

## PROLOG

*"Behold, He has given us all things."*

The brightness of the day hurt Richard's eyes, as he squinted through the dirty window of the prison bus. No air conditioning, of course. Not for the likes of people like him, for he was being transferred to court, where he would be sentenced and condemned. His crime? Being a professing Christian.

Richard was old, and very tired. His eyes had seen too much of this life. His wife had died in the raid on their church. His children and their families had scattered for safety. He had no idea where they were, how they were doing, or even if they were still alive. Therefore, he was resigned to his sure fate, for no one was ever found innocent, once accused of this crime.

"How long now, Oh Lord, before You return for us?" Richard, as of late, had always prefaced his prayers with this question.

The bus lurched again, forward a few more feet. They were in one of the perpetual traffic jams in this great West-coast city. Richard heard a familiar sound. It got his attention, because he had not heard it since he was a youth. It was the sound of an ancient aircraft. How odd. Was he becoming dillusional?

Richard again squinted into the light, looking for the source of that sound. They were on a freeway in the south county, next to an abandoned airfield. Apparently, there was an air show of sorts going on. He saw a vintage Tomcat, an old F-18, probably a relic from one of their sister states in the mid-continent kingdom. This jet was more than a century old, and flew using old fashioned petroleum, instead of hydrogen. "Where did they get the gas?" Richard wondered to himself.

"Hey Shardick! I need some air!" Richard shouted to the guard, as he lowered the seat window. Shardick growled, "Go ahead, for all I care. Ye won't be gettin' through them winder bars." His guard was surprised at the request, for his prisoner never asked for anything, nor did he ever complain: Such a strange prisoner, that one.

Richard strained against his leg irons to see the old jet, flying continually back and forth over an old nearby runway in front of a crowded grandstand. He certainly had a good seat, watching from where he was on the prison bus. He saw several other old planes on the ground, off to the side. This Tomcat was beautiful in form, and painted with its old Navy colors. It lazily sliced through the heavy afternoon air, barely using any of its enormous energy to fly simple loops and figure-eights. The pilot probably wanted to baby this old machine. Bright flashes of light reflected from the canopy and the edges of its swept-back wings as it flew through the haze. To Richard, it was absolutely beautiful.

Oh, this brought back memories for him. Since he was little, he always wanted to fly. But it was not to be, for when he joined the military, he could not afford the 'required' payment to the Air Master to purchase flying school. Instead, because he was got good test scores, they put him into aviation electronics. But he never lost his desire to fly, for he always hung around the base airfield, and went to the airshows when they were held.

Today, of all days, to be reminded of this! Of late, nothing in this life had appealed to him. It seems he spent his days waiting to quit this life and move to the next; the one God had promised to all who followed Jesus. "Oh, Lord, will we be able to fly in Heaven?" Thought Richard, to himself, as he watched that old Tom cat maneuver in the sun. He imagined himself up there next to it, just flying beside it, without the need of an aircraft, or a set of wings. "Oh, that would be pure joy!", He thought, as he envied the pilot of that old craft.

The traffic jam was to take a while, it seems. He knew the Lord understood his heart's desire, as he enjoyed the show from his prison bus. "Thank you Lord, for this respite. . . "

\* \* \*

The brightness of the light hit his eyes, as he squinted into the hazy overcast of this day, on this planet now below him.

Richard, having been alone on a walk somewhere in the New Earth, had let his thoughts wander back to the Old Earth, and his life there. He had transported himself to a particular day and place just by thinking about it; the memories of this place and time were strong, and were particularly emotional and clear.

This day, and this place was in front of a vintage air show. Richard saw this, as he descended onto the scene unnoticed.

*No one could see him in this world, nor could he change anything, nor contact anyone here, for this world was history to mankind now.*

He saw the traffic jam off to his left. There was the prison bus, with him in it, in his old life. Below him now as he slowed his descent was the ancient Tomcat fighter plane, doing slow and lazy loops.

He presently flew along side of it, admiring the sweetness of its design and at the same time, seeing the sadness of its purpose and the crudeness of its manufacture. He could see the plane through the eyes of its creator, but this old world just never had the technology to make dreams come true.

It was easy for him to match each move this aircraft made. He flew along side without any effort or exertion of any kind. It was so easy to do this. He had done it for a few thousand years, yet it never ceased to amaze or thrill him that he could do this!

Richard's heart was joyful as he thought about his other self watching below. On this day he had desired, no, *lusted* for the ability to fly like this! His Lord perfectly understood his heart of hearts, and the prayerful cry and lament, unspoken upon his lips, down there, as his old self watched from that prison bus. God had again, given him all things, and Richard was in pure joy, as he playfully led and followed that old jet around in the hazy afternoon air.

*Miracles happen, and dreams do come true, even as we sit in chains, yearning for our heart's desire. To our prayers and our yearnings, even those unspoken, He has already answered yes. We only need the eyes of faith with which to see this. So have faith, my friends, the Lord Jesus shall indeed give us all things. In fact, He has already done so!*

1. TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE

***“One day is like a thousand years.”***

It was a bright and sunny day. Richard, the old man, lay sleeping peacefully under the tree on the hill. Although the sun was out, he was undisturbed in the shade, as he reclined peacefully on the carpet of grass. Birds sang nearby, and bees buzzed softly among the flowers nodding in the gentle breeze, but he was all unaware. A young man approached the hill singing. Spying the sleeping form, he grinned.

“Wake up son,” said the youth gleefully. He sat down under the tree and gently repeated his request until the old man roused himself, yawning and blinking.

“How long did I sleep, Father Hiram?” The white haired man asked, looking sheepishly into the clear gaze of the other.

The youth thought for a minute, a single finger on the side of his chin, and said, “About 20 years, Richard.”

The grey haired man was startled as he sat up, “That long? What have I missed?”

Again the youth was pensive. A little grin again playfully crossed his face, “Do you wish to go back to when you started, and continue from there, or do you wish to go on from this point in time?”

As he stood and stretched himself, the old man thought for a bit, and finally expressed quietly that he would go back, to continue his life from the point when he first fell asleep.

The youth quickly stood. As the old man rose and turned to go with the boy, he looked back at his sleeping form on the grassy knoll. They had already traveled back to the point *when* he started his long afternoon nap. He thought briefly about waking himself, but then shook his head. “No need for another paradox,” He said to himself. Together they ran down the hill and into the wide, sunny meadow.

*As they were running, Richard did not grow tired, nor was he breathing hard. He felt completely fit, and his body gave him no sense of pain or problems. In fact he felt wonderful. (“Not bad for a man going on forty — thousand years, that is!”)*

“What’s for lunch, Father, and how many of us will there be at home today?” The old man asked, as he stopped to stretch himself again. He ran to catch up.

The boy stopped and sighed patiently before answering, “If you

*Matthew 19:29  
And everyone who  
has left houses  
or brothers or sisters  
or father or mother  
or children or fields  
for my sake  
will receive  
a hundred times as much  
and will inherit eternal life.*

*Isaiah 35:10  
and the ransomed  
of the LORD will return.  
They will enter Zion  
with singing;  
everlasting joy  
will crown their heads.  
Gladness and joy  
will overtake them,  
and sorrow and  
sighing will flee away.*

thought for a minute, the answer to your questions would come to you, 'son Richard.'"

"I know, 'Father Hiram', but it is more fun asking you. You are the governor, and the record keeper for our family", Richard said. He too, put a single finger to the side of his chin thoughtfully. "I don't want to keep you from doing your job, you know," he finished lamely, after a long pause.

*In heaven everybody knows everything.* He knew that, but what was the point in having a conversation if you couldn't ask a few simple questions?

Richard again continued, his grey eyes alight. "I remember now, Father. We are having our family ritual for this time of year, of an early period family recipe of lentils and barley stew, He continued. "There will only be a small number, 2,526 of our family there for the common meal. My own John and Betsy will be serving today."

Hiram chuckled at his completely humble reply, as they continued on, now walking. "You do like it better when you can ask, don't you? After all these centuries, you are a delight to talk to. Most everyone else in our family is so introspective, it is hard to have a real conversation with them. You, on the other hand, are funny."

"I guess I will take that as a compliment 'Father Hiram', many generations removed. What is it? Twenty-three generations removed? You were the first of our family to follow the Lord Jesus."

"And you were the last, living in the last days and spending time mostly in prison because of your faith, dear Son, twenty three generations removed." Laughed Hiram.

"You almost make me wish I were younger, Father."

"And you make me wish I looked more my generational age. I might get more respect as Recorder."

"Why don't you change then?" Asked Richard. He had never felt the desire to be a boy again. He glanced at Hiram's golden hair, which was closely cropped, and thought of his own white mane.

"I might at that. I have always felt old, 'Son Richard.' I died at forty-one, an old man too soon wore out from the digging and hauling at the mines."

Richard agreed, "While I died an old man of eighty-five. Living, it seemed forever, in a worn out body that refused to die, so I could finally come home."

*2 Corinthians 5:1  
Now we know  
that if the earthly tent  
we live in is destroyed,  
we have a building from God,  
an eternal house in heaven,  
not built by human hands.*

As they came to the top of another hill overlooking their estate, they stopped and looked at each other. Hiram put his hand gently on the old man's shoulder. "Interesting times we lived in, Richard, before *Here*. Come, I know your story, but there is pleasure in hearing you tell it to me. Can we skip lunch again for a while, and walk for a time together? We can always catch up again by coming back to this particular time." It was Hiram's turn to be humble.

### A JOURNEY

*"I saw a new heavens and a new earth. . ."*

Richard smiled, and then turned aside down the next fork along the main path leading toward their mansion of many, many rooms.

