serpent’s miraculous appearance, Moses did as he was told. When he took it out his hand was covered with scabs and scales, and had gone a sickeningly white color. It was a hand that, if not already dead, certainly should have been.

“Put your hand into your robes once again,” El Michael said. If Moses required proof, Heaven would see to it that he had sufficient.

“I am healed!” the human breathed, relieved that his hand had returned to its previous state.

“If they will not believe you,” El Michael said, “nor understand the power of the first sign, they will believe the testimony of the latter. And yet further, if they will not believe either of these two signs or listen to your words, take water from

the river and pour it unto the dry land; the water that you take out of the river will become blood upon the earth.”

Naturally, not even the most powerful demons dared approach Horeb. The High Prince was standing there with both of the powerful Covering Cherubim, and a small army of high-ranking dignitaries from the Heavenly Kingdom. Under the darkest dome of human depravity, they would have stood no chance of overcoming us; and as far as Moses went, he was so overwhelmed by the presence of the divine that no true thought of temptation tinged his spirit. Here, in the open air, not far from the faithful souls of Midian, they would not so much as cast a disparaging look in our direction as they watched from the distance.

This is not to say, however, that Moses was perfectly susceptible to the power of what he was encountering. While no outside temptations were with him, the demons that would not then approach him themselves had long done their subtle work, and not even my time with the human in the open plains had been sufficient to undo every scrap. What had begun as true humility in the face of El Michael had started, as Moses thought about the future and the potential for failure, to become a close counterfeit.

“Adonai,” he said, “I am not eloquent. Neither was I before this, nor as you speak to your servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.” I looked sadly at my charge. What he had said was not true; while there was some validity to what Moses was thinking in terms of how long it had been since he had used the native language of Egypt, he had been a leader in Pharaoh’s army, had been trained for the priesthood, and was as naturally gifted at this skill as any other member of his biological family. He would have performed in an entirely satisfactory manner once he re-entered the land of his birth.

While he may have felt inadequate to the task being set before him now that it was actually placed there, seeking reasons why one should neglect his or her appointed responsibilities is not the true face of humility. Elohim, of course, knew perfectly well the less-than-noble motives behind Moses’ latest words.

“Who has made man’s mouth? Who controls men’s dumbness, or deafness, or sight, or blindness? Is it not I, Yahweh?” Moses made no reply, but lowered his face again to the ground. El Michael said, “Now therefore *GO*, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you will say.”

“Adonai,” Moses ventured once more, “send your message, but by the voice of one whom you choose.” By this, of course, he meant, “Not by me.” Was this the man who had slain an Egyptian for what he believed to be the cause of IaHWeH? How often is it the case that men are eager to perform those tasks they believe will please the Almighty, but shrink back from those very deeds that *He* has declared would be acceptable in His sight? This was the error of Cain, who offered his best fruits when the Eternal One sought to educate him through the sacrifice of a lamb. This is the error of many in the last days, who claim to be

worshipping Elohim while despising His commandments and the claims He lays upon their talents and time by virtue of His having *created* them.

The displeasure of the Divine Messenger was made manifest, and my own irritation was apparent also, I am sure. The flames surrounding the bush flared to even greater intensity, sending fresh waves of fear over the resisting witness. Yet for all this, El Michael emanated perfect sympathy and love when He again spoke. “Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he comes forth to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be gladdened.”

“Aaron!” Moses almost shouted in his surprise. His thoughts flashed back to their brief goodbye, when his older brother had pushed the precious writings into his hand. How had he known to be there? And why was he coming out to Midian, of all places, now? How would he find him?

Ignoring the human’s thoughts, though He was perfectly aware of them, El Michael continued, drawing Moses’ mind once again forward to the events he would be required to witness and produce. “You will speak unto him, and put words in his mouth. I will be with you both, and in your words, and will teach you what you both shall do.” After adding a few more words to His chosen messenger designed to strengthen and encourage him, Michael motioned to the Cherubim beside him.

“Go now,” El Michael repeated as the physical signs of His presence faded away, “and take the rod that is in your hand, for with it you will do wonderful works.”

As Elohim’s words ended, Gabriel and Raziel rose into the air. In a flash that blinded all the spirits for an instant they vanished, and with them all of the visitors from Heaven save one. Before Moses and myself, the human still lying on his face and shaking, was As’fael the Principality. I had not seen him long enough to hold a conversation since the day of the battle between Moses’ army and the Ethiopians.

As we spoke, my fellow Prince informed me of Aaron’s route, and when Moses finally stood on his feet, he was still so dazed that I was easily able to lead him, as a man in a dream, through the routine of securing his flock, and providing him with a firm conviction of the route he should take to return to Egypt. Through it all, his main thought was not of his mission, but of his brother. The demons, meanwhile, sped off to Egypt at the speed of thought to report what they had seen.

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The Hebrew did not delay long before setting out on his return journey. His sleep had been peaceful, untroubled by nightmares, and I rejoiced that my charge, having accepted the mission that had filled him with doubt and fears on Horeb, seemed intent on accomplishing it. His wife and sons (he had two now) he placed

upon a donkey – one of Jethro’s finest – and they set out through the wilderness together.

He had told his father-in-law only part of the reason for his visit to Egypt, but though the older man had suspected something more significant was at hand, he released Moses with a blessing, and permitted his daughter and grandchildren to accompany him. As the head of the tribe, he still had some authority in the movements of those under him, but he recognized the value that Zipporah would be for her husband on this unnamed quest.

It was providence, and the inspiration of angels, that had led Jethro to submit to the request without any questions of his own. IaHWeH had indeed determined that Zipporah should accompany Moses a small part of the way home, because there was one very specific lesson that he would require before being finally equipped for his task.

As the Hebrew walked on, leading his family near to Horeb, I heard a whisper from Uriel the Archangel. I was instructed to do nothing during an encounter that was about to take place.

The eyes of man and beast went wide as a whirlwind of fire rose up from the earth, and coalesced into the imposing form of a six-winged, living flame. Kaleon of the Chalkydri stood before the travelers, incandescent in the light of pure holiness. El Michael stood above the Seraph, shedding His light upon the Tribal Guardian of Levi; IaHWeH Himself was barring Moses’ progress back to Egypt, and both Moses and I quickly realized why.

Both Zipporah and the donkey were minded to return quickly to the tents of Jethro, and the confused boys made loud protests of their own, but Moses stood firm, and held the tether tightly so that there would be no retreat. Although the Seraph stood threateningly with drawn and burning blade, the chosen of Heaven stepped toward him, and knelt.

Angels do not receive worship; they never have, and they never will unless they are fallen from grace. Yet Kaleon knew that Moses was not bowing to him, but to the Presence that encircled him, and he spoke no words of warning or reproof, as he had been instructed. “I have received the testimony of Adonai,” Moses said, and went back to his startled family. The Seraph stood motionlessly, his burning eyes merely observing the scene.

“I have betrayed the tradition of my people,” Moses said. “You know what we have done with Gershom, my firstborn, that on the eighth day after his birth we circumcised him according to the covenant of our father Abraham.” Zipporah looked at her husband with a cautious expression; although the early Midianites had practiced the tradition, as had Ishmael the brother of Isaac, it had fallen out of use. After seeing the rite performed on her firstborn son, she had strongly objected at its being repeated on Eleazer, her second.

“Every male of Israel must be circumcised in his flesh,” Moses said. “I cannot return and perform service for the children of my people unless I am faithful in the matter of my own children.” Unlike Jethro, Zipporah had been informed of the true nature of Moses’ journey. She knew how important this delierance was to her husband, but she struggled within herself, for she felt the rite he was describing was barbaric. Yes, she knew the significance of the sign... but on this matter her strength of character had been lacking.

She was as dazed from her first encounter with the visibly divine as Moses had been after his climb on mount Horeb, therefore when Moses turned aside she did not resist, fearing that he would be killed by the angel’s mighty weapon. As Kaleon looked on, they circumcised Eleazer right then and there, Zipporah herself doing the deed. “You are a bridegroom of blood, because of this circumcision,” she said, insisting that she be the one to so handle for her child if it needed to be done. The Seraph immediately vanished, but the family traveled no farther that day, lodging under the shelter that a nearby watering place afforded.

In truth, the family traveled no farther at all. The next day Zipporah and Moses decided that perhaps there would be greater danger in Egypt than it was wise for their children to brave. She had served her divine purpose on the way, and I gave assurance to Moses’ conscience that his family would be safe during their return to Jethro. Kaleon himself, though now invisible, guided them after Moses sadly, but resolutely, let them go.

* * * * *

Now alone, Moses thought back to some of the things El Michael had said to him before vanishing on his previous experience at Mount Horeb. “When you return to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh that I have put in your hand; but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.”

He looked at the staff he carried, and said, “Yes, it will be a dangerous work indeed.” In his dreams before he departed from Midian, Moses had been told that the Pharaoh of his early days had died, and that most of those who were actively seeking his life, among them the many counselors that had been opposed to his favored status in the first place, had also passed away.

It had, after all, been forty years, yet the additional knowledge helped to give him courage on the way. Even so, he was under no false impressions that he was being called forth to do a work that involved no great risk.

“Aaron shall be your spokesman unto the people; he will be your mouthpiece, and you will be to him as I am to you,” Elohim had said.

Moses’ thoughts turned once more to his brother, and with me guiding his journey, and Adaiyel guiding Aaron’s, the two men soon met shortly after Zipporah’s departure.

“Aaron!” the traveler exclaimed, throwing his arms around his brother. Aaron responded with similar enthusiasm, and above them my Virtue bowed to me and said, “Greetings, Prince Uzziel.”

“It has been a lifetime, brother,” Aaron said, looking his sibling over. “How have you fared?”

“I have been at peace,” Moses replied, “except for the sake of my people. But now I have been sent to... but you already knew that, didn’t you?”

Heaven’s champion spoke those last words slowly and carefully, realization dawning on him.

“Why did you not tell me,” me asked his brother, “that you also had the dreams?”

“You are not the only one chosen by Heaven,” Aaron said. “Perhaps the faith of our parents, or perhaps the hand of providence, or perhaps the selection of Elohim... I do not fully know why. But our family has been blessed, Moses. Even so, not all of us have been called to the same level of greatness, and it was not necessary for me to say all that I knew.”

“Does our sister Miriam know?” Moses asked. “How is she doing?”

“Miriam knows, and she does well. When I told her I was being called to meet you in the wilderness, she prayed for our safe return. She is eager to see you.”

“I am eager to see her,” Moses said. “And our mother, has she been gathered to our people?”

“Not so long ago,” Aaron replied gently, “but yes.”

“And the princess? I was made to know that the king died, but what of she who raised me?”

“She lives,” Aaron said, “but unhappily at the palace. I do not know very much of the things that happen in the House of Ra,” he added with a hint of distaste, “but I know she is subject to the will of a relative of hers that ascended to the throne after your departure. And ah, Moses, this Pharaoh...”

“I know it,” Moses said. “For his sake, the cry of Israel has come up before the Almighty of Heaven, and He called to me, telling me to return to Egypt. This is the reason you have been sent to me this day.”

Aaron nodded in acknowledgement, “I am to be your voice, and in my own dreams I was called by an angel to come unto Mount Horeb... but beyond that I was not permitted to see.”

“Where your dreams have left off, I have visions to continue. Behold this mountain we pass; but a short time ago I stood before a great Wonder here...”

The rest of the return to Egypt passed far more pleasantly than Moses’ first journey across the wasteland. The brothers spoke of the changes that had occurred in the last four decades, and I myself learned a few details that I had not seen fit to explore during my own time working with Moses in the tents of Jethro. Adaiyel was forthcoming about the changes in my charge’s family and homeland, and my knowledge of much that would become important in the days ahead was made complete.

Miriam now lived in the house formerly owned by Amram and Yochebed. When the woman reunited with her brothers, I greeted Rinnael her guardian. The Dominion was excited, as were we all, at what Heaven was doing, and we worked quickly among the other holy angels in the camp of the slaves to assemble the elders at Moses’ instructions.

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“Elders of Israel,” Moses began, “all of you know my face, and have heard my voice. You know how I escaped from the violence imagined against me by the king of this land forty years ago, but in my time away, I met with the Almighty, Elohim of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. I stood before Him on a sacred mountain, and He said to me, “I am *Yahweh*, who has heard the cry of my people in Egypt. Return, therefore, and deliver the children of Israel from their bondage.””

There was much conversation among the elders as Moses spoke, but one voice was particularly audible above the general murmuring and debate. Finally, the voice was raised, and clearly heard. “Who is this man, raised by Egyptians, to deliver us according to the prophecies of the Hebrews?”

Moses looked at the speaker, and his face looked familiar. He could almost place it, and then Aaron spoke, resolving the mystery. “He speaks the truth, Dathan. The house of Amram has been called by Elohim, because of the goodwill of *Yahweh* toward His people.”

“The house of Amram is full of dreamers and idlers,” Dathan retorted. “You may flaunt the favor of the princess toward your family, and vanish into the deserts for days on end, but you know well how times are changing. What sympathy she had for us slaves diminishes daily, as does her power under Pharaoh’s rule.”

“She will not long keep the full fury of Egypt against us in check,” Moses rejoined, ignoring the harsh words of Eliab’s son. “This is why the time is now. You know well that our traditions have long been kept from us, and we cannot serve the Almighty according to His desires in this place. Has not Elohim commanded us to keep holy the seventh day? Who has regarded this day, in the camp of the slaves?”

None replied. All knew the proper response, “We cannot, by reason of the taskmasters,” but all knew what the reply would be, “Elohim is lord also of the taskmasters.” The debate had been had, and re-had, generations ago, but the discussion was always settled at the end of an Egyptian whip. The people worked, and they observed no rest. Now, this Moses was saying, “We must obey Yahweh our Almighty One.”

“There is strength with Yahweh, Elohim of our fathers. For behold, I do not come to you with words only. I have tokens with me from the Almighty who dwells above the mountains.” Without regarding the voices that were rising up, or the continued protests of Dathan, Moses calmly handed his staff to Aaron and said, “Cast this rod to the ground.”

* * * * *

A few days later the brothers, with a small contingent of the elders of Israel, requested and obtained an audience with the king of Egypt. They walked boldly past the guards, who gave them appraising looks, and then confidently into the magnificent royal chamber, where Pharaoh sat attended by his counselors, his royal relative the princess, and the high priests of his kingdom.

In the blink of an eye, however, Moses’ poise vanished before the face of a terrible surprise. Standing beside the unfamiliar king was a familiar figure, and a familiar voice addressed him with the same arrogant tones he remembered from his days as a student of the Egyptian Mysteries.

“Welcome home, prince of Egypt,” the sorcerer Yannos said.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 8: AN UNDISPUTED VICTORY

“O, sing unto Yahweh a new song; for He hath done marvelous things. His Right Hand, and His Holy Arm, hath gotten Him the victory.” (Psalm 98:1)

Uzziel,” the fallen Power said to me. “I see you have managed to keep your burden safe.”

“I have delivered what I have been sent to deliver,” I replied.

Sammael gave me a cruel smile. “For all the good it will do. With what power will the King of Heaven challenge our authority in this dark place?”

“By means of an agent,” I replied, for just as human choices may bind our hands if they follow the path of evil, so may the righteous decisions of a human provide Yahweh with the agreement to act, even in the most dire of circumstances, or under the worst spiritual darkness that idolatry and selfishness may generate.

The Power gave me a scornful look and said, “This champion? Moses was broken long ago, though you and your brethren have pulled him along by puppetry. Behold his expression even now, as he realizes the power against which he has dared to lift his shepherd’s staff. No, Uzziel, this man is held in so little account that Lucifer himself has not seen it necessary to attend this meeting, but is away on more pressing business.”

The king of demons was indeed away to the east; I had been told this by my allies. The tempters had partly intended this as a show of strength, as an attempt to intimidate the guardians of the Hebrews, and to say, “We do not need our strongest, in order to assure victory here.” Their tactics did not have much impact on the faithful spirits of Elohim, but Moses on the other hand took a few moments to pull himself together after coming face-to-face with his old mentor.

“How can you yet live?” the Hebrew asked.

“That is not as warm a greeting as I would have liked,” Yannos responded. “Yet this is what I must expect from the manners of a slave child who has been in the wilderness. Come, Moses, you have been too long away from your home... but now, if you will return to your adopted family, all will be forgiven.”

“Forgiven?” Moses asked, genuinely surprised.

“Oh, yes,” Yannos said. “Your departure altered my predictions. As you can see, the Pharaoh of your youth has passed on, and left this more powerful, more capable man at the head of Egypt. We have nothing to fear from you, or your God.”

As the sorcerer made this challenge he stared directly into Moses’ face, the demon within him seeking thereby to sap the last of the Hebrew’s confidence. Yannos smiled and his eyes suddenly shone with a mysterious light, one with which some of those who hear this testimony may recognize from the descriptions previously given of the Cainite sorcerer Enoch, and the Babylonian witch Yunah. Here was Egypt’s version, and all the peculiarities that attended the old man’s actions in the years Moses had known him flooded his mind.

“You did not believe in the Mysteries,” Yannos hissed. “Will you now test their strength against the word of your people’s spirit?”

Pharaoh had sat patiently through his advisor’s speech. Although the sorcerer had declared him “more powerful, and more capable,” it was clear that he was far more dependent on the word of his counselors than the previous sovereign had been. Now he spoke, however, uncomfortable at the silence that had developed.

“What is it you Hebrews seek?”

The elders, who had been somewhat ruffled by Moses’ change in posture, now stood upright. Aaron stepped forward and delivered the message that his brother had given him, while Moses himself tore his eyes away from the too-young-looking Yannos and stared squarely at the one sitting on the throne.

“Thus saith *Yahweh*, the Almighty of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.’”

Pharaoh’s eyebrows rose, and with a quick glance at Yannos he said confidently, “Who is this ‘Yahweh,’ that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not ‘Yahweh,’ neither will I let Israel go.”

“The God of the Hebrews has met with us,” Aaron said. “Let us go, we pray you, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto *Yahweh* our Almighty, otherwise He may inflict upon us a pestilence, or punish us with the sword, for disobeying His command.”

Pharaoh was being invited to consider the power of IaHWeH, and the strict claims that He held upon His people for their good and happiness. The monarch would have none of that, however. “I have heard these commands mentioned in my presence,” he said. “My soldiers say your people are spending time speaking of your return to Egypt, when they should be working. You should fear *my* sword, yet have encouraged them to take their day of rest, is this not so?”

The question was not one that anticipated an answer, for Pharaoh's face immediately darkened with rage and he said, "Why do you, Moses and Aaron, distract the people from their work? Get you unto your burdens! You see how many slaves we have from your nation, but you tell them, 'Sabbath!' Do you not know what a large number of people will thus stand idle for a day? My kingdom will not suffer such loss. Depart from my presence!"

The prophets of Elohim and the elders of Israel looked one to another, but they had little choice but to withdraw. Moses turned fully around, facing away from the throne; he would give this new Pharaoh no respect, and he did not wish to see yet another time the look that Yannos had fixed upon him for the duration of his audience in the throne room. He did, however, spare a glance at the princess, his adopted mother, before leaving the room; she had sat silently with large, sad eyes the entire time.

* * * * *

If the messengers of freedom had been confused by Pharaoh's reaction, and his staunch refusal to even consider the divine command, Moses and Aaron were even more baffled by the report that came to them a few days later. Each day they had gone up to the palace, intending to repeat their message to the king of Egypt. They had received no further instruction from Heaven, no dream or vision, therefore they knew they must try again, for although they were badly shaken they were confident that the Word of Elohim was true, and would eventually have effect. Each time, they had been refused entrance.

As they went forth to palace, one of the Hebrews who had been appointed overseer of some others was coming out from within. He met them, and he barred their path.

"May Yahweh be the Judge of you both," he said, "because you have made our presence hateful to the eyes of Pharaoh, and to the eyes of his servants, and you have put a sword in their hand to slay us!"

"What do you mean by this?" Aaron asked.

"Have you not heard?" he asked. "After you took our elders with you to Pharaoh, and asked of him time to rest from our burdens, he appointed us harder labor still! Now, we have not only to make the bricks for his buildings, but also to gather the straw we use to make them. Yet for all this increase, we must still produce the same number as before!"

"Those of us who have been appointed over the others have been severely punished, for we have not been able to meet the impossible demands Pharaoh has placed on us. And yet," he continued, "we did not believe that such an unreasonable decree had come forth from the king, so I and my workers came to see which of Pharaoh's counselors had been so harsh against the Hebrews."

“It was Pharaoh himself!” the Hebrew revealed, breathing heavily. “Our nation is in a most miserable strait, because you came forth with a word of oppression from the wilderness wherein you lived.”

The brothers looked at each other in confusion while their kinsman stalked off in desperate frustration. Moses and Aaron spoke not a word, but went forth to the house of their sister Miriam where Moses had been lodging since his return.

As a cry of despair went up from the settlement of the slaves when they learned that the highest court in the land would offer them no recourse, a solemn and sorrowful prayer went up from the house of the children of Amram.

“Adonai,” Moses asked, “why have you done this thing, to bring misfortune on your people by means of the one you said would deliver them? For what purpose, then, have I been sent? Since the day I spoke in the presence of Pharaoh, he has set his heart to do evil to your people, and you have not yet delivered your people at all.”

Aaron and Miriam likewise prayed, asking for guidance, and seeking assurance that Heaven’s instructions had been properly understood, that their course was right in the sight of IaHWeH. They opened their hearts and poured out their petitions until they were weary, and then the three chosen messengers of Elohim fell into a deep sleep.

* * * * *

A hard wind blew over the plain, and it felt very cold. Moses wrapped his coat tighter around his body, praying that the bitter wind would cease. He looked up, and for a moment terror gripped him as he saw the same dark cliff, and same dark figure standing above him, as he had the night before he first left Egypt.

As he looked on, however, the scene changed, and he was standing once more upon Mount Horeb, and the bush burned brightly before him. Glancing down the side of the mountain, Moses saw Aaron and Miriam standing there, but they could not hear the voice of Heaven when it again came forth from the fiery foliage.

“Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh,” He said, “for with great force will he let the people go, and with a strong hand will he drive them out of his land.

“I am Yahweh, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of El Shaddai, but by my name *Yahweh* was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

“Therefore say unto the children of Israel, ‘I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage,

and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you an Almighty One; and you will know that I am Yahweh your Elohim, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage. *I AM YAHWEH!*”

Moses awoke with a start, the name of his Almighty ringing in his ears. His brother and sister also awakened at the same instant, and although he did not ask, Moses believed they had all shared the same experience. “I must return to Pharaoh,” he said. His brother and sister agreed.

Again and again in his dream, Elohim had underscored the dignity of His name. Pharaoh had said, “Who is ‘Yahweh,’ and even Moses’ own ancestors had not known the character and dignity represented by this word, but Pharaoh – and all the world – would soon know who IaHWeH was.

Before his return to the palace, however, Moses attempted to regain the confidence of his people. This time, it did not take much work on the part of Dathan to disrupt any organized effort that the prophet was attempting to obtain. Demons of wrath surged through the crowd, pricking one heart after another. Demons of bitterness, a contingent of Abaddon’s House of Envy, crushed souls as they turned away from Moses’ words. Supreme among them, however, were the elite spirits chosen by Lucifer himself to be pillars in the House of Fear. Their master may have been absent, but these powerful forces had no need to be instructed so closely concerning their work; they were competent at their destructive tasks, and the spiritual ground under the Hebrew slaves was as fertile a soil as they could ask.

This time, IaHWeH instructed Moses not to take the elders with them. This time he went before Pharaoh with only Aaron and his four nephews: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, who were already men, and well respected amongst the slaves.

As they marched on the palace we went before them, Adaiyel, Rinnael and myself, along with the guardians of the four younger men. Moses’ mind had settled on the words El Michael had spoken to him before sending him once again to the palace, “Behold, I have made you as a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother will be your prophet.” He had also been told that the king would not listen to him, but he knew he was there to deliver a message, and we ensured that the guards who had barred their passage before knew it also. On this day, they let the Hebrews pass.

“What is it you wish this time?” Pharaoh demanded, angered that his guards had not prevented the men from entering his chamber. This was a high breach of palace order, and he would see to it that there would be great punishment inflicted. For now, however, he intended to focus on making a show of power to the intruders.

“Have you come to complain further about the fate of your people? No, I will not hear you; if your god is unable to deliver you from my power, you ought not to render Him worship. Change your hearts concerning the gods of Egypt, and then, perhaps, I will relieve your nation of some of its burdens!”

“We come in the name of Yahweh, Elohim of the people of Israel,” Aaron said, “who has commanded you through the mouth of His messengers, ‘Let my people go, that they may serve me, or I will deliver them by means of my wonderful works, and bring a curse upon the land of Egypt.’”

“So now you bring commands, and threats against my kingdom,” Pharaoh replied. “And by what mighty works will your God deliver you? What power has He shown, to deliver His people, whom I have been allowed – by the power of *my* gods – to use for the glory of Egypt?”

“That you shall know the power of Yahweh,” Moses said, and turned to his brother, “Aaron, cast down my rod.”

Aaron’s two youngest sons had not been present at the demonstration of this miracle before the elders of Israel. Even so, all four boys stared in wonder as the marvel was repeated amidst the grandeur of Pharaoh’s royal throne room. Aaron himself struggled to keep his eyes fixed on the face of the king as the staff rippled with life and then reared up to reveal its fangs and fiery eyes.

If he expected to see shock registered in the Egyptian’s face, Aaron was disappointed. My charge had seen this episode play out in his dreams, and was prepared for what was to come. The king began to laugh.

“Have I attained the throne over the greatest people on earth, the wisest, the most skilled in the service of the gods, to be impressed by the trickery of a desert magician? Who among my wise men cannot do this?”

The king leaned over and called for his priests, and the messenger swiftly vanished through one of the doors to the throne room. When he returned he brought with him the sorcerers Yannos and Yambras, and a few of their more gifted disciples. The demons Kaspiel and Salathiel also entered. They were joined by Zaphkiel, the Power who had attached himself to Yambras, and a dark Cherub named Hiel that I had not seen in Egypt before.

“Moses,” Yambras said, “have you returned to challenge the gods you ever despised?” The Hebrew, like Yannos, said nothing.

Pharaoh said, “Behold the staff of the Israelite; he has made it a snake. Show him what the gods of Egypt can do.”

As soon as they received the command, the priests of Egypt threw their wooden wands to the ground. Immediately, the Cherub who was with them opened his

hands, and dark energy began to flow from him. Before long the elements of the wooden rods were moved apart and made flexible. The other demons, including Kaspriel and Zaphkiel, intruded into the physical world just enough to manipulate the softened fibers, and in very short order there were a number of “snakes” crawling around the chamber to rival Moses’ contribution.

I stared in distaste at my fallen brethren, reduced from riding the winds of Heaven to crawling around on the floor of a human castle playing with sticks. The Hebrews were not as impressed as the king made a show of being. There was no life in these illusions, but the work of IaHWeH was genuine – and the Almighty had created His work *hungry*. Moses’ serpent, already larger due to its having been a shepherd’s staff, struck at the smaller rods of the sorcerers and devoured them, tearing them from the invisible hands of the demons.

When it had swallowed the last of the priests’ animated instruments, the living serpent stretched itself out on the ground between Aaron and Pharaoh and once again became wooden. Aaron bent over and retrieved the staff.

The power of IaHWeH was clearly seen to be superior to the demons’ trickery, no matter how artfully it had been portrayed; even those who would not admit to the validity of the contest knew in their hearts what the outcome truly meant. Pharaoh’s rage swelled, but at that moment the Cherub Raziel appeared above him, shining in the light of the Shekinah that caused the hearts of the holy angels to thrill, while paralyzing the fallen spirits.

Had Raziel not been present, I was certain that Pharaoh would have been influenced by the demons to order the Hebrews put to death. I could read the deadly rage in his eyes, and his breathing and heart rate had increased dramatically. The Cherub standing above the throne caused the light of the Spirit to flash forth still more fully, and I was amazed that the humans could not see what was so overwhelming to the spiritual beings. The demons who could still move covered their faces.

“Choose,” Raziel said to the king of Egypt. “Choose... Choose.”

As he spoke, repeating the word slowly and clearly in the language of Pharaoh’s soul, the monarch’s eyes grew shadowy. He felt the conviction, and knew he should pay respect to the deity who had bested his most highly trained sorcerers, but the Almighty’s urgings served only to harden his heart. The king of Egypt would not choose to even listen, much less obey, the voice of conviction. He had seen enough evidence, and he was doing himself irreparable damage every instant that he refused to submit to what he knew to be proper and right; but he would not bow to the god of slaves.

“You have skill in magic,” the proud monarch said, the words coming forth painfully from his lips. “That your power is as great as my magicians’ is clear, yet this is not the true test. Any god can make sticks move, but what manner of god would abandon those who pay him worship?” Pharaoh was certain that this

argument, one he had both heard and made several times before, was entirely conclusive. “Depart from my palace,” he said with a sneer, “and go back to your slave-houses.” Raziel, and the spiritual light, vanished in an instant.

“Come,” Moses said to those who were with him. “Pharaoh will not hear us any further today.”

Yannos and Yambras watched the brothers and the four younger men go, and hatred flowed darkly over their countenances.

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Moses and Aaron stood on the banks of the Nile early the next morning, doing as they had been instructed by the younger brother’s dream. Adaiyel and I were with them, but the two men were alone in terms of the company of other humans. They were not alone for long, however. As they had anticipated, Pharaoh came out with Yambras and other members of the priestly caste to bless the Nile, giving thanks to their sacred river for supporting their life in the dry country. The early sun shone down, and gleamed off of shorn heads bowed in reverence to the deified waterway.

Many of the Egyptians had not noticed the brothers standing nearby, and so they drew closer and Aaron’s voice rang out over the murmuring of the sorcerers, “Yahweh Elohim of the Hebrews hath sent me unto you, saying, ‘Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness,’ and behold, you would not hear. Thus saith Yahweh, therefore, ‘In this you will know that I am Yahweh.’ Behold: I will strike the river’s waters with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that are in the river will die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians will not wish to drink the water of the river.”

“I am tired of this speech!” Pharaoh said. “Depart from my presence immediately, Moses, and your brother also, or I warn you surely, though you be the son of the princess my eye will not spare you from death.”

As IaHWeH had commanded, Moses spoke a word to Aaron, and the latter placed the rod of wonders into the river. As the tip of what had been the serpent’s tail touched the Nile, an explosion of color filled the water, radiating out from the point of contact with such speed that the magicians who were looking on gasped. This was something they would never be able to duplicate; it was entirely beyond their skills. Nevertheless, Pharaoh confidently turned to them and said, “Show these impostors what Egyptian sorcery can do!”

Yambras was not intimidated, however. He said, “Behold the power of Hapi, god of the Nile, who throws off such insolent intrusions into his power!” He raised his hands over the reddened water, and after a moment’s indecision the fallen Virtues who were standing ready at hand went to work. They spread themselves out over the water and, under Lucifer’s direction, they were able to cause the light

from the morning sun to scatter over the water in just such a way as to make the Nile appear to run clear.

The king of demons himself had returned from the region of Bashan, where he had been engaged in other work. He had heard of the defeat of Hiel's serpents and knew his purpose was in danger of being thwarted. He would not let any lesser spirit than himself work against the power Moses was demonstrating in his kingdom.

"And now," Yambras continued, confidently repeating the insinuations of the demon Zaphkiel, "behold how Hapi grants his servants the power which was usurped by the Hebrew slaves!" At these words the Virtues left off their difficult task with a collective gasp of relief. Adaiyel and I exchanged glances... we had never seen our fallen brethren, members of our own Order, placed in so humiliating a set of situations. How beautiful the dignity and majesty of the King of Saints, as He stretched forth His mighty hand over the land of Egypt!

Satisfied for the moment, Pharaoh turned and went back to his palace. To his horror, he found upon his arrival that even the water stored for drinking and bathing had turned into blood. Yambras could not undo "his" enchantment, and so the monarch of Egypt angrily he called for Yannos. The high sorcerer was nowhere to be found.

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Seven days later, the Egyptians were weary of digging for fresh water. Some had resorted to drinking the thick, tepid, metallic liquid, and had made themselves sick on the rotting river of life. Pharaoh's heart was unchanged, but when the Hebrew slaves, who had quickly regained their respect for Moses, did not report for work on the Sabbath day, no punishments were commanded for their disobedience – the Egyptians had bigger concerns on their minds.

The plague had not affected Goshen, where the slaves had their homes, and those Egyptians, and even some of the guards, who had been friendly with the Hebrew workers, were given fresh water to drink. Many, for the first time in their lives, praised the Almighty who had preserved His people in such catastrophic times.

"Let my people go, Pharaoh," Moses commanded, standing once again on the bank of the Nile at sunrise. Once again the king of Egypt and his priests had come to the sacred river, not to bless it this time, but to pray that it should release them from its wrath. "If you will not," Moses continued, "I will fill your borders with frogs!"

The king made no reply, save a baleful glare, and Moses motioned to his brother and gave him simple instructions. Aaron stretched out the wooden staff over the waters of the Nile, and almost immediately the priests who were standing with Pharaoh began to give cries of delight.

Their rejoicing was short-lived however when the waters, which had become clear and fresh for a moment, suddenly began to bubble, and then a thick, green slime was seen seeping up from the riverbed. Now there were cries of an entirely different nature, as large, ugly frogs leaped up out of the river and onto the clothing and faces of the Egyptians who were there.

“Shall my sorcerers not also show this power?” Pharaoh asked, turning to Yambras, but there was noticeably less confidence in his voice after he had realized that his priests had not been able to reverse the last plague, their claims of power notwithstanding.

This time, as a result of Yambras’ words, a summoning of the goddess Heqt, Lucifer sent forth a contingent of Dominions led by the spirit that received worship under that name. These wicked angels used their abilities to summon the frogs that already lived near the Nile, and lined them up along the banks. It could easily be seen that these frogs had not come out of the river, for those who were appearing had not yet become very plentiful, and once again Pharaoh favored the Hebrew brothers with a haughty look, and then retreated (a little quickly, perhaps) to his palace.

As Yambras was leaving Moses said to him, “Tell your master I will see him in the evening hours, and that he will not find this plague so pleasant as the last.” The sorcerer turned away from the Hebrew’s knowing stare, and hurried off after his king.

More frogs came out of the Nile, and still more, a seemingly endless barrage of sacred animals from sacred waters, but how gladly the heathen sorcerers would have seen them absent from their presence. In addition to being plentiful, the frogs were also energetic. They did not pause for a moment on the river’s banks, but began to move toward the city, and in a matter of mere hours they had intruded into every house, every room, every vessel they could find.

That evening, as Moses had predicted, a messenger from the palace appeared at Miriam’s door. “Pharaoh... requests... your presence, prince Moses,” the Egyptian said, making a great effort to be polite. Moses went to get Aaron, and then, taking his brother’s sons once again, they made their way through the twilight streets to the king’s home.

This time, as the Hebrew had anticipated, Yannos stood with his king, and with his most trusted disciple.

“My magicians have not been able to remove the frogs they brought forth,” Pharaoh said, ridiculously omitting to mention that the vast majority of the animals, and all those that had invaded the city and the palace, were those that IaHWeH had brought forth from the river. Yambras kept his eyes lowered, but his fury was apparent on his face. Behind them the demons Zaphkiel and Kaspriel sneered; they had been unable to prevent their charges from submitting to Pharaoh’s humbling request to speak with the Hebrews. Their human victims,

though quite skilled in self-control, fought for no greater glory than their own, and were entirely unwilling to risk life and health to continue their charade. The lesser priests would have nothing further to do with the painful contest.

As for Lucifer, his ability to induce fear in Pharaoh was nothing compared to the self-indulgent monarchs' concerns for his own safety. He would not submit to kicking frogs around for seven days, the length of time he had endured the bloody waters, and the arch demon could do nothing to change his mind.

"Entreat Yahweh that He may take the frogs away from me, and from my people, and I will let the slaves go so that they may do sacrifice unto Him."

"I am at your service," Moses replied meekly. "When shall I ask that Yahweh remove the frogs from you, your servants and your people? He will destroy the frogs that plague you and your house, and they will remain only by the river."

"Tomorrow," Pharaoh said. "Let it be tomorrow." The only thing preventing him from saying "At once" was that he believed he could endure another day and night, and perhaps by that point the magicians would have thought of something to relieve the plague or maybe, just maybe, the awful, slimy creatures would just *go away*.

"As Pharaoh commands," Moses said, bowing low before the king.

* * * * *

When Pharaoh changed his mind upon the death of the frogs and refused to let the Israelites go, few were surprised. Though his people waded through piles of rotting amphibian corpses, undisputable evidence of the power of Elohim to give life and to take it away without any form of trickery, the king of Egypt refused to humble his heart.

Stinging gnats filled the land as a result of Pharaoh's continued refusal. The tiny, irritating insects stung the Egyptians and their cattle along their arms and legs, on their necks, in their ears. Yannos and Yambras called upon Seb, the god of the earth, from which the third plague had sprung. When the Seraph instructed by Lucifer brought his mighty presence to bear, however, he could do little more than swirl a few fragments of grit around. The confidence of the people in their sorcerers had fled, and Heaven's power bound the illusions of even the most powerful demons. The sorcerers bowed low before Pharaoh, and they said, "This is the finger of Elohim. We do not have the power to send such a curse."

By this point, however, Pharaoh had no need of evidence. He had been slowly rejecting the last rays of light. Raziel no longer stood over him, but distant beams still played over his soul from Heaven, lest there be a faint quickening, the slightest indication of repentance. I marveled at the mercy and longsuffering being shown to this upstart human who had such pretensions of greatness. What was his little kingdom compared to the Eternal City? What were his fragments of

gold compared to the streets of Heaven? What was his authority over a few mortal swordsmen compared to IaHWeH Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts?

Large, venomous flies covered the land of Egypt from border to border, save only the place where the slaves dwelt. Even in Goshen, however, the Hebrew stayed behind closed doors lest they be seen and mauled by the frantic Egyptians. Limbs were swollen with poison, and food and drink were well nigh unpalatable, since the vile creatures would go from place to place, landing on refuse, bodies, filth, and then buzzing through houses polluting everything they touched. Even this was less intolerable than the rings of young insects as they attached themselves to the faces of the aged and infants alike, ringing their eyes and drinking away the tears of the wailing sufferers. Nothing like this had ever been seen before.

The magicians did not even attempt to call upon Khepfi, deity of insects. The demons spoke little to one another, and Lucifer, understandably, cut his losses and returned to his work in Bashan, leaving Sammael his regent to muster what zeal he could among the demons and direct it into a growing hatred of the Hebrew slaves that were being spared these unimaginable horrors.

At this point Pharaoh seemed willing to bargain. Gone was much of his arrogance in Moses' presence, and he agreed to let the Israelites offer their sacrifices... only within the borders of Egypt. When Moses pointed out that Hebrew sacrifices involved the killing of animals that were sacred to the Egyptians, and would undoubtedly only fan the growing flames of anti-Hebrew fervor, Pharaoh conceded the point. As soon as the flies were withdrawn at the prayer of Moses, however, his old stubbornness returned, and he would not give any permission for sacrifices to be made, either within or without the borders of Egypt. His councilors, his priests, his sorcerers, all were begging their king to let the Hebrews go. He would not, he insisted, be humbled by the God of slaves!

At Moses' command the cattle of Egypt died while the animals of Israel were preserved. The evil creatures calling themselves Apis and Hathor had no response to give to their priests when their names were chanted. Refusing to believe that Moses and Aaron truly held such power as they claimed, Pharaoh sent spies into Goshen to see about the state of their cattle. "If anything, Great One," the messenger reported, "they have grown stronger and more vital!" Of course, it may have been merely the case that the messenger had not seen a healthy beast since the first plague. In any event, Pharaoh dismissed his servant in disgust, but did not even call for Moses and Aaron; he would not let the Hebrews get their way.

The brothers made it a point of visiting Pharaoh once again, standing in his presence and saying, "You do your subjects great harm, Pharaoh! You have let Egypt be spoiled by reason of your pride, and your great people suffer under the burden of disease and hunger. Yahweh Elohim will make your land as the wilderness, and your people as dry bones, if you will not let His people go!"

Pharaoh would not listen, and Moses said, "Very well then." Aaron took out a handful of ashes he had brought with him from Goshen and gave it to Moses.

“Receive the pain you have inflicted upon the people of Israel.” As the prophet sprinkled the ashes about, an angelic wind lifted the tiny particles up into the air, and they spread out over all the land – except for the camp of Hebrew slaves. Wherever the fragments landed, whether on human or beast, sores and boils broke out. They were not as painful to endure as the lash of a whip, but they spread out to areas of skin seldom broken by the taskmasters’ lashes.

The sorcerers limped into the presence of Pharaoh, and one fell unconscious at his feet. “Let Pharaoh have mercy on his people,” Yambras said, his thoughts of standing before Moses having long vanished. His master Yannos had not been seen since the boils broke out, and with good reason – the shadowy human’s own enchantments had kept him from suffering the plague. He did not wish his immunity to be known, for Pharaoh and his fellow officers would surely put him to death for not revealing the secret of such comfort. Yannos’ primary allegiance, however, was to one far more powerful than the human monarch.

