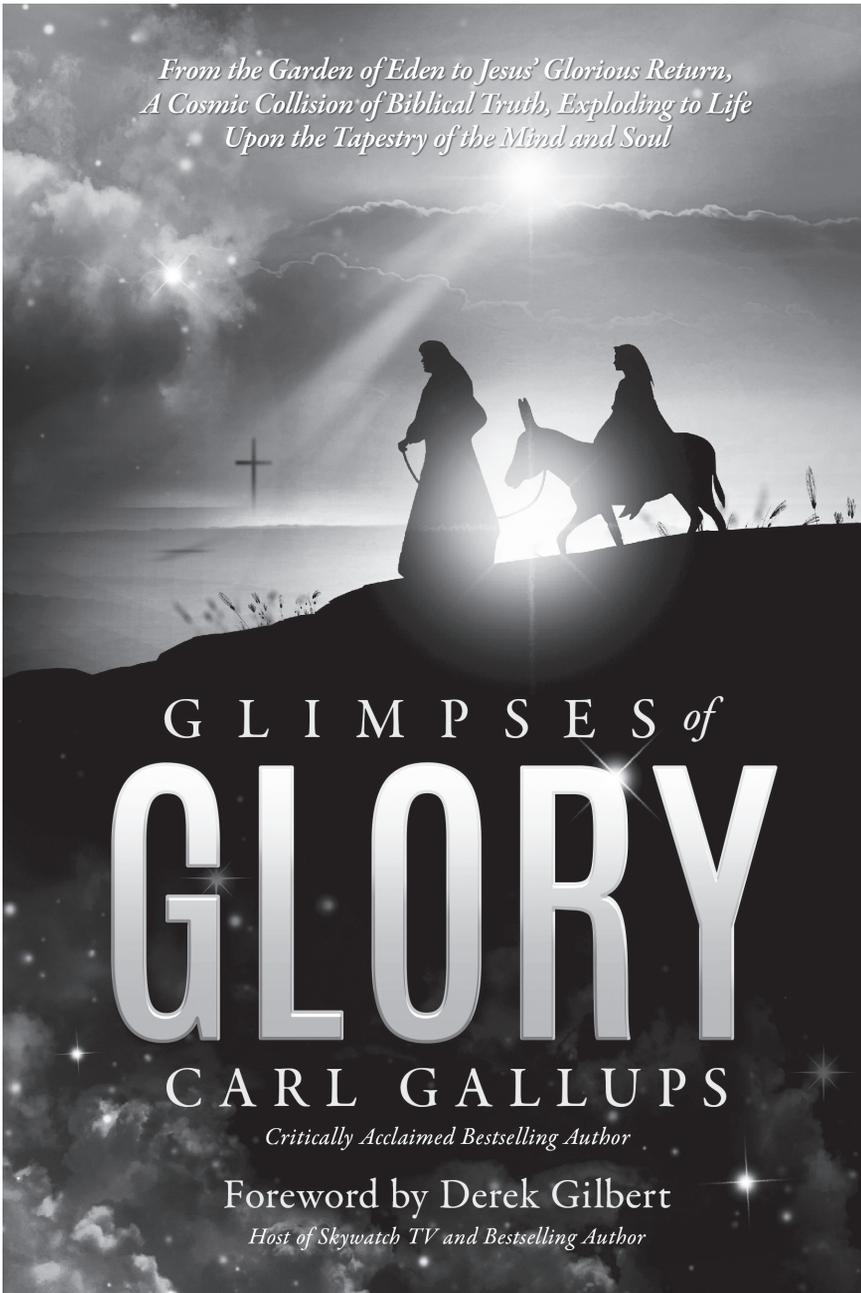


G L I M P S E S *of*
G L O R Y





*From the Garden of Eden to Jesus' Glorious Return,
A Cosmic Collision of Biblical Truth, Exploding to Life
Upon the Tapestry of the Mind and Soul*

GLIMPSSES of
GLORY

CARL GALLUPS

Critically Acclaimed Bestselling Author

Foreword by Derek Gilbert

Host of Skywatch TV and Bestselling Author

DEFENDER
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Glimpses of Glory

By Carl Gallups

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For my dad, Dr. Bill Gallups. One of the greatest fans of my books, and a consistent source of resolve that this one should be written.

Also for my two beloved sisters, Beth and Brenda, as well as our baby brother and precious mom—Paul and Holly—who have both now passed “beyond the veil.”





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To Tom and Nita Horn of Defender Publishing, and the entire Defender and Skywatch TV staff. You took a chance on me years ago.

Not only do we still work together, but now, I truly consider you and your family to be among the dearest friends in my life! What a blessing of the Lord you are to me and my family.

I also extend a word of my deepest gratitude to my treasured and precious friend, Messianic Rabbi Zev Porat (www.messiahofisraelministries.com). The story of how we met is an amazing and remarkably supernatural one. You can read that account for yourself in a previous Defender book that we coauthored, titled *The Rabbi, the Secret Message, and the Identity of Messiah*. Without his graciously shared insight into several of his deepest biblical revelations—from the mind of one who was born steeped in Orthodox traditions and speaking Hebrew as his first language—I might not have been able to bring several relatively hidden biblical truths to explosive life within the pages of *Glimpses of Glory*. Thank you Zev!