This path would lead them to the River, which was but a small tributary of the great River of Life flowing from the City of God. (Ezekiel 47)

The River of Life forever flowed out from the Throne of God on top of Mount Zion, in the center of the city of New Jerusalem. It came out of the City of God to water the whole earth. This smaller tributary near their home was only a few hundred miles across, and was named after their family. Here and there the River broke into smaller streams, watering their family land. Their land was a small inheritance of only a few hundred million acres. To the East of them, several hundred miles away, lay the little city of Christgate, in their nation of New Austria, on the planet which is called the New Earth.

As they ran, Richard caught the smell of the wildflowers, ever blooming along these paths. Their sweet fragrance headily filled the warm afternoon air.

This day was the Secondday. Six more days to the Firstday, when all the people on the planet went to New Jerusalem to worship and to party. This was the grandest kind of celebration that mankind had ever known. They were held every Firstday, and on each New Moon. (Isaiah 66:23)

*Here, the Firstday commemorated the very Firstday of their Victory in Jesus, their redemption, and the founding of the New Earth. On that day, a nation was born, and a brand new world was opened. (Isaiah 66:8-16, Revelation 20:11, 21:12)*

Richard recalled that the calendars were perfect Here; thirty days each in the twelve Gentile months, of a 360 day year. It was just as God had originally made it to be on the first earth, before the time of

*Psalm 27:13  
I am still confident of this:  
I will see the goodness of  
the LORD in the  
land of the living.*

Joshua's little battle in Caanan. (Joshua 10)

Life in the Here was sweet, and filled with peace.

As he ran, he said a silent thank-you prayer to the Lord for it all.

*Jesus quietly answered in kind, reminding him that it was all for the pleasure of pleasing him, that He had done it.*

They presently came to the edge of a large stream leading to their river. They followed it, walking along the marble pavement wending along its bank.

"Hiram, tell me, did you imagine in the time you spent on the old earth, that it would be anything like this?"

"No, Richard. I could not begin to understand back then. Though I loved the Lord, and had put Him on in baptism, the preacher we had, and the Christian people we knew then, really had no idea that it would be so overwhelmingly full of life, beauty, and opportunity! I guess we thought it was some sort of sterile and pious little courtyard, where we would stand forever, singing and praising God," Espoused Hiram.

"I had such a similar idea, Hiram. I once met one of those who forever stand in His presence. I envy them their position! It is always hard to leave His Presence, for He is so utterly beautiful. Yet, I cannot deny that this land given to us by His hand, and all these people of ours, including you. . . . Our family . . . I am *ever* at a loss for words to describe my joy at having all of you!"

Hiram heartily agreed. "We are blessed indeed, Son! How is it possible that we, of all people, were so blessed by these things? I never could have dreamed that we would have been given such a glorious inheritance, so out of proportion to anything you or I ever gave Him. I still can scarce believe it is all ours!"

Richard said, "I will add my 'amen' to that, brother. He is so awesome, and you and I are living in the time of Jubilee, in a free and open land with no laws or rules!"

At a narrow bridge, they crossed the stream and continued South through another wide meadow encompassed by a tall forest.

**Philippians 3:7-11**

*But whatever was to my profit  
I now consider loss  
for the sake of Christ.  
What is more, I consider  
everything a loss  
compared to the  
surpassing greatness of knowing  
Christ Jesus my Lord,  
for whose sake I have lost all things.  
I consider them rubbish,  
that I may gain Christ  
and be found in him,  
not having a righteousness  
of my own that comes from the law,  
but that which is  
through faith in Christ  
—the righteousness  
that comes from God  
and is by faith.  
I want to know Christ  
and the power of  
his resurrection  
and the fellowship of sharing  
in his sufferings,  
becoming like him in his death,  
and so, somehow,  
to attain to the resurrection  
from the dead.*

## ADAM AND EVE

*“To you I give the earth, and to your descendants forever.”*

As they walked on into the day, it happened that in the cool of the afternoon, they came across father Adam and mother Eve. These two lead a beautiful pair of full grown Bengal tigers.

Hiram saw the couple first, as they were walking hand in hand. Of course these two could go anywhere. All mankind were their children, and they were welcomed by them everywhere. If they had possessed a small garden of their own someplace, what of it? They had the freedom of the whole planet, for God had originally given it all to them in the old Eden; to them forever, and to all of their descendants after them.

When they met our friends, the ancient couple smiled, and said hello, gaily calling out their son’s names.

Adam and Eve wore nothing, as they always did. Lack of clothing, or the style of clothing people wore, was of no importance in the New Earth. There was no thought of it, nor mention of it by either of our friends. Adam had a broad smile and booming voice. He was tall, dark haired, and muscular, and looked the perfect picture of a man in his prime. Also, as did mother Eve, who looked like a perfect red headed young woman, and whose beauty was both legendary and breathtaking.

Hiram walked over to Adam’s tigers, each of which allowed him to scratch behind their ears. He had to reach up to do this, as they were almost taller than he was. They both purred politely at this favor, thanking him, —and one was asking for a bit more, but a little lower down, just behind her right ear.

People knew that these two tigers were Pons and Sofred. They were the ones whom the Lord had killed, in order to cloth Adam and Eve, after their fall and expulsion from the old Garden of Eden.

Talking together about many things, they all resumed walking, arm and arm, toward the Great River and the slow setting of the sun, the tigers following.

Evening rose with the moon. In the Here, the moon appeared a dusty blue and green sphere. It was full of air, water and plant life, and was brightly shining above them in the clear, brightly spangled sky. Even without the moon’s presence in the sky, the great myriad of stars never let the night be dark on this New Earth.

*Genesis 3:21  
The LORD God made  
garments of skin for  
Adam and his wife and  
clothed them.*

The six of them eventually stopped to recline on a wide sandy shore of the River to watch the whales breaking the surface, far out toward the horizon. Their keen hearing could pick up the whale song, and their spouting as they played, even at this great distance.

Across the River to the Southeast, far away over the horizon, was the soft golden glow of the City of God.

Their conversation together was of no small matter to Richard.

“My son Richard, I heard from our Lord about your creation on the planet Veranda in Reuben’s Bow (the old Alpha Centauri). Is it really going to be one house completely covering the planet?”

Hiram smiled at Richard’s momentary lack of understanding, while he said nothing. He knew Richard was digging into his memory to retrieve the needed information.

Presently, Richard responded, “Father Adam, I am touched that someone discovered something that I had written in my youth. I had described a planet covered with a single mansion, where each room was dedicated to a very small part of the Scripture. I once wrote the story to help people understand how precious the Word was. It is only just now that I understand that a group of our people got together and are actually building this treasure house as a memorial to His Word. Eventually, every family on the New Earth will participate in adding to that treasure world, by creating a part of the Scripture with metal or gems in some unique fashion. I estimate that it will require about four centuries to complete the work.”

“That is amazing, my son. You must be pleased about this. I know I speak for both your mother and I, when I tell you that this pleases us that you so honor God our Father in this special way.” Adam said.

This flustered Richard, who stammered, “Father, I haven’t even been there yet to look for myself. Besides, I am sure that in all of our people, there must have been others who had the same idea.”

Hiram broke in, “Richard has been away for a while, Father Adam, catching up on something he had little of in the old life.” One of the tigers yawned profusely.

Eve, already knowing, smiled and mockingly asked Richard, oh so innocently, what that might be.

Richard pretended not to hear, wanting to change the subject,

*Deuteronomy 4:19  
And when you look up to  
the sky and see the sun, the  
moon and the stars  
--all the heavenly array --  
do not be enticed into  
bowing down to them and  
worshiping things the LORD  
your God has apportioned  
to all the nations under  
heaven.*

but finally spoke the single word they were quietly waiting for.

They all laughed together at this, teasing Richard for his long nap in Fast time.

Eve said, "I have often wondered what it would be like to enjoy such a long sleep, but I could never find a lion, or a tiger, who wished to curl up next to me for that long." She paused, "Nor could I imagine poor Adam doing without me for so long a time."

Everyone laughed again, except Adam, who pretended nonchalance. "Do I not have many fair people to spend time with, dear?"

"You mean many fair eagles, horses and dogs, don't you, Love?" Said Eve, sweetly smiling at her mate, as her hand caught his.

Richard and Hiram chuckled to themselves at the banter these two lovers were giving each other, and they soon were excusing themselves from their company, walking on again in the moonlight.

"Those two! Imagine being in love with each other that way forever?" Hiram exclaimed. Richard agreed, adding, "Who could take the place of the one for the other? They are both the first of their kind. Besides, they had been through so much together in their final years on the first earth, during its horrible fall before the flood. In the end, we know they had died together violently, amid such hopelessness and despair, both for themselves and for all their children." (*Please see the essay on The Very First Earth*)

### TIME TRAVEL

*"And he took me to see the New Jerusalem."*

"I yet haven't gone to that time to see for myself," mused Hiram.

"You don't travel anywhen much, do you, Richard?"

Richard admitted that he didn't. Once he thought it would be absolutely wonderful to be so free as to travel anywhere or anywhen. But once he had the ability and the opportunity, he found that staying home with his family held so much more appeal to him. There was such a large family in his eyes, over six thousand grown men and women. It was hard to tear himself away from them, except for the occasional nap. (How he loved those.)

Hiram asked, "Show me where it is."

"Humm? Oh, the planet. Sure, there it is, just below the center of Reuben's Bow. See it?"

"Yes, I can see the star. But tell me about its planet? Is it only

*Ecclesiastes 3:11  
He has made everything  
beautiful in its time.  
He has also set eternity  
in the hearts of men;  
yet they cannot fathom what God  
has done from beginning to end.*

forty-seven hundred miles in diameter?”

