

The
KINGDOM
Chronicles



by Steven G. Kennard



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The Kingdom Chronicles

Episode 4 Battle For The Kingdom

By Steven G. Kennard

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The BATTLE FOR
THE KINGDOM

Episode 4

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FOR THE GLORY OF THE
Kingdom of Heaven



KINGDOM
Chronicles

The Kingdom Chronicles

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Introduction

Approximately 587 BCE



urel, an angelic messenger and Chief Captain of the League of Guardians stands watch over the hills of Judah and the holy city of Jerusalem. He watches as the Babylonian army of King Nebuchadnezzar marches within hours of the great city. They will encircle the city and siege it for two more years waiting for famine to take its toll.¹ Then they will attack and overrun the city's defenses and with it the Kingdom of Judah will fall. Like a lightning bolt he races back into the heavens to the very throne of the Almighty.

"Zurel my faithful guardian, what say you of my people? Have they turned from their wicked ways? Do they cry out to me? What is your report?"

Zurel on bended knee regretfully gave the Lord his report. "They cry out Lord, but there is no repentance in them. They cry for deliverance from the Babylonians who have advanced within a few hours of the gates of the city."

The Almighty stood to His feet and Zurel heard Him say with a heavy heart, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem how I love you, but my people have rejected me and serve the gods made of their own hands. My judgment is true and righteous and I will not stay my hand from them. They desire to serve another. Let them see if he will help them. Let it be done unto them as they have chosen." Then the crashing sounds of thunder could be heard in the distance followed by a moment of silence throughout the Kingdom as judgment was being proclaimed.

"My Lord, there is another matter of which I need your direction."

"I know ... The Holy Book of Beginnings is resting in the secret place below the city."

"My Lord, there is no one of the royal lineage left. No one who can read the words. Who is left to retrieve the book before the Babylonians overtake the city and destroy it?"

"There is another, but he is not yet. I have been to the future. I have reserved for me another. He is of the lineage and has the heart of a servant. I have hidden his lineage from him for his own protection. If it was known the enemy would go to him and destroy him.

Again I call on you Zurel, my Chief Captain, to go to him and bring him back. I will use him to fulfill my purpose.”

“And if he will not come what should I do?”

“If he will not come then the book is truly lost and his royal lineage will be removed and given to another. Go now and show him My will for him ... he will come.”

* * * * *

God’s timing is perfect, for the beloved city of Jerusalem would be under siege for eighteen months before Zurel would bring this man back to this time to fulfill his calling.



Part 1



Chapter One



The Cave

(Modern Times 2009)



One of the most amazing things in life is that no matter how much a man has planned his life, it never seems to turn out like he thought. When **Conner Daniels** was a young man he had plans like everyone else, but events arose that were beyond his control and his life changed. Conner suddenly had a new life in the military and soon he was off to war. He saw what war does to people and how it changes a person and so he swore to his Father in heaven that he would never be what he saw in other men. Only time would tell if he could stay the course and keep the promise he made to his God.

Soon he would be out of the military and on his own and could finally do as he pleased. He would finally be in control of his own life.

Conner became interested in a new hobby called Spelunking and he liked to travel to locations close to his home in the foothills of **Austin, Texas**. Exploring the caves gave him the feeling of exploring and discovering and so he was always excited to visit new caves. He had quickly fallen in love with exploring caves and it quickly became his passion. Many times he would go off on his own just for the fun of exploring. What he did not know was that his life was about to change. He was soon to become the focus of a special visitor, one he would never forget.

THE CAVE

One Saturday Conner decided to try a secluded cave he was told about out in the eastern edge of the county where there was a lot of rock and dirt. His secret hope was that he would find some long forgotten treasure that had been hidden hundreds of years ago and it would make the effort, time and money spent, all worth it.

This one particular cave had a rather small opening so he had to crawl in on his belly and pull his equipment in afterwards. He quickly turned on the helmet-light and found a narrow space with rocky walls on both sides. There was enough space that he could see between the rocky formations to squeeze his body between them.

It was always an eerie sight at first. To calm himself down, he would tell himself, "This cave has been here forever and nothing is going to happen today." He tied off some rope at the entrance so he could follow it back when he was ready to leave. He had left his truck close by the opening so he didn't have to go too far to get the equipment packed back up.

Conner wasn't that brave to go too far in a new cave system on his own. He mustered up all the courage he could and inched his way in. One path lead to a fork and then another and another. About the time he was thinking he had come to the end of this tunnel system and was about to turn back when He saw a flicker of light in one of the branches of the cave. "*Light in here,*" He thought. He reasoned that "There is a mountain above this cave so where is the light coming from?" Every Spelunker loves a good cave mystery so he had to check this out. He made his way over to where the light was coming from. The closer he got to it, the brighter and more intense it became. The funny thing about it was there shouldn't even be a cavern here. He followed the light and stepped into a very large cavern that shined like a star of some kind. Conner had to turn his head for the brightness of the light.

ZUREL

There was a voice that called out his name. It might have been out of fear, but Conner quickly fell to the ground trying his best to cover his eyes from the brightness of the light.

"Conner Daniels, royal heir and son of the kings of old, I bring greetings to you in the name of the Most High."

Conner heard the voice loud and clear but was stunned as to why he is calling him all these other names. Conner thought to himself, "What did he just say? He called my name. How does he know me? Royal heir, what is he talking about? He has me mixed up with someone else."

"I know your questions and all will be told to you. I am here on a matter of great importance." Then the light began to dim to a point that Conner could see

the image of a large man with even larger wings standing before him. He still glowed of brilliant light, but this time it did not bother Conner's eyes to look on him.

Before he knew it Conner's next words were "Who are you?" Conner really wanted to shout it at him, but then he was very large and holding a sword.

"I am Zurel, Chief Captain of the League of Guardians. I have been sent to you as I have to all of the royal lineage who have come before you."

"Are you sure you have the right guy, because I'm not of any royal lineage, no way. I have never seen or known my father."

"Let me assure you that your Father in Heaven knows the beginning of all things from the end of all things and He hasn't forgotten you. He knows you and from where you have come and that missing part of your life that is found in the secret that is hidden in you. The secret of Conner Daniels was hidden even from you."

Then Conner spoke to the angel of light, "If there was a secret about me then you might think I would be the one to know it?"

The angel Zurel said nothing for a few seconds, and then he continued, "Be it known unto you Conner Daniels that you are of the ancient lineage of the Kings who once stood guard over the sacred Book of Beginnings. What was lost to them, has also been hidden from you."

"What has been hidden from me?" Conner asked.

"The knowledge of your lineage and of the sacred Book of Beginnings," he said. "It was this way because the great evil of this world would come to destroy you if this was known."

"Well ... that's just great. Just ten minutes ago I was crawling into a dark cave and now I'm royal and evil wants to kill me. So, what am I supposed to do?"

"The sacred book was read by the Kings to know God's will and to teach the people about righteousness. Only they could read the words of the ancient text. When King Jeddak, the last of the seven kings ascended the throne, the kingdom soon fell to the evil and became like all that was around it. The book had already been taken out of Ildar and eventually hidden away under the city of Jerusalem to wait for an heir who would come for it.

That book is in danger of being destroyed. Unless a royal heir can be found to take possession of the book, it will be lost to evil forever. If that happens

it could be disastrous for mankind. Evil will seek to establish on earth what it lost in the dateless past before time began.”

“What did evil want then?” asked Conner.

“Evil sought to be as God and to be worshipped by all. The book can give him that power.”

“That sounds pretty serious and you want me to come save this book and the entire world? Is that about right? This is just unbelievable. Did I die back there in the cave? Maybe this is some near-death experience?” The angel didn’t answer Conner, but rather stood there staring at him, waiting on him to get himself together. “Wow, is this really happening?”

I AGREE

“I am here to find the lost heir of the Kingdom, to see if he is ready to take his place and stand as his fathers, the Kings of old, once did? The question is, is that person you? It is now time for you to decide Conner Daniels, as all men must choose.”

“So how long will this take anyway? I have a lot going on this weekend?” The angel didn’t answer him, and he just stood there waiting for an answer. “Well, I guess it really doesn’t matter anyway. Okay, I’ll do it. So do I raise my hand and take an oath? And where do I park my truck outside?”

The angel looked at him with a slight smile on his face and then took off something from around his neck. “You have a noble heart,” he said. Then Zurel stepped forward and placed the object around Conner’s neck.

“What is this?” Conner asked.

“It belonged to King Jeddak, the last King of the Kingdom of Ildar and now it is worn by his heir. You are its rightful owner. When you are in need of help you have only to press the jewel in the middle and we will come and be with you. Always remember that you are never alone.”²

THE QUEST

“Now I set before you a noble quest as I did your forefathers. You are of the lineage of those who were known as ‘Readers.’ This means that only you can rescue the sacred Book of Beginnings from destruction. When you have the

sacred book and it is safe then you will be told what to do by He who is alive in its pages.”

“I have a question first,” said Conner. “Just for the knowing, but why didn’t an heir to the throne back then rescue the book?”

“The heirs of King Jeddak were either killed or fled away and would not accept their responsibilities before the Lord who gave them their privilege. For this reason the lineage and the book was hidden from men. Now unless the book is rescued many in the holy city will die for the secret of this book.”

“Well I guess someone has to go and get this book. It’s in Jerusalem you said? I’m in Texas, so how do I get to Jerusalem?” The heir of this kingdom you speak about is flat broke. I have no money to do this with. It’s a long way ...”

“All things are possible if you believe.”³

Then the angel began to fade away and the light faded with him and just before the last of the light disappeared from view, Conner heard one last word from the angel, “Now the burden has fallen to you.”

Conner heard the last few words, thinking to himself, “That’s just great, all I need in my life right now is another burden, and here I am a week before payday. He never did tell me how I was supposed to get to Jerusalem. I sure hope this isn’t all just a dream.”

The cave was dark again so Conner reached up and turned on the helmet light so he could find his way out and get back to his truck and then home. It took longer getting back to the opening than he remembered it taking, but the way out was not too far up ahead and all this would be over.

Suddenly Conner felt the ground shaking, “*Earthquake*” he thought. “It’s no big deal, happens all the time here.” Conner got on his stomach and low-crawled out of the hole and dragged his backpack out after himself. It sure was good to be out in the sun again. He turned around to find his truck. He looked where he thought he left the truck, but it wasn’t there, “Hum, something is wrong. This doesn’t look like Austin that’s for sure. This didn’t look like anything he had ever seen around here. Did I take a wrong turn in the cave or something because this is not Austin.” Conner just stood there looking, “Where am I?”

Chapter Two



Jerusalem

(Approximately 587 BCE)

ALIYAH



Conner got out of the cave and dusted myself off and turned around squinting his eyes from the sun, trying to get adjusted to the outside again. Funny, but he didn't remember the steep rocky cliffs that were all around him when he went into the cave. He mumbled to myself, "I need to pay more attention to where I'm at next time."

Then Conner heard a voice coming from behind him, "*Follow the girl.*"

"*What girl?*" He said to himself? Then he turned to see who had said that to him, but there was no one. "I must have been in that cave too long."

He looked around again hoping to see his truck, but it was nowhere to be found. "*Someone stole my truck,*" He thought. "That's ridiculous because I'm the only one out here for miles. "Maybe I just came out of a different hole than I went in, but I followed the rope back, No, I'm sure I'm at the right place."

"You are a stranger here aren't you?"

Conner quickly turned in the direction of the voice to see a girl standing on a rock looking down at him. "You talking to me" He said?

"I see no one else, but you," she said back to him, "There is only you. Maybe you have been out in the hot sun too long? Are you feeling okay?"

"Yes I'm okay," said Conner. I'm fine if I could just find my truck now, I could go home."

"What is a truck, maybe I can help you find it?"

"You got to be kidding me. You don't know what a truck is? It's like a car, but bigger and has a bed in the back?"

“Are you tired,” she asked? “I saw you come out of that small cave, so maybe you should go back in and sleep in your bed in your truck until you are not tired?”

“No, no,” shouted Conner. “You have this all mixed up now. I didn’t come out of the cave ... well yes I did, but I was exploring the cave, just looking around it.”

“I see, so you crawled into the cave to see what rocks are in it? I can see what rocks are in it by the rocks that are outside, just more of the same inside. My mother taught me this when I was just a small girl. Did your mother not teach you this?”

“Oh, brother!” exclaimed Conner. Out of frustration he rubbed his face with his hands and scratched his head, he was getting nowhere with this girl.

Then Aliyah trying hard to figure all this out asked another question, “Is your brother here also? Maybe he is in the cave still sleeping?”

“No! No! No! ... My brother is not here, or in the cave. In fact I don’t even have a brother.”

“You call out for your brother even when you do not have a brother? Do you want a brother? I have several brothers, they torment me all the time but I think they love me more than they say.”

“Why are you doing this to me,” said Conner, “who are you”?

“I am doing nothing to you but talking and if you are finished calling for your brother then I can help you. My name is Aliyah and I am from the tribe of Judah. I do not recognize your clothes, what tribe are you from? I have never seen clothes like those before. I do not believe you are of my people, maybe you are a pagan? I have never seen the pagans, but I hear they are very ugly and wicked in the eyes of Jehovah.”

Conner was trying very hard to be patient, so a few deep breaths and then, “No, I’m not a pagan,” then he remembered the words just a few minutes ago, to “Follow the girl.” So He decided to play along, maybe she was supposed to lead him back to his truck.

“So why are you out here in this hot sun,” He asked her?

“I have been sent here by an angel who told me I would find a stranger from among the rocks and that he has been sent to us for a purpose that would be revealed to us soon. So I came and watched you crawl out of that small hole in the

mountain. Did you find what you went in there for? My father also says that everything we do is for a purpose. Did you find a purpose in the cave?"

"Oh, now this was getting creepy" thought Conner, "but I should not let on too much. Well first, I'm not the one you think I am, but yes I found out some things that I didn't know before."

Then Aliyah said, "There is a word from the prophet of Jehovah that one would come who would stand out from the rest. He will show us mighty things, but now I must tell you the bad news."

"There is bad news, already?"

"We must hurry back. We cannot waste any more time. Please follow me quickly." Then she jumped down from her rock and began to run around to the other side of the mountain. Conner followed her as fast as he could run.

"What is the bad news? Why are we running?" Quickly running out of breath, it was hard to admit he was not in that good of shape any more.

She turned back around to shout at Conner, "Hurry, run faster we don't have much time."

"Time for what?" Conner was trying to ask as he was struggling to catch his breath.

"There is a tunnel I know of that runs for several hundred feet and then goes under the wall. This is how I got to you. The city has been surrounded by the Babylonians for many months. The people are starving and we fear the end is near."

"What City?" Conner shouted back at her.

As he ran around the last rock and at the end of the mountain he suddenly saw standing about a mile and a half from them a site that just totally amazed him, leaving him in complete disbelief. There was an ancient looking city up on a hill with great walls surrounding it. All around this city were thousands of men that looked like they were part of an army, and they were not a modern army for sure.

The arrows going over the walls were intended for the people behind the walls. Then there were the sounds of trumpets blowing and men shouting and screaming out in a language he did not understand. The army surrounding the city were scrambling to make ready for something big to happen. The rumbling sound of many chariots could be heard moving all around, and it looked to Conner like they were preparing to attack the city again.

Conner was awakened from his amazement by Aliyah shouting at him, “You cannot just stand here or they will see you for sure. Follow me ... please, there isn’t much time. Try to keep quiet until we are back in the city.”

“You mean we’re going into that city ... why?”

Aliyah didn’t answer as she jumped down into a ravine covered with brush and disappeared into a dark hole.

Conner thought to himself, *“I just got out of one cave and now I’m running after a girl through another one.”* Conner quickly followed Aliyah down into the tunnel and began to run after her. From within the tunnel you could feel the vibrations of the men and horses above and much of what was being said, that was if you could understand whatever language this was. When they came out of the tunnel inside the city, they both stopped to catch their breath.

The thought ran through Conner’s head *“For some reason I don’t think I’m anywhere near Austin.”* He then turned and looked at Aliyah, “Where are we?”

“Why we are in Jerusalem of course and we run because the armies of Babylon are camped about our walls for the last two years to starve us out. They will attack us soon and many will die. I need to take you to my father because he will know what to do. Now follow me”

MEET THE FAMILY

Aliyah led Conner through the streets as the sun was beginning to go down and small torches gave little light for moving around. Finally they got to a small house that she said was her father’s. They bolted through the door. Someone else slammed it shut behind them.

Suddenly there were three swords pointed at Conner’s body and one of them was only inches from his throat.

“Where have you been child and who is this stranger you bring into our house? I can tell just by looking at him that he is a pagan,” said her father. “Just look at the way he is dressed.”

“No father he is the one who has been sent to us. I was told to go to the place of many rocks and tunnels, and I would find the last of the royal line of Ildar. I went out beyond the walls as you have forbid us to do, but it was only because Jehovah commanded me to. Please forgive me father.”

Aliyah's father was not happy, "You make up stories about Holy angels as a reason to disobey your father. You went beyond the walls that I forbid you to go and you bring back a strange man. How could you do this? I have been cursed by a daughter who does not obey her father. Just this day we received word that King Zedekiah and his family fled the city with the soldiers. They have left us to die."

"But Father this man is not a spy. He was there as the angel told me."

The father thought about her words and then said to her, "What angel told you this?" Aliyah did not answer. Father looked at her for a moment trying to decide if he should believe her, or run Conner through with his sword.

Aliyah's brother Nathan spoke out in anger, "Father, let me run him through now for the pagan dog liar that he is. He is here to deceive you and all of us. This is a trick to get you to tell them of the ..."

"Quiet son, before you say too much."

That's when Conner finally spoke up, "I'm no pagan, nor am I a spy, I promise. I was sent here by an angel to get a book called the "Book of Beginnings." Suddenly the swords dropped and there was a moment of silence.

"Father ... he spoke of it. Let me run him through now."

"Not so fast son."

"Whoever you are, you need to know that we do not speak of such things," said the father. "Only in the secret places are such things mentioned. How do you know of this book?"

Everyone's eyes were now on Conner, "Early this morning I went into a cave to explore what was inside. Then from within the darkness there was a bright light, so I went to see what this light was. The light turned out to be an angel, who said his name was Zurel Captain of some guardians some place.

"He told me I was the last of an ancient kingly lineage and I had to come and save this book that is under the city of Jerusalem. Then he gave me this thing around my neck, this medallion." Conner reached under his shirt and pulled out the blue medallion that Zurel had given to him. "He said it belonged to the last king and to use it only when I was in trouble and he would come. Then he left and I crawled out of the cave. When I got out of the cave I was here in a different place and a different time and your daughter Aliyah was there and she called out to me."

Nathan couldn't take hearing this anymore, "Father, again more lies. He has tricked my sister so she would bring him here. Then he will kill us. Let me run him through now, he looks evil and his clothes are ugly like the lying devil pagan dog he is."

Conner looked at the father and asked him, "This Nathan with the sword must be your son? He guards you and your family?"

Aliyah interrupted, "He is also my brother. I was going to tell you, but he kept interrupting me, wanting to kill you."

"Why does he want to kill me so bad?"

The father looked to his son, "Nathan, put your sword down. He is not an enemy of ours. This man is not dressed as a pagan dog as you say. I have never seen clothes as his, but he must be very poor if he is living in a cave. We cannot condemn him for trying to find a better way to live."

The father turned back to look at Conner, "I'm sorry, I gave my son my own sword and he has been wanting to use it ever since, To make things worse for me, in my old age, I find out now that I have a daughter who does not obey her father. This too she gets from her mother."

By now all the other men including his son Nathan had lowered their swords and relaxed. Conner just sighed a big breath of relief and stopped feeling like he was about to die at any minute. Her father continued speaking, "Now young man, I believe that what you told us is true and I believe that Jehovah has truly heard our prayers and sent you to us."

"But father, he is a spy and we need to kill him. Let me do it now?"

"Nathan, put your sword away, you will not act this way in our house." The father turned back to Conner, "I apologize for my son. He really wants to use his new sword. Aliyah, get this man some decent clothes and destroy the ones he has on. If he is found dressed like this they will arrest him as a spy and if they find out he is royal, which we do not know yet, then he will be taken to Babylon. Can you do this simple thing Aliyah without disobeying your father?"

"Father," I never disobey you unless Jehovah instructs me too."

"Awe, so now Jehovah talks to her and not to me? May the ancestors look down on us with thanksgiving and not shame. Such words from a woman ... It's not my fault if you are listening from above mama, but she gets it from you."

Then Aliyah came to her own defense, “She can’t hear you father, she has moved on to heaven as you have taught us. I listen to Jehovah when he speaks to me. You should be happy I do, or this man would not be here tonight.”

Aliyah’s father looked at Conner. “She talks and talks, the trick is getting her to not talk so much. Do the women in your cave do the same? This may explain why you seek a better cave.”

Conner tried again to explain, but the father was not listening as he just replied to Conner with “yes, yes, I know.”

“Son, I would like to know what is your name? I know even pagans have a name.”

Conner just gave a big sigh and told father, “My name is **Conner Daniels**”

“That is a good name son, I am called **Ben-Aaron**.⁴ I am the head of this house and of the lineage of Aaron, a priest in the house of Jehovah.

“Now Conner of the cave dwellers, please forgive our unbelief, but when we get to the book you speak of, it will reveal the truth to us. But for now we can eat some food and rest, for the time to get what you seek will be here shortly. We have only until sunrise before the end comes, for the Babylonians will kill whoever they find in the city.

“Now, Is there anything you can tell us about yourself that would make your story believable?”

Conner thought about it for a minute or so then said, “Well I do not know much about my family because much of it has been hidden from me. I know a little more since the angel talked to me, but I still find it hard to believe that my ancestors could have been kings.”

Ben-Aaron stroked his beard and thought about that, “Yes, we can understand why you were not told about your family, we Jews stopped living in caves long ago and we built a magnificent city called Jerusalem. As to your claim of royalty we will find out if you pass the test. Jehovah will proclaim it to us. Now let us sit for a while and the women will bring us food.”

TALK OF THE BOOK

While the men ate, Ben-Aaron began to speak about the origins of the book Conner sought.

“As my disobedient daughter has said, there was a prophecy of one who will come and only he can read from the ancient book. We have waited a long time until this morning. In my prayers I was visited by Jehovah and told to wait in my house and He would send him who is the reader, only he can read from the book. So we have waited and prayed all day.

“The fact that you even know of the existence of this book tells me you are he who the Lord sends this day thanks to my disobedient daughter. If you are a true descendant of the Kings of Ildar then only you can read from its holy book. This is the test of a true King of Ildar and this we will see soon.

“Three generations ago my grandfather spoke of a time before the Kingdom of Ildar was overrun by the great evil. The last of the kings smuggled out of their kingdom a sacred and holy book. It is rumored that they brought it to Jerusalem for safekeeping. All who even heard of the book were sworn to silence or have mysteriously died.

“The great evil marched his armies throughout the land conquering kingdom after kingdom destroying all that was good on earth in search of that book. Many lives have been lost for its safety. For three generations no one has mentioned the book by name lest the evil would come looking for it. It is a powerful book and its words have the power of life and death. Do you understand what I am saying to you Conner of the caves?”

Conner was so much in awe of what he was hearing that he was shocked that he was the person sent to save this book. “I understand how important this is now. I will not mention it by name again, I just didn’t realize.”

Aliyah came back into the room with her hands full of clothes and handed them to Conner and then showed him where he could change. Once he was changed into his new clothes Ben-Aaron stood up and told the family and the few friends gathered in the room to gather up all their things, it was time to go.