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FOREWORD

If you've ever had the pleasure of hearing Carl Gallups speak, you already know that he's been blessed with a gift. Words are tools for communicating ideas and emotions, and Carl wields language with the skill of an artisan.

This is true of his writing as well. In his previous books, Carl illustrated biblical truths with vignettes that bring readers into the scene, helping us better appreciate the wonder of God's plan to restore humankind to His family.

It seems backward, but concepts like sin, salvation, and redemption seem more real when they're conveyed through stories. In his new book, *Glimpses of Glory*, Carl takes readers on a journey into the past, spotlighting key inflection points in history so that we can better understand our future.

From Eden to John's visions of the end times, Carl Gallups paints images of God's handiwork on the canvas of human history—pictures of



glory, but also of the human failings and frailty that make His ultimate victory all the more powerful.

Through his gift, Carl takes you into the Garden, where Adam and Eve encountered the *nachash*, an enchantingly beautiful, serpentine being who schemed to establish his own kingdom above that of the Creator's. He places you inside the ark, describing the horror of Noah's family at the agonized cries of their neighbors struggling in vain to survive the deluge by clinging to the boat. And he shares with you the anguish of our Savior as He struggled with His human emotions—and the goading of the tempter—on the night He was betrayed.

He looks back over His shoulder at His slumbering disciples, far away in the shadows, nestled under the mammoth olive trees. They are sleeping like children, without a care in the world. His lips begin to tremble as He fights back more tears. The spectacle of His sleeping companions reminds Him.... He is still alone. So very, very alone.

We've heard and read these stories before. As powerful as the biblical accounts are, however, they are brief, mainly intended to convey historical truth. Carl has added color and dimension to the details recorded by the prophets and apostles, careful not to stray from the facts while bringing the scenes into focus.

Storytelling is a wonderful tool for conveying spiritual truths. Again, that may seem counterintuitive. As the author of two novels, I can attest that some object to the use of fiction to share the hope we have in Christ. *Glimpses of Glory* is not fiction, but the artful use of imagination and language to bring the Bible to life.

This is, after all, why Jesus used parables to illustrate the spiritual truths He taught during His ministry. He wired us from the beginning to understand and appreciate the world around us through the art and beauty of stories.

It's a beautiful tactic, really. The enemy has weaponized Hollywood

against us. But unlike mainstream depictions of Bible stories that twist events to serve politically correct, twenty-first-century environmental or social-justice narratives, Carl has turned the enemy's stratagem around. *Glimpses of Glory* shows you biblically accurate portrayals of the actors, both human and divine, through whom God has worked since He placed Adam in the Garden.

As a man with a pastor's heart, Carl's calling is to use every tool at his disposal so the gospel message isn't just delivered, it's *received*. *Glimpses of Glory* makes God's love for us, even in our rebellion, come alive.

—Derek Gilbert, host of SkywatchTV and best-selling author



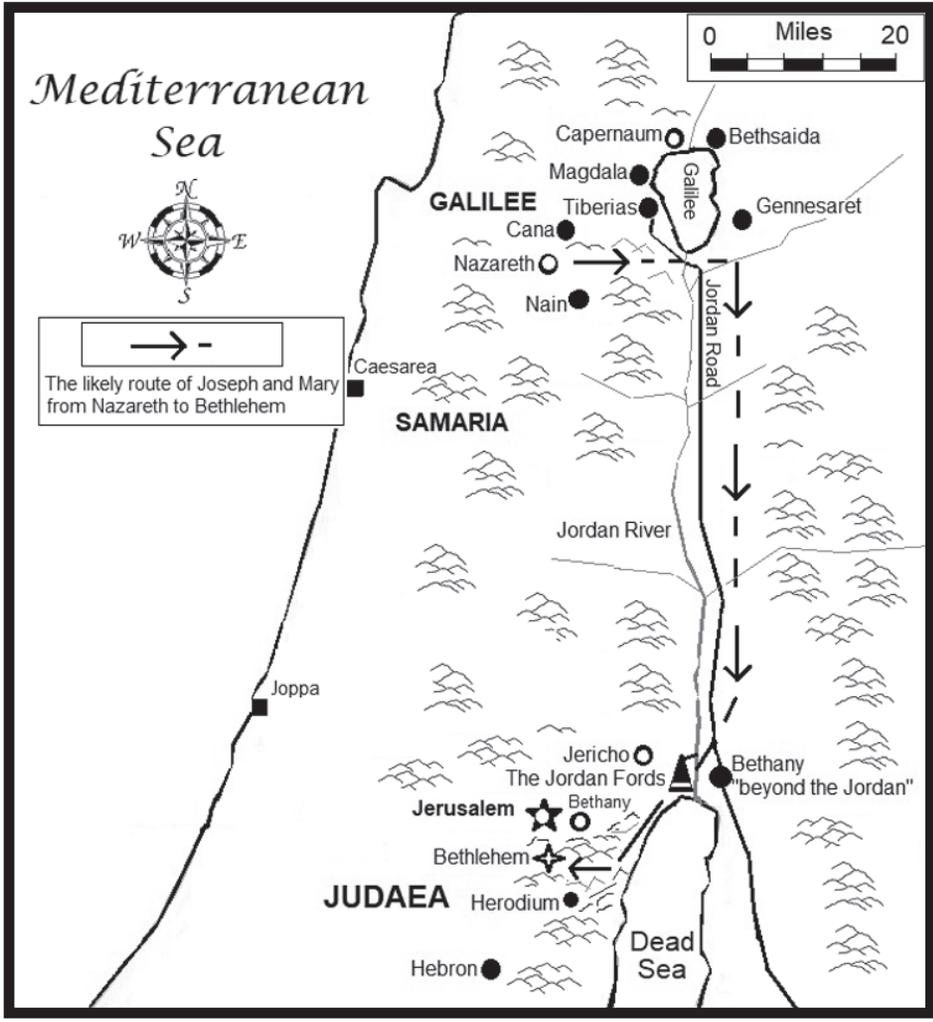
GLIMPSES *of* GLORY

This...was the first sign Jesus gave, the first **glimpse of his glory**. And his disciples believed in him.