“Yes father, I guess they chose that one because it was exactly big enough to build a mansion to house all the Scriptures. This is the one planet I would have chosen too,” said Richard.

*They both were very familiar with all the stars and their planets. Everyone in the Here was. Mankind knew about all things, including the vast universe and all of its amazing and beautiful creation.*

Most people, like Richard, had never traveled all that far from home, and even with 6.66 billion people (*the number of man*, Revelation 13:18), there would never be enough of them to see all of the universe, for it was as infinitely endless as eternity was long.

Hiram had traveled the farthest of the two, being far more adventurous. In earlier days in the New Earth, he had gone as far as the Coal Sack and back.

In the earlier centuries, he had stood alone on more than a thousand individual planets. Each one was unique and special, in the color of its sky, and in the smell and the shape of its land. However, there was no life on any of them. They were all empty, and seemed only to be waiting for habitation.

He had once floated within a nebula near the pulsar named Diamond, where the gas was dense enough to breath. The oxygen rich atmosphere there carried the sound of great hollow rocks, some as big as mountains, which all rang like a hundred thousand bells in a revelry of celebration. He was always marveling at what God had wrought.

He marveled too, at his own body and its remarkable God given power, because once he had stood on the sun. He had walked unevenly upon the wild roiling ocean of the sun's surface until he came to an island of darker matter, which was a temporarily cooler and harder place on which to stand. There he picked up a small 'rock' of hydrogen/helium from its surface, and then watched it burn and melt away to nothingness, the bright gases soaring upward into the whirling plasma field miles above, in the photosphere of the sun. Then he thought himself home again, with not even a tan to show for the trip. He had not been harmed, for it was only light, after all.

Hiram always marveled that it took no more than a blink of the eye to get anywhere. *The old earth mathematicians were right: Every point is instantaneously connected to every other point.*

### **I Corinthians 15:35-44**

*But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

More than this, he had more recently traveled eternity-time into Eternity past to see God. Having done *that*, he did not care to go into Eternity future, although he had the freedom and the ability. *He knew God was there, forever unchanging and all powerful.*

Afterwards, he was then more content to simply live in the Now, satisfied to see how everything would work out as it happened. He was instead, trying to grow and to mature, so that he could understand all that was happening right now in the Here. Perhaps, like so many others, he had at last found his peace.

*Mankind, at the beginning of Eternity and forever, had had a party. Such a party! Celebration for a thousand years! The wedding supper of the Lamb! Hiram's feet still started to dance every time he thought about that first encounter with Everything New. How they all had celebrated then!*

*In the Beginning no one had told him about what was Here. There was no need, for all the answers to every possible question was already within their minds. (John 16:23) It was some time before he understood that he knew it all. Once he found out about his God-given talent, once they all did, they each began in earnest to explore the common possession of their New Earth and their New Heavens, and all of Eternity.*

### AT THE CROSS

*"This do in remembrance of me."*

Hiram was Here for several thousand years before he found his first opportunity to look elsewhere. That visit was to the Cross. For him, that was the place he most wanted to see. That Day was like no other, the final battle, where Jesus fought and won the victory for mankind. Even though there could be up to several million souls there at once, it was never crowded. . . —He chuckled about the incongruity of the thought he just had. Of course! All redeemed mankind would be there at the foot of the cross at one time! It did not matter *when* they each embarked on that journey to see their Lord die. Because, while Jesus was on that cross, for those six hours, all of us were there together before Him, unseen in that reality.

*He was perplexed at this. They were climbing now, in the bright darkness of night, through low foothills seasoned with apple trees. Hiram stepped to the left to avoid putting his foot in a large Adder's nest. Not that he was worried, or that he might have been bitten, he just did not want to disturb the snake's sleep.*

Because He lives  
Gaither

God sent His Son,  
They called Him Jesus;  
He came to love,  
heal, and forgive;  
He lived and died  
to buy my pardon,  
an empty grave is there  
to prove my Savior lives.

And then one day  
I'll cross the river;  
I'll fight life's  
final war with pain;  
And then as death  
gives way to victory,  
I'll see the lights of Glory  
and I'll know He lives!

—chorus—  
Because He lives  
I can face tomorrow;  
Because He lives  
all fear is gone;  
Because I know  
He holds the future,  
And life is worth the living  
just because He lives.

*All the while they were walking, not a word was said. Richard understood this musing of Hiram's, and did not feel the need to interrupt. When Hiram spoke at last, it was no surprise to Richard.*

"Son, how did we all fit, there at His feet?"

"I, too have wondered at this, but I have a theory," Richard postulated, instantly understanding both Hiram's meaning, and his unspoken train of thought. "I see it as a breakdown of time into microseconds. Our time there is subjective to us, but in the reality of that moment of time, who can say? You and I both know that eventually everyone of us will make that same personal journey to sit or stand at the Master's feet, and to weep and pray as we watch Him die for us."

Hiram broke in, "Yes! Even though that must be the most crowded moment in all of history, next to the Resurrection, the exact moments there must be essentially timeless. He said a day is like a thousand years, so it must be measured in microseconds in that plane of reality.

Imagine, all of us standing there watching Him, unseen in that reality. Watching our own deliverance. Is that what it meant in the Word where it said that He endured the cross for the joy set before Him?" (Hebrews 12:2)

"What else could it mean, Hiram? He saw us all there before Him as He hung on that cross. He knew we were there, . . . would be there, . . . had been there . . . Oh, I wish that in all of our languages, there was a language invented that could handle the time properly! Anyway, He loved us, and He knew! It was enough for Him, father. And we love Him, and we went there too. There was time enough, father. . ."

"Time enough, Richard. There will always be time enough for Love." Hiram spoke quietly, with a soft wet gleam in his own eyes.

"It is all sort of like a much debated riddle in my day, Richard. How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? We know the answer now — *all of them.*"

On they walked, again now along the River, into the end of another night in that eternal Day. Changing direction at the first hint of morning's light, they turned their faces to the sunrise.

**Romans 8:16-18**

*The Spirit himself testifies  
with our spirit that we are  
God's children.  
Now if we are children,  
then we are heirs  
—heirs of God  
and co-heirs with Christ,  
if indeed we share  
in his sufferings  
in order that we may  
also share in his glory.  
I consider that our  
present sufferings  
are not worth comparing  
with the glory  
that will be revealed in us.*

## 2. LIFE IN THE NEW EARTH

*“At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*

Walking Eastward, Richard and Hiram strolled now along the upper valleys of their southernmost mountain, named Blue Rock Mountain. Early on, they encountered a lioness who politely inquired as to whether they had seen any honey hives. As they told her they had not, she shrugged her shoulders and walked along with them for a while. From time to time she nuzzled their hands with her head, and here and there nibbled daintily at the new grass, wet with dew. Presently she left them, roaring a good-bye, and bounded up a rocky hill as she heard others of her kind off in the distance.

Richard too, began to eat some of the perfect raspberries he found growing along the trail. *Unlike the days of his flesh, where everyone and everything had to eliminate, no person and no animal had to do that in the Here. Whatever was ingested was completely broken down into nutrients without any waste, and without the need to rely on friendly intestinal bacteria. Food was not really needed for nourishment in the Here, but it was used to power their body's illumination. Therefore, there was no fatty accumulation, for a large meal could always be “burned off” in light. (Mark 9:3)*

*Their planet in the Here was totally pure. It was unblemished with fungus, bacteria, virus, or any kind of filth. Can you imagine such a place where there could be no dust or lint, no debris of any kind? Mankind enjoyed a new planet which was perfect and clean in every way. Animals there enjoyed it also, lacking fear of either man or other beast, living as they should once again in their garden of Eden.*

*All that seemed to be missing were the insects. Oh, not the bees and butterflies, and those good kinds of insects. It was the worms, the fleas, the flies, and the roaches; all of these were absent in the New Earth. Where were they, you ask? Jesus had foretold, long ago in the old earth, that these would inhabit the Lake of Fire, to feast on the remains of those who had chosen to follow other gods. (Mark 9:42-48, Please see the essay on Hell)*

Hiram also gave in to the moment, putting his hand into the bushes up to his hairy arm, unconcerned. No thorns grew in the New Earth, and there was no poisonous insect ready to strike. As he picked

There is a land that is fairer than day  
Bennett/Webster

There is a land that is fairer than day,  
And by faith we can see it afar.  
For the Father waits over the way,  
To prepare us a dwelling place there.

We shall sing on that beautiful shore  
The melodious songs of the blest.  
And our spirits shall sorrow no more,  
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.

To our bountiful Father above  
We will offer our tribute of praise.  
For the glorious gift of His love,  
And the blessing that hallow our days.

In the sweet bye and bye,  
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.  
In the sweet bye and bye,  
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

his berries, he looked at them one at a time before eating. —An old habit from the old earth, looking for the spoiled fruit. He knew there could never be any, not Here. But he enjoyed continually reveling in the surprise he felt again and again, as he took them a few at a time from the bushes burdened with fruit along the path where they walked. (*You would think they were a couple of kids.*)

Eventually they came out of the foothills down to their cattle land. Here and there were herds of sheep and cows. These might have provided their family with milk for cheese, and wool for clothing, if it had been anywhere but Here. For in the Here, there was no need to take anything from another living creature. These animals were content, and their owners just as content, for them to simply *be*. It was wonderful to see all these fully grown animals prancing and playing like newborns, there in the wide, green meadows.

*There was no death Here. Nothing, and no one, had ever needed to die. Death was the final enemy that our Lord destroyed. Hiram and Richard had seen this final victory with their own eyes, (as will we all) when God the Father had placed all enemies finally and forever under the feet of the Lord Jesus. After Death had died, all things came to life again, for it seemed that God was determined that through Jesus all the living things that died would be resurrected. (Ephesians 1:10, Romans 8:18-23)*

*Micah 4:4  
Every man will sit under his own vine  
and under his own fig tree, and no  
one will make them afraid, for the  
LORD Almighty has spoken.*

## REPRODUCTION

“A royal nation, created in a day!”