Kafziel, Prince of the fallen Dominions, burst forth from the palace and fled from Egypt, refusing to endure the sight of his worshippers being so debased. As Thoth, the god of wisdom and medicine, he had received a great deal of adulation from those who attended and visited his temple. At the advent of this sixth plague, however, those who were not crying out to him in helpless misery were cursing him for refusing to heal them. Only in such a time of great calamity would blasphemy of this order pass unpunished, but the proud demon would not tolerate it, and he left for more hospitable lands.

Still Pharaoh would not let the people go. “Let Yahweh do what He will,” he said in his madness. “When He has exhausted His arsenal, Egypt will still stand!”

Huge hailstones pelted the land, crashing into buildings, slaying men in the streets, and ruining crops. Those plants that escaped the chunks of ice were incinerated by fire that broke out as a result of lightning crashing down from heaven and flames racing along the ground in a manner not even the sorcerers had envisioned. One of Heaven’s highest Principalities bore this burden, and unleashed his power on the land. Although they had fled the palace at the time of the sixth plague, some of the sorcerers kept a close eye on the events that followed, terrified by the power of the Hebrews’ God that they had so long despised. There could no longer be any doubt that they were dealing with an incredible, supernatural, power.

This time, a mercy had been extended to the Egyptians. Before the hailstones had begun to fall, Moses made it known that anyone who gathered his or her remaining animals (for even among the Egyptians there were a few beasts left) into safety would not suffer the misfortune that was coming upon the land. Those who had learned reverence obeyed, but there were many who said of Moses what the antediluvians had said of Noah, “He speaks of *what* coming from the sky?” Hail was not known to the Egyptians beyond some very old stories – rain was rare enough – and many believed that Moses was merely making boastful claims

based on what he had previously been able to accomplish. As with those before the flood, they were disappointed in their hopes.

“Does he think to win their hearts?” Sammael fumed as he drifted among the homes of the Egyptians whose animals had been spared. “This shall not be endured!” The fallen power went whispers and quickly summoned a large army of demons, but as they were about to attempt an attack on the land of Goshen with whatsoever power they were permitted, they found themselves barred by the Host of Heaven, with Ariel and his eleven mighty Seraphim standing at the front of the divine army. Pulsing with impotent rage, the mighty demon disbanded his troops, and returned to the palace to consider other alternatives.

As for Pharaoh, he had called Moses once again and confessed, “I have sinned this time, in standing against the power of your God. Yahweh is righteous, and my people and I are unjust. Ask of Him, for we have endured enough, to remove this plague of thunder and hail, and I will let you go... you will stay no longer.”

“Mighty Nuht has not been able to command the sky to resist the Almighty,” Moses said. “As soon as I depart from the city, I will spread my hands unto Yahweh, and the thunder and hail shall cease, that you may know that the earth belongs to Yahweh. But for all this, I know that you will not fear Yahweh Elohim.”

Pharaoh protested, saying, “I will surely let the Hebrews go!” As soon as the plague was lifted, however, and the fear that had inspired these promises had lifted, he added sin to sin, and gave no command that the Hebrews be released. “Let them go if they wish,” he said, not going so far as to overtly forbid their departure, but this compromise was not what he had promised to the prophet of Elohim. In truth, Pharaoh’s despondent and afflicted army would have done little to prevent the slaves from leaving due to IaHWeH’s intervention, but every consideration, every opportunity to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Almighty was given to Egypt.

Locusts, the terror of the Egyptians, next came forth at the word of Moses, and the myth of Isis, goddess of the land and crops, was unable to prevent this great misfortune. My charge had been instructed to stand alone now, leaving Aaron out of the matter, for the Almighty wished it to be known that He Himself would send the final plagues. With this eighth, no mere angel summoned the locusts; by the Word of Elohim, by El Michael Himself, they sprang forth and swept over Egypt like a cloud of death. Yet in all this, Pharaoh resisted the voice of conscience, the rays of light from Heaven, the pleas of his people, and the words of Moses. Perhaps, had he not already resisted for so long, the severity of the locust attack would have caused him to release the slaves. He had gone too far, however, and realized that if he submitted now, he would never again be able to command the respect of his nation. He would weather this storm, his fury declared, for until that time Yahweh had demonstrated no direct power over death. As long as he lived, Pharaoh swore, he would not bow.

This was not what he said to Moses, however, asking him to call off the locusts, and saying that he would, “surely let Israel go.” The prophet was not by any means convinced, but did according to the word of Pharaoh, and the hungry insects were blown off into the Red Sea by a strong wind from the west.

“He has stained the honor of Ra himself!” Yambras thundered as he struggled to breathe the thick, dark atmosphere. It was not so much that the sun had been obscured, but that the very air seemed to have been made smoky around them. It was such a smoke as extended upward, completely blocking the light of day from reaching the land. Even the angels looking on marveled, as the dome of spiritual darkness covering Egypt had been made detectable to the humans within it except for those living in Goshen. “Let them feel the conditions under which we have had to operate in their homeland,” Adaiyel said. “Even the Hebrews will one day appreciate our work more clearly, having experienced this dreadful burden themselves.” I agreed; this was a fitting result of Pharaoh’s pride, and it was made a plague by the confusion and terror of the people who endured it without explanation.

Pharaoh called for Moses after enduring this for three days. “Go,” he said, “and serve Yahweh, only leave behind your cattle so that I may be assured that you will return. Take your families, but leave your animals.” This represented yet a further concession from the king of Egypt. Just before the plague of locusts, Pharaoh had been willing to let the men go into the wilderness to perform the required sacrifice, but the old, young and women were commanded to remain behind. As with this latest attempt at bargaining, the Almighty would accept no partial measures. Pharaoh was to do no less than he was commanded.

“And what shall we offer to Yahweh?” Moses asked. “Will the Egyptians provide us with sacrifices and burnt offerings?” This statement infuriated Pharaoh, for Moses knew full well that the Egyptians could ill afford to part with what few beasts they had left; and further, no Egyptians would surrender their revered cattle for the sake of a Hebrew sacrifice. “Our cattle must also go with us,” the prophet clarified. “Not a hoof shall be left behind, for of them we shall offer to Yahweh, and we know not what manner of beast we shall sacrifice until we arrive at the appointed place.”

Long before this, Pharaoh had come to understand that the slaves had no intention of returning. This was the reason he first attempted to induce them to leave their families behind, and then their cattle. Now, he was certain that if the Hebrews passed beyond the borders of Egypt, they would not be coming back. “Depart from my presence,” he said. “Look to your life; come to me no more, for in the day that you see my face, you will die.”

“Pharaoh has spoken well,” Moses said. “I will not seek to come before you again.”

* * * * *

“It is enough,” IaHWeH informed Moses in a dream. “The misery of the Egyptians has continued long enough, and my power has been seen among them. Those who will bow before me will bow, and those who will be obstinate will be obstinate. Let those who are just and clean among the Egyptians go with you when you depart, but the unjust and filthy shall remain in the land. I will bring one more plague upon Egypt, and afterwards Pharaoh will let you go. When he shall let you go, he will thrust you out with force. Speak now into the ears of your people, and let every man ask wages of his neighbor the Egyptian. Let every woman ask for things of value, of silver and of gold.”

The people did so, and obtained such favor of the Egyptians – either by means of fear or genuine affection – that they went a long way toward being compensated for their years of hard labor. Moses also related to the people the nature of the last affliction, as he had been informed by the Almighty: “About midnight I will go out through the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on the throne down to the firstborn of the maidservants behind the mill, and even the firstborn of all the beasts. And there shall be a cry throughout all the land of Egypt such as there never was, nor shall there be again. But against the children of Israel and their cattle not even a dog will bark, that you may know how IaHWeH has put a difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites.”

Despite Moses’ acquiescence of Pharaoh’s command not to enter again into his presence, the prophet was led by the force of the message he bore to again present himself before the monarch. This time, however, he made no requests. He did not ask for Pharaoh to release the Hebrews, but instead said, after describing the plague that was coming, “All your servants will come down unto me and bow, saying, ‘Depart, with all the ones who wish to go with you.’ After that we will go out.” Not waiting for a response, for he knew no favorable one would be forthcoming, Moses left the palace.

That night the Hebrews were gathered into their houses. The blood of lambs was spread over the doorposts of the homes in Goshen according to the instructions of the Almighty. In addition to the Israelites, many Egyptians were also there, having asked for mercy from the promised calamity, and even some of the servants from the house of Pharaoh, led by the princess who had raised Moses from childhood, had gone down into the houses of the slaves, and there awaited the will of the Most High.

With the leaven removed from their houses and a ritual meal prepared to commemorate the occasion, the Israelites ate quickly, prayed quietly, and waited.

At midnight five divine beings descended through the void and hovered by means of majestic wings over the royal city in Egypt. At a word from El Michael, the Figure in the center, the archangels Uriel, Gabriel, Raphael and Camael flew off in the four directions, grimly engaged upon a strange work. Michael Himself descended into the city, and made His way to the palace of the king.

A short time later, Moses and Aaron were called from their houses by solemn-faced messengers from the king. “May my lords show favor unto their servants,” the Egyptians said, bowing low, “and come with us to the presence of Pharaoh.”

When they arrived, they found the house in mourning over the heir to the throne. Indeed, they had heard sounds of great anguish all along their journey to Pharaoh. The king of Egypt looked up at them with dark pain marring his features, and he said, “Rise up, and depart from among my people, both you and all the children of Israel. Go, serve Yahweh, as you have said.”

“Take your flocks also,” he continued, intent on making it clear that he was offering no compromise this time. “Take your herds, as you have said. Be gone and... and bless me also.”

Moses and Aaron looked at each other with wonder filling their eyes. Could they truly depart? Was the time of their nation’s slavery truly over? They had no time to consider, for the councilors, dressed in royal apparel, but clad also in terrible boils and scabs, said, “You have heard the word of Pharaoh. Go! Depart quickly, before we are all made dead men.” Moses and his brother quickly turned and strode back to Goshen.

The sorcerers that had opposed them had not made an appearance that final meeting.

Word quickly spread throughout the settlement, and as soon as they knew it was safe, the Israelites gathered in the streets of Goshen. They had laden their animals with all they wished to take, having prepared ahead of time for the event they knew was coming. They brought with them the wages they had obtained from the Egyptians, and clothing, and cloth to make more clothing, and such food as they could carry. Before the sun had made its appearance in the eastern sky, the Israelites had organized into companies, and were marching joyfully from Rameses to Succoth, and from thence onward to freedom.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

SECTION 3: TRIBULATION

CHAPTER 9: A HOLY PLACE

“Who shall ascend into the hill of Yahweh? Or who shall stand in His holy place?” (Psalm 24:3)

During most of the plagues we angels had mostly been witnesses, and witnesses we would often be, but we were to have a somewhat more active role in the journey through the wilderness. As the children of Israel walked, the twelve Chalkydri soared around them, trailing holy fire over the scenes of rejoicing. Adaiyel, Rinnael and myself were at the head of a multitude of guardian spirits. Before us all El Michael, High Prince of Heaven, had descended. He had wrapped Himself in a column of moisture so that a visible pillar of cloud, swirling like a whirlwind, led the way. By night a holy fire could be seen within the column, providing illumination by which the Hebrews could see, yet it was veiled by the cloud lest its full glory be known.

The praise of humanity surged Heavenward, providing a great and welcome contrast to the cries of their suffering in years past, and the howls of anguish coming forth from the Egyptians the night before.

That final plague had been struck against Pharaoh himself, the deified son of the high god of Egypt. The one thing Pharaoh did not believe IaHWeH had, direct power over life and death, was shown to be well within the hand of the Creator. He had broken, he had wept, and finally, he had descended into a great despondency, from which it seemed impossible for his counselors to rouse him. Yannos and Yambras, though they had known to stay far from the royal chamber while Moses and Aaron were there, now appeared again, and urged their king to stand on his feet.

Lucifer and his demons had been powerless to prevent the events that transpired after the final plague. The archfiend himself had been there when El Michael entered the palace and gently, painlessly, withdrew the breath of life from the firstborn of Pharaoh. Before departing, Michael and Azazel looked at each other across the dead body. No words were exchanged, even in whisper, but a more silent, more fundamental communication between the two took place, a universe of meaning in every instant that passed. Finally, both turned away and left the room.

Now, after the departure of the holy angels from Egypt, save a few remaining to record the events for Heaven, Ba'al of the House of Fear demonstrated that he was by no means superior to his human charge in terms of his pride or obstinate resolve. "They think to have escaped me," Lucifer said. "Let us see how far from Egypt they can truly go!"

The Dragon gathered his forces together: all his arch demons, all his Ba'alim, all the chiefs of the fallen Orders. As one they rose from their rallying point in Egypt, and swept over Pharaoh's forces, preparing to change their despair and lament into fury. Not a house remained untouched by the work of the archangels, and the mourning was to be converted into bitterness and hatred against those whom the Egyptians blamed for the deaths of their firstborn. When a messenger arrived from a city near the borders of Egypt, revealing that the Hebrew slaves were indeed heading into the wilderness and singing songs of freedom, the fallen angels struck.

The arch deceiver descended into Pharaoh, taking command of his faculties. Rarely in the history of your world have there been humans who were given as many chances, as many signs, calling them to worship IaHWeH. The trial was fair, for the king of Egypt had been raised from his birth to honor the gods of Egypt, and daily the sorceries of his priests and magicians were before him. Even so, he knew in his heart that the power of the King of Heaven was far greater than anything he had yet seen, acknowledging it even at the last when asking Moses and Aaron for a blessing. Yet as soon as the danger was removed and his fears had calmed, that wicked pride returned, and Satan found his reins an easy target to grasp.

Other mighty angels drew upon the grief of Pharaoh's captains and high officers, sank within them to add yet more hatred to their minds, and stirred them on to desperate action. Commands were issued, horses and chariots were brought, and soon the armored host of Egypt rode out to seek vengeance upon those who had spoiled their land financially, agriculturally, and spiritually.

Guided by the Almighty, Moses turned the people south. It was an unusual maneuver, and one that Moses and Aaron, who knew the land, contemplated with some surprise. Yet the instructions were clear, and so the people went as they were directed. It was not long before the Israelites came to the bank of the Red Sea, but before they could even question the decision made to travel in this direction, messengers from the rear of the group were approaching the leaders, shouting in a panicked voice that the armies of Egypt had been stirred against them, and were indeed almost upon them.

Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, drew near to Moses. As the people began to cry out in fear they said to the humans who had been guiding them, suddenly forgetting the significance of the pillar that went on before, "Where there no graves in Egypt, that you have taken us out to die in the wilderness? Why have you done this to us, to bring us out of Egypt?"

Others who were nearby, and who had supported Dathan in Moses' first meeting with the elders, began to take up the complaint. "Is this not what we told you in Egypt?" they said. "Did we not tell you, 'Leave us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to remain as servants to the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

Some, who have read this record as it appears in your Histories, have said, "How strange that the people should so soon forget the plagues, and the power of the Almighty who led them!" It is a valid observation; nevertheless many who say this would have fared no better when faced with the reality of water before them and swords behind. Many, indeed, look upon these words as "stories" designed to teach faith, but even we angels had a measure of sympathy for the men, so recently steeped in idolatry, cut off from their weekly opportunities to rest their bodies and minds in praise of the Creator, and facing sudden, immediate danger. There, amidst the smell of the water and the terrified faces of the messengers who had seen and heard the thundering chariots, the Israelites were being invited upward into a higher sphere of trust. It is one badly needed by everyone who is to face a similar trial for the sake of his or her faith. Let those who read not say merely, "We would have done better," but let them *learn* to do better and thus stand where others have fallen short.

Moses was one who had learned this lesson, for in his years amidst the tents of Midian he had wrestled with the word I once gave him in a dream, "You are also Pharaoh." Moses had come to the realization, through deepening layers of trust, that he was not the one with the power to direct his own course if he wished to travel safely through the unknown obstacles his life would provide. It was not, as later events would unfortunately show, a realization that was fully perfected within him, but that day, before the Red Sea and just as the first riders of Egypt appeared over the horizon, Moses shone as an angel.

Moses stood up to full height before the opponents and the confused; he raised his staff over his head and said, "Fear not! Stand still, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which He will show to you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall soon not see them anymore, or ever again! Yahweh will fight for you, and you will hold your peace!"

As he was speaking the cloud that had gone before them spread out over the camp, and then it swirled down behind them – between the Israelites and the Egyptians – and made a wall through which neither side could see. Though Pharaoh's forces pulled up before colliding with the strange barrier, the demons guiding them plunged right onward, only to be repelled by the glory within the cloud. Some of the bolder ones soared over the cloud, and others went around it, but they found an army of angels with swords drawn awaiting them, should they dare to descend upon the men of Israel. Even the tempters inciting Dathan and Abiram to their proud speeches, along with their major supporters, were forced away from the crowd, and the men who had long been under their influence fell silent, staring with mute wonder at the protection provided by the Defender of their people.

Moses then turned to the cloud that had been before them, and made ready to speak a petition. He was given little opportunity for prayer, however, only a reminder that IaHWeH had *already* pledged to keep His people safe.

El Michael spoke to Moses out of the cloud with a voice that sounded like the roll of thunder to all but the prophet himself. “Why do you cry out to me? Speak to the children of Israel that they may go forward, and lift up your rod and stretch your hand out over the sea, and divide it. The children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea, and I... behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians that they may follow them; and I will be honored amongst Pharaoh, his host, his chariots and horsemen. And the Egyptians will know that I am IaHWeH when I have obtained honor among them.”

The side of the cloud facing Israel had thinned, and the glory shone through more brightly than they had seen it previously. The entire group of travelers were given light, and by this light Moses sent his messengers out to the various divisions and tribes saying, “Prepare, for soon we march.” Many misunderstood, thinking that this meant the Egyptians would be destroyed beyond the cloud, and that they would backtrack before going around the gulf that was barring their way. Others, who had heard Moses’ explanation thereafter, understood that the sea would part before them. All prepared to continue their journey.

When the last of the preparations were made, Moses stood on the very bank, where the water just met the land, and he stretched out his staff. At a word from the Almighty, the Dominions raised themselves from around us and insinuated their presence into the physical world. Though invisible, their passage was felt like a rushing wind, and the air indeed helped them, guiding them by the hand of the Most High Himself. With the wind in their fists, the angels under the command of their Chief Zahariel descended into the waters and lifted, drawing the fluid into a wall and fanning the moisture away from the seabed to provide a narrow, straight way through the roiling waters on either side.

This done, the wall of cloud and fire behind them swirled together, once more forming the whirlwind pillar, and the Angel of IaHWeH once again resumed His place before the Israelites, starting through the passage in the sea as if to demonstrate that the path was safe for the humans to follow. Moses, Aaron and Miriam began to walk, following the gently glowing column while their guardians, Adaiyel, Rinnael and myself, led the angels.

Now during the time in which the wall had kept the Egyptians back, Pharaoh was keeping the fervor of his men high. Under the direction of Lucifer, he reminded his army of the suffering they and their families had endured “because of the Hebrews,” and that the honor of their homeland and the favor of their gods had been stolen from them by the sorceries of one who had enjoyed the hospitality of the palace itself.

“Which of your children, who now lie dead,” Pharaoh asked, “was shown such favor as this Moses? Which of you was given such delicate instruction in our sacred Mysteries by the best of Egypt’s priests? Which of you had the opportunity to command our armies in the name of the throne, only to despise the throne itself, and consider the life of a slave preferable to the life of a king? Ingratitude! Thanklessness! Such as Moses are all these Israelites, who have made better slaves than they would ever make free men! Let us compel them to return with us at the points of our swords, or slay them here in the desert to relieve them of their misery, and let us thereby restore the blessings and honor of our gods.”

When the wall dissolved and sped away from them through the entrance to the sea, the soldiers marveled, and Pharaoh himself was momentarily overcome, but the demons had seen (from a respectful distance) what was being done, and they quickly deadened the senses of the men under their power. “Do not be afraid of his sorceries!” Pharaoh commanded. “His enchantments do not last forever, and every plague that we endured had an end. Let us rush upon them quickly, for we have chariots and horses, and let us overtake them in the sea before his desert magic fades! If he intends to cross this gulf we may slay them, or force them to return with us, and they will keep the waters up that they themselves not perish.”

It was a good plan, as far as pagan reasoning went. If the swifter horses and chariots had indeed overtaken the Hebrews during their crossing, for the sake of His people Elohim may have kept the waters up to preserve the Egyptians also. Even if Moses were the only one kept alive, the king of Egypt believed, his enchantment would hold. Yet Pharaoh did not recognize the presence of the Most High in the wall, or in the cloud. He did not understand that the One who commanded the plagues still held the ultimate power over life and death, and could have called the breath forth from every Egyptian while preserving the life of each Hebrew. Yet the Egyptians were used to wonders, and so wonders were provided, that they might know the power of the One they were resisting until the very end.

When the Egyptians had entered the passage, the cloud that was guiding the Israelites again lifted itself and went backward to the pursuers. As it flowed over the Israelites it began to burn. The wall of opaque moisture was largely stripped away, and the holy fire of the Shekinah bathed the entire scene in unearthly light. As the pillar of fire descended behind the Egyptians and they urged their horses on all the more swiftly, we ourselves flew backward, and by the command of El Michael we began to confuse their horses, trouble their wheels, and generally cause them to slow almost to a halt as they struggled to go this direction or that.

The demons rose up against us, drawing their dark blades. They did not resist us for very long, however, knowing the power that was there within the pillar of holy flames. After a few brief skirmishes wherein few angels or demons were even wounded, the dark spirits withdrew, and left the humans they had guided to reap the reward of their decisions.

“Let us flee from the face of Israel,” one of the Egyptian captains shouted, “for Yahweh fights for them against us!” The realization came too late. While all that time of struggling against horses and uncooperative chariots was passing, the Israelites had reached the far end of the passage, and stood behind Moses as he looked back through the passage in the sea. Thunder pealed forth from the heavens, and Moses heard the voice of the Almighty speaking to him, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come down again upon the Egyptians, and their chariots and horsemen.”

As the sun broke over the eastern horizon, Moses raised the rod that had been the symbol of IaHWeH’s power and pointed it out over the breach in the water. As he did so the column of cloud rose up into the sky, and from it came thunder and lightning. As these blasts of light and sound filled the senses of the onlookers, the walls of water began to collapse. The Egyptians abandoned their restless animals and failing chariots and began a hopeless race for the shore, some back toward Egypt, and a few after the Israelites. None reached safety before the Dominions relinquish their hold on the waves, and the sea rushed together, engulfing the mighty and proud army of Egypt.

Moses looked out over the place where the host of his former country had been. He had commanded men just like them forty years earlier; some may even have been the same men. He had believed, in those days, that he knew what strength was; but now, standing before a people who had been set free by means of mighty wonders, and contemplating the sudden destruction of the pride of Mizraim, he was awed and humbled by the One who had sent him on his mission. The champion of Heaven turned and looked at his people, and wonder filled his heart. Inspiration settled upon them like rain, and the chants of victory all around swelled into song.

As one the people sang a great hymn of praise to the Almighty who had led them forth from slavery. Miriam and the women took up instruments and danced through the crowd, carrying a refrain and answering the stanzas with the words,

“Sing you all unto Yahweh, for He has triumphed gloriously;
The horse and the rider He’s thrown into the sea.”

* * * * *

When the Israelites began to move, leaving the pain and country of their past behind, the pillar of cloud had again descended and led their way, the passage through the sea having saved them an even longer journey. Yet even with the time the Almighty had shaved off their trip by His wisdom and power, they were more than three days arriving at their first major encampment.

During those first three, the supplies that they had brought with them from Egypt began to dwindle. In this regard the people of Israel would be tested more than once. It was among the Egyptians who were traveling with the Israelites that the complaints first began. The initial murmurs were infrequent, and irritating to

hearers, for though the way was plain and hard, the joy of their deliverance, and the impression of the great miracle they had witnessed at the Red Sea was still quite fresh in every mind. Yet as the hot days wore on and thirst began to weigh upon the resolve to ration water, word began to reach Moses and his siblings that the people were becoming distressed.

As the cloud led them on, Moses knew that the direction it was taking them held no water – at least, not that he could recall. The only possible place they might find refreshment was a fountain named Marah that lay along this path, but that would not help; the waters were called “Marah” for a reason, the word signifying *bitterness*.

Yet the cloud led them on, right to the fountain, and Moses said nothing as the people, at first joyous because they had reached salvation from thirst, came to the bitter realization that the water was well suited to their mood. There is much that a thirsty man may endure to preserve his own life, but this fountain’s water was beyond the limit; it was simply unpalatable, and even parched throats could not force the solution of awful chemicals down.

Moses was distressed as the people began to cast looks and hard words his way, again forgetting the Majesty in whose presence they stood. The pillar of cloud stood as a silent witness to the providence of the Almighty, but in fear for their lives the irreverence of the multitude broke through. The prophet of Elohim turned to the cloud, in the full view of everyone, and prostrated himself, reminding the onlookers that IaHWeH, who had brought them up out of Egypt, was still with them. The people fell silent, becoming mindful of the manifestation’s significance, and their place.

Gentle thunder rolled forth from the whirlwind, and Moses stood up. He walked over to a tree that was growing nearby, and to the astonishment of all, he grasped it and pulled back, uprooting the thin foliage. The prophet brought the tree over to the fountain and cast it in. Without hesitating for a moment he then knelt down and began to drink. After a brief pause, others also drew near the flowing water and tasted. It was sweet.

As the grateful and humbled Israelites slaked their thirst and then refilled their leather skins, Moses faced them. “Thus says Yahweh,” he declared, “If you will diligently listen and obey the voice of Yahweh your Almighty, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will hearken unto His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases on you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am Yahweh that heals you.” As He had healed the bitter water, so He could heal Israel.

They moved on to a place named “Elim” where there was water and shade in abundance. They remained there for a time, recovering from the journey thus far, and resting from their flight from Egypt. They had gone from slavery to departure with little rest in between, and Elim afforded the Israelites the first real opportunity to be still and refresh themselves. We moved among the humans,

shedding comfort and the light of inspiration upon them. The elders of Israel wrote their reflections on their time in Egypt while the younger people sang and danced. Many came to Moses and Aaron to ask for prayer, while Miriam taught the women of the things she had learned from her younger brother's experience in Midian.

It was with some hesitancy that Israel roused itself again and departed from the greenery eastward into the wilderness. They'd had their first taste of true freedom, and it was sweet – but the little oasis was not their home. Canaan awaited, if they would reach out and grasp it in faith, a country far better than this little spot, and theirs forever according to the will of the Most High. Often men will cling to the good that they see before them, ignoring the call to greatness that lies just beyond their field of view. With encouragement from the prophetic children of Amram, the sons and daughters of Jacob shouldered their burdens, and began once again to move.

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One thing Elim had not provided in abundance was food. There was enough to satisfy immediate wants, but nothing that could be carried in any great quantities, and herein lay the second great lesson for the people of Israel some days after their departure from the last place of rest.

At Moses' prayer, prompted by the murmurings of the Israelites (led in no small part by the Egyptian multitude and spurred on by Dathan and Abiram) the Almighty gave this reply, "Behold, I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather in a certain amount every day. By this I will try them, to see if they will walk according to my Law."

"And it shall come to pass," He continued, "that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much on that day as on others."

As Moses and Aaron stood before the discontent congregation and spoke, the cloud flashed with light, at least as brightly as it had to the Egyptians, giving great power to their words. Opposition was stilled in the face of this clear manifestation of divine power, and awed silence met the announcement that Moses was commissioned to give. "At evening you will eat flesh," he said, repeating the words of IaHWeH, "and in the morning you will be filled with bread, and you will know that I am Yahweh your Almighty."

That evening, according to the word of Elohim, a wind came over the camp, and a large quantity of quails landed near the Israelites. They were quickly captured, and quickly prepared for food. Angels had guided the animals to the Hebrews, and we watched the characters of those who were recipients of this undeserved gift. Some exhibited kindness and shared far and wide before eating. Others thought only of themselves, and their guardians beheld it. Often humans judge success or defeat by the great and visible things a man may do; for us, our work as

observers and helpers by far outshone what we had been able to do with our fiery swords. Satan and his demons were already defeated, as far as most of us were concerned, and all would be convinced at the Cross. But what we could do to help the souls still in the valley of decision, making that eternal choice between victory and destruction – this was the purpose for which we had been sent among men: “ministering spirits,” as your Histories say. In humans, likewise, character is far more easily seen in the little choices than in the occasional, noteworthy acts.

By no ordinary means was food supplied to the Hebrews in the wilderness. Every morning but the seventh of the week, the mighty Ophanim, angels of the Throne, were commissioned to go forth and saturate the dew with a blend of nutrients perfectly suited for the traveling humans’ use. When the water of the night evaporated, the compounds that were dissolved in the dew reacted with the air and formed little round flakes.

When the people awakened and beheld the ground covered with the snowy substance, they asked, “What is this?”

“This is the bread that Yahweh has given you to eat,” Moses said. “Let each person gather of it as much as he needs for his use. Let the gatherers obtain as much as for each member of the household, those that remain in the tents.”

Those chosen as gatherers went forth, and took up as much as seemed fitting, though some gathered more than others and some less – for they did not know how much would be “enough” to satisfy the appetite, as this was an entirely new thing to them. Even so, when the flakes were measured out in the tents, they proved to be just the right amount for the family that had gathered. The *manna*, which means, “What is it,” and was so called because they had no true name for it, was prepared by either grinding it with water to make dough and then baking it as bread, or boiling it in water to make a nourishing broth. In either form, it was both filling and delicious.

Each day, they were told, they should gather only enough for the immediate meals, and there would be a fresh supply in the morning. Some, testing this, ate less than they would have, and attempted to save a portion of the prepared food for the next day. Each time, the food rotted and was found to be covered with worms. So divinely nutritious were the meals made from this perfect blend of food elements that every microbe, every parasite’s spore, could immediately put it to use.

The only day on which this did not occur was the Sabbath. As the sixth day passed into the seventh, the blessing placed upon those hours in Eden took effect, and the work of decay was arrested in the elements of the Israelites’ food. Here was clear evidence of the power that was shed abroad upon the commandment that had been so long forsaken by the enslaved Hebrews. The work of the Throne-angels had been entirely untouched by the curse of sin upon the earth, being produced from pure elements, and the manna was thus able to respond to the Sabbath blessing more clearly than anything else but the redeemed human soul. The impression this sign made was not lost among the wise of the Israelites.

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Lucifer had retreated back to Egypt, unwilling to leave his seat of power, after the Israelites departed from Elim. His presence would come forth to trouble the Hebrews from time to time, but for the most part he was content to act through his appointed messengers. Whereas Sammael had been the one he considered his stand-in in the land of Egypt, he now sent forth Abaddon the Destroyer to work at cross-purposes to Michael who was going on before the holy nation. He brought with him the shamed god Thoth, also known as Kafziel of the fallen Dominions. This wicked spirit was eager to afflict the Israelites in return for what had been done to his worshippers. Salathiel (Nephertem) also sought and obtained permission to accompany them, and I suspect this had much to do with my presence as the guardian of Moses.

By the time the travelers had come to the region of Horeb, they were again complaining about a lack of water thanks to their natural dispositions and pricks at certain key individuals by Thoth and Nephertem. Abaddon himself had gone on ahead, and we would soon see why. In any event, the Creator again made manifest His holy patience, and brought forth water by means of a miracle through His servant Moses. Even so the incident, made worse by the fact that the Almighty had already rescued them from a similar predicament in the recent past, was not allowed to pass without rebuke. Moses named the place at which water had come forth from a rock to quench their thirst “Massah” or “Temptation,” and also “Meribah,” or “Strife,” as a reminder of the complaints they had so easily voiced.

Now while the fallen princes Kafziel and Salathiel were chipping away at the Israelites’ trust in their Protector, Abaddon was making use of what the results would be. He hurried ahead into the land of the Amalekites, and spoke there with Kemuel, a Seraph who had been established as the overseer of that land. When he knew what Abaddon was up to, Ariel of the Chalkydri petitioned Uriel for leave to put a halt to the evil Cherub’s plans. Uriel replied, “For the murmurings of Israel, this must be allowed. The Almighty has a vision for His people, that they should rise up in Canaan and teach the world the fear of the Most High; what good can they be if they have a greater fear of men than of He who created men?”

Under Kemuel’s powerful guidance the Amalekites rose up and said, for they were descendants of Esau, “Let us spoil our cousins the Israelites, and grow rich upon what the Philistines missed.”

When Israel had turned south to go through the Red Sea they had not only saved time but also a battle. The demons would not have let the Philistines, who were to the north, pass on an opportunity to claim Egyptian gold from the hands of escaping slaves. Furthermore, the Hebrews had been largely unarmed at that point, but now they had some weapons and armor, which they had gathered from the bodies of the Egyptian warriors on the shore of the Red Sea.

The children of Amalek were skilled in the tactics of warfare, and they knew the wilderness very well. Without any difficulty they came up behind the travelers, and without any warning (for we were not permitted to give one in either a vision or a dream) they began to attack the rearmost Hebrews in the column. In a sense, it was this rearward assault that permitted the attack to take place at all. Abaddon well knew that if the Amalekites approached the travelers head-on, they would first encounter the magnificent cloud that went on before them. Even failing to recognize the presence of the Most High with His people, they would nevertheless have considered it a great work of sorcery to produce a column of cloud in the midst of the desert that furthermore formed a canopy at the top over the people to shelter them from the sun's heat.

When Moses knew of the turn of events, he was certainly taken by surprise. After raising a petition to the One guiding and guarding them, he then called for princes of the tribes of Judah and Ephraim. Hur, who was appointed over Judah, and Oshea, who was the son of the aged chief of Ephraim, came to him. "By the will of the Almighty," the prophet said to Oshea, "Choose out men, and go out to fight against Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on the nearby hill with the rod of Elohim in my hand." Oshea did as he was instructed, ensuring that the chosen men, the most able he could find, were equipped with the Egyptian weapons and armor.

When the plans were laid and the strategy discussed among those who would go down to war, Oshea led his small army against the greater forces of the Amalekites. When the battle began, Moses, Aaron and Hur ascended the elevation, and as Moses stretched out his hands to Elohim in supplication, he began to pray.

We angels had likewise received specific instructions. We were to fight on behalf of the Israelites, and repel the demons that were among the descendants of Esau, but only as long as Moses' hands were raised. This, we were told, would further strengthen the imperfect faith of the travelers, and increase their confidence in the role of Moses, which had so frequently come under attack in even the brief period since they had left Egypt behind.

In truth, the entire history of Israel's journey from slavery to Canaan is primarily an *Egyptian* conflict, for Lucifer knew well what he was saying when he vowed that the Hebrews would not go far out of his realm. Physically, they may have left the country of their bondage behind, but for the rest of their lives, and into the next generation, they were fighting against Egypt in their minds and spirits. Most had not left it behind where it truly mattered, and the influence of the paganism, the dissolution, and the marks of servility were upon the people for years and years to come.

Now, in their first battle as a redeemed nation, they would learn the importance of those leaders whom the Most High has appointed, and their own personal authority in defending their safety and integrity when explicitly instructed to do so. While a word from the Holy One would have caused the Amalekites to cease their attack, or vanish from this earth, and while a command from the Throne

would have produced an innumerable army of willing angels for physical combat, this work was left up to men. As in the attack on Babylon by Shem long before, humans were enlisted in the work of carrying out divine commands.

The untrained men of Israel met the men of Amalek sword for sword. The former slaves were untrained, and still dizzy with the taste of freedom – between bouts of anxiety over food and water – therefore we angels indeed needed to render them aid. We did not manifest ourselves or assist them in any direct way, but guided their hands and filled their minds with the hard-won knowledge of war. As Moses prayed the guardians of the individuals did this, while above them the Chalkydri and other mighty spirits kept the demons at bay. Abaddon had thought to capitalize on the flagging faith of the Israelites at Meribah, and thus obtain the authority for a swift victory. He was disappointed in his hopes, unaware of the depths of mercy and pity extended to those who had been for so long under demonic oppression.

For another people, to be sure, who had received more light, not only would the battle itself have been unnecessary, but a level of unbelief such as had attended the camp of Israel would indeed have given the demons leave to work their worst. It is at such a time, and in the presence of such light, that this testimony comes forth, therefore let those who hear these words take heed and understand.

For all his zeal and natural strength, Moses' energy eventually began to fade, and he lowered his hands to lean upon the staff. Aaron and Hur continued to support him in prayer, and thus the lives of the Israelites continued to be preserved. Even so, the Amalekites began to press the Hebrews backward, forcing them into a formation and terrain that was decidedly unfavorable to victory. Seeing this, the prophet on the hill lifted the staff with renewed fervor, and resumed his visible intercession.

Almost immediately, the tide turned. Oshea felt a cool breeze fill him, and the men around him felt the same. The captain of the Hebrew host launched himself at the nearest man and cut him down. He turned just in time to avoid a movement the corner of his eye had detected, and an Amalekite blade went whistling past. He kicked the man away, while simultaneously running another through.

Despite their newness to warfare, the Israelites under the guidance of their guardians began to work as one. Enemies were thrown from one to another, faster than they could turn around. While no miraculous strength or speed was granted to the men of Israel, for we wanted them to see what they could do in their own power if guided by the divine, the harmonious functioning of the army's members began to have a telling effect, even at so grisly a task. When Moses' strength again began to fade and he lowered his hand, the progress of the Israelites' retaliation slowed, and Aaron soon realized what was happening.

Calling to Hur, who was standing off to the side and observing another point in the conflict, Aaron lifted one of his brother's hands. Hur held the other one, and

soon the three men were united in visible prayer and thanksgiving for the victory that Elohim had promised to provide.

Gravity and momentum seemed to conspire against the Amalekite warriors. They seemed to be rushing upon the tips and edges of the Egyptian swords borne by the Hebrews, and soon – after a full day of battling fiercely – the manna-fed soldiers of the Almighty had driven the survivors of the children of Amalek away.

When the battle was over, the Almighty spoke to Moses out of the cloud and said, “For this thing, and stretching forth their hand against my people Israel, the cup of Amalek has overflowed. Judgment is appointed to him, therefore write this event for a memorial in one of your scrolls, and tell it also to Oshea, for I will completely destroy the memory of Amalek from under Heaven.”

Of course, nothing that has ever happened under Heaven has been *entirely* eradicated from memory, for what humans have forgotten angels remember. Yet the power of Amalek, and the full extent of its kingdom, has remained hidden from mankind, including all the great things that they accomplished as a people – their pride was broken that day, and their population would follow in due time.

The name of the place, called after the altar that Moses built there, was *Yahweh-Nissi*, or “IaHWeH is My Banner.”

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The holy place to which the Israelites were being led was drawing near. Mount Sinai, where the Most High purposed to meet with the Hebrews, was not far away, and the supplies that they had obtained, and the spoils of Amalek, had served to content even the most naturally troublesome. Even so, the people were many, and mobile, and contentions broke out from time to time among those who had so recently cooperated against a cruel invader.

As the people of Israel set their camp, the flow of individuals seeking Moses and his brother increased, but more frequently were coming requests for justice and civil decisions than for prayers and words of encouragement. Moses was troubled by this, nevertheless he accepted his role as the human leader of the nation, and took it upon himself to settle their disputes.

It was at this time that a runner came from the edges of the camp and said to Moses, “I have a message from one who has come unto us from the region of Midian. ‘I, your father-in-law Jethro, have come to you, and have brought your wife and two sons.’”

“Let them come to me!” he replied joyfully, but as the messenger departed he said, “No, stay... I will go out and greet them.”

Moses went out and met his father-in-law, bowing before him as a sign of his deep respect. They spoke briefly about their most pressing concerns, and then Moses brought him, along with his wife and sons, into his tent.

“I heard of your people departing from Egypt,” Jethro said. “The country is left in ruins, and is now open to attack from all its enemies. Some doubt that Egypt will ever rise again, though they say that one who was near the throne has assumed power to restore order and work on behalf of their gods.”

“Your sources are knowledgeable,” Moses said, believing he knew whom the one “near the throne” was; if Yannonos was not such a one himself, he was surely behind the activities on some level. “I do not doubt that Egypt will rise again, though it may take them time to recover. But come now, let me tell you of the victories that Eloah has provided for His people!”

“Blessed be Yahweh, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians!” Jethro exclaimed, using (for the first time) the name that the Creator had revealed as His own on Horeb. “Now I know that *Yahweh* is greater than all gods; for in this He has shown Himself above all who dealt proudly against His people.”

As was his custom, Jethro offered the sacrifices he had brought for the occasion, and Moses, Aaron and all the elders of Israel, including Oshea who had just worked such deliverance, came and ate of the manna that IaHWeH had provided, along with what Jethro had brought to share – for he had not come alone, but brought with him gifts and supplies on the backs of his animals and in the hands of his tribesmen. In return, they were provided divinely ordained food for their return to Midian, with a promise that it would be preserved until they returned to their home.

Before their departure, however, Jethro stayed a few days in the camp of the Israelites, and in his time there he took note of Moses’ daily activities. One evening before departing he called to his son-in-law and said, “Why is it that you do this, standing before the people from morning to night and judging between them?”

“The people come to me to enquire of Elohim,” Moses replied. “When they have a matter they come to me, and I sit in judgment so that they may know the way of the Almighty and His laws.”