JOHN 2:11, *THE MESSAGE*; EMPHASIS ADDED

For presently we see through a glass in obscurity;
but then, face to face. Presently, I know in part;
but then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:14, BEREAN'S LITERAL BIBLE; EMPHASIS ADDED



PROLOGUE

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

Over the years, a good number of readers from around the world have indicated that they particularly enjoyed the portions of my past books in which I inserted them—in *the theater of the mind*—directly into various biblical encounters through an immersive-narrative style of writing.

At the same time, a sizeable portion of them also asked me to revisit the topic of multiple dimensions. They were especially interested in how that subject relates to the perspective it brings to the quickly changing prophetic world in which we're currently living.

Those two requests sparked a new idea: Why not emphasize the pervasive biblical truth of multidimensional realities by weaving it together with a narrative-styled presentation of the Scriptures that would be similar to reading a novel? After giving the idea considerable reflection, I came to believe a book of that nature might actually give depth to the central story of the Word of God beyond almost anything most students of the Bible might have imagined. I finally developed a clear picture of where I

wanted to go with the idea. With the Lord's help, that's what I've tried to accomplish here.

I assure you, this is not just another book about the life of Jesus. It is much more. It focuses on key sections of the Bible that summarize its entire message, from Genesis to Revelation...with its central focus upon Jesus and His absolute command over the multiple dimensions.

Glimpses of Glory is based upon the true and contextually interpreted Word of God. In the narrative sections that follow, I have endeavored to stay in line with the biblical text, as well as the foundational truths that the Bible declares. I've also attempted to connect the fundamental dots of Scripture that tell the whole story of the Word, *in a nutshell*...all the way through to the last pages of Revelation, and even beyond.

Some readers might recognize certain parts of this book as being similar to what you've seen in several of my previous works. While it's true that I have indeed drawn upon select material from the preceding eleven books I've written, I've also greatly enhanced those passages, as well as arranged them in chronological order. Additionally, I've included a large portion of brand-new material in order to properly tie together the bigger picture.

In several selections of the narrative, I've filled in the details of important backstories by adding a few invented characters, as well as a smorgasbord of fictional—but contextually plausible—dialogues that keep the story moving forward, and engaging. However, nothing has been added or enhanced that maligns the doctrinal truths of the Bible. Any artistic license I've employed was designed only to augment what I believe to be the clear intent of the overall scriptural message.

In short, I'm asking you to simply enjoy the adventure and trust that it will all come together into several powerful explosions of biblical revelation as you follow the path of the saga all the way to the end.

All I know is *this*—practically every time I've presented the various truths that follow, lives have been dramatically changed for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is my earnest prayer that the perspectives you'll uncover through the following pages will accomplish that same kind of outcome in your own life.

I am honored that you've chosen to take this journey with me. In light of the startling and unprecedentedly prophetic days in which we are currently living, I'm convinced the adventure that awaits will be one you'll not regret taking.

Neither, I believe, will it be one you'll soon forget.

What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived—the things God has prepared for those who love him—**these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.** (1 Corinthians 2:9–10; emphasis added)



PART ONE

Before the Foundation of the World

Scriptural Backdrop:

He is the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. (1 Peter 1:20)



1

FIRST KINGDOM

Bethlehem, about 4 BC

The first cry of a newborn baby boy has just shattered the tranquility of another Bethlehem night.

Normally, this wouldn't be an unusual occurrence. Many baby boys have been born in Bethlehem before this night. At this moment, though, there are only two people on the planet who truly understand why this particular child is so inexpressibly different from all those who came before Him, or from any who will come after.

Of course, at this point, there are still things about Him that even they can't fathom. Most of those details will be revealed decades from now. Tonight, however, the first natal tones of the newborn have fallen upon their ears alone...and that's all that matters. He has entered their arms safely, and Mom is fine.

Also, at this very moment—unbeknownst to them—a company of Bethlehem's shepherds are running across the fields...headed their way. Until that magnificent surprise arrives at their door, the young parents are immersing themselves in the majesty of these private moments with their son.

As they stand, hands joined, gazing into His tiny, searching eyes, they're overwhelmed by what they *are* privy to—what this occasion *really* means within the scope of all eternity. They alone possess the foundational answer to the mystery of His presence among them. A divine messenger who entered their realm from *behind the veil* told them that much a little over nine months ago.

God's cosmic plan of humanity's salvation had begun, and they were both to become a pivotal part of it.