Because nothing ever died, there was naturally no need for progeny. The world was big enough for all that lived, with more than enough room and provision for every person and animal. Actually, the New Earth appeared mostly empty. Since there was enough of every species, no person or animal needed to procreate in order to preserve his own kind. This was probably the greatest difference between the old earth and the New: All things were full grown Here.

These thoughts did not bother either Hiram nor Richard. They felt no need to question why, nor did they feel anxiety about this lack of procreation. Neither they nor any of their family felt the need to reproduce, although they all had the capability to do so. Innately within themselves, they understood that someday they and their families might reproduce more of their kind. Someday there might be children. Perhaps, as they told each other, in God’s own good time.

*Isaiah 66:8  
Who has ever heard of such a thing?  
Who has ever seen such things?  
Can a country be born in a day  
or a nation be brought forth  
in a moment?  
Yet no sooner is Zion in labor  
than she gives birth to her children.*

About this subject they did not know, for it was hidden knowledge. They just understood that there was not yet procreation in the New Earth.

Again, this thought occurred to Richard as they surveyed the bounty of their land. All life, all mankind still communed with one another, after their kind. People still coupled if they desired. There were no rules and no laws in the Here for anyone to break. There was instead perfect freedom, so anyone could do as they pleased. Mankind was pleased to enjoy all things which God had given them. (I Corinthians 3:21)

In the New Earth there were three ways people could join themselves together. Besides the body, they could join together in mind, and also in soul. Each way was special and beautiful, of its own. The least of these three was the old way, from the old earth. Richard's former wife in the Beginning was the one who had helped him to grow and understand these new ways. For as their love deepened, Richard was always the slow one to catch on, as most men are concerning those things.

*Proverbs 25:2  
It is the glory of God to  
conceal a matter;  
to search out a matter  
is the glory of kings.*

## MARRIAGE

There is no more marriage, but they are as the angels.

*Indeed, it took most of mankind the first thousand years to understand what Jesus had prophesied concerning the lack of marriage in the New Earth. People came into Heaven out of both good and bad marriages. Some of these people had been abused. Some had been abused even as children. So some were reluctant at first to maintain a physical relationship of any kind. Then Jesus came to each of them one by one, and wiped away every tear along with every fear, and even the very memory of their former pain. (Isaiah 66:17)*

*Eventually everyone understood that we were no longer married the way we were in the old earth. We all now have something far better. We all are married to God Himself. Remember how Jesus said that the angels behold their Father's face? Now we all have that most unigue of all honors, not only to behold His face, but to enjoy the 10,000 pleasures at His right hand forevermore.*

*Are we also married to each other: all of mankind? Possibly. No one in the Here is a stranger. There are no individuals who are unknown to us. There are none who are not wanted. There is no one who is not a real and necessary part of the whole. All people, —every individual, finally belong!*

*There is no more of the old world's jealousy, hatred and rage.*

*Luke 20:34-36  
Jesus replied,  
"The people of this age marry  
and are given in marriage.  
But those who are considered worthy  
of taking part in that age  
and in the resurrection from the dead  
will neither marry  
nor be given in marriage,  
and they can no longer die;  
for they are like the angels.  
They are God's children,  
since they are children  
of the resurrection.*

*All things have been made new.*

Did Richard and Hiram still love their former mates? Yes. More so, now that they were enabled. Especially now that they at last knew what real love is. Their love with their mates, or with anyone, as always is sweet and passionate. *What is indeed lacking in the Here, is the need to possess one another. "Perfect Love casts out fear." —I John 4:18.*

## IN THE FUTURE

*"The greatest of these is love."*

"Horizontal love," mused Richard, as they walked past their herds.

"What?" Said Hiram. Richard explained: "Vertical love is our relation with the Father and with Jesus. Horizontal love, the relation between people. —I was thinking about my lovely wife just now, and reflecting on how we have grown so much closer together over the centuries, yet sometimes it is a long time before we see each other."

"Ah, more riddles." Said Hiram, smiling. "You always do think of the most common things in the most extraordinary ways, my son."

Again Richard said, "Where is it all going? Since the beginning, we have all had the ability to propagate, to procreate. God gave us all things. Why haven't we done so?"

"There is no need." Said Hiram. "Think about what God did for us and what He did to us, by bringing us to such a world as this. He has been, and ever shall be, all that we need. Therefore, there is no need for mankind to propagate. Besides, He has given no new life in this perfect world. Nothing in the Here, no living thing, even down to the smallest flower or the tinniest fish reproduces."

"Why then do we still have the ability to do so?" Reiterated Richard.

Hiram sighed. "Look within again, to find your own answer, son." He then waited politely for Richard to think it through.

Richard at last said, "Because it is written in the Scriptures, that *"in Jesus there is no yes and no, but only yes."* If we lacked even that small ability, then He would not have given us all things. We don't propagate because He does not give Life as a result of our play and recreation together. He does not yet give it to us, nor to any living thing after its kind."

"Very good," Hiram said. After reflection, he continued, "Will that always be true, son?"

"Who knows," Richard muttered. "God is the only one of His kind in

*1John 3:1  
How great is the love  
the Father has lavished on us,  
that we should be called  
children of God!  
And that is what we are!*

all of creation. He is always a mystery. He never changes, but not everything He is going to do is revealed all at once. It is possible that He might require all of us someday, to propagate. For now He does not. Therefore we do not.”

To this Hiram added, “But we might someday. There might be a day when we are no longer adolescents, and mankind no longer children. The universe is a big place, someday we might try to fill it.”

“Perhaps, father.” Said Richard. “But for now I am very content to play at recess.”

Hiram laughed. “Me too!” Together, they broke into a run toward the edge of the meadow.

### IN THE FOREST

*“Behold, I make all things new.”*

They traveled further to the South East, away from the Great River and across another mountain, named Sugarloaf. They were coming down toward the deep forests covering the southernmost part of their inherited land.

Deep in these cool woods, which were named Emerald, they listened to the low murmuring of the giant trees; the redwoods, the evergreens, and the oaks.

This was a place on their land like no other. They loved to go here to listen to the trees talk about their beginning. The giant trees sang very softly, almost too quietly to hear, except these two had very good hearing. —Perhaps they were hearing with their hearts.

One tree in particular, who was called Greatness, was the first to be planted by the hand of God. The tall Sequoia spoke of being placed lovingly into the soil of the New Earth. It was just a seed.

This tree knew why he was being planted. It was to please *Those who were coming; the Sons of God*. He knew that One day they would all arrive: a new Nation, created in a day. So he was planted by God to grow and to be tall. He had grown, and he had waited for Their Appearing for more than two thousand years.

Jesus was very busy in those early days, building this world, creating the New Creation. This giant Sequoia knew all about such things, for was he not *Here since the Beginning?*

*All things called the New Earth Here, because Here was where they wanted to be, most of all. This earth was their long home.*

#### **Romans 8:19-23**

*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

## The Book of Heaven

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Isaiah 44:21-24

Remember these things, O Jacob, for you are my servant, O Israel. I have made you, you are my servant; O Israel, I will not forget you. I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.

Sing for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done this; shout aloud, O earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel. This is what the LORD says-- your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself. . .

*In the Before, mankind had been filled with such longing for Here. In the Here was where they were loved and needed. Here, was the land of Always.*

Deep in those woods Hiram and Richard walked quietly on, not speaking, but listening intently. This was not their first journey through these woods, as they had traveled together through them before. So they took much pleasure in this part of the forest, and for all that the trees had to say.

### LANGUAGES

*“The world was of one language and tongue.”*

Mankind spoke all languages: The languages of all the creatures of the sea, of the air, and of the land. All creatures spoke of their Creator and of their own creation. All things praised God. Even the trees. Every person therefore, spoke all tongues. Every nation had its own language, which was its milk tongue, but there was also the universal language of Heaven, spoken by men and angels.

Additionally there was the language that each person spoke with Jesus, while they were alone together, and which no one else knew. Jesus had given each person a New Name which was written on a small white stone. This name was known only to Jesus and the person to whom it was given. This was the secret Name which that individual treasured above all else, for it was precious, having been given personally by the Savior. (Revelation 2:18)

Besides these languages, there were the unspoken utterances of the sun, the moon and the stars. These creations of God all praised Him. They all were given the ability to express their wonder and admiration of His Name. For He alone is worthy of glory, honor, power, and dominion. And man was forevermore joyfully privileged to listen, and to participate in that praise.

Job 38:4-7

*“Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone-- while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”*

### THE SONG OF CREATION

*“Let everything, all creation praise God.”*

As our two friends walked on the soft carpet of moss between the wide trees, they listened to all of creation. (Psalm 148) Soon they detected a pattern in the words of the trees, of the animals, and in the earth beneath their feet. Overhead the moon spoke as well, in unison with the story the trees told. Soon there was a slow rising and falling of

the words. A melody was discerned, which carried all of their sayings. Hiram and Richard began to quietly join in, finding the song of the ages burning within their hearts also.

As they listened and as they sang, their eyes, their hearts, and their minds were drawn again to the City of God. There One sat on His throne at the top of the Mountain of God, in the center of that magnificent City. He was forever the One who was deserving of their praise. For hours they walked, singing in unison with creation, to the Son of Man who is the Son of God, and to the Father of all Life.