“This thing that you do cannot be good,” Jethro said gently. “You will surely wear yourself out, you and the people with you, for it too heavy a matter for you to do alone. Listen now to me, and I will give you good counsel, and Eloah will be with you – be yourself between the people and Elohim that you may bring causes to Him directly. But you must teach the people themselves ordinances and laws; that will show them the way in which they must walk and the work that they must do.

“Further, you should separate from the people men who are able, and reverent before Eloah. They should be men of truth, hating covetousness; and let them be over the people as rulers of thousands, and hundreds, and tens. Let them judge the people at all times, and if there arises any great matter, let them bring it to

you, but for the smaller matters they will judge. It will be easier for you in this way, and the people will bear the burden with you.

“If you will do this thing, and Elohim command you so to do,” he continued, bowing his head as he spoke that last phrase, “then you will be able to endure, matters will be settled more quickly, and the people will go then to their place in peace.”

Moses saw the wisdom in the suggestion, and resolved to do so, according to the advice of Jethro and the movements of the Spirit. After informing his father-in-law that he would take the counsel seriously, the older man departed to his land in peace, leaving his daughter reunited with her husband and his grandchildren again with their father.

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It was the end, in a sense, of a very long journey. Unbeknownst to the Hebrews their true sojourn had not yet even begun, but what they had endured so far was a voyage of not only location, but also mindset. Those who were willing saw beauty revealed to them in the providence and guidance of IaHWeH. Those who were unwilling made themselves hard to the gentle influence being exerted upon them, and daily became more alienated from the harmonious workings of the people.

While some became more fervent in praise, little factions rose up among them and in these groups of complainers bitterness spread, giving the demons a foothold in the camp of Israel despite the mighty power of the Chalkydri who were ever with them, and a multitude of guardians.

Abaddon, Salathiel and Kafziel followed on, eager for opportunities to present themselves by which they might strike. They would soon be shown a mighty breach, even before the very presence of the Most Holy, and the cruel spirits would waste no time in entering in.

They had camped at the foot of Sinai, grateful to be resting once again, and those who had been following the words of Moses were expectant of some great revelation that would come to them in this place. Would they meet their Deliverer, their true Deliverer, face to face? Would IaHWeH appear to them in His glory, and say, “I am He who has called you from Egypt to serve me?” There was much anticipation, much excited talk, but very few understood that the light and power Elohim had revealed so far was not the merest tip of His majesty, and had they an inkling of the Might that had been among them, their excitement would have remained, but it would have been tempered with a holy dread.

The cloud that led them through the wilderness had departed when they came to a halt, but in the thunder that echoed down from the peak of Sinai Moses heard the voice of the One who had spoken to him from the burning bush some months before. “Thus shall you say unto the house of Jacob, unto the children of Israel, ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings

to bring you unto myself. Now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you will be my particular possession above all people, for all the earth is mine. And you will be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.’”

The people joyfully received these words, and Moses went up to the mountain and received further instructions for the days to come.

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I have spoken largely of the human elements of these events. Let it not be thought that Heaven was passively observing these things transpire. There was great activity, even when we were not directly protecting the travelers, for events in other parts of the world would have bearing on the course of the Israelites, and there remained much to be set in place. While Moses was speaking with the Almighty, I ascended to the Divine Kingdom and spoke there with the archangel Uriel and my fellow Prince As’fael.

“Be instant about your charge,” Uriel said to me. “He is to endure a great trial before the people of Israel, and inform Adaiyel that he has been appointed to some grief regarding Aaron.”

“How is this to be?” I asked.

“The Oracles have seen trouble in the camp,” Uriel replied. “Those who have failed of contentment will plague Israel as IaHWeH plagued Egypt, until such a day as they are severed. There are many, many who are dissatisfied, despite the great glory with which they were brought up out of the land of their bondage.”

I knew there had been many. Among the humans I had been observing not only my own charge, but also the ones who came to him seeking judgment. I had conversed with the guardians of other Israelites, and the angels who had been appointed as overseers of the tribes. Many were reporting troubling matters, even within Moses’ own Levites, but there were stirrings also from the House of Reuben as Dathan and Abiram made their presence felt in the camp.

There were lessons for us in all these matters. Of the created beings we were the first to feel the pain of warfare and grief before the Throne of Heaven. We were the first to know betrayal and the first to endure separation from the direct will of the Most High, some permanently so. What we had never seen before was a nation attempting to overcome the lingering effects of idolatry. To be sure, we had seen its poisonous results in Babylon, and absolutely so before the Flood. Yet in these situations men were drawn out by the promises of the Most High one by one. Sometimes little companies who had been touched by the purity of the messengers forsook their lives of darkness and death to join the worshippers of IaHWeH.

But here, in Israel, was something new. As a whole, a people had been taken from dark conditions, encouraged in the paths of righteousness, provided with all they needed to overcome, and given a divinely appointed leader. More than this, they were being directly led by Michael through the wilderness to an appointed place, but for all these things, and victories in both the physical and spiritual realms, there were some who were dissatisfied. A day comes when IaHWeH will gather His creation, and appoint judges over the souls of angels and men. In that day, before He releases His glory over all the universe – when His presence will be a soothing cloud to some and a pillar of fire to others – we will know the hearts of every being, and it was during times like this that we servants of fire became equipped to acknowledge the longsuffering and mercy of the Eternal One, even during the meting out of justice.

Below us, the humans were being instructed by our High Prince to prepare themselves, to be clean both physically and spiritually, to meet the Most High. They were told to maintain an attitude of strictest reverence, lest anyone manifest any disrespect in the presence of the King of Kings.

As I prepared to return to the humans, As'fael said to me, "I was with you when Moses pursued the Ethiopians, when he was leading the armies of Pharaoh. I have seen him fail at maintaining his composure when his patience has been tried. Your work with him has borne much fruit, but I witness to Adonai Uriel's words: remain close with him that he not fall victim to a dark blade."

I thanked the Principality who had encouraged me in this way, and returned to Moses.

* * * * *

As I appeared at the side of my charge he was speaking to the elders, giving them instructions for what the people should do. Bounds were set up through which the congregation was not permitted to pass, and they were repeatedly told about this specification. Elohim was to make His presence seen in a way never before witnessed by humanity, and for the sake of reverence, the humans would be taught that IaHWeH was not like any of the gods of Egypt or their silent idols.

Though in the fictional accounts often presented of this great event Moses is seen standing by himself, it was in the presence of two witnesses, he and his brother Aaron, and indeed all Israel, that Elohim first spoke the Ten Commandments in their written and codified form. As the two brothers went up to nearer to Elohim, leading the congregation to the base of the mountain, there were heard cracks of thunder coming down from the thick clouds and a blast as of a trumpet. When they drew near, the voice of the Most High prepared to speak words that would be with humanity for eternity.

The multitude of angelic princes and dignitaries that descended with Him began to sing. Their voices echoed like thunder, and even the sons of Amram were not

allowed to hear their words. All they heard was the sound of a storm, fury added to fury, and the people below saw flashes of lightning and bursts of holy flame. It was terrifying, I am sure, to have been a man standing before Sinai on that day. It was overwhelming even to be an angel, as the Most High presented Himself before His people. Again, duty precludes me from speaking at length about the beauty of the scene; but in the judgment when these visions are revealed, then will these things be opened up to the view of all. I await that day.

What was known to the Israelites by virtue of their Creator's work among them in the past was now set forth with indisputable force by direct words that they could *hear*. The Hebrews were forbidden to have or make other gods, or to bow before graven images. The very name "IaHWeH" and all that it signified was to be held in eternal reverence by the servants of Elohim. The Sabbath was already a mark of the creative and saving power of the King of Heaven, but now it was placed within the laws of Israel and delivered to Moses as an integral part of the very character of the Almighty.

Respect for parents as enjoined upon the nation of priests. They were not to violate other human beings in terms of their lives, their spouses or their property. They were not to pervert the cause of justice by bearing untruths, or standing silently by while one was unjustly condemned. Finally, the flesh touched the spirit when it was said to Israel, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house, or his wife, or his servants; do not be envious of his animals, or of anything that belongs to him." In this commandment was a deep truth, that it was not acceptable service to the Most High merely to perform works of righteousness, or to be obedient to outward guidelines of behavior. IaHWeH was seeking something deeper from His people, hearts that desired to do righteousness because of the beauty of righteousness. He looked for changed spirits and holy longings, and where the people looked into the law and saw that these were lacking, He would provide for any who earnestly took hold of grace and asked.

Under the curse of sin, mankind found it impossible to sincerely seek Elohim. Holiness was a light they were unequipped to bear, and they knew nothing more than to grasp after the next comforting or enjoyable thing. Even the most noble of men could not discern the motives of their hearts, but there were some who, because of the grace of the Most High, became His friend. The grace was shed abroad to all men by virtue of the Promise Sacrifice, and light shone down in merciful beams into the hearts of mankind, undeserved, and often unwelcome. Where the voice of conviction stirred, even among the most heathen of lands, the Spirit of Elohim was nearby, and angels were close at hand to assist the soul should the heart accept these promptings and resolve to do what was pleasing in the sight of Heaven. To the Israelites, as to no other people in the ancient world, was the means by which conviction could be brought explicitly given.

By looking into the Holy Law, men could see what was demanded of them, and when they came to see wherein they had fallen short, they could be atoned and set right.

Not only where these commandments given, but also a multitude of delicate instructions – to teach the full significance of each of the Ten – were to be provided. Upon hearing the Decalogue, however, and being overcome by the terror of the scene, the people fell on their faces and pled with Moses to speak with the Almighty alone, and then relate His words to them thereafter. “Fear not,” Moses encouraged them, but submitted to their request and ascended the mountain by himself.

There, in the presence of the Most High, we stood around my charge, my fellow angels and myself. Alone amidst divine beings, both the Creator and the created, the human received further instructions for his people. Rituals were provided as a visual aid to show how all the things of the law should be done: atoning sacrifices, the construction of altars, and gifts of repentance and thanksgiving.

Not only were laws and statutes provided, but also promises of aid if the people should remain in their faith. “Behold,” the Almighty said, “I send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the place that I have prepared. Consider Him carefully, to obey him; do not oppose Him, for He is holy and will not pardon transgressions, for my name is within Him. But if you will indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak then I will be as an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries, for my Angel will go before you and bring you in unto the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and the Jebusites, and I will cut them off.”

Let not those who hear this testimony wonder that El Michael, the very Vessel of this message, would so have it said of Himself that He was one who would “not pardon transgressions.” He was even then known as One who “standeth for the children of thy people,” and would further be sent by the Almighty as the very Sacrifice according to the Covenant of Promise. By these words were shown the great holiness that was demanded of Israel while in the very presence of Elohim. Those who continued their complaints and murmurings against their Deliverer even before His very presence as a fiery cloud were so injuring their souls that repentance would be impossible.

If any should seek to slay his neighbor in the night, and in so doing sneak from tent to tent by the light of Heaven to commit the deed, he gave evidence that his heart was beyond redemption. Of such Elohim would one day say, “Him that is filthy, let him be filthy still,” for the rays of mercy would never reach such darkened chambers. It was not by the command or will of Heaven that any should cross that line of no return, but both angels and men were witnesses to such occasions within the camp of Israel.

When the first set of instructions was given, and the promises made, Elohim said to Moses, “Come up again unto IaHWeH, you and Aaron with Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and let them worship afar off.” Upon hearing this, the prophet of the Almighty went down again into the camp to fulfill the instructions that had come to him out of the magnificent cloud.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 10: THE PRICE OF MERCY

“Who is an Almighty like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy.” (Micah 7:18)

Returning to his people, Moses related some of what he had heard on the mountain to the Israelites, and then spent the night in his tent without speaking further to anyone but his wife and sons. In the morning he set into effect what had been suggested by his father-in-law Jethro. With divine sanction he appointed seventy elders, adding to those who had already been recognized in their tribes from their days in Egypt. As some tribes were larger than others, some were likewise appointed more judges, and each received according to what was required by the number of people as estimated by the size of their encampments.

In addition, he appointed young men, the sons of the princes of the tribes, to offer sacrifices to Elohim before Sinai. As the seventy elders stood before the congregation, flanked by scores of invisible guardians and watchers, Moses took some of the blood from the sacrifices and sprinkled it on the alter that had been built for that purpose. The altar stood between twelve pillars that were raised up, one for each tribe, and from the midst of the pillars Moses read the words of the covenant, which he had written out before in his tent. As he read, he repeated some of what he had told the people the evening before, but there were new words now, words that had returned to him with clarity as he set them down in visible form.

When he had done so, and the people worshipped, Moses and his brother, with his nephews Nadab and Abihu, entered the boundaries that were erected to keep the Hebrews away from the edges of the mountain. With them went the seventy elders.

When they had ascended some way to the top, the men who were looking up gasped in wonder. Some of the cloud that had stood at the tip of the mountain coalesced into a column such as that which had led them through the wilderness thus far, and stood close by Moses and Aaron. As they looked on a Form stepped from the cloud and stood before them, glowing and sparkling in all the colors of the rainbow, and dazzling to angelic eyes. The eyes of men were shielded from the full manifestation of the Angel of IaHWeH, but even before this veiled Form they fell on their faces in fear. As the human Form stepped toward them It

produced features, and soon stood before them like any man. El Michael was in the figure, and He spoke in the voice that had called to them from the mountain, only in subdued tones for His smaller audience.

Here, coming from this lithe, powerful Figure was the same authority that had caused the mountain to quake and the people to tremble. Here was the Authority that had called plagues upon Egypt at the word of His appointed servant. Here was the Voice that had said, “Let there be light” before there was such a thing as time in human reckoning, yet He stood before them as a Man, and then the people knew that this was not a “god” they were following as if it were some abstract force or power. This was God Most High, this was Elohim, El Elyon, and He was a Person who had a name that was above all names. This was He in whose very image they had been created, and He stood before these common men and said, “Fear not.”

The very air around His presence seemed alive with holy light, and the very stones under His feet became as open sky, as the streets of Heaven. Though He drew near, He made no move to make contact with the humans before Him, for it was not yet time for Him to walk amongst them in that way. The angels had long ceased their singing, and we stood in reverent circles in the air around Him, watching and listening, entranced by this unique meeting between the Most High and men. Not since the days of Eden, and to some degree with Enoch, had any such thing taken place, and it was a marvel to behold. Enoch himself, along with the man once called Melchizedek, and a few other humans beside them, looked down through the void, permitted to behold this great sight. The antediluvian who had been preserved from death wept with joy that he had been preserved to see this day.

The only creatures who did not know to rejoice at this visitation were men; and oh, what a tragedy. This was done for their sakes!

Now Moses and his brother did rejoice, and the elders, when they understood what had come upon them, were filled with wonder. And Michael, the High Prince of Heaven, did something on this great occasion so unexpected, so *ordinary*, that it stunned even the angels – as it would many years later before some very confused apostles: He spoke of food.

As manna rained down from them prepared as wafers for consumption, El Michael invited them to take part in a meal, and to drink of the water that flowed naturally from a brook that ran along the side of the mountain. Here was Heaven’s way of touching humanity, by ministering to its needs. When the humans before us knew not how to deal with their overwhelming awe to be standing in the manifest presence of the Second Elohim, they were instructed to eat. It was a method that the High Prince would use more than once to forever tie the eternal things and most sublime concepts to the daily experiences of humanity. It resulted in an experience that was at once supernal in its significance, and yet complete its power to be ever before the one in attendance. Not one of those men ever ate a meal again without remembering that great day.

When they had eaten, and the confidence of the men in this Being before them had been gained without the loss of supreme reverence, the manifest presence of Elohim turned to Moses and said, "Come up with me into the mountain, and I will give you tablets of stone and a law, and commandments which I have written that you may teach the people."

Moses rose up and took with him Oshea, one of the seventy, who had been placed over the Tribe of Ephraim, and who had been at the head of the Israelite forces against the Amalekites. As they departed the prophet said to the elders who remained there, "Wait here for us until we come again to you, and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. If anyone has need of anything, let him come to these two." As he spoke the Form El Michael had chosen dissolved and returned to its whirlwind form, and then that also rose up to join the clouds surging around the peak of Sinai. When He did so some of the clouds descended like smoke, covering the entire mountain in a thick fog.

Moses and Oshea made their way up the side, speaking little and praying much. I walked with my charge, though invisibly, and the Cherub Berithael accompanied us. He was Oshea's guardian, and one that might be considered the angelic equivalent of the "strong, silent type." Oshea himself was a good orator, and this was a skill that would serve him well in the years to come, but Berithael's was a presence that could be more readily felt than heard.

When we reached near the top, there was only a little more to go before the men would actually be standing IN the burning cloud. The pair halted, and there waited and prepared themselves for what was to come. For six days the men stayed there, and Berithael and I were alone with them, for the other angels remained below us with the humans. Gabriel and Raziël were above El Michael, and He Himself was hidden in the bright glow of Union with the Throne of Heaven. No demon would even consider drawing near to the burning, shaking mountain. The closest they had come thus far was the base of Sinai, but even there they were ashamed before the light of glory, and drew no dark swords to make threats, or threw no dark darts of temptation at the men who were around them.

On the seventh day, the voice of El Michael sounded from the cloud at the peak of Sinai. "Enter with me into the cloud, Moses, and leave your servant to await you." Moses stood up, gave Oshea a reassuring look, and ascended those last few steps to stand on the very top of the mountain. As he stood there a bright light flashed down through the cloud, entirely obscuring him from the Ephraimite's view, and when the light faded away the cloud had gone fully opaque. Oshea could see only the column of smoky darkness where his prophet had once stood, with surges of fire climbing the column from time to time. He knelt there and prayed.

Oshea prayed until he was tired, and then he prayed some more. He prayed until he was hungry, and opened his eyes to see that more of the manna had fallen

while he was in supplication. This was what had fed them below among the elders, and this is what they had eaten during the six days they had awaited further instructions. Now Oshea ate again, and drank of the brook, and looked down the mountain.

“He is concerned for his people, Israel,” I said to Berithael.

“Yes, Prince Uzziel,” he replied.

Twenty days later, I myself cast a curious look down the mountain and said, “The people grow impatient.”

“Yes, Prince Uzziel,” Berithael replied. It was the first time he had spoken since that last statement.

* * * * *

Moses stood in the presence of the Most High for *forty days*. I emphasize this, not because it seemed long to me, or to Oshea, or to the elders, and certainly not to Moses who was quite busy standing in place for that time, but because of the people near the base of Sinai.

As the days wore on, the people indeed grew impatient. I did not need to communicate with any other angel to surmise this, for I knew well enough the characters of those whom Moses had been leading. When messengers did pass us by, ascending and descending between Heaven and earth, my suspicions were confirmed: amidst the ones who had come forth from Egypt for the sake of fear or excitement, primarily the Egyptians themselves, had the voice of discontent first found utterance. Among the Hebrews, Dathan and Abiram of the tribe of Reuben spoke out, and from the tribe of Levi a man named Korah spoke his mind.

Now Korah, as a prince in the tribe of Levi, had been taken up on the mountain with the seventy elders, but as the days wore on the elders had spread around the circumference of Sinai to pray, and to look out over the countryside as they contemplated the great things they had seen and words they had heard. For reasons that will shortly become clear to those who hear this testimony, he had become impatient as quickly as any down in the camps, and in anger he had descended the mountain, unbeknownst to the others, and returned to his tent.

“Where is this, my kinsman Moses?” Korah now said. “Has the Almighty taken him away, as He did with Enoch in the days before the Flood? Who can say? He was a faithful servant of the Most High, and honored before us by Yahweh. But now we have assisted him in his journey to Elohim, and we are left here alone, and so what shall become of us in this wilderness?”

It took no demon to feed the Levite this treachery. Korah’s family had long been considered the princes of their tribe, but when the sons and daughter of Amram had manifested gifts from Heaven and were chosen to lead the Israelites from

Egypt the house of Korah was all but forgotten. This was perfectly acceptable in the eyes of the Levite's children, who were truly pious, and loved their people and tribe. But to their father this was unacceptable, and now that an opportunity presented itself to reassert his name in Israel, he took it, and by means of flattery sought to steal the hearts of the people away from Heaven's chosen vessel.

While this came forth naturally from Korah's own polluted heart, it did open doorways into the camp for the demons, and the angels who remained there were not permitted to drive them off. I held my post near the mountain's peak with Oshea and Berithael, but I carefully observed the activities that were happening near Sinai's base, as discontent gave way to complaints, complaints to anger, and anger to disobedience.

Korah thought himself favored, as he had been of the same tribe as Moses, and was called to be a judge of his people besides. Taking with him other Levites who were sympathetic to him, he rose up from his tent and went toward the barrier. The other elders were still up on Sinai, and the priests, the young men who had been chosen to offer sacrifices, dared not stand against so imposing a figure. It was Miriam who attempted to reason with him, who seemed intent on disobeying the divine command by taking men who had not been chosen for this service up on the holy mountain.

"Have you not thought on the words the Almighty spoke in our presence so short a time ago?" she asked. "Have we not heard that we are not to covet anything that belongs to our neighbor?" Miriam had correctly discerned Korah's true motive, envy of the reputation of Amram's house. Naturally, being the daughter of Amram herself, she had little chance of being heard by the haughty Levite.

"Aside, woman," he said, almost pushing her away. "Who are you to speak to me of these matters? I have business with my fellow elders of Israel!"

With heaven-daring confidence, Korah and his followers broke through the barrier that surrounded Sinai. There were men who were stationed at the boundary, instructed to keep everyone away from the mountain, and they were even commanded to punish insistent offenders with death by stoning or the javelin if they were to go so far. When Moses had repeated this instruction from Elohim, he had no inkling that the commandment had been given for a practical purpose; he believed when he spoke those words that they were merely to increase the sense of reverence for the occasion in the minds of his people. Would that it had been so! The guards of Sinai had themselves grown weary during the time Moses was gone. In addition, they held Korah in great respect and were loath to attempt violence against him or those whom he took with him.

Aaron stood on his feet, surprised to see a small group of Israelites approaching him on the forbidden ground. Twice a day, in the mornings and in the evenings, Hur and Aaron descended to the base of Sinai to speak with the people, and see if they had need of anything. Upon dealing with the Israelites, they would return to

the other elders to await Moses' return. Korah had not waited for Aaron and Hur to descend, however, determined to exert his dominance in a visible way.

"Aaron," Korah said, "you and Hur have been placed at the head of the congregation. We have spoken, and wish to be removed from this mountain."

"Removed," Aaron said, "And where to?"

"Some have said onward to Canaan," the proud Levite replied. "Those of our people who have confidence in what Moses was told, such as myself, would have it be so. The Egyptians and some others have said, 'Let us go back to Egypt.' That would not be the course of wisdom, as I have seen things."

"Let me go and settle this matter," Aaron said to Hur and the others.

Hur stood up, saying, "Let me go with you."

Moses' brother, however, here manifest a flaw of his own and, believing the matter small enough that he could deal with it by himself, said, "Remain here with the elders, prince of Judah. The breach cannot be great, and I will return in a short time." In so saying, he left his second witness on the side of Sinai.

The people saw Aaron coming down from the mountain speaking with Korah and the others. "Aaron will hear us," they said, their hopes rising and their anxiety at the forty days of inactivity seeming to abate for the time being. The people gathered around the tent of Moses' brother, waiting to see what would be said. Outside the tent, Miriam sighed and looked on, knowing that this would not go well.

After a brief discussion Aaron said, "The voice of the people notwithstanding, we were instructed to remain here. You were with us, Korah, when we saw the Most High manifest Himself to us in a visible way. We have spoken with Him, eaten in His presence. He has not abandoned us, nor would He consume Moses in His wrath, or take Him away from us without warning as you have suggested. No, we were instructed to await Moses' return here, and here we will wait."

"Your love for your brother runs deep," Korah said, "and I understand, therefore, why you are intent to remain here... but the people do not love him any less! And has Yahweh brought us out here to grow old at the foot of His holy mountain? Come, Aaron, consider this matter with care."

"I have considered it," Aaron said, and rose up to go. As he stepped from his tent he faced the crowd and said, "We wait here! I have received no instruction to move us from this spot until Moses should return."

As one the people cried out, however, angered that Aaron had not bowed to their wishes. "We have waited long enough!" Dathan said, his voice rising above the general tumult. "The cloud on Sinai has taken Moses away."

In the time that Aaron had been discussing the matter with Korah, the Egyptians and their sympathizers had been working within the crowd, and the demons exerted their presence ever more forcefully. My fellow guardians could only look on as things went from bad to worse. Now, the people were intent not merely to remove themselves from Sinai, but it had been decided that Egypt was the closer, more easily reached destination. Few knew the way through the wilderness, they reasoned, and who knew what dangers and other obstacles, perhaps people like the Amalekites, awaited them in the wasteland?

Even Korah was surprised by the shouting of the crowd, for he had desired to become the leader of the Hebrews, and to guide them on to a glorious future in Canaan. His shattered plans were soon replaced by a second vision, however, for if he would not lead them to Canaan, he could return them safely to their place of origin, arrange for their safety among the remaining Egyptians, and live out the rest of his days as one who had rescued them from the wilderness. The honor would not be as great, certainly, as if he had guided them on to the land they had seen in Moses' promises, but at least this way he would not be fighting against the wishes of the people, and it allowed him to save his reputation before them.

"To Egypt it is!" he said, taking up the cry. Aaron turned to the man beside him and gave him a look of disdain for so quickly losing his resolve, but the surrogate leader of the Israelites was about to do no better.

Adaiyel drew close, attempting to bolster Aaron's confidence in the face of overwhelming opposition, but his charge's character was not one that was then equipped to be strong against such a sea of voices. The Israelites, driven by desperation born of fear and inactivity, pressed close, mobbing the Levite and saying, "Make us gods to go before us; as for Moses, we do not know what has happened to him."

Miriam struggled through the crowd to get to her brother, to say something to the people on his behalf, but the milling bodies kept her back, and by the time she had reached him he had already spoken. "Break off all the golden rings that in the ears of your wives and your children, and bring them here to me."

"Aaron!" Miriam said angrily, but any reply he would have given her was lost in the shout of the crowd as they went to their tents to accomplish the task. Aaron had underestimated the impatience of the people; pride for their ornaments had not caused them to consider their ways, as he had vainly hoped. Demons were among the Israelites, and our guardians were helpless to prick them with the voice of conscience while this fervor lasted.

Soon there was a small mountain of gold before the Levite, and the people were demanding that he do what he had implied he would do. Aaron saw the faces around him, and the face of his sister, looking on with anxiety. Ultimately, fear for his life won out and, with a sickening stomach, he stooped down to gather the gold.

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Stars swirled before Moses' eyes. Galaxies spun away from him, and bright lights overwhelmed his senses. The vision cleared again and he saw a glorious building standing amidst streets of clearest gold. "This is my Tabernacle," the Almighty said to him, and began to describe it in detail saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering." He listed a number of precious stones and metals and said, "Let them make me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."

For the forty days, Moses was shown marvelous things, and given the wisdom to command their construction. He was led to the names of individuals who would assist him in the work, and then he was shown that his brother Aaron and his nephews were to become intercessors between IaHWeH and the Israelites, officiating in the Sanctuary that was to be made.

At the end of the time, the voice of Elohim rang out, saying, "Take these two stones, upon which are written my Royal Law; but now go, get down from my mountain, for your people, which you have brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way to which I have drawn them; they have made a molten calf and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, 'These are Elohim, Oh Israel, which have brought you up out of the land of Egypt.'"

The news greeted Moses with a mighty shock. He had so long stood in the most holy presence of the Creator, his mind filled with beauty and reverence; to hear now that those he had led into the presence of this glorious Being were now worshipping an idol such as the very things they had been forbidden to make, filled him with grief and terror for their sakes.

Though I was not there, Gabriel later informed us that as El Michael spoke the next words, He wore a curious expression. It was sorrowful, but purposeful, and there was a look as the Covering Cherub described it that we have come to know as confidence when it appears on the face of our High Prince. "I have seen this people," Elohim said, the Angel sparkling in perfect unity with the Heavenly Throne, "it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore depart from me that my wrath may become hot against them; and I will consume them. I will thereafter make of *you* a great nation."

Still standing in open space, with no view of the mountain or landscape around him, his senses flushed through with the presence of the Holy One, Moses fell on his face and said, "Yahweh, why does your wrath grow hot against your people, which you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?"

"Why," he asked, "should the Egyptians say, 'For evil intent did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains and consume them from the face of the earth'?"

Turn from your fierce wrath, and depart from this great calamity against your people.

“Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel your servants, to whom you swore by your own self and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land of which I have spoken will I give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.’”

El Michael smiled thoughtfully, Prince Gabriel told us, and said, “You have spoken well, my servant, but go down now and be my wrath there among them. Punish whom you will punish, and have mercy on whom you will have mercy. Behold, I have put my Spirit in you, to execute my will this day in the midst of the children of Israel.”

As He spoke, the fire around the peak of Sinai faded, and Oshea looked up to see Moses standing there, looking up to Heaven with tears in his eyes, wonder on his face, and two tablets of stone in his arms. “Let us go down, prince of Ephraim,” Moses said to his minister.

As they went down the noise from the base of Sinai came up through the thick clouds that still covered most of the mountain. “There is a noise of war in the camp!” Oshea shouted, on the verge of panic. But turning to Moses he saw no worry there, only great sadness.

“It is not the voice of them that strive for victory,” the prophet said heavily, “neither is it the voice of those who are being overcome, but it is the voice of singing that I hear.” Oshea looked at him in confusion, but the two went down without speaking further.

They went down still further, to where they had left the elders with Aaron and Hur to pray and to await them amidst the water and the manna... but the elders and his brother were gone.

Arriving at the base, Moses found the elders; some of them were standing or sitting mute at the foot of the mountain and others, amazingly, had joined in the revelry that was taking place. While he had but a short time before been pleading for his people, when Moses saw what IaHWeH had seen, he was filled with the very wrath that had arisen in Elohim. He had been invited to intercede for his people but the Spirit within him testified that there must also be punishment, for much had already gone unchecked, and if the people were to ever have reverence again for the Holy One who had kept them safe and led them, there must be wages for this great sin. The Holy Law had been broken; there in the sight of the people Moses cast the precious tables of testimony against the foot of the mountain, and there they broke apart. Those who saw this knew what it meant, and fell silent.

“Up, men,” Moses said to the elders who had remained separate from the “holy day” of celebration that Aaron had appointed in his fear and compromise. As the

elders stood, he directed them to seize the golden calf, and to cast it unto the fire that was burning on the illicit altar. Where once sacrifices had burned to the image, the image itself was now laid. As the fire heated the golden shape it cracked, and pieces began to fall off. I had descended with Moses, but made no attempt now to soothe his anger or calm his rage – this was truly the Spirit of my Creator working through him, and I knew this as I knew my own essence.

The prophet of Israel dragged the crumbling object from the flames and struck it with the staff that had done so wonderfully for his nation. He struck it again and again, and the pure wood prevailed over the ill-used gold. Soon the calf was powder. Those who were near enough to see Moses descend (for the camp was very large, and word of his return had not spread very quickly in the general ruckus) looked on as he took up handfuls of the cooling metal and cast it into the brook that was coming down from the mountain, their one source of water.

“Let Israel drink of its sin,” he said, looking fiercely about him.

He then called for Aaron, who had officiated at the altar, but since his younger brother’s return had been standing as quietly and unobtrusively as he could manage. Now, trembling before the wrath he knew was divine, he stood before Moses. “What did this people do to you,” he was asked, “that you should bring so great a sin upon them?”

“Let not the anger of adonai grow hot against me,” Aaron said, using a very respectful term for his younger brother. “You know the people, and how they are set on evil things, for they said to me, ‘Make us gods to go before us, since we do not know what has become of Moses.’ I said to them that they should give up their gold if they wanted gods, and they did so... and I cast their gold into the fire and... and out came this calf.”

Moses inhaled deeply and raised his eyes to the sky. He looked down and then around, and saw the wounded faces of Miriam his sister, his wife Zipporah, and his brother’s wife Elisheba, who had heard Aaron’s words. He did not need to see their expressions to know that his brother’s report had been... less than accurate. As he turned to rebuke his brother, some of the Israelites ran screaming past from the outer areas of the camp, apparently oblivious to the presence of their leader. They were acting in an entirely indecent manner, and Moses’ anger rose again.

Leaving his brother for the moment, he went to the nearest limit of the camp and he lifted his voice and said, “Who is on Yahweh’s side? Let him come to me!”

Many among those who had stopped worshipping and reveling at Moses’ return went over to him, and all the Levites who had been there, but had not participated in the idolatry, gathered themselves quickly by Moses.

With anger mixed with pain for his people, the prophet spoke the words of the Almighty, “Thus says Yahweh, ‘Get every man his sword to his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay... slay every man his

brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’” Moses fell silent, and cast his eyes to the ground.

The Levites were stunned, but the sons of Aaron took up their swords and went forward to their grisly task. They sought out those who would not cease from their chanting, and their lustful actions – being fully possessed by devils, or led by seared consciences – and slew them. All the men of their tribe followed after.

When the people saw what was going on, many fled from the swords of the Levites. The demons stayed where they were, rejoicing in the blood that was being shed, and in the sorrow they had caused to the camp. This was Abaddon’s moment, and he stood there with Salathiel and Kafziel, congratulating them for a job well done. When the Princes of Heaven descended, my eleven other sealed companions and the Chalkydri surrounded them, and the evil Cherub said, “We are here by right; you cannot drive us off.”

Abaddon was correct; the Sar’im had come only to witness the execution of the terrible sentence. Very few of us were the least bit surprised at what the Almighty had spoken through Moses. We had seen the debauchery and idolatry that had characterized the antediluvians just before the flood had hit; we saw the same stamp upon many at the foot of Sinai. We saw the tempting demons entering and leaving the minds of the people as freely as before the cataclysm in Noah’s day; had the Almighty chosen then to break the earth once more, the sentence would have been just.

As fair as we knew the punishment to be, for those who would persist in their crime in the presence of the Most High and His chosen messenger would never find repentance, it was a terrible thing to behold. Humans and demons stood heart to heart, united in their rejection of the dignity of the scene. Above them a mountain smoked with the presence of the Holy One and ten thousand of His ministering spirits, yet the love of sensuality held sway right before their silent testimony. Most of the angels swept their wings upward and covered their faces, unwilling to see the shame of Jacob uncovered. We, the Princes, watched – we were there to be witnesses.

* * * * *

“Depart from this place and go forth, you and the people which you have brought out of Egypt, unto the land that I have promised to give Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. And I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites from before you, and bring you into a land flowing with milk and honey, as I have promised, but I will not go up in the midst of you (for you are a stiff-necked people) lest I consume you along the way.

“And now, put off your ornaments and festive clothing, that I may know what to do with you.”

In His mercy, the Almighty had pledged to complete the promise He had made to the Israelites, but His words were nevertheless a great indictment against the people. Elohim would send an angel before the people to make their way safe, but no longer would the pillar of cloud and flame that signified the direct presence of the Most High go with them. In truth, Gabriel and Raziel had been greatly taxed to hold the glory of the Almighty back when He had sent Moses down the mountain to deal with the transgression himself. Moses was to have yet another opportunity to intercede for his people, and perhaps to restore them to a level of reverence that would make matters easier to bear. He, who had been kneeling in the tent that served as a makeshift meeting place since the Israelites had camped at Sinai, went out to see Israel once again.

When the people heard these words repeated to them, they wept for their sins. A heavy toll had already been extracted from them. Three thousand had fallen to the commissioned Levites at the command of Moses. Thereafter, Dominions were summoned and sent into the crowd to strike those whom the Levites had been unable to find or attack. Many more would have fallen had it not been for the continued intercession of my charge, who said more nobly than any man before him, "If you will not forgive their sin, take me also and blot me out of your Book of Life, Yahweh, for I cannot bear to see the destruction of this, your people."

To my surprise, El Michael had said to the Hashmallim, "See that you spare the lives of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, for they are chosen of me to try my people Israel in the wilderness." Apparently these three men, who had surely passed beyond the bounds of mercy at least as distantly as anyone who was slain, would live to blaspheme another day. They were to be preserved, as Lucifer himself is preserved.

It is a mistake, as the saint named Job once explained to his three friends, to assume that preservation means sanction. It is at least as big an error as the common idea that visible blessings mean the favor of the Almighty.

Moses looked out over the mourning crowds. They had buried their dead, and stripped off their colorful garments. They stood there in their plainest clothing, ready to hear what the prophet would say to them, but distressed that their actions had so quickly forfeited the visible favor that they had hitherto enjoyed, and then despised with their idolatry.

Following further instructions, Moses had the elders help him to remove the tent of meeting from the middle of the camp, and place it outside the boundaries of the tents, away from the dwelling-places of men as a visible sign of their separation from divine favor. As he stood there before the newly-removed structure, the people came near to him and stood silently, penitently, while he said, "I go in now unto Yahweh, to speak with Him concerning the children of Israel. Be silent, and prayerful, and I will see what He shall say regarding you."

The men who had gathered about him returned to their tents, but they stood at their entrances, the ones close enough looking on, and the ones farther away waiting for word from those nearer. Moses turned when he saw the eyes upon him, and entered the tent of meeting. Oshea remained with him, as he had since his descent from Sinai. The sixty-nine other elders, along with Aaron, Miriam and Zipporah, waited near the boundaries of the camp.

As the prophet entered, the cloud of smoke that had been atop Sinai spiraled its way downward, and stood around the tent, its greatest thickness being by the door, and obscuring the view from the outside. Moses was alone with the Creator once again. As they saw this, the Israelites rejoiced, for they took this as a sign that IaHWeH had not surely abandoned them; they stood up and raised their hands to the sky, shouting words of thanksgiving and praise.

In the midst of this glorying, the demons departed. They knew that they could re-enter the camp at any time, for sin had been among the redeemed, and it was not yet cleansed away – even by the death of many who had partaken of it. Before they had been wary of drawing too near the pillar and the people it led, but now they laughed amongst themselves, and felt secure in their presence. Abaddon, Salathiel and Kafziel also made ready to depart, but as they did so the Destroyer turned near the entrance of the camp and flew calmly toward the Chalkydri who were looking on.

Surely, I thought, as I saw him drawing nearer, he would not do anything foolish in the presence of so great a force of holy arms. Surely, I thought, he would not taunt the mighty Seraphim! But Abaddon, apparently, had been inspired by his fellow demon Azrael, and in more ways than one.

As he drew near, the fallen Cherub sought and found Ariel, the mightiest of Israel's appointed guardians, and approached as of to speak in confidence. The bright angel drew back, knowing that there was no need for the two to speak, but before he could react fully Abaddon had drawn his blade. Far too late, I saw what was about to happen – yet how could anyone have anticipated it? What could the demon hope to accomplish there amidst the most holy Host? Were not the angels of Elohim mighty? Was not Raphael the great healer among us?

But Abaddon knew his scheme well, and had been taught the deep things of the great controversy by Lucifer himself. In the presence of the Sar'im, the chiefs of many Orders, and thousands of holy messengers, Abaddon thrust his blade into Ariel's torso, and the holy Seraph's eyes went wide in surprise. His being burst into divine flames, fighting off the effects of the weapon's dark fire... but Abaddon's strike had been deep, and then he did something else that no one would have expected.

With an evil smile and a dark look, the Cherub turned his hand aside and snapped the blade, leaving the point, pulsing with stolen energy, in the being of the Seraph before him. Immediately, the other eleven Chalkydri fell upon him, and in the attack that followed we perceived only a flash of glory and then his broken,

maimed essence being flung from the camp of Israel. Salathiel and his fellow showed no expression, but quickly flitted out of the camp before further vengeance should follow.

I, and many others, immediately drew near to the stricken angel. He was kneeling on the face of the earth to which he had anchored himself, clearly in great pain, his power being bound by the fragment of the sword within him. “Shall we call for the archangel?” some asked, meaning Raphael.

Ariel grimaced, but he said, “No, my brothers. This thing has been permitted by Elohim. Israel my people have sinned a great sin, and I bear within my being the marks of their transgression. Be content to let it be so for now.”

For what cause was this sign permitted? I understood, but to explain is difficult. The universe must see the results of sin; yes, in the death of men the language of evil is written, but men pass into the grave, and are silent until the Day of Judgment. Until that Day, when the true and everlasting effects are made manifest, Elohim has permitted a few of His messengers to serve Him in this way. Some have remained silent since the dawn of grief, and others have borne scars and wounds for a season.

As the injured Seraph stood on his feet and bravely waved the other angels away, forgetting his wound as best he could while we looked in on Moses, I marveled that the demon had been so willing to sacrifice himself for this pointless exercise. I knew that Abaddon’s injured state was such that he would not be directly troubling Israel again for quite a long time, but why had he done this? Perhaps there was more to it than simple pride, taking advantage of a weak moment in the Hebrews’ spiritual armor – but my musings were interrupted by a sudden flash of gold from Ariel’s robes, momentarily obscuring the injury. Just as quickly it was gone, but I had seen that vision before, appearing upon myself as I watched over Moses in Egypt.

These were new days in the universe, and things were changing, but why was I the only one thus far permitted to see glimpses of these plates of gold?

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 11: THE FAIR MITRE

“And I said, ‘Let them set a fair mitre upon his head.’ So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the Angel of Yahweh stood by.” (Zechariah 3:5)

All eyes were upon the tent of meeting, including those of the angels. I continued to cast periodic glances at the wounded Seraph who was near me and flanked protectively by Nakoniel and Kaleon. He seemed content to bear the wound of Abaddon’s grievous blade, but I could tell that it was not an easy burden he endured. The golden armor that I had briefly seen did not reappear; but I knew, as the Cherub Za’afiel had learned during the war in Heaven, that this merely meant our eyes were not yet ready to behold that which was truly there.