Their bundles were large and Conner got the impression that they didn’t plan to return. Conner handed his old clothes to Aliyah to dispose of, but being in a hurry she just threw them under a bed in another room. Conner looked at his new set of old clothes and commented, “How do I look? Now I am one of you?”

Then Ben-Aaron looked at Conner in the light of a torch, “It is an improvement, but soon your beard will grow in and then you will be one of us ... maybe”

By now it was late in the evening and very dark. They had a few torches for light when Ben-Aaron announced “Now we go. Aliyah, help your brother Nathan, you and the others watch our backs. Everyone follow me quietly.”

Chapter Three



Escape From Jerusalem

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

Ben-Aaron led the small group through the dark streets and then into a narrow spot between a house and the city wall. There was a clump of thick bushes and some rocks towards the back of the wall and Conner watched Ben-Aaron disappear into the bushes and then between the rocks. Everyone followed him and found themselves in an ancient system of underground caves that ran throughout Jerusalem. The last of the men through the bushes and rocks was Nathan. He rolled a large stone in front of the small opening and sealed up the entrance.

The few torches they had were their only source of light. Ben-Aaron turned back facing them and said “Stay close to me, it is easy to get lost in here and you will never be found. We have a way to go to get to the secret place so we must hurry.”

Everyone remained silent and stayed close behind Ben-Aaron as he led them through the system of turns and caves with secret doors that only he knew about. Each cave opening gave way to another system of tunnels and secret openings

“We are now under the Temple and it is here that we will find what you are seeking young Conner Daniels.”

Everyone gathered closely around the few torches that were there. Conner didn’t know what Ben-Aaron was expecting to happen, but as they all stood there as silent as they could, they began to hear the sound of a rock moving. Rock on rock, something was opening, Conner could feel it. A gush of air suddenly blew past them like it was coming from another dark cave and there appeared the glow of a soft blue light.”

Suddenly Ben-Aaron raised his hands and said something in his native Hebrew language and everyone fell to the ground. Conner looked around and then he too fell on the ground with them. “What’s going on here?” Conner whispered to Aliyah who was next to him.

“Quiet, this is a holy place. The spirit of Jehovah is here, be quiet.” Then she looked back at Conner very quickly and her eyes lit up. “Look there on your neck, it glows.” The medallion had begun to glow and now everyone became a little scared of Conner and moved back away. Even he was getting a little afraid too.

Ben-Aaron stood up and went to Conner and helped him stand to his feet. “If you are who you say, then this is your time to prove your lineage, otherwise you will die right here. I cannot help you any longer, this is your destiny.” Ben-Aaron backed up and left Conner standing there in front of the old box covered with what appeared to be a royal covering. The entire box was glowing in a soft blue light.

Conner chanced a look back at Ben-Aaron, “What do I do?”

“First take off your shoes, this is a holy place. Then you must take the book out of its container and read from it. It will tell you what you must do, or it will burn your eyes until you are blind if you are not of the lineage of the kings.”

“It will do WHAT? When were you going to tell me that part?” said Conner.

“Conner, you complain like a lamb before the altar of sacrifice. Be strong and read from the book”

“We need to have a talk later,” Conner said to him. For now Conner just looked at the box aglow in the blue light wondering if he dared to open it. He really wasn’t in the mood to have his eyes burned out today.

Then from somewhere around the box a voice called to him “Conner Daniels, son of the ancient kings, trust in what I have told you. Open the box.”

“Where did that come from?” Conner said. He looked around and no one was looking up. “Who said that?”

Ben-Aaron told him, “No one said anything Conner, we are silent.”

Suddenly another gust of wind blew around the group and still no one looked up. It was just Conner and the box. Again everyone heard the same voice, “Open the box.”

Conner took a deep breath and stepped forward and removed the royal draping that covered the box and handed them to Ben-Aaron. He looked at the ancient box and in a few seconds he lifted the lid off of the Royal Box. There was the sound of air rushing out of the box. “This has been closed a long time,” proclaimed Conner, only a small amount of a very bright light shot out of the box. The cave lit-up and everything could be seen perfectly. The darkness was gone. Everyone gasped at the sudden flash of the light.

Now Conner was curious for sure. He looked in the box but it appeared to be empty. “It’s empty, it’s empty” Conner shouted to everyone.

Ben-Aaron was very upset and almost in shock. “No, No it’s not. You can’t see the book because of the Zephaniah stone inside the box. It hides what is in the box. Feel around for the book and then lift it out.” Conner felt down as far as he could stretch and sure enough his hands hit something his eyes could not see. Then with both hands he grabbed onto the book and lifted it out of its box. Once it was clear of the box it suddenly came into view of everyone and the soft blue light now moved as he moved the book.

READING THE BOOK

Everyone was looking at the ground until they heard Conner tell them, “I have the book in my hands. Can you see it?” Then they all looked up and uttered sounds of amazement.

Ben-Aaron spoke up, “We are looking at a book that has not been seen for hundreds of years since the last King of Ildar sent it here for safe keeping. It is a sacred book for it is the very words that Jehovah spoke to bring all things into existence. We must know if you can read its words and find out if you are a true heir of the Kings. I will hold the book so you may open it and read.”

So Conner was about to find out if what that angel told him was true or not. Otherwise as the story goes, he would be blind for the rest of my life. So he opened the book and on the first page he saw symbols he did not recognize. He believed them to be an ancient language, but he did not have any idea what they meant. The symbols were blue with a silver trimmed edge and most peculiar of all, there seemed to be the same soft blue light behind each symbol. Everyone was watching Conner and waiting to see if he would be blinded or even fall over dead, but he was still there and standing. They took this as a good sign.

“Well ...” said Ben-Aaron “What does it say, tell us.”

“It says nothing, these are symbols ... wait a minute, I think they are moving, just sort of moving in place. Oh my ... it’s ...” A long pause ensued.

“It’s what? Conner ... tell us please. Are you ok? Can you see or have you been blinded?”

The next thing Conner knew the blue light of the book began to reach out towards him and surrounded him. He was engulfed in it and for the first time in his life he felt an incredible warmth and feeling of peace that he had never felt before. Conner suddenly knew that everything was going to be okay for the Lord was there. Without a single thing being said, he received understanding beyond his years and beyond the physical. He understood the vastness of God and of His creation. Something was changing in him and for the first time in his life he was experiencing incredible love like no other. This was where he knew all men wanted to be, washed in the love of his Creator.

He did not realize it, but Ben-Aaron had stepped back from him, not willing to interfere in any way. The light of the book stretched out over the distance to cover Ben-Aaron and Conner heard everyone gasp and again fall on their faces before him and the blue light. He wondered why they are doing this.

Then Ben-Aaron said, “My most humble apologies to you your majesty, we doubt you no longer. You are truly the son of the ancient kings.”

“Why do you say this to me? What’s going on?”

Then Ben Aaron said, “Look at your clothes, it’s your clothes.”

Conner lifted up his arms and looked at the clothes he was dressed in. The clothes he had on had changed and he was no longer wearing the clothes Aliyah had given him. He was wearing what would be considered royal garments from his head to his toes.

The symbols on the page began to move again. Conner sensed the presence of something next to him. It was a presence he could feel. He suddenly had the overwhelming urge to bow down before this presence and to worship it. This was the person or spirit of the book. Without having been told anything, everyone knew they were in the presence of a Most Holy and righteous God, and then came the voice that Conner had heard earlier.

“**Conner Daniels** my servant. I have called you out and brought you to this time for you are the last of the lineage of the ancient kings who I did make covenant with. My covenants are from everlasting to everlasting. By faith you

have listened to my voice, so you shall be blessed among all who have come before you.

“Hear me and obey my command to keep my book safe from those who seek to destroy it. There is a small remnant of my people who have taken refuge in me. Take the book and those here to this place where I shall lead you till the danger has past, but beware the evil one still seeks a voice to read from the book. He will seek you out, even now he knows. Make haste for the hour is quickly approaching.”

Then the light slowly faded away and back into the book. Everyone stood up and looked at Conner with amazement. The light, the royal robes and the crown slowly faded away and soon Conner was back in the clothes given to him by Aliyah.

To Conner’s surprise it was Nathan who spoke up with excitement in his voice. “You are as the prophet declared, you are a King. You are not of our people, but Jehovah has chosen you to help us. Command us and we shall obey. My sword is yours to command. What shall we do my lord?”

“Thank you Nathan. Does this mean you’re not interested in trying out that new sword on me?”

“Never my King, I am as a servant to you now. Please excuse my misguided desire to kill you earlier.”

ESCAPING JERUSALEM

Conner had to laugh just a little under his breath, but said to them all, “I believe we should do as the LORD has commanded us and the book will lead the way. Have the men carry the box and the draping that covered the book and let’s find out where the book takes us.”

Ben-Aaron wanted to tell Conner something so he stopped. “Conner, I believe we do not have much time until the attack begins so we must hurry. My son is much nicer than the Babylonian army will be.”

“Then we better hurry,” Conner said to him.

Conner carried the book next to his chest as the small group began to move deeper into the caves. The light from the book began to glow and proceeded out in front of them and like a compass it began to direct their footsteps. Soon they had come to what appeared to be the end of the caves and tunnel system and

it seemed to Conner that they were now trapped. They stopped to contemplate what to do next when the light from the book appeared on the cave wall and stayed there for several minutes.

Ben-Aaron turned to Conner saying, “What is it telling us? We cannot walk through rock.”

Conner still holding the book told everyone, “Believe that the LORD makes a way when there seems to be no way.”⁵ Then as everyone looked at the light that shone upon the wall, the same area of the wall began to fade away. They could now see the land outside and before their very eyes a new passage had formed that lead them out of the caves to the outside.

It was Aliyah that exclaimed “He parted the waters for Moses, now he makes an opening in the rocks. He makes a way where there is no way.” They quickly followed the light that led them through the newly formed hole in the rock. Once they were all on the outside and safe they looked back and to their surprise there was no hole that they had just passed through. It was like there never was one.

Ben-Aaron raised his hands toward heaven and the rest did the same and gave thanks for this true miracle. Conner said to the group “Remember this moment when the LORD your God brought you from out of the earth to save you for a greater purpose.” Conner didn’t know where those words of wisdom were coming from, but somehow they just were coming to him at the time when they were needed. As he contemplated these things he heard that voice once again in his thoughts say, “My Spirit is with you, HE will put the words in your mouth to speak. Listen to Him.”

He quietly whispered under my breath “Yes LORD.”



Part 2



Chapter Four



Jerusalem's Final Hour

For over two hundred years Judah had not heeded the warnings of the prophets, but rather they killed the messenger the Lord sent to them.⁶ Like their sister Israel⁷ they would be punished because of their idolatry and their rejection of God. The Lord was about to bring severe discipline.⁸



THE KING'S DAUGHTER

Now unknown to everyone except a few, there was a daughter of King Zedekiah named Rachel.⁹ She was the youngest and most favored amongst the children of the King. Therefore when the first rumors of the coming again of the King of Babylon, the youngest of the King's children, Rachel and her hand maiden Gabriella were smuggled out of the city by night to a place called Hebron, twenty miles to the south.

Being the youngest she was the only one they dared try to take out for there were spies in Jerusalem and no one could be trusted.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

It was in the eleventh year of King Zedekiah's reign that the city of Jerusalem came under siege. For many months the people suffered inside the city walls. They were starving to death and the situation had become desperate beyond all imagination. Now it looked like the end was close at hand.¹⁰

In what looked their final hours, the King and his family and what was left of the army made an attempt to escape through a secret tunnel. The end of the tunnel took them to the plains of Jericho where they emerged only to find more of

the Babylonian army. The troops quickly chased off Zedekiah's army and took the King and his family to Riblah where King Nebuchadnezzar was camped.

There, after seeing his sons killed before him, Zedekiah was blinded, bound, and taken captive back to Babylon, where he remained a prisoner until his death.

In the meantime while the King was fleeing the city, Nebuzaradan's Chief Commander of the Babylonian army broke through the walls of Jerusalem. He set fire to the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building and the temple of the Lord were he set on fire and the great walls of the city were destroyed. In the process he also killed many of the people in the city and surrounding areas, even the children and young maidens. The number of those killed inside and outside of the city was two hundred and ninety thousand. Although many were killed, just as many were carried away into exile in Babylon. Nebuzaradan left behind the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.¹¹

THE UNKNOWN GARMENTS

As the Kings army burned and ransacked the city taking what they pleased, they began a house by house search for anything of value or usefulness. The evil spirits of the dark under-lord led the soldiers straight to the house of Ben-Aaron or where he used to be. The soldiers tore every piece of furniture apart and then finally the bed where they found Conner's old clothes. These were not clothes like anything they had ever seen before. So the clothes were quickly taken to Nebuzaradan who in turn took them before the King in Riblah.

The King looked at the clothes closely and examined every piece especially the shoes. "Commander Nebuzaradan, where did you find these garments? I have never seen such things as these?"

"Oh Great King, my lord, they were found in a house within the city, where I believe there was a spy among them. We cannot tell where the spy is from based on only these garments."

The King handed them over to his chief priest who was full of the evil spirit which lived in their land. As the priest held up each piece of clothing he pondered not about what the piece was, but of what fabric it was made of.

“I do not know the origins of these clothes and never have these types of garments been found in all of our history. Whoever these belong to could show us many things, or he could potentially be our worse enemy. The cloth for each garment is unknown to us and I believe they are not of anything of this world. The sandals are very strange sandals, if you can call them sandals, but we know they are worn on the feet. We cannot explain these garments my lord. This person whoever he may be, is one to be feared, my Lord. For if these garments are this advanced over our own clothing, then the person to whom they belong is mighty indeed.”

With this news King Nebuchadnezzar turned back to Commander Nebuzaradan.¹²

“Commander I believe this city was hiding a potential enemy of our kingdom and of me. Take one thousand troops from among my army and find this enemy and if he is a man, bring him to me in chains, but if he is not a mortal then capture him in this vase and bring him to me. Take the chief priest with you as his special powers may be useful to you.”

THE HUNT BEGINS

So Nebuzaradan and the high priest together with the soldiers who found the clothes made their way back to Ben-Aaron’s burned out house where the clothes had been. There was nothing left to examine or to get any clue from as to where they had gone.

Nebuzaradan was very upset now. He could not return to the king with nothing. So he turned to the priest, “You find them, you are the priest, you have power. You tell me where they are, or I will have you cut up in tiny pieces and fed to the dogs ... I demand to know, WHERE ARE THEY?”

“Commander, be calm and let me hear what the gods tell me.”

The priest began to chant and then went into a trance. For a moment all was quiet, and then the priest opened his eyes and announced, “The one we seek is outside the city and he has help. They are too far away, but I have another way to find them. Meet me outside the Eastern gate of the city.”

Nebuzaradan and several of his men waited over an hour for the priest to come to the Eastern gate. Then the priest arrived with a hawk on his arm. Nebuzaradan came up to him with disbelief in his voice. “Can your hawk find this

person we're looking for? You don't even know what direction they went off in do you?"

"Learn from me Commander. The hawk is just not a hawk, but has the spirit of the god Anu, the god of the highest heaven. I have cut a small piece of material from the clothes that were found. The hawk carries this piece in its beak. With this piece of cloth Anu will help the hawk focus on where this person is. By the power of Anu I can see as the hawk sees. I will know as soon as our friend finds him. The hawk will not stop till he has finished his mission. We will find this enemy of ours."

With that being said, the high priest let the hawk go. First it went very high into the sky and then circled the city a few times. Then he made a sharp turn and headed southeast away from the city. "Now we wait," said the priest.

THE ROAD SOUTH

Once Conner and those of his group were outside of the cave and had a moment to look around, it was Ben-Aaron who spoke up first. "We are quite a ways from Jerusalem. I know all of the land of Israel and Judah, so let me see from where the sun rises. I would say we have exited out of the cavern on the south end of Jerusalem but how far to the south I do not know. This road will soon be traveled by army looking for anyone who escaped ... like us."

Everyone looked around for any indication that Ben-Aaron was right. They had exited the caverns onto a small rocky path. Then Conner heard a voice speak to him in his thoughts, "Follow the path of rocks."

After hearing the voice speak to him Conner announced with great confidence, "If the Lord didn't want us to follow the rocky path then why did he put us right here standing on it? I believe we are far enough away from the fighting that as long as we are moving away from Jerusalem we will be safe." Everyone agreed with him and so off they started without a clue where they were headed.

Conner shouted over to Ben-Aaron, "Since we are headed south away from Jerusalem and we stay on this road, what towns will we find?"

"There are several towns along this road your majesty, so we will just have to wait and see which one Jehovah tells us to stop at. Then we will know where

we are going. We might find refuge for a night in the few small villages along the way if the people haven't been taken away or killed."

They had been walking for most of the day taking breaks every hour so the women could rest. If the truth were known Conner could use the rest himself. Towards the tenth hour of the day he made an announcement, "I think we should find a place to make camp for the rest of the night, everyone is tired. In the morning we should follow this road and see where it goes."

Aliyah turned to her father, "This is a good idea father. We are all tired. Let us camp here and then we can go on in the morning."

"But this place will be crawling with the Babylonian army at first light, said Ben-Aaron."

Conner went over to Ben-Aaron and put his hand up on his shoulder, "Believe me when I tell you that God is with us tonight and He will keep us safe. Trust in God."

"Okay, we camp here tonight," said Ben-Aaron, "but if we die, it will not be my fault."

EYES IN THE SKY

As the small group was busy getting ready for the night, unbeknown to them there appeared in the sky above them the hawk that the High Priest had released into the air to find the stranger. The Babylonian god of Anu, otherwise known to everyone else as Satan, guided the hawk still holding the piece of Conner's clothing in his mouth.

As the hawk came closer to the encampment below the angel Zurel, standing in the clouds above took out his sword and plunged it into a cloud and suddenly the cloud fell to earth below in fog and acted as a covering for the group. They were not even aware of the hawk circling above. The group was under the protection of this mighty angel, the Chief Captain of the League of Guardians.

CONNER'S DREAM

The men started a fire and everyone laid down around it for some warmth. Before Ben-Aaron closed his eyes, he remarked to Conner that it was strange to

see a fog cover this time of year and one so high above us. In five minutes he was asleep and in a short time everyone else joined him.

Then suddenly while Conner was sleeping or almost asleep, he heard his name called out.

“CONNER, man out of time, what are you doing here Conner? You have come to take what is not yours, but is mine.”

In a dream or out of it Conner could not tell, but he said back to the voice “Who are you?”

“I can give you the kingdoms of this world, or I can be your worst enemy, the choice is yours.”

“I don’t understand, who are you?”

“I heard someone reading from the book. It was you, wasn’t it? You are holding the book very tightly I see.

“How do you know who read from the book? I was brought here to save the book. I am the son of the ancient kings of old and I must get it to safety and finish what they started.”

“A son of the kings you say? Then you are a reader also? He was right to hide you from me. Now that is something. I will make you the same offer I made to your fathers. For just a little time spent reading for me and I can make you great. I will give you a kingdom and you will be feared among all the nations of the world. I will come to you tomorrow for your answer. I hope it is the correct answer for your sake and the others or you may never see your home again. I have my armies everywhere. You cannot hide from me, Conner, for even now they are looking for you. Choose well.”

A SECOND MEETING WITH ZUREL

Conner suddenly woke up and jumped to his feet. He looked around for a moment in the night and saw the dying embers of the camp fire where everyone was asleep. “Just a silly dream I guess.” Looking around he noticed a light off in the distance, “I better go find out what that light is all about,” he mumbled to himself.

As he got close to the light he noticed the medallion that Zurel had given to him began to glow and the closer to the light source the brighter it became.

“Oh my! ... It’s you!” There up against a rock with the brush all around him stood the angel again surrounded by a beautiful light.

“I am Zurel.”

“I’ve been wanting to talk to you,” said Conner. “You’re the same one who got me into all this mess. Where have you been? You see what is going on here and how am I supposed to get home now?”

“You have stepped into your destiny, Conner Daniels. You now carry the burden of many as did your fathers before you. Know that He who is, sees you, and He will be with you, just believe.”

“What am I supposed to do?”

“Have faith and trust in God. I have come to give you this warning. The evil one seeks you out to read for him and in so doing he seeks to be like the Most High among men. He seeks to be worshipped and praised among men taking for himself that which belongs to Jehovah. He is a liar and the father of all lies.”

“Let me tell you something Zurel, you just missed him five minutes ago. He was just here and something else too, he said they were already looking for me. How can they even know that I am here. We left the same night I got here?” Zurel just looked at Conner as a small smile began to appear and then disappeared.

“They found your old clothes under a bed, but that is why I am here, to give you hope, knowing that the Lord sees all things and sent me with this message for you. ‘Resist the evil, and it will flee from you. For this cause have I set my guardians among you. Remember your medallion when you’re in your darkest hour. Press the jewel and they shall come. Remember you are not alone in your fight.’”

With that Zurel again faded away and Conner was left standing in the dark. He quickly shouted back at the angel, “Who is the guardian? Zurel ... hello Zurel. That guy comes and goes too quick.” Conner made his way back to the others and finally lay down and soon fell asleep again.

THE JOURNEY

The next thing Conner felt was Ben-Aaron shaking him and telling him to wake up. “We need to get moving Conner. The women made some food for everyone. You were not awake so Aliyah held some back for you. We were all

very hungry. I am sorry there was not much left, but you are young, you will make it.”

“I will make it? Wait just a minute, hold on. I have a question to ask you.”

“Conner, we are in a hurry. We are fleeing for our lives. We cannot wait.”

“Yes you can and right now too. I found out some things last night ... the Babylonians know about me, because they have found my old clothes. Now how did that happen if you buried them like you said?”

“How did you find this out? How do you know? Aliyah buried them in the ground like I told her. Let me get the girl over here.” Within a few minutes Ben-Aaron came back with Aliyah.

“Aliyah, what did you do with my old clothes your father asked you to bury in the ground?”

“Well ... ah ... we were in such a hurry and I had nothing to dig with and I was afraid I would be left behind.” Then there appeared a few tears that ran down her cheek. “So I threw them under the bed thinking they would get burned up when they burned the houses down.”

Ben-Aaron was in shock. “Aliyah my daughter, again you did not listen to your father and now they know about Conner and they are looking for him. Oh my child, this is not good.”

Aliyah ran off crying. Conner felt bad for her, but now he felt a greater urgency in getting to wherever this road would lead them. He gathered his few things and quickly went to the front of the group and they were off again headed south and to where, they did not know. A simple observation of the path suggested to Conner that they were not the only ones who had gone down this path lately. “This could be a good thing for us” he thought.

As Conner thought about the situation they were in, the only thing that would help would be if he could speed up the small group because his fear was that the enemy they had escaped from might soon be upon them.

THE LORD PROVIDES A RIDE

No truer words could have been spoken by anyone of them, that they needed to move faster and put more distance between them and Jerusalem. It seemed to Conner that if he thought on something long enough, that it could be



considered a type of a prayer of the heart. If that was true then he had been doing a lot of prayer lately. Just two hours more down the road and there it was, “Our prayers are answered” shouted Conner.

There it was on the side of the road a wagon with a couple of horses attached to it. Several of the men ran over to lay claim to it.

“Ben-Aaron,” said Conner, look around and see if this wagon and horses belong to anyone before we get too excited and end up stealing what is not ours.”

“Conner, these have been abandoned, or the owner has been killed or dragged off. The horses just ran away and decided to stop here. Jehovah has provided for us this day.”

Then without anything being said everyone climbed into the wagon and sat down. “Don’t look at me,” Conner said. “I have never ridden a horse. I have no idea what I’m doing with them.”