Night fell, and too soon morning broke through the treetops of their Emerald forest. With never a need to rest, they came at last to the end of the woods. Their faces glowed, they were exalted, and full of joy from the worship of their Lord. Having been so transported in the Spirit, they found themselves refreshed and renewed. Laughing together, they both raced from the woods into the wide meadow, and joyfully into the bright morning light. Like children at play, they were without care, happy, and at peace with all things.

### SHARDICK

*“And they shall learn how to make war no more.”*

Richard was not prepared for the voice of Shardick, who was rapidly approaching them from behind. Richard’s face lighted in glad greeting for his former servant. *Shardick’s story was one that was repeated many times in the Here, for he had been Richard’s jailer on the old earth.*

Shardick had once been a mean tempered bully. He was short, dark, and heavy set, abused by his parents, and very abusive and severe with his prisoner, eventually causing Richard’s death. Afterwards, Shardick was discomfited over his prisoner and how well he had died. Richard had not been like the others, who were full of cursings. This man even asked God to forgive him! Shardick remembered the kind words of his erstwhile prisoner. Because of this, Shardick was at last converted to the Lord of his dead prisoner, Richard. Then he too was soon put to death for his new faith.

At the Beginning, Richard was very surprised to see Shardick in the Here. The Lord had made sure that he was one of the first ones present when Richard was brought to his home. You may well imagine that reunion. The result of that meeting was that Shardick was given to Richard to be his servant.

Joy to the World  
Issac Watts/Handel

Joy to the world  
the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart  
prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and nature sing,

Joy to the earth,  
the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods,  
rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,

You rule the world  
with truth and grace,  
And make the nations prove  
The glories of  
Your righteousness,  
And wonders of Your love,

## The Book of Heaven

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*Psalm 148:1-13*

*Praise the LORD.*

*Praise the LORD from the heavens,*

*praise him in the heights above.*

*Praise him, all his angels,*

*praise him, all his heavenly hosts.*

*Praise him, sun and moon,*

*praise him, all you shining stars.*

*Praise him, you highest heavens and*

*you waters above the skies.*

*Let them praise the*

*name of the LORD,*

*for he commanded*

*and they were created.*

*He set them in place*

*for ever and ever;*

*he gave a decree that*

*will never pass away.*

*Praise the LORD from the earth,*

*you great sea creatures*

*and all ocean depths,*

*lightning and hail, snow and clouds,*

*stormy winds that do his bidding,*

*you mountains and all hills,*

*fruit trees and all cedars,*

*wild animals and all cattle,*

*small creatures and flying birds,*

*kings of the earth and all nations,*

*you princes and all rulers on earth,*

*young men and maidens,*

*old men and children.*

*Let them praise the name of the LORD,*

*for his name alone is exalted;*

*his splendor is above the*

*earth and the heavens.*

*John 21:25*

*Jesus did*

*many other things as well.*

*If every one of them*

*were written down,*

*I suppose that even the whole*

*world would not have room*

*for the books*

*that would be written.*

Richard was again surprised. He had no idea that such a thing could exist Here. He had thought rather, that he would be the servant of someone. His life in his own eyes, was not exemplary in the least. Yet they both acquiesced to the command of their Lord. Shardick was really still a free man. He knew he could have easily asked Richard for release, and it would have been quickly given. Richard was immediately inclined to do so, but something in the way that Lord looked at him made him refrain.

*What transpired in the intervening years was unnecessary for Richard, but vital for Shardick. This former jailer was overjoyed to be indentured to his former prisoner. How else to attempt to make amends for his sin?*

*In a way, it was the Lord who gave in. He could have set this man right without any effort, yet He knew Shardick's heart, which was open to his Master. Jesus gave the gentle Shardick the gift of servitude, for as long as was necessary, so that he would finally set himself free and be at peace.*

*How long to be a servant, as repayment for an execution? One hundred years? A thousand? Eternity is a long time. Eventually all former debts, both real or imagined, would be paid in full. How long it took really doesn't matter.*

*What eventually happened is that Richard and Shardick became fast friends in the Here, just as the Lord had designed for them to be.*

Running up, Shardick spoke excitedly to Richard. "It is finished, my lord Richard!"

Hiram and Richard both looked at him for a moment.

"You built me a boat!" exclaimed Richard.

"Yes. It is finished this day, and you will find it at the tributary of the River, a little way to the South. It is now waiting for you in the little cove named Raven. Come, I will lead you there!"

Hiram said, "You must name her, Richard."

Very few people had boats in the Here. Even sailors, who had always loved the sea, did not miss their old occupation in the Here. The Great River of Life was bigger than any ocean they had ever known. Its own ways and its seasons were familiar to them, yet many of them had found the newer ocean of space, time, and all Eternity. For many of these seamen, these new things were their lasting passion.

How odd that the men and women, who in the old earth had followed

the flight of the wild goose, now had come home to rest in the Here with their Lord. Here, there was room enough to roam forever, *but Home was always an eyeblink away.*

### THE BOAT

*“And I saw a river there.”*

As the three ran down to the marble steps of the Cove Raven, ahead on the deep blue water was a most remarkable white craft. No old earth craft ever looked quite as fleet, or as utterly graceful. — She looked almost eager. The industrious Shardick had gotten some very good advice and council from several hundred of the best boat builders living Here. Those mariners came from many centuries and many lands, but their common passion was employed in the design of this most remarkable gift: The boat for lord Richard.

“What will you name her?” Shardick wondered out loud, waiting to see if she pleased Richard.

Richard smiled, and uttered a single syllable in the language of Heaven. Loosely translated in our language, it meant ‘free wind’, or ‘Spirit blessing’. (We do not have a word to directly translate what he said.) Both men were pleased with this most appropriate of names, and applauded as Richard stepped on board.

The *Free Wind* was about ninety feet long and twelve wide, and had very little draft. Instead of sails, there were long white vertical wings above her, and there were heavy blades to be later deployed below. There was no rigging. Walking upon the light colored wood, she felt solid underfoot, and her response seemed almost telepathic, the way she laved to the slight movement of the tiller under Richard’s proud hand.

Soon, Richard was bringing her swiftly South out of the cove, as the wind picked up obligingly behind her. Hiram and Shardick trailed happily behind, moving inches above the water, not wishing to interrupt Richard’s happy moment alone with a new found passion.

After a while, he noticed them and motioned them on board, heading for deeper water. Sea gulls wheeled overhead in the bright sunlight. A pod of narwhals raced to keep pace with the Free Wind. The wind again blew harder for them, pressing the wingsails to their full. The blades had now placed themselves properly below, rigged for deep water. Waves picked up with the wind, and the white ship knifed through these with an

*Psalm 104:24-34*

*How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number-- living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there. These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works-- he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke. I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.*

easy and graceful abandon.

“I may never go home again!” shouted Richard, to his friends. They laughed with him, begging him to take them along to explore all of the New Earth, by its River.

In a lull toward the late afternoon, a great white shark came along side, eyeing the sleek form from his environment. Shardick playfully leaned over the railing and scratched the great white affectionately a little behind his large left eye, as the animal lifted his huge form appreciatively out of the water. This fish was very fast, but was now making a great effort to keep up with the boat, as the wind had picked up. Eventually the great white began to fall behind. Before the shark let them go, he asked what she might be called. Shardick told him in the shark’s language, waving him a good-bye.

As night fell, they reached the far shore to the South of their inheritance. They settled conveniently into another small cove, named Bitner. They tied up to a large banyon tree hanging over the water above the quartz pavement of the cove. Inside the cabin someone opened an everlight, and they shared some of the provisions which the faithful Shardick had thoughtfully provided for his master’s journey. These three spent all the night in conversation and fellowship, recounting to each other some of the things the Lord had done in their presence.

By morning Hiram and Richard had agreed to continue their journey, walking South. Shardick agreed temporarily take Richard’s boat up the River and around another tributary to the closest harbor to their home. This would take a number of days, but Shardick was content to do this for his lord Richard.

After a long farewell they parted. Walking up the hill from the Cove Bitner, Hiram and Richard turned, and for a long while watched the beautiful craft sailing swiftly away. Hiram could tell that Richard was mentally making plans for a good long time with this boat. With a sigh of contentment, they turned toward the hills and meadow lands of the county ahead.

Jesus is Lord

Unknown

You are Lord!

You are Lord!

You are risen from the dead,

And You are Lord!

Every knee shall bow,

Every tongue confess,

That Jesus Christ is Lord!

### 3. MEETING JESUS

*“In the cool of the day the Lord came walking.”*

That day, they found Jesus coming unhurriedly toward them, as they walked in a grove. He was walking along the path in their direction. The short white robe of royalty He wore shown brightly in the sunlight. As they met, Hiram and Richard bowed their knee at His feet. These two old knights were special to Jesus. He didn't let them stay in that position, but smiling, and with a hand on each shoulder, He bid them rise.

Jesus, of all men who deserved such allegiance, never gloried in it as some earthmen might. He never demanded obeisance, nor coveted their worship. You might think that He, the Creator of all, was just a simple carpenter at heart. Jesus turned with them and the three walked together, continuing on their way toward the south.

The Lord asked them some questions. To Hiram, He spoke of his record keeping, which Hiram loved. To Richard, He asked how many children he would one day have, after mankind's adolescence was complete. Richard glowed, and was completely happy in the Master's presence. It did not matter how many, or when, he said. It was just an intellectual curiosity for him, he honestly told his Lord.

Watching these three walk together, you might think them long time friends, from the way they took delight in each other's company, and the way they laugh and joke together. You would not think that here was the Word, the Most Holy, and the Lord of All, condescending to walk with two formerly fallen members of mankind.