However, neither the reprobate kingdoms of humanity nor the dark domain of the fallen ones comprehend the significance of what has transpired on this holy night. The arrival of this child has been flawlessly hidden from them. He is nestled away in the obscurity of a seven-hundred-year-old prophecy—lying in this uniquely dedicated manger and guarded by unseen warrior angels.¹

Thirty-three years from now, the “rulers of this age” will be consumed by an unquenchable rage when they come to recognize that the entire ordeal will have been pulled off without their ability to thwart its coming. It will have been concealed from them! By then, they will understand more fully what actually happened...but, *by then*, it will be far too late to do anything about it.²

In the years to come, in the midst of Satan's ever-growing awareness that his stolen domain is, in fact, being targeted by the Creator of the universe, he'll realize that his time is rapidly diminishing with every turn of the calendar's pages. So he'll steel himself and cobble together one vicious attack after another, hoping to somehow derail Heaven's battle plan amidst the chaos of it all. That brand of unmitigated conceit will prove to be the dangling, loose thread of his eventual undoing.

Following is the account of when the saga first commenced...and why this specific Bethlehem night is necessary.

PART TWO

Restoration

Scriptural Backdrop:

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” (Matthew 26:36; emphasis added)

But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer... Heaven must receive Him **until the time comes for God to restore everything**, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets. (Acts 3:18–21; emphasis added)



2

TIME AND PLACE

Garden of Gethsemane, Jerusalem, circa AD 30–33

As the nighttime deepens somewhere near the outer walls of Jerusalem, a distraught donkey bellows out a disharmony of mournful protests. Its obnoxious braying is downright bone-jarring. Digging its hooves into the earth, the animal comes to a jolting halt and looks as if it's staring in horror at some ghastly sight right in front of him. In the human realm, there appears to be absolutely nothing there—certainly nothing that should invoke *this* response. Nevertheless, the poor creature seems to be inconsolable.³

After several choice words—and a whip—the master gets the animal's begrudging attention. Minutes later, its cantankerous grievances begin to wane. A few more moments pass, and the commotion finally folds into the mixture of all the other sounds of the night.

The crickets once again resume their soothing night songs, having been stunned into silence by the sudden burst of the ruckus. Now Jerusalem's serenity, at last, slips back to a more normal level.

But even while the brief disturbance ensues, most of the city's residents sleep through it. They have no idea of the cosmic clash of kingdoms that's coming to a vicious conjunction...on this very night. That battle is about to commence in a normally serene grove of olive trees.

The grove is located only a short walk across the Kidron Valley just outside the city's East Gate. To get there, one has to first cross over the brook Kidron—an ancient tributary that eventually winds its way down to the Dead Sea. The garden, located immediately across the stream, is known by the locals as Gethsemane.

Right now, the man widely identified as Jesus of Nazareth is in that garden.

He is here in order to recover what is rightfully His.⁴

As He kneels to pray, He knows He has only a little less than a day to live. From this point forward, every moment will prove to be eternally significant.

As far as the *divine reclamation process* goes, the exact location and the precise timing of each subsequent event is vital. Every detail is now in the course of completing its appointed convergence.

This night has been planned from the beginning of time itself.⁵ And this spot is not an accidental one. It is here, in Gethsemane, where the defilement began. And it is here, in this garden, where it will begin to come to an end.⁶ This is also where the cosmic personage of evil will appear, one last time, to torment Him and again attempt to turn Him from His divine mission.

This prescient evening is a huge part of the reason Jesus covertly entered earth's domain in the first place—through the womb of a woman, and through Bethlehem's obscure corridors—three decades ago.

So, He waits...

Just now, an owl hoots out its ominous drawling tones somewhere nearby, adding to the bleakness of the evening. It's as though the creature is stoically announcing the cosmic duel—shouting its arrival to the world....

The battle for restoration of all things is now underway!



3



THE GARDEN OF AGONY

He tears at the earth as He agonizes, filling His hands with great scoops of dirt.

The evening has finally melted into the depths of an eerie oblivion.

It's that time of the approaching morning when almost nothing virtuous lurks in the shadows. The Passover moon melted behind the hills hours ago. Like a primeval mist, the fog has slipped into the stillness of the night as if it were a serpent easing upon its prey, having first fallen from the canopies above, then slowly gliding through the tall grass, unnoticed...until it's suddenly there.

It will still be another handful of hours before the aureate splashes of the rising sun will spill out across the eastern horizon and bathe the jagged peaks of the surrounding mountains in its sparkling glory. But the arrival of that magnificent exhibition will contradict the treachery that will eventually engulf the day it's announcing.

However, at this moment, in the depths of the garden's eerie darkness, *Heaven's Trap*—in the flesh of a mortal man—is sitting cross-legged beside a massive boulder. He is burdened with an unspeakable grief. With His face buried in his hands, He groans aloud. But no human ear pays attention to the guttural utterance He makes. For now, He's hidden to the earthy world to which He has come, cloaked in the night's shadows.



Jesus eventually unfolds His legs and arranges Himself so He can kneel beside the rock, laying both hands upon it for support. He bows His head in prayer. That singular boulder—now His altar of supplication—is located in the midst of the grove of huge olive trees. It is a well-known place, located at the base of the highest mountain in Jerusalem proper—the Mount of Olives.⁷ Oddly, the rock where He now prays looks like an ancient boundary stone of sorts—some kind of signal for all who see it... a sign that this spot might actually be important to Heaven itself.⁸

The Mount of Olives towers over the city below it—appearing as a faithful sentinel—with a perfect view of its legendary Temple Mount. But, that same lofty hill is also infamously known for some of the vilest sacrileges that have ever occurred in the annals of Israel's storied history. It's as though Satan has, over the centuries, turned this place into a monument of mockery—perpetually declaring the dark realm's contempt for Heaven's throne. Tonight, still another abominable chapter is about to be added to its saga.⁹

Jesus shudders as He contemplates the horrors that await Him.