“Okay,” said Ben-Aaron, “I will do it. Someone has to save us and get us to where Jehovah leads us. We will be there later today so hold on.”

Off they went with Ben-Aaron at the reins and the wagon was making better time than they were by walking. It wasn’t much longer before the road Ben-Aaron kept them on began to weave around the hills and up an incline and down again. Conner shouted out to Ben-Aaron, “What are you doing? Why not just stay to the road, it is smoother.”

“Conner, I make a short-cut. It is faster for us. You have to hold on tight.” Conner envisioned a nice soft mattress in the back of the wagon about that time, they could have used one, as the bumpy road was getting hard on the backside.

Conner shouted over at Aliyah, “Has your father ever driven a wagon before?”

“Today Conner is his first time. He is pretty good isn’t he?”

Conner just smiled and thought to himself “I’ll just be quiet.” He thanked God each time the horses managed to pull the wagon up another hill. When the hills became too steep and too large then Ben-Aaron stuck to the trail and went around the hills, either way we were making better time than if we were walking.

As Conner looked around at the landscape he noticed it was very barren. There was evidence that some people had been through here already. There were broken pieces of wagons and even the land was blackened by the fires that must have been so horrible to experience. Even a few weapons were strewn about the

country side. It was evident to everyone that there must have been a lot of fighting to the south of Jerusalem. They all hoped it was all over with. They did pass the burned out remains of a few villages. Ben-Aaron would stopped to tell everyone these villages used to be full of people and now they were all gone maybe even all dead, or taken as slaves.

“Our sin was great in the eyes of Jehovah to cause so much death.”

Of all the destruction Conner saw laying out amongst the landscape of land he thought to myself, “How can we survive here, am I leading us in the right direction, or to our death?”

Conner had many questions, but he remembered the words of Zurel, “Just believe,” that was the last word Zurel told him and so he chose in his heart to believe.

For Conner it felt like he had been sitting in the bumpy cart for days. He felt all the rocks, cracks in the road, and plants that Ben-Aaron was running over and hitting. All he wanted by this time was for the jostling of the wagon to stop and for no more bumps or rocks.

By late in the day they came into what looked like a small village on the outskirts of a larger town that could be seen in the distance. Small homes were built up against the hills and in some places even a second layer of small one room houses were on the top of the first level homes. They were not much to look at, but served a purpose and provided some shelter from the elements especially at night.

In some ways the ancient structures reminded Conner of apartments back home, not the nice well-kept ones, but the run down and rat invested ones that you wished the city would tear down.

Finally the wagon came to a stop. “We are here,” declared Ben-Aaron, “Everyone out of the wagon.” Thank goodness the shaking and bumpy ride was over. It took Conner longer to get out of the wagon then it took to get in the wagon.

Ben-Aaron shouted back to Conner.

“Yes Conner, we are finally here, be happy.”

“I am, but do you have any idea of where here is?”

“Still I do not know. I can only say we are where Jehovah has led us.”

Chapter Five



Hebron

WELCOME TO HEBRON

Suddenly there appeared several people who peeked their heads out of the house openings trying to see who had just come into their small community.

Conner looked over at Ben-Aaron and commented to him “There are people here. They probably think we are here to kill them or something. Shout something out to them so they will know we are not the enemy.”

Then Ben-Aaron raised his hands in the air and then shouted as loud as he could “S H A L O M my brothers we are people of Judah. We are your brethren.”

Conner looked over at Ben-Aaron “Well that will either make them hate us, or they will love us. Let’s see.”

It wasn’t long before many people came out of the houses. Soon they were greeting the new comers like they were family that they had not seen for a long time.

It wasn’t long before even more people were outside. They were excited to see the new comer’s, everyone wanted to know any news of Jerusalem. Conner for one just wanted to know where we had ended up at. His eyes caught sight of one of the younger women there and so he shouted out to her, “Will you be so kind as to tell me where we are?”

She came over to Conner and said, “You are a stranger to our community aren’t you? Everyone knows this place because it is special, it is the outskirts of Hebron. The city itself was abandoned except for those too old or too weak to leave. The Babylonians invaded here a few years ago and made slaves out of the people and carried them off. Slowly a few had come back just before I came. Now we all work to help each other survive. Everyone is scared. They fear the Babylonians will come back looking for people who fled the fighting in

Jerusalem. I am especially scared for my family. I fear I will never see them again.”

Ben-Aaron came over to Conner because he overheard the woman say that they were just outside Hebron. “I heard you say this is Hebron? I had many friends here so now my heart is broken for them. It is a shame that the resting place of our father Abraham should be so disgraced. So woman, what is your name?”

At first she was reluctant to tell them her name, but then finally she decided it was safe. “My name is Rachel. Some of us have been here in hiding for a long time now, but I have a promise from Jehovah, Himself, that it will not be long till he will send someone to lead us out.”

Ben-Aaron turned his head and looked at Conner.

Conner quickly said to him, “I don’t know anything and don’t look at me that way.”

Rachel looked puzzled over Conner’s comment, but continued, “This entire area is considered part of Hebron. There are some people in the larger part of the city just over those hills. At first they helped us with some food, but when they heard the Babylonian army arrived in Jerusalem and they stopped helping in fear of being killed for aiding us. Now we scratch for our food and water wherever we can find it.

“What you see here was at first very run down and uninhabitable. It was mostly a place for the birds and animals to hide in. Now we are the animals and we hide here. Don’t expect anything more than dirt and some rocks.”

She pointed to Ben-Aaron. “You are one of us and we need your help if you are willing kind sir?”

“Yes my child, we all will help. We are in this with you. Now we will help the others for it will be dark soon. This is Conner, he is not of our people, but his people have been a friend to us for hundreds of years. Can you find him and the box he carries a place to stay? I will explain later my child.”

Rachel looked over at Conner then smiled. “I think I can find this stranger, called Conner, a place. I know of a place most suited for him. It is not the palace, but maybe I can make it more suitable for you. You are a royal aren’t you?”

“Why do you ask me that?” he said.

“The box is covered in royal coverings with a royal seal on it and that color only the royals are permitted to have.”

“You are a very smart young woman,” Conner said. “We all have a secret or two and I’d like to keep it that way as long as I can.”

Rachel just smiled at Conner, “We all have secrets now don’t we?”

CONNER’S PLACE AMONG THE PEOPLE

Soon all the people including Ben-Aaron and Aliyah had gone off trying to find shelter among the abandoned homes. Rachel and Conner and the box that held the secret were the only ones left standing there.

“I will find you a place to stay Conner, like I said I know of a good place suited just for you. It is larger and on the top level where you won’t be interrupted so much and can spend time in prayer.”

“Sounds great Rachel, but let me get some help with this box first, I can’t lift it alone.” Conner looked over at Nathan and another man in their group and waved to them for some help. Soon the two men were carrying the box following Conner, and Conner was following Rachel. They went up a series of dirt steps leading up to the second level. These were set back about twenty feet from the edge of the first level. This particular set of houses only had one second level house on top and that’s where Rachel took Conner.

“You can use this one here,” she said. “It is one of the larger ones.” Just then Nathan and his friend brought in the box and set it towards the back on a particular rock that looked like it was made for this use, and then they left and went back to the others. After they left Rachel told Conner, “I have to go back down for a little bit and help the other women with the food. We all pitch in and help. I will be back and bring you something to eat. I hope it is to your liking. I will try to find you some blankets or whatever we have to make you comfortable. I see much, but say little. Your secrets are safe with me your Majes... I’m sorry I meant Conner. I have maybe said too much already.”

A MOMENT TO REFLECT

Conner was alone at last and looked around at where he had ended up. He never could have imagined this. It was getting dark and he had no food or water, but he was hoping Rachel would solve that problem for him. He had no bed and

no one that he would call a friend. Then he started thinking of what he had back home. A big bed right now sure sounded great to him. He looked up at the ceiling, “Lord in heaven am I doing something wrong? Is this how you take care of your people ... and why me?” Conner suddenly went silent for a minute and then the thought went his mind, *“Now I did it. I opened my mouth and said words that I really didn’t mean.”* Then came the guilt, he felt ashamed of himself. He was just tired and maybe anxious. It was getting cold as the sun was going down. He was tired for the long bumpy trip there. He was feeling every rock in the road.

“Lord, are you sure you have the right man for this job?” His doubt was even clear to him and Satan wasn’t about to let him forget it. He sure felt ashamed for not having faith enough in God, but he did believe in God so why did he question this? Satan made sure he looked at his circumstances because then his eyes are off of God. He was still feeling pretty bad for doubting God, so he just stopped talking to himself and sat down and waited until Rachel returned.

TIME ALONE WITH RACHEL

Rachel was gone about an hour and by then it had gotten dark out and people started lighting some torches for light and each house had some candles burning in them. Then Conner noticed someone coming up the stairs with a torch and carrying a bundle. He quickly jumped up and ran over to help them. It was Rachel coming back as she said she would.

“Oh Conner you are kind to run and help me. I have brought you several things that will help you tonight.”

Conner grabbed hold of the bundle she had so she could place the torch in the hole that was made in the wall.

“I have candles for you tonight and some bread and a little meat and water, but this is all we have. I have a blanket for you because the night air is cold I know.” She immediately went about getting the candles lit and the blanket spread out. She sat down on the blanket and began getting the food prepared. She looked up at Conner. “Are you going to just stand there or sit down here and join me.”

“Oh, yes I’m sorry. I guess I just got too wrapped up in watching you, you’re amazing.”

“No Conner, Jehovah is amazing. I am just His servant. While I was gathering up some food I met a young woman, the one who came with you named Aliyah. We had a good talk and she told me many things concerning you.”

“I bet she did, that Aliyah likes to talk. Was there anything she didn’t tell you?”

“I cannot tell you what she didn’t tell me because she hasn’t told me yet, but I know enough for now. You know I picked this place for you because it is set off from the main group of people so you can have time to talk to Jehovah and have peace so you may ponder what He has for you to do. Jehovah has given me a promise that He would send someone to lead us out of here to a place He is preparing for us. When I heard about you and that ... oh, nothing I heard nothing. Forgive me.”

“Rachel, since Aliyah has already told you more than she should of, why don’t you just tell me what you now know so I won’t be guessing all the time, besides I ’m curious.”

“What I heard is that you are a special man who Jehovah has brought to us. What I believe is that in this small place of refuge Jehovah will come to you and you will find your answers and your heart will be calm. You are the one who will lead us out of here wherever Jehovah has for us to go.”

They sat there a while and made some small talk and she told Conner more about the people there and their lives in this place. Everyone here had a story to tell of personal tragedy and escaping certain death. They all found their way here and they have been waiting on the Lord ever since. Now Conner had even more to talk to the Lord about.

Rachel spent an hour or so talking with Conner and thanks to her he had some food and water. Soon it was time for her to go. So they said their good-byes and she was gone into the night back to her house. Maybe in the morning he could focus on what to do next. Right now he had no idea.

Conner thought to himself, *“That maybe he had done the job he was brought here for. Maybe he could go home and if so how would he do that?”*

There was a large rock inside of the house that had been flattened on top so it was more like a rock table. The men had set the box down on the rock so it was not sitting on the ground. Conner decided that in the morning he would venture out and see what he could do to help these people survive here. For now it looked like this was going to be their home until God moved them out. One thing

Conner now understood very well was that God would make a way. He had seen it many times with my own eyes.

It had been a long day and Conner was particularly tired and sore. In the morning he would have to think about all this. Right then he was just tired.

GABRIELLA

Morning comes fast when you're really tired the night before. Sure enough Conner was still sound asleep when he heard a voice calling out to him, "Conner ... Conner wake up, I have brought you some food" It was Rachel who had come to check on him. "Everyone is up and about and talking about the attack on Jerusalem. I wanted to check on you since you didn't show up. Some of the people that were with you when you came here are still looking for a place to live in, but do not worry they will be okay."

While some were looking for shelter others were looking for other things too. As everyone was gathered together talking, Nathan whispered to his dad in private to ask him a question. "Father have you noticed the absence of the men here. There are a few old men, but other than those who came with us there are no young fighting men."

"I noticed that too," said his father. "There are no young men because they were all taken into the army to defend Jerusalem. You would have been taken also, except that I know important people who over looked you for my sake and the sake of your mother. May she rest in peace.

"You are our only son and have to carry on the family name. So be happy and give thanks because Jehovah has spared you for our sake, but now He blesses you with a selection of bountiful young maidens. I know about these things son, after all I found your mother didn't I? There is one I have noticed who has been watching you from a distance and that is a good sign. Find a reason to talk to her and don't say anything about killing, just wear your sword around your waist. Women like to see your sword. It makes them think you are a strong fighter who will protect them.

"She is still looking over here you should go over and make conversation with her. Try to be nice. She isn't one of your friends you roll around in the dirt fighting with, remember she is a girl. Now get over there now and at least find out her name."

Nathan was never very good around the girls and the prettier they were the more nervous he became. He would rather kill one hundred men with his new sword than talk to one small female. This one had him almost shaking as he pretended to be talking to other people while working his way closer to where she was.

Finally, as Nathan pretended to be interested in something in the opposite direction, he heard a voice behind him, “Hello there kind sir. I see by your sword that you must be a soldier or a fierce warrior. We need all the fighting men we can get here.”

Nathan turned around not knowing what to say. “I ... I ... well yes I am a warrior, this sword is special to me. It has been in my family for many generations.” At the same time Nathan was thinking, *“I’m such a liar and I’m going to burn in hell for this.”*

Gabriella could see the young man was very nervous, but still somewhat on the handsome side. “I want to welcome you and your friends here. Anytime our fellow countrymen are reunited it is a good thing. It makes me feel especially secure that our numbers are growing and now there is one more sword to add to the few we have that will protect us.”

“I will do everything in my power to fight and protect our people should that time come. So before I have to fight and maybe even die a cruel death protecting such a beautiful lady as yourself, may I have the pleasure of your name?”

“Hum ... yes you may and only because you asked so nicely. My name is Gabriella.”¹³

“That is a good name, a strong name. I will always remember it. So what do you do here among the people?”

“I care for them as though each one was my own family. We are all family in Jehovah we are all Hebrew. So I help them get food and water. I do what I can for the good of all the people here. There are many old and feeble. It took great effort to get them out of Jerusalem while we could still go. These are the true followers of Jehovah, who still serve Him and keep His commandments. They would not bow down as did the others to foreign gods of wood. Many days we suffered in the heat and lost many of our friends, but Jehovah was good and sent food on eagle’s wings and water from springs that we never knew were there before.

“Truly Jehovah is our protector, and He sends us many who need help and now He sends you and gave you a sword so you can help. I hope your presence here does not mean I have to work harder?”

“No, it will not be like that. I will help you care for these people. When I’m here you will have all the help you need.” Nathan had no idea what he was getting himself into.

Gabriella was impressed. “I will see if your zeal will last, or if your words are just empty babblings to gain my attention.”

Then Gabriella went about her business and Nathan went back to his father to tell him what he found out. “Father, I did like you said and found out her name is Gabriella. She has taken it upon herself to care for the needs of these people. That is a very honorable thing, don’t you think?”

“Nathan, I was doing my own asking around while you were over talking to that girl. She is close friends with Rachel the youngest daughter of King Zedekiah, she is here also. What did the girl say to you son?”

“Well ... she said ... then I said ... then, I think I got talked into helping her look after the people. I’m not sure how she did that either.”

Then Ben-Aaron looked at his son, “Are you sure you have a brain up in that empty head of yours?”

A VISIT WITH RACHEL

A few days had passed and it seemed like everyone had settled into the regiment of living in their little portion of Hebron. Conner had ventured out a little to look around and to get a little familiar with the surroundings and to see what he could do to help. Helping was an issue for he knew nothing of how to live off of the land like those people did. He was raised in the city. By now word had begun to get around and he noticed that the people didn’t get too close to him when he went out.

Rachel had taken it upon herself to see to it that Conner had food and the few comforts that were available. She seemed to be overly attentive to his needs all without having to be asked. This last time she came up Conner could tell she was very tired.

“Rachel, you need a rest. Why don’t you have a seat on one of these rocks and catch your breath for a bit, okay?”

“Yes, that would be very helpful for sure. Just a little rest then in a moment I will be fine.”

“You have been running yourself to death helping me. You know I can do some things for myself. I’m not helpless.”

“But Conner I know ...”

“Wait a minute before you speak, catch your breath first,” a few minutes later she continued.

“Aliyah has told me more about you. She says you are the son of the ancient Kings of the Kingdom of Ildar. I was suspicious at first when I saw that box. I know it is for the eyes of Kings only. My people have only heard old stories of Ildar and the Kings of old and how they battled the great evil, but we thought they were just stories.

“We believed their kingdom and family died out many years ago, so learning of you is a bit of a surprised for us. Of all the kingdoms of that time, it was only Ildar that befriended Israel. Only they believed in the one God of Israel, who is Jehovah. Aliyah will not say how you came to be here or among our people. She only said that Jehovah has not forsaken us and that He has sent you.”

Conner rubbed my head trying to think, “That Aliyah, she can spread the news faster than any person I know. Can I trust you more than Aliyah? Can you be told something and no one else will ever hear it?”

“Oh yes Conner, I never repeat anything ... I promise.”

“Hum, well I have a feeling you’re going to find out anyway. Rachel, I am not of this place or this time. I like to explore caves and climb rocks and it is something I enjoy doing. It kind of relaxes me and gives me time alone to think. One day I went into a cave and saw a room that was very bright so I went in to find out why. It turned out that in this room there was an angel messenger of God who you call Jehovah. I was shocked and didn’t believe it at first. He said that I was of an ancient bloodline of the Kings of Ildar and that I was needed here and now.”

“But Conner, didn’t your father ever tell you who you are? Maybe it was because you were stolen as a baby and raised by a tribe of pagans? This has happened many times I have heard.”

“No I wasn’t stolen by pagans.”

“How would you know if you were a baby? How did you escape from them? I would have been so scared. Were you scared?”

This was beginning to sound like another conversation Conner had not too long ago.

“Rachel, before you go off asking me a lot of questions faster than I can answer them, let me finish first. Anyway the angel told me of a book, a very old and sacred book that I alone had to rescue and that I needed to come here and get it and take it to safety. So I agreed, but had no idea how to get here.”

“As I was leaving the cave an earthquake happened and when I finally got out I was in this place and time and Aliyah was standing there. She brought me to her father and in the middle of the night we found the book and then escaped and came here.”

AM I QUALIFIED?

“I have been thinking about all this and I just feel I’m not qualified to do this and lead anyone or be entrusted with such a task. I have my own self-doubts and so I stay up here mostly waiting to see if God will change his mind and send me home. So you see I’d like it if not everyone knew this. Can you keep this to yourself and make it a secret between only us?”

By then Rachel was well rested and had listened to every word Conner shared with her. “Oh yes Conner, I can keep your secret and I love that you told me this. Because you have shared a secret with me, I will share my secret with you. For some reason I feel you should know who I am, but I need to know, that like me, you can keep my secret?”

“Rachel, anything you tell me will stay only in my heart and will never see my lips. So please go ahead, I’m listening.”

“When the King of Babylon sent his troops into Judah to collect his taxes, it became obvious that he would soon take what he wanted and destroy the rest. My father was rebellious and proud, but feared what was coming. Because of our sin Jehovah was angry with us and our fate would be as Israel’s. We knew this because the prophet Jeremiah foretold our doom.¹⁴

“I am the youngest of the daughters of my father so he quietly had my handmaiden Gabriella and me rushed out of the city and sent here.”

“Your father must love you very much to keep you safe like this knowing he will never see you again. Who is your father?”

With a short hesitation on her part, a few tears rolled down her face, “He is King Zedekiah ... I miss my family so much.” Then Rachel started to cry and so Conner reached over with a hug and a shoulder to cry on for the moment.

“Rachel, I understand, I lost my family too. It seems we have some things in common. So that makes you a Princess then doesn’t it?”

“I do not speak of such things anymore. I am like everyone else here, a refugee running from the King of Babylon. Only a few of the people here know who I am. Even my handmaiden Gabriella who came with me now keeps my secret also. I am treated as one of the people and not the Kings daughter. Please keep this to yourself. I only tell you now because you trusted me and that you are a King also.”

“Rachel your secret is safe with me, and I understand all that you have said. You’re a very sweet woman with a special heart and much to give. I understand your role here and I see how God uses you, but I fail to see how He can use me. I have nothing to give or offer and no talents except climbing around in dark caves.”

“Conner, you are so wrong and I believe you have much to learn while you’re here. Maybe this is why you are here. When I was a small girl my father sat me on his lap and told me how special I was and the reason he said was, ‘Just because Jehovah loved me,’ that’s why I was special. He told me how I would be used by Jehovah, but I never knew how until now. Now I see.

“As I grew it was my mother who helped me understand and so I will tell you what she said to me. You will learn as I have that to whom Jehovah calls to serve Him, Jehovah will give the ability to serve Him. That is easy isn’t it Conner? Even a King can understand that. His ways are perfect¹⁵ and far above our ways. If Jehovah has brought you this far then He will not forsake you. Believe this Conner.”

“Rachel, I believe it because this comes from your heart. Thank you for telling me. I will always remember it. Now come over here and let me show you something.”

SHOWING THE BOOK

At first Conner wasn't going to tell Rachel any more, but then at that moment it seemed like the right thing to do. They walked over to the rock table on which the box had been laid. Rachel saw the draping over the box and immediately commented, "Oh Conner this draping is so beautiful. It is of the Kings of old. I have seen these markings and symbols in my father's throne room and in the temple. This is of Jehovah. What treasure is in this box?"

"I will show you, just stand back a little." So Conner took the covering off and opened the box and as soon as he did Rachel stuck her head in quickly to see what was there.

"Conner the box is empty. There is nothing in the box. Why is nothing in the box?" Then she noticed the medallion hanging around Conner's neck. "Conner your medallion is beginning to glow on its own. Oh, all that I have heard is true, this is amazing." And then she noticed something else he had forgotten about.

"Oh Conner I cannot believe what my eyes see. Your clothes have changed and you are dressed as a King. The light now changes how we see you to reflect who you really are. You are truly a King of Ildar, I believe."

"I'm sorry Rachel I forgot to warn you that it does that and makes my clothes different. Now please stand back." So Conner reached down into the box and felt around for a moment then he felt the book that was hidden by the Zephaniah stones. As he began to lift the book out the blue light again began to appear and Rachel stepped back and then fell to the ground. Conner set the book down on top of the lid and the glow began to fill the small house.

"This is the Book of Beginnings that the Kings have protected all these years. This is a holy place now, simply because it is here. The Spirit of the one God called Jehovah is in this book." Then Conner put both his hands on the cover of the book and said out loud so Rachel could hear him, "This is the word of God ... it is the very WORD of Jehovah God who created all there is and nothing was created that He did not create by His Word."¹⁶

Then he heard Rachel who was next to him, "I have heard of this book from the legends of my people. My Father the King spoke of its existence but no one knew where it was. It is not right for a man to see this Conner. It might for you Conner because you are the King, but it is not for my eyes."

Conner was not listening to Rachel as much as his mind was focused on the book. Then for some reason he said out loud “This book is alive” and from somewhere deep in his thoughts he heard a very clear and resounding “YES I AM.”

Conner turned and looked at Rachel, “Did you hear that?”

“No, Conner I heard nothing. What did you hear?”

“I think the book just answered me?”

“It means you are a King for sure, only a King can hear from this book.”