Within the tent, Moses was pleading for his nation. “You have said to me, ‘Bring up this people,’ but you have not let me know who you will send with me.” The Almighty had promised to send an “angel” with Israel, but this did not necessarily signify that it would be the Personal Angel of IaHWeH; in fact, from the other words spoken this seemed to be entirely not the case. Moses was distressed, for he did not desire to take a step with this congregation apart from the personal presence of the Most High.

“Yet,” he continued, “you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in my sight.’ Now, therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in your sight, show me your way that I may also know you, that I may find grace in your sight, and consider that this nation is also *your* people.”

In an instant, the Man who had spoken with the elders of Israel upon mount Sinai appeared to Moses, replacing the impersonal “cloud” that had been before him hitherto. The prophet raised his eyes to look, and then lowered his head again. Elohim said to him through brightly glowing features, “My presence will go with you, Moses, and to you will I give rest.”

It was a long time before the human said anything, but when he spoke it was with great reverence, great gentleness, yet with a boldness born from an unselfish love of his people. “If your presence does not go with me, do not take us up from this place. How shall it be known that I have found grace in your sight if you do not go with us *all*? It is in this way that we shall be separated, I *and* your people, from all other nations that are on the face of the earth.”

El Michael smiled that thoughtful smile again, and said, "I will do this thing that you have asked, for you have indeed found grace in my sight, and I know you by name."

Few among men have so spoken with the Most High. Enoch and Shem, who watched from the heights of the Eternal Kingdom, saw a brother in this mystery below them. Angels weep when we look into the hearts of men so full of love as was Moses' that day. Such emotions as surpass any great tragedy, or any great romance, break like a sunrise over the stars, to sweep away any but the most sublime forms of gracious passion when men know that they are surely in the presence of the divine. A thousand words are they that I could devote here to such a thing, but as your preacher would one day write in song, "*Stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please!*"

"I beg of you," Moses said, overcome, "show me your glory."

This thing pleased Elohim, that His servant would make such a request. It ever pleases the Creator when His loved ones express a desire to know Him. Yet the time for such things was not yet. "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of IaHWeH before you, and be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and show mercy unto whom I will show mercy," came the reply. "Yet, you cannot see my face, for no man may see me thus, and live."

"Behold," He continued, "There is a place by me, and you will stand upon a rock, and it will come to pass that, as my glory passes by, I will cover you with my hand while I pass, and I will take away my hand and you shall see my back, the very edge of my undimmed majesty, but my face will not be seen."

The angels heard this statement, and wondered. This had never been done before. Not even the saint Mahalale'el, who had seen the Great City with his eyes, or the ones who had passed from the world without seeing death, had been permitted to behold the glory of Elohim, even in so limited a form, in their natural flesh. This was a magnificent promise, and one I was sure would prove most educational, most *important*, to the watching universe.

"Carve out two tables of stone like those that were given to you at first, and I will write on these tables the words that were on the first which you broke. Be ready in the morning and come up then unto mount Sinai and present yourself to me there at the top of the mountain. No man will come up with you, nor let any be seen on the side of the mountain, neither man nor beast." With these words, the Man returned to the cloud, and the cloud departed from the tent.

When Moses came out, the people who were nearby drew nearer still from their tents, and asked what had been said. "Yahweh has said that He will go with His people," he informed them. At these words, there was no wild celebration, for the people had so recently been wild. Instead there was a general soft weeping, and the people bowed themselves to the ground before the tent of meeting, and

worshipped in reverence. Turning to Oshea, who was standing by the door of the tent the entire time, he said, "Come with me."

The two went up to Sinai, and there found two stones of a suitable size. As they sat there, Moses using the metal tools they had brought with them to shape the tablets, he spoke to his faithful companion. "The Spirit of Yahweh has spoken to me concerning you," he said. "As you have been before the armies of Israel in the day Amalek came upon us, and as you have been before the people in judgment, and they have seen your faith and service to me and to Elohim, there has been a place reserved for you in Israel."

"What manner of place has been reserved for me?" he asked.

"When I was on the mountain, Elohim showed me many things. We are to make a Sanctuary for Him among the people, a Tabernacle such as the one in the Kingdom from which Yahweh has descended unto us. We are to consecrate to Him those from among us, including my brother Aaron and his sons, and they are to minister before Him at the Tabernacle.

"But now, Aaron was with me in leading the people, and here he is to be called to other service. I have not yet spoken to him of these things, for he has sinned a great sin in the sight of Israel, and he must have time to rest in his repentance; but it must surely come to pass. Therefore," Moses said, "you have been called to minister unto me in the wilderness, and if I should be otherwise occupied, such as atop this mountain, the leadership passes to you at such a time. My brother Aaron will not lead this people, but as for you, who have remained faithful, and have been seen so by the people, they will listen to your voice, and do according to your words."

At this declaration Oshea fell on his face before Moses and said, "Who am I, that I should lead this people? I have seen the idolatry to which they may descend, and how will they know to listen to my voice, and to do according to my words?"

"Do not let such questions trouble you," my charge said, reflecting a great deal of growth from those days in which the Almighty spoke to him from the burning bush. "Yahweh will be with you, and His Spirit will be in you."

"And now," Moses said, "you are no longer to be called Oshea, but the Almighty has called you *Joshua*, for He will lead His people into the land of promise with His own mighty hand, and in His own Presence in the midst of His people." The name Oshea meant, "Salvation." The name Joshua or, as it was pronounced in human language, *Yahshua*, was the name that Moses' father sought to give him in Egypt, but now it was given to his servant. It means, "Yah is salvation," and the change in name signified that IaHWeH Himself would be with His people to save them. It was a sign of great comfort to those who heard it, for they knew that the Almighty would be among them.

“Your charge has been given a great responsibility, like that of Moses,” I said to Berithael who was with me.

“Yes, Prince Uzziel,” he said. I could tell, though, even from these simple words, that the Cherub was inspired by what he had heard.

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The next morning Moses ascended the mountain alone, leaving Joshua and the elders at the head of the congregation. As he neared the top, the might of IaHWeH again began to flash forth from the clouds, and the people rejoiced that it was being done as it had before their transgression with the golden calf. In all this time, the Egyptians who were with them, and the Hebrews who had served to spur the people on, had remained silent, and out of the way. The demons continued to watch from far off, but Salathiel was over them now. Kafziel had borne Abaddon’s ruined being back to Egypt, and the Chief of the fallen Virtues was now left to continue the campaign against the escaped Israelites.

The twelve Sar’im, who had returned to the scene for this great occasion, rose up and saw Moses seating himself on a rock that has been shown to him. El Michael descended next to him in the pillar of cloud, but soon the cloud became the Man, and the Man began to glow brightly with the union of Elohim. Soon it was beyond even that, and angels veiled their faces as the Holy One shed His own veil, and stood on Sinai in His Majesty. As we looked on, we saw around Moses’ face a film of spirit similar to our own, though the human was unaware of its presence. All he saw was light, and all he heard was a voice speaking to him, saying, *“IaHWeH, IaHWeH Elohim, merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in mercy and truth, keeps mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but will by no means clear the guilty. He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and fourth generation.”*

Here was a sight into which Lucifer had desired to peer more deeply, and he had lost his reverence by removing his veil in the unclouded glory of Elohim. He had been preserved for the sake of revealing the effects of such irreverence, but Moses felt as Azazel indeed had felt in his early days as Covering Cherub – a joy and indescribable sense of undeserved privilege in the presence of this eternal wonder. The prophet bowed his head quickly before the Almighty, and worshipped as the Holy One passed by according to His word.

There, in the overwhelming Presence of Elohim, Moses thought again about his people, and knowing anew the holiness of the Almighty, sought yet another word of assurance that this great Beauty would go up along with a people who had so recently turned to darkness. “If I have now found grace in your sight, Adonai, let Adonai, I pray, go among us, for we are indeed a stubborn people, therefore pardon our iniquity and sin, and take us for your inheritance.” Like so many after him would do, Moses spoke of “our iniquity and sin,” taking the burden of sin unto himself, and bearing it into the presence of the Most High to seek

forgiveness. This was a pattern that would be followed by the prophets sent to Israel, and finally by the Sacrifice which was to come.

For forty days, another period like the first, Moses was in the presence of the Most High. This time, the people dared not suggest that their leader had been consumed, nor were there any thoughts of moving on without him, either forward to Canaan, or backward to Egypt. Though not every spirit was quiet within, every mouth was silent concerning their movements. With all that signs they had witnessed, none could deny that Elohim was with Moses, and there they would remain, even if many days should pass them by at the foot of the burning mountain.

This time, Moses was told more details of the covenant between the Most High and His people. First he had been given the commandments, and then the system of priests was described along with the specifics of the Tabernacle. Now the Spirit of the Almighty turned to the common people once again, and Elohim spoke of their responsibilities at length. Just as the prophet was preserved with no need for food and drink at this time, so was his mind enabled to retain all the information he had been shown with no need for writing or rehearsal; it was becoming a part of the man himself, and these were things he would never forget.

When Moses finally descended the mountain, bearing with him the tables of the renewed covenant, no man met him on the way, for he had been instructed that none should be upon mount Sinai during that time. Entering the camp, he was surprised to find Aaron lying facedown before him, and the other elders as well. As he had stepped out from the thick fog surrounding the mountain, the men who were stationed near its base had instinctively fallen down and lay as dead men.

“Stand on your feet,” Moses said, “what do you mean by this prostration?”

No one moved. “Come near to me,” he said, “for I have brought assurances that Yahweh will be with His people, and have brought again also the tables of testimony, which Elohim has restored to us in His great mercy and love.” Still, no one moved. Moses was perplexed.

Then, finally, one of the elders, a younger man, stood up and crept closer to Moses, his eyes lowered. He would not look upon his face, but the man made it known to him, without the use of any words (for none dared speak) that something was different about the prophet’s face. With dawning understanding, Moses went over to the brook and, stepping over the tiny fragments of gold that still lined the banks in some places, looked down into the water.

A dazzling light was coming from his face, so brightly that he himself could scarcely look upon it. Immediately, he called for Joshua, who approached him cautiously, and had him bring a strip of linen from among the clothing. Having obtained this cloth, Moses carefully wound it around his countenance, hiding the glory for the sake of the people. In their yet penitent state, the light of Heaven reflected from the prophet’s features was a great wonder, and one too high for them to be comfortable beholding.

When he had done what he could to stay the peoples' anxiety, he spoke to them the words that he had heard at the top of mount Sinai.

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With angels guiding them, the people of the Most High began to work. According to the instructions of Moses, they began to construct the Tabernacle according to the pattern that had been shown to the prophet on the mountain. Two men, Bezale'el of Judah and Aholiab of Dan, were given special inspiration and skill to carry out the prophet's instructions, and unto them the people brought their offerings as they were instructed. Gold and silver and brass, cloth of various colors, precious stones, wood and oil for lamps, incense made from aromatic herbs, all these things the people brought.

As the Spirit rained down on the camp, ministered by the angels, the people were filled with joy and wisdom, and began to work together in a harmony never before seen in Israel, no, not in Egypt when driven by the taskmasters. This was a unity born of faith, and every man's work and every woman's work complimented his or her neighbor's, and a great thing began to take shape amidst the people. Indeed, in repentance and generosity the people continued to bring their gifts, laying them at the tents of Moses and the workmen, until finally their veiled leader said to them, "It is enough, yes, even too much! Let neither man nor woman make any more work of offerings for the Sanctuary."

Even Korah, Dathan and Abiram contributed to the labor, driven by their sense of duty and a desire to be at peace with their people. Yet their guardians knew that this was not sincere work, and that the Spirit had not come to rest upon their three charges. They were troubled for the days ahead and what the men would do.

Bezale'el had more to do with the metalwork, and the inner structure of the Tabernacle, while Aholiab was commissioned to direct the labor for the outer court, and the things made of wood and cloth.

The angels drew near as Bezale'el envisioned the Ark of the Covenant when Moses described it to him. Carefully, patiently, the man of Judah wrought with the wood and the gold to produce a box that represented the very Throne of Heaven, and the Tabernacle in Heaven as well; of this matter I will have more to say shortly. Above the box into which was to be placed the words of the Covenant, Bezale'el fitted a covering that displayed two Cherubim, representing the ministry of Gabriel and Raziel. Previously, Michael and Gabriel had held these offices, and before that Michael and Azazel, who had become Satan. It was a deeply significant sign.

Altars were constructed for sacrifices of animals and incense. A table was made to stand in the Sanctuary and hold twelve loaves of sacred bread. A sevenfold oil lamp was created (mistranslated in many places as a "candlestick") and a washbasin of brass was constructed for the priests. Cleanliness of the body here

was to represent cleanliness of the mind and spirit, and this sign, like all the others, had great meaning in the minds of the people who would be witness to the work of the priests.

Finally, when all the work on the Tabernacle itself was completed, both Bezale'el and Aholiab personally set to work on the garments of him who was to be the chief priest. At that time Moses revealed to them who this would be, though most had believed it would be Moses himself, who had interceded on behalf of Israel time and again in the presence of IaHWeH.

They made a blue robe, and then an ephod, or outer garment, of bright colors, which represented the older system of authority as had existed under Noah and his sons. Over this was placed a girdle, and then a breastplate in which was set twelve gemstones, one for each tribe of Israel, the newer system. On the shoulders, the high priest would bear two stones, made of white onyx, as seals carrying the names of the tribes. Around the edge of the blue robe they made a hem of tiny golden ornaments, bells and little pomegranate shapes, which tinkled together whenever the priest walked. Coats of fine linen were made for all the other priests, and for he who would be high priest also, for the sake of other Sanctuary-based activities.

At the end of all this, a mitre of pure white was created, and upon it was placed a plate of pure gold like a crown, bearing the words, "Holiness to Yahweh." When all this was done, and all the parts constructed – for the Tabernacle was not yet raised up and fitted together – the people brought their work to Moses, and then laid them by the tent of meeting near the outskirts of the camp.

The children of Israel had left Egypt in what they were to consider the "first month" of their sacred calendar. They had traveled for some time, and then set up a long-lasting encampment at mount Sinai. During this time Moses had gone up away from them on two occasions for forty days at a time, and had spent many more days communing with Elohim in the tent of meeting, removing his veil when he did so, but replacing it when speaking to the people of what he had learned in the Holy Presence.

It was almost a year since the Israelites had left Egypt, when Elohim spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting and said, "The first day of the first month draws near. On this day, you are to raise the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting. And you shall put therein the Ark of the Testimony, and cover the ark with the veil that you have made. And you will bring in the table and arrange the things upon it that are to be there, and place upon it the loaves of showbread, as a perpetual offering, and thanksgiving for the bread which I provide for my people. And you will bring in the lamp stand, and light the lamps thereof.

"And you shall set the golden altar of incense within the Tabernacle, before the Ark, and place a veil before the Ark, between it and the altar of incense. And you shall take the altar of burnt offerings, and place it outside of the Tabernacle, before the door and set the washbasin of brass between the tent of the

congregation and the altar, and fill it with water. And set a boundary around the Tabernacle, which you will make of the hangings constructed by the people, and take the anointing oil which you have prepared, and anoint the Tabernacle and all that is within it, and set it apart for holy use, and all the structure, and all its vessels, and the altars, and the washbasin, these shall all be holy.

“And bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the Tabernacle, and wash them with water, and put upon Aaron the holy garments which you have made, and anoint him and set him apart for me, that he may minister to me in the priest’s office. And bring his sons and place upon them the coats, and anoint them as you will have anointed their father, that they may be priests before me with an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.”

It was time to speak with Aaron, Moses realized and, leaving the tent of the meeting, he called for his family. Only those of his immediate family were there, present with him for that discussion: Moses, Aaron and Miriam, as well as their spouses and children. These were things which involved all the children of Amram, whose name meant “Exalted People,” and they would hear of what they had been instructed to do.

Even while this meeting was called, a danger was present in the camp, even among the joyful, harmonious Israelites. The fermented liquors of Egypt had been one of the things for which the mixed multitude of foreigners had longed, and some of the less temperate Hebrews as well. It had not taken them long, stationed as they were in Sinai for almost a year, to begin the work of producing intoxicating drink, and these were carried around by some of the people.

The demon Salathiel had entered into Korah, and when the graceless Levite discovered the presence of the drink, which conscience had forbidden the brewers from making generally known, dark designs entered his heart. He knew why Aaron and his sons had been called into the tent, and he burned with fury that he and his house had been passed over for this honor, despite his great capability as a leader, and the gifts that he and his family possessed.

Aaron, on the other hand, was completely overcome with humility when Moses had informed him before the congregation that he would act as high priest, and his sons as his ministers. Now, when his duties were being spelled out, he asked, “How can I stand for the people in the presence of Elohim?”

“Let not your spirit be troubled,” Moses said to him, “your sin was great indeed, but Yahweh has put away your sin, and I have prayed for you that you be delivered from its power. Nonetheless, Aaron,” he said by the Spirit of Elohim, “a great sorrow will descend upon your house for your actions. In public you led many astray from the worship of the Creator, my brother, and in public will your house be brought low according to the way of the Most High.”

Aaron bowed himself and said, “All that Yahweh has determined, may it come to pass. I have sinned greatly before Him, and would not draw back from death,

should He determine it for the good of the people.” Adaiyel and I exchanged a glance, and Rinnael came over to us as these words were spoken. Little did we know at the time that the price Aaron’s house was to pay for the transgression was not less than that which the High-Priest-to-be had spoken – we all knew, by our very essences, that Moses had spoken truly about the sorrow to come.

* * * * *

On the New Moon, the first day of the first month of the second year since leaving Egypt (counted inclusively as so many things are) Moses directed the erection of the holy Tabernacle. The structure was set in place, and hung together, and locked together, and anointed with oil, according to the word of the Almighty. As angels guarded the camp, which had been our primary function since the arrival at Sinai, Moses entered the golden rooms and lit the lamps, filling the Sanctuary with an unearthly light. The human stared in awe, for he had never seen things of the earth made so marvelously divine, approaching in appearance the things he had seen atop the smoking mountain.

Then, finally tearing himself away from the beautiful scene, Moses brought his brother and nephews to the entrance of the Tabernacle and said, “These are your priests, Israel.” He washed their hands and feet before the congregation, and the people said, “Let the will of Yahweh be done.”

As they stood within the area of the sacred things, the people raised the court around them, posts that were locked into place, and curtains that hung from them providing a boundary of the consecrated ground. When this last step was accomplished there was a noise like thunder from atop Sinai, and the cloud that rested there descended, covering the entire camp of Israel like a canopy, and then swirling together like a whirlwind above the Sanctuary.

It spiraled madly, drawing gasps from the onlookers and then, while the angels veiled their faces, it began to pulse and glow with holy light. A ray of majesty broke down from the sky and lit the cloud still more brightly, and then the fiery nimbus descended through the roof into the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. Immediately, a light so bright it was almost solid broke out of the entrance, and illuminated the awe-struck congregation. Moses and Aaron, who had been standing right by the door, were forced backward by the brilliance that shone without any detectable heat.

As they looked on a flame leaped from the door of the Tabernacle and rested upon the altar of burnt offerings. The fuel that had been gathered there sparked, kindled by no human flame, and began to burn. “You shall never let this fire go out,” the voice of Elohim came forth from the sacred place.

Now I shall speak for a moment about the sacred fire and the representation of the Tabernacle. The Essence of Elohim is represented in Heaven by the fiery cloud of the Shekinah. While there is a Throne on which the Almighty Himself sits, the Temple in Heaven is a separate structure in which a manifestation of His Presence

is housed. Because the Shekinah within Temple, or Tabernacle, represents the essence of Elohim, it likewise represents the Throne. This was for the sake of the created beings, including angels, for like men they see “two witnesses” to the authority of the Creator; there is a spiritual authority (represented by the Tabernacle) and the legislative authority represented by the Throne of the King.

Even in the human kingdoms of Israel, the house of the king and the house of IaHWeH were separate, though intimately connected. These are things your prophets have seen but dimly, yet their words in describing these things were true. It is written in the Histories that Elohim has said, “*Heaven is my Throne, and the earth is my footstool.*” At the same time, “*Yahweh’s Throne is IN Heaven.*” Further still, “*He hath looked down from the height of His Sanctuary; from Heaven did Yahweh behold the earth.*”

To add to the matter, we find that the Redeemer, upon His resurrection, entered “*into Heaven itself,*” as a High Priest, with us attending Him. Further, He came into a “*more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands,*” while at the same time, He is seen as seated (or standing) “*at the right hand of Elohim,*” and “*on the right hand of the Majesty on high!*”

Yet for all this language, and all these glimpses into something wholly transcendent, man was shown these things for a reason. Confusion only arises when one fails to distinguish between a representation of a thing, and the thing itself as it may be directly known. All of Heaven is the Throne of Elohim in a sense, by way of representation, but there is a specific Throneroom as well. All of Heaven is a Sanctuary, and a Tabernacle of Elohim in representation, but there is a specific “*Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in Heaven*” as your prophet John the Revelator has seen. Thus while the Resurrected High Priest ministers in the Tabernacle, which is located on the right of the Throneroom, He is simultaneously spoken of as seated at the right hand of IaHWeH, while at the same time He “*ever liveth to make intercession*” for His people in the Most Holy Place wherein the Shekinah is housed.

Now on this occasion, let it be known, it was not a mere “sign of a sign” that descended and filled the House of Elohim on earth that day. When the ray of pure light shone down from the heavens, it was the descent of the *actual* Shekinah, the true and living manifestation of the essence of IaHWeH that was among His people, though veiled. It was not a copy, or a secondary representation of the burning fire in the Temple above; no, when the Shekinah descended, the Tabernacle in Heaven was left empty of its Primary Manifestation. For a brief time, when the Tabernacle was carried through the wilderness, the Israelites got a foretaste of what will happen in the renewed creation, when it will be said, “*The Tabernacle of Elohim is with men; and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and Elohim Himself shall be with them, and be their Almighty.*”

Men knew not the honor to which they had been raised in the watching eyes of the universe, and so soon after so great a rejection of His love and tender mercy! Not

until the world to come will the men who stood there, on sandy soil and in travel-stained garments, understand what had been done to them on that day.

Then, in those precious hours, the word came forth from the shining Presence, “Stand before me, Moses, in the presence of your people.”

Moses drew closer to the door and removed his veil, but he could not enter in because of the brightness that burst even through the veil between Most Holy Place and the outer Sanctuary. His own reflected glory, so like that of an angel, was lost in the brilliance, but he knelt there and awaited the instructions of the Almighty.

As he knelt the people also went down in worship, and all heard the thunder coming forth. Some of this Moses had heard before on the top of the mountain, but this was now for the people, that he should be acknowledged once again as an arbitrator of the covenant, and that the people should know that the judgments were not from Moses, but from IaHWeH. The Most High spoke of sacrifices, and forgiveness. He spoke of offerings and the work of the priests before the holy fire that was never to be left to die down.

In the work of redemption, Elohim will kindle the flames. Even in hearts depraved by sin and iniquity, He will shed forth His grace, as on all men, and allow an undeserved opportunity to draw near. Yet even those who respond in faith are not immediately sanctified. They must add fuel to the fire, developing their talents, and deepening in their love and understanding of the One who has called them to eternal life. To men was committed the work of winning souls, telling the love of the Savior, and rejoicing in thanksgiving for the victory that they had been invited to obtain. This fire must never be allowed to go out, and no human fire must be allowed to intrude upon the work begun by Heaven. This is beauty.

Most unworthy did Aaron feel as he was washed. Adaiyel knelt by him as Moses clad him with the sacred garments, and poured on his head the anointing oil. Into the breastplate Moses had placed two stones, and he told Aaron, “These were given to me with the tablets on Sinai, and will show you the way in which you should walk according to the will of Yahweh; they shall be to you *Urim*, and *Thummim*.” These words mean “Lights” and “Perfection.”

And Moses brought a bullock for a sin offering and slew it before the people, and took the blood in a bowl. He placed the blood on the horns of the altar for burnt offerings and then poured out the rest at the foot of the altar. He washed and then burned the inward parts on the altar with incense, but the outer part he had burned outside the camp. It is the inner man that must be washed and consecrated wholly to the service of Elohim, for without this outward appearance means nothing, and is counted an unclean thing. He did this again with a ram.

A second ram was called, this time for consecration, and not for a burnt offering. Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram and consecrated

themselves to the service of the Most High. Then Moses slew the ram as he had the other animals, but this time he placed the blood on the right ear, right thumb and toe of Aaron's right foot. He did the same thing with Aaron's sons, and then sprinkled the remainder of the blood about the altar. Then he took the inward parts and placed them in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and had them lift them up with unleavened bread in front of the people, and then he burned them on the altar. He did the same thing with the breast of the ram and then sprinkled his relatives once again with the anointing oil.

After this the flesh of the ram was boiled, and the priests ate the flesh in the presence of the people, showing that they had taken the covenant into themselves to execute it faithfully before IaHWeH and before Israel.

When the main ceremony was concluded the people returned to their tents, but Aaron and his sons remained at the entrance of the Tabernacle for seven days, being instructed by Moses of the many rites and ceremonies that he had been shown on the mountain of Sinai, communing with Elohim in the Tent of Meeting, and then within the raised Tabernacle.

On the eighth day after the New Moon, with tears in his eyes, Aaron stood before the people and blessed them, his anointing completed, and his work as the high priest about to commence in earnest. As Aaron went forth to offer a sacrifice on behalf of the people according to the instruction of Moses, a great flame leapt from the door of the Sanctuary. The burning finger passed by Moses, passed by the sons of Aaron and the High Priest himself. It raised itself like a living stream of fire above the congregation as if it would descend upon them and utterly consume every man, woman and child assembled there. But instead, to the vast relief of the amazed onlookers, it turned and descended upon the altar, reducing to ashes in an instant what the flames that were blazing there would have consumed in far more time.

When the people saw that the offering had been accepted on their behalf, and that the wrath of Elohim was surely turned away from them, the Israelites gave a mighty shout, and fell on their faces in reverent worship.

With all these things completed: the law given, the Tabernacle constructed, the elders and judges selected and the priests anointed, the children of Israel were finally prepared to remove themselves from their long visit to Sinai. A few matters remained, however, for Moses was yet to receive many of the instructions regarding the priests' ceremonial system, and it would be another month before the Hebrews set out on the larger leg of their journey homeward.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 12: THE TESTIMONY OF FAITHFUL WITNESSES

“I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you; ‘Therefore ye are my witnesses,’ saith Yahweh, ‘that I am the Almighty.’” (Isaiah 43:12)

YaHWeH is Spirit, but man is flesh. How, then, can man meet Elohim, except that he become spiritual himself? Yet too often is the word “spiritual” misused among the children of men in these last days. I have seen great trouble descending upon humanity because they praise those they admire for being “spiritual” when there are more spirits in the creation than those that are holy. The sorcerer Yannos was an extremely spiritual man, yet his body and mind were warped by the demons, until he became less than human while pretending to be more.

Amidst the miseries of broken Egypt he was given the mind of Lucifer, to guide the nation and nurse it back to health, while covering the departure of the Hebrew slaves, and the calamity that befell them, with clouds of smoke and misdirection. To the priests of Egypt were given the job of maligning the divine spirits that had been instrumental in accomplishing the freedom of Israel. Angels were forgotten or debased, and demons were exalted as gods more fully than ever before. The mighty and noble Chalkydri were mentioned in evil terms, reflecting the anger and envy of the fallen spirits who had opposed them.

Man must be not merely “spiritual” but “Godly.” Man must be sanctified by a working knowledge of Elohim, and a living connection with His people, in order to attain what must be attained. It is the priests, or spiritual leaders, who have a great responsibility here, to show the difference between the holy and unholy, between the clean and unclean, between the Godly and the twin errors of ritualism and spiritualism, which are two ditches on either side of that narrow road.

It is in this regard that the house of Aaron paid the wages of sin.

The Levite Korah, while pretending to be reconciled to his brethren, was in truth harboring a deep resentment, and was one of the main strongholds of Salathiel and his demons in the camp. Often would the fallen Virtue taunt me with plans that he had for the Israelites in the wilderness, but for my part I followed the example of Joshua’s silent guardian Berithael, and replied not a word. In the time before the Heavenly War, this being had been one of my most talented and

dedicated angels. He had worked with endless enthusiasm to bring beauty to the courts of Heaven.

When men, in their incorruptible bodies, finally gaze upon the Eternal City, the work that they see will have been inspired by his early labors for Elohim. Now, his colors were washed away. His light had gone out, and in the darkness that remained he had become merely a cosmetic corpse. He was outwardly beautiful still, but for the remaining scars of his initial fall, yet inwardly he was a monstrosity, and one whose cruel eyes were fixed on my charge, and on the people that he had led up from Egypt.

When Aaron and his family had returned to their tents to await the final instructions for their office that Moses was even then seeking in the light of the Tabernacle, Korah approached the priests, and made friendly remarks to the sons of Aaron.

The two eldest, Nadab and Abihu, had been honored with higher places than their younger brothers. They were to minister directly to their father Aaron, and to stand in judgment over spiritual matters regarding the many directions Elohim had been pleased to provide for His people. In large part due to their father's error, the two young men were filled with pride. Their guardians had sought to instruct them that they must not follow the example of Aaron, but be firm in the face of opposition, and take upon themselves a true responsibility for leading the people of Elohim. This instruction they accepted, taking it indeed to heart, but along with it the demons in the camp turned this great lesson but a little aside, and soon it led to pride. If they must not bend before the will of the people, the demons informed them, it meant that they were superior, more able to decide, less apt to require correction, and holding some special place at the ear of Elohim.

Yet while the Almighty will favor some individuals with particular offices, He is not one who will chose "favorites" from among the children of men. IaHWeH is a Respector of character, but not of persons, and this was a distinction that Nadab and Abihu entirely failed to grasp. Thus, while their characters were allowed to slip by the wayside, they felt exalted in their persons when they stood before the Almighty.

Into Korah's company the two men were drawn, while their younger brothers, discerning something amiss, avoided them. Korah's companions were from various tribes, but many had become sympathetic to his position. Korah's main complaint was that Moses had taken the priestly set from among those in his own immediate family. Under the influence of the wine that was shared freely between his friends, he reasoned, "Elohim by His Presence has signified acceptance of this choice, and it is well, of course, that He has done so. But does acceptance always mean desire? Consider, brethren, Aaron is a wise man, at times... but the choice is a good one, surely. Why should the Almighty speak against it? Yet if Moses will always choose from among his own friends and family in appointing men of position and power among us, what is to prevent him from overtaking the camp completely?"

The men, though under the influence, nevertheless retained enough sense to make cutting remarks about this line of thought. “But now,” Korah said, maintaining his composure, “you have spoken true, that Yahweh would not allow such a thing to be. But how much more important then, that we save Moses from the fate that will befall him should it come to pass?”

“And how will you accomplish this?” one asked him.

“Simply,” Korah replied. “We must show that the anointing of the priesthood does not make a man special at all, only powerful, and then the people will ask why men of their own tribes and families may not also serve in the Tabernacle.”

The men were not open to this demonic suggestion, yet when Korah had induced the two eldest sons of Aaron to join them in their recreation time, they accepted the additions with hospitality. They were not a sanctified group, hospitable as they may have been, and inevitably the association began to have a telling effect on the minds of the priests, as they laughed and spoke of frivolous things night after night in the camp.

And it came to pass, during that final month at the foot of mount Sinai, that Nadab and Abihu stood before the altar of Elohim, having not yet recovered from their evening of carousing the night before. Not until the dissolute sons of Eli in the days of Samuel would such an affront to the dignity of the priestly office again be seen. With minds tainted with pride, and still suffering from the effects of slow poison, the men drew near the altar with fire that had not been kindled by the Almighty. Only the holy flames that had come forth from the Tabernacle, they were told, were to be used for this purpose. Only the fire that had been kindled on the New Moon was to be brought to the altar for sacred use, but in their carelessness and pride, the men had been induced to use the fire that had been started by man.

As the congregation looked on, praising Elohim and giving thanks for the sacrifices that were accepted on their behalf, a sudden rush of flame burst forth from the Sanctuary. The finger of fire that they had seen previously again appeared, and the onlookers wondered if they would be favored once more with a special manifestation of divine power. This they were, but not according to their desires. As angels veiled their faces, the fire descended upon the horrified priests, and slew them in an instant.

Moses and Aaron, along with Aaron’s remaining sons, gasped at the sudden violence, but Moses quickly recovered and said to his brother and nephews, “Ah, brother, this is what Yahweh spoke, saying, ‘I will be sanctified by them that come near to me, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” His brother answered not a word, but stared silently at the place where his sons had stood only moments before.

Moses called two men over who had stood by. They were also Levites, sons of his uncle Uzziel (another, of course) and he said to them, “Come near, and carry your brethren from before the Sanctuary, and out of the camp.” While the fire had settled on the two men, it had not utterly consumed them as it had the offering; the great heat had destroyed them instantly, but their bodies remained as mute testimony to the offense.

The congregation had drawn back in surprise and fear, and Korah with his men looked on as if they were but innocent witnesses. The consciences of some of his sympathizers struck them heavily, but Korah’s only thought was, “Now let us see what shall happen.”

Moses acted quickly, and decisively, but his grief was not significantly less than that of his brother Aaron. He had loved his nephews dearly, but knew that Elohim would not bear such an offense as he had realized it to be. For the very sake of the people looking on, a people so prone to disobedience, the holiness of the One who stood guard over them must be emphasized at every turn. The people must know, further, that those who served Him were not out of harmony with the justice of the decision.

“Do not uncover your heads, or tear these sacred coverings,” he said to Aaron, Ithamar and Eleazar, “for your own safety and that wrath should not come upon the congregation. Let Israel mourn for your sons, and bewail the burning we have seen today, and you must not depart from this Sanctuary, for the anointing oil is upon you, until you have completed your services this day.”

As Aaron and his sons went, painfully, back to their labors, the voice of the Most High came forth from the burning cloud within the Tabernacle, and He began to speak to them in the hearing of the assembly that was still gaping at the scene.

“Do not drink wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the Tabernacle of the congregation, lest you die. It will be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may put a difference between the holy and unholy, between the unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes that Yahweh has spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.”

* * * * *

Korah, for all this testimony against his works, and the manifest displeasure of Elohim in the results of his subtlety, would not repent of his course. Israel had been wounded, as surely as Ariel bore the mark for them, and healing would be long in coming. Another evidence of this injury occurred just after the tragedy concerning Nadab and Abihu, and involved Aaron’s other two sons.

According to the instructions of Moses, the sin offerings were to be eaten by the priests, and in this way, the priest was seen as taking the sin “into” himself in order to intercede properly for the people. A short time after the incident where

the two older brothers had been slain, however, the prophet of Elohim discovered that a goat that had been consecrated as a sin offering had actually been burnt.

This, in the mind of Moses, constituted a great breach in the system, and he was certain it would pollute the minds of onlookers, who were ever present at these sacrifices. At the very least, it would show a measure of carelessness about the system of sacrifices, which held great significance for the nation and the events that were to transpire in the course of human history. Thinking that this had been an error on the parts of Ithamar and Eleazar, he began to rebuke them, saying, “Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the Holy Place, seeing as it is most holy? Has not Elohim placed upon you the burden of bearing the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before Yahweh?”

While Moses was yet speaking, however, Aaron came over and said, “This was done at my instruction.”

“And why, then, have you caused them to go contrary to the command of Elohim?”

“Today,” Aaron said, “they have offered their sin and the burnt offering together before Yahweh. Such things have befallen me, such grief, that if I were to eat the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of Yahweh?”

Moses, relieved that this unusual activity on the part of the priests was not due to carelessness, said, “Be at peace, brother. The loss of your sons is a great sorrow, but let us grieve for them and move forward in the joy of Elohim.”

“You have spoken truly,” Aaron said and, taking a deep breath, he returned to his duties in the Tabernacle.

* * * * *

Shortly after this, Israel departed from Sinai. There are many things about the journey that followed of which I might speak. There are many things of great importance that men may learn by studying the course of this sojourn, yet for the purposes of my testimony, I have a few significant events on which I must focus. First, those who hear these words must come to understand the discipline that Elohim was attempting to provide for His people. Should they not learn to become reverent, and holy, there would be no purpose for establishing a nation of priests to teach the world about the glory of IaHWeH. Much of this part of my record involves this idea.

A census was taken of the Israelites just before their departure. During the last month of their stay in that location, instructions about many things were given to Israel, including how to deal with potentially dangerous diseases, what days were to be considered holy, and a diet regarding the animals that had been declared “clean” or “unclean” based on their nature centuries earlier, even before the Flood of Noah’s day. Whereas Aaron’s descendants had been chosen as the priests of

the Tabernacle, the entire tribe of Levi was now honored with being the attendants of the Sanctuary.

Within those days the demons continued to pick at the faith of the Israelites, at times gaining small footholds and stirring up trouble. We prevented any widespread confusion from breaking out, but it was certainly more difficult than it should have been considering the holiness of that place. Indeed, the entire episode at Sinai is but a testimony to the long-lasting effects of idolatry and corrupting surroundings. Even these men who had bravely followed Moses into the wilderness, and had been preserved by the living glory of Elohim, were not above petty complaints, falling easy prey to fear and cowardice, and at times outright blasphemy.

To be sure, it was not long after Israel set out into the wilderness once again that the complaints started up. The initial discontent began yet again in the stragglers from Egypt, but it was taken up eagerly – too eagerly – by the descendants of Jacob. Israel had been numbered and divided into orderly tribes, traveling with the Levites and the Tabernacle at their center. Instructions had been given to the families, and individuals, regarding specific duties. The cloud of the Presence had lifted itself up from the Tabernacle at the appointed time, and went ahead of the nation as they journeyed toward their promised Canaan. Yet in all this, some were not content.

While the manna with which the Throne angels had been appointed to provide was “meat indeed,” and sufficient to sustain the entire people indefinitely in the wilderness, many among the travelers desired the food they had enjoyed in Egypt, particularly the flesh of animals and birds. At the beginning of the journey, the Most High had indeed provided them with quails to sustain them, but immediately thereafter He had replaced it with the miraculous food on which they now subsisted. Some, however, cherished their strong desires for that which they had left behind, and when Moses was informed of the matter he grieved for the stubbornness of his people.

Elohim said to His angels, those of us who attended the nation, “The people rise up against me yet again. What shall be done with the people of Israel? My servant Moses is grieved often for their sakes, and shall I not visit for this iniquity? I will cut off the offenders for the sake of my people, and my servant Moses, that there may be silence in my presence.”

As He thus spoke, the cloud became a pillar of fire, as it had unto the Egyptians, but it was guided backward by the hand of the Almighty, and it went among the Israelites, consuming the openly rebellious as it had done to Nadab and Abihu. The people saw what was happening, and many fled from the camp, running as far and as fast as they could from the presence of the Most High to avoid this outbreak of wrath. Many ran to Moses, who was looking on with sadness, but not with fear, and he knelt on the ground before the fire and prayed.

“Yahweh our Almighty, have mercy on your people. Remember the covenant which you made with us on your holy mountain, and forgive the iniquity of your servants.”

Though Elohim would have consumed all the offenders, at the prayer of Moses He ceased, letting the people see the authority that He had committed to Moses, and reducing them once again to humbled silence. Slowly, those who had fled into the wilderness returned, sneaking slowly back into the camp. There was nowhere for them to go in this barren wasteland, and none would be under the protection of the covenant apart from the brotherhood of Israel.

The camp was not yet cleansed, and to accomplish this in a large measure Elohim directed angels to bring again quails from the regions nearby, and to blow them by means of a wind into the camp. Since Joshua now traveled in close proximity to Moses’ family, his guardian Berithael was constantly in the presence of Adaiyel, Rinnael and myself. As we watched the little birds being carried by the streams of air among the Israelites, I said to my fellow guardians, “Now we shall see the trial of their faith, as at that first night.”

“When will there be rest in the camp of Israel, Prince Uzziel?” Rinnael asked me.

I turned to the gentle angel and said, “When the people choose to enter into rest, they will have it. For some that day will never come, but among the people there are many who are wise of heart, and did not desire the things of Egypt. This thing is from Yahweh, to separate among his people the unclean from the clean.”

It was indeed so. Too late some of the demons realized what was happening, for those whom they had trained to be slaves to their lust and appetites began to gorge themselves on the birds, saying, “When have we last seen flesh like this? When may we see it again?”

The people had received warning, warning that seemed excessive to the eyes of some angels, who marveled at the longsuffering of Elohim. Moses had said to the people, “There will be a plague in the flesh, and it will become loathsome unto you.”

The Almighty had poured out His Spirit upon the seventy elders, even those who had not come to the assembly that was called, and the wise, respected men prophesied, saying, “Elohim brings judgment to His people. Let not the lusts of the appetite direct our course, but be strong in faith, and endure the trial that comes upon us for lust’s sake.”

Yet the people would not heed these great warnings, and when Elohim visited a plague upon those who had made themselves corrupt with the quails, not one among the angels or human survivors had cause to say, “Yahweh has dealt harshly with His people.”