They traveled for several days together. Before He left them He again laid His hands on them and blessed them both. You could tell that He loved them greatly, both from the tone of His deep, strong voice, and from the look of respect for them in His grey-blue eyes. For this, they bowed their knee once again, each lovingly touching the nail scarred hand on their shoulder. Jesus then disappeared from them.

It was a long time before either of them rose. For Richard and Hiram, nothing in all of their new life was of such value as these precious times with their Lord. As much as they loved their new life, their families, their friends, their lands, and their inheritance; they would have gladly given all of it up for their King, their liege-Lord. For He had given up All for them. Their inheritance had belonged to them from their rebirth on the old earth, but like every other born-again believer, they would have

Fairest Lord Jesus  
Crusader's hymn

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature  
You! Of God and man the Son.  
You will I cherish, You will I honor  
You! My soul's Glory, Joy, and Crown!

Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations.  
Son of God and Son of man.  
Glory and Honor, Praise, adoration!  
Now and forever more be Yours!

## The Book of Heaven

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*Zechariah 9:9  
Rejoice greatly,  
O Daughter of Zion!  
Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you,  
righteous and having salvation,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

gladly given everything they had, including their part in the New Earth, for the precious Name of Jesus.

*Men, casting down their crown of Life at the feet of Him who is worthy.*

*For His part, Jesus was happy to give them All Things.*

*So it was. It was always that way in the Here.*

### 4. A FRIENDLY GATHERING

#### THE HAPSBURG MANSION

*“He sat the fatherless into families.”*

As they were walking, Hiram was the first to notice. He pointed out the long greystone mansion to Richard. Their journey together with the Lord had taken them into the neighboring heritage of their friends, the Hapsbergs. The giant castle-mansion with its blue shingled white towers and wide grey ramparts rambled over many acres, for as with every other, this dwelling had a room for every family member. Here were all the Hapsbergs on the planet. God had set families in order in His New Earth. This place was no exception. Many of the people were coming out to warmly greet our friends.

“God bless you, my friends!” Roared the large Michael Hapsberg, “Welcome Hiram and Richard!” Embracing each of them with an arm, he lifted them off their feet. The others gathered around them, shouting gleefully. Michael’s graceful wife, Thelma came walking up. She was a redhead like her husband. They had been the first of their family to believe in Jesus, which was unusual because both had been battlescarred warriors, and political hotheads, in the fiefdoms of the old earth. Thelma said, “The Lord told me you were coming through this place today. You have to stay a while with us for a visit.” Hiram and Richard offered no protest to this, as they considered how many miles they must have walked with the Lord Jesus.

As they all went into the great hall, Richard saw Becky standing next to a tall, befreckled young man. “Daughter Becky! How are you and Stephen?” He said, hugging his daughter and son-in-law. He was so proud of these two. When the Lord had placed them all in families, Becky had opted to be with her husband, and to wear his family name.

*This sort of thing had happened everywhere, and in every family. Therefore, it was not an uncommon thing. What it did was to unite a*

*Matthew 19:21  
Jesus answered,  
“If you want to be perfect,  
go, sell your possessions and  
give to the poor,  
and you will have  
treasure in heaven.  
Then come, follow me.”*

*great many families together in special ways. That was one of the wonders of Heaven, and one of the greatest blessings: for there was no loss in the Here, but only gain.*

“We do well, Father. Are you going to Veranda soon? May we come with you?” These words delighted Richard, and so off they went, his arms around them both, as they talked excitedly.

Hiram sat down with Michael at the head of a long table. They were talking together about their lands and their many enterprises for which they had the oversight. The Hapsberg family were tinkers, as they were once called in the Before. More accurately, they built things. They mined the metals, wove the cloth, created the plastics, and cut the gemstones to produce the most beautiful and amazing of artifacts. While other families might be brewers, or book binders, paper makers, or carvers of wood, it was this family who had blessed their nation with such beautiful creations in metal and jewelry.

*Michael had not known of his creative gift in the old earth, for he and his family had always been at war, or in some political intrigue. He never found his happiness in life until after he died. Now, it seemed he was always making up for lost time, so to speak.*

*Psalm 68:6  
God sets the lonely in families,  
he leads forth the prisoners  
with singing.*

## A PRICELESS ECONOMY

*“And buy from me, at no cost.”*

You could buy anything the happy Hapsberg family had to offer, at no cost. The price was always free. Theirs was the joy of creating, and for the pleasure of gift giving. They already had all they could ever want: Their land was their own forever: They lacked nothing. In that land there were none to tax them, or to demand tribute. So they gave away all they made, and made more. This was an easy thing to do, for a people who had inherited all things. (Please see the essay on Economy.)

The most precious of their artifacts, they saved for the Firstday. When, with the King of their nation, and all of their people, they traveled in a blink of the eye, to New Jerusalem. There in the City they laid it all down; their honors, and their greatest treasures at the feet of Him who is worthy.

Jesus, who inherited all things, and who had need of nothing, returned blessing upon blessing, sharing his gifts with everyone else. The receiving of gifts and the giving of gifts was a part of the Firstday celebrations. *Christmas on the old earth was never like this (but it might*

*Psalm 69:35  
For God will save Zion  
and rebuild the cities  
of Judah.  
Then people will  
settle there  
and possess it.*

have been).

### PLAYING WITH TIME

*“And a day is like a thousand years.”*

Sitting there together, Michael gave Hiram a special gift, carefully pulling it from his own vest pocket. It was a watch for measuring microseconds. It appeared to be a watch with no hands. The watch was housed in a small eight-sided platinum case, where perfectly balanced hands spun silently. They moved so fast that they were nearly invisible. The watch was so well made that there was not the slightest hint of vibration.

Hiram instinctively knew what it was for. *The Lord had said that a thousand years was like a day, and a day was like a thousand years. Three hundred and sixty thousand days in a millennium was not that different from three hundred and sixty thousand microseconds in a twelve hour day, in the Here of Eternity.* Hiram paused for a moment, knitting his brow and trying mentally to make the racing hands slow down. Soon he was seeing them spin slower and slower. The watch never really changed at all: It was his body changing time.

All at once the hands appeared to stop. All except one, which was slowly ticking off the tiniest of marks.

*Just as Richard had been in accelerated time, while asleep on that hill, now Hiram was indeed in the slowest of Eternity-time.*

Satisfied, he looked around. Nothing was moving. Everyone was like a statue. He got up and sat gingerly on Michael's other side. Looking around again, he could see that everything was so *very still*. It was eerie.

There was no sound of course, but now he could see into the deep ultraviolet spectrum. He sat quietly for a long time there, closely observing the bright vibrations of the atoms and molecules in the air and within the furnishings of the great hall, now filled with many lifelike statues of men and women. He watched the strange interplay of vivid blue and violet colors from the yellowish light wafting into the great hall from the upper windows. He sensed that this was a new environment to be explored, full of hidden truths and wonders.

He again marvelled at this ability Man had been given by God, to explore freely all of time and space, and eternity.

Getting up, he walked slowly to the door of the great hall. Couples were frozen in their entrance, so he sidestepped to avoid them. On the

Micah 4:1-4

*In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.*

outside, he looked at the afternoon sun, now such a strange color of yellow, mixed with violet. Looking at the landscape around the mansion, the green was almost all gone. In its place were deep blues and indigos, and surprisingly bright neon pinks and yellows in the flowers, and in the birds and butterflies frozen in the nearby air.

Everything was utterly motionless in this now strange landscape. Suddenly to his left a woman popped into the scene, intent on going inside. As soon as she appeared, she was transfixed like a statue before him. This gave him an odd sensation. "What if she had popped where I was?" He thought to himself. Presently, he understood that this would never happen. Their transporting always included a view to where they were going, so that they could avoid any collision, even with a man who was only there for a few microseconds. A short space of time after her, others began to pop onto the large lawn in front of the mansion.

Hiram came back inside, again avoiding those at the door. Finding his seat on the other side of Michael, he sat again. He was surprised to find the seat still warm. For a long time, or so it seemed, he just sat and watched. What a time for contemplation! He could spend weeks here and be gone just a few seconds in normal time. How fun!

Then he closed the watch and waited until everything sped up to normal time.

Michael blinked, and looked to see where Hiram had vanished.

Turning around, he saw him sitting on the other side. He laughed, pounding him soundly on the back. "You know how it works! I am so happy to give you such a gift, my dear brother."

In wonder Hiram placed his hand on Michael's shoulder, "And you brother, are a genius for inventing such a device. What kind of math did you use to make it?"

"I am not sure. One of my great grandsons developed the concept. I just figured out how to make it work," He replied sheepishly. "I never really get involved with the little details."

"It is beautiful! Thank you, my friend. I will treasure it, as I use it in my explorations," Hiram said.

"Where do you go next?" Asked Michael.

They were interrupted before Hiram could answer.

Richard came walking back into the great room with his daughter and her husband. He was calling out Hiram's name in the crowded room.

"Over here," Said Hiram. "Look at what Michael gave me."

"That is a beautiful fob," Said Richard, showing Becky and

*Daniel 2:22  
He reveals deep and hidden things;  
he knows what lies in darkness,  
and light dwells with him.*

## The Book of Heaven

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Isaiah 45:3

*I will give you the treasures of darkness,  
riches stored in secret places,  
so that you may know that  
I am the LORD,  
the God of Israel,  
who summons you by name.*

Stephen.

Stephen said, "Father Michael, you got it to work! You must make more."

Michael beamed proudly at them all. Soon, some of the others close by joined in the conversation, admiring his work. Some tried the device, as Hiram had done, blinking out of normal time, and in again.

At that moment, a large group of Hapsburgs came noisily into the great hall. These had returned from the games of New Austria, played out on Anselem (Mars), where there was enough room for good hard play. Some looked relatively untouched, others seemed completely wearied, leaning on one another, but they all were in high spirits.