Under normal circumstances, He shouldn't feel so alone...so utterly isolated. After all, He's accompanied by almost a dozen of His closest friends. *But not really.*

Oh, they're here, to be sure—but, at this moment, they're spread out on the ground, heads pillowed by rolled-up garments. They've been asleep for a while—off in the distance, hidden in the shadows of the fog-laden garden. They had promised to stay awake with Him throughout the night, and to pray. They're keeping neither of those promises. They had started well. But that was the end of it...after the first hour, they had fallen into a deep sleep.

It seems His closest friends still don't understand the gravity of the events that will soon unfold before them. However, three days from today, they will see it more clearly. But, because of their lack of resolve tonight, they will later have to nurse immense regrets and haunting memories. They will then remember that they actually *slept*—during the most important moments of prayer in the entire saga of fallen humanity's sorry history.

The loneliness of Jesus' grief has grown increasingly unbearable. A thick heaviness settles throughout the garden. The enormity of the moment has taken on a life of its own—becoming almost palpable. He lets out another groan under the burden of it. The weight of thousands of years of humanity's rebellious degradation has been strapped to His shoulders. If there was ever a moment when He might truly be tempted to give up the ordeal...it is this one.

Jesus knows what awaits Him over the course of the coming day. The divine plan was ordained before Adam sucked in his first breath of life. Soon, within the next few hours, all the horrors of the dark kingdom will be unleashed upon Him with a voracious and intensely personal fury. But He *has* to submit to it, every last humiliating and excruciating bit of it, if the trap is to work.

But...maybe there's still some other way to accomplish the plan?

He already knows the answer to this flesh-darkened temptation. But the question races through His mind anyway. It has been doing so for days, pounding away at Him, like a mallet's strike upon the steely heads of iron spikes. *Pa-pingggg! Pa-pingggg! Pa-pingggg!*

That's when He hears the vile, serpent-like seduction again:

"Deliver yourself from here! You have the power to do so...just *ssay* the word! Bow to me, and I can give you the kingdom*sss* of this*ss* world! There's no need for you to suffer like this*ss!*"

Jesus shakes His head in an attempt to dispel the abominable enticements. They slash and claw at His soul, as if a ravenous lion has just begun tearing away at its newly captured prey.

Father, give me your strength...give me courage to complete the plan, to take this to the very end!

So far, the divine strategy of redemption's plan has worked. There have been a few close calls over the last three years, to be sure. But everything has flowed right into the filthy mire of this particularly necessary moment. This is the point of no return—for Him, as well as for *Nachash*.¹⁰

That old serpent¹¹ is mere moments away from being entangled in the secreted snare that has been laid for him. His dripping arrogance has

brought him right up to the point of sealing his ultimate demise. He just doesn't know it yet. Oh, how far Nachash has plunged! How unspeakably and desperately wicked he has grown! The original guardian cherub of Eden's Garden is now the despicable *fallen one*.¹²

The night shift of the Sanhedrin's Temple guard will be arriving soon. It shouldn't be much longer now...

The next words Jesus hears slip upon Him as slight undertones of carefully crafted enticements. They originate from deep within the recesses of His own mind. But He knows the voice is real. The words are spoken from a certain cosmic being, one that possesses interdimensional vocal chords, with murmurs that are able to penetrate the mind of a mortal and even interrupt the prayers of the righteous. They are genuinely seductive words—sodden with repulsive condescension, laden with diabolic power.

"You don't have to do this!" the voice whispers. "You *don't!*"

There it is again!

He falls back to His face and prays. He claws at the earth as He agonizes, filling His hands with great scoops of dirt slowly sifting through His fingers.

Father, please give me more strength! My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow!

His closest friends are about a stone's throw away, oblivious to everything that's happening to Him. Even now, He can hear their wheezing breaths and rattled snorting.

You couldn't stay awake with me to watch, and pray? Just for a while?

4



THE SLUMBERING ONES

He knows the words are true.... But to live them out—*in human flesh*—
that is a different matter altogether.

Only a handful of hours earlier, Yeshua¹³ and His disciples had eaten their fill. They were in a privately secured upper room in downtown Jerusalem. It was another Passover...another joyous feast. How He loved to partake with them in those ancient meals of remembrance.

But this Passover had been different from all the others before it, vitally so. He had explained to them what this evening's celebration truly meant, its deepest meanings—how it had always pointed to Him and what He was getting ready to do, and also what the lessons of it would mean to them in the years to come. But, had they really understood the depth of the explanation? *No. Not entirely.* It was obvious they hadn't. That understanding would come later.

Warm tears spill from His eyes. The overflow of His grief streams down His cheeks and splatters into the soil beneath Him. Once again, He leans heavily against the huge rock.