* * * * *

The demons were losing their grip on the travelers. It seems a strange statement to make, in light of the great apostasies and transgressions I have been describing, nevertheless this is what I observed. It is true that those such as Korah, Dathan and Abiram were becoming bolder as they saw they were not punished for their murmuring and plotting, but those who followed them were rapidly decreasing in both zeal and number. Elohim did well in bringing successive trials to His people. Those who trusted in Him were preserved at every turn, and between the accusations of Satan against the nation of Israel, and the untrained consciences of those within the camp, Elohim in His justice allowed the tests to come, which served only to strengthen the faith of those who remained, while dramatically reducing the number of individuals who would be sources of trouble.

The matter was far more serious, however, when the source of trouble was one of the chosen messengers. When Aaron had led the people in their transgression at Sinai, the effects had been farther reaching than I have yet indicated in this record. The delay placed upon the movements of Israel by their extra time at Sinai Elohim turned in many ways to the good, but at the same time things would have been far better, even in these last days, had the Hebrews removed from Sinai at the time originally appointed.

After departing, it was not Aaron primarily, but Miriam, who had her moment of testing. Though she had stood with Elisheba and Zipporah, united in sorrow at the apostasy with the golden calf, she had no great affection for her younger brother's wife. Rinnael's charge was ordinarily the most thoughtful, and least impulsive, of her siblings, but there were things of which she neglected to speak, small matters that, on their own, would have amounted to little, but which grew with the passage of time.

Miriam had very early on formed the opinion of Moses' wife that Zipporah was a weak, untrustworthy, delicate thing. Although it had been Moses who sent her back to Midian shortly after setting out on their journey, consenting to Zipporah's reasoning regarding the safety of their children, and her own unnecessary exposure to danger and suffering, Miriam blamed his wife. She said, "Why did she not support my brother during that difficult time? She left him to stand before Pharaoh alone, and had it not been for Aaron my brother, alone he would have remained." She shared these things with Aaron, and he listened to her.

When Jethro had suggested that Moses form a committee of seventy elders, Miriam suspected that it was Zipporah's complaints about having too little time with her husband that prompted her father's words. With that council Moses shared the most important decisions of the movements of Israel, and she felt that she and even Aaron to a degree (despite his own high office) had been neglected. She took to calling Zipporah "the Cushite," emphasizing the non-Hebrew aspect of her Midianite heritage, rather than the common ancestry they shared through Abraham.

It was Salathiel himself who first noticed this growing irritation in the woman of Israel, and he sent one of his Virtues, a vile spirit calling himself Ra'abiel, to exploit the matter. Over the days and weeks that followed, he gradually guided Miriam's thoughts, alienating her farther and farther from the influence of Rinnael, who could only look on in sorrow as the prophetess gave in to a carnality she had been unprepared to face.

The fallen Virtue did his work well, and soon he had opened a great gulf between Miriam and Moses – a gulf made dangerous because it was *unknown* to Moses. Aaron, having learned far less than Adaiyel had hoped from the incidents at Sinai, did little and was swept along with his older sister's fury. Eventually, when she could do little of either eating or sleeping, believing that she was acting from proper conviction and firm principles, she called for her brothers in her tent, and spoke to them in the presence of angels and demons.

"Moses my brother," Miriam said. "I have erred, and committed a disservice against you."

"In what way?" Moses asked confused at the words of the sister on whom he had come, in many ways, to depend.

"I have let my troubles rise up within myself, and have not let myself speak openly in your presence." At these words, I saw a flicker of hope in Rinnael's being; perhaps, just perhaps, the Spirit had spoken to Miriam by means of her gift, and she was turning to repentance. Should she confess her unjust feelings toward Zipporah here, all would have been healed, but I had been watching her, and caught some things the hopeful Dominion had missed.

"My heart grows heavy, my brother, when I see the work of the wife of your bosom upon you. It troubles me, and has for many days, when I see how she has not supported you in your labors, as have I, and your brother Aaron. And now we see the word of Elohim in this matter, that you have chosen a wife who was not from among your people Israel, and shall we be astonished when she fails to come up to the mark? Come, brother, listen to our words, for has Yahweh indeed spoken only by you? Has He not spoken also by us?"

A look of surprised pain passed over Moses' features, and he looked to Aaron for support. His brother said nothing, but glanced downward, unwilling to meet his eyes.

A flood of thoughts rose in Moses' mind. How had this happened? What had changed since the days of Egypt, when the three of them prayed together, and fell asleep petitioning the Almighty for the good of Israel? Wherein had he failed to show publicly what a value his wife had been to him? How could they so misinterpret his respect for the daughter of the Midianite priest who had taught him so much, and held him up in his time of greatest need? Had he not told them of what a blessing Zipporah herself had been to him, when he was a stranger in a land not his own?

But as Moses opened his mouth to say one of the many things that immediately occurred to him, another voice rang out from within the tent. “Who is this that speaks against my servant Moses?” Immediately, I fell on my face, and the other angels with me. The demon Ra’abiel and those who were with him instinctively drew their dark weapons, but when they saw who stood before them, they slowly returned the kherevs to their sheathes. Prince Michael was among the humans, manifest in His shimmering form as a Man. It was in this manner He had appeared to the seventy elders of Israel, and both Aaron and Moses immediately recognized Him.

They also fell on their faces and Miriam, catching on, joined them on the floor. The demons stood apart, but did not flee, for they knew that if the High Prince had wished to harm them they would already be consumed or thrust out of the tent. Yet all they did was turn to us and chant those tired words we had wearied of hearing in the camp of Israel, “We are here by right!”

El Michael ignored them and said to the humans, “Come out unto the Tabernacle of the congregation.” With that He vanished from among them, and we saw Him rising out of the tent, invisible to the siblings within, and returning to His place within the pillar of cloud.

The three went out, Moses confused and hurt, and his brother and sister fearful. The brief words of Elohim had already shown where His judgment rested, and they went forward now believing that only sentencing remained.

As they came near to the Tabernacle, the cloud descended and stood by the door, and Elohim spoke out of the cloud, “Hear now my words. If a prophet is among you, I myself will make it known to him by means of visions and dreams. But it is not so with my servant Moses, who is faithful in all my house. With him I speak in familiar terms, in a visible manner and not in dark speeches, and my likeness he will see, even the likeness of IaHWeH. Why, therefore, are you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

Elohim waited for no reply, but immediately the cloud lifted up and streaked off in the direction of Sinai. It had not returned to the head of the camp, nor had it remained among the people, but departed as a sign of great displeasure. While we angels remained with the Israelites, we could provide little comfort to those who came to understand what had taken place.

Even more dramatically, Miriam’s skin immediately became white, a sign of a dreaded disease that was both deadly and highly contagious. Both Moses and Aaron stepped away from their stricken sister, but Aaron, who had been silent in the tent before Moses, now opened his mouth and spoke.

“Alas, adonai, I beg you, do not lay this sin upon us, for therein we have done foolishly, and have surely sinned. Do not let this be visited upon our sister, that

she be accounted as one condemned to die, and counted as no more in your sight than one born dead.”

“Ah, Aaron my brother,” Moses asked, “have you still not understood?” But the servant of the Most High needed no convincing. He fell to his knees, forgiving his sister immediately in his heart, and saying, “Heal her now, Elohim, I pray you.”

As he spoke those words, thunder cracked a clear sky, and in the voice of the thunder Moses heard the words of the Most High, saying, “Though her father had spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp for a week, and after that let her be received.” When the thunder had passed away, Miriam’s brothers looked upon her, and it was as if the affliction had never taken place. Nevertheless, according to the word of Elohim both then and in His previous instructions during their time at Sinai, one who had been afflicted with leprosy was to remain in quarantine for seven days, and this was done also with Miriam.

The people, who held the prophetess in high affection, were exceedingly sorrowful when they heard what had taken place. Miriam herself was greatly humbled by the experience, and spent her time in genuine repentance, searching her soul, and casting off the envy that had led her to believe that her own mind’s promptings had been divine conviction. As for Aaron, he fasted for the seven days, knowing that in his role as high priest he bore a great responsibility, and he must not again be led astray by the emotions of others, be they many or few.

When the week of purification had passed, both Aaron and Miriam went to Moses’ tent, and sought forgiveness from husband and wife. They were received with open arms, and tears of reconciliation.

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Miriam’s return marked also the return of the pillar of cloud. On the day she stepped again into the borders of the tents, the smoke of Elohim rested again upon the Tabernacle. The manner of His guidance was in this order: When the cloud rested upon the Tabernacle, the people knew they were to remain there. When the cloud rose up and whirled around into a column, they knew they were to prepare, and when the preparations were completed, with tents and Tabernacle bundled for travel, the cloud would move forward, leading the multitude in their formation and under their tribal banners.

Just a few days later, the children of Israel were already on the borders of Canaan. The time of their actual traveling had been quite brief, most of their time being spent stationary at mount Sinai. The cloud of Elohim’s presence rested over a spot in the wilderness of Paran, just south of Canaan, and the people camped there. As I have said, for much of this phase in Israel’s journeys we angels were little more than border guards and witnesses, but now when humans were to be the witnesses, we angels would act. Again, I have told you now of Aaron and Miriam, who proved to be two unfaithful witnesses; I will speak here of two

witnesses who proved to be faithful, though faced with great danger both outside of, and within, the camp of their people.

Elohim spoke to Moses out of the Tabernacle, and said, “Send men into Canaan, that they may search it out, and let them know the land that I will give unto the children of Israel. Of every tribe of Israel’s fathers you will send a man, every one a prince among them.”

By this commandment, Moses selected twelve men. They were Shammua of Reuben, Shaphat of Simeon, Caleb of Judah, Igal of Issachar, Joshua of Ephraim (the minister of Moses), Palti of Benjamin, Gaddiel of Zebulun, Gaddi of Manasseh (which is of Joseph), Ammiel of Dan, Sethur of Asher, Nahbi of Naphthali, and Geuel of Gad. With them went their guardians, and from these guardians I learned what transpired in the land of Canaan.

With them also went Salathiel and a multitude of demons, to work wrath among the chosen of Elohim.

Lucifer knew that if Israel was able to make it to Canaan, and establish themselves there, they would go a long way toward spreading the worship of the Almighty, and greatly delaying his plans to exalt humanity in its own eyes and turn from its reverence toward Heaven. Though it looked like they were right on the borders of the land, the patron demon of Egypt knew that defeat would always find a way, if only it were allowed to do so.

Directing events from his dark throne in Egypt, Lucifer worked according to his nature through his agents such as Salathiel and Ra’abiel.

Before the sending of the twelve explorers, Moses gathered the congregation about the Tabernacle, every man from his tent, and he spoke to the people, saying, “We are on the borders of the land, of which Yahweh has said, ‘I have sworn by myself, I will give it to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.’ Today, this promise is fulfilled, for we are sending men into the land, to see what it is, and how we may best enter in. Elohim has led us thus far, unto the borders of the land as He has promised, and He has said His presence will go with us, but henceforth He will direct our way through chosen men whom He will fill with His Spirit of wisdom and skill.”

After saying these words, Moses bowed down on his face before the Tabernacle, in the sight of the people, and He prayed. “Yahweh, Elohim of our fathers, who has brought us up out of Egypt, hear now my words in the presence of your people Israel. By a mighty hand you have brought us up out of the house of slavery, and separated us from the wickedness of the gods of the land. You have brought us up to Sinai, your holy mountain, and there made known to us your Law, by which we are to be sanctified in your sight. And now, Almighty One, there remains only the inheritance, which you have promised your people, and we send men out according to your word, men filled with wisdom and skill, to guide us in the way that we should go.”

“Be with them, as you have been with us, and forsake us not as we go forward according to the commandment which you have given, and do not delay to bring us into the land that we may be there a holy nation unto Yahweh.”

As he concluded, the voice of the Almighty was heard speaking from the Tabernacle, and all the people heard it as they had heard the first recital of the Decalogue. “I have heard your voice, and in the presence of the people I have listened to your words. My presence will go with the men whom you have chosen, and my peace will be upon them to accomplish that which is to be done. They shall not be harmed, not a hair upon their heads, by the inhabitants of the land, but they shall see the country from south to north, and return to you with a report of what they have seen.”

As the people worshipped, the Almighty called to Berithael in a voice only the angels could hear, and he approached with the guardians of the other eleven men. “You will bear my presence into the land of Canaan, and watch over the men of Israel. I have appointed you the Seraphim, those who fly at Ariel’s command, to accompany you, for the darkness of the land is great, and idolatry covers the earth as a stain. In that place Satan holds great power, and he has raised armies in preparation for this day, knowing the promises I have made unto my servant Israel.”

There is a principle in matters of religions, whether true, false or magical, known as “correspondences.” Briefly told, it means that the spiritual and invisible may affect the concrete and visible – and vice versa. As in most general statements, there is an element of truth and an element of error in this. It is true that by prayer men may communicate with the spiritual world, and thus entreat the hand of Elohim (or demons, as the case often is) to intervene in the affairs of life, however this principle of correspondences is often used to describe mere impersonal forces and de-centralized, often animistic, concepts. In other words, many consider the natural law that “*whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*” to be accomplished automatically, without any real intelligence behind it. The eastern concepts like Karma, and the western versions such as that which is reflected in the more modern, “what goes around comes around,” ignore the first part of that verse from your Histories that I have quoted: “*Be not deceived; Elohim is not mocked.*”

By expecting an *automatic* meting out of justice, the secular mind has introduced two problems into its philosophy. First, “life is not fair,” in that sometimes the good are punished for the crimes of the wicked, or for no apparent reason at all. This leaves out the authority Elohim has over every life, to train and mould the character of men in an attempt to suit them for the wonders of eternal life. Second, it seeks to entirely exclude the concept of a coming Day of Judgment by having all, or most, reward and punishment for the actions of humanity dealt with in this current life (or a succession of earthly lives).

This has been the purpose of almost every occult “science” that I have seen since the Tower of Babel. Under Lucifer’s inspiration, the concept of the judgment of IaHWeH is diminished, forgotten, or pushed so far into the future that it has no practical connection to daily life. This was the fundamental error of the companions to faithful Job in his distress, and it was a great one. Men who accept this viewpoint labor for what they believe to be the present good, and attempt to avoid present evils, and passion and appetite are therefore much more easily allowed their sway.

Yet both justice and mercy function between the visible and invisible realms because “*Elohim is not mocked.*” The material influences the spiritual, and the spiritual the material, much more directly because of the “characters” of the individuals involved than their activities, for the prayer of a wicked man does not “avail much,” though his words may be outwardly pious and lofty. Elohim will not act on his behalf unless there are other things that must be accomplished thereby.

So here, before Israel, Elohim acted, not because He was bound to do so by automatic processes, but because His character was such that it found sympathy with Moses’ character, and the request of His people. The angels were assembled by means of an intelligent command, and an intimately involved Person, not an insensible force, or anything resembling what some men now call “religion.”

Brave Ariel was ready. His wound had not grown worse with the passage of time, but it had not grown better either, and it was clear to every angelic eye that he flew as Israel marched: under a measure of pain. Ignoring the obvious discomfort, which would surely have incapacitated many less powerful angels, he summoned his warriors, and together with the twelve guardians and the twelve men they moved eastward along the southern border, to mount Hor, and from there they went in a more northerly direction to the river Jordan, and then almost directly north.

This was the route, but not the ease of their passage. The men went easily, and almost without incident – not so the angels. For forty days the men spied out the land of Canaan. For forty days, the angels endured almost non-stop attacks from powerful demons.

When I later spoke with the Seraph Ambriel, guardian of Ephraim, he had much to tell me, and an amazing report of what befell Ariel over the place known as mount Hor.

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The problems started almost immediately. As soon as they departed from the glory of the Presence that rested over Israel in Paran, demons appeared, attempting to strip the humans of their divine protectors before they had even crossed the border into Canaan.

It was a twofold attack. Tempters descended among the men, and warriors went after the Chalkydri, primarily seeking Ariel whom they knew to be suffering from an injury. Elohim had known well what tactics the wicked spirits would employ, and it was for this reason that he had sent two sets of twelve. The men's assigned guardians kept the tempters at bay, while the Seraphim in turn protected them from the dark blades of the more violent angels.

Most of the demons, Ambriel told me, had come forth from the House of Envy under Abaddon. Their Ba'al was recovering in Egypt, but they were eager to make good on the breach opened up by his sacrifice.

As the men passed by lush scenes and beautiful streams of water, they said in their hearts, "It is a good land indeed, to which Elohim has brought us." Yet as they looked down over the strong cities, and warlike people, a tinge of fear entered the men, who envisioned scenes of struggling against these armies with the weapons they had collected from Egypt and the Amalekites. Ten of the men, all but Joshua of Ephraim and Caleb of Judah, were susceptible to the temptations of their demons, and what had begun as fear began to give way to pride.

It may seem a strange thing, but many times the will of the demons are done because people *resist* temptations! What do I mean by this extraordinary statement? It was not long before demons learned that they could not so easily manipulate those who had a firm desire to serve the Almighty. They knew what was true, and right, especially after the Law was given in a written, concrete form to Israel. This gave birth to a new tactic, and the evil ones called it "diversionary temptations."

This is what befell the sects known as the Sadducees and the Pharisees in the days of the Sacrifice. The former, in seeking to avoid the pagan ideas of the afterlife, surrendered the thing that was being counterfeited, and soon had lost their trust in our protection, and even existence. The latter, in earnestly striving to avoid idolatry and complacency, became so strict in their dedication to the letter of the Law that its spirit was well-nigh eliminated in all but the most sensitive of their number.

There are fallen angels who excel in presenting a temptation merely for the purpose of having the individual avoid it; and as they draw away from the danger they see, they are subtly induced to tread too far on the other side of the road. Many have thus fallen from the narrow path of true holiness.

"We will not be afraid of them," the ten spies thought. "We are the people of Elohim, but behold how He protects us, so that we may move among so mighty a host of enemies and not be destroyed!" It is true that the path was often perilous, and yet the twelve men saw no direct danger. This was due to our work in keeping them from being detected, and the Seraphim in distracting those fallen angels who would have gladly alerted their human agents to the presence of the men of Israel. The nations all about had come to know the victory that Israel had won over Egypt, few understanding the true significance or even order of events,

and they believed that these Israelites were a powerful, bloodthirsty people who would raid their land by force of arms and take their goods. As such, many had been stirred up by the demons to aggression, and would have attacked any man of Israel on sight. This was one of the reasons Elohim led the people southward from Egypt, that they may avoid the Philistine armies that were to the north of the wilderness.

While the ten spies said, “behold how He protects us,” their hearts were secretly praising their own skill and wisdom. The warrior demons were not successful at dislodging the guardians, but the tempters got a lot further in the minds of those who walked on below. Day after day, the Chalkydri repelled attacks. There were no demons of rank, though they were powerful, and Ariel began to suspect that Lucifer was planning a major assault at some point in the future. “Be on your guard,” he said to his angels. It was not until the men were on their way back that the captain of the twelve burning Seraphim was proven right.

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The men had done a thorough job of mapping out the land. They had drawn sketches of the geography, and marked regions where the highest concentrations of potentially hostile forces were located. They made marks to show the places where mountains stood, and also rivers and sources of food. Upon their return the men decided that they would bring a sample of what the land had to offer, and so they stopped by a vineyard in an area known as Eschol, and collected some clusters of large grapes. Some of it supplied them on their return, but they had reserved some to display to their nation when they arrived in Paran.

They moved southward once again, crossing the rivers, and entered into the mountainous region of Hor. It was there, amidst the rocky land, that the fallen angels mounted their attack.

As the guardians led the men gently over the twists and turns of the land, both Berithael and Ambriel looked southward and saw a cloud of shadows drawing near. At the head of the group was Salathiel, the chief of the fallen Virtues, and Ra’abiel. With them also was Kafziel, the chief of the fallen Dominions and his angels. Finally at the rear was Zagzagel, a mighty Throne, and chief of his own fallen contingent of the four-winged angels.

“Do not fear them,” Ariel said, drawing his blade, “for IaHWeH has given us the victory!” As his sword burst into holy flames, however, Ambriel says he saw the Seraph wince. Neglecting his discomfort, the burning angel plunged forward, trailing fire behind him like a long tail, and meeting the demons head-on.

It was a large group; by Ambriel’s count it was far larger than the demons I had faced in Egypt that were being led by Anubis, but the land was not as tainted by the idolatry of its inhabitants as the heart of Pharaoh’s country and the very seat of Lucifer on earth. How would twenty-four sanctified spirits hold off an army of evil? By faith, and little else.

At first the guardians banded together around the humans, leaving the Chalkydri to fend off the invasion. It soon became apparent, however, that they would need to aid them. No assistance came from Heaven, and we in Paran did not even hear about the incident until after it had occurred, so those who were battling above mount Hor knew that this situation was as IaHWeH would allow.

When the larger and more powerful group of Ophanim joined the battle, the guardians knew that they needed to lend their aid to their fiery protectors against the onslaught of the four-winged fiends. Berithael gave a single command: “Go!” and the guardians rose as one and went up to meet the advancing demons. This, of course, left the humans unprotected, and the tempters who were left were allowed greater access to them as they would ordinarily have been allowed.

It is important to be clear on this matter: the tempters of men are not allowed to cause them to sin. Whether or not guardians are able to fully turn aside the influence of demons is one thing, what humans do when temptations inevitably come is another. Even the most skillful guardian of a human soul is simply not allowed to prevent temptation from within the human’s own desires and already existing flaws of character, or from all external influences by wicked spirits. Where the line between the two is located is impossible for men to determine, and not something the angels are instructed to reveal. Demons can use men’s pasts as surely as the flesh can stir up memories and a desire to commit iniquity. Demons may inspire new and novel crimes against the law of Elohim, but the naturally creative instinct in mankind may do as good a job of inventing new variations of sin.

Some have said, “Then, what job do demons have?” While “the devil made me do it,” is often an inaccurate assessment of many matters, it is true that demons have inspired, and continue to inspire, mighty strongholds of thought and deed against the Creator. Unregenerate men organize, and unite, in activities to stamp out holiness that they would never have done if left to their own selfish devices. Untrained consciences, led by devils, convict men to act “for the good of society” when they are in truth trampling upon the freedoms of the small and oppressed.

There, on mount Hor, the demons led the ten spies of Israel, who had cherished impure thoughts, to internalize ideas that, if left on their own, they might well have suppressed. Nothing was said, but hearts were subtly changed, and the men thought in their minds, so the Oracles tell us, “We are mighty men of Israel; we shall conquer by our hands these mighty people, and overcome by the strength of our swords!” They had avoided fear, for the time being, but no less evil a river of thought now ran through those several benumbed minds.

Above the mountain the demons were being repelled. Amazingly, Ambriel testified, the few were accomplishing a great victory over the many. As faithful men would later say, “*There is no restraint to Yahweh to save by many or by few.*”

There was one casualty, however, of a sort. Most of the angels sustained only very minor wounds, despite the length of the battle, and the number of foes that they sent streaking toward the earth with glittering wounds. Ambriel did not elaborate much on the details, and I did not ask, but he told me at length of Ariel's fight, and how the angels of Lucifer targeted him specifically, leaving him never a space to breathe, or to rest from his labors.

Even with the fragment of Abaddon's blade pulsing and sparking in his being, the Seraph cut enemies down to the right and to the left, soaring in intricate patterns over the oblivious men beneath, and occasionally darting down to dispatch a tempter who had carelessly drawn too close to the battle. Yet even for all his speed, the sheer numbers of the press were allowed to eventually injure him further, and even his mighty, protective wings could not long sustain the continuous assault of hostile blades.

The Cherub Berithael saw that Ariel was surrounded on all sides, and both above and below. He flew up to render assistance, but was barred from drawing near by one of the four-winged Thrones. With all his might he attempted first to defeat the distracting demon, and then finally to just avoid him long enough to reach Ariel's location, but by the time he got there, it was too late.

While Berithael was still attempting to shake the Throne-angel, he heard the Seraph cry out as another major wound was added to his previous one, and then he perceived the demons surrounding him suddenly closing in, collapsing like a canopy without supports, around their victim.

The Cherub was able to eventually strike his adversary down, and flew up to break through the league of demons. He saw, when he arrived, that the other Seraphim Nakoniel and Ragaziel were already setting that matter aright. The number of enemies had dwindled, apparently, either from being defeated in battle directly, or fleeing, wounded, back to Egypt. Berithael descended to the surface of the earth, where he met Ambriel already there.

Ariel was lying, unconscious, on the ground. His wings were slashed, and his robes torn. The wound caused by Abaddon's blade was still pulsing brightly, and in combination with the other injuries we had suffered, Ambriel was concerned indeed. "I do not know if he will awaken as long as the fragment is within him," he said, "and I have not the skill to remove it."

Berithael nodded, and Ambriel was about to suggest that they return him to Heaven, where help would be available, when the Cherub looked up, and an expression of surprise crossed his features. "More demons," he said.

Ambriel's eyes followed his, and indeed... yet another crowd of demons was on the horizon, this one larger than the first! At the head of the force this time was Sammael, a warrior-spirit at least as fearsome as Abaddon who had inflicted Ariel's grievous wound. The mighty Power was in the form of a large boar, its golden bristles and sharp tusks burning with unholy light as it raced across the sky

leading Salathiel, who had survived the first wave, and a vast number of other spirits. Lucifer, it seemed, had commanded an all-out effort this time, for if Israel lost its spies, how much more fearful and troublesome would the Israelites be if Moses attempted to move them over the borders of a land that swallowed up their bravest men?

The Seraph and the Cherub drew their swords and attempted to face the oncoming storm, when suddenly they were flung aside by a mighty burst of power streaming down from Heaven. With light so bright that it seemed almost a solid column, the archangels Uriel and Raphael descended and stood on either side of the fallen captain of the Chalkydri.

The angel whom your Histories say has “*power over fire,*” and the angel whose name means “Healing of El,” laid their hands on Ariel’s still form. A voice from Heaven came down, heard by the angels and demons that were drawing closer, saying, “Let there be a sign given to the spirits of Egypt concerning my people Israel.” The two mighty archangels vanished even more abruptly than they had appeared, stepping in an instant through the void between Heaven and earth.

The demons had drawn back at this strange sight, but they quickly regained their composure and continued their advance. When they were almost upon the small band of angels, yet another blast of spiritual heat and light filled the air, this time from the earth. In a great flame, the burning angel Ariel rose up, his sword drawn and his face grim. Ambriel said that he was so full of glory he appeared to fill the entire sky, and Sammael and every advancing demon stopped dead and hovered silently, looking at this fiery sight rising slowly, majestically, into the air.

The Spirit of IaHWeH was within him, and Ariel spoke, his sword pointed directly at Sammael. “Depart from this place, lest the fire of Elohim consume you in an instant! You have done what you have come to do, spirits of betrayal, plagues of pride, of envy, of cowardice. Let the demons of Egypt remember this sign, but as for you, depart and your time shall be extended until the Day of Judgment.”

In Heaven, as I later learned, the Covering Cherubim were standing by the Throne of Elohim, blazing brightly with their work of keeping the Shekinah in check. That same living fire that would have consumed the rebellious demons in Heaven now threatened to break forth from the revived Ariel, and incinerate the advancing hosts of darkness. Sammael, somehow, seemed to sense that the Seraph was not speaking idly. Slowly, reluctantly, he said, “There will be another day, cinder of Heaven.”

As he retreated, leading his demons with him, Ambriel looked up and noticed that the wound caused by Abaddon’s evil sword had vanished completely. Ariel, chief guardian of the nation of Israel, was whole once again.

* * * * *

When word came, first to angels and then to men, that the spies were returning, all rejoiced. The camp had been reasonably silent for the forty days in which the spies were away. There were still the rumblings from Korah and his people that the angels had to hear, and Dathan and Abiram, as representatives of the “firstborn tribe of Israel” were speaking words of pride that wearied our very beings, but there were no open outbreaks of disobedience or transgression. All were waiting in anticipation of the report that would come to them from Canaan.

When the men finally returned to the camp, they were greeted with great joy. From tribe to tribe the news spread through the settlement, and soon all were assembled before the Tabernacle, with the twelve men standing before Moses, Aaron and Miriam.

“We bring you gifts from the land of Canaan,” one of the spies said, revealing the fruit that they had brought with them. “We have gone into the land where you sent us, and surely it flows with milk and honey, and this indeed is the fruit of it. Even so, the people of the land are strong, and the cities are walled up, and mighty. Furthermore, we saw Anakim there, the sons of the giants. Beside all this, Amalekites are in the south, along with the Hittites, the Jebusites and Amorites who dwell in the mountains. The Canaanites dwell in the sea by the coast of Jordan.”

Now, ten of the spies had given this report, not initially to discourage the people, but to proclaim the dangers that they had faced and overcome as the brave men of Israel. They had indeed brought the fruit to encourage their people to go, and would not have so freely praised the country if they truly wished to remain in the wilderness. Nevertheless, they enlarged upon the dangers they had faced, and sought thereby to impress the speakers. As they began to speak, fear inspired by the demons who had affected them changed their hearts, and they began to dwell far more explicitly upon the dangers, rather than the bounty, of the region.

This was as the demons would have it, and elements that the tempters had been encouraging in the camp now broke forth in response to the spies’ words. “How, then, shall we take the land?” The cry was quickly taken up as the report rippled backward amongst those who were too far away to hear the words of the explorers directly. “We have armies on one side, and the wilderness on the other!”

Caleb of Judah turned to the near-panicking crowd and attempted to quiet their fears, saying, “The danger is not so great, and see... we few men have returned to you unharmed. There are many against us, but not so great nor mighty as the armies of Egypt, which Yahweh overturned in the Red Sea on behalf of His people.” He then said, “Let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it!”

This seemed to have a good effect on those who were nearby, but one of the spies, who was perhaps more affected by the tempters’ work than the others, would not have his experiences so easily set aside. Going beyond what he had intended, and helpless now to do otherwise, he said in a loud voice, “We are not able to go up

against the people, for they are stronger than we!” He then turned to his fellow explorers, and encouraged them to relate again the dangers they had faced. Joshua and Caleb drew away from the men, confused at the lack of faith they now showed, and worse, though they were the men who had seen the land, the fear of the crowd was apparently working on them to further corrupt what their minds had seen amongst the obstacles of Canaan.

Unbelief set in fully and they declared, “Oh, the land through which we have come, into which we have gone to search, is a fierce land that eats up its inhabitants, and the people we saw there are of a great size! Yes, we saw the giants there, the sons of Anak, and we were in our sight as grasshoppers before them, so indeed were we in their sight.”

“Not so!” Joshua said, his spirit rising within him in protest at this base exaggeration. These were men who had borne the fruit of Canaan back to Israel, to share with them the good they had seen, and now there came forth this evil report. Joshua made to speak again, but the noise of the wailing of the crowd was rising, spurred on by the ten unfaithful spies’ words, and not even Moses, who stood nearby, could hear his voice.

As for Moses and Aaron, the people made them the target of their particular displeasure, and those nearest said to them, “It would have been better if we had died in the land of Egypt! Or even yet, if we had perished in the wilderness! Why has Yahweh brought us out to this land to fall by the sword of our enemies, that our wives and children should be as prey? Is it not better now that we return to Egypt?”

Some rose up and went back to their tents, saying, “Let us make a captain, and let us return to Egypt!” At this, several ears pricked up... there would have been no shortage of volunteers for that office.

But Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the congregation, and said, “I pray you, men of Israel, be softer with your words! Do not become guilty of this great transgression, to doubt the word of Yahweh, which has brought you to the borders of the land!”

And Joshua and Caleb stepped away from Miriam, who had been listening to their explanation while the people raised their tumult, and tore their clothing in sorrow. “The land which we passed through to spy out is exceedingly good,” they shouted. “If Yahweh delights in us He will bring us into this land and give it to us, this land that flows with milk and honey, only do not rebel against Yahweh, and do not fear the people of the land. They will be as bread for us, their defense is departed from them and Yahweh is with *us*! Fear them not!”

“Stone them!” came back the answering cry, stunning many of the humans assembled there. We angels saw demons amongst the people, spurring them on to action. They were “there by right,” as they were fond of saying, having exerted their authority as soon as the crowd began to express its doubts and fears. We

were commissioned to do nothing to prevent their anger and frustration from breaking forth on the faithful spies, but while Moses and Aaron prayed to Elohim for the sake of their people, Miriam took the two and said, "Come with me!" As they made to leave, however, hopefully to escape the crowd, the Tabernacle was suddenly illuminated with brilliant, burning light.

The people were immediately stilled and Moses, trembling with fear, but not for himself, entered the Sanctuary.

"HOW LONG WILL THIS PEOPLE PROVOKE ME?" a mighty voice thundered over the scene. "HOW LONG WILL IT BE BEFORE THEY BELIEVE ME, FOR ALL THE SIGNS THAT I HAVE SHOWN AMONG THEM? I WILL SMITE THEM WITH PESTILENCE, AND DISINHERIT THEM, AND MAKE OF YOU, MOSES, A GREATER NATION AND MIGHTER THAN THEY."

The people were terrified; I sighed with relief. The tension of holding back the rebellious nature of this people had weighed on me greatly, and I was but the guardian of one, faithful man, and a Prince of Heaven. And yet, if it was difficult for me to bear, how much more my charge, who dwelt among them, and did not have the periodic relief of the view of Heaven? How much more painful for Elohim, whose tender mercies and longsuffering were so constantly rejected that here, amidst a crowd with murder on their hearts, He must thunder again as on Sinai? How long indeed, would this great burden continue?

Once more, Moses stood between his people and destruction, a role that had not grown less overwhelming, or great in its awe, with the frequency of its occurrence. "The Egyptians shall hear of it, Yahweh, if you should do this thing, and consume your people from the face of the earth, for it is out of their land that you have brought this people. And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this region, for they have heard that you are among this people, and that you are seen face to face among them, and that your cloud goes before us, a shelter by day and a light of fire by night.

"But now if you should kill this people as one man, then the nations which hear of it will say of you, 'Because Yahweh was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, He has slain them in the wilderness.' And now, I pray you, let the power of Adonai be great, according as He has spoken saying, 'Yahweh is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and no... not by any means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children for the third and fourth generation.' Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of your mercy as you indeed *have* forgiven them, from Egypt until now."

It was a prayer of the finest beauty, and one that is worth recording in full. Angels wept at the words of Moses, the noise of the crowd vanishing in our ears as one faithful man spoke to his Redeemer. Prayers such as this should be offered more often, for the sins of mankind have grown greater, not less, since the days

the men of Israel went to stone Joshua and Caleb for pride, for envy, and for cowardice. Those who are faithful, and have overcome sin, must plead on behalf of those who are yet slaves to their corruption, and whose heads are plunged under the waters of death by evil angels if ever they should think to rise up for a breath of life. Remember these, the words of my testimony.

“I have pardoned, according to your word,” came the voice from the Tabernacle, that most welcome voice, bearing that most welcome message, and covering the silent crowd that had long since fallen to the ground in reverence and fear. “But as truly as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of IaHWeH. Because all those men who have seen my glory and my miracles, which I did both in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not heeded my voice...

“Surely,” came the terrible sentence, “they shall not see the land that I swore unto their fathers; not one who has provoked me to anger shall see it. But my servant Caleb, because he has another spirit within him, and has followed me fully, he will see it, and I will bring him into the land wherein he went, and his offspring will possess it. Tomorrow, TURN! Depart into the wilderness by way of the Red Sea.”

This was back southward! This was south and to the east, away from the land they had just so easily come upon. Surely we would have fought for them, and had the desire of Elohim been upon them, not a hair would have fallen from their heads to the sons of Anak, or the Amalekites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites or the Canaanites. But now, because of the people’s unbelief, we could be given no mandate to work so mightily on their behalf. We mourned for the people, and they would have done well to mourn themselves, and perhaps ask Elohim to reconsider His command.

Yet the Almighty had spoken truly, knowing the character of those assembled before Him that day, and many (far too many) had gathered themselves together openly against the report of Joshua and Caleb, and they now returned to their tents, leaving the truly penitent before the Sanctuary.

The cloud descended on the Tabernacle, and the light faded, but Elohim spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “How long shall I bear with this congregation that murmurs against me? I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. But now, say unto them, ‘As truly as I live, says IaHWeH, as you have spoken unto me, so will it be done unto you. As you fear to enter into the land of Canaan, so your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness, all of you in full number above the age of twenty who have murmured against me. Surely you shall not come into the land that I swore unto you to give for a dwelling, save for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, whom you said would be a prey to your enemies, even they will I bring into the land that you have despised.

“But as for you, your bodies will fall in the wilderness and bear your infidelity until you are wasted in the desert. As the number of days in which the land was searched, so it shall be the number of years of your wondering. For forty years you will bear the weight of your infidelity, even forty years, and you shall know the breach in my promise that you have brought down. I, Yahweh, have spoken, and I will surely do thus unto this evil congregation that are gathered together against me; in the wilderness shall they be consumed, and there shall they die.”

As IaHWeH finished speaking to Moses in the sight and hearing of those who had remained, the cloud vanished, and again a light flashed forth from the entrance to the Tabernacle, bearing with it a token of the dreadful wages Israel had earned that day. In a great burst of heat and light the ten spies who were creeping away from the Sanctuary, who had spoken evil of the land of Canaan, fell to the earth and died. Moses, who was in the Tabernacle, Aaron, who was by the door, along with Miriam, Joshua and Caleb who were no farther than the ten, felt nothing but the warmth of a gentle breeze as the sentence was visited upon the unfaithful witnesses.

None who were there were able to say, “Yahweh has dealt harshly with His people.”

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The next day, early in the morning, those who had stood up and departed from the Tabernacle were driven by demons to the very depths of madness. They were as swine running toward a river, with no thought for the danger ahead. “Have we come all this way to be turned back?” they demanded, speaking to those who brought them a report of what they had missed. “Forty years! No, it shall not be! Has Elohim spoken through Moses only, or has He not promised to guard *all* His people? What need, then, have we for the words of this man? We are here, and we will go up and into the place that Yahweh has promised us, though yes, we have sinned. Has not Yahweh said He has forgiven us? If so, then He has forgiven us! Let us go forward!”

Moses said to them, upon hearing of their resolve to go into the land, “Why do you transgress the commandment of Yahweh? It shall not prosper, for though forgiven, we must bear the weight of infidelity, as the Almighty has said. The Amalekites and Canaanites are indeed before you, and you will fall by the sword, because you turned away from Yahweh, and He will not go with you!”

The line between faith and presumption is not very wide, and men cross it every day. Elohim desired a nation to serve Him, yes, but not at the expense of the characters of those whom He loved. Though the people of Israel had been forgiven, had the consequences been removed they would have forever lost their reverence, and have taught nothing to their children, and their children’s children. In this way, the sin would have been visited “*unto the third and fourth generation.*” IaHWeH had a great love for even this rebellious people, and would not see the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob forever corrupted by the actions and

thoughts of a relatively small number of men. If they would submit now to His will, they would be saved ultimately, and their children would indeed possess the temporal paradise. Those who were repentant waited upon IaHWeH in true faith; those who stepped over into presumption also stepped over into Canaan that day... and very few of the survivors were ever seen in Israel again.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

SECTION 4: EXALTATION

CHAPTER 13: THE CLEANSING OF THE CAMP

“I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you; ‘Therefore ye are my witnesses,’ saith Yahweh, ‘that I am the Almighty.’” (Isaiah 43:12)

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had not gone up with the Hebrews who perished in Canaan. They were given over to the demons, yes, but they were given to an entirely different kind of madness, and Salathiel would not so quickly sacrifice his most valuable agents. He well knew that the Israelites they were spurring on to battle would mostly perish, but they led them to do according to their lusts that Israel might be further discouraged in the wilderness.

The demons received the word of Elohim with glee, thinking, “Now we shall have ever more time to destroy their faith before they receive their promised inheritance.” By means of the presumptuous soldiers, they had also caused Israel to be even more greatly despised by the Amalekites and the Canaanites who ultimately did away with most of them.

But now, before I close my testimony, I have four more things to tell concerning the way of Israel. The first involves the cleansing of the camp from the three individuals I have mentioned, with whom IaHWeH had borne for so long. Two others involve the trials that Lucifer brought upon the nation, trials that he had been preparing even before the Israelites left Egypt. Satan was cunning, and though he wore away at Israel from time to time by means of Abaddon, Sammael and Salathiel, he was merely setting the stage for his true attacks, one a physical and one a spiritual, which he suspected would be the far more successful. Satan, though a fool in many ways, is not without great brilliance, and is second to no created being in strategic ability.

The final thing I have to say is regarding Moses, my charge, and how he ended his mission on the earth, signaling the end of mine.

But herein I shall speak of the first:

The Kohathites of the sons of Levi were encamped near to the tribe of Reuben in the arrangement by which the Israelites marched and rested according to the movements of the cloud of glory. In this way, Korah, Dathan and Abiram found

time and opportunity to work together against the influence of Moses. A great many of the Reubenites and Levites were corrupted by their influence, and they steadily found sympathizers among the dissatisfied. Both Hebrews and Egyptians joined them, considering the authority given to Moses and Aaron too high, and they blamed the men, the very men who had tried to avert the disaster, for their failure to enter Canaan at the appointed time.