Michael roared across the hall, "You did us proud my sons and daughters! That was a very close game." He ran to greet them. Others of the family, brothers, wives, and mothers descended to console or bring refreshment to the members of their family team.

Games were interesting on the New Earth. They had to be so different because of the new abilities people had with their new bodies.

*(Of course this is all just speculation that there might be games there, but if there were, with our new bodies, the changes in our games would be major. Such abilities would also cause some new games to be invented)*

Even the simple game of golf, for instance, would have to be modified. In the Here, anyone had the ability to drive a ball 1200 yards into the cup on the fly, even if they could not see the pennant. That is done with just a carved hardwood club and a round seed from the Shimbaub tree. *How do you give a handicap for this?*

Those who still played golf went to the moon to play the greens there among the sand traps and waterways. No one lived on the moon, so it was a good place for games. The difficulty there was the necessary control in hitting the ball not too hard. A good drive could send the ball into orbit, or even out of the moon's gravity well. God had placed a giant container outside of the South Gate of the City for just such a purpose. All the balls hit too hard ended up there, . . . eventually.

Other games involving all sorts of balls were played in the sky or off world, because of the great distances required. There were games of speed and endurance in the other elements of air and water, as well.

The greatest games were played out in the orbits of Michael and

Gabriel (Jupiter and Saturn). All of the games of man required modification for Life in the New Earth, but man was inventive, having all of space and time available, to play at his recess.

Games both new and old were played within families at first. Eventually they were played with one city against another, then within individual nations. The best and most popular games were played between nations worldwide, year by year, and season by season.

*Let it be noted that none of the games played in the Here ever needed a referee.*

\* \* \*

### ANOTHER GAME

*“They shall mount up with wings like eagles.”*

Late the following day, our friends said their fond farewells, and walked to the edge of the green in front of the mansion.

“Are you hungry yet? Hiram asked Richard.

“Yes. I am getting particularly hungry for some lentil and barley stew. How about you?” Richard replied.

“Race you home, to the time when we left. O.K.?” Said Hiram.

Richard answered by suddenly running with all his might into the woods at the edge of the green. Hiram quickly followed, making an effort to catch up. Soon they left the ground to increase their speed. Flying through the trees, their game soon became one of tag. Like children, they looped and dove to reach, or to avoid each other.

Their path toward home was not very direct. Gaining more altitude so as not to disturb anyone, they flew faster and faster over the earth. Before long, they reached the broad desert at the opposite end of the world from the City. Then they rapidly lost altitude, and began to chase each other through the colorful canyons and towers of stone. Few people chose to live in the desert, where the Water of Life came only occasionally. Many former desert dwellers had moved to the edge of the sand where there was more grass for their animals. Still, there were plenty of lizards, hawks, and snakes about, to watch these two cavort overhead.

Hiram shouted with delight as he skimmed closely along the ground. He was fully horizontal now, and enjoying his wild ride through the wide, painted desert. Richard came from behind and lightly touched his shoulder, then quickly zoomed high above. Hiram followed, as Richard

*Isaiah 33:24  
No one living in Zion will say,  
“I am ill”;  
and the sins of those who dwell  
there will be forgiven.*

headed into the bright light of the sun to hide.

His continued evasion quickly took him out of the atmosphere. With the stars all around them, they finally halted. There was no where else to hide. They were now far above the curve of the earth. Laughing silently, for there was no air to carry their sound, they clasped forearms in truce, and began their downward journey together, to more hospitable surroundings.

## 5. A FAMILY MEAL

*“You shall feed at her breast and be satisfied.”*

As they arrived at their home they touched the ground and again broke into a run for the door. A strikingly beautiful young girl named Miriam was waiting to greet them as they came into the great room of their family home.

To her, Hiram had been gone only an hour. She had been the one who had sent her husband to fetch the long sleeping Richard from the hill, some two decades into the future. Yet she knew where they had been, and what they had been doing. *After all, she was his wife.*

Smiling widely, she happily and soundly kissed her husband. Then she embraced her son Richard, many generations removed. Asking if they were hungry, she escorted them inside the green marbled hall, just in time for the family meal. Many had already gathered in the great dining room. A few people were on a platform against the distant back wall. These were singing and playing a variety of musical instruments. Their music was some lively improvisation of their own nation's ballads. Here and there people were singing to one another, while some were dancing to the music. You could tell that this was a family that loved to serve one another. There was joy on the faces of those who were sitting, and gladness was upon those who served, there in that bright, sunlit hall.

The fine oakwood tables were abundantly piled with an abundance of vegetables and fruit, gathered from their own land. There was no worry of spoilage or infestation on these, for nothing in the Here could pollute or spoil what they had so lovingly been placed there for their family to enjoy.

Along the oak sideboards, steaming bowls of stew were appearing. Hiram, with Richard and Miriam, got their bowls and soon were seated with Richard's wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth was dining on a large, perfect peach. Richard was excitedly telling his dark haired wife about their

*Isaiah 40:31  
but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.*

wonderful new boat, and enticing her to take a long trip with him in the very near future, when the boat would arrive at their cove.

Their round table was small, only big enough for about sixteen people. Around our friends and their wives, sitting at other tables, were a number of their children and ancestors, their aunts and uncles, and their nieces and nephews. Most of the family were away, for a variety of reasons, this being the Fifthday. Today, many people were off preparing for gifts and presents to be brought into the City on Firstday celebrations.

### LONG LOST CHILDREN

*"I will restore all things."*

Richard saw Michelle approaching their table. She was a tall blond girl, young and radiant. He and Elizabeth immediately got up to greet her. Michelle was their daughter they had never seen, for she had died prematurely, before her birth in the old earth. The three embraced for a long while. At the Beginning, Richard had been amazed and delighted to have found another daughter. He loved his five sons, and his daughter Becky, but little Michelle was special to him. She was a now musician of considerable talent. He and Elizabeth were so very proud of her.

*This sort of addition to families in the Here, was a common thing at the Beginning. The Lord had brought each one of these children to their parents. These children were all full grown adults, being brought to meet their families for the first time. Many people wept with joy at seeing the faces of children whom they had never met. Others wept in pain, for they had aborted or abandoned these children in the old earth. Yet the Lord had healed their pain, and helped each new family off to a grand start, by extending around them all of His forgiveness and His Love. Some children had no parents in the Here, for there were a few who were redeemed from a lost family. So the Lord had placed them, each one, into their newly adopted families. There were no orphans or widows in the Here. (Psalm 68:6, John 8:35)*

Many, many people were made rich in that day. Not only because of their inheritance, but because of their children. There were even some people who had been eunuchs, or celibate in the old earth, who were surprised that day to find that they had children and a family after all.

Michelle joined Richard and Elizabeth, with the others at their table. Richard got her a portion from the sideboard. She certainly seemed hungry, for she had been away a long time at the City, taking music

Beyond the Sunset  
Brock

Beyond the sunset,  
oh blissful morning,  
When with our Savior,  
Heaven is begun.  
Earth's toiling ended,  
Oh glorious dawning;  
Beyond the sunset,  
when Day is come!

Beyond the sunset,  
no cloud will gather,  
No storms will threaten,  
no fears annoy;  
Oh Day of gladness,  
Oh Day unending;  
Beyond the sunset,  
Eternal Joy!]

Beyond the sunset,  
a hand will guide me  
To God, the Father,  
whom I adore;  
His glorious presence,  
His words of welcome,  
Will be my portion  
on that fair shore.

Beyond the sunset,  
Oh glad reunion,  
With our loved ones  
who've gone before;  
In that fair Homeland,  
we'll know no parting,  
Beyond the sunset,  
forever more!

lessons from her namesake, the Archangel. This angel had regarded Michelle as a special student, and he had been pleased that she had asked for his assistance. Although everyone knew all the facts about anything in the New Earth, they could still learn new skills. *God was the only One who could not learn anything.*

Miriam stopped what she was doing and said, “Stand up you two.” Hiram and Richard looked at each other quizzically. “Stand here together in front of me.” She insisted. The two complied, standing at ease together, each with an arm over the other’s shoulder, looking slightly bored. “What do you think, Elizabeth?” Elizabeth, in mock astonishment, exclaimed, “I do believe they are twins!” Hiram and Richard looked at each other, no longer a youth and an old man, but men in their prime.

“We’ve just been having a good time, girls.” Said one. “What is wrong with that?” Said the other.

“Men! Won’t you ever just be yourselves, . . . and stay that way?”

“We are what we are, right brother?” “Yes, and you know Lizzy, I really liked you better when you were bigger.” Richard teased, holding his hands out nearly a yard apart.

“I am pleased to tell you husband, that this is the real me. You’ll just have to live with how I am now.” Elizabeth said, in an attempt to be haughty.

Richard walked over to his mate, picked her up and kissed her soundly, letting her know with that, that he was very pleased with her as she really was.

Hiram then came over to Miriam and jokingly sat in her lap, “Didn’t you like me better when I was younger, my love?”

Miriam quickly pushed him off, onto the bench beside her. Then she sat in his lap, hugged him, and looked up into his eyes coyly. “What do you think, my dear husband?” She said sweetly.

Presently the meal was over. The dishes had sat empty for a long time, as their friendly conversation continued. After a while, John and Betsy came over to their table to collect the bowls. These two had offered to do the serving that day, for the family. These were Richard and Elizabeth’s son and daughter-in-law. Michelle got up to help her brother, hugging him briefly. These two had grown close over the years, John being very glad to have a younger sister.

2Samuel 12:23  
(David said)  
“But now that he is dead,  
why should I fast?  
Can I bring him back again?  
I will go to him,  
but he will not return to me.”