With that Rachel ran off to tell the rest, in the excitement of the moment she forgot she swore she would tell no one. Conner yelled out to her “Don’t you want to know what it said?” In her excitement she was gone and missed what Conner thought was the bigger news ... THE BOOK IS ALIVE!

Chapter Six



Learning to Wait

THE WAIT BEGINS

onner decided that this was the morning he I venture out. He was about to start down the steps to the lower level when he suddenly heard a word from the Lord. Like a whisper in his head he simply heard, “Know my people.”

Like the many times before this, every time Conner heard this voice in his mind he also was given its meaning. This time was no different and it couldn't have been any clearer. Since it came from God he decided to make this an everyday routine, until he had met everyone.

He realized that by now Aliyah must have told almost everyone about him, so the people all knew something was up. So if they already thought he was a King then he would show them a servant King. He liked that idea, but he certainly would pray for them that God would hear their prayers and deliver them to whatever end He had waiting for them.

The first person Conner met was Aliyah. “How are you Aliyah and how is my favorite person to tell a secret to? Aliyah said nothing for a minute as she thought of what to say. OH! ... Well I am good and I have helped your secrets to never be forgotten.”

“You mean by telling everyone?”

“Yes, I thought if something happened to me someone else could keep the secret and it didn't die with me.”

“Well Aliyah that wasn't what I had in mind, however let's forget that and please tell me how your family is doing. Is everything alright? It's been a few days now since I have seen your father. Is he well?”

Learning To Wait

“Father is doing well and has just been resting from the trip. Maybe too much I think. My brother Nathan has finally met someone special. Maybe it will give him something more constructive to do than to polish his sword.”

“Good,” Conner said. “Maybe he will forget about using that sword of his. So who is this someone special? I don’t think I have met her yet.”

“No you haven’t, but you have met her Mistress Rachel. Also, let me tell you in all confidence, I have heard that Rachel favors you very much. She has eyes for only you since the day we showed up. This is a special thing with my people. She is of the tribe of Judah and you are a pagan. I don’t know what Jehovah will do about this.”

“Well, wait just a minute Aliyah. Why am I a pagan?”

“Conner, there are only two types of people, you are either Hebrew or you are a pagan.”

“Well in my time and where I come from we are called Gentiles and there is a large group of Gentiles that believe in the same God as your people, but for now and in this place I will not talk about that. I also know God and my heart is for your people.”

“Maybe then Jehovah knows this and truly uses you Conner. Did you tell Rachel this?”

“Aliyah, you just take care of your father, I will deal with Rachel. I know more than you think I do about her. Why don’t you tell me about your brother Nathan?”

“Nathan’s eye is for Gabriella. He thinks she is in love with him, but I do not believe this is so. Men think women are so easily won just by a flashy sword or a few words spoken. We want to see you show us your love. We hear too many empty words. Gabriella wants to see Nathan’s actions more than empty words.”

“Well okay Aliyah. It seems you have everything under control including the gossip for now. I need to go and meet more people.”

Conner hadn’t taken but a few steps when he looked up and saw Rachel coming over to him.

“Hello again Conner, or should I be calling you, your Majesty?”

“Let’s just keep it Conner for now, okay?”

Learning To Wait

Rachel grabbed ahold of his arm saying, "Let me introduce you to my people." Rachel tugged on Conner's arm guiding him in the direction she wanted him to go.

"First this is my friend that I told you about last night, her name is Gabriella." The two seemed to look at each other differently like they had secrets, but Conner already knew this secret and it was safe with him.

Rachel took Conner around to many people all of whom she knew and was eager for him to meet. They all asked him pretty much the same questions like "Where are you from, and how did you get here?"

Conner wondered to himself *"how do they knew those things to even ask?"* A certain girl's name kept coming to mind ... Aliyah.

Everyone was very respectful of Conner. He could tell they were trying hard to put their best foot forward in spite of their situation. They all seemed to know Rachel, but not her secret. She had managed to keep it well hid. Even Aliyah seemed to be keeping that secret.

In the following day's Conner kept his vow to come down and meet the people and each day Rachel made a point of being there with him. Several days had gone by when to Conner's surprise Rachel reached down and took his hand as she led him around to different people. He didn't complain one bit and in fact He liked it. It had been a long time since anyone wanted to hold his hand and it was a good feeling. Actually he felt better having her there with him as she made everything seem so much easier for him. Rachel knew the people and told Conner the different needs of each family.

Conner was beginning to feel the burden of the people even more than ever. They were in need of so much and still they willingly gave to him that which they, themselves, needed. Just so he might have a few comforts. Conner prayed each day for all of them. As the days went on the burden just seemed to feel heavier. "When oh Lord?" he ask for the people. "When will you give them a home and take them away from here?"

Well before Conner knew it several weeks had gone by. The additional people to feed had only made matters worse on the food and water supplies. Conner, know the needs of the people, just couldn't understand why they were not moving on or doing some grand and noble thing for God.

Right now they were just existing and praying not to be found out. If the army of the King of Babylon were to discover King Zedekiah's daughter was here

and that Conner was here also, then the army would come and would butcher everyone. For all of their sakes they needed to be moving on soon.

Until such a time as God told Conner what to do, they were going to stay in Hebron. So he decided to find ways to help, but each time he got out and started doing anything the people ran to Rachel, or to Ben-Aaron and one of them would come and discouraged Conner from working. Ben-Aaron told him, “You are a King. You cannot do these things we will do them. Your job is to talk with Jehovah for direction and to intercede for the people. Go tell Him we need food and water.”

HOW LONG OH LORD?

In time almost six months had passed. Conner felt like he was carrying the weight of so many, but all he could do was pray for their needs and like everyone else wait on the Lord. Then he thought he would do something different, so he went to the box that held the Book of Beginnings and lifted the book out of its box and laid it upon the flat rock that also was on the rock table. It was aglow in its pale blue light and so was the medallion he wore around his neck.

He reached down and opened the cover of this beautifully ornate book. In every detail it looked like the book of a King. Now he understood that term differently. The King he spoke of was the King of Heaven who sits on His throne. These are His words and yes Conner believed and he knew that the person of the book was very much alive.

Conner laid on his face before the book and before the Spirit of the Lord that dwelt inside the book. All he knew to do was to pray and worship the Lord. A few minutes went by as he lay there face down in the silence. Then he opened his eyes for a minute and saw the light expanding out of the book until it had covered all of his body on the ground. The house was aglow with brightness until nothing else could be seen except light and the image of a man now stood in front of Conner. He did not need to be told this was a Holy place

Suddenly Conner heard, “I know your burden for my people. I have called you out to lead them to a place I have set aside for them and all who choose me. Now is the time for you to send out three scouts to look over the land for I will soon call my people out of this place into a new place. Now hear my words and understand that the evil of Babylon still seeks you. He will destroy all that is here

to have you, but have faith in what I have said. Behold I have set my angels among you.”

Conner didn’t want that moment to slip away without asking for the people. “Oh my Lord, I ask for these people and not of myself. How long must they scratch out an existence in this desert. They are hungry and they tell me that water is hard to find. They ask me what they should do. I do not know except I come and ask you.”

“Until the going out of this place, tell my people that they shall go out each morning and gather a day’s portion of bread that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not.”¹⁷

“And my Lord what shall I tell them of their water for they are thirsty.”

“Each day they will fill their water pouches and vessels from the place of their meetings. It shall flow with water enough for the day. This shall be done until they go out.”

“Lord I have but one more question if I may ask of you?” There was a silence for a moment so Conner took that as a sign to again ask of the Lord. “I have done as Zurel your servant has commanded me and the book which you sent me for is here with your people. I have been waiting and there are so many issues that they are a burden to me. I do not know what to do. Your people need someone else to lead them because I do not know what to do. I ask you that maybe if it is time for me to go home?”

Then the image of the Lord reached down and lifted Conner up on his feet. he suddenly noticed his arms, chest ... all of his clothes were different again and Conner realized that he was again dressed as a King of Ildar.

Then Lord spoke from out of the light, “That time will come young King, but it is not now. I have called you out for this purpose to fulfill the calling of your forefathers. I see before me a King not by choice, but by blood. My calling shall not return to me void.¹⁸ However like the kings before you, each one has to choose whom they will serve, so also you will have to choose soon.”

After hearing that answer Conner suddenly felt over whelming since of guilt, that he wanted to go home before the job was finished, He felt selfish and once mere he didn’t like what he was feeling. “Forgive me Lord for my selfishness, I will stay and serve you for all that you have for me to do, that will I do. I am as were your prophets, a servant to the Most High.”

Then the light dissolved back into the book leaving Conner with a lot to think about and his normal clothes returned as to how they were. Now Ben-Aaron had seen the bright light shining out of the house from below and came running in.

“Ben-Aaron, just the man I needed to see.”

“It is good for you to see me. I can do many things you know. What can I do for you today my King?”

“I have heard from Jehovah and he has answered our prayers. Go tell the people to gather in the place of the assembly to meet with me and I will tell them what Jehovah has said.”

With that news Ben-Aaron raced down to get the people assembled as quickly as he could. As Ben-Aaron was busy gathering the people together Conner made his way down the dirt steps to their meeting place.

“Conner, the people are coming, they are all coming. Why don’t you stand on that rock so they can all see you and hear you better?”

“Okay, I can do that if you think it will help.”

As Conner waited the people began gathering around the rock he was standing on, all were eager to hear what Jehovah has said. Then just as he was about to speak, the medallion around his neck began to glow a very bright blue and the light from it engulfed Conner and once again his appearance and garments were that of a King. The people all gasped, even some moved back away from him. Then the light faded, Conner appeared before everyone dressed as a King.

“People of Judah hear what I have to say for I have heard a word from Jehovah concerning you. I know your food and water are harder to find each day, Jehovah has heard your prayers and has commanded that each morning when you wake you shall find bread upon the ground. Go out and gather a day’s portion of bread. Gather no more than what is needed for the day.”

Then one of the old men who was also one of the poorest shouted out to Conner, “Where will the bread come from? Will he turn the rocks to bread or maybe it will fall from the sky?” Then all the people laughed for they did not believe in Conner’s words. It was their way of testing him now that he stood before them as a King.

So without thinking Conner bent over and picked up a rock about the size of his hand. “Behold I tell you that if Jehovah wants to turn the rocks to bread

then from them you will eat.” Conner lifted the rock up in the air and shouted to the people, “What is this I hold in my hand?”

The old man shouted back, “It is a rock, do you intend to stone us or to feed us?”

Then Conner tossed the rock out into the crowd and it fell not far from the old man. The people gasped and jumped back expecting the worse. The old man bent over and picked up the rock Conner threw, and after looking at it for a moment he put it in his mouth and bit off the end and began to chew it. The man lifted it up in the air for all to see, “It is indeed bread, Jehovah provides,” he shouted. “Jehovah provides.”

Then the people lunged towards Conner shouting “We need bread, we need food.”

“People, people” Conner shouted. “Be calm for Jehovah has also said that each day you shall fill your water pouches and containers from the water that is in pool in the place of your meetings. Jehovah shall fill the pool there with water enough for everyone, but again only gather enough for the day. In doing as Jehovah has asked of you, you show him that you are not like the others, that you listen to Him and you obey His commandments.”

Then Ben-Aaron jumped up on the rock with Conner and spoke to the people. “Moses tells us that this is how Jehovah provided for our ancestors in the wilderness. Each day He gave them ‘Manna’¹⁹ for the day and they made their food from this, enough for each day.” Many of the people murmured and shook their heads in gestures agreeing with Ben-Aaron. Then as Ben-Aaron jumped down from the rock with Conner, Rachel climbed on the rock to stand next to Conner.

Rachel then lifted her hands up to get everyone’s attention. “Friends and family my heart is with you and have I not served you my entire time with you. I do only for you, but I have seen with my own eyes as you have even now that Jehovah is with Conner who is a King of the old Kingdom of Ildar who served the same God as we do. He is here to lead us to a special place. Please listen to him.” Rachel held onto Conner’s arm very tightly in fear of falling off the rock.

“Jehovah shall provide,” came a shout from out of the crowd.

Conner raised his hands to get their attention again. “People hear me once more I beg of you. I asked Jehovah, ‘How long shall we wait here?’ He has answered by commanding us to send out scouts to see the land outside of this

place of refuge. Our God is preparing a place for us.” With that news many shouted their approval and praise that finally the end was in sight. Everyone started going back to their places and they gave thanks and praised Jehovah for He had heard them and seen their suffering.

“Ben-Aaron,” shouted to Conner “Stay here with Rachel and I, so the three of us may speak. I know we have to talk about the scouts, but do we have to do it here in front of Rachel? She does not know of such things.”

“Rachel stays,” said Conner. “There are more reasons than even you know.”

“Okay, okay, I understand. I go through this all the time with Aliyah. So I already know who we can send out. Well, actually they are the only ones we can send out there is no one else.”

As they spoke the image of the Kings clothes began to fade and Conner was now in his normal clothes “Well Ben-Aaron at least we have a few to send. Send them out just before dawn. We need to know where the Babylonian army is, so we can avoid them. Try to find out what has become of Jerusalem and which direction looks clear for us to travel in.”

“Yes my King, I can do this and I know exactly who I will send.”

“Tell them they have seven days to get back here, only seven days to scout out the land and the city. They are to take nothing with them that can be traced back here, not even their clothes can be Hebrew, nothing the enemy can use to trace them to us if they are captured. So get the scouts sent out at the appointed time and on their way. Also in three days I want a gathering of all the elders that are here among us. Can you do this quickly?”

“Yes my King I can do this. I will send them out at first light.”

After all the people had gone Conner and Rachel went back up to the place that had become his home for his time in Hebron. Rachel had made it a habit to come up each day to keep him company and to tell him of her people and their heritage. Conner always looked forward to her visits.

Meanwhile Ben-Aaron went looking for his son Nathan.

“Nathan ... Nathan, I have an important assignment for you from Jehovah.”

“What is it father? I am ready to serve and my sword is eager to be used.”

“Now be quiet and use your head this time. I am sending you out as a scout along with Yosef and Levi. All of you have only five days to make it back. Wear nothing that is of your people in case you are captured. You go back to Jerusalem and find out what has become of our blessed home. I will send Levi with you, He will watch out for you. Yosef will head west in search of a place to go when we leave. I cannot tell you anymore in case you are captured then you cannot tell them what you do not know. Now you listen to me son, tell no one who you are or where you come from. Only find out what has happened and come back. Can you do that?”

“Yes father, this is very easy. I shall ride like the wind and not be seen by even the birds. I will first go see Gabriella and say goodbye?”

“What is wrong with you? Are you like a love sick dog? I give you a mission from Jehovah and you want to go see a girl first. Be quick and tell her nothing do you hear me? And do not tell your sister either or it will be all over Israel by morning.” Nathan ran off to do what his father asked of him, it is a great mission, and he cannot fail.

Meanwhile ... Ben-Aaron looks up to the heavens ... “Father if you hear the lowest of your servants, you have given me a heavy burden in that boy.”



So the scouts were sent out. Nathan and Levi went towards Jerusalem and Yosef went to the land west of Hebron in search of a place the small community could move to. They needed to know what was waiting for them beyond the hills. So then they waited on the scouts to return with their reports. Conner’s focus was on what he should do and how would he know if he had done what was asked of him?

EYES IN THE SKY

In all the time since Conner had been in Hebron their location had been hidden from the eyes of the High Priest and his hawk. The hawk was sent out on a regular basis to scout out the land from above. Every time the hawk was being guided in Conner’s direction the angel Zurel would plunge his sword into the

clouds and the land would fill with a thick fog. They never knew how many times they had been spared from the eyes of the enemy.

Each time God had an angel there to protect them. Conner didn't know if it was possible, but he was beginning to feel a close friendship with Zurel. He was the angel who had been sent and it was he who would thrust his sword into the clouds and caused the fog to conceal them from the eyes of the hawk.

Little did Conner know that soon this would not be enough, the forces commanded by General Nebuzaradan would discover them if they waited much longer. Even though the hawk hadn't found them yet, the small army being led by Nebuzaradan was on the move. They would need a miracle not to be found out and another one to not be crushed.

A MEETING WITH THE ELDERS

Four days had gone by since the scouts were sent out. Conner had put off the meeting of the elders twice, but finally he called for Ben-Aaron and this time asked him to bring the elders with him. Conner greeted all the elder men and everyone all sat down to talk about what should be our next move and how long we should wait on the scouts to return.

Conner began first, "Men of Judah hear my words. When I first came here I did not know how long we would be here. I only knew that Jehovah had brought us all here and has protected us and His sacred book for which I have been chosen to watch over. But I do know that we cannot stay here forever. We need to go to a place that you can make your home. A place you can raise your families in peace. The Lord Jehovah has such a place laid aside for you.

"In a few more days it will be time for the scouts to return. Their time is about to run out and there is no word from any of them. I am afraid our time is running out and that the Babylonians will find us. I would like to hear what you and the people say?"

Then one of the elders spoke up, "Oh great King Conner, we are old and humble people and all we know is our crafts and our trades. We have always trusted in the King who is now you. I speak for everyone who believes that you talk with Jehovah and so it is for Jehovah to answer your questions. What he tells you we will do."

Learning To Wait

All the men began to speak to each other and nod their heads then turned back and looked at Conner. To his surprise they all rose up and began to leave, all of them except Ben-Aaron.

“Conner, the men have no answers for you. They look to you for answers and you talk to Jehovah for them. It is the way it has always been. You intercede for the people to Jehovah. It is part of the job of the King. Now I will leave you so you can do your job and intercede for us.

“Yes, the scouts have not returned yet and one of them is my son Nathan, but I have faith that the boy and the others will find their way home. It is not easy Conner to be King. This is why the men left, they want you to be King. Your answers my King can be found in the book you protect. Look there and you will find your answers.”

LONELY AT THE TOP

Everyone left and again Conner found myself standing at the entrance to the house overlooking the rolling hills off in the distance. He was looking out wondering when the scouts would come back and what should he do next. Conner stood there thinking to himself *“What do I do? I have gotten to a point in my life that I don’t know what to do. Should I go one direction or another, I just don’t know. Maybe you just go nowhere and stay put. There are times it seems I go through dry spells while I wait on the Lord. No one likes waiting, and it’s not in our nature I think. I don’t think I can just stay put or we will all die we will have to leave soon.*

“I never really saw myself as a leader, but then I never had many goals in life either. I was just happy to do like everyone else, but I guess God had another plan for me and so there I was.

“I’m not complaining now Lord if you’re listening, but sometimes it’s lonely at the top. I feel a great burden and now the people want answers, what do I tell them? And another thing Lord, the scouts have not returned so how can I make a plan?” Suddenly Conner felt a little depressed.

Then Conner remembered the last words of Ben-Aaron, *“The answers can be found in the book ... you will find your answers in the book.”*



Part 3



Chapter Seven



The Three Scouts

THE THREE SCOUTS



he small community had only three horses that the scouts could use, and two of them were pulling the wagon that brought Conner and his group to Hebron.

Nathan and Levi took two of the horses and left just before sunrise and headed straight north towards Jerusalem. They had to stay off the main roads to avoid being seen by the Babylonian patrols. Normally with a fast horse the trip could be made in a day, but if you wanted to avoid the patrols, then it took a day and a half. Nathan knew a lot of back roads and places to hide because he grew up there. As a young boy he was always running through the countryside looking for hideouts and exploring, so they knew the area very well.

As they got within eyes-distance of Jerusalem they began to find the dead bodies of their kinsmen brethren strewn about in the fields. Signs of the war were all around. The two were able to easily find additional weapons among some of the dead, but by now the bodies had been well picked apart by the buzzards and the other animals. Nathan looked over to Levi, "This was a slaughter. These people were just farmers and they didn't even know how to fight. They didn't have a chance. I will take my own revenge, I swear."

"Nathan, you will just get yourself killed like they did. Remember your father said we were just here to observe and that's all." The two of them tied up their horses somewhere where they would be safe and hidden from view. They couldn't take the chance of being seen or both of them were dead men.

The Three Scouts

WATCH BY NIGHT

The Babylonian army had patrols roaming the countryside during the day and camped out during the night. The main force of troops was to the north of Jerusalem and it was there you could see the large tents and most of the activity going on.

So Nathan and Levi using the cover of darkness slipped around some of the camped patrol units who had already begun to drink themselves into a drunken stupor and soon would be asleep. The two were able to get close enough to hear some of the conversations and then to their complete surprise, they saw a few of their countrymen still alive.

With all the torches that were lit in the main camp, it almost looked like daylight. This made it almost impossible for the soldiers to see Nathan and Levi in the dark. King Nebuchadnezzar was still away in Riblah and by now the blinded Zedekiah was on his way to Babylon to sit in prison for the rest of his life.

It was clear that the troops were still celebrating their victory over Jerusalem and not paying too much attention to anyone hiding in the tall grass watching them. Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guard carried off into exile almost all the people who he did not kill. However the commander did leave behind some of the poorest of the people to work the vineyards and fields.

NATHAN SNEAKS INTO THE CITY

Nathan looked over to Levi and whispered, "I need to get into the city and see how bad it is and I have a plan. It's dangerous and risky and I want you to stay out here and wait for me. Keep out of sight so they don't find you."

"What are you talking about, what plan? We were told to watch and try to find out what the army was doing and all I can see is that they are all staying around the city. They're not going to do anything if the commander is away. Let's just go home."

"No, we just got here. Don't you want to know what they did inside, if your home is there or destroyed? I have a few things I left behind. I won't be long if everything goes ok. Go back and guard the horses. We will meet back there when the sun is up."

"Nathan, don't do this. I'm telling you it's a bad idea whatever it is."

The Three Scouts

Both the young men made their way back around the side of the city away from the main entrance. There were fewer guards there and they were more scattered out and easy prey. Nathan waited for a little bit till one of the soldiers went off into the tall dark grass alone. Then out of the darkness Nathan drew his sword and quickly ran up on him and killed him, covering his mouth so he could not make a sound.

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ARE YOU MAD, Whispered Levi.”

“It’s part of my plan.” Then Nathan took off his own clothes and put them on the soldier and in turn put on the soldiers clothes and armor so now he looked like one of them. “How do I look now?” Nathan said.

“You look like you’re going to get yourself killed. That’s how you look and what about this dead soldier? They’re not going to be real happy when they find him.”

“They’re just going to think he is another dead Hebrew and ignore him. If it will make you feel better then cover him up, or throw some dirt on him. Just stay out of sight while I work my magic.”



Now dressed as a Babylonian soldier Nathan did some quick thinking and wondered over to a group of soldiers that were not from the main group of the one he killed.

“Everything is quiet, I have been ordered back inside. They need more guards to control the prisoners. I will be back.” There wasn’t much said. He was just waived off by the others and they went back to their drinking, laughing and storytelling.

Nathan made his way closer to the city and was shocked to see that not many of the city walls were left standing. The city was in shambles and parts of it still smoldering from the fires. Nathan made his way through what once were beautiful streets, but now they were blackened and large pieces of charred rock and stone that once were the Kings Palace were now a heap of rubble. He stood there for a few minutes as tears ran down his face, “My home is truly gone,” he thought to himself.

The Three Scouts

“Hey you there, come over here.” Nathan was being shouted at by another guard. “You guard these prisoners until I come back. You stand here and don’t move. If anyone complains, you kill them. You understand?”

Nathan just grunted a noise and the older guard turned and went away. Nathan was now face to face with the poorest and lowliest of his countrymen. In their faces he saw defeat and hopelessness. Some of the women cried while some were beyond crying and just stared off into the dark night. Because it was night, no one in the crowd recognized him. Not a sound came out of any of them. The look of shock, defeat and fear was on them.