Korah himself was such an influence on the community, such a powerful speaker and an impressive presence, that even among the princes of the tribes, indeed, even among the very elders who had been up on Sinai with Moses, he had supporters, some more vocal than others. For a long time, none would speak openly about these things. The occasional, direct acknowledgement by the manifestation of IaHWeH that Moses was the chosen voice of the divine to Israel made such thoughts foolish indeed. Yet there were some whose hearts had been so long in silent rebellion, so long in the company of those who made complains (often contributing to the din) that even these magnificent displays, before which the angels bowed, failed to impress them for long with the solemnity of Moses' work.

As the Hebrews turned south and east, many among the tribes casting longing looks over at the mountains between themselves and Canaan, the dissatisfaction festered. Rather than admit that they were the ones to blame, and forgetting that they as a people had called for the stoning of the very ones who had said to them, "Let us go up at once, and possess it," they complained against the punishment they were bearing and, thus, against the One who had meted out the punishment.

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The light broke over the horizon, and Moses, still dealing with his own sadness regarding the delay in reaching Canaan, departed from his tent to pray before the Tabernacle of the congregation, as had been his custom. As he looked out he was greeted by a shock. About two hundred and fifty men, a number from his own family, stood there waiting for him to arise. At the head of the congregation stood his cousin Korah, a face he had often seen amidst an angry see of those who murmured.

When he saw them, he asked, "Men, what is the cause for assembly?"

"Call your brother Aaron," Korah said, and it was not a gently worded request, but a statement approaching a demand. "We have a matter to address with you in the presence of these witnesses."

Moses' spirit shrank from these words, and he knew that this was not going to be a pleasant meeting, nevertheless the men would say nothing more until he had done as they asked, and at that moment Moses saw His brother Aaron appearing near the Sanctuary, so he called him over.

When the brothers were together, Korah said, "Here is the matter that concerns us: We have seen that you and Aaron taking too much authority upon yourselves,

seeing that the entire congregation is holy, every one of its members. Yahweh is among us all, therefore why do you lift yourselves above the congregation of Yahweh?”

Moses and Aaron looked at each other with widened eyes. “Why do we lift *ourselves*?” Aaron began. “Who has chosen...”

But Moses turned and faced the Tabernacle, falling to the earth in his sorrow for a moment, to offer silent prayer for guidance. Standing up once again he raised his hand gently and said, “Tomorrow Yahweh will show those who are His, and who is holy, and will cause such to come near unto Him. Even him whom He has chosen He will cause to come near unto Him.

“Do this: Let Korah and all his company take censers, and put fire in them, and incense, and stand before Yahweh tomorrow. And it shall be that the one whom Yahweh chooses, he shall be holy.”

“But now,” Moses said, the authority placed upon him by the Spirit of IaHWeH overcoming his surprise at the sudden turn of events, “you take too much upon *yourselves*, sons of Levi. Hear me indeed, sons of Levi: Is it a small thing in your sight that you have been chosen by Elohim of Israel, separated from the congregation of Israel to approach near unto Him, and to do the service of the Tabernacle of Yahweh? Is it a small thing that you stand before the congregation and minister unto them?

“And He has brought you near to Him, and all your brethren the sons of Levi with you, and now you seek the priesthood also? What is the cause for the murmuring of this company that is gathered together against Yahweh? And who is Aaron, that you murmur against him?”

Korah was about to answer when Moses spoke again, suddenly saying, “Call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and bid them come to me.”

Korah’s eyes narrowed, and he said, “What have they to do with this matter?”

“Bid them come,” Moses commanded, certain that he was speaking by inspiration after noting his cousin’s reaction.

Korah turned to one of the men with him and said, “Go.” Moses and Aaron noted, significantly, that it had taken Korah’s command to send for the sons of Eliab – the word of Moses has not carried sufficient weight with these sympathizers, and the prophet of Israel wondered just how deeply this dissatisfaction went, and how many within the camp had been affected. We, who had been watching, knew, and had I not known the necessity of what was to come, I would have sought to spare my charge the knowledge that he was about to gain.

While the Israelite was off summoning the brothers from the tribe of Reuben, Moses and Aaron said little, but the men with Korah spoke amongst themselves in subdued tones. The sons of Amram made no great effort to overhear, but what they did overhear dismayed them. There were questions put forth about the degree to which Moses was acting on his own accord, to what degree the manifestations of power and light really signified divine acceptance, and whether or not the Almighty would gladly accept a new spokesman. It was, of course, merely an attempt to convince themselves that they were running a noble course; most of the people there were not so far gone that Moses' presence, so often exalted in their sight by the Presence of IaHWeH, did not intimidate them. Had they not been able to convince themselves, or let themselves be convinced, that they were serving the greater good of Israel by this action, few would have left their tents that day.

The messenger returned and, with far too much satisfaction apparent in his features, said, "The brothers Dathan and Abiram have sent me with their message: 'We will not come up. Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness? Would this have happened had you not fully made yourself a prince over us? Moreover, you have not brought us into a land of milk and honey, nor given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards, and now will you seek to blind the men who have seen these things? We will not come up.'"

Moses was exceedingly angered by these words. His spirit revolted against the things he was seeing and hearing. Korah had entered fully into the path of Lucifer, reflecting the mighty angel's words in Heaven: "If the Host is holy, what need do we have for leaders, for rules, for *restrictions*?" In seeking to be free, they had cast off true freedom, and become slaves to their hurtful lusts, both fallen angel and rebellious man. But Dathan and Abiram would not even appear to discuss the matter; they would not even heed a call to repentance, and thus had effectively sealed their doom, for what knowledge would ever reach them, that could turn their hearts again to the path of the Almighty?

Aaron, for his part, trembled for his fellow Levites in particular. He remembered all too keenly how easily he had been swept up in his sister Miriam's dissatisfaction, and he knew just how close they had come to disaster for standing against the clearly revealed will of IaHWeH. But looking at the set expression in his cousin's eyes, he was held back from attempting to reason with him – it would have done little good.

Moses, upon receiving the word from Dathan and Abiram, looked again at Korah, and the army of would-be priests. He raised his hands and eyes to Heaven and said, "Respect not their offering; I have not stolen one beast from among them, nor harmed any one of them."

Again fixing his gaze on Korah's eyes he said, "Be here, you and all your company with you, before Yahweh; you and they, and also Aaron. Tomorrow."

After repeating to them his instructions regarding the censers, he walked on toward the Tabernacle, sparing them not another glance, and Aaron followed his brother. The men milled about for a while, but eventually disbanded and returned to their tents.

A few people from the other, nearby tents, had seen the confrontation between Moses and Korah. Word spread quickly through the entire camp of the decision that was to be made on the morrow. While most people were not open supporters of Korah, many had heard of his plans and desires to some degree, and when the sun rose the next day, every able-bodied Hebrew was up, either at the door of his tent or gathered around the Tabernacle's outer court to see what would happen.

According to the instructions of Moses, every Levite that had been with Korah had taken a censer and filled it with fire and incense. They stood there in the outer court with the sweet smoke rising to Heaven, an offering which they vainly hoped would be pleasing to the Almighty. But the smoke of incense means nothing to Heaven; even the least messenger can fill a room instantly with sweet smoke. The blood of sacrifices is nothing, for what angel of Elohim cannot slaughter an animal? The fire of a burnt offering is nothing, for any commissioned angel can flatten a city in fiery destruction. But a heart that is turned to Elohim, this only is acceptable in His sight. When the heart is right then, and then only, do the actions of the hands and the words of the mouth have value.

The hearts of Korah and his men were not right. As soon as the Levite had gathered his followers in the court, the cloud that had covered the Tabernacle flared to life and burst forth with flames and dazzling light. With a voice like thunder, that only Aaron and Moses could understand, the Almighty said, "Separate yourselves from among the congregation that I may consume them in a moment."

In response they fell upon their faces and said, "Oh, Elohim, Elohim of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin and your anger break forth on the entire congregation?"

Korah had not heard the words that the Almighty spoke; he had only heard the thunder and seen Moses and Aaron on their faces pleading for mercy. Though he understood, within himself, that they were pleading for Israel on behalf of those who were transgressors, he would not let himself consider that *he* was the "one man" being mentioned in their prayer. An evil spirit that was standing with him, daring to manifest its vile presence at the very door of the Tabernacle of Elohim, whispered to the hard-hearted man.

Taking up the temptation, Korah said, "Behold now, how Yahweh has spoken! Before the truth these men have fallen, and see the fear on their faces when they see their error! Elohim will not forgive so great a course of pride, as have taken Moses and Aaron – I go now to call Dathan and Abiram, that they may see us vindicated in the sight of all Israel."

With that, Korah slipped away, leaving the other Levites standing in the court. Some, watching him go, suspected the truth, that Korah was merely deluding himself, while ensuring his own safety by departing from this great wrath that was about to fall on *somebody*. Nevertheless, like the demons of our own sad memories, once they had entered into their course the tempters had full access to their faculties, and they would not admit their error and repent. What, and be ashamed before the very people they had sought so diligently to impress? No, they would not repent, for their desire to please men had grown to such a maddening magnitude that even the presence of the pulsing, glowing, flaring cloud of glory was not sufficient to awaken their minds.

In response to Moses' prayer El Michael spoke out of the cloud, and as He spoke the angels saw Gabriel and Raziel descending. The Covering Cherubim were encased in brilliant spheres of pure light, and the strained look on their faces made it plain that they were using all their considerable skill to keep the divine displeasure from breaking forth and consuming sin, as was its nature. These two angels, though Cherubim, were the closest to the Throne, surpassing even the mighty Seraphim in power and glory. They constituted, indeed, an entirely separate Order of angels, and showed the great height from which the king of demons had fallen. As they stood by, demonstrating to the angels there and the entire watching universe that Elohim was restraining His power, veiling it in sanctified araphel for the sake of the people, El Michael spoke to His servant Moses.

“Speak unto the congregation, saying, ‘Depart from about the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.’”

Moses rose up at this second peal of thunder, and said, “Let the elders of Israel come to me.” With the elders who had remained faithful, along with Moses and Aaron, the congregation turned with Moses and went to the tents of the men IaHWeH had singled out. The Levites in the courtyard now began to whisper among themselves. Some said, “Yahweh will strike Moses and Aaron down in the presence of Korah,” and others said, too quietly to be heard outside of their little group, “This is foolishness! We are standing on forbidden ground!” But none moved.

When they stood by the tents, which were situated close together, they saw Korah there, and soon Dathan and Abiram came out to join them. Their faces were drawn and angry, and if ever the impress of demons was seen on human faces, this was the time. Korah's own face reflected calmness; his corruption was much more skillfully covered, but the heart within was darker. “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men,” Moses said, “and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins.”

The people, wisely, withdrew a distance, and by this time the families of the men had come out to join their husbands, sons, wives and even little children. The congregation, those who were most sensitive, began to appeal to the families to

withdraw also. On most it had no effect, but Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph, the three sons of Korah, looked about them and came out, bringing with them some of their possessions, and the two oldest boys bringing their wives.

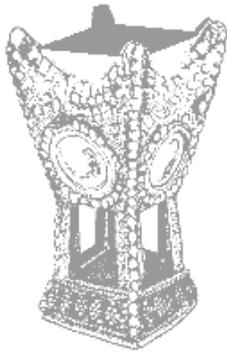
Moses and others rejoiced when they saw that mercy had extended to the family of Korah, and these three boys would later become great men in Israel, trustworthy and loyal – the very antithesis of their father. But now there was strange work to accomplish. “Hereby you shall know that Yahweh has sent me to do all these works,” Moses’ voice rang out over the crowd, “for I have not done them of my own mind: If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be punished after the punishment of all men, then Yahweh has not sent me. But if Yahweh makes a new thing, and the earth opens up her mouth to swallow them up, that they shall go down living into the abyss, then you shall understand that these men have provoked Yahweh!”

Without a word the archangel Gabriel, greatest in glory of all the creation, descended into the earth, taking the orb of the Shekinah with him. He sank down and rested within the heart of the earth, just under the tents of the men. Every angel saw the sudden fear striking the men in the tents of Korah. The sudden realization that they were condemned by the Presence whose confidence they had hoped to win filled them with great terror, but at the punishment which they knew must surely come, not at the great sin they had committed in Israel, to lead the people into destruction.

A light burst forth from below the men, consuming the soil in an instant; what was not destroyed was pushed aside, leaving a gaping chasm that eroded away at the sides, pulling the sinful families down into the darkness below. As the cries of the doomed echoed upward, a second flash of light blazed upward, and the earth drew together on both sides, leaving solid ground where a mere instant before there had been a deep pit.

The men who were looking on fled in all directions; those who had been Korah’s sympathizers, and even some who were mostly innocent of this crime but fearful of Elohim, said, “Away, lest the earth also swallow us!” All had been affected, to some degree, by Korah’s well-known words, and in the light of judgment, the men of Israel trembled.

Those who were fleeing toward the Sanctuary fell on their faces, and told the men in the courtyard what had happened. What was required of the would-be priests was immediate repentance, if their lives would be spared. They responded only with indecision, and Raziel moved over and stood above the Levites still assembled there. Even as the men holding the censers watched more Israelites fleeing, the Cherub released a tiny fraction of his hold on the Glory he bore. The Fire of Elohim burst forth upon the men from the cloud of Glory, and a great blaze went up, consuming them. The shouts of pain from the Levites, and renewed terror from the prostrate witnesses, reached even unto Moses and Aaron, and they and the people who had remained by the place where tents once stood hastened back to the Tabernacle.



“Speak unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron,” came the voice of Elohim from the cloud, “and let him gather the censers of burning, and scatter the fire within them away from the camp, for they are now sanctified unto me. Take these censers, witnesses of sinners against their own souls, and make of them plates of brass to cover the altar, for they have offered them there before IaHWeH, therefore they are holy, and shall be a sign unto the children of Israel.”

Moses related this to Eleazar, repeating what was thundered in words the priest could understand. The son of Aaron went into the courtyard, and there amidst the ashes he found the censers, lying around and entirely undamaged by the fire. Even the incense within them was still smoking fragrantly, though the humans that once held these instruments had been consumed in an instant by the great heat!

Moses dismissed those who had not already fled back to their tents and said to the people, “Spend this day in fasting and prayer, that Yahweh may speak unto you again, to know what He shall do with this congregation, for He cleanses His camp before the sight of all Israel.”

Indeed, the cleansing was not yet completed. There was one main conspirator who had not yet been visited with the fruits of his sowing. His name was On, one of the seventy elders, and chosen from the tribe to which Dathan and Abiram had belonged: Reuben, the firstborn of Israel. On, and many of those who had sympathized with the initial rebellion, did *not* spend the day in fasting and prayer. They spent the day rather in rationalizing and complaining. It is amazing what a single day of self-justification can do.

It is true that none but Aaron and Moses had heard the voice of Elohim in the thunder, yet they had seen the glory of the Almighty rest upon the prophet, and even shine forth from his face for some time before naturally fading away. They had been witness to the authority he held when leading them to safety, and had heard the voice of the Most High speaking both to Moses and to the congregation at different times. But for all this, because they heard only thunder when Korah and his Levites were consumed, they were able to say, at the demons’ prompting, “It was sorcery.”

The very thing of which the oppressive Pharaoh had accused Moses and Aaron was now heard by the angels to come from the mouths of the people so graciously released from Egyptian custody. “How long will this people provoke me?” Elohim had asked. We angels were wondering the same thing, but being led ever onward to a greater understanding of a very vital element of our ministry: At what point does mercy cease to plead for the wicked? When is the time for patience, and when is the time for judgment?

These were things both my charge and I were learning together.

The next day, Moses received a shock even greater, if possible, than two days earlier when Korah had approached his tent. Now, before the congregation, and about to pray for the people to Elohim, cries began to come from the assembled crowd, “You have killed the people of Yahweh!”

On had cleverly stationed his men, those who had gone so far they could not repent, at different points in the congregation. It was from here that these disaffected ones were crying out, and to Moses it appeared therefore that the entire assembly had turned against him. Having accomplished his aim, On urged his men forward, and soon most of the rebels were at the front of the congregation, confronting Moses personally and saying, “You have appointed yourself a prince over us, and slain the people of Yahweh by your enchantments!” As sorrow threatened to overwhelm him, thunder broke out once more from the cloud of glory; but this time the words were distinct to everyone there. They were not angry words, but full of power.

“Depart from this congregation, that I may consume them in an instant.” The words entered deeply into every mind there, bringing with it reminders of the destruction of the Levites. These were words, not a mere thundering, and the voice was that of Him who had brought them with a mighty hand up out of Egypt, and given them the words of the Covenant on mount Sinai. IaHWeH was still with Moses! The terrifying realization hit the rebels hard, and they fell on their faces in fear; angels looked on, seeing anew the depths of foolishness into which idolatry and paganism had plunged men that had been created in the image of the King of Heaven.

Moses quickly said to Aaron, “Take a censer, and fill it with coals from the Altar of Incense, and place incense within it, and go quickly through the congregation to make an atonement for them, for wrath has gone forth from Elohim, and a plague has begun.”

As he spoke, those closest to him groaned and lay still. Gabriel and Raziel stood above the Tabernacle, releasing the wrath of the almighty in a slow, perfectly timed stream. The orbs of the Shekinah expanded invisibly, covering the camp. Demons were forced backward, and many fled in terror. Where the light of glory reached men, those who had stood against Moses died. Aaron moved as quickly as he could, and when he had the incense burning he ran out into the congregation as death radiated out from the Sanctuary in slow, purposeful waves. The people were still on their faces, and they could not tell where the plague was, nor could they see their fellow Israelites fall... but not one dared to move.

As Moses entered the Tabernacle, the high priest stood in the midst of the congregation where he was convinced he should wait. Adaiyel had restrained him, and so Aaron stood there with the smoke ascending to Heaven. The orbs expanded larger, and larger, until they reached the priest, and there they stopped. With a speed that rippled the spiritual atmosphere from the Tabernacle to the

country of Egypt, the orbs contracted and once again surrounded the Cherubim, who promptly ascended into the sky.

When the people stood on their feet again, fourteen thousand, seven hundred of them did not rise.

* * * * *

The price of transgression is high. How much more pleasant it would be for me if I could speak of more convincingly beautiful things than this, more calming to the mind, more reflective of the peace that the Almighty would shed abroad upon the humans that He loves so dearly. But there is a purpose for all these things... beauty is also present in the destruction of sin. There is a kind of loveliness that attends the end of transgression and pain, but I say a “kind” because it intimately involves the blotting out of those who have so acquainted themselves with sin that they fall with it. It is a sadness that we bear because we know that it is the only barrier against greater, and everlasting, suffering for even the faithful beings in the universe, so we bear it willingly, as a wise child bears the pain of the hard lessons of life.

The camp was cleansed from one of its great evils, those who would rebel outwardly, but IaHWeH sought to cleanse his people completely, even from those “demons” that hide in the natural heart of man, and as such there needed to be a cleansing of the individual vessels. The forty years of wandering was a mercy to those on whom it was visited, though even the wisest among them sorrowed that they would not behold the land of promise with their eyes. It gave them time for reflection, time for acceptance, and indeed, in that time all died the death of the flesh, but many have been reserved for the life to come.

Now Lucifer had prepared, even before the departure from Egypt, two trials for the Israelites, should they escape him. He considered the establishment of a holy kingdom to be one of the greatest calamities that could befall his plans for this world, and therefore he brought all his considerable mental might to bear on setting measure after measure in place to prevent it. The constant posture of Moses, on his face before IaHWeH pleading for the transgression of his people, is a testament to the tenacity with which the demons operated under Satan’s orders, and they wore away at the number and faith of the wandering tribesmen.

Yet this was all a preface, and before they should come upon even the first of the arch deceiver’s snares, all three of the congregation’s leaders would be destroyed. Two would pass from the earth completely, and one would survive, but bearing thereafter a terrible weight.

The first to fall was Miriam, the prophetess. The children of Israel had wandered for many years, and drew near the close of their time in the wilderness. Most of the generation that rebelled in Paran had fallen in the sand, and their guardians returned to other duties, or were left as an inheritance to their children. The Israelites had made a large circuit eastward, and had returned to Paran, to a region

known as the Wilderness of Zin, and they encamped again at Kadesh whence the spies had originally departed. Joshua and Caleb, now much older, were still alive and active among the Israelites, as Elohim had promised.

There, in Kadesh, Miriam died. Never again, after the incident with Zipporah, did she manifest any mistrust of the Spirit leading Moses, and she was ever a support and comfort to her brothers in their civil and religious duties. Often, when the congregation was facing difficulty, she would pray with Moses and Aaron as they had prayed that long night in Egypt, and the siblings of Amram, when united in entreating IaHWeH, were never refused. Battles were won, obstacles were overcome, and the people rejoiced.

But now Miriam was not to see the land of Canaan, at least not the earthly land, and Rinnael ascended to Heaven the night she was gathered to her people to see what awaited him in the machinery of Divine Will. The people mourned for her, but during the forty years the demons had not been inactive. While there were no widespread rebellions such as that which led to the terrible deaths of the fourteen thousand, the children of the first, rebellious generation did not learn as much as they could have.

On the night Miriam died, the waters in Kadesh dried up. As if her life had been the source of the springs, Elohim commanded that the people face a trial at which they had previously failed. They were to enter Canaan soon, and they would be liberally supplied with all their needs if they but trusted in the One who had led them safely for so many years; but alas, the sorrow of Miriam's passing was soon swallowed up by the complaints of the children of Israel. Manna they had always had, and continued to have, but the divine providence that this daily mercy signified was forgotten in their moment of distress: there was no *water*.

“Have you heard the people, Aaron?” Moses asked, coming in to his brother's tent. “Again they say, ‘It would have been better had we died with our brethren, rather than be brought this far only to perish in the wilderness.’ The rebels! The thoughtless, ungrateful, complainers! Have they, is it possible, learned so little in my time with them? Have they not seen my example? Have they not understood?”

Aaron was surprised by his brother's anger, but said nothing... there were no words that Moses spoke which were not true. I looked on, my spirit heavy. The brothers were still dealing with the recent death of Miriam, feeling as if a pillar in their lives had been taken away. They were right to be outraged that the Israelites were more concerned with a momentary lack of water than with the greatest personal tragedy they had known since entering the wilderness, but I could see old hastiness returning to the words and bodily reactions of my charge, and I grew concerned.

Again, the shouts and pleas were filtering into Aaron's tent, and the high priest said, "Let us go out to the Tabernacle, as we have before, and enquire of Elohim."

Moses followed where once he had led, weariness reflected in his movements. His spirit seemed to have been drained from him. Of course, and I have documented it in detail, the actions of the people since they left Egypt until this day forty years later had taken their toll. In my eternal scroll there is a record of the names of those who have wronged my charge; and of those great crimes for which there was no repentance on the part of the actor, an account will be required in the Day of Judgment. Every obstacle cast in my dear Moses' way, every occasion of stumbling placed before him, will draw an answer from a human or a demon. Each time his eyes took on that wounded look, because he had been harmed by a thoughtless word or deed, each time his brow furrowed in holy anger at the corruption he beheld, will stand as a ready witness against a soul or spirit in the Day of Accounting.

But Moses would also have had to give an account of his own actions on the Great and Terrible Day, except that... well, I will speak of that matter at the appropriate time.

On their faces in reverent prayer before the Almighty, Moses heard the command from the cloud of glory, which had not left them in all their time in the wilderness, "Take the rod, and gather the assembly together, you and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will bring forth water. And you will bring forth for them the water out of the rock for the congregation, and their animals, to drink."

Moses rose up and with Aaron, said to those nearby, "Call the congregation and they shall drink before Yahweh this day."

Moses, to my relief, appeared to be calming down. The people were gathered, and looked at Moses, Aaron and the large rock between them, and there, amidst the faces, both Moses and I saw expressions that had been influenced by evil spirits. The men were to be pitied, but while some were anxiously awaiting that which they needed, and standing there in faith (for not everyone had complained) the hard looks and arrogant expressions of others pricked again at my charge.

This was according to Salathiel's plan.

Just as Moses focused on one jeering fellow, my counterpart, the chief of the fallen Virtues, darted in and slashed at Moses with his suddenly drawn kherev. As the wound registered, Moses suddenly felt the weight of all the trials of the past forty years. The grief of his sister broke upon him again, and the complaints he had borne for so long. That face, that face before him just grated on his senses, and raising the staff that had worked miracles over his head, he raised his voice and said, "Hear now, rebels! Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" And with that he struck the rock once, twice, with the rod, and then angrily stalked

back to the Tabernacle, leaving Aaron agape before the people, and shocked expressions all around.

The rock cracked where Moses had struck it, and soon water indeed broke forth, and flooded the ground around it. A mighty jet soon followed, and soon there was a river flowing through Kadesh where one had not been but moments earlier.

The people began to drink, slaking their harsh thirst, and rejoicing, despite Moses' bitter words, in IaHWeH's salvation. But there was one being, at least, who would not know relief.

While this was going on, I was speeding through the air after Salathiel. My fury was not less than Moses' had been. With blazing eyes, I called after him with words that sprung easily to my mind, "Corrupter!" I yelled, "Worm! Serpent!"

The Virtue sped off as quickly as he could, but I was once his Chief, and was now a Prince of Heaven. When he saw that he could not outrun me, *Nepherthem* turned and drew his dark blade. So quickly had he fled that we were not anywhere near the earth, though departing from his anchor point was difficult for the fallen Virtue. He had gone up, up, unthinkingly speeding past the planets with which you are familiar, faster than a thought. Somewhere few eyes have ever looked we met, and I rammed into him without slowing as he tried to parry my initial attack.

He turned me aside, but only barely, and I was on him again with a sharp blade and sharper words. "You have taken the children of Israel away," I accused, "and been a thorn in the flesh of the people of Elohim!" He did not deny it, but then again I gave him little time or room to formulate a reply.

In the cold depths of space I struck, reeled away and struck again, calling out to the Throne, "Reserve this creature for judgment, IaHWeH, and reward him doubly according to his works!"

Had the Almighty called to me, saying, "Let him be, for his time to try Israel is not yet ended," I would have departed from him. For all my fury, I was not in a state of blind rage. My spirit had risen up against this demon, and I had pursued him, but while my essence sympathized with Moses' spirit, I had to admit that there was a difference between my actions and his. I had disobeyed no commands, nor had I wounded a creature for which mercy still lingered, as it did for many in the crowd of humans before the great rock in Kadesh.

The Eternal Throne was silent as we met in the darkness, Virtue against Virtue, Chief against Chief. Salathiel would receive no favors from the Most High, and I would not let him return to Israel to perform more of his dark designs upon them. He had done enough damage.

"What force?" the Chief of the Shavoorim managed to hiss, struggling to maintain his position so far from the planet of his binding.

“What force?” I repeated. “He was in pain! Yet for all that he was beginning to calm, then you tripped him over the edge! Will a man lay a stumbling block before the drunken and say, ‘He should not have been drunk?’” My analogies were of the things of the earth, for among angels we have no true equivalents of these things. “No!” I answered myself, swinging my sword down, “That he should not have been angry, that he should not have been sorrowful unto distraction is *his* affair, but the sword you passed through his heart is *yours!*”

With glittering tears I pressed my attack, knowing that the consequences for my charge would be high. Salathiel resisted me mightily, but he was at too much of a disadvantage due to his foolish flight. As I thrust toward him, letting him knock my sword away, I reached forward with my other hand and grabbed onto him. Without a moment’s hesitation I threw him away from me as hard as I could, and before he could right himself I sent my kherev spinning after.

The burning blade whirled around and smoothed out, becoming a flattened disk of holy fire, its handle and guard lost in the glory. I do not even think Salathiel saw the weapon coming, for he was spinning around himself, but the weapon struck him and, with a flash of light his essence was laid open, and his consciousness departed. My weapon vanished from its trajectory and reappeared in my hand.

With my blade still drawn and burning, I flew forward and grasped the Virtue’s wing. Thus flying, I dragged him through empty space back to the earth, down into its orbit, and over the seas and lands. I passed over Israel’s encampment, my blazing weapon drawing the attention of the spirits below me, letting them see what I had done. I continued westward, over to the land of Egypt, and I hovered over Pharaoh’s palace, in which I knew Lucifer sat.

“Lord of Flies!” I bellowed, using a name that the Oracle Zephon had given him many years earlier. “Hear now my words: The Sword of Elohim glitters in Heaven, and the Day comes quickly when It shall be loosed upon the vile spirits that have turned from light to darkness!” With that I threw the broken demon downward, into the very heart of the palace, and returned to the earthly Tabernacle of the congregation without encountering a single fallen angel.

* * * * *

I settled to the earth, my sword sheathed, and knelt gently before my charge, who was lying on his face within the Tabernacle and Aaron was lying by the door. He had been praying, and weeping, but Elohim had not yet replied. The Almighty had been waiting, it seems, for my presence, so that I should witness what was to be said.

“Because you believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the Children of Israel, you will not bring this congregation into the land that I have given them.” The voice spoke, but it was a voice both gentle and soft, so that not even those close to the Tabernacle heard the sound of thunder.

Adaiyel and I looked at each other. It was a high price, but one that, in truth, I had anticipated when I went after Salathiel. The demon's work had been done, and IaHWeH would not permit him to remain any longer after doing that which he had been tolerated long enough to do. He had brought his trial upon my charge, and he had had his day. Salathiel, I knew, would recover, as would Abaddon, but I prayed that Moses also would take heart and rise to his feet.

He did rise, eventually, and went to his tent. By the grace of the Almighty his wife yet lived, and he was able to take comfort with her. Aaron, likewise, who had been in a position to prevent the act, went to his house, where his sons heard his words and mourned with him.

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As strange as it may seem to those who hear my testimony, the disappointment that Moses experienced in coming to understand that he was not to go over into Canaan was the very thing that drove him to recover from his low point after the death of his sister Miriam. In mercy, Elohim sent him a powerful shock, as hearts that have stopped may have administered for the sake of life. Three times between that day and the next he prayed to the Almighty, and three times was the word repeated, "You will not bring this congregation into the land that I have given them." On the last occasion the words were added, "Thus have I spoken, and you will not bring the matter before me a fourth time."

Moses submitted to the command and fell silent, but not for long. By the time he appeared again before the congregation he had accepted his role, and simply commanded them to prepare for departure, as the cloud had risen from the Sanctuary after speaking with him and was swirling around to their east.

The people packed up, and the journey continued.

East they went, toward Edom, but when the Edomites refused them entry Moses was instructed to honor their request, and he took the congregation around by mount Hor, where Ariel the Seraph had fallen and had been raised again in fire and light. There, of course, the demons under Sammael had returned to Egypt with one more bit of information for their priests, who were already at work manifesting the envy of the demons against the Chalkydri.

But there also one being fell and did not rise; at least, not yet. From the Tabernacle they had raised at the foot of Hor, El Michael called to Moses and said, "Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he will not enter into the land that I have given unto the children of Israel, for you have both rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah." The place where Moses had struck the rock was also called Meribah, like the first "Meribah" further south near Horeb. "Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor, and strip Aaron of his garments and place them upon Eleazar his son. There shall Aaron be gathered to his people, and there he will die."

Aaron accepted the news graciously. He had seen the power of Elohim, and knew the promises of the Canaan to come, and said, "Blessed is the name of Yahweh, who has led His people thus far for His name's sake."

Moses did as he was commanded, and there on Hor was Aaron laid to rest. Moses and the new high priest descended from the mountain, and the people of Israel mourned with genuine sorrow for thirty days before the cloud moved off of the Tabernacle, and they prepared again to travel.

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Lucifer knew his time was short. The time spent resting in various campsites was diminishing, and if Israel was to be prevented from entering Canaan the opportunity to strike was now. Miriam and Aaron were dead, and Moses, he believed, had been greatly weakened by the incident at Meribah in Kadesh. He heard the reports of his demons, that the Israelites had gone around Edom and moved once more up the eastern side of Jordan. From this point they would then travel downward to the river, and cross over at some point into the land of promise.

My testimony has been of Moses, and of the movements of the children of Israel; but other angels, other Princes, would have had other things to say, and just as important, about the forty-year period of wandering. Za'afiel the Cherub, Jehoel the Seraph and Anael the Principality were busy during that time. These three Sar'im of Heaven were sent to prepare the way for Israel, and to disrupt Lucifer's most intricately laid plans. There was one plan, however, that they were instructed to leave be, the matter of Og, the last of the Rephaim.

The giants that had been conceived in Egypt had spread abroad after the power vacuum developed when Pharaoh's host was destroyed in the Red Sea. Their non-altered ancestors had traveled over the northern lands many years before, but now they established their kingdom in the region, passing quickly through Philistia (one of them fathering a child there) and into the land of Canaan. There they established themselves as tribal leaders, and held power over the citizens. It was men such as this that the twelve spies had seen forty years earlier when they had gone in to spy out the land. While the Israelites had spent a year at Sinai to the south, the Rephaim had wasted little time in moving directly across the peninsula and into mainland Palestine.

What the Israelites would have done, had they acted in faith, the angels did, and soon the last of the Rephaim, Og, was the major power in the northward region known as Bashan.

There were other races of giants, to be sure, but not like the Rephaim. Og slept in an iron sarcophagus, which he had brought with him from his homeland, but no Egyptian ever had a resting place like his, for this tomb was about fifteen feet long. Og himself filled it well, and was no thin stick, but a muscular, powerful

engine of death that had ever, from his days in Egypt, been disdainful of the Hebrew slaves.

When his watchmen told him that the Israelites were coming up the Jordan, drawing near to Edrei in the southern part of his province, Og took his army and went down to meet them. Lucifer himself had come forth from his kingdom in Egypt, and the Ba'al of the House of Fear would himself see to it that this was the last stand of the Tribes of Israel. With him were Sammael and Ra'abiel, the latter of whom was now over the Virtues in the absence of Salathiel.

Your Histories do not give a long account of this conflict for, as I have stated, Satan *believed* that Moses was weakened by his disgrace in Meribah. The truth is that my charge had been greatly strengthened by humbling himself without strife to the will of the Most High. He has borne the passing of Aaron with perfect decorum, though much sadness, and did not feel alone at the head of Israel. Joshua his assistant had proven to be able and quick-minded. He and the seventy elders of Israel (its members being replaced as the older ones died out) has been an invaluable support system, particularly in times of crisis, and after the passing of Korah and On had consistently held their leaders hands up, as had Hur and Joshua in the battle against the Amalekites a generation earlier.

This was almost the last hand Lucifer had to play, and it was a total disaster from his point of view. The Ba'al of the House of Fear *should* have realized what he was up against when he heard of the Amorites falling easily to Israel only a brief time before, but he was intent on his prey, and believed that, if anything, that battle had only weakened the armies of the humans below. In any conflict, be it spiritual or physical, it is generally better to be underestimated. With Moses' calm faith, we angels were given full authority to fight for the nation, and we had been greatly distressed at the wounds done to our people during the forty years of wandering.

For a generation we had stood silently by, enduring the taunts of the demons and their ceaseless chanting of, "We are here by right." For a generation we had watched as the tenderest individuals were abused by their fellows, and rocks were taken up to stone faithful witnesses. For forty years, yes, we had seen the demons have a feast of souls before our faces, but now Elohim declared to us, "Defend my people Israel, for I will surely bring them into the land!"

The people were not yet at rest. Indeed, before the battle against Sihon, king of the Amorites, they had again complained of their conditions, and brought plague upon themselves. The camp was being cleansed, but we were content to wait for the highway of holiness to be established, and we saw those who had genuine faith preserved at every turn. We were comforted that Joshua was not alone in taking up the reins of leadership, but with him were Caleb and many others who consistently stood for that which was right and true.

The army of Sihon was obliterated, and the demons had offered little resistance to our influence in that battle. Of course, Lucifer no doubt instructed them to

reserve their true strength for the battle in Edrei, but we ourselves had shown but a fraction of our power. The Oracles had long informed us about Satan's plan, but we were certain that he knew we had been told. There was something else, I had no doubt, that he would try before Israel was actually in the land of Canaan.

When Og came down, leading his people, the first instinct of the Israelites was to be afraid. Yet Moses, elderly Moses, stood before the armed and armored men and he said to them in a voice still strong, and shot through with the authority of Heaven, "Thus says Yahweh, King of Heaven, 'Fear not this Og, whom you see before you, for I have delivered him into your hand, and all his people, and his land, and you shall do to him what you have done to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.'"

Taking heart from the courage of Moses, the men surged ahead. It was Caleb of Judah who personally fought the gigantic warrior-king, defeating him and establishing his reputation among the people as a "giant slayer." Joshua led the troops in and utterly destroyed their opponents, and above the humans the wrath of angels was unleashed upon the demons that thought to interfere with this battle. Lucifer was there, as I have said, with Sammael on one side and Ra'abiel, gleeful at his promotion, on the other.

The Chalkydri sliced through the dark crowds of Satan's warriors, who were determined to take a stand, but they could not stand long before the fire of Heaven. I myself did not play a major role in this battle, staying with Moses who also did not fight, but remained by the tent of meeting in prayer. When the conflict was over, however, and a multitude of demons lay motionless on the face of the earth, the twelve guardian spirits of Israel came to me and bore me over to Lucifer, who stood in the air with a few powerful spirits, patiently awaiting my arrival.

I drew my sword and pointed it at the Dragon, who yet bore his pleasant, Cherubic form. "You shall not prevent the people from entering Canaan," I said to him, asserting my authority as the guardian of Israel's human leader.

The demon had the arrogance to look amused. "I received your warning when you hurled Salathiel into my Throneroom," Lucifer replied. "I did not wait here to listen to your speeches. I have only to say this: as you have seen Moses your charge disgraced before you, so you shall see all this people fall. They will not be *worthy*, as your mighty King counts worth, to enter into the land He has promised them. When you see it come to pass, Uzziel, Prince of Heaven, then you will know that I have spoken truly."

With that he flew off, traveling more quickly than perhaps even Ariel would have been able to follow. But he did not make the attempt.

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Of the four things, two I have told you and two remain.

In the matter of the third, Satan indeed held one thing in reserve, and it would lead to one of the most sorrowful and painful scenes in the history of the people of Israel.

There was a man in the lands of the east who had learned of the King of Heaven from the Midianites. Further, in the time since Jethro had departed from Sinai with news of his son-in-law's progress through the wilderness, the name "Yahweh" had spread through the nomadic tribes, and among the people to whom they brought this great knowledge, spiritual gifts such as prophecy had awakened.

Balaam, the son of Beor, was one in whom such a gift had been found. In his younger days he had been a great force for good among the Midianite tribes, but after the passing of Jethro's generation a great and rapid decline was seen in the faith of the people that even he could not check. By the time Moses was moving the Israelites northward up the Jordan, the Midianites had joined forces with the heathen Moabites, and had eventually come under the control of Balak their king.

Sammael and his angels would come to be known as corrupters of prophets, and Balaam was one of their early victories. Under the directions of Lucifer and Sammael, fallen angels were sent to discourage the witness of IaHWeH, and to draw his heart after the Midianites whom he had wished with all his heart to help. Eventually, after years of delicate work, Balaam had caved in under the pressure of dejection and the promise of wealth offered by the Moabites to all who would join their cause.

Instead of offering prayers to the Almighty, Balaam now taught heathen people the sacrifices of Elohim, which they perverted and offered instead to fallen angels masquerading as gods. This had been Lucifer's main idea, since the people were simultaneously made more accountable *and* more guilty, as they were offering sacrifices according to the true method, but to the wrong deities. In this way, the king of demons paved the way for a glorious reign among the people east of Canaan; as a result of this many nations passed beyond the borders of hope before the Israelites even had an opportunity to establish their holy kingdom.

Lucifer and his demons were adept then, and have become more so now, at blending the true with the false in such a way that men will accept the mixture, and thus be immunized against the full truth. It is, in a way, a spiritual "vaccination." By being introduced to weakened, deadened forms of true religion, the mind and spirit of the victim rapidly begin to produce defenses against the pure form of that which they have only encountered through a veil of deception.

But knowing Balaam's potential for spiritual devastation, Lucifer had long thought to use him against Israel, should the people indeed reach as far as the plains of Moab.

When Balak, king of Moab, knew that the people of Israel had come into his land, he called for the corrupted tribes of Midian and said to their elders, “There is a people who have come out of Egypt, and they come now to cover the face of the earth. Even Israel, of whom we have all heard, has come upon us, and encamped in my country. Consider not your familiarity with them through your ancestors, but remember what they have done unto the Amalekites, and the Amorites, and the people of Og the giant. They are led by their God over into our country, and they will come upon us as a plague, if we are not able to destroy them.

“You have heard, men, of the armies that they have faced, and how they slew Sihon, king of the Amorites, and possessed his country. It was because the God of whom you have heard, *Yahweh*, goes with them, and if He is with them we will not stand against them. But now, call for Balaam, who has been with us in the things of the gods, and let him come and curse this people, that they may separate from their God and die here before our faces.”

The elders of Midian, together with the elders of Moab, went eastward to Pethor, where Balaam lived, and they took with them a promise of great wealth, for the king’s fear was great and he was willing to offer much for the security that the Israelites’ absence would ensure.

To the house of Balaam few angels could go. The place was darkened with the everlasting night of a corrupted prophet. The dwelling place of this man of Pethor was a miniature Babylon amidst the already dim colors of an idolatrous nation, and what we learned of this incident we learned only through the Oracles Da’athiel and Zephon.

The men approached the prophet with their king’s message and lofty promises but Balaam, whose love for money was very great at this point, said to the elders, “Remain with me this night, and I will speak to Elohim. In the morning I will tell you what He has said of your plans.”