He sucks in a deep breath, letting it out in a long, husky moan, as He looks up into the star-splashed heavens. Its canopy of countless glittering pinpoints looks like sparkling diamonds spilled out upon a sheet of glass. The beauty of what He beholds is breathtaking. But what He sees through His human eyes is nothing compared to what, one day in the future, will be revealed—after the rolling up of the dimensional scrolls... the final unveiling of what was there all along! It lay just behind the cosmic curtain that had been lowered in Eden eons ago.¹⁴

No human eye has ever seen the glory that is to come. No mortal mind has even come close to conceiving its majesty. *But He knows.* He alone spoke the entirety of it into existence in the very beginning. Oh, how He longs to show His dearest friends just a glimpse of the splendor that is to come! And that time *will* come—but today isn't the day.

Right now, He aches for the luxury of a little rest. It's been more than twenty-four hours since He last enjoyed that sweet release. And, it's been weeks since He's had a good night's sleep. From this point forward, He won't taste of that pleasure again. His eyelids grow heavy with grief, weighted down with a cosmic burden that no human has ever carried or could even comprehend.

Can He allow Himself the treat of a short nap...even for only a moment? *Surely a little innocent rest would do no harm.* Just then, His eyes slam shut, startling Him. His neck quickly stiffens. He catches His head, at the last instant, as it almost drops to His chest.

So...here is yet another enticement? Even the modest thought of the delightful bliss of a little respite—only the simple resting of His eyes and soul—have now become an unrelenting fleshly allurements. But, He *must* not. He must stay awake. He must stay alert.

He looks back over His shoulder at His slumbering disciples a good distance away, in the shadows, nestled under the mammoth olive trees. They are sleeping like children, without a care in the world. His lips begin to tremble as He fights back more tears. The spectacle of His

sleeping companions reminds Him...He is still alone. So very, very alone.

If they only knew what is just down the road for them and their families. *How I love them, Father! I know that you will not yet remove them from the tribulation of this world, but, please...Father...protect them in the midst of the coming evil.*

With the back of His hand, He wipes more sweat from His forehead as He continues to agonize. It is a form of grief that ruthlessly rips at His soul, torturing His mind beyond any hope of immediate relief. In this body of earthly human flesh, He has never felt anything like this before. But, He knows there is more to come. Much more.

He looks down at His hand, having just pulled it away from His face. The dampness is bright red. Under the traumatic stress of what He knows awaits Him, tiny capillaries in His temples have burst open. Now, as a result, great drops of bloody sweat continue to trickle down His face.¹⁵

Where are His dearest friends when He needs them—especially now! *Couldn't you stay awake with me?* He utters the question aloud, knowing that no one actually hears His words. They're still snoring.

He struggles for a proper breath...and again bellows out an unearthly sound of agonized grief. But, He presses on, remembering how far He's journeyed to get here. *The strong man's house will soon be plundered. Paradise will be restored, and Satan and his emissaries will be banished forever.*

He allows Himself a brief moment of inward celebration at the thought of the reclamation of Paradise. This, in spite of the fact that the terrorizing flashes of what is just around the corner of this day continue to pummel His thoughts.

If I can only hold out. Help me Father! Strengthen me...so that I am able to accomplish the task for which I've come!

The atmosphere around Him sparks. He knows what it is, and He knows *who* it is. In that instant, He feels a hand upon His shoulder. It's a familiar touch. A loving hand—bringing with it a divinely comforting grip.

He turns and looks. One of His own, created before the foundation of the earth, a true and obedient *bene elohim*, stands at His side.¹⁶ He has come in response to Yeshua's agonizing prayers. This messenger of Heaven has slipped, undetected, into earth's domain, from just behind the separating veil.¹⁷

Jesus beams through watery eyes. *Here is a friendly face! A friend who is not asleep!* The two grasp each other by the hand. The angel returns His greeting. "Your prayers are heard. You are not alone," he assures the Suffering One.

When Jesus doesn't answer in words, the angel continues. "Give the command and this ordeal will be over. If it is your will, we'll strike down those who are coming for you, every single one of them! I have more than twelve legions of your *holy ones* at my side. Just behind the veil. Just in case! Simply provide the order..."¹⁸

Jesus firms His grip on the angel's hand. That grasp, and the look upon His face, tells the heavenly servant: *That will not be necessary. This mission must be carried through...to the end.* As a loyal subject before his beloved King, the divine being lowers his head in obedience, understanding the unspoken signal he has just received. His tears splat into the dirt as he bows.

The angel speaks again. "Then I must leave," he says. "The prince of this world approaches. He must not know that I was here."

And then...*he's gone.* In a mere twinkling, Jesus is alone again—His hand still outstretched where it once held the hand of His servant.

Yeshua looks up towards the sparkling heavens and whispers, "I am now ready, Father. This must be done."

Those words had been the heartfelt focus of Jesus' prayers throughout the night. But to actually live out the supplications—in *human flesh*—that is a different matter altogether. Those utterances, that goal, no matter how beautiful—or how necessary—will also come with an enormously agonizing price.¹⁹

What is waiting just ahead will necessitate the spilling of blood.
Lots of blood. And not just *any* blood.



5



THE GRAND ENTRANCE

There is a directness and firmness in the intonation
of His voice that is uncharacteristic.

The serpent's appearance in Gethsemane's garden is first accompanied by an atmospheric flash of light and then a sharp, popping noise. It sounds like the soft crack of a small whip.²⁰

A slight, eerie breeze glides through the treetops, lightly swirling the leaves. Nachash has just entered earth's domain. He has come from the other side, from another realm...unseen by the eyes of mortal men.²¹

The foreboding presence is now somewhere behind Yeshua, in the murky shadows. He has known the *prince of vileness and filth* would show up. In fact, He has been counting on it. This is all a part of the trap.