Nathan stood there watching his countrymen until the guard came back. “You go to the temple, they need more men there. They are not yet finished destroying it as the King demanded. Go now.”

A DETOUR

Nathan took off as he was told and quickly made a few detours. One of them was towards his old house. He wanted to see what became of it. Most of the outside rock was still standing but covered in black soot caused by the fires. Anything of wood was burned up. There was nothing here to salvage and as he went to check in the back room where there was once a bed, the bed and Conner’s clothes were gone.

There was one place Nathan was sure they had not found. He went to a corner of the blackened burned out room and reached up to a certain corner rock with a small menorah carved on it and wiggled it. It began to come out, then he pulled it the rest of the way out to reveal his small secret place to hide things.

Nathan started pulling away small pieces of rubble meant to hide the real treasure. With his one hand he began to pull a few pieces out of the hole. First he pulled out a gold ring that was special to him because it had belonged to his mother. He saved it from those who were preparing her body for burial as they had a habit of taking objects left on the dead. He pulled out a small golden Menorah and then finally a prayer which had been torn off a parchment with only the words left on it, “Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha-olam,” Being translated means “Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe.” The rest of the blessing had been destroyed.

With his people either dead or taken captive, their beautiful city and temple destroyed, these words were haunting reminders of a time that would not

be seen again until his people were back in their own country and the Kingdom was restored. Until then the objects would be safe in his possession. Nathan knew he could not stay long so he hurried to the temple mound as he was told.

THE TEMPLE DESTRUCTION AS TOLD TO NATHAN²⁰

On the seventh day of the month of Av, Nebuzaradan, Chief of Nebuchadnezzar's army tore down all the walls surrounding Jerusalem. The royal palace and all the structures and houses that would burn were put to the torch. The fires were so great that the smoke rose up and could be seen as far away as Hebron. It was not by chance that Jehovah allowed Nathan to be a witness to the aftermath of the temple.

Nathan was shocked and moved to tears at the sight of the burned out temple. In his mind he remembered for a moment of when his father took him to see the great temple of Jehovah. All the gold and beautiful decorations dating back to King Solomon had still adorned the temple, but it was all gone. Every piece of gold was taken and they had even scratched the gold off the stones that lay all over the temple mound. He would be the last to see the temple even in this condition.

He quickly covered his face when a guard approached him.

"You there, what are you doing here. You are not allowed here, go now." Nathan wanted to see for himself if what they were told in the field was true, that the temple was destroyed.

Nathan was hoping the guard would tell him the details of what happened in the temple, so he persisted. "What happened to the gold we heard about and the mysterious blood of the prophet, is this true?" At first Nathan thought the guard was going to run him away, but to his surprise the guard suddenly became too happy to tell everything.

"I guess it will be okay to tell you about it. I was with Nebuzaradan when he entered this temple. He found the blood of the prophet Zechariah still seething on the dirt floor. He asked the Jews what this phenomenon meant. They attempted to conceal the scandal, but Nebuzaradan threatened to comb their flesh with iron combs. So they changed their minds suddenly and told him the truth saying, 'There was a prophet among us who chastised us, and we killed him.

The Three Scouts

Nebuzaradan said, 'I will appease the blood of Zechariah.' So he killed the members of the Great and Small Sanhedrin's, the youth and maidens, and school-children. Altogether, he killed 940,000 people. Still the blood continued to boil, whereupon Nebuzaradan cried, 'Zechariah, Zechariah! I have slain the best of them; do you want all of them destroyed?' Finally, then the blood sank into the ground."²¹

Nathan knew the story of the blood of the prophet and how the King had ordered his death. Jehovah's judgment is just even unto His own people, but the guard was not finished telling of the overwhelming disaster that was brought upon the temple that day.

"To all of our surprise," said the guard, "A group of young priest had escaped with the keys to the Sanctuary in their hands. They managed to climb to the roof of the Sanctuary while the fire raged down below. Then with their last act of boldness they declared in a voice so loud that Nebuzaradan and all of us could hear them. They looked towards their God in the heavens saying, 'Master of the World! Since we have not merited to be trustworthy custodians. We give the keys back to You.' They then threw the keys towards Heaven and a hand emerged and received the keys. Then all the priests threw themselves into the fire below."²²

There was nothing else to say as Nathan was so shocked at the degree of destruction and death in what was once so glorious a city. "*I have to get out*" he thought to himself. All he could think to do was to run. He found an exit over the top of what once had been the city wall, but then was just rubble. Nathan managed to make it back in the dark to where he had left his friend Levi, but Levi was gone.

RESCUE LEVI

"Levi ... Levi," in the loudest whispered voice Nathan could use. "Where are you?" Levi was missing. Nathan still dressed as a Babylonian soldier decided to take the risk and try to find his friend. Nathan walked into one of the small camps of soldiers that were all sitting around a fire drinking and laughing loudly. "My friends, my friends," said Nathan. "I am making my rounds checking to see if all is well. Nebuzaradan wants a report tonight of everything going on out here."

One of the drunken soldiers shouted back, "He does, does He?"

The Three Scouts

“Wait a minute,” said another soldier. “I heard that two camps over they captured one of the Jews out snooping around. They think he killed someone. That’s all I know and all I care about. Give me some more to drink.”

Nathan was scared for his friend, “I have to go check this out and report it to the commander. Go back to your celebrating.”

Nathan went over to the second camp from where he was and sure enough there was Levi all tied up on the ground being used as entertainment by the soldiers. “I have been sent by Nebuzaradan to gather a report from out here tonight. Who is this you have here?”

“This is an escaped prisoner, and we captured him. Put that in your report.” Then all the men began to laugh and take another drink.

“Who captured this prisoner so I may give his name to Nebuzaradan myself and he will be rewarded in the morning?”

“I did,” said a half drunken soldier. “I am Helos the great hunter.” All the men laughed again as he tripped and fell down into the dirt.

“You men are too drunk to see Nebuzaradan tonight. Get sobered up for in the morning I’m sure you will get a reward. But now I will take this prisoner back and throw him back into the prison, and then deliver my report.”

“Wait,” said Helos. “I want to go with you and get my reward now.”

“Sit down,” Nathan said. “You know Nebuzaradan will run you through if he knew you were drunk and on duty. You will be rewarded. I promise at first light. I promise you will sober up quickly.”

With that Nathan pick up his friend from the dirt and dragged him out into the darkness. Finally cutting him loose, the two of them ran off into the night.

“Levi, what happened, how did they catch you and where are the horses?”

“I was back with the horses waiting for you. You took too long and a patrol came by and heard the horses and found me. I was beaten up and kicked and I have you to thank for it. By the way, they took the horses too, so now what do we do?”

“You whine like a girl. We will take back what they took from us, except we will take even better horses and then go home. I have seen enough here, I can never come back.”

Chapter Eight



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he seven days given to the scouts are almost up and a decision had to be made on what to do. There was still no word from any of the scouts, so again out of Conner's desperation for an answer from God he went over to the box which held the holy Book of Beginnings.

This time Conner simply placed his hands on the tapestry that covered the box and offered up a prayer saying, "Oh Lord above, ruler of all heaven and earth, hear my words and see the heart of your servant. Speak to me that I might do your will and lead your people as you would have me do." Then no sooner had he spoken when he felt a tingle run through his entire body and he knew something was happening, but he would not open his eyes. This time he had to hear from God. A moment later he heard a voice from behind him.

"Conner my servant, Satan that evil one still seeks a reader to read from the book. He comes even now to force his will on you. He brings his armies to take by force what is not his to have. Keep what is entrusted to you. Then lead the people for they listen to you now. Have faith, for I am Jehovah²³ and I will be with you."

THE EVIL ARMY

"Conner Conner," Conner suddenly heard Ben-Aaron yelling his name. So he opened his eyes and turned around to see what all the shouting was about and saw Ben-Aaron suddenly stop in his tracks. "You are dressed as the King again, this is good because now is the time for a King to be king."

"What are you talking about," Conner said back to him.

"Oh King I have urgent news. You must come now as we are surrounded by an army that I do not know."

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Conner walked out into the open air appearing dressed as a King and looked out onto the hills and valleys just beyond the cave houses that the people dwelt in. There they were like locust covering the landscape numbering thousands and tens of thousands. When the evil ones saw Conner, who looked to them as a King, emerge from the doorway they all began to scream and yell and beat their swords and spears on the ground. The noise was loud enough that all the people in the village became scared and began to run towards Conner who was standing on the second level, hoping he would save them from this current evil.

Conner turned to Ben-Aaron, “You had a right to be concerned, I think we are in a lot of trouble here except for one thing.”

“I think we are in a lot of trouble also Conner, but what one thing are you thinking about? Maybe that it is a good time to pray?”

“The one thing is this, that it’s not our fight. I have already heard from God on this matter.”

“Conner ... I mean King, if this is not our fight then why are they here? Tell them to go away. Do you know why they are here?”

“Yes I do know why they are here, they’re here for me.”

“All these are here for you? You are getting good at being King.”



As Conner looked out over the landscape just across from them he saw the enemy screaming and shaking their fists and spears at him. Then he had the feeling that something evil had suddenly come in close behind him, and then he heard it speak.

“So you like being a King do you? All dressed up for the part I see. Well King, what say you now? You see my army, they will crush you and these people. They will all die before the hour is up. All you have to do is read for me. If you do I will send you home.”

Conner turned to look in the direction of the voice.

“Oh yes, you are surprised aren’t you? I know your thoughts, I gave them to you. You don’t want to be here do you? This is not your fight ... go home Conner. Read and go home. It’s just that simple.”

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What this evil devil didn't realize was what Conner had just been told five minutes ago, "to have faith." Conner had already reached up and grabbed hold of the medallion around his neck, the one Zurel had given to him. Without any hint of what he was about to do Conner simply pushed the blue Jewel in the medallion which meant Zurel and the League of Guardians were already on their way.

Ben-Aaron was getting very nervous. "Conner what is happening, what do you see?"

"Nothing Ben-Aaron, just Satan and he is about to leave."

"You see WHAT?"

Ben-Aaron was listening to Conner speak to the thin air and was amazed and had taken several steps backwards away from Conner then asked him, "Who are you talking to Conner, I don't hear anyone else?"

"Ben-Aaron, go quickly and gather the people and tell them to lift their hands and their hearts to heaven and begin to give praise and thanks to Jehovah who delivers us this very hour, go quickly." Ben-Aaron ran away yelling out to the people to gather quickly.

A BATTLE TO REMEMBER

Satan kept up his assaults on Conner trying to get him to at least open the book, to read just a little, but Conner would have none of it. His threats continued as he watched the people gathered below and their hands in the air began to worship Jehovah. Their shouts and praise grew louder and Satan became even more incensed and his tone of voice changed towards Conner.

"I am tired of waiting boy, King." Then Satan looked out over his army and yelled out to the hordes of demons and devils "Kill them all." The entire massive demonic army raised their weapons in the air and screamed and yelled out all manner of cursing and vile words of hatred and death. Then they started to move towards the small group of people and towards Conner.

As Conner looked out upon the people as they praised God with holy hands lifted up, he saw mixed in with the people angels with their wings spread out covering the people to protect them from any harm. Then more came and they too started to form layers of angels with their wings spread out covering the worshipers. They were here to protect the people as they praised and worshiped God. Then Conner saw another angel holding a golden censer in his hands. I

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understood that it was full of the peoples praises²⁴ and it was taken straight to the presence of God where it was released as a sweet smelling fragrance unto the Lord.

“They will all die this very minute,” said Satan who was by now yelling at Conner. “It will be your entire fault. You are not fit to be a King. You love only yourself, and you’re not here for them, you’re here for you. You deserve only to die like they are about to.”

Conner tried his best to ignore anything Satan said to him or put in his thoughts. As he was going on with his tirade of threats, Conner saw up in the clouds the flickering of the blue lights, not just a few, but hundreds, then tens of thousands. Before the evil army could get even close to the angels whose wings covered the people who were worshiping God, the two armies clashed. The angels with swords drawn swooped down and engaged the army of demons and devils. They immediately halted any future advances the demons could make. Then screams could now be heard from the dark side as they were pushed backed away from the worshipers.

Then Conner heard from behind him Satan yelling out orders to the devils and demons, “I command you to fight, fight I tell you. Take for yourselves what you want.” Then more devils came like hordes of ants crawling over each other to get to the people. As the demon forces grew Conner saw even more of the League of Guardians descend from out of the heavens and the battle grew in size and fierceness. There was one angel who stood taller than the rest and more aglow. His sword alone brought down many demons.

Then this mighty angel looked in Conner’s direction and as lightning flashes across the sky so did this one single angel and he landed directly behind Conner. Suddenly Conner felt a quick scuffle and saw the evil one called Satan thrown from behind him as far out into the distance as he could see. He flew through the air with the speed of a lightning bolt. Then from behind Conner came the words, “Behold the army of the Light of Jehovah stands with you. You are not alone.” Conner knew it was Zurel, Chief Captain of the League of Guardians.

Conner was beginning to feel a close bond now with Zurel. He was a fighter and was there watching Conner’s back and Conner liked that. Zurel looked down at Conner and said, “This is an ancient battle for the Kingdom and it continues even today. The army you see is not of men, but of the spirit for these are the ones from among us who rebelled in the beginning.²⁵ They corrupted themselves and were cast out as profane and evil things.²⁶ Now they seek only to

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destroy and tear down.²⁷ Their only desire is to cause chaos upon the earth in service to the evil one. The kingdom they seek is now on earth and their goal is to enslave all men present and future in service to evil”

Then with their leader defeated and cast out from among Conner and the small community of believers the great hordes of evil scattered quickly and this time as Conner looked out onto where they were, now his eyes beheld the angelic army, the League of Guardians. With victory in the air Conner saw tens of thousands lift their swords into the air and with one voice they shouted “Glory to God in the highest.”

Then the brightest light Conner had ever seen shot out from behind him and all the people looked up and saw Conner standing in the light as it was almost blinding to their eyes. The people all shouted their praises to God and with great joy in their hearts they praised Jehovah.

Then the great light faded away so Conner looked up at Zurel with a big smile on his face and asked. “What happens next?”

“Satan that evil one will not give up. He will bring war and death until he gets what he wants.” Conner looked out beyond the houses and the hills, out to the land beyond where the battle had been.

“Is this going to always be our fate? Are we always going to be at war? Will the killing never stop?”

“This battle that you see is a spiritual battle and it happens every day and is played out all the time in the lives of all men.”²⁸

Then he waved his hand out towards the area where the battle had been and the Guardians stood and it suddenly disappeared from Conner’s view.

TWO PATHS

Zurel continued, “As long as men seek their own, there will be war until He who is perfect comes and puts an end to sin.”²⁹ Now I have come to put before you again two paths, but only one destiny for you to decide.”

Then Zurel turned to one side and held out his arm and suddenly a hole opened up like a whirlwind of clouds and through it Conner could see his home. He could see his truck right where he had left it.

“What does this mean Zurel? Why are you showing me this?”

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“You have done what was asked of you my friend. Now you can walk through this opening and be home and you will have no memory of all that has happened. You will be as all men of your time, with the cares of your world and of your life and never again will you remember this.”

“Wait a minute,” Conner said. “Maybe I’m not ready to go back. What will happen if I stay?”

Then Zurel turned back towards the hills where the army had been and held out his arm again and another hole seemed to appear right before Conner, but it was a vision of the future.

“The second path is a hard one to follow, but it was the path of your fathers, the Kings of old. Follow in their footsteps, go as they went and be as they were. The kingdoms of this world have fallen prey to the evil of this world. Kingdoms have come and they have fallen, but there is still good in men’s hearts, but it is misguided and corrupt. Go and men will follow you for they seek a good King to follow. Lead them and you shall see all that your heart desires. The choice is now yours to make Conner. You can go home now or choose to join in the battle for the Kingdom.”

For a brief moment Conner stood indecisive not knowing what to do. He could see home through one hole Zurel had opened up, but then he loved that here, he was a King and his opinion mattered and people look towards him for leadership. He had somehow become an example to these people and that made him want to be a better person. Home could wait a little longer he figured. Maybe he truly was a man out of time, and maybe this was where he belonged for now.

Conner looked back at Zurel, “I am a King of Ildar and I will remain a King of Ildar. May the Lord use me as He sees fit”

Then the two different portals closed and Zurel reached out and touched Conner on the head. He suddenly became light headed and weak on his feet and fell down on his knees still dressed as a king. It was hard for him to think for a moment and then even harder to remember. His thoughts were scattered and suddenly he could not remember his past. He was unable to focus for a moment. He did not understand what was happening to him.

In his mind’s eye he saw kings and a castle and a people he had never seen before, but now they seemed familiar to him. With Zurel’s hands still on his head Conner asked, “Who are these people I see?”

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Zurel answered him, “They are the people of Ildar of a time long past. Your heritage lies with them, but your future lies here and now. These people have no land or leader. You are their King now and you will lead them to a place not far away where they will become renewed as God’s people. Many more will join you from among the nations because of the persecutions of war. Though the struggle will be hard, you will endure. What you say, they will do and Heaven will open up at your command. Go now for the time is short. The evil prince of this world will not be stayed for long. Even now Babylon moves closer.”

THE SCOUTS RETURN

Conner no longer had any memory of his past life, only that he was of the lineage of the ancient Kings of Ildar and he was here to help these people and safeguard the ancient Holy Book. Since he had no memory of his past, he no longer found himself changing back and forth from the clothes given him to the clothes of a king. He would stay dressed as a king for the rest of his time. His entire mind set was that of their King.

Conner’s focus was directed towards the scouts that had been sent out. He didn’t realize it, but he didn’t have long to wait.

“Conner, Conner” yelled Ben Aaron. “Come quickly, they are back, all of them. They all have come back at the same time, come and see.”

Sure enough there they all stood looking at Conner as he came down the stairs and came towards them. Conner reached out and embraced each one. “I thank Jehovah for your safe return.”

They all looked at each other totally surprised at Conner’s actions, like they wondered what had gotten into him. Then to Conner’s surprise without saying anything Rachel came over to stand next to him, he was glad she did. Rachel somehow helped him to relax and not feel alone. She helped him keep up the image of the King that the people expected. Rachel looked up at Conner and seeing him dressed as the King that she knew he was. “I like it Conner when you are dress as the King, you are our King now and my King forever.”

This time Conner didn’t understand her words, he had no memory of anything but a King of Ildar and friend of Israel and Judah. He responded to Rachel, “I am the King, how else would I be dressed?” Rachel was glad to hear that.

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Then Conner addressed the scouts who were gathered together again. “So if you are rested from your journey can you give us your report so that the people may hear it?”

YOSEF GIVES HIS REPORT

“I will speak first,” said Yosef. “I went to the west towards the ocean and on my way I met a man, whose appearance was of an old man. He asked me if I could spare some water, so I shared with him from my water, and then I went on my way. I had not gone far and turned back to see how the old man was, but he was gone. As far as I could see, the old man was not to be found. So I continued on, all the time praying to God to answer my prayer and show me where I was to find a place for the remnant of His people.

“Half a day’s journey more I came upon a woman who sat crying for her family, who she said had all been killed, and she alone had survived. She was tired and dirty from all the trials she had endured. I asked her how I could help for I had pity on her. She asked for bread because she had not eaten for two days. To my own detriment I gave her my food and she ate it all until I had none left, but hers was the greater need over mine and so I gave her all my food. I offered to take her with me, but she said she was going home, so I didn’t ask her anymore.

“Then as I traveled half a day’s journey more. I came to a man lying on the ground who appeared half dead, injured with wounds like a slave who had been beaten. His head was bloodied with cuts and deep wounds. I determined to help the man and take him with me and not leave him to die in the dirt. I gathered wood and made a bed of wood and leaves and tied it to my horse and helped the man onto it so he could lie down. It seemed like a short time later I arrived into a village where the people came out and helped the man, but I believe that it was with his last few breathes that he spoke these words to me, ‘As you have done unto the least of these so shall it be unto you.’³⁰

“As I rested there in the village a young maiden came to me saying, ‘Kind sir, I have heard of your great deeds this day and of what you are seeking. An Angel of the Lord has told me to take you to a secret place and there you will find what you seek.

“So the young maiden rode with me down the road about two hours to the east. We stopped at a place called **Maresha**. I have heard of this place, but never have I been there or known anyone who has. The maiden took me through some

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ancient ruins that hid the entrance of a mighty underworld of massive caverns with more than enough room for our people for many years to come. I knew this is where Jehovah has led me and where we should go. We can stay hidden there for years.

“I turned to find the maiden to thank her for her kindness in showing me this, but she was gone. I search for several hours and never found her. So my only thought was to come back here and so I went back the way I came. My thoughts were to get more water and food at the village to make it back home, but when I got back to where I thought the village was, there was no sign of it. So I checked to see how much water I had and to my amazement my water pouch was full to the top. So I checked my bag where my food had been before the stranger ate it all. To my amazement it was full of food again and this I cannot explain. My food and water have not run low from that time till this.”

With this news all the people were very happy and even more eager to hear of the news of Jerusalem.

NATHAN AND LEVI GIVE THEIR REPORT

Nathan and Levi both looked at each other as if for a moment they didn't know who should speak up. Levi took a step backwards and that left Nathan only to speak, a moment later Gabriella came forward and stood next to Nathan in a sign of support for him. Gabriella came close to Nathan and reached out placed her hand on his and told him, “Say what you know, say what you have seen for us so we may know what Jehovah has shown to you.”

With renewed confidence Nathan began to speak, “My brothers I have no good news, only news of destruction of our beloved city and the death of our people. Jehovah has certainly judged Judah for its idolatry and rejection of Him.³¹ I have seen the burned out ruins of our homes and was able to get inside the temple or what is left of it. The Babylonian commander Nebuzaradan found the blood of the prophet Zechariah and took out his revenge on the high priest and all those he felt were responsible for the prophet's death. Then he turned his army loose on the people, killing even the smallest of our children and the young maidens, 240,000 died by his hand. The temple was burned to the ground and all that King Solomon adorned the temple with was carried away to Babylon. There is no temple in all of Israel or Judah. I will never go back for all that I have seen.

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“I was able to find a small piece of a prayer. It is not all of the prayer, but part of it.”

Nathan reached in and pulled out of his pocket the torn piece of prayer he had hidden away in the wall of his house. “I would like to read what it says for all of us to hear and may we never forget the God of our fathers.” Then he held up the paper and read, “Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha-olam, (Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe.)” Then Nathan repeated the phrase and all the people repeated with him “Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe.”

Then Nathan and many others began to cry for their people and the great loss of life and for their temple.

FEAR COMES OVER THE PEOPLE

While the people were still crying over the destruction of Jerusalem, there came from one of the watchmen the sound of the shofar, a warning blast. All the people turned to look and saw two riders on one of the hills overlooking the small village. Then the two riders took off in the direction of Jerusalem.

Someone shouted out, “We have been spotted. They are soldiers, they followed you here. Now they have gone to tell Nebuzaradan and he will bring the troops. We are going to die like our brethren.” Panic began to set in.

It was Rachel who stepped forward and began to speak, “People be calm please and listen to me. Jehovah has not brought us this far only to have us die here. Jehovah has made a way. Didn’t you listen to the report from Yosef? Also I know that our God is mighty and He has spoken to King Conner about this, so listen to Him.”

Conner looked at Rachel with surprise that she would step forward as she did. He raised both of his hands to get the attention of the people, “Listen to me my brothers and listen to the voice of Jehovah your God. Have no fear for you have heard a good report of a future home and a report of God’s judgment on sin. This does not have to be our judgment. You say you love Jehovah then obey his commandments and live.”