Balaam had no intention of praying to Elohim. He hoped, by his delay, to impress upon the men the importance of his role and office, and thus induce them to raise the rate of his hire. He was to receive that night, however, a word from the One whom he had long despised. In a dream Balaam saw the face of a mighty Warrior, an Angel of exceeding brightness, and knew that the Spirit of IaHWeH was within Him. The divine Messenger said to him, “You are not to go with these men. You will not curse these people, for they are blessed.”

When Balaam awakened, he debated within himself for a time. Had he truly received a message from IaHWeH, or was this merely guilt speaking? For some men, there is no difference between the voice of Elohim and a guilty conscience, but Balaam was in no position to think along those lines. Fearful and superstitious in his apostasy, he could not bring himself to reject the message that had been spoken to him in just such a way as was designed to impress him with the holiness of the One sent. “Return to your land,” he told the princes in sullen tones. “Yahweh has refused to give me permission to go with you.”

When the king heard this report he was angered, and said, "I know this man. He wishes a greater reward!" Balak was correct in his assessment of Balaam's character, but not of his motives on this occasion. Acting from his suspicions the king sent more princes, and those nobler than the first, and with promises of greater reward to the prophet of Pethor. "Let nothing prevent you from coming to me!" was the message he sent to Balaam. "I will promote you to very great honor, and you may name your reward; come, therefore, and curse this people for me."

"If Balak should give me his house, and that full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Yahweh my Almighty One," he answered the princes with a great show of piety, "to do less or more." But Balaam had spoken those last words slowly, for a thought had occurred to him – one last chance to capitalize on his reputation. "But stay with me here this night," he added, "and I will see if Yahweh will say more unto me than at the first."

That night, seeing that Balaam was intent on doing evil, El Michael returned to the prophet in his dream and said, "If the men come to call you again, rise up and go with them, but only the word that I speak unto you at that time will you say." The prophet awakened, joyful at the permission he had been granted. But when he sought the men who had been resting in his considerably sized home (for he had obtained rewards for his gifts before) they had already left.

In the night the princes had said among themselves, "This man seeks to make sport of us, and increase his wages yet again. In the morning he will once more say, 'I cannot go with you.' Let us return to Balak, and if the king wishes he may come this way himself, with soldiers, and force the prophet to agree if that is his desire."

Using the "permission" given to him as sanction, a mistake often made in holy things, Balaam transgressed the words of Elohim and went out after the men with his two servants, even though they had not called him the second time. Because of this Balaam was alone, following after the Midianites and Moabites with his two servants, when the anger of Elohim broke out upon him for his disobedience.

The very Angel that Balaam had seen, in whom he knew was the Spirit of IaHWeH, stood before the path of the prophet's progress. El Michael had remained invisible to mortal eyes, but He lifted the veil that stood between Himself and the eyes of the donkey on which Balaam rode. Immediately, the animal shied away from the glorious sight, and it turned out of the path and into a field, taking the outraged prophet with it. His servants began to laugh at their master's misfortune.

Balaam tried in vain to get the donkey to turn back and go the way it had come, even striking it with the rod in his hand, but the animal had seen a burning sword drawn in the path, and would not return for any reason. It ran further, and passed between two walls of a narrow path through a vineyard, and again El Michael

appeared before the beast, which flinched to the side so suddenly that Balaam's leg was crushed against one of the walls. The compromised prophet yelped in pain and struck the animal again.

The High Prince of Heaven stepped closer, and the animal, in panic, collapsed straight down, for the way had grown too narrow to turn to either side. Balaam bellowed in fury, and struck the donkey a mighty blow with his staff, but it would not move, and only lay there still. At that El Michael did a most unusual thing, which had never been done before.

"What have I done to you, that you should have struck me these three times?" The donkey spoke, its tongue suddenly opened, and its mind quickened to understand things as a man understands.

"Because you have mocked me," Balaam shouted, "and had I a sword in my hand, I would kill you this very moment!" Then it dawned on the prophet that he was speaking to an animal. In his fury, he had not even considered the matter, but now he was awed. He had seen animals appear to speak to some degree before, in his work as a "prophet;" but that had been the trickery of clever men, or occasionally the work of a demon, as in the case of the serpents from the staffs of the Egyptian rods.

But no magician was here, and he could only stare as the donkey said, "Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden from the day I came to be with you until now? Had I ever given you reason before to be angry?"

"No..." Balaam stammered out, the absurdity of the situation breaking upon him afresh. It was in this wondering, awed state of mind that the Angel of IaHWeH appeared to him, the shock of the talking animal preparing the hardened prophet to be educated by the Majesty of Heaven.

It was as if scales had fallen from the Pethorite's eyes, so suddenly did the Divine Messenger appear in his sight. "What fault do you find with your donkey," El Michael asked, "to strike her these three times? Behold, I am the One who went out to withstand you, because your way is not proper before me. And the donkey saw me, and turned from me these three times. Had she not done so, I would have slain you and left her alive."

Balaam wriggled free of the crouching animal as quickly as he could, and fell on his face in fearful worship. "I have sinned, for I did not know that you withstood me," he said, in partial honesty. He did not know that El Michael was actually standing against him in any physical way, but he knew well enough that the concession granted him had not been the original declaration of Divine Will. "If my way displeases you," he said, "I will return to my place."

"You have already departed your home," El Michael said, determining to bring a blessing out of even this situation. "Go after the men, only remember what I have

said to you: only that which I give you to speak must you say.” Having said this, the Angel of IaHWeH vanished.

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Lucifer, hearing of this development, ordered Sammael to withdraw his influence. “Michael permits it,” he said in disgust, “therefore our plans cannot be accomplished here. Let the prophet do as he will, and my eyes will turn to other plans for Israel once they are within the borders of Canaan.” Unbeknownst to the Ba’al of Fear, he would indeed get another opportunity to move against Israel before they entered into Canaan, but not for any reason that he then anticipated. This last trip up Palestine was by far the most active of all Israel’s wanderings.

Balaam caught up to the princes, and they presented him to Balak as if they had performed a triumphant and successful service for their king. Ignoring their posturing, Balak turned immediately to the prophet and said, “Did I not summon you in earnest? Why did you not come to me the first time? Am I not able to promote you to great honor?”

Balaam said, “I have come now, but have I the power to do or say anything of my own accord? The word that Elohim puts in my mouth, that is what I must speak.”

“Yes, yes,” Balak said, “Only speak that which I desire you to speak, and you will be rewarded greatly.” With that he provided Balaam with all the animals that he required for his sacrifices, sent by the hands of his servants. They then went out together unto one of the pagan altars that the demons had inspired, and it was on a high place, from which the camp of Israel could be seen spread out before the observers.

Waxing theatrical, Balaam said, “Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven oxen, and seven rams.” Balak did all that he was instructed to do, and then Balaam offered one of each animal on each of the altars. Having done so he said to the king, “Stand by the offerings and I will go unto the peak of this mountain, and see if Yahweh will come to meet me, and give me a word to speak.”

He did so, and El Michael indeed appeared to Balaam on the top of the mountain whereon the altars had been constructed. “I have prepared seven altars, and offered to you a bullock and a ram on each of them.”

Not for the sake of the sacrifices, but for His own divine purposes, El Michael said to the corrupt prophet, “Return to Balak, and speak.”

Balaam, believing that he had been given permission to curse Israel, quickly descended back to the plateau and joined the king and his princes. He opened his mouth to speak, and suddenly other words filled his mind. Constrained by his commitment to the Divine Angel, Balaam indeed spoke: “Balak the king of Moab has brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, ‘Come, curse me Jacob,’ and ‘Come, defy Israel.’ How shall I curse whom Elohim has not

cursed? Or how can I defy whom Elohim has not defied? For from the tops of the rocks I see Him, and from the hills I behold Him, and see, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be absorbed into the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of a quarter of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last days be as his!”

The Moabites and Midianites were caught entirely off guard. “What have you done to me?” Balak demanded. “I brought you here to curse my enemies, and now you have altogether blessed them!”

“Must I not take note and speak what Yahweh has put in my mouth?” Balaam asked in reply.

“The tents of Israel have overwhelmed you,” Balak said, taking note of the majestic and peaceful scene spread out below them. “Come, I pray, come with me to another place that you may see them from farther away, and you may curse them for me from that place.”

He brought Balaam up unto a higher mountain, and there they went through the arduous process of again constructing seven altars, and offering a ram and a bullock on each. “Now,” said Balak, “Do as I have brought you here to do!”

Again Balaam went forth, and again El Michael met him, shining in but the tiniest fraction of His glory before this sinful, avaricious man.

This time, when he returned, the prophet said these words, “Rise up, Balak, and hear! Listen to me, son of Zippor! Elohim is not a man that He should lie; neither is He a human being, that He should repent. Has He declared that which He will not do? Or has He spoken a thing that He will not make good? Behold, I have received a commandment to bless, and He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He has not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor perversity in Israel; Yahweh his Almighty is with him, and the shout of a King is among them. Elohim brought them out of Egypt; He has strength like unto the unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor a divination against Israel. According to these days it will be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘Look what Elohim has done!’”

“Behold,” he concluded, “the people shall rise up as a great lion, and he shall lift himself as a young lion. He will not lie down until he has eaten of his prey and drunk the blood of the slain.”

Balak would not so easily admit defeat, but Balaam at this point began to be fearful for his life. “Surely,” he said to himself, “the king’s anger will break upon me, but I can say nothing when I open my mouth but what Yahweh has given me to speak, lest He slay me Himself!” Nevertheless, he had no choice but to accompany the irritated monarch to yet another place.

Seven altars and fourteen sacrifices later, Balaam spoke again, this time realizing that he needed not make a show, or go forth to consult with El Michael. He

merely opened his mouth, and these words came: “Balaam the son of Beor has said, the man whose eyes are opened has said, he which has heard the words of Elohim, which saw the vision of the Almighty in a trance with open eyes, has said, ‘How beautiful are your tents, Oh Jacob! How lovely your Tabernacles, Oh Israel! As the valleys they spread forth, as gardens at the riverside, as aloe trees which Yahweh has planted and cedars beside the waters! He will pour the water out of His vessels and His seed will be in many waters, and His King will be higher than Agag of Amalek, and His kingdom will be exalted.’

“Elohim has brought him forth out of Egypt; He has strength like that of a unicorn. Israel will consume the nations that are his enemies, and will break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He crouched and lay down like a lion; and as a mighty lion who will stir him up? Blessed is he that blesses you, and cursed is he that curses you!”

Balak’s fury peaked, but the demons attending the scene were not willing to let so valuable a commodity be destroyed. Impatience was allowed to win out over wrath in the mind of the king, and he exploded, but not in violence. “I called you to curse my enemies, and you have blessed them entirely three times! Depart from me, and flee quickly to your place. I would have given you great honor, but *Yahweh*,” he said in a sarcastic tone, “has kept you from honor.”

As Balaam turned to go, he said to the king, “Did I not say to the messengers whom you sent for me, ‘Even if Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of Yahweh, to do either good or bad by my own mind, but say only what He gives me to speak’? But now I return to my country, and will tell them what this nation will do unto your people in the latter days.”

Balaam had not any inclination to keep speaking, and had been happy to escape with his life, but he had agreed with the Almighty to speak the words that He would put in his mouth. The prophet spoke again by a drive such as that which often actuated more noble men. He blessed Israel once more, being permitted in vision to see much of the future of the Hebrews. As he spoke on he said, “There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel and smite the corners of Moab to destroy all the children of Sheth.” Even down to the time of the Sacrifice was this fallen prophet permitted to see, and he spoke longer still, in the amazed view of the Moabites and Midianites.

When the words were ended, Balaam quickly hurried off, thinking not now of reward, but of safely returning home.

Balak spoke to his princes, saying, “Let us prepare for war. We know that Israel shall not turn aside from coming into our land, therefore let us resist them, and it may be that we shall not fall like Sihon, or like Og.”

Not many days later, however, one of Balaam's two servants returned to Balak. "Princes of Midian and Moab," the man said, falling on his face before them, "my master Balaam would have a word with you all."

"We have heard enough of his words," Balak said, when he heard the message. "Has he another blessing for Israel that we must hear?"

"He does not speak now according to his former words," the servant said, "but says, 'If Balak, king of Moab will permit, I can teach him the way of victory over Israel, though I cannot curse them for him.'" Several demons had already gone into Egypt. They had heard the words of Balaam to his messenger, and then more details of his plan spoken to the second servant as the first departed. They immediately knew that this was something Lucifer was not anticipating. When the arch deceiver heard of it, he was indeed surprised, but said, "Then we shall have our breach! This Balaam has been a greater service to us than I had anticipated." Satan's original plan had been for Balaam to indeed curse Israel; he knew that such a curse would hold no true power against the blessings of Elohim, but he had devised to send, by means of messengers, word to the Israelites that they had been cursed by one using the name of their own Defender.

In such a state the confidence of the army, so long used to doubt and complaint, would be shaken in battle, and Elohim would, he reasoned, surely depart from them. Moab would thereafter easily defeat them in this unprotected, faithless condition. But this... this was even better, and reflected the wonderful, rich, creativity of man!

At the direction of the false prophet, the Midianites sent "ambassadors" of a sort, young women primarily, who went to the outskirts of the tents of Israel, and formed friendships and other, more inappropriate, relationships with some of the individuals there. Great care was taken by these women, and in turn the men they encountered, to conceal the matter from those who would object. The evil spread in Israel, and even those among the princes of the people were participants in the carefully concealed transgressions. A short time later those on the outskirts of the camp, those farthest from the Tabernacle and most familiar with the people of the land, heard the sound of music coming from a concealed area nearby. Most of them grew curious, and went forth to see what the people were doing. What they saw there dazzled their senses.

The young women of Moab and Midian, by all accounts beautiful (as was Zipporah in her youth) were dancing and singing and shouting in joyful celebration of the demonic god whom the people called merely Ba'al. With them was a large group of the Moabites themselves, both males and females, and they were offering sacrifices to their god. When they saw the men coming toward them, the conductors of the ceremony said, "Men of Israel! We have heard of your journey, and rejoice with you, as we rejoice in all things! How well, how powerfully, Yahweh has brought you up out of Egypt, and through the wilderness. How well He has fought with you against the Amorites, and the Amalekites! We offer a feast to our gods, who were ever the enemies of these people whom you have defeated, therefore will you not come, and bless us with your presence?"

The words pleased the intoxicated Israelites, who were captivated by the women, the music, and the speeches of these men who seemed so wise. There were princes among the men, but even they suspected nothing amiss in the words of their tempters. They went down into the celebration, and in the passage of time they were enticed into words and actions upon which the angels would not look. Not all who had gone forth to the place of feasting were so easily turned aside from the commandments which they knew from IaHWeH, therefore several of the young men returned to their camps, and went to the Tabernacle where they found Moses. As they gave their report, dark shadows began to gather around the camp.

When Moses heard that some of the Israelites had gone down to a feast for another god, and there committed both idolatry and acts forbidden by the cleanliness into which the Almighty was leading them, he grew greatly sorrowful. When he heard that some had returned to the camp, drunken on wine and sin, and were continuing their apostasy in the very sight of the Tabernacle, he grew exceedingly angry, and he said to the young men, "Wait here by the entrance to the Sanctuary. I will go in unto Yahweh, and there speak with Him."

On his face before the Almighty, Moses heard the words, "I have seen the iniquity of Israel, and my anger is raised upon them. The congregation is under a curse for the works of these men, and my name is profaned among the heathen. Shall I not visit for these things? For if these men die not, then will my name be forever profaned among the heathen. Take therefore all the heads of the people who transgress and hang them up before IaHWeH in the light of the sun, that the fierce anger of IaHWeH may be turned away from Israel."

Not since the incident with the golden calf had there been such a breach made in the tents of Jacob. In many ways, this transgression was worse than the former. Moses was among the people, and there had been no cause for anxiety. They were on the very borders of Canaan, and not in some unfamiliar place about which they had heard little. They had acted under the compromising actions of their own high priest in the former sin, who had led them into apostasy. They had committed impurities with their *own* women, which, though not inherently better or less sinful, was at least a less public embarrassment from the perspective of the nations around them.

Yet the penalty of death was appointed for those in the first transgression; how much more now, and on the very eve of war?

The angels did not rejoice at the terrible sentence, but we agreed with its severity. Had the people not seen the example of Moses at the waters of Meribah? The humble prophet had not hidden from the Israelites the nature and consequences of his sin, and in so doing he had won the hearts of many who had been offended that day, and many who were not knit with him even before that incident. But the warning had been clear: Elohim is no respecter of persons, and the transgressors of His commandments would surely fall into their own darkness. Those who

would not learn from these warnings would feel their sting, and have the commandments testify against them in the Day of Accounting.

The men of Israel who had returned from the ceremony found the seventy elders coming toward them, and Moses and Eleazar were waiting for them to be brought forward, standing by the Tabernacle. All around the camp, dark eyes continued to observe the proceedings.

When the transgressors were ushered into the court of the Tabernacle, this the cue for which Satan had been waiting; it was time for him to set his final great snare into action. Lucifer knew that the camp had been polluted, and he said to his demons, "If ever a time presented itself for us to remove the protectors of Israel, it is now!"

An army of fallen angels now stood over the tents of the chosen people, visible to us in an instant, and waiting to descend upon it. El Michael, ascending from the cloud, called to the Chalkydri, and summoned also Berithael, Khenael (Eleazar's guardian) and myself. He said to us, "The darkness has gathered according to its desire; this is to be the final struggle that Israel will have before it enters into the land which I have sworn to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. Satan has understood this, and rises up to oppose my people. He has caused a great breach, and brought great accusation against the Hebrews. He knows that when these men of Israel are destroyed, who have been permitted to follow the summons of their lust, my people will be ready to enter the land."

"See," He said, "that I have made a division in Israel between the innocent and the guilty, but my people are greatly weakened in this place. The corrupter of the sons of men will seek to find a hook in those who will remain; therefore go forth, and drive them off. Cleanse my camp of the adversaries, as even my servant Moses cleanses his people."

I was not expecting this confrontation, and had not noticed the demons gathering. I was taken quite by surprise, to be honest, yet I drew my blade, and steadied myself for the impending conflict.

We looked down and saw the men who had gone forth assembled before the congregation. The people wept as they learned that the sentence of these men was to be death, and great dishonor besides, and many, particularly the families from which these men had come, were in great distress. Everyone knew the sentence was fair, but heavy. Moses spoke well, and set forth the reasons why they could not allow the name of the Most High to be despised among the nations, lest they rise up against Israel, and overcome them... but worse, that when the kingdom for which they had been brought out of Egypt in the first place should be established, there would be none who would come and learn of IaHWeH.

Though acknowledging the justice of Moses' words, some were overcome with their grief, and it was in that grief that the danger lay, for with the dissatisfaction that had so long attended the congregation, going from complain to complaint,

from trial to trial, what had begun as sorrow could easily become bitterness, and from there, hatred.

If the people of Israel, now confessing their error and repenting, should become embittered against Moses so near to Canaan, and right on the borders of Moab, Lucifer might well be able to accomplish his purpose! We had to work quickly, one last time, to cleanse the camp.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

CHAPTER 14: AN EARLY SUNRISE

“El Elohim, even Yahweh, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. ‘Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.’” (Psalm 50:1, 5)

My power is bound,” El Michael said, “and I cannot fight for the people while there are transgressors in the camp. Should the demons obtain a place here, shall not the Moabites overrun them in their fury? Should the people rebel in their grief against my servant Moses, shall not the armies of men come upon them suddenly? Now go forth, and resist the demons until the plague in my camp is stayed.”

With that, a plague indeed broke out in the camp, and those whose hearts were being turned to bitterness upon hearing the sentence of the transgressors began to die before the congregation. Moses saw this, and he said to the elders, “Turn away the wrath of Elohim from His people!” The elders began to carry out the grisly sentence on those who had gone down to the feast of the Moabites and Midianites.

“Descend!” Lucifer cried out, standing above the camp with many powerful demons. The only spirits of note whom I could not find (and who were not occupied in other lands) were Azrael, whom I later learned was preparing the Moabites and Midianites for an attack on Israel, and the demons such as Salathiel, Kafziel (who had fallen over mount Hor) and a few others I knew that were still incapacitated in Egypt. Abaddon, it seems, had revived, and he was there looking with satisfaction on the scene below him. This was the sort of confusion the fallen angels loved to see: the wailing of families, the deaths of those who would have been heroes to their people, a plague breaking forth from the light of Elohim because of the transgression of men.

Both angels and demons knew that as long as there were rebels in the camp the demons could seek a place among them. The plague was divinely ordained to fall upon those with hardened hearts; this was the final cleansing of the camp before the land of promise, and under Raziel’s reflected light those who would endanger Israel’s safety were falling. By the Tabernacle, Moses and the elders were dealing with the *open* transgressors, those whom the people would indeed acknowledge as being worthy of death.

Trials are always allowed to come, many times quite intensely just before the promises of Elohim are to be delivered. Satan has accusations against the sons of men, asking, “Does not this one serve the Almighty for reward?” As Satan will intensify his fury just before the servant in question enters into peace, Elohim will often permit the most fierce testing to occur right on the borders of the promised land (whatsoever form it may take for individual souls). This day was a great test for the children of Israel. They lay on their faces before the Tabernacle as their brethren died before them and behind them. Above them the demons swirled like a cloud of evil flies, and touched down like a tornado among the people, seeking sympathetic souls in which to fix their poison. “Rebel, rebel...” the tempters whispered, and the warriors guarded them. “Flee, flee...” others said to those who had become aware of the plague. But by either by grief, or terror, or both, most remained where they were, pleading with IaHWeH to have mercy on their nation. Many, to the delight of angels, had learned from Moses, and were interceding for their people!

The demons could press their attack only as long as the transgressors lived, and we knew therefore that the battle would be brief, but intense. It would not be an all-out war, such as that which had occurred last over Babylon, and neither side was out to destroy the other; but the consequences of its outcome would be no less significant for this fact. I called forth my Virtues, and saw the other Chiefs there with me, summoning angels from Heaven to defend Israel. The Chalkydri burst into flame, and swirled upward like ribbons of fire to meet the descending cloud.

“For the Redeemed of Israel!” I cried as I led my angels forward. “IaHSheVaH!” came the answering cry, “IaH Saves!” like thunder over the land where the tents had been pitched.

They hit us like a wave crashing into the shore. The waters broke, and roared, but the land remained firm. In dark aspects, the arch demons fell upon us: a burning boar, a fierce lion, a mighty eagle, and a gruesome wolf. Above them all, the dragon soared; he opened his red wings for the first time since the day of Babylon’s destruction. Immediately our most powerful angels rose up to meet him, Ariel, Za’afiel and Zadkiel who had faced him before. As in every battle he had joined, the mighty beast displayed some new trick, some new aspect of combat, but the Seraph, the Cherub and the Throne were ready for him.

Of Throne-angels, Eleazar’s guardian was a great benefit to me. The four-winged Khenael was ever at my side as we moved through the demonic ranks, keeping the attacking spirits away from the humans as much as we could while driving them out of the camp or cutting them down.

When a small company of Powers soared toward me, Khenael intercepted them long enough for my Virtues to arrive and drive them off. When the powerful spirit Petahel attempted to run me through, Khenael’s blade turned his attack aside, and I was able to strike the evil Seraph down.

My veil vanished and my shield appeared; my helmet blazed to visibility on my head as I charged Arioeh. This demon, who had been assigned elsewhere, had actually returned from the land in which he was stationed to take part in this conflict. The “Fierce Lion” had outranked me in Heaven both by virtue of his Order (a Principality) and his station (an Archangel). Thoughts such as this did not find place in my mind, however, as I faced him and slashed at his modified form. The lion’s claws lashed out at me, but each time my shield interrupted his attack. The fangs were of no account, for the demon knew that if he stuck his neck out to bite he would find it acquainted with the edge of my burning blade.

As the arch demon realized that against a shielded warrior he would not be able to accomplish much in that form, he once again regained the aspect of a winged, robed swordsman, and he knocked me aside with a blast of force from his left hand. I would not be dissuaded, however, and I immediately circled around to attack again. I found Khenael a ready ally, and together we forced the fallen Principality backward into a group of his own angels.

Ariel, in the meantime, was battling with Abaddon, who had wounded him before Israel. The dark spirit’s sword had been restored when the fragment vanished from Ariel’s being on mount Hor; for unlike the absent Azrael, whose weapon had been shattered against a holy surface, Abaddon had snapped his own blade, and was therefore still in command of his own kherev.

Ba’al of the House of Envy was repeatedly battered by the Seraph’s wings, and by the flat of his sword. He was careful to avoid any attacks that would have put him out of the battle, but he was entirely unable to gain the upper hand, or to prevent himself from sustaining further injury. Pride alone had brought the demon out into the open in his newly recovered state, and he was suffering the consequences of that decision now.

A blast of flame from one of Lucifer’s seven heads sent a number of holy angels spinning to the ground, but as I looked up I saw Daniel, one of the Chalkydri, unfolding his wings in the area through which the wicked heat had just passed. He had used his six shining limbs as a full shield against the fiery attack, and with a shout of victory he rushed forward and slashed at the head of the great demon. The dragon roared and immediately vanished – leaving in its place the princely form that had been previously abandoned.

Without a moment’s warning Satan flapped his wings and darted closer, dealing Daniel a mighty blow. The Seraph fell from the air, trailing a long stream of flames. As he hit the ground, however, a blast of fire and light, such as had attended Ariel in his distress, lit the battle for an instant, and Daniel was back up and after the master deceiver. Lucifer stared in disbelief, and then flew off with the six-winged fireball in pursuit.

I looked up to see Raphael and Uriel standing over the scene, looking at each other with patient, but obvious, satisfaction. I was not the only one to notice them, however, and Satan shouted to Kokabiel and Nisroch, two of his most

powerful Seraphim, “The Chalkydri will not fall while the archangels stand!” He meant only the two he had seen, however, for Gabriel was standing with El Michael, preventing the wrath of Elohim from breaking out fully upon the transgressors below, and Camael was...

I had no time to look for Camael, as I was once again caught up in a struggle. With Khenael I beat three Cherubim back who, though more powerful, were not armored as were the holy angels. As time progressed, and we learned more about our roles as the servants of men, we became less and less vulnerable to demonic attacks. We had gained our swords in Heaven, hanging from the belts that we had always worn. The shields followed that, and then the helmets. As I thought on these things, to the degree that I could think while cutting swaths through a harvest of demons, I remembered the golden glow that had obscured Ariel’s injury for a moment after Abaddon’s attack, and the glimpse of shining metal I had seen about my own being in Egypt.

I was being shown something, but what?

On the subject of seeing things, I looked up and saw that the cloud of demons was not abating. We were about evenly matched for number, by the design of Elohim, but the fallen spirits were still attacking! Surely, after all that time (for the battle wore on longer than I had expected) the transgressors had been removed from the camp of Israel!

I looked down and saw that indeed all those who stood before the Tabernacle had been slain, and their heads removed to be hung before the sunlight as a testimony to both the Israelites and the Moabites who were no doubt going to be looking down from their high places. But the plague still continued, claiming one after another as the hearts of the people turned from bitterness to rebellion. Demons were slipping away from the battle as they could, and darkening the hearts of those who left themselves open to the evil influences. None who trusted Moses could be moved from their place, for as it is written, if you “*resist the devil ... he will flee from you.*” Yet there were many in a deep valley of faith, and these were made the particular targets of the vile tempters.

Why was the attack continuing? Were not the open transgressors all destroyed? I looked over the tents of Israel and I saw the reason why... with my angelic vision I saw right down past the tents of the people of IaHWeH, and I found a man of the congregation who was not clean. Near the outskirts of the tents, far from the Tabernacle, a man lay with a Midianite woman that he had brought with him from the festival. They had returned early, but had not come into the camp with the others; they had not, therefore, been brought before the people, as had the others.

As the battle raged in the skies above me, I descended and sought a man to stand for the Almighty. I found Phinehas nearby, the son of Eleazar, and my spirit lifted. Here was a son of the priests, and it would not be a difficult thing to direct him over to the stain that rested on the camp.

As I moved toward him, however, a dark spear pierced my leg. So powerfully was it thrown that the very momentum of the weapon threw me to the ground and pinned me there. Into the earth, to which I had anchored myself, the point of the weapon had sunk. Before me stood the demon Ra'abiel: Salathiel's temporary replacement as Chief of the fallen Virtues. It seems indeed to be the case that the members of one's own house are intent on being his worst enemies.

The Virtue did not attack me, for had he withdrawn his spear from my leg his sword would have returned, but I would have been able to move. It was clear that Ra'abiel did not wish to face me in open conflict, but it was also clear that he was sending silent messages to demons who were nearby. Khenael was instantly with me, and he drew the evil weapon from my being, but by that time a small army of spirits had gathered around us, and we were surrounded.

The press came from every side, and above, so we were forced to fight on the ground, but this was not a major disadvantage in itself. What did prove to be a telling factor was the wound in my leg, which made maintaining my footing very difficult. My wings were slashed, and soon my shield-arm was also injured. More and more demons were coming, and I was beginning to wonder if I would be conscious when the battle concluded.

Just as Khenael's back pressed into mine, for the limited space we had left, a flash of light revealed one of the holy Seraphim, not one of the Chalkydri, but a mighty spirit nonetheless, who struck out with his wings against those who escaped his initial sword attack. We had a moment to act, and I moved toward Phinehas as quickly as I could over the ground since I still could not fly. I discovered that Ra'abiel had not been overcome by the Seraph's attack, however, and he came at me from the side.

Suffering as I was from the weight of many injuries I turned too slowly, and the demon carved a deep wound into my chest as I was spinning to avoid him. The blow was not immediately incapacitating, but I knew that any further injuries would render me useless. Phinehas was behind me now, and Ra'abiel drew back for another assault. I raised my sword and struck his blade away from me, into the ground, and I thrust him away with my injured, but still somewhat active, free hand.

The laceration burned my being, and I could feel the poison of liquid fire pouring through me, playing at the edges of my perception like a shadow, but I would not sink to the earth. I whispered for Khenael, and told him of the Midianite woman, but as he moved toward Phinehas himself a huge detachment of demons slammed into him, and when they had passed the Throne-angel was no longer there.

I watched Ra'abiel approaching again. He had been momentarily distracted by the passing of the demons who captured Khenael, but now he turned his murderous eyes upon me again, and began to fly in my direction.

I had been in enough battles, however, to know what would happen next. I knew that some of our most significant lessons were learned in the thick clouds of conflict, and I knew that Elohim had chosen me to see the golden armor about myself, and about Ariel, when we had been willing to submit to divine will regarding the humans we were protecting. I saw Ra'abiel's blade coming at me, right for the center of my being, and I realized that even my most powerful remaining parry would not completely turn it aside. I would be hit, as Ariel had been hit – as Israel had been wounded – but if the Almighty would allow, I would not be overcome. IaHWeH had chosen me, and placed me here, for a specific purpose, knowing my thoughts and reactions – and the way of the Almighty is *perfect*.

I caught the edge of the dark kherev with the edge of my own, and I turned aside as much as I could. As I had anticipated, my weakened arm had not provided enough strength to completely repel the thrust, nor could I turn my already injured body aside sufficiently to completely evade the attack. Even so, Ra'abiel's dark weapon struck solid spiritual gold, and slipped past me.

I was not surprised, not in the least... but I could not say the same for the Virtue I was fighting. “*Another...*” he began, but did not finish the thought. I brought my blade down and, weak as I was, dealt him a blow sufficient to immediately lay his essence bare. He would not rise again for some time.

I sank to my knees, but I did not lose consciousness. I looked down and saw a shining plate of gold fastened upon my upper body, covering many of the wounds I had thus far sustained. While the injuries were still there, I was protected, and I felt some of my strength returning. Better still, I looked up and saw a ripple of gold passing through the legions of holy angels. Those near me, seeing me thus clad, received knowledge of their own breastplates, and those who saw *them* likewise gained their shining armor.

I was merely the pebble in the pond, but soon every angel from the least to the greatest was shielded both on his arm and also on his body. The demons drew back, unsure of how to proceed; the new armor, therefore, would not be tested for very long, at least not during this conflict. I wasted no time in running over to the rebellious Israelite, Zimri of the Tribe of Reuben, and I struck downward with my sword, causing the man to feel a sudden twinge of fear.

Just as the kherevs of the demons confuse, darken and dismay, so the blades of the righteous angels strike the conscience, convicting of sin, and leading to an acknowledgement of evil. The only humans against whom our blades are useless are those so far into darkness that they have unsuited themselves for life. The sorceress Yunah, Enoch the son of Cain, and Yannos of Egypt were three such creatures, but Zimri was not beyond hope, at least not at the moment. That changed, however, as I had sadly anticipated when, instead of repenting of his error, as he ought to have done, he instead hardened himself against it, and was given over to the madness that waited to claim his soul.

There were no Israelites between him and freedom, but arrogance and curiosity got the better of him. He drew closer to the congregation and there saw the bodies of his companions lying on the ground. The elders had already begun to place the heads of the young men on poles near the outskirts of the camp, and his startled expression was impossible to conceal. Then and there he knew with certainty that if he should stay in the camp he would be slain; yet if he fled into the wilderness he would not last long either. Moab, likewise, would offer no amnesty to this man of Israel. With no alternatives his rebellion burst forth openly, and with amazing pride made all the worse by the lingering effects of intoxication, he took the woman with him and went forward into the open view of all Israel.

With elders and Israelites agape, he stood up before the kneeling and prostrate crowd and said, "This woman is a princess of Midian, the daughter of Zur, one of the chief princes of the land! No common woman is she, but royalty, and worthy of Hebrew attention, and *respect!*"

He pointed to the bloodstained scene before him, his finger indicating Moses, and he said, "You slay our people for desiring peace with the residents of this land, but what peace will we have if we cannot cease to slay of our own! Will you now strike me down for this union?" he asked, raising their joined hands in the view of all. The woman was silent, for she had become terrified at the sight of the slaughter, but when Zimri spun around to return to his tent, taking her boldly with him and continuing to shout insults and nonsense at Moses and the elders, she followed him.

As he turned to go back to his tent I looked and saw, to my relief, that Eleazar's guardian still stood. Khenael placed his hand on Phinehas' shoulder, who was between Zimri and the Tabernacle, and the priest grabbed a nearby spear. "Son of Reuben!" he called. Zimri looked and saw the weapon in Phinehas' hand, and his nerve nearly broke. Nevertheless he slowly, calmly, continued toward his dwelling place.

"This day you have defied Israel!" Phinehas shouted, running after him. "This day you have flaunted your sin before the Holy One, and you shall not draw breath again from henceforth!"

Zimri reached the tent just before Phinehas, but the priest, burning with zeal, did not hesitate. He charged in, and angels and men heard the brief cries from within.

As the sounds of fear and pain fell silent, a loud rumbling was heard from the Tabernacle. The cloud of glory flared to life as Gabriel released some of his hold on the Shekinah. A full release would have consumed even the bodies of the righteous, and the very earth would have been destroyed, yet the mighty Cherub was suited to his task, and let pass only that which was to be let pass.

The people, still weeping on the ground, covered their faces with their hands, and around and above them demons fled. Those who were too close to flee curled up

with their wings around them and fell to the earth, lying helplessly before the outpouring of Heavenly glory. The angels stood up, even the wounded, and basked in the light of Elohim, and the hearts of the men of Israel were filled with a sudden sense of holy fear. IaHWeH, the Creator of Heaven and earth, the Almighty of Armies, and King of all Creation, was among them. The tears stopped, but so, almost, did the breath.

“I have looked upon my people, Israel,” the voice of the Creator came forth, clearly audible, and able to be understood by every being in the camp. “I have seen the faith of Jacob, and the righteousness of the seed of Abraham. The plague has ceased from among you, and I have declared you clean in my sight. You will surely go up into the land which I have sworn unto your fathers, only first you will avenge the Midianites and the Moabites for the sake of your brethren which have fallen in my presence this day.”

With that the sound of thunder ceased, and the light from the cloud dimmed. The archangels and many of the divine warriors returned to Heaven, rising as a vast ring of stars into the Heavens, leaving only the guardians of the people, and the Chalkydri, to remain in the camp.

After a brief respite in which we recovered our senses from the battle, we began to gather the bodies of the unconscious demons that had been laid out by the flash of light from the Divine Presence. When we had gathered them we sent them out of the camp by the hands of powerful angels. Lucifer, of course, had long since fled.

Though angels were active in the tents of Israel almost immediately, most of the humans remained on their faces, praying and weeping and pouring out their sorrow at the death of so many of their brethren by both the plague and open apostasy, for a long time thereafter.

* * * * *

When Moses was praying within the Tabernacle later that day, Elohim appeared to him and said, “Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned my wrath away from the children of Israel. He was zealous for my sake among them, and so I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Because of this I give unto him my covenant of peace: He shall have it, and his seed after him, and will bear the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his Almighty, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.”

“Moreover,” He said, repeating the command spoken before all Israel, “You are to distress the Midianites, and attack them, for they have troubled you with their subtlety, enticing you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of the daughter of a prince of Midian, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor’s sake.”

Moses called Eleazar to him, and before the battlefield within the camp of Israel, amidst the heads of transgressors and before the witness of the remaining angels, Israel was numbered, as it had been numbered upon their escape from Egypt. By

families and by tribes the people were counted, all the males who were aged twenty and above, and they were prepared for war. Moses said to them, speaking the words of Elohim, “Unto you has Yahweh given the inheritance of the land, for your fathers have fallen in the wilderness, and Elohim as purified for Himself a holy nation. Among you are Joshua and Caleb, and these will surely go with you into Canaan. Only you will avenge yourselves on the Midianites before entering into the land.”

The people returned to their tents until such a time as Moses would summon them to battle.

The prophet of Israel had told few that his days were drawing to a close. He knew that it would not be long until he was taken from his people, and his heart was heavy. All too readily the memories of repeated murmuring, apostasy, and outright rebellion came into his view, and he remembered a conversation he’d had, many years ago, with a faithful man on mount Sinai. Moses prayed to Elohim in the Tabernacle, before the cloud of Glory, “Let Yahweh, the Almighty of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation who may go out before them, and may go in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of Yahweh should not be as sheep which have no shepherd.”

From the cloud of smoke and fire, Elohim gave answer to Moses’ prayer.

All Israel came out to join their numbered army, and there before them Moses stood with two other men: Eleazar the high priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. In the presence of all the people Moses and Eleazar laid their hands on Joshua, and Moses said to him the things he had prophesied when they two were on Sinai together, and gave him a solemn charge in addition that was heard by a cloud of human and angelic witnesses. Joshua accepted the commission, and the people worshiped IaHWeH for His anointing among them, even while coming to understand that Moses was preparing for his departure from them.

Their human leader again spoke, telling them once more of the promise of the land, and rehearsing in the ears of the people instructions for what they were to do when they had gained their inheritance.

When he had finished speaking of these matters, he said, “The day has come when we are to break forth upon Midian. Arm yourselves for battle and go against the Midianites, to avenge Yahweh of Midian. Of every tribe take a thousand, for from each of the tribes of Israel you will send men to war.” Twelve thousand were thus selected, and they, along with Eleazar and Phinehas, who bore with other Levites the Ark from the Holy Place, and with trumpets to sound the victory, moved against the people of Moab and Midian.

Balak heard from his watchmen that the Israelites were advancing with weapons and armor, and he prepared his troops for battle. His greatest fear had come upon him, all his scheming notwithstanding, and because of the cleansing of Israel and

the shaming of the demons before the presence of Elohim, not one fallen spirit went with the armies of Moab and Midian, except to observe. They went to see the destruction and bloodshed in which they delighted, but not one interfered with the course of the battle, and the Chalkydri stood over the men of Israel to see that this would indeed be so.

The twelve thousand warriors slew all the men, including Balak, and including *Balaam*, who had remained with the king since the acceptance of his plot against Israel. The cities were burned, the high places of Ba'al were destroyed, and the castles were brought low. The cattle, the goods, the women and the children were all captured, and they were led by the triumphant soldiers back to the camp of Israel from which they had departed. It had been a complete victory, but one matter remained that was not entirely pleasing.

Moses went out and saw the captives, and he felt a spark of holy anger. "Men," he said incredulously, "have you indeed saved all the women alive? Have you not remembered the sin into which such women have led the people of Israel? And behold, the signs of their idolatry are yet upon them!" Moses pointed to the amulets and sacred jewelry that many of the captives still wore. He was disappointed that the warriors he had sent forth, so recently reacquainted with the requirements of the Most High, would not be moved by the Spirit to make a full end to the very agents of their recent distress, and moreover to bring objects dedicated to Ba'al into the camp of the Most High.

"Behold, these very ones caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit a great trespass against Yahweh in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague for their sake amongst the congregation of Yahweh. Now therefore, you must kill every male among the little ones, and every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the younger women, those that have not known a man by lying with him, these you may keep alive for yourselves."

In mercy, Zipporah the wife of Moses had not been permitted to see the apostasy in Israel caused by her former, degraded, tribeswomen. In the course of a single lifetime, hers, her people had gone from faithful followers of the way of Eloah to the sacred prostitutes of a pagan god. The demon who was the new "Ba'al" of her country was a wicked, lustful, tyrannical spirit, who had ensured that Jethro's reputation and memory had been forever marred among those of her people who had known him. The women before Israel knew not Elohim, except to despise Him, and they had willingly participated in the debasement of Israel, letting family loyalties and simple modesty be taken captive to the whims of their king and his god.