The sulfuric odor of Nachash's depravity permeates the night air—as a suffocating presence begins to envelope Jesus. At this moment—as He still kneels at the rock—He hears the familiar voice.

“*Hmm.*” Nachash clucks his tongue as he approaches from behind, his arrogance dripping with every word that slithers from his lips. “So, we’re together again...*one more time?* Just like I thought it would be. Just as I told you! Isn’t that right...*Son of God?*”



Jesus offers no reply.

“I promised I would see you again. Didn’t I? And, I always keep my promises...”

The words are silky. They are hypnotizing and musical. Almost irresistible.

“Didn’t I try to warn you? I figured it would eventually come to *this*.”

He spreads his arms open wide as if indicating that the agony of “this” is actually Jesus’ own fault. He clucks his tongue several more times, then shakes his head with closed eyes, feigning empathy. But the look on his face betrays the underlying masquerade. Everything is always a dramatic ruse with this one.

A slight groan is Jesus’ only response.

Nachash continues, “You have to admit, though, I actually gave you the opportunity to skip all thisss...did I not? Don’t you remember?” The serpent waits for an answer. Jesus offers none.

“Of course you remember!” Satan grins, answering for Him. “But you wouldn’t listen, would you? You could have saved yourself from thisss dreadful messs. But...*no*...”

Jesus leans heavier into the rock as the ground beneath Him trembles slightly. Even creation itself groans as it struggles to bear up under the burden of the serpent’s ancient perversion.

Jesus lowers His head again.

Nachash continues his taunt. “*Instead*, you just had to make your point...didn’t you? Well, you’ve certainly taken your stand now! You’ve had your say for three full years. Yes—yesss, your power is from Heaven’s throne. Okay then. Have it your way. Everyone knowsss what you’re claiming now. Everyone has seen your wondrous displaysss of heavenly might, and your uncanny wizardry. I must say, even I’ve been jealous of it, from time to time. Everybody’s talking about it!”

Nachash persists, “But, if that’s all the validation you require, *the acclaim of the people*—well...I can easily arrange it for you. In fact, that’s one of my most cherished specialties!”

Satan cocks his head as he continues with his alluring offers. “Why, I’ll

have everyone bowing and scraping at your feet in no time. . .if that's what you *really* desire. It's quite simple to manipulate them. They're like naïve little sheep. I can show you how to do it, if you want. It's really not all that difficult. What *sssay* you?" The serpent sneers, waiting for a response.

Just like in the Judean wilderness three years back, Jesus refuses to acknowledge Satan's presence. Those earlier challenges had been equally vile. They deserved no response then, and there will be no banter with this profanely rebellious cherub²² on this occasion either.

Jesus doesn't turn to look—even though He can feel, down the back of His neck, the heat of Nachash's presence. The fallen one is standing right over Him, just behind Him. The vileness of his rancid breath reeks of the stench of death.

"I'll make this offer just once more, but thisss is the last time I'll do it," Nachash hisses. "*Here*—I'll hold out my offer of indulgence. *Take it!* Then all of your suffering will be over!"

Jesus sees the hand.

"*There*. . .you see?" Nachash unfurls his gnarly appendage, dangling it across His shoulder. "Am I not merciful? Yesss?" the serpent smugly hisses. There is even something serpent-like about the movement of his hand and arm.

Jesus turns His head away from it.

Father! If it is possible! Please. . .take this cup from me!

"Oh, come now! Don't be ridiculousss! You won't even take my hand? That's a bit rude, wouldn't you say?"

Jesus kneels there, silently.

"*Who* are you anyway?" Nachash seductively whispers, while scanning Jesus up and down with his penetrating gaze. "*What* are you? And, where is your *Father* now? He appears to be awkwardly silent, don't you think? I've not heard Him answer your pleas yet. *Have you?*"

Jesus looks straight ahead. He still has not uttered a word to Nachash.

"Okay, okay," the serpent persists. "I'll make my offer just one more time. Simply bow to me as the prince of this world and I'll give you all the kingdoms of the earth! After all, they are *mine* to give. Isn't that ultimately

what you want, anyway? A kingdom of your own? We can rule together!
At no cost to you! No ludicrous price to pay. No 'cup' to drink. No one
has to 'lay down their life' for anything—or for *anyone*.²³

“What is your answer?”

“What will it be?”



6

REVERSING THE CURSE

His heart is steeled for the gruesome mission ahead.

Jesus knows the precise moment has finally arrived. It's time to reverse the original blasphemy of Eden's Garden.²⁴ On that fateful primordial day, in dark ages past, Satan, in his insolent rebellion, had effectively declared—along with Adam and Eve at his side, “*Not your will, but ours!*” In that moment of ancient debauchery, they had plunged themselves into a cesspool of despicable disobedience. It was there where Jesus' heart had first been crushed...and betrayed.

Here He is once more.²⁵ In just a few more moments, He will again suffer heartrending disloyalty...by Satan, who has entered the body of a man²⁶ and even now is on his way to the Garden of Gethsemane to kiss Him on the cheek—and to gloat.

Jesus once again speaks. This time, however, there is a resolve in His voice that will unnerve the evil one. But, like before, His words are not spoken to Satan.