Then from out of the crowd of people there was heard the voice of one who doubted. “You are not one of us, and you have not suffered as we have. I say we are better off in Babylon than to starve in the desert or die running away from

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the troops. If we give ourselves up they will send us to Babylon, but we will be alive and we will eat. I say we go back to Jerusalem and surrender.”

Several people agreed with the man and began to shout louder at Conner. “We don’t want to die in the desert, send us home.”

Conner responded, “My friends have you not heard of the destruction and of the death in Jerusalem and still you want to go back. You will be killed as those in Jerusalem were. Trust God and live I tell you.”

“You lie,” shouted the man in the crowd.

Rachel tried to calm the man, “Our King does not lie, and he speaks the word of Jehovah to us. Hear him.”

Again the man shouted back, “He is not our King, he makes himself King and we will not follow him no more.”

By now Conner was upset that a few could change the minds of the many, so he climbed up on a large rock so all could see him. “People of Judah, hear the words of your God as he spoke to me saying, ‘Have faith in Me and keep My commandments and live.’ If you believe these words then come to me and, if you doubt and Satan has filled your heart with fear and hate, then go your own way. But I warn you that you shall also be judged for your hard hearts and rejection of God. These were the sins of Israel and of Judah and I see it still remains in some of you.”


With that a group of about thirty people left the group and picked up their belongings and walked out of the camp headed towards Jerusalem. They never heard from them again.

Chapter Nine



Leaving Hebron

DISCOVERED

hen Ben-Aaron came to Conner, “Conner we have a problem, the people say they are still hungry and fear leaving this place for here they can at least can find a little bite of food, and what they do find is gone quickly. They say if you are King then help them.”

“Ben-Aaron I have made a decision for the good of everyone, I believe it is time to move on. The soldiers on the hill today found us because they followed Nathan and Levi back. They have left to tell their leader about us and in a few days this place will be covered with Babylonian soldiers. It’s time to go and so we are leaving in the morning.

“For now go and tell the people to bring their empty baskets and any jars for water to my house and lay them on the floor before the box that contains the holy book. Tell them they will see the answer to their prayers for the Lord their God has heard them. God do it quickly.”

When he was alone Conner said out loud talking only to himself, “Who can say how the Lord God works in the lives of men, for He works in mysterious ways³² which are far above our own.”³³



EYES IN THE SKY ARE OPENED

As it just so happened, at the same time the scouts were giving their reports to the High Priest, that his hawk with the piece of clothing still in its beak began to fly over the portion of Hebron where the small band of people were

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hiding. This time God in His wisdom stayed the hand of Zurel, so he could not set his sword into the clouds and cause the fog to cover over the people.

It only took a few moments for the hawk to find what he had been searching for and then he turned back north and back to the High Priest. The one thousand man army that was set aside for Nebuzaradan to capture Conner would be on their way by morning. It was just a matter of time before they would be found out.



Aliyah and Rachel came running into the house where Conner was. “Oh Conner you are still dressed as King, you did not change back into your clothes,” said Aliyah. “You have been different lately. I believe Jehovah has done a work in you.”

“I am who God has set me to be, I am the King as my fathers were before me. What happens from here depends on your faith in God and in His servant who stands before you.”

“You really have changed Conner ... oh, I’m so sorry ... I should say your Majesty.”

Then Conner looked towards Rachel. “Rachel, you know the people best and they know you. Please have them come here and place their empty baskets in front of the box that holds the holy book and then go back to their homes and offer prayers of thanksgiving for how Jehovah will bless them through this act of faith. Then they need to make ready their things for we will be leaving here in the morning.”

“But their baskets are empty now and they are hungry,” said Rachel.

“Yes I understand, but as each family does what Jehovah has asked of them, then give to each family a loaf of bread from my bag which is next to the door. They can eat this for tonight. Then tell them to come back at mornings first light and be ready to travel, for we shall leave here tomorrow. Aliyah will help you as you need.”

Aliyah looked at Conner as if he had made a mistake. Conner leaned over to Aliyah and in a soft tone whispered, “Blessed are the hands that help.”

A MIRACLE OF BREAD

Shortly the people began coming to the house where Conner was. He stood to the side and out of the way, but still everyone could see him. He was still dressed as a King should be and the people all gazed at him astonished at what they were seeing. The girls Aliyah and Rachel were busy directing them as Conner had asked.

As each family came in Aliyah gave them the instructions and on their way out Rachel reached into Conner's bag and handed them a loaf of bread. This bread would feed them for the night.

One loaf was handed out, then two, until many had been handed out. Rachel looked inside the bag for it wasn't a big bag to hold so many loaves of bread, but bread could still be seen sticking out the top. The women began to smile for the bread was still there, then they began to laugh, but still more bread was in the bag. Smiles could be seen on everyone's faces. A few of the people ran over to Conner and fell on their knees and thanked him, kissing his hand.

"Please, do not thank me, but thank Jehovah who is your provider."

Eventually all of the families had come and gone. Rachel and Aliyah ran over to Conner to show him that his bag was still as full of bread as when they had begun. "How can this be?" they said.

"Remember this night when Jehovah met your needs and filled your stomachs. Go now and eat and rest for tomorrow we will be leaving."

"Leaving?" said Aliyah. "Why where are we going?"

Conner was quick to respond, "Aliyah, just ask Rachel she knows everything. Have faith and believe, you should go and rest for now."

THE CLOUD

Early in the next morning before the sun began to rise, Conner woke and his thoughts were on the events of the night before. He pondered how he had gotten to this point, but still he could not remember anything since the night before. He only knew that he was a King and a King responsible for these people.

As Conner was about to kneel down and pray he noticed there was a strange fog that had settled in the small house and was covering the baskets, the

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water bottles and the floor completely. At first he thought it was some kind of early morning fog, but this had never happened before in his house. Then he suddenly was given the understanding that this was of the Lord. So he sat down on the ground and started to wait on God.

Before long he could hear people beginning to stir. Aliyah and Rachel came expecting to see a miracle, but they were surprised by the cloud as Conner had been and he was still sitting in the middle of it.

Aliyah stared at it for a minute then commented, "I believe this is odd that there is a cloud covering the floor and Conner, why are you sitting in the middle of it?" Rachel agreed with her.

"Aliyah," said Conner, "Maybe there is a reason for the cloud, just be calm and wait like I am."

Then more people came in expecting to get their baskets, but they too were amazed at the cloud which engulfed all the baskets. Finally Conner stood to his feet and began telling the people as they came in, "Everyone, please just stand back and wait, for what you see is of Jehovah. While you wait offer up praises, for the Spirit of the living God is here and your prayers are being answered."³⁴

Eventually word got out and soon everyone had assembled as they had been told and trying to get a look at the cloud when Conner heard a word from God, "Conner draw near to me and face the people."

So Conner walked carefully through the fog, which was up to his knees, bumping into a few of the baskets in the process. He stood before the box with the book in it and turned to face the people. All the people started to move back away from Conner not knowing what was about to happen.

As Conner faced everyone he too lifted his hands in the air and gave thanks to the Lord. Then the fog which covered the floor began to glow in brightness and in intensity. As it grew brighter the people gasped and moved even further away from the light and Conner. By now only a few people were left in the house, but the brightness of the light shot out the only window there was and then the door. Conner had become engulfed in the light and for a moment he heard again from the Lord.

"Take my people out of this place to the land I have shown to Yosef. You will be met by others whom I have called out. They shall become as you and go with you. Do not be afraid for you will be tested a short while."

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Then the fog slowly began to move along the floor and through the walls of the stone house and over the edge to the houses below and out onto the ground where many people had assembled. Then it slowly disappeared.

As Conner was watching the fog move out of the house and over the edge it was Rachel who shouted out, “The baskets ... look they are full. It is a miracle.” Then people started coming in and each one equally amazed at the sight of the baskets full of food enough for a day’s journey.

To Conner’s surprise one of the men in the group shouted out “Jehovah-Jireh is with us.”

Then all the people shouted “Jehovah-Jireh provides.”

As the people were already gathered Conner felt it was a good time to talk to them. “People, people of Judah listen to me. The Lord Jehovah has told me of a place He has for us and that we must go there. Your baskets are full and you have food, now have faith. Go and gather your things and prepare to leave this place today. When the sun has moved to the third hour of the day then we will leave. Now go and make yourselves ready.”

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It didn’t take Conner long to pick up a few items and get some help moving the box containing the Holy Book and have it placed in the cart they had use to come to Hebron. The box was tied securely to the cart and it was ready to go.

At the third hour of the day all the people had gathered back out in the main area with all their belongings, about one hundred and seventy people all together. They brought their own carts and anything they could make to help carry their belongings. Everyone had helped out and provided for each other and the elderly.

Ben-Aaron was waiting for Conner to come to the head of the people to begin to lead and point the way to their new home.

“King Conner we are here and all ready to move as Jehovah has commanded.”

“The people have done a good job and now I tell you that we are to go to Maresha, the place Yosef told us about. This I believe is God’s will for us.” Then Conner just happened to look up at the sky and there he saw a hawk circling

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above them. Suddenly a dreadful feeling came over him, but he told no one. He kept this concern to myself.

About that time Rachel came up to Conner and grabbed hold of his hand and asked, "If it is alright with you I will walk here by your side."

"And what about your friend Gabriella, where is she?"

"She is helping the people, which is her passion and she has Nathan helping her. I believe Nathan has more than the people on his mind though. I believe she will keep him in line. They are good for each other"

Conner looked at Rachel and smiled, "I bet they are." Then Conner turned back to Ben-Aaron, "Do you know how many men we have that could fight if there was a need?"

"I am afraid Conner, that if we count the three scouts then you and me then there are five. We have enough to attack a very small house with no one living in it. Do not get any ideas of invading anything. Our only fear would be that Nathan would hurt himself or one of us waving his sword all around. Remember we are farmers and lowly people, but there is good news for you Conner."

"What could that be," Conner said.

"Jehovah loves us and He will fight for us."

Conner looked at Ben-Aaron for a second, "You are a very smart man my friend. However, I have a promise from God also. "

Then Conner stood up on a rock so everyone could see him and raised his hand as high as he could. "People of God, today we start out for a new home, do not be afraid for Jehovah goes before us and He fights for us. Now follow me and we shall discover what He has for us together."

He had everyone's attention now and everyone ready and eager to begin. Conner jumped down from the rock and took a deep breath and started walking, Rachel was at his side. Soon all the people had collected their goods, which were meager and began their journey with the children in tow and their food. Like Conner everyone was headed into a new life and a promise from God that if they kept his commandments He would never leave them nor forsake them.³⁵

THE JOURNEY

The people numbered about one hundred and seventy even after having lost the group who decided to go back to Jerusalem. Not a large crowd but big enough that they needed to stop about four times a day so the women and children could rest. After the first day on the road Conner began to notice that there were lone riders on the hill tops around them watching as they moved through the land. Ben-Aaron came to Conner to tell him how the people are getting nervous for they saw a man on the hill tracking along with them from a distance.

“I believe we are in danger Conner.”

“Tell the people to trust in Jehovah. It would be good if they said a few prayers as they walk.” That was all they knew to do was to walk and to pray, the rest had to be up to the Lord. So everyone ventured on for several more miles.

WATER CRISES

So far on their journey they had not come across any watering holes and so the people began to complain about water. They had gone through all they had and now had become thirsty.

Aliyah came over to Conner with a problem, “You need to know that the people need more rest and water, they are very thirsty. These are not soldiers on a march, but women with children and the elderly. They need another rest and so do I. What are we supposed to do for water? There is no spring or oasis anywhere, only sand and the sun and the heat.”

Then as if the Lord was waiting on Aliyah to say something, Conner heard His words, “Have faith Conner offer up your own water pouch to the people that they may drink of it.”

So as he had been told of the Lord he gave his own water pouch to Aliyah and told her, “Have the people gather in closely than fill their water bottles and skins from my own pouch.”

And so Aliyah took Conner’s water pouch and as she walked away she looked back at him saying, “This is a kind thing you do Conner. We shall see how Jehovah will use it.”

So Aliyah went to each family giving them water to drink. Now Conner meant for Aliyah to give a drink to everyone, thinking this was what God had told him. He really didn’t think that with the small amount of water he had in the

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pouch that she would get very far before she ran out. Soon Conner realized how little faith he had as he watched Aliyah filling every man's pouch full of water. How can she do this when the pouch was only half full to begin with? However, to Conner's surprise she moved on to the next family and the next until she had gone to every family filling their water pouches and every container that would hold water.

It did not take long before the people, realizing what was happening, became very excited and joyous over every container that Aliyah filled with water. The excitement was contagious and the people began to celebrate Jehovah and shout His praises. Then again Conner heard the people begin to shout "Jehovah-Jireh is with us. Soon everyone was shouting it out.

In the midst of the shouting and the celebration Aliyah brought back Conner's water pouch and as he looked in it, to his surprise it was at the same level as it was when he had given it to her. The water level had not increased or decreased.

"Aliyah, why did you fill every ones container and pouch, when I only asked you to give them a drink? And why is my pouch not filled to the top like the rest?"

"I filled every pouch because I have faith Conner. You have much to learn of our people. Today Jehovah performed a miracle and revealed himself to us as Jehovah-Jireh, the God who provides. This is why the people shout as they do. You will learn this also, that He alone is sufficient. He alone is more than enough to meet your need in every situation. So we shout out this name Jehovah-Jireh, when He reveals himself to us this way. There are many other names for Him, but you will learn this in time. Then you too will have more faith, then maybe your water pouch will be filled to overflowing as it is for the people. Then you will be a better King."

Conner didn't say another word he just looked at Aliyah as she walked away. He thought to himself, "There is something really different about that girl."

From that day on no one ever hurt for water. Every morning there was sufficient water for the day in everyone's pouch and no more. Conner began to understand that name Jehovah-Jireh. As for the food, the same was true for there was bread enough for the day. The next morning the baskets were full again.

THE PEOPLE FROM THE EAST

Everyone had been walking now a day and a half when a rider was spotted again on the top of a hill parallel with them. Again the people became nervous, but they kept on their path and kept walking. Then Conner noticed there were three riders now watching them. They seemed to be having a discussion about something and then they all rode down the hill and headed straight towards Conner.

“Hail King, my name is Nazer and I greet you in the name of my people. I have nothing to offer as a gift to you because all that we have has been stolen and taken from us by the army of Babylon. My friends and those who come with me are from a small Arabic community to the North East of here. There is a small band of us who have escaped certain death. We number about one hundred, of which twenty-three are warriors like me.”

Conner turned to Ben-Aaron and smiled for a moment, then looked back at Nazer. “Nazer where is the rest of your group? You said there was about one hundred and you want to join with us?”

“They are on the other side of this hill. We have been following beside you for a day now. We are like you oh King, in that we have been running from the Babylonian devils for a month now. We were told of you by two young men fleeing south from Jerusalem a few days ago. Our great hope is that we may join with you for we were told many great things by the men.”

Conner looked back over at Ben-Aaron for a moment. Ben-Aaron knew exactly why he was getting a look from Conner this time. Nathan and his friend Levi must have told Nazer and his people of what God was doing in Hebron, and if they told Nazer then how many more did they tell? Ben-Aaron shook his head at Conner signaling that, “Yes, it is okay” for Nazer and his people to join the group.

Rachel came close to Conner and grabbed his hand and looked directly into his eyes. “Conner my King, this is a good thing to do. It does not matter how they heard of us, or from whom. They seek refuge as we do. It will be ok, trust Jehovah.”

Rachel’s words brought back what God had said to Conner the day they left Hebron, “You will be met by others whom I have called out. They shall become as you and go with you.”

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“Nazer, it will be good for you and your group to join us, but I tell you that I believe that Nebuzaradan and a small army is hunting us even as we speak. So we would welcome your men and your people. We are on our way to a place called Maresha.”

“Maresha,” shouted Nazer. “King, I have heard of this place you say you are going, it is small. We call it Tel Sandahanna. It has a cave system that will hide all of us. I must tell you one more thing as a warning to you. The word is out to stay clear of this man Nebuzaradan for he has an evil priest who is looking for a stranger to this land. A mighty man more advanced in culture and abilities than us. He wears clothes that no spear or arrow can penetrate and seeks to rule the world and all that is in it.

“I thank you for your words of warning,” said Conner.

Nazer continued, “Now if I may I will go and get the rest of my group and we shall join you. We are low on water and food if you have any to spare it would be greatly appreciated.”

“Nazer we have water for your people Aliyah will see to it you have all you need.”

“Praise the Almighty,” Nazer shouted then road off to get the rest of his group.

Conner looked over at Ben-Aaron, “So who is this of whom he speaks, whose clothes can’t be penetrated by an arrow or a spear, and seeks to rule the world?”

“Conner my King, I have no idea what man this may be. I know nothing.”

Conner stroked his beard a few times then said to Ben-Aaron, “It needs to stay that way my friend.”

Rachel, who has constantly been at Conner’s side since they left Hebron, reached out and took hold of Conner’s hand to get his attention. “In all that I heard from Nazer of this man who cannot be killed, it does not describe the man I see before me. I see a man chosen of God, who is learning his way. The man whose hand I hold has the spirit of Moses in him. Lead us and trust God and the people will follow.”

Conner took her words to heart and then started back on the road, “We still have a ways to go, and God will see us through.”

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It didn't take long before Nazer's people was joining Conner's group. They fell in behind the last of long line of people. The two groups started to blend together as everyone began to help the other, all with one goal, to get themselves to Maresha. In short time Aliyah came up to Conner to get his water pouch. "Conner, I will fill their water containers like I did before from your pouch. God has blessed your water pouch so that I can fill the others from it." Then off she rode to help the new people giving them water and then bread."

Conner then motioned for Ben-Aaron, to come up front so he could tell him something. "My friend, go tell Nazer if he will place his warriors along the sides of all the people. It will help them feel protected and feel better that they have joined us."

Conner had no idea of how long their trip would last now that Nazer's group had joined them. With the elderly in their company it slowed them down considerably, but then he believed God knew this and He would make a way for them.

ARRIVING AT MARESHA

Two more days had gone by and according to Yosef they should be within a few hours of this place called Maresha. They all stopped for a two hour break before they made a final push into Maresha. As Conner talked to Rachel and Aliyah about how they might accommodate everyone in the cave system they had been telling him about, he chanced a look up into the sky and to his surprise there was the hawk. An evil feeling came over him and he could sense that they were all in trouble.

"My King," said Rachel. "What is the matter that it should upset you so much, so quickly?"

"Look up," Conner told the two women. "See that hawk?" Then to everyone's surprise the hawk came down and landed on the ground close to them. It dropped the cloth that had been in its mouth on the ground then took off again. Rachel ran over and picked up the cloth.

"Look Conner, this cloth is different than anything I have ever seen. What is it?"

"It seems familiar, but I can't think of what it is either."

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Aliyah was right there and took the cloth and having touched it she then remembered. “This is from Conner’s clothes when he first came here, but right now he is not remembering.”

Ben-Aaron came over also and looking at the cloth “Yes, this is part of Conner’s old clothes. They were very different and Aliyah disobeyed me and did not destroy them as I asked her to.”

“We know father, we have all heard this before.” said Aliyah.

“They are using the hawk to track you down Conner. We are not far from Maresha so we should hurry. I will get everyone going for you. You and Rachel go ahead and find a high place to stand on so the people can see you. They will believe and have faith when they see you on the rocks.”

Conner and Rachel did as Ben-Aaron suggested and hurried ahead of the people. Aliyah and Ben-Aaron began to get the people up and start moving.

As Rachel and Conner turned a few more bends in the road they suddenly saw the abandoned city. These were mere relics of the houses that used to be there. Then towards the back of the ruined structures Conner saw a cave opening and suddenly felt more comfortable about their choice of ruins to make a home in. The two of them made their way to one of the higher points on the hill and a place they felt the people could see them as they came around the last bend in the road.

GETTING SETTLED IN

It wasn’t very long before the first of the people came around the last bend in the road and they could see the ruins of ancient Maresha. It took about another forty-five minutes until the entire group was in the canyon opening. Conner raised his hands in the air to get everyone’s attention.

“I praise the Lord God Jehovah that we have come to a place He has made ready for us. These are the ruins of a people long ago, but we will rebuild the homes that they once had. We will prosper here because Jehovah is on our side.”

Then all the people shouted out again “Jehovah Jireh is God.”

Rachel leaned over to Conner, “He is the God who supplies all our needs. Are you learning this, my King?”

“Yes, I’m learning this.” He said back to her.

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It was getting dark they were not ready. Conner shouted down at Nazer, “Can you have your men light torches in the caves so the people can see and get settled for the night and we will work out everything else tomorrow. Also can you have your men stand watch on the hill tops? I have a feeling we will be having company soon.”

“Yes King I will do as you ask.”

Nazer’s men were fast at making torches and then began helping people into the caves and getting them settled down. Each person had a bag with enough bread in it to last the night so everyone was able to eat. Nathan and Gabriella never had to be asked, but were already busy helping people find places in the cave system. Nathan had talked to a few of Nazer’s men into carrying the box containing the Holy Book into the cave so it could be safe.

Within another fifteen minutes the sun was down, but at least they had a few guards now to post as look-outs. Conner’s thoughts were on Nebuzaradan and his army could not be far behind.

Rachel never left Conner’s side even in the darkness. They both just sat down on the rocks and looked out into the fields and talked.

“Rachel, I want to thank you for staying by me all this time.”

“Conner my King, I would not have it any other way. I will not leave you, because I know you are a special man brought here to help us in this time of our greatest need. If it were not for you I believe these people would all be dead now and I would be a servant in the house of the King of Babylon. So I am more than glad to be here by you and right now you are keeping me warm.”

“Thank you Rachel, that means a lot to me. Right now I think we need to find a way down from this rock and join everyone else. Let’s go see how the people are doing.”

FIRST NIGHT IN THE CAVE OF MARESHA

Nazer’s men handed Conner a torch as he led Rachel through the entrance into the cave. The inside was a wonder to behold. There was a very large main section of the cave that was supported by massive natural columns of limestone. For tonight most everyone stayed there huddled together for the night.

Later they would start looking into rebuilding the houses outside and then start living a somewhat normal existence. For then Conner was like everyone else,

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He was tired from the journey. Rachel had some blankets and so she made a soft padded area for them both to lie down on so they could get some sleep. The next day would be a busy day and Conner believed he would have to deal with Nebuzaradan and his army. Until then sleep was all he was looking for.

Chapter Ten



The Final Battle

Everyone seemed to make it through their first night okay. Conner woke up to find that Rachel had already been up and was working on some food even if it was only bread and some pieces of fruit. As he was beginning to stand up Ben-Aaron and Nazer came running up to him.

“Conner I believe we have a problem now. You need to hear this from Nazer.”

“Okay Nazer what can be wrong today and so early in the morning too.”

“Oh King, I hate to disturb your rest but there is a problem outside. It is best you come out and see for yourself.”

So Conner got up and Rachel of course overheard what was said so she was right behind Conner on the way out of the cave. As Conner looked out onto the hill tops in front of him all he could see was an army lining the tops of almost every hill. He looked down and in the center of the canyon stood two men and one of them had a hawk on his shoulder.

Deep inside of him Conner somehow knew this was about him. It was finally time for him to deal with the problem he brought onto these people.

Conner turned to his friends and to Rachel, “I love you all too much to let you suffer for my decisions. How I brought this on you I cannot remember, but I’m sure I’m the cause of it. So, for whatever the reasons are I am the one that will now deal with this. All of you are to stay here and do not try to come help me.”