It was a heavy penalty, as are so many, and some modern readers of these Histories have said, "The way of Elohim was harsh with His people, and His purpose merciless toward these women and children." Let those who are tempted think the punishment on Israel too severe remember this: for all the hardness of the penalties, and all the clear evidences of displeasure so often manifest among them, the nation continued to fall into repeated errors. Had the penalties been any

milder, the inducements of Satan would have fully succeeded, and the Israelites, I testify, would never have been able to accept the cleansing necessary to enter into Canaan. Let those who consider the words of *any* prophet too strict remember the aims of these burdened messengers, and consider the holy place into which they are attempting to lead the people of Elohim.

That day, more blood was added to the soil of the Hebrew camp. Yet all who witnessed these great and terrible sights had their resolve fueled, and the people of the Most High said, "We must never let this come to pass again!"

* * * * *

I come now to the final thing, the last part of my testimony.

Moses had been told, though he had shared it with no one else, that after the conquest of the Midianites he was to be removed from the people of Israel. His anxiety for his people was somewhat assuaged by the selection of the capable Joshua as his replacement for visible leader of the Tribes, but despite that his love for those with whom he had borne so long was causing him some distress. He looked out over the faces, those of the people he had assembled for this last discourse, and great feeling crept into his voice as he spoke.

At his side were two scribes recording the words he spoke, for he knew that he must complete, as much as possible, a written record of all that Israel had been through in the wilderness for the good of the generations to come. He himself would write these down in their final form, but now, standing before the ones he had led for a generation, he spoke freely, letting the Spirit move him as It willed.

The prophet of Israel began by recounting their victories in battle, as they journeyed through the wilderness. He spoke of the powerful enemies that Elohim had fought on behalf of the people, and also of the rebellion that had, at times, delayed divine purpose regarding the movements of the congregation. He spoke of the twelve explorers sent out into Canaan, and how Joshua and Caleb, the faithful among them, had been mistreated. He reminded them of the refusal of the Edomites to let them pass through their land, and that they went around by mount Hor, and of their battles against Sihon and Og the giant.

He next spoke of a more recent event, that the Tribe of Reuben had desired an inheritance on the east of the Jordan, outside of Canaan's borders, and that IaHWeH had given permission through Moses, if the Reubenites would agree to help their brethren in conquering the rest of the land into which they were intended to go.

He next brought before the people the matter of his transgression at the waters of Meribah, for he had not concealed his error from them. "Yahweh was angry with me for your sakes," he said, "and would not hear me when I asked to be allowed to enter Canaan; and Yahweh said to me, 'Let it be enough for you, do not ask me again about this mater.'"

Moses would see the land at a distance, but was not to set foot within its borders, and Joshua was left to command the people and lead them forward from that point. The last historical event he discussed was the apostasy at Ba'al-Peor, where the people fell due to their intermingling with the Moabites and Midianites, and he encouraged them to stand firm in the instructions that had been taught them. "Take heed to yourselves," he said, "and keep your souls diligently, lest you forget what your eyes have seen, and they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but teach them to your sons, and your sons' sons."

The Ten Commandments were repeated, and Moses shared with the people what the Almighty had spoken to him in tender concern for the Israelites, "Oh, that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children, forever!"

Moses expounded on the commandments, speaking at length on their importance in keeping the people from idolatry, keeping the nation free of the displeasure of the Almighty, and he encouraged them to remain faithful in the beautiful land to which they were going. He reminded them of their rebellions, urging the people to remember that they should never become proud because of the mercies they had been granted, and to remember that only by obedience and faith would they be able to maintain the favor of the Holy One of Israel.

He spoke next about the priests, and their responsibility to the people. The Spirit that led him guided him to touch on the very things those in responsible positions within the nation most needed to hear. He further encouraged the people to support the Levites in their ministry, for they were to receive no designated land, and they were dedicated to the service of the Most High for the peoples' sake.

The holy diet, the holy days, the holy sacrifices, these were reviewed in the ears of the people, so that they would not forget their calling, but would have these things ever before them to keep them in the best of physical and spiritual health. He encouraged them about the future, saying that other prophets would rise, and that IaHWeH would make them known; and that a Prophet like himself would come forth in Israel, and the people should listen to Him diligently.

Civil punishments were next listed for various offenses, and the authority of the ones who would be appointed over the people was upheld. He ended on a note of encouragement, however, exhorting the priests, Levites and elders to "be strong, and of good courage," and saying that although he foresaw future apostasy, for IaHWeH had revealed this to him, Elohim would not forsake them. He wrote the words of a song for them, which set forth both the mercy and justice of the Almighty, and spoke it in the hearing of the congregation.

Moses ended his long oration that day with this: "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which you shall command your children to observe and to do, along with all the words of this Law. It is not a

vain thing for you to do this, because it is for your life, and through this Law you will prolong your days in the land that you are going over Jordan to possess.”

Returning from the assembly to his tent, Moses took the words of the scribes, and spent the rest of the day writing these things out, while the men of Israel discussed and considered his many statements. When he had finished, Moses delivered the book into the hand of Joshua, and said, “Yahweh calls to me, and I go. I am to ascend mount Nebo, which you see, and from there I will not return.”

Joshua bowed before his mentor, sadness filling him, and Moses said to him, “Remember that Yahweh has called you for a purpose, and you must lead this people as I have led them, with tender mercy for them, and patience. Do not be overcome with haste, nor speak harshly unto the transgressors, but let the Spirit move you, that Elohim may have His way with the people of Israel.”

The departure of Moses from the tents of Jacob was not a private matter, though his death and burial were. His sons, Gershom and Eleazer, took charge of his possessions, and after speaking personally with his sons, he looked at the congregation who had gathered by the foot of mount Nebo.

Many of the people were weeping openly, and even the great men of Israel had a most solemn look on their faces. Their sorrow was great, and compounded by a sense of failure that weighed heavily on the heads of many. Among the crowd were those who had been spared from apostasy time and again, and now, in the face of losing their divinely appointed leader, they grieved for the trouble their selfishness had caused him.

Yet there was no look of rebuke in the eyes of the prophet as he scanned the crowd. Elohim had punished the guilty according to His will, and spared the repentant in the sight of angels and men. The last words he spoke to the people were words of blessing, calling the Tribes by name and giving the testimony of the Spirit regarding them.

“The eternal Elohim is your refuge,” he said, “and underneath are the everlasting arms, and He shall thrust out the enemy from before you, and shall say, ‘Destroy them.’ Israel then shall dwell in safety alone; the Fountain of Jacob shall be placed within a land of corn and wine and His Heavens shall drop down the dew. Happy are you, Oh Israel! Who is like unto you, Oh people saved by Yahweh, the Shield of your help, and the Sword of your excellency? Your enemies shall be found liars in your sight, and you shall tread over their high places.”

Then, he departed.

* * * * *

The tents of Israel had been relatively silent since the cleansing of the camp. Angels had remained to do their work, and demons remained to do the work they had always done. There were no major events of a spiritually dramatic nature,

and during the speech of Moses the hearts of the people were turned toward him with great attention, knowing that these would be the last words of their beloved guide.

Now, as Moses climbed mount Nebo, I alone accompanied him. He moved slowly, reflecting on all the things his life had brought to him, but he ascended without fear, knowing that IaHWeH was awaiting him at the peak.

When he arrived at the top, the scenery was open to his view. He could see across the Jordan River into the promised home of Israel, and he could see back toward the east from which they had come.

As he looked out over the scene I gently brought his mind around to the final lesson that Moses needed before even this great man was ready to lay his burdens down and close his life record.

Moses remembered his early lessons with the sorcerer Yannos, a man that was (he sincerely *hoped*) long dead.

“Do you not realize,” the sorcerer said curtly, “that evil works make your heart heavier, while good ones make it lighter?”

The words echoed in his mind as if along a stone corridor: far away, yet close enough to touch.

“It is true that I feel so,” young Moses replied, “but how do I know when it is light enough? You have said that it is to be weighed against a feather after dying... but how will I be sure that my heart will pass this test, and be allowed into the Blessed Land?”

The Blessed Land; that was what the Egyptians called their afterlife for the “good.” Moses smiled as he looked over into his own, personal, Blessed Land. All his life had been a quest for this place, and now he saw it with his eyes, but would not set foot therein. “Is my heart not light enough?” he asked, but not in sorrow. There was a little wistfulness in Moses, but a joy as well, that his people would enter, and see the good of Canaan.

I took him back again, to the dream in which I had said: *“You are also Pharaoh.”*

He then saw before his eyes his own expression as he had struck the rock in Kadesh with anger. There was a demon behind him, a demon who had found reward on the point of my own sword, but Moses understood... In a moment Moses had indeed done as Pharaoh had committed his life to doing. Where soft words and persuasion failed, force was the answer. This was the sin of Egypt, and in that one instant Moses had been back in Egypt, slaying the Egyptian for a cause he felt was just. “I was also Pharaoh,” Moses acknowledged, and then tears came.

“The way of Yahweh is just and true,” Moses confessed, bowing on his face. Before him, but invisibly, El Michael stood and watched His charge – for though

Moses was my charge nominally, every man is the charge of the One who has formed him in His image, and would die for him on a Roman cross. “Rightly have I been called to this mountain,” Moses said, “that I may see the land with my eyes, but not step upon it with my feet.”

“If Elohim has forgiven me for my transgression,” he said, “I will close my eyes in sleep and be glad, only let Him forgive my course, for I have not given a perfect testimony of His love, and tender mercy.”

Gently, slowly, Elohim came into view. He stood as a Man before Moses, who raised his eyes and greeted him as a God – yes, always that – but also as a Friend.

“Your sins are set aside, Moses,” the golden Union said, “for I know you by name.”

Moses bowed his head in confession once again, thanking the Almighty for release, “For Yahshua,” he said in his language – “because IaH is salvation.” But when he raised his eyes a second time, the vision had passed.

With a heart full of love Moses sat down and looked out over Canaan. At a word from El Michael I stepped forward, I, Uzziel, the Prince of the holy Virtues, and I did one of my final acts service for this man as his guardian. Before his eyes, which were already in excellent condition considering his age, the beauty of the land suddenly leapt out at him, and he saw it. Not as a mere man did he see it, but as a prophet in vision. The Israelites were below him in their cities. There was beauty. The heathen had been removed, and the kingdom had begun. There was beauty. The people had a wise and powerful king, and the praise of IaHWeH ascended into the Heavens. There was everlasting beauty.

He saw angels as he had never seen them before, and they were ascending and descending on cords of faith to lend aid and to resist the demons that were crouched at the borders of the country. He saw conflicts fought, and victories won. He saw twelve burning warriors standing guard over his people with watchful eyes and ready swords.

He saw a Man being born, and brought up in the fear of Elohim, and then learning things that no human has ever learned. He saw this Man teaching the things that he had taught since their camp at Sinai, and breathing into them a life, a love, that Moses had only reflected. He saw then, with a start, what had become of his people in the time that was passing, and the visions of the angels departed, as they could do nothing to stem the tide of rejection. He saw the Spirit of Elohim like a soft wave of fire, flowing over the hearts of the people, but softening only few.

He saw the evil spirits at work, those such as the one that had been with him in Kadesh, and they were turning the hearts of the people away from the Man, and taking Him away to a dark place, and finally putting Him to death. Moses’ heart was filled with anxiety. Surely, he thought, he must go down!

Surely he must warn the people again that when the Prophet should arise they must listen to Him! Surely, he could do something to stop this from happening, this great and terrible tragedy! Here was the lesson. I had brought it to my charge, and now I let his spirit, which reflected the Spirit of the Witness before him, lead him from there.

“No,” Moses said aloud. “I cannot do more than I have done. I have stood in the path to righteousness, and I have led them as I have been commissioned to lead them. Elohim has said, ‘Thus, and no more.’ Elohim has said, ‘Come up unto me,’ and I leave Israel in the hands of the one I have appointed as leader, and in the hands of Yahweh, who loves His people, and will help them. I cannot add unto His work with any of my own strength.”

Egypt was behind him.

With great joy, I showed Moses the rest of what I had been commissioned to show him. I opened again his prophetic gift, and let him see what I myself had not yet seen.

The Man was raised to life by the glory of the Most High. The Man was raised, not merely back to mortal life, but to take His place on the Throne of Eternity, and who but *Moses* would open the gates of the Heavenly City to greet Him upon His return?

And he looked past those gates, like Mahalale’el the son of Cainan, and saw the City, and the beauty that resided there. He saw the Son of Man interceding on behalf of the people that had rejected Him, as Moses himself had done so many times before. He saw the earth covered with light, and all who were willing could see by that light.

He saw darkness covering the land, but it did not push the light away; and then, when the time had come, the Son of Man descended to bring the light with Him to the earth – not merely the rays, but the Source of light, to dwell among men forever. Canaan.

And then.... And then there was Eden again. And then there was holiness, with no sin, or death, or sighing. Everywhere, and everything, was beauty.

“You shall not mourn for long,” Michael said to me, touching my glittering tears.

The archangels Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel and Camael, those that had borne faithful Enoch to Heaven without passing him under this shadow that had taken my charge away, descended unto mount Nebo with a slow grace and a look of tender compassion. No words were exchanged, but as they stood on the mountain they gathered form, until they looked like men of flesh. They knelt before Moses and lifted him into their arms, and then removed him to a place where they would lay him to rest.

* * * * *

Three times and a half the earth rotated, and I was in Heaven for that time, looking down upon Israel to see how they fared. Elohim was before the people in a cloud of glory, and Joshua was speaking to the Israelites. He was laying out plans for the conquest of Canaan, and Heaven was approving his course. The people, it seemed also approved.

“All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us, we will go,” they said. “Just as we have listened to Moses in all things, so we will listen to you; surely Yahweh will be with you, as He was with Moses.”

At that last declaration I am certain I caught a small sigh from Joshua. This was a soldier, and divinely capable of leading the people into the battles they would face, but he knew as surely as any witnessing angel that “just as we have listened to Moses in all things” was no guarantee of a smooth course.

The cloud of glory returned to the Tabernacle, and El Michael was in the Kingdom again. He came to me and said, “We go to earth. I have been in Union with the Throne, and it will be as We desire.”

I should make it clear: what I know of Moses’ final visions, of the entrance of the King into New Jerusalem, and of my former charge being the one to open the gates for Him, I had not seen. I am no Oracle, and I had merely been the instrument of activation for the human’s prophetic gift. What I know of the scene I have been told... by Moses himself.

I did not know that Moses would be alive when Prince Yahshua returned to His Kingdom in Triumph, so I did not know until that moment that he would be raised from the dead. Nothing like this had yet happened; Enoch and Seth and others, whose names are but mentioned in the Histories, are here; but none had gone through the valley of Sheol to reach this mountain; they had been brought here directly on the wings of angels.

* * * * *

An *army* of demons awaited us at the site of Moses’ burial. They had seen us descending, slowly and purposefully, and the wicked spirits had assembled quickly and come out to meet us. Lucifer was there at the head of his forces, with the most powerful of his demons that had recovered from our last conflict. Beside him was a weak, but revived, Salathiel, and I knew exactly why he was there.

We angels of Elohim wore our golden helmets, our bright belts, our glittering swords, our glowing shields (all except the Seraphim)... and our shining armor. Yet for all this display, we were not there to fight. This was not a day for combat.

“What are you doing here, Prince of angels?” Lucifer asked, although from his very presence and those of his warriors, we knew well enough that he was aware of our purpose.

El Michael made no reply, but stepped forward, standing on the grave of Moses.

“He is under my power!” Satan declared, drawing his sword. “This one you cannot take, for death has claimed him, and that for sin, which you have named for my kingdom. If Sin is my name, so be it! But this one has fallen, and so must remain by your own decree!”

Our Prince drew His sword, and its light lit the scene in holy radiance. Some of the demons stepped back, but Satan only narrowed his eyes. “Will you drive me off? You cannot steal this soul! He has broken your covenant, and has earned the wages of his deeds.”

Salathiel then stepped forward, and made as if to speak, but this was where I knew I was to act. I came and stood beside El Michael, but I did not draw my sword. Instead I pulled out a golden scroll, and I held it up before the demons. Without a word I opened it, and immediately every mind was filled with the record of the life of Moses. Every pain, every joy, every triumph, and every defeat of the human whose body lay below us was brought into view.

The scenes passed quickly by, but after a time it began to slow, and we saw Salathiel striking at Moses in an unguarded moment, and leading him further in transgression than he would, of himself, have dared to go. It was not in the record, but both the evil Virtue and I knew of our confrontation beyond the stars, where I had said in his hearing, “Reserve this creature for judgment, IaHWeH, and reward him doubly according to his works!”

The Chief of the Shavoorim stepped backward, and said nothing.

The scenes passed again, and we saw Moses standing with Elohim on Nebo, and the Savior of humanity was saying to him, “Your sins are set aside, Moses, for I know you by name.”

I closed the scroll, and stepped back to stand with my fellow angels.

Satan held up his sword, and said, “You do not have the power to forgive sins!” He charged, leading with his wicked blade.

El Michael, who had not said anything since our descent, suddenly raised His eyes to Heaven and said, “*IaHWeH rebuke thee!*” As He said this He drew a line in the earth with the tip of His khery, and immediately a wall of light sprang up from the tear in the surface.

Lucifer stopped just short and fell back, powerless to advance beyond the line that Elohim had drawn.

“*IaHWeH rebuke thee!*” He said again, this time to death itself, as He brought His burning blade up over His head and then sank it into the earth before Him.

This cut split the first, and the demons leaped aside as a line of holy fire blazed toward them. A giant cross of pure light lay over the grave of the fallen hero, and a shout of joy that sent the demons scattering rose from the angels standing beside El Michael, the loudest from my own throat. Beneath the earth we had perceived life, and it was beginning to stir.

THE EGYPTIAN CONFLICT

EPILOGUE: THE BEAUTIFUL THINGS

*“Give unto IaHWeH the glory due unto His name; bring an offering and come before Him. Worship IaHWeH in the beauty of holiness.”
(1 Chronicles 16:29)*

It seems but a short time since I have begun to speak with you. I have covered much, and poured my own heart out before you as I spoke of my work on earth for Prince Moses.

Like Moses so many times before Israel, I am anxious that you learn the lesson IaHWeH has brought into your view, for it will bear you up as you walk in this dark world among demons and men who are little better than they. Let no man, let no spirit, take the crown that has been laid up for you in High Places, and remember this always: Lucifer fell, because he forgot he was a servant; Moses fell, because he forgot he was a servant. See that you do not forget this, and all will become bearable. In so doing no grief, no anger, no exultation, will separate you from Elohim, for unto him that is pure, all things are pure.

I have shown you beautiful things, each one a joy to behold, or hear, or know. Yet I find myself, at the close of my testimony, able to give no words to you of greater beauty than those you may find written already in your own History. Is it not already written there, *“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown”*? Has it not already been spoken before humanity, *“Unto the pure all things are pure”*?

What I have said I have said for a reason, but it cannot replace that which has come before. If you have not set your heart to understand that which the Almighty has said to you the first time, then like Balaam you will only be deceived by that which follows, even if the words are right. Read of Moses in Moses' own words and believe in his testimony, for without it you cannot know the testimony of the One who would come after to bind up the work of Salvation.

Moses saw the day of Elohim, and in his last moments on earth he rejoiced. Not the strength of Egypt, but the strength of IaHWeH, caused his life to be a victory, and before such strength, the Strength of El, no obstacle, no temptation, no demon, no evil, can stand.

My testimony is ended. Prince Moses sends you greetings.

A PREVIEW OF BOOK 6:
THE ROYAL CONFLICT

THE ROYAL CONFLICT

PROLOGUE: A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT

Fear not.

I am Jehuel, a Prince of Heaven, and one of the blessed Seraphim. I stand here upon the beach and look out over the waters, where the setting sun's light is playing over the waves, making patterns and designs in a secret language that only spirits know. I stand here with the wind rushing past me, knowing that if I desired I could feel it coursing through the feathers of my six wings, and whipping about the hair that hangs down past my shoulders.

As I close my eyes I can hear the sounds made by the creatures under the water, the crawling things in the grass beyond the sand at my feet, and the living things that wing through the heavens, and I hear a kind of music that reminds me who the Creator is. The beaches are among my favorite places on the earth, for standing on the ground, and looking out over the waters, I remember the very first days of this planet's formation.

Those who are familiar with the testimonies of my brethren will remember me as the first to feel the direct wounds of Lucifer's dark arsenal. I was the first of the angels to know pain beyond the emotional and spiritual unease of the rebellion, and to fall, though only temporarily, to the adversary's might. The end of the first day of the earth's creation was the end of the dark angels' period of grace, and the beginning of our painful war. All these things come back to me as I see the ocean, which lay like a serene blanket over this theater of spirits from before your people came to be.

There, in the waters, was the promise of beauty, and as I look over them now I remember one man in particular, who was a creature of great beauty. This record, which I now bear, is not about that man. This record is not about my part in the history of your world beyond a few isolated incidents, but the man of whom I am thinking is the one who first drew my attention to the events I must relate.

His name was Samuel, and he was a prophet.

Samuel was a friend of mine, although he never saw me revealed in bodily form. While I was the guide of his visions, and his guardian spirit, I was never made manifest to him. Nevertheless, as the conduit through which the prophet spoke to the Almighty, I knew this man more intimately than any human could have known him, and in that knowledge I rejoiced that we angels were created as ministering spirits.

But for want of wings and for the body of flesh, Samuel was a Seraph. He played and heard the songs of the prophets. His voice was ever raised in thanksgiving to His exalted Father, and his long hair, fragrant with the oils of earth's chemistry, was a sign of his sacred nature. Samuel was a crown on the head of humanity, particularly so in the dark time during which he was called to service, and for the love of Samuel I willingly kept watch over the nation of Israel long after the old man took his rest.

As the sun continues to set, and the light on the waters fade, I remember another night that was not so pleasant, for one who had received an anointing, a great anointing, had come to the end of his time.

He and I, at one time, had shared a love of Samuel. He and I, at one time, had the good of IaHWeH's chosen as our foremost concern. He and I, at one time, felt the sting of Lucifer's dark blade, but there our similarities ended. I recovered, and this individual did not.

The wound was in his heart, deep and festering, sparkling with a dark glow that was readily apparent to the many angels and demons that watched over this hooded figure's desperate journey. It was not a new injury. In fact, it had been there for years, polluting the flow of his thoughts, and turning every hope to despair. The fear of death, the too-late fear of madness, was upon this mighty figure, as he trudged through the mud and undergrowth of his country. It was a dark night, and a quiet one. There was a storm raging, but it was not a storm of rain and lightning; it was a storm of spirit.

The two soldiers who traveled with this man said nothing. They had spoken their minds, and attempted to dissuade their lord from his course, but they were men under authority, and could not force his hand. They, in fact, were the ones who had made this adventure possible, having provided their companion with the location of the woman he now sought, though their consciences now stung them, and regret grew ever more weighty with every step.

As they approached the hidden dwelling, the night seemed to darken even more, although the stars continued to shine in the sky up above. What these soldiers had no way of knowing was that the darkness they felt rather than saw was the dense cloud of demons that had anticipated their journey, and had gathered themselves to watch.

There were few angels in proportion to the number of fallen spirits. I stood nearby, for the love of Samuel, and a small company was with me; but by the very darkness that hung as a dome of midnight over that house, we knew that any requests for intervention we could think to make would be denied. The curse and blessing of freedom were met tonight in the heart of the one who was attempting to act, and to walk, as if he were no king.

“Who are these, my lords, that come to seek my aid?” came a voice from the shadows of the home. A short while later the faint glow of burning oil came into view, and a woman with a lamp pushed the door open, almost as if she had been expecting them.

She was of medium height, and the color of her hair indicated that she was not of any great age. Her clothing seemed to speak of means beyond what the state and location of her home would indicate, and she was not a thin woman – she was not lacking for food or any financial considerations. The soldiers who entered with their master knew the import of these things: she was being paid. Although her trade, and her practices, even her life, was forbidden in Israel, there were some, and enough, who resorted to her methods and kept her in business.

“I come seeking the benefits of your talents,” said the hooded man, who stood with a decided stoop, and sloped, tired shoulders.

“My talents, my lord?” came the reply. “What talents can this daughter of Israel possess that would cause you to come such a way? For your men are tired, and I bid you all to sit and take your rest.”

“I seek the benefits of your talents,” repeated the traveler, and he added, “those that cause you to live apart from other daughters of Israel, though you dress and live as the wife of one who could sit in the gates of a city.” The incongruence of the woman’s appearance to her housing had not escaped this man’s notice, for he knew quality workmanship when he saw it, and he did not wish to remain in this place, playing at games, any longer than necessary.

The traveler then said, directly, “I pray, grant me a divination, and use your skill with familiar spirits. Call forth for me one whom I will name to you.”

“Divination?” asked the woman, as if hearing it for the first time. “Surely...” she began a denial, but then she saw the eyes of the three men upon her, and said, rather, “Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off from the land all who have familiar spirits, and necromancers, so why have you come to ask about such things? Why have you come seeking me? Why do you speak to me of such forbidden things? Are you seeking to entrap me, to secure my death, as they have done with others before me?”

“No,” said the hooded man. “As Yahweh lives,” he spoke, invoking in human language the name of the very Creator, “you will not be punished for this thing I ask of you.”

The woman pursed her lips and stared at the men for a moment before turning away. As she did so, one of the soldiers noticed the strange way in which her eyes caught the flickering light of the lamp. Had he known the ancient first-queen of Babylon, he would surely have recognized it. “Who are you,” she asked, “that I should take so great a risk for your sakes?”

“We are those that can pay,” said the traveler. “You will be compensated, even rewarded, for telling me that which I must know. Have no fear of penalty, for I assure you of protection from the king.”

“And who will ensure *your* protection,” she asked, warily. “None are above the law of Saul, and we have heard, even here in En’Dor, that he is quick to anger, and without mercy for transgressors... more so in these latter years than ever before.”

“Let that be my affair. We look to our own safety, but do for me that which I ask.”

“And whom shall I bring up for you?”

“Bring me up Samuel.”

“Samuel the *prophet*?” came the surprised reply. “What have I to do with a man who spoke in Saul’s ear to cast us out of the land, or down into she’ol? What have I to do with Samuel with witch-killer, Samuel the judge, who spoke with fire, and slew kings with the edge of the sword? Was it not Samuel who said we have no power but that which we pretended to have, or were deceived into believing we possessed? Was it not this Samuel who blasphemed the gods of the old ways, and spoke ill of the spirits of the sacred departed?”

“That Samuel,” said the man. “That Samuel, now dead, who left me without counselor or guide. Bring him up to speak with me from his place of rest. I am not yet satisfied listening to his words.”

Surely, if you know of this incident from your Histories, the events that happened that night must have raised questions in your mind. Why should this traveler, who *knew* Samuel, and knew what Samuel said about the true nature of spirits, seek to contact one who was beyond contact until the day of resurrection? Why should this traveler, who knew the command of King Saul, go to such great risks to speak with one who had declared his counsel ended? Why should the woman, who knew Samuel’s reputation, seek to call forth his disembodied essence from the land of the dead?

The last question is, perhaps, the easiest to answer.

My brothers have told you of the Tower at Babel, and the terrible things that took place in that place at that time. They have told you of the demons’ work, to

influence human minds, and to give them the illusion that spirits are theirs to summon and, if carefully handled, to control. All such notions are foolishness and vanity. One angel, on a divine mission, can crush your planet's moon. One demon, operating under the cover of spiritual darkness, can lay waste to a nation. A single spirit, unopposed and given enough time, can destroy every human being alive, until the day your bodies are changed by resurrection or translation into glorified form.

This woman of En'Dor, as one who dealt with evil spirits, was a spiritual descendant of the first high-sorceress, the wife of Nimrod and the corrupter of the world after the flood. It was at her hand, and that of the magician Jebus (of which this record has something to do) that the rituals and procedures for summoning and "containing" demons were forged and passed down to other men who were led to believe that these words and diagrams could contain a creature of the primary genesis. For this reason the witch who received the strange visitation that night truly believed that even the spirit of the prophet Samuel (which she believed had returned to its "pure" and incorporeal form) was at her command if she so desired.

This brings us to the traveler. Samuel had taught all of Israel, as had the messengers before him, that divination and contact with the dead was contrary to the Law of IaHWeH. Not only was it dangerous, it was worse than that... it was useless. Demons know more than men, and can read the patterns of nature and human behavior to a very great degree, and thus are able to make a fairly good show at predicting the future. Necromancy, on the other hand, is a far more serious deception. As the very kings of Israel, who were students of the prophets, wrote, "*The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing,*" and, "*His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.*" Despite the often-misunderstood passages of the Histories that have been used in an attempt to demonstrate otherwise, man was created as a union of flesh and life-giving spirit. Upon the separation of these two, the soul ceases to function until the elements of that creature are reunited at the judgment.

Samuel, my former charge, my beloved Seraph, was truly gone until the sounding of the Trumpets. I had mourned for him, as had many in Israel, and was now content to await his return in the day when the lives of the righteous shall be made anew. Yet this traveler, driven beyond reason by fear and a long, painful warfare against sin, was clutching at straws. "Could it be so?" he asked, when he began to turn away from Samuel's teachings to the darker arts that spoke of other wisdom. "The prophets do not know everything," he mused, "and if all is lost in any event, let me see what the spirits can indeed tell me." He had been told by the living Samuel, before his death, that his end was near. He had seen his enemies rise against him, mighty in power and number, and he saw no recourse but to seek aid, even if it were at the hands of the enemies of One whom he now felt had abandoned him.

It was under these conditions that he had said to the soldiers under his command, “Seek me such a one as can provide me this insight,” and said to them thereafter, “Let us go forth and inquire at her spirits.”

As the woman began her arcane rituals, one dark spirit detached himself from the cloud of shadows hanging over the scene. He drifted slowly over to the chanting necromancer and placed his hand upon her shoulders. He leaned forward to whisper into the woman’s ear, even as he had done so often in the past, to give her a message for the confused and desperate seeker. She sat down on the ground and raised her hands, anticipating the words of the spirits, which she had been trained to hear.

As her familiar made ready to speak at the pretense of being Samuel, one even greater than he in Satan’s unholy hierarchy entered the room. He had been watching from farther away than the others, and when he drew near the others bowed before him. This fallen angel, this high spirit of the Order of Powers, caught the attention of the one with his hand on the woman, and said, “This action is ordained by the greater minds. Let me stand before the woman.”

“Of course, *Ba’ali*,” said the familiar spirit. “We are honored by your presence.”

The necromancer’s regular contact with the spiritual world was a demon of a higher Order than the newcomer, nevertheless Kaspriel was the chief of the fallen Ko’achim, or Powers, and was in full favor with Lucifer, the King of the Nine Houses of Evil.

As the lesser spirit removed his hand from his victim’s shoulder, Kaspriel placed his hand upon her head and closed his eyes. “See,” he said, “see.”

The woman’s eyes opened, and she saw smoke arising from her lamp. As the smoke swirled and grew denser, she glanced from this unusual sight to the three men, who were continuing to look expectantly at her. It was clear that they were not able to see what she was seeing, and indeed, there was nothing to see... all that appeared before her was the result of Kaspriel’s work upon her mind. This Power, who had stood with the priests of Egypt against Moses, had only continued to improve his ability to cast illusions over humanity’s senses. By the time of Israel’s monarchy, he had grown to the point where he needed not manipulate the natural world – this had become the specialty of his fellow demon and constant companion Zaphkiel – but could produce almost any vision he wished by working directly upon the signals of the brain. Each of the two Powers had a role to play in deceiving those who wished to serve the Creator. Zaphkiel could produce illusions that were perceived by many, although they were more limited in scope. Kaspriel could force those who fell under his shadow to experience nearly *anything*, but could only do so with one or a few humans at a time.

Before the sorceress, who had been expecting the voice of her familiar friend, there now appeared within the smoke a commanding figure with fierce eyes, long,

sacred hair, and a unique garment. With a fearful cry, the woman fell back, scrambling up from her sitting position only to slip and land on the ground again.

In addition to Samuel it appeared, in her view, as if many other mighty and commanding spirits were standing and giving respect to the prophet. “Surely,” she thought, “this is beyond my skill!” The ghostly prophet looked at the woman with the very judgment she would have expected of one who had been responsible for the death and exile of many of her kind. Then, appearing to lose interest in her, the apparition turned to the three men, stretched out a hand, pointed a finger, and said, “Saul.”

Fear gripped the heart of the medium, and she said, “You! Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!”

“Do not be afraid,” the traveler said, stretching himself to his full height, and pulling back the hood that covered his face. Without his deliberate stoop, it would have been immediately clear to any observer who this man was, for he was among the tallest of the Israelites, and there could be no mistaking his regal bearing, marred as it was by a life run aground like a shipwreck.

“Tell me,” said the king, when the woman continued to stare in wordless shock, “What did you see?”

“I saw...” she stammered, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth, and one mighty among them.”

“What does he look like?” Saul inquired eagerly.

“An old man is come up, and he wears a torn mantle over his...”

“Samuel!” the king interrupted, a memory flooding his mind. The last time King Saul had seen his former mentor, many years before this night, the prophet had said to him, “I will not return to the people and worship before them with you, for you have rejected the word of Yahweh, and Yahweh has likewise rejected you as king over Israel!” Saul was unwilling to accept this, however, despite the many opportunities he had been offered to amend a rebellious course. He grabbed for Samuel’s arm, hoping to restrain the old man a moment longer, and to reason with him. All he succeeded in doing, however, was grasping the edge of the prophet’s mantle, and tearing it in two.

Samuel, ever fond of parables, held up the pieces of his ruined garment and said, “Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and given it to one of your fellows that is better than you. This is not my doing, Saul; the Strength of Israel will not lie, nor will He reverse His decision, for He is not a man, that He should repent.”

“Ah, but for the people, Samuel,” Saul said, using his best argument, and one that had persuaded the old prophet before. “For the sake of the people, and the elders

of the people, that they should honor Yahweh's king, return to the camp with me, that we should worship Yahweh, your Almighty."

Samuel scowled at Saul, and narrowed his eyes, but then he closed them in resignation and inhaled deeply. They turned to go back to the encampment. "This is the last time, oh king of Israel," said Samuel, "that you will see my face. For the sake of the people Yahweh has borne long with your pride and your disobedience. You were chosen king to serve, not to rule, the people of Yahweh, who is their one and true King. You have been infected by the heathen nations around you, who treat their rulers as an Israelite should treat Yahweh alone."

Saul said nothing, but as they drew near enough for the people to see their faces, his eyes lit up in triumph, and he grabbed the prophet's arm, lifting it in a display of unity and victory that turned the old man's stomach for sorrow as much as for disgust. Samuel meant what he said; as soon as the distasteful events of that foul day were ended, the prophet returned to his home and never again consented to see the face of the king that he himself had once anointed over the people of Israel.

In the witch's home, Saul now felt the remorse that he should have felt on that fateful day, for he now saw how he had squandered the time he had been lent, and wasted the benefits of friendship with that old man. "Samuel..." he said, unable to see the vision that Kaspriel was producing in the necromancer's mind.

As Saul lay on his face, the demonic Power said, "Why have you disturbed my rest, to bring me up?" The woman repeated his words, trembling at the ferocity of the apparition's tones.

"I am sorely distressed," replied the unfortunate king, "for the Philistines are at war against me, and Elohim is departed from me. He gives me no answers, not by the prophets, nor by dreams. For this I have called out to you, so that you can tell me... please tell me what I must do."

"Why do you ask these things of me," came the reply from the woman's lips, "seeing that Yahweh has departed from you, and has become your enemy?" Saul lowered his eyes in defeat, but the demon continued to fill the woman's mind with words, words designed for one thing, and one thing only: to steal the last ember of hope from the fallen king of Israel.

"Yahweh has done to you even as He has spoken by my mouth, for Yahweh has torn the kingdom from your hand, even as you tore my garment – do you remember, Saul? He has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, even unto the young man David. Because you did not obey the voice of Yahweh, nor did you execute His fierce wrath upon Agag of Amalek; for this Yahweh has forsaken you this day.

“Moreover, Yahweh will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will join me in death, for Yahweh will also deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”

The angels standing with me burned with fury. Much of what Kaspriel said was absolutely true. Saul had broken faith with Yahweh, and for this reason the nation had been taken from his hand, and was destined to be led by the young man of whom the vision spoke. Yet Yahweh had said nothing of Saul’s death on that day, nor was this His will for the proud monarch. Saul was to be humbled, yes, stripped of rank and power, yes... but these were to be done for his good, and for the education of the nation of Israel, as it is even written in your Histories, “*A man’s pride shall bring him low, but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit.*”

What was to have happened to Saul was to happen in public, as a warning to the nation, yet were it not for the loose lips of the two soldiers with Saul that day, and the decree of IaHWeH that this be known, the events of that night would have been swallowed up and forgotten. From the time of the kings of Israel, the Almighty had decreed that no nation would ever overcome His people. Indeed, no nation ever did, until the land had grown so dark in apostasy, many generations later, that Babylon was allowed to prevail upon it... and even then only for a time. From Saul down to the Messiah, Israel was to be true to its name, as a nation of Overcomers, and the false Samuel who said to Saul, “Yahweh will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines,” spoke there not genuine prophecy, but the will of the demons themselves, that the earth should be left without a witness to the greatness of the Almighty.

Of course, your History declares the truth of the events of that night anyway. Not only was this “Samuel” the source of a false prediction, for the Philistines did not overcome all of Israel in the battle that followed – they only came as far as the outer cities and were content to dwell there until driven off – but he is identified as an evil spirit in the Chronicles of Israel, where it was written of the events that followed, “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against Yahweh, even against the word of Yahweh, which he kept not, and also for asking of *a familiar spirit*, to enquire.” So reads the record, when the additions of certain men are removed from the English text, and Kaspriel was king, the greatest, of those considered as “familiar spirits.”

All that Saul knew that night, however, was that Samuel had not only confirmed Yahweh’s rejection of him as king, but he had now also added a death sentence for not only himself, but his sons as well.

“Ah, my strength is gone,” said the sorrowful king, lying on the floor of the woman’s home. Saul had been fasting throughout this journey, hoping for a favorable response from the shade of his former mentor; he was now drained of energy, hope and faith.

“Stand, my lord,” said the necromancer, concerned for the king’s state of mind, and also for her own life. While Saul had indeed promised her that there would

be no penalty for her actions, the woman of En'Dor had no guarantee that this desperate man would honor his agreements having now received the most wretched of prophecies at her hand. "Behold, this your handmaid has obeyed your commands, even at risk of my own life, and I have heeded all the words you have spoken unto me. Listen now also unto the voice of your handmaid. Let me set a bit of food before you, that you may eat it for your strength before you depart."

This she said, using careful language, and hoping in her heart that his departure would not be long in coming. "I will eat nothing," groaned the king, who seemed content to lie motionless until the sun should rise.

"Come up, my lord," the woman repeated, more insistently this time. She cast a glance at the two silent soldiers, who finally stepped forward and lent their persuasion to resolving the situation.

"What have we to do with this wife of the serpent?" one said, "Who knows what purpose she can have for speaking as she did?"

"We ought to slay her for her words," the other said," and moved to grasp the king's arm to raise him from the floor.

"Let her be," Saul muttered, pulling himself up partway. "She has spoken only what I have deserved to hear."

"Come and sit," said the woman, deliberately ignoring what the soldiers said. "Come and let your handmaid prepare you a meal."

Eager to appease the unstable king, the woman took the best of her animals, which had been purchased and fed by her predictions to the disobedient Israelites that dwelt near her home, and slew it. As the meat was being cooked, she took some flour and made some bread to accompany the meal. As she prepared the food, she listened carefully to the words of the men in the other room.

"David, always David," Saul was muttering. "I should have slain that boy when I had the chance, and many times over. I had him in my hand so many times, and how he runs through the wilderness and plots against me, as if the Philistine army were not plague enough!"

"David is not your concern now, my lord," one of the soldiers said, "we must prepare for the battle ahead. We have greater warriors than the Philistines, and even if what the woman said truly came from Samuel, that old man has been wrong before. Do you not recall, my lord, what things you have said of him before the army? Had not age clouded his judgment even in life? How much more, then, will his vision of Yahweh's purpose be obscured from the very grave?"

“It is David!” fumed the king. “You have known of these things as well as I, and now this woman speaks of him taking the kingdom. I swear, as Yahweh lives, if I survive tomorrow’s battle, every soldier loyal to the throne will be sent to search out this serpent, and great reward will be his who brings me his head.”

The woman brought in the food and set it before the three men. The two soldiers ate eagerly, but Saul barely took anything in. Even so, when they had finished all appeared to be revived, and they left without saying many more words. The woman breathed a sigh of relief, giving no thought to the fact that she hadn’t been paid a single coin.

Saul marched forth the next day against Philistia and, as the demonic spirit had purposed, he was overcome. Both he and his son Jonathan, of whom this record will also speak, perished before the heathen army, as did two more of Saul’s male children. All those who went out with the king were overcome, and the Israelites of the surrounding cities fled, leaving the region entirely unprotected.

A few days later the news of Saul’s death reached the ears of one who mourned greatly for the loss of the king, although he might have rejoiced that his enemy was deceased. There was no feigned sorrow here, however; this young man wrote a funeral song for the fallen monarch, and it is of the singer of this mournful music that I have come this day to tell you.