Nevertheless, Father...not my will, but yours.

Streams of sweat pool together into larger rivulets, spilling down His face, dripping off the tip of His nose, and splattering into the dirt. It is



sweat that is still mixed with His blood. Yeshua knows that, with those words, He has sealed His own fate. There will be no turning back.

Satan snarls in a cavernously derisive tone, “*You fool!* Have it your way then! You have no idea what you’ve just forfeited!”

As Satan levels those words of threat, Jesus thinks: *And you have no idea what you’ve just stepped into.*

Satan positions himself in front of Jesus, glaring at Him through slatted, serpent-like pupils—His face just inches away from the Suffering One—slowly swaying from side to side, like a cobra ready to strike. The foggy mist envelops his repulsive countenance, settling upon him like an aberrant kingly robe. . . his breath sour and revolting.

“Look at you! Look what you’ve become! You claim to be able to save others, but you can’t even save yourself from what’s coming now, I promise you *that!* You’ll *not* ‘save’ yourself!”

Jesus still doesn’t acknowledge his presence.

“Well then!” Satan continues. “If this is the road you insist on traveling, then I *do* have a very special cup prepared for you, at the end of it—and you *will* drink from it, deeply! I’ll personally see to it. I’ll be there the whole time. *Watching. Enjoying.* Relishing each long and dreadful moment of it! If you will not join me. . . then you most assuredly will be destroyed!”

His threats persist. “The whole thing has already been arranged, just in case you are insolent enough to refuse my compassionate offer. But I can assure you of this, you’ll lament this moment—the night you declined my hand.” He pauses again, and glares—but only for a moment, then he continues the pummeling.

“I promise! Before this new day is over, there’ll be a multitude of times when your indescribable suffering will bring back memories of this very moment, and these very words, and the horrendous mistake you’re making! Then you’ll wish you had been more gracious to me, and *grateful* for the offer I’ve held out to you!”

Jesus raises His head and looks directly into the serpent’s eyes. Nachash slowly turns away, unable to meet the challenge of holding this first experience of a soul-penetrating gaze from the Suffering One.

With his eyes still directed away from Yeshua, he spits his words into the air, “*Pffff!* I’ve had enough of this!” Satan expels the declaration like a defeated bully on a schoolyard playground. He moves toward Jesus, glaring at Him, then raises his hand over his head.

When he does, the air *pops*. The ground rumbles again. There is a slight folding of the atmosphere—barely discernible to the human eye. Sparkles of a glitter-like substance fall in front of Jesus and melt into the ground.

The rumbling stops. Nachash is gone—but only temporarily. Jesus knows the serpent will be back to taunt Him again before the day is over.

This is it. No turning back. No more struggling. No more doubt.

Jesus wipes His brow again, His sweat bloodier than ever.

He stands from His place of torment and makes His way back to the sleeping disciples, His heart steeled for the gruesome mission ahead. There are still convergences that need to take place, more meetings to be endured.

Jesus slips through the shadows like a whisper and stands directly over John. After a few brief moments, He stoops and eases His hand down upon the beloved disciple’s shoulder. He nudges the young man—just a couple of gentle prods—until he stirs. John opens his eyes as though he is awakening from an all-night drinking binge, both fists twisting in his eye sockets, trying to clear the haze of deep sleep.

“John, why do you sleep? And why *now*, of all times?”

Jesus’ countenance startles him. There is a firmness in the intonation of His voice that is uncharacteristic. His face glistens with a reddish hue. What happened while Jesus was praying? *What has He seen? Has someone attacked Him? Why is blood on His face, and hands?* John is suddenly embarrassed. And...afraid.

“Get up, John. Wake the others, and pray—so that you won’t fall into temptation.”

“What do you mean, Lord? What happened to you? What *temptation*? Why are you bleeding? *Who*—” He was cut off midsentence by Jesus’ sudden uplifted hand of warning.

Yeshua nods toward Jerusalem. “Never mind that now,” He says. “The betrayer draws near. Satan approaches—and he’s inside the body of a man.”

John turns around to look, afraid of what he might see.

What he beholds are the approaching torches. The flames bob about in the darkness like a swarm of gigantic fireflies flittering in the night. And he can also, just now, begin to make out the forms of the Temple guards who are carrying the fiery harbingers.

The guards draw ever closer, picking up their cadence as they come; their conglomerated footsteps are sounding more like a rushing military troop.

It’s obvious that this looming horde is headed straight for *them*!

There are dozens of them—and Judas is leading the way.

7



THE SIXTH HOUR

It has been three torturous hours since the first spikes
slammed into their hands and feet.

The sunrise has, indeed, brought forth a splendid day. But it's going to eventually become a dreadfully sweltering one. There's not a cloud to be seen, only crystal blue sky and an orange fireball in the heavens blasting down its heating rays upon the earth below.

Hours ago, another bustling crowd of curious onlookers scrambled through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, then darted outside the city gate, following the throng that was already ahead of them. Jerusalem was alive with swarms of people, visitors from all over the Roman Empire. They were of every shape, dress, skin color, and language. It was the week of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, commencing with the Passover meal at the sunset of this day.

But this morning, a tantalizing report had spread throughout the city like an out-of-control wildfire. That vigor had been set ablaze by the Sanhedrin's lackeys. Another Roman spectacle of gore was soon to unfold. This one had been rumored to be like no other before it.