Everyone objected and wanted to help, but if he was their King then there comes a time when a King must be a King and do what is best for the people and not himself. Conner looked at Rachel saying, “You have a pure heart before the Lord. So I ask you to go and take the Book of Beginnings out of the box and set it

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on the lid. Today the Lord will fight for us. This will end today” Rachel went to do as Conner the King had asked of her. Conner then began the lonely walk down the small hill stepping over the old stone ruins of ancient houses and then out into the open area.



By now the word had gotten back to all the people of what Conner was doing and everyone all ran out to see. Nathan ran for his sword thinking he was finally going to use it, but it was too late, Conner was already face-to-face with the enemy.

Conner now stood before Nebuzaradan and his wicked Priest. Then the Priest pulled Conner’s old clothes and shoes out of a bag and held them up so Conner could see them, “Do these belong to you?” Then he threw them at Conner hitting him in the chest before they fell to the ground.

Conner looked at the priest for a moment, “Who are you to demand anything from me? Do I look like one of your common servants?”

The priest responded, “You make yourself out to be a King but you are our worst enemy. You have come to take the kingdom from Nebuchadnezzar and I the High Priest will stop you. I say what will happen here for I have the power of the gods with me. Now you will speak when I command you, do you understand that?”

“You evil and wicked priest, you figured all that out by just a few pieces of clothes? You have been lied to and your mind is twisted by the very evil that you have embraced. All these lies you invent to gain power over people that you are not able to gain any other way.”

Then Nebuzaradan pulled his sword and brought it up to Conner’s neck, “You may be dressed as a King, but you are about to be a dead man. Nebuchadnezzar, the King of the world has commanded me saying, ‘That if you be a man, then I am to put you in chains and bring you back to him and if you be a spirit then I am to put you in a vase and bring you back to him.’ The way I see it, you are coming back with me this very day and these people are going to die here because of you.”

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Conner reached up and pulled the sword away from his neck then said to him, “I don’t think I will allow that to happen and I am not the one who will die today, but I tell you that by your own words you will be judged this day.” Conner didn’t know why he said that, it just kind of came out.

The next thing everyone saw was Nebuzaradan raising one of his hands into the air and he shouted something and two men came riding down the hill with chains which Conner knew were meant for him. Conner heard the scream of Rachel back at the cave, “No my King ... No, call out to Jehovah.”

Still facing the two men, Conner spoke for the last time, “Behold! You evil and wicked devils so that you may know that the Lord Jehovah is still the God of Judah and of Israel” He raised his hands into the air, not knowing why he did this. The Book of Beginnings which was still in the cave suddenly glowed its blue light and suddenly flew out of the cave and headed straight for Conner and landed in his hands which were over his head. The blue light from the book spilled out covering all of Conner and by now the medallion around his neck was aglow with the same blue light. Nebuzaradan and the priest were shocked and took a step backwards. The people gasped as these miracles were happening before their eyes.

As the book was now in Conner’s hands and he was covered by its light, he felt it changing in his hands in full view of everyone. Every soldier on the hills surrounding them, the priest and commander Nebuzaradan all had front row seats to the power of Jehovah God. The Word of the Lord had changed into a sword in his hands. It had been said of the Kings of old that the Word of the Lord was a powerful weapon in the hands of the King.³⁶ Conner felt as though he was fulfilling his true destiny at that very moment.

Then with all his might he drove the sword into the ground right in front of Nebuzaradan and the priest. Within a few seconds the ground beneath their feet and hills around them began to shake, but only on the side where the enemy was. Then the ground shook even more violent and the enemy began falling to the ground unable to stand.

A large crack appeared between Conner and the priest and Nebuzaradan. The crack opened up in the ground and began pulling them apart from one another. Then a branch of the crack quickly formed and began to run towards the hills where the army was standing on the top overlooking the caves. Nebuzaradan and the priest watched this crack in the ground in total amazement, shocked that this was actually happening.

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The crack opened wider and several more branches opened up and ran to the other hills and as the cracks in the ground got closer to the army they began to grow in size till sections of the ground started falling into the earth and in the process swallowing almost all the army of Nebuzaradan. Both of their faces were in complete shock as they watched their army disappear into the earth. Nebuzaradan turned to the priest and yelled at him, "DO SOMETHING!"

Conner just couldn't help it, but he had to say this last thing to the two of them, "Are you still glad you found me?"

Then without any warning all the ground beneath Nebuzaradan and the priest and that old hawk that sat on his shoulder suddenly gave way and the three were swallowed up into the earth. In a few moments the ground closed back up as if nothing had happened.

Conner was the only one left there standing as Rachel and many others came running out to him. Rachel was the first to reach Conner and she gave him a big hug, "Oh my King I was so afraid for you, I thought that you were going to be put into chains and taken away. I am so happy and thankful. Praise Jehovah you are safe." Then without thinking Rachel gave Conner a big kiss in front of everyone. "I do not care who sees me, I am so happy."

As Rachel was so happy for Conner and showing her thankfulness for his safety everyone else watched as the sword began to transform itself back into the Word, the Book of Beginnings.

Then Nazer ran up to Conner also, "King ... I have no kiss for you, but that was amazing. I have never seen anything like that in all my battles."

"Nazer," Conner said. "I want you to quickly take all you're fighting men and go run down any remaining army. Get to them before they get back to Nebuchadnezzar."

"Yes King, you can consider it done already."

THE SECOND BATTLE

While they were still celebrating the defeat of Nebuzaradan, the priest and his army, Conner's spirit suddenly felt the presence of something evil approaching. Then without any notice everyone around him was suddenly knocked several feet backwards and thrown to the ground except for Rachel. Conner saw her be lifted up off the ground by something he could not see. She

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began grabbing at her throat and trying to breathe. Conner was at a loss at what was going on and then his spiritual eyes were opened.

“Hello boy king, did you think I would just go away. This is your last chance to read for me or this girl will die right here in front of your eyes and it will be your fault. Then I will crush these people in the cave and it will be your fault and you will live forever knowing you have killed all these and the girl you love.”

Conner suddenly bent over pretending to cough and hold his chest, but what he did was to press his medallion. He needed help of a higher kind, he needed his friend Zurel.

Being able to see into the spiritual realm meant he could now see hundreds of thousands of demons and devils who had come to do battle yet again. They were dressed with armor this time and with swords in their hands. They screamed obscenities and waved their swords into the air all swearing that he would die that day. The feeling of evil was so strong and so overwhelming, that even the people at Maresha began to argue with each other and evils influence began to affect everyone.

Finally Conner shouted out at Satan, “You put her down and let her go and then I will read for you.” Satan that old Dragon was surprised that Conner had agreed and for a moment stood there with Rachel in his grips, by now her face was purple. Conner shouted again, “Put her down first ... put Rachel down and let her go.” Suddenly Rachel dropped to the ground and collapsed. Ben-Aaron and a few other men quickly pulled her away from Conner and took her back to the cave to care for her.

“Now boy, read what I want to hear. This is your last chance or I will unleash my army onto these people.”

This time Conner had no more tricks to play or stories to tell. The Holy Book lay on the ground before both him and Satan. Conner bent over and picked the book up and all the eyes of the people were on him, what would he do? As Conner opened the book, the book began to glow again, but this time the glow was red, “This can’t be good Conner thought to himself.” He looked at the symbols and nothing was coming to him. He couldn’t read anything and nothing came to mind for him to say, so he made something up that sounded like what Satan would want to hear.

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Out of the corner of his eye he began to see flickers of blue lights in the clouds and he knew what that meant.

“Now repeat after me Satan, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be most high.”

Then Satan leaned back and let out a terrible roar so that fear was struck in the hearts of the people watching. Conner said to him, “Repeat my words, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be most high.” A few seconds went by and nothing happened, “Why is nothing happening boy, why not?”

“Well, I might have gotten a few of the words wrong, you know I’m not perfect, or I could be wanting to show you how ridiculous your request was. It didn’t work for you back in the beginning and it’s never going to work for you now. You are defeated and I already know this because I know what is coming in the future concerning you.”

“I don’t believe it,” Satan yelled. “You’re lying to me boy. Read me the words I want to hear.” At that Satan leaned back and let out another horrible roar and once again fear shot through all the people there. The demons and devils on the hills around the caves also let out their screams and more cursing could be heard. In the middle of his unholy temper tantrum he suddenly started to choke and gag a bit trying to get it something out. He fought for even one word to come out.

Conner backed off some to see what Satan was doing, than he noticed Satan’s feet were no longer on the ground. This reminded him of what he had just done to Rachel only a few minutes ago. Now Satan was getting a taste of it.

Satan twitched and grabbed at his throat and his face had turned purple. Conner saw his eyes look at his chest and sure enough his medallion was a-glow with the bright blue light. Suddenly Conner could see into the spiritual realm and there was his friend Zurel. He had Satan by the throat lifting him off the ground with one hand. “I think he is having a hard time speaking those words,” said Zurel.

“I bet he is too,” laughed Conner. “You ever hear the saying, what goes around ... comes around? He looks good in purple.”

Zurel looked down at Conner, “Who do you think started that phrase anyway?” Zurel took another glance at Conner and smiled big. “I have always been close at hand and you have never been alone as I promised you. You see



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Michael and I make God's will happen. When these devils try to stop it, or interfere, then we get involved. We've been very busy since you got here.

"Sorry about that," said Conner. But thanks for being there for me."

"So King Conner of the old realm what is your judgment on this evil creature for all his lies and trying to kill the girl you love."

"Get rid of him, since he can't die, just throw him out like the trash." Then I saw Zurel reach back with Satan still in his grip and he threw Satan as far as anyone could see, and in the flash of a moment all the evil on all the hills had vanished from view, gone as well. "I will make sure he doesn't come back and harm these people. They will live in peace now for their obedience to Jehovah."

About that time Conner and all the people of Maresha saw the angels come down and stand on the mountains surrounding their new home in the caves of Maresha, and so it was and the people lived in peace for ever more.

Chapter Eleven

The Community at Maresha



Over the next few weeks the people began to rebuild some of the ruins where the ancient houses used to be. A few of the people discovered that the ruins of the house they would rebuild hid secret entrances to the cave system so you would not even know the caves were there. This was a good security feature Conner thought. Some new houses had to be built, but everyone was pitching in to help each other and progress was being made.

The Lord provided for them as they discovered a few lost sheep and goats. They started to breed them and soon had small herds of sheep and goats and the blessings of God continued for now at least they could eat. The baskets of bread then stopped. As for the water, there were several small springs in the cave and around the outside the cave, so Jehovah had truly provided for their needs.

Zurel's word was good because the small community had no more trouble from the outside. That didn't mean the community didn't grow because it did. Maresha grew into a multi-ethnic community of Idumeans,³⁷ Judeans and other small groups who had suffered loss and whose homelands were no more. Truly the word of the Lord God Jehovah is true, saying "You will be met by others whom I have called out. They shall become as you."

Over the following years the small community would become a town. Thousands of manmade caves were hewn from the soft chalk and limestone bedrock of the cave system and the surrounding landscape. Inside the caves they quarried spacious underground complexes, supported by vaulted ceilings and massive pillars. This provided a place for meetings and for worship.

NATHAN AND GABRIELLA

Well, say what you want, but Gabriella managed to do what Nathan's father could not do, get Nathan to put his sword down and forget about it. It was amazing what a good woman can do. As Conner learned, "Her worth is far more than rubies."³⁸

Nathan found a new calling in life, one valued far more than his sword. The more he was with Gabriella, the more he enjoyed helping people, seeing to their needs and putting them above himself. Not only did he find a new focus for his life, but he found a close friend and maybe more, that is if they could find someone to marry them.

One day Ben-Aaron, Nathan, Gabriella, Aliyah and Rachel all came to see King Conner.

"My friend Ben, it is always a pleasure to see you and you have all my favorite people with you too. You are all welcome to come visit me anytime you want. Nathan, I have never seen you without your sword, you haven't lost it now have you?" Conner noticed Gabriella holding his hand.

"No my King, I still have it, but I have traded it for something more beautiful."

"Well then you have found a good thing Nathan, Who knows if even I could be so blessed."

Then Rachel came over and grabbed Conner's hand and gave him a quick kiss on the cheek, "Well my King, if Jehovah smiles on you, then you never know what your future will be."

"Ah ... okay, so what brings all of you here this morning to see me?"

Ben-Aaron stepped forward, "Conner my King, I'm so glad you are in such good health and spirits today. As you know we have no Priest or Rabbi to which our young people can go to if they wish to be married. Even though we are no longer a nation, we are still a people and we have traditions. However I will admit we also have nothing we need for a wedding to happen, but we do have a King and this is a good thing."

Conner stopped him for a minute, "You mean there is someone who wants to be married and somehow this is going to involve me?"

The Community at Maresha

“Yes, you are the only one. There is no one higher over the people than you. You just have to bless them and give your blessing to their marriage and declare them married before Jehovah. They have asked me to come to you personally to ask this.”

“So who are these two who wish to be married?” As if Conner didn’t know already.

Ben-Aaron looked back at Nathan, who very nervously stepped forward holding the hand of Gabriella. “We do my King.”

Conner looked at Gabriella for a moment, “Nathan hasn’t done anything to you that caused you to agree to this has he? Because if he has, you can take that sword of his and beat him over his head with it till he straightens up.”

Gabriella smiled for a moment, “No my King, he has not. I do this of my own free will.”

Looking at Nathan, Conner said, “I don’t know how you did it, but one of the prettiest jewels in the kingdom wants to marry you. I am amazed, but Rachel is right again. Jehovah works in mysterious ways, of which I have learned so well.” Rachel squeezed Conner’s hand harder. “Okay, I will do this for the two of you, even though I have never done this before.”

“Praise Jehovah,” said Ben-Aaron. “Now the women can get to all the planning and I can get some rest.”

Aliyah, Gabriella and Rachel were all very happy. Rachel finally released her grip from Conner’s hand and blood began to flow again. There hadn’t been a wedding for so long and all the people were very excited at the prospect of it. The women had lots to talk about. Why this was, Conner never would understand.

A WEDDING AT MARESHA

For the most part all the people pitched in and offered material to make Gabriella a special dress for this special occasion. The men came together and actually built a Chuppah.³⁹ This was to be the place where the man and woman would come and stand under its covering and say the words that would join them together before God.

It was only a few days until the women had a dress made for Gabriella and the Chuppah was in place. All the preparations had been made. Even though it

wasn't as nice as they would have had if they were in Jerusalem, this was still the best they were going to get.

On the day of the wedding Conner went out and found Ben-Aaron to ask him of some of the traditions their people had for weddings. He thought He'd see just how much different they may be from what he know.

"Certainly I will tell you," said Ben-Aaron, but there are many traditions. Because we are here, we cannot do everything so we will make due. Either way they will be just as married before Jehovah.

"First, the two of them are not allowed to see each other for seven days prior to the wedding, but since the wedding is today we will forget that. There is a time of preparation for the wedding and in that time the women would get together and have a celebration just for the Bride, this the women did a few days ago. I apologize that you were not told this my King, but then no men are allowed to be there for her celebration. Then on the wedding day, which is special for both of them everyone will treat them like a King and Queen.

"I am told from the women that they have only simple cloth for a dress and no cloth for a veil for the bride, they will think of something else to use. There is no ring's for them to use so they decided to give each other something that was personal to both of them. This was all we could do and we are fortunate to have that. We are truly a humble people."

Conner asked Ben-Aaron "Is everyone ready now so we can do this wedding and get these kids married?"

"Yes Conner, I will go check again, but I believe everyone is now ready. You need to go and stand under the Chuppah and wait for them there."

So Conner did as he was instructed, but for this event he thought it would be appropriate to bring with him the Holy Book, the Book of Beginnings.

THE WEDDING

Conner stood under the Chuppah as Ben-Aaron instructed him too. Conner set the Holy Book just in front of him on a small homemade table. Ben-Aaron and Nathan patiently waited just in front of the Chuppah for Gabriella. Soon there was heard the sound of the Shofar blowing, announcing the coming of the bride. Since Gabriella did not have her father to escort her, several of the men, took turns escorting her a little ways and then handed her off to the next man, who escorted

her a little more and so on, till she finally was in reach of Nathan. Gabriella's escorts were elderly men of the families who she had helped and cared for, now they were doing something in return for her. All of them took a place several steps behind her as their way to symbolizing their watching over her.

As Gabriella approached the Chuppah Nathan reached out and took her hand and they both stepped under the Chuppah together. Ben-Aaron then walked around and stood next to Conner.

Then King Conner dressed as everyone expected as their King began to speak. "I am told that it is traditional to have a contract of marriage or a covenant written up and agreed upon by each partner. However in the light of our situation, we find ourselves without such a document. However, Nathan and Gabriella have chosen to make a verbal covenant between them and their words will be heard by everyone and by Jehovah God. They will also exchange a small gift in the process."

Then Nathan reached into his pocket and brought out the small golden Menorah he had taken from his house when he snuck back into Jerusalem. "Gabriella my love, this is all I have to give, it is dear to my heart. I give it as a token of my love, but nothing is more precious to me than the love I have received from you."

Gabriella though she had almost nothing of value, she had managed to take a long piece of white material from her wedding dress and cut it into three strands which she weaved together making a beautiful piece of long white cord. She took the white cord and loosely wrapped it around Nathan's wrist and the other end she loosely wrapped around her own wrist. This was to symbolize the binding of two hearts to each other, than she spoke to Nathan. "Nathan as soon as I saw you I knew you were special. You proved just how special you were when you laid down your sword for a life of servitude. You won my heart that day. Today I give myself to you as your wife."

Now the Book of Beginnings was sitting on a small table in front of Nathan and Gabriella and King Conner. As the couple spoke their few words of love to each other the Holy Book began to glow its soft blue glow. Nathan and Gabriella looked up at Conner not know what was going to happen next. Conner told them to continue because he knew Nathan had something else to give. Nathan again reached into his pocket.

"Gabriella, there was something else I have had hidden for a long time that belonged to my mother and is precious to me." He lifted her hand up and produced the gold ring he had hidden away ever since he dug it out of his hiding

place back in his room in Jerusalem. He placed the ring on her finger and then said, "Behold, you are consecrated to me with this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel."

Then Conner's thoughts went to Gabriella because he knew she had nothing and especially not a ring. Then Conner heard that familiar whisper in his thoughts, "Open the book."

Gabriella was still in a state of shock looking at the beautiful ring Nathan had produced. Conner had to call Gabriella's name a few times to get her attention. "Gabriella I have been told for you to open the Holy Book, Jehovah has something for you."

So Gabriella, who was fighting back her tears reached out and opened the cover of the book, which made everyone gasp for this has never been done before. "Oh my!" said Gabriella, then the tears began even more. Conner heard the voice of the Jehovah again, but this time the words were to Gabriella, "For the heart of a servant is a precious thing to me, take my ring it is yours to give to your husband."

So Gabriella reached out and took the ring from out of the book and then reached over and placed the ring on Nathan's finger. Gabriella had memorized a scripture just for this moment. "I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine."⁴⁰

At this point they were considered married, but then there was one more confirmation. The light from the Holy Book of Beginnings began to move expanding out over the table and then it covered both Nathan and Gabriella as if by this gesture Jehovah was giving them His blessing and all the people gasped again at this miracle.

About this time Ben-Aaron spoke up, "It is time for the blessing of this couple before Jehovah." He reached into his pocket and unfolded an old wrinkled up paper from which he read, "Blessed art Thou Lord our God, King of the universe, who created all things for His glory. Blessed art Thou Lord our God, King of the universe, who fashioned the man in His image and who gladdens the groom with his bride. Blessed art Thou Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine and of all life. May you be blessed in life and may Jehovah bless you with many children for me to spoil." Gabriella smiled at the last comment, but Nathan looked surprised, he had never thought that he could be a father.

After the blessing Conner offered a word of comfort to Nathan, "It will be okay Nathan, believe me, Gabriella will help you through being married." The

people who were close enough to hear all chuckled a bit at Nathan, who was looking like he was in shock. There was only one thing left to do at this point that Conner could think of, “Nathan and Gabriella you both have spoken words and promised your love to each other before these people, myself and before Jehovah. So as it is given to me by Jehovah to do, I now pronounce you husband and wife, and yes you are now married Nathan ... forever.”

Everyone cheered and shouted for both of them waiting for the big moment of a kiss. Gabriella was waiting also for the big moment of her first kiss. Everyone was waiting on Nathan who was still in his moment of shock over the comment of his husband responsibilities. Conner looked at Nathan some more ... “Nathan,” still nothing was happened. Then Conner looked at Ben-Aaron trying to signal him to get his son moving, but still Nathan stood there. Then Ben-Aaron said to his son, “Nathan ... wake up boy, this is a good time to kiss your bride. We all want to eat before the food gets old and the flies get more then we get.”

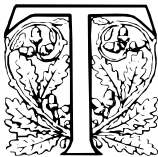
That seemed to wake Nathan up, “Oh yes, I knew that” said Nathan. Finally Nathan gave his new bride a kiss to remember and all the people gave their approval by saying “Be it so unto them.”

Then the Shofar sounded again and all was good. “Let’s all go eat now,” shouted Ben-Aaron.

Chapter Twelve



Going Home



he wedding party was still going strong and everyone seemed to be in a good mood. The community of Maresha was growing and would soon become a town. The people were safe for they had the promise of Zurel, Chief Captain of the League of Guardians.

Rachel was having fun and talking with Aliyah and Gabriella who was so happy for her marriage, when suddenly a bright light appeared in the open area away from the wedding. Everyone quickly moved back away from the light except for Conner. He recognized this light it was the light of an old friend. It was Zurel.

“I bring greetings to you Conner, King of the old realm and friend of the people of Jehovah. I bring a message for you, that your faith has been rewarded. This day the Lord Jehovah has given unto you one from among His people who shall bless you all the days of your life and you shall remember his people through her.”

Conner was very surprised to say the least, “But who is this that the Lord has given to me?” It didn’t take long for that answer to be revealed. Conner then felt the bump of Rachel and not far behind her was her friend Aliyah. Rachel grabbed hold of his arm.

“It’s me silly, I will be with you. You are the promise Jehovah made to me. I have always known this in my heart.”

Conner looked at Rachel, “You have? How come I didn’t know this? How come you didn’t tell me?”

“You will learn that there are just some things a woman knows from her heart and you don’t.”

Zurel looked at Conner with a small smile on his face. Conner was a little surprised in a good way. He did love Rachel, but never thought about marriage because he was so busy trying to be King he missed and the signs Rachel was giving to him. “So what do I do now?”

Zurel look at Conner and then at Rachel and said her, “The prayer of your father the King are answered this day.” Then Zurel looked back at Conner, “Again, it appears you must choose. I cannot say any more.”

Conner looked at Rachel, “I cannot believe this is happening this way. It was supposed to be Nathan and Gabriella’s big day. You should have your own day.”

Rachel was fast to respond, “I am the daughter of the King. Everyday has been special for me and serving these people have been my greatest joy. Jehovah has filled my life with people who need my help and now he offers a man ... a King who needs a Queen. You are special to me, and I want it to last a lifetime unless you are going to just stand here forever. I think the angel of Jehovah is waiting for an answer.”

Conner was quick to respond to that, “This is certainly the fastest engagement and marriage I have ever heard of ... but yes, I choose Rachel.”

Then there were shouts from among the people, “Kiss her ... kiss the bride.” Everyone laughed, but Rachel was looking straight at Conner.

Rachel reached up and pulled Conner’s face around in her direction, “Well my King, I’m waiting.”

Suddenly it was King Conner who was the nervous one, “But everyone is watching.” Rachel said nothing, but she did use one hand and moved it up around Conner’s neck and with a gentle pull the King got the hint. Conner leaned over and in front of all the people finally and for the first time he kissed Rachel. As he did he felt light headed again and suddenly the memories of who he was and his life before this came back to him. Zurel had given him back the memory of his home and who he was.

Zurel said in a low voice, “I was rooting for you Conner, and now Jehovah has blessed you as all men are blessed.” Zurel then turned and with his hand pointed out in front of everyone there suddenly appeared a horizontal whirlwind

that grew in size and intensity. Then a hole appeared from within it and everyone could see the wind and small clouds turning like a funnel. The whirling tunnel became larger until several people could fit through it. In the center of it Conner could see the mountain he had gone exploring in and there was his truck he had left, it was still there waiting for him.

“I remember now,” said Conner.

Zurel turned back to Conner and Rachel to tell Conner, “You have done what was asked of you. You had faith in God so you shall be rewarded with a prosperous life and family who loves you. It is time for you to go home and take what you have learned and teach others. Do not let the memory of what you have seen and the people of God be forgotten.”

Now Conner’s heart began to yearn to go home, he turned and looked at Rachel. “You are my wife?”

“Yes, my King I am your wife now and you are now my husband. I go where you go, forever. When you spoke the words and my ears heard you choose me my heart leapt for the joy, for I felt Jehovah bind our hearts and lives to each other”

Then Aliyah shouted out, “I want to go too, can I go with you.”

Conner looked up at Zurel ... he shook his head okay and Aliyah and Rachel were very excited and both gave each other a big hug. Rachel squeezed Conner’s hand again and said to him, “Conner my husband, you need to say good-bye to the people. They love you also, they will be losing their king.”

SAYING GOOD-BYE

Everyone was happy with tears in their eyes. Then Ben-Aaron brought Conner the Book of Beginnings. “Conner, this book is to stay with you always. You were brought here for a reason and you are done. We all love you even if you are not Jewish. I lose a daughter, but I gained Gabriella a daughter-in-law. Please watch over Aliyah for me. She is still my daughter, but be warned, she has a mind of her own and sometimes she can be very disobedient.”

“I will good friend and I will miss you the most. Maybe in some other time we will find each other again and have lots to talk about.”

Then Conner looked out over the people gathered there, “People of Jehovah, be blessed this day for with your own eyes you have seen miracles. Never forget how Jehovah stood for you and evil was defeated right here. You have kept God’s

commandments and so He now stands for you. Live your life and be prosperous in the Lord. It is time for me to go back to my home. I look forward to hearing how you served God. Be blessed in the name of Jehovah.”

With the Book of Beginnings in hand and Rachel next to him and Aliyah following her, Conner told Zurel they were ready, but he did have a last question. “These people are now at peace and they deserve a rest from war. This is their kingdom now, but how long will this last for them?”

Zurel answered, “Nothing of this world lasts forever and that is the destiny of all earthly kingdoms. Be comforted in knowing there is coming a King, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.”⁴¹

Again Zurel spoke his last words to Conner as the three of them started walking through the whirlwind tunnel that would take them home. “Keep what has been entrusted to you for the Word of the Lord is a powerful weapon in your hand.” With those words all three of them entered the whirlwind of swirling clouds with an eye on Conner’s truck still waiting for him in the future.

BACK HOME

As they entered the swirling whirlwind tunnel back that would take them home, the wind became strong and encircled all of them, but they kept walking. Conner could feel his clothes change almost instantly and suddenly he was dressed as he was before he started this adventure. He looked straight ahead at his truck as the place he would step out of the whirlwind. To Conner’s surprise he saw the two girls step out of the whirlwind and onto the land next to his truck. They waved to Conner to step out and join them, but for the moment he was unable to.

While Conner was still in the whirlwind tunnel the Book of Beginnings was suddenly pulled out of his hands and it opened up in front of him. The book began to glow its blue light and he saw many hands appear from out of the whirlwind, all of them appeared to be writing in the book all at the same time, but somehow Conner understood differently. The hands were the hands of every King, prophet and disciple who had written and their words became the inspired word.

As the hands wrote in the book Conner noticed that the book began to grow in thickness and number of pages. He saw the faces of the many prophets and apostles faintly appear in the swirl of the whirlwind. He heard the voices of

many speak as they wrote their words in the book, “By grace you have been saved through faith,”¹ “for God sent not His Son into the world to condemn it; but that the world through Him might be saved.”² He heard the dimmed voices of the martyred as they cried out to the Lord for vengeance.

Then Conner heard the sound of a hammer as if it was hitting something and then the scream of pain and the weeping of many. A heaviness came over him as he felt what the disciples must have felt as Jesus was crucified. He felt that moment of crucifixion and in that moment he realized at what great cost, “God so love the world ...”³ Again he looked into the whirlwind and saw the persecution of believers throughout the ages and those who stood for the message of the book that he was bringing back. Conner saw the images of all those who stood the test and did not falter. These became a great cloud of witnesses⁴² who stood forever in heaven. Now their images too faded into the whirlwind.

Suddenly Conner was cast out of the storm next to where the girls stood. Then to his surprise the Book of Beginnings flew out of the whirlwinds also and fell into his hands. This time it was different, but familiar at the same time. Though he knew what he held in his hands the girls didn’t have any idea, especially Rachel. They both looked at the book that was now in Conner’s hands and it appeared different to them, but so familiar to Conner. On its cover were the words “Holy Bible.” Rachel asked me “Why did it change Conner? What does this mean, is it still the word of Jehovah?”

“Yes Rachel, it’s still the Word of Jehovah, even more so now. A lot has happened since we walked into that whirlwind and the book has been added to by the prophets and by the apostles, but the message of the book will never change. I will explain to you later and help you understand, but it is all good.” Rachel looked up at Conner and smiled.

Conner looked over at Aliyah, “I think we have a lot to talk about don’t we Aliyah?”

“Why do you ask me?” said Aliyah.

“Because I think I know a secret. What do you think about that?”

“I think you’re a very smart man Conner.”

Rachel smiled and grabbed Conner’s arm, “I think he is too.”

¹ Ephesians 2:8

² John 3:17

³ John 3:16

Conner reached down inside his pockets and found the keys to his truck and told the girls, “I think it’s time we get home ladies, everyone in the truck.”

Rachel looked puzzled at the sight of a truck, having never seen one before. Aliyah showed her what to do like she was a pro at it. Conner watched the two girls and knew that his suspicions about Aliyah were correct. He thought to himself, *“So if Aliyah is a ... then what about Ben-Aaron, was he a ... also? A lot of things now seemed to be more than what I was led to believe.”*

A Bible verse came to mind, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unaware.”⁴³

A PROPHECY COME TRUE

Aliyah, Rachel and Conner had been home for a while and it seemed like Rachel was picking things up pretty fast. She especially liked the shopping mall the best. Conner believed her second most favorite thing was the grocery store. This was very exciting for her to just pick her food from the shelf and not have to kill it first. Aliyah was there showing her things that Conner don’t know how Aliyah even knew, but somehow she did. Conner still had his suspicions about that girl.

Conner would have never believed it in a million years, but even in spite of himself, the Lord had a way of working everything out for his good. Soon after returning home he was offered a new job that allowed him to go back to school. Aliyah told everyone that she too had found herself a job and eventually her own place to live.

After what Conner had been through he thought it would be fitting to study Archaeology. Rachel asked if she could join him in this and so the two of them became study partners and within time we both graduated with degrees in Archaeology. It also wasn’t long before Rachel had her own announcement.

“Conner my King husband, I would like to speak to you about a matter that concerns you.”

“But first Rachel, we need to talk about you calling me ‘King.’ In this place and this time I am not a King, just call me Conner or husband if you want to.”

“Yes my husband King ... oops I’m sorry, but I like it that you’re a King and I am the daughter of a King and our children will be prince and princesses.

Oh yes, that reminds me, I have to tell you something. How long did you want to wait to have a little prince or princess?"

"Well, I thought after college and we were off working then we could talk about that ... why?"

"My husband you need to start talking now because I believe that in God's time of nine months that you will be a father." Conner was surprised at this news. He just stared off into space thinking of what she just said. "Conner ... hello husband, you need to move or say something before I think you have died."

"Do you know if it's a girl or a boy yet?"

"My husband, I am not God. The child is too small and inside my stomach, so I cannot see yet. Only Jehovah knows, you should ask him. He seems to listen to you."

Then Conner remembered the words that Zurel spoke to him as they walked into the whirlwind to come back home, "You had faith in God so you shall be rewarded with a prosperous life and family who loves you ..."

Conner repeated those words to himself, "A family who loves you." Rachel was just glad to be pregnant, but Conner saw it as something greater, a gift and a promise kept. Little did he know that before long there would be three, all girls.

TIME TO GO TO WORK

After Rachel and Conner had settled down to the joys of parenthood Conner received a call one day. It was from a museum asking if he was interested in a new dig they wanted to start in Israel. He was always interested in going back to Israel so he told them yes. Rachel wanted to go too and Aliyah offered to go along and help with the kids. The next thing they knew they were all on their way to Israel.

They were met at the airport by a man named Ben-David who was head of the Department of Antiquities and Museums in Israel. Conner thought he looked familiar, but he kept it to himself. He seemed drawn to Aliyah and then the three kids. Another thought came to Conner's mind, but he dismissed it as impossible.

"Mr. Ben-David," said Conner. "How did you get my name and contact information to find me?"

“We Jews have the highest of contacts you know. I can find who I need and for this dig and I needed you.” This was all Ben-David had to say and so everyone followed him out of the airport and into a waiting van.

Again Conner asked, “Mr. Ben-David, just where is this dig you want us to work at anyway?”

“Oh, Conner ... I’m sorry, I mean Mr. Conner. It is an old site about twenty or thirty kilometers to the south of Jerusalem. An ancient site called Maresha. About a month ago there was an earthquake in the area and it opened up caverns and exposed some ancient artifacts. I have read some of the papers you wrote on ancient cultures and knew you would want to be a part of this.” Conner’s mouth just fell open as he looked at Rachel and she started to cry and Aliyah helped to keep the children occupied.

So Conner asked, “What have you found out so far about Maresha and who is there now digging?”

“What we know is this. Maresha⁴⁴ had a mixed culture at one time in its history of both Arabic and Judean settlers. In its beginning we believe the village was only about six acres, but then grew to over eighty acres and the population with it. This is strange because we were told the area at some time in its history had a major earthquake. Now last month there was another earthquake and caves inside the main cave. New areas were opened up. After some prayer about how to proceed, I remembered your name and that you had some knowledge of this place. I am hoping you and your wife can assist us on this site.”

“We will be happy to Mr. Ben-David.”

“You can just call me Ben.”

“Yes I will. I seem to know that name well.”

THE DIG AT MARESHA

By the second day Rachel and Conner were up early and ready to go to work. Aliyah stayed with the children and played with them outside and out of the way of any danger.

Rachel looked around the site and all the memories came back to her, she could still see her friend Gabriella as she stood with her new husband Nathan. That was the day her life changed forever as she looked over to the place Zurel opened up the whirlwind tunnel that they went through that took her to her new life. As

she was thinking back to that time Conner came up to her and wrapped his arms around her, “Are you remembering ... I can still see them too, right here is where Nathan and Gabriella were married.

“Conner my love, Jehovah has blessed us in that we can find out what happened to our friends. I know there are answers here if we look hard.”

“I understand Rachel, let’s follow our procedures and see what the Lord shows us. It has been too many years and all traces of them are surely gone by now. But we will look.”

They both joined the dig team, but Rachel and Conner wanted to focus their attention on the inside of the caves. Here is where they knew the people made meeting rooms and places of worship. The next thing they knew in came Aliyah and without the kids.

“Where are my children?” asked Rachel.

“Ben-David wanted to play with them. He seems to really like them. So I thought I’d come in here and help.”

“Conner, I’m going out there to find my children,” said Rachel and then away she went out of the caves.

“Aliyah, I know you can help us here because I know a secret. We’re looking for something, anything that can tell us that the people were here and were safe. I want to know.”

“I can help because I know my brother best. Nathan liked hiding places and he always stuffed things in these hiding places. We need to go to the large cave that was used for worship. I believe there Nathan may have left us something hidden.”

They both knew where this cave was and now thanks to electricity they had lights strung up in the cave to light the way. They searched the large cave for two days. They looked in every place they thought Nathan would hide something, they searched, tugged and pulled on the rocks and anything that might reveal a secret.

GIFTS FROM NATHAN

Then Aliyah called out to Conner to come to here quickly. “Look at these markings behind this waterfall. This one I believe is a Menorah carved on the

rock. I don't believe this waterfall was always here. It must have worn down the rock above and broke through hiding this. That is why they have missed it until now."

"Aliyah, I think your right, and look I can move the stone if I try real hard. It must have a few thousand years of limestone deposits jamming it in there."

"Wait a minute Conner before you ruin it, let me do it. You will end up breaking everything."

Though Aliyah was getting wet by the waterfall, she somehow managed to make the stone loosen up so that it looked like it would come out.

"Aliyah, move out of there and let me take that thing out. You never know what will come falling down on you once that comes out. With all the years of water running over this, who knows what will happen."

So Conner moved into position to pull the stone out of the smooth wall behind the waterfall. It was stubborn and he had to wiggle it more and pull out a little, then do it all over again. After a few minutes the stone came out, but with it a portion of the smooth wall collapsed at their feet. To their surprise a blue light shined out revealing a gold mine of Nathan's artifacts.

Aliyah was so excited that she ran out of the cave to go get Rachel. "Rachel come quickly, Conner has found something amazing. Come quickly bring the children with you, they will be fine."

Moments later Rachel and Aliyah stood behind Conner in awe of what they were looking at. "These belonged to Nathan, He left them here, hoping one day that we would come back and find them, but what about the blue glow?"

Then Conner remembered, he turned to the girls and said, "Just before we went through the whirlwind tunnel I took off the medallion and handed it to Ben-Aaron. I didn't think I would ever need it again. He must have given it to Nathan. Nathan then became the leader of the people after we left."

Aliyah shouted, "Oh I'm so happy for him. He was a good brother especially without that dumb sword, Gabriella changed him for the better."

Rachel answered her back, "Jehovah change him for her." They all agreed

Rachel looked in the hole, "Look there is his sword and what are those other small items ... pull them out."

As Conner reached back into the hole to get the items, the glow of the blue light came out and covered him once again. The girls and the three kids all looked at Conner very surprised. “Look at you,” said Rachel. “It has been a long time since we have seen this. You are again dressed as a King. See I told you, you are still a King.”

Conner pulled out the medallion which still looked like it did the day Conner gave it to Ben-Aaron. He put it around his neck and reached in and grabbed more items. He pulled out the next object and handed it to Aliyah, it was the small golden menorah given to Gabriella at their wedding. Then he handed the next objects to Rachel, and she started to cry at what she was looking at. The two wedding rings of Nathan and Gabriella now tarnished but still recognizable.

Then Conner pulled out a small scroll and a second small piece of parchment with only these words left on it, “Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha-olam,”

Rachel quickly translated the text for them saying, “This is Hebrew meaning “Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe.” The rest of the blessing had been destroyed.

“Hey,” declared Aliyah. I think this was read at their wedding. Nathan got it from his secret hiding place when he went back to Jerusalem. This is priceless.”

Conner handed another small scroll to Aliyah. She very carefully unrolled it for it was small and only a portion of the original. It was brittle and should not have been touched at all, but she wanted to know what her brother wrote. “This is Nathan’s writing, he wrote this, but it is hard to read.”

“What’s it say?” said Rachel.

“It’s very old and hard to read, and some parts are missing from just its age, but let me try. He says that ‘Jehovah has blessed them at Maresha as the angel of the Lord has promised. Their leader has left them and gone home through the whirlwind of clouds. He was appointed by the messenger of the Lord to lead the people.’ The Messenger of the Lord must have been Zurel. Then down here he talks about his children and his wife’s death.” Rachel gasped at the news of her friend Gabriela. “She died soon maybe even in childbirth. The rest is missing.”

Rachel told Aliyah “I am so sorry. I hope she got to have lots of time with her children. She loved children so much.”

Aliyah reached over and gave Rachel a hug, “I’m sure she did. She enjoyed life and she got everything she wanted, marriage and children.”

Conner finished pulling out everything from the hole and then picked up the rock that was carved on and told the girls that they should keep the few personal items Nathan wrote to them and he was holding onto the medallion for safe keeping, after all Zurel gave it to him. The sword and the rocks and the rings should be given to Mr. Ben-David. He will want to put them in his museum.

Sure enough Ben-David was beyond himself with excitement. To actually have this level of artifacts found on a site is miraculous. There were a few other items Nathan had in his hiding place. One especially was a long cord that was discolored with age and very fragile. It was Rachel who remembered that this must be the cord Gabriella had made and wrapped around Nathan’s wrist at their wedding. It must have meant a lot to Nathan to keep it for so long and put it in here. Ben-David crated up the objects and packed them into a truck heading back to the museum in Jerusalem.

A LAST VISIT

Conner and his family stayed at the dig site for a few weeks helping the others and finding small reminders of the people and the friends they left behind. One day as Rachel and Conner were digging at an isolated section of the site the medallion Conner wore around his neck began to glow again. Rachel noticed it first “Conner look quick, it’s your medallion, it glows.” Before he could look at the medallion, a great light appeared before them, one Conner was familiar with, it was Zurel.

“You have fulfilled all that was asked of you King of the old realm. You have returned seeking those you once knew. They are in glory and waiting for the day they will see you once again. Now because of your love for the people of Jehovah they will be remembered through the museum. All men will know that Jehovah provides for those who love Him and keep His commandments.

“I come to you this time to give you this word. Your faithfulness is rewarded to the second generation. It will be through one who seeks knowledge and wisdom that you will be blessed. He will reap what you have sown. Be strong and be courageous,⁴⁵ fight the good fight⁴⁶ and be not deceived for the evil of this world still seeks whom he may destroy.”⁴⁷

With that, Zurel again like so many times before slowly began to disappear and was gone. Rachel then went over to Conner, “I saw that and I heard too. I have been telling you forever who we are and you better not forget it, we are the son and daughter of a King, and you go around with your medallion looking like a King ... I can’t believe you could ever forget. You need to remember this. I tell you so many times, but you don’t listen to me. You never listen to me. You are so much like a man. I am so mad at you now, so just keep digging and don’t talk to me until you decide to listen to me.”

Conner took a deep breath and with one hand he reached around the back of Rachel’s head and pulled her close to him and kissed her the deepest he had ever kissed her, remembering when he first kiss her so long ago. “Is it better now,” Conner asked.

Rachel said nothing as she walked away talking to herself, “*This man thinks he can kiss away my anger at him, well it will not work*” ... She smiled to herself, then ... “*Maybe I will not be angry latter.*”

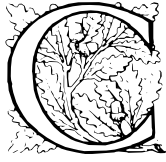
HISTORY RECORDED

They stayed and finished the dig and sent many more artifacts to Ben-David (who still looks a lot like Ben ... that Conner remembered, Conner still wonders if ... hum). Ben-David asked Conner if they could write a short history of what he felt was the daily lives of the people who once lived in Maresha. Aliyah and Rachel jumped at the chance to write about their friends so long ago, surely in this way their friends and family would be remembered. So the two of them got together and wrote the history of a small group of people who out of the midst of their disaster clung to their faith and kept the word of the Lord and how He rescued them. These were the people of Maresha and their longtime leader Nathan, who chose to lay down his sword for love and became a servant of Jehovah.

The End



Epilogue



Conner and Rachel had three daughters who grew up hearing all the stories of God, angels, and of great mysteries. As interesting and fun as the stories were the girls grew up and their focus belonged on their families until one day the stories were long forgotten.

Two sons were born from among the girls families the first several years ahead of the second. One day the elder grandson Aedan came to see his grandfather. As they talked in his office, surrounded by all the special artifacts his grandfather had collected in his travels. Aedan asked, “Grandfather, one day can I have all these things in your office?”

Conner smiled for the interest the young boy showed, “Well maybe one day when you are older, we will see what can come your way, but you do have a sister and a cousin too. What would you give to them?”

He looked around and then went to the shelf and picked up a certain rock, “They can have this rock.”

“Well that’s very nice of you Aedan, but let’s wait a little longer because grandpa may not be finished with all his things yet, okay?”

Conner and his wife Rachel lived a long life and prospered according to the promise of the Lord. Their kids and grandkids were the love of their lives and Rachel’s heart was constantly full of joy over how the Lord had blessed her. Slowly Conner’s health began to fail, but he never forgot the prophecy of his old friend Zurel, “Your faithfulness is rewarded to the second generation. It will be through one who seeks knowledge and wisdom that you will be blessed. He will reap what you have sown.”

Conner thought to himself “The second generation would be my grandchildren.” Suddenly Conner sat straight up in his chair. A glimpse of future events had just been awakened in the deepest recesses of his thoughts. His ears heard his mouth speak the words ... **There is another!**

FOR THE GLORY OF THE
Kingdom of Heaven



KINGDOM
Chronicles

References

¹ II Kings 25:3

² Heb.13:5

³ Mat. 19:26; Mk.10:27

⁴ Ben - name meaning “Son of” Aaron was the first priest of the temple I Chronicles 5:30-40

⁵ Phil. 2:13-14

⁶ 2 Chron. 24:20-21; Mt. 23:29-36

⁷ Israel (a synonym for Ephraim, meaning the ten tribes)

⁸ Jeremiah 36:31; Ezekiel 8–9; 22–23

⁹ Rachel in the Hebrew means “God is my strength.”

¹⁰ Jer. 52 (587 BC)

¹¹ II Kings 25:8-12

¹² [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_\(587_BC\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(587_BC))

¹³ Gabriella means God is my might

¹⁴ Jeremiah 25:8-11, Jeremiah 29:10 & II Chronicles 36:21, Daniel 1

¹⁵ Ps.18:30; Deut. 32:4; 2 Sam. 22:31

¹⁶ John 1:1

¹⁷ Ex. 16:4

¹⁸ Ro. 11:29

¹⁹ Manna was the supernatural food God gave to the Israelites during their 40-year wandering in the desert. The word manna means "What is it?" in Hebrew.

²⁰ http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/144569/jewish/The-First-Temple.htm

²¹ Talmud, Gittin 57b

²² Talmud, Ta'anit 29b

²³ Jehovah – Always present tense, intimate and personal God who walks with you. “Names of God, by: Marilyn Hickey pg.28

²⁴ Rev 8:3-4

²⁵ Isaiah 14; Ezek. 28

²⁶ Ezek. 28:16

²⁷ John 10:10

²⁸ Eph. 6:12

²⁹ Rev. 19-20

³⁰ Mt.25:40

³¹ Jer. 32:30

³² Isaiah 45:15 (NLT)

³³ Isaiah 55:9

³⁴ Ps. 22:3

³⁵ Hebrews 13:5

³⁶ Heb. 4:12; Rev.1:16

³⁷ Idumeans are the descendants of the Edomites

³⁸ Proverbs 31:10

³⁹ Chuppah, a canopy beneath which Jewish marriage ceremonies are performed

⁴⁰ Song of Solomon 6:3

⁴¹ Luke 1:33

⁴² Heb. 12:1

⁴³ Hebrews 13:2

⁴⁴ Biblical Archaeology Review, Sept./Oct. 2013 pages 32-39, 74

⁴⁵ Joshua 1:6, 9

⁴⁶ 1 Tim. 6:12

⁴⁷ 1 Peter 5:8