## DISHES ARE NO BIG DEAL

*“And the angels shall serve them.”*

As the three gathered the dishes, it should be noted that in the Here, no one had to do dishes. Food did not require preparation, neither did the aftermath of dinning require any effort. In every family dwelling there was a place for dining, but there were very few kitchens.

How could this be? Perhaps it was done the in way the Lord had given manna in the wilderness to the Jews, or perhaps in the way Jesus had fed the thousands during His ministry on the old earth. It was probably only a matter of asking the Father for what was required at the moment. God in the Here supplied life, air, and water to all. It would be only natural to ask, and to have their daily bread to come this way as well. (It was always that way in the old earth too, for God supplied the air, the water and the food to all living creatures, but mankind just didn't notice that fact very often.)

Other families in other nations had different practices, each according to their customs, as to what they deemed fit and proper. Some people, by choice, were permanent servants to their families. Therefore, they did whatever was required. Families in other nations had abandoned the formal meal altogether, sharing only whatever had been brought in from the abundance of the fields and forests.

*Let the reader understand that Here, there were no meat eaters. No one of mankind, nor any animal, required the flesh of an animal. The law of the jungle, and the law requiring man to work by the sweat of his brow were both long forgotten. Here, at last, was a permanent peace for mankind, and so for all of God's creation.*

Therefore, John and Betsy did the dishes by simply putting the bowls on the go-away spot of the sideboard. Then they, along with Michelle, ran to join their parents for a long walk under their family arbor, in the cool of the afternoon.

\* \* \*

## SHOWING LOVE

*“Thy lovingkindness is better than life.”*

*Here, we must add another aside, in order to better explain what it is like to Love and to be Loved, in the New Earth:*

*If you look at the qualities of love and kindness that is exhibited in all of the Bible, you will find that there is one Hebrew word which describes*

*Psalm 147:1-7  
Praise the LORD.  
How good it is to sing  
praises to our God,  
how pleasant and fitting to praise him!  
The LORD builds up Jerusalem;  
he gathers the exiles of Israel.  
He heals the brokenhearted  
and binds up their wounds.  
He determines the number of the stars  
and calls them each by name.  
Great is our Lord and mighty in power;  
his understanding has no limit.  
The LORD sustains the humble  
but casts the wicked to the ground.  
Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;  
make music to our God on the harp.*

*these virtues better than any other. That word is “Hesed.” (It is pronounced, “He Said.”)*

*There are many examples of Hesed in the Old Testament, such as the kindness which Abraham showed to the angels who visited him. Another example is the kindness these same angels showed to Lot and his family, by removing them from the city of Sodom, before its fall. There was also Boaz, who practiced Hesed by marrying Ruth. King David showed Hesed, which we call loving-kindness, to the remainder of Johnathan’s descendants. It was also Rahab’s kindness and protection, which she gave to the Hebrew spies, which was called Hesed.*

*In the New Testament, there is no Hesed, exactly, because the corresponding word is not there in the Greek. Instead, we have Jesus to look at, who is the perfect embodiment of Hesed.*

*There is also an English word: Loving-kindness, which is used in many times in the New Testament, for the concept of Hesed. Other words or phrases, which correlate with the Old Testament Hesed, are: the showing of kindness, the giving of forgiveness, and the constant practice of servitude towards all men.*

*This Bible background is important here to our story.*

*We mention Hesed because it is always and everywhere practiced by all the people in Heaven.*

*If there were one quality descriptive of the New Earth, and one that dominates every relationship, it would have to be Hesed.*

*The perfect practice of Hesed in every form, rules the New Earth.*

\* \* \*

## MIRIAM’S STORY

*“You have set a watchman for my feet.”*

That night, as Hiram rested on the pallet they shared in their room, Miriam got up and walked outside through the open door, to their wide balcony. She always enjoyed their time together, for she was deeply and eternally in love with her dear redhaired man. Tonight, however, she did not wish to rest, nor to enjoy the company of any one of her several thousand descendants. Tonight she was thinking about the past —Her past. She flew lightly down to the wide lawn on that side of their mansion, and walked out toward the woods where there was a meadow beyond.

She heard a tiny mew behind her, and turned to see Shalamar, her ancient cat, following her. “Come to play with the field mice, Shal?”

**1 Corinthians 4:1-2**  
*So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required of those who serve, that they be found faithful.*

“You know I don’t do that anymore, Mistress. You look like you could use company.”

Shalamar jumped into her waiting arms and settled two paws over her shoulder, as always, so she could properly guard the rear. Miriam stroked the cat’s long tan fur, thankful once more to the Lord, for having her again. Shalamar was always hers now. Forever.

*This cat had been her one childhood companion in a very lonely upbringing. It had died when she was wed, at fifteen, to Hiram. Their relationship floundered after that, for she had no idea how to be a loving mate. Especially to a man who was only a miner. She deeply missed her home and her mother, who, although cold, was at least familiar to her.*

*Over their years together, they had children, and responsibilities, and hard work. Too much hard work. She got old very quickly. She never had another cat, ever again. For the pain of that loss was too great to her.*

*But the loss of her Shalamar had caused her to speak out to the Lord.*

*Oh, she hadn’t known His Name, nor anything about Him, but she had a grievance to deliver to Him. Soon, as a young girl who was poor, married and pregnant, she had more.*

*One day in the village, a man was speaking about God, and His Son Jesus. He was quickly run out of town by those ruffians who threw stones at the likes of him, but she had heard His Name. Over the following months she had descreetly inquired among her friends and family if anyone had ever heard of Him, or if they had seen a book that was written about Him. A book like that man had talked about.*

*No one had. No one cared. Even more; no one cared about her, except her own children and the man she had married. He did work hard for them, and he was not given to liquor or abuse. For that she was grateful. Yet there was an emtyness inside her, a great longing that transcended even the loss of her dear cat.*

*“What was life about? Is this all there is?” She added questions to her grievances.*

*There was once a summer night then, in her young life, much like this one tonight, where she asked God these questions. That for her, was her beginning. Not too many days afterward, a chest washed ashore on the beach near her village. She had taken the children there for some time away from their duties, and from the heat of the day.*

*This chest, some relic from an unknown shipwreck, was only partly dry inside. She couldn’t break the lock, but she had used a rock to pound*

*Isaiah 58:6-11*

*“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.*

*Matthew 13:44-46*

*“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.*

## The Book of Heaven

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The Garden  
Bartlett

I come to the garden alone,  
while the dew is still on the roses.  
And the Voice I hear,  
falling on my ear,  
the Song of Man discloses.

And You walk with me,  
And You talk with me,  
And You tell me I am Your own.  
And the joy we share,  
as we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.

*through the flimsy wood of the lid. Inside, she and her little ones had found fancy clothes, such as she had never seen. Silk was unknown to them. Also inside was some silver bracelets, a very small clay urn of perfume, —and a book. All of it was very damp. Especially the book, which was written by hand. Much of the ink of the outer pages was illegible, but those pages on the inside might be salvaged.*

*What caught her attention, and excited her tremendously, was the fact that the book was a Bible! She hurriedly got up, gathered her belongings and the children, and ran home with the silks, the urn, the bracelets, and the book. She let the book dry on the mantel over the hearth for many days. She did not tell Hiram. He was always so tired anyway. When she finally dared to touch it again, she found it to be quite dry, but very brittle.*

*She had taught herself to read at an early age at home, so she was eager to try to read this book. It seemed to her to be an answer to her prayers. Many of the words were unknown to her, but most of it was easy enough to understand. The place where she first tried to read was called John. In it was the words of Jesus! How marvelous did these writings appear to Her!*

*She read so long, that she was late getting her husband's dinner. He was cross at her, but he did not enquire as to why she was late. She promised herself that she would not be late again, but within her was burning the words of this Jesus. Although she was outwardly composed, on the inside she was very excited!*

*Months went by. She became a very good wife and mother. More than that, she did not argue with her husband as before, but truly began to try to understand his needs and his ideas. She found him to be an honest and a good man. Silently she thanked her new found Lord for these qualities that she had not seen before.*

*Hiram grew quieter and more thoughtful as this time passed. Finally he could contain himself no longer. It was bedtime. They had put the children to bed at sunset, as always. She quietly mended his clothes, sitting before the hearth. He had his pipe and some old journals to read, handed down from well-to-do friends.*

*She never forgot this particular night. When he stood up, knowing that meant they were to retire to their loft, he suddenly stopped, put down his pipe on the stoney hearth, grabbed her hands and knelt down at her feet. Quite amazed at this, she knelt too. Looking into her eyes, he*

had one question. "What has happened to you?"

*She was speechless for a moment. Did she dare tell him?*

*Again he asked her the question. Then he asked another. "Have you found someone else?"*

*She laughed. Then she poured it all out to him, sitting together, facing each other in honest conversation, baring her heart of hearts to him.*

*He was astonished. She was now religious? That was all it was? He had feared much worse than this. She was just too nice to him for him to believe that there wasn't some sinister motive to it all.*

*But wait! If she was going to follow this God, —this Jesus, their friends would drive them away! He could even lose his job in the mines over this. No! It was not a good idea at all.*

*He then told her what she must do.*

*Wide eyed, she acquiesced. She would speak to no one about this. It would remain within their family. Deeply disappointed, she agreed.*

*Seeing her hurt, he held her. It pained him that somehow he had hurt her. He had always thought himself exceedingly lucky to have been given permission to have her to wife. He knew that he loved her very much. How much, he did not realize until he saw her face fall in disappointment at what he had said.*

*Holding her there, he asked her to read this book to him, to help him understand what it was she was becoming. She was delighted to do so. He stoked the fire for some light. It was cold anyway. It was the only light they had, for they couldn't afford candles, as their tallow went for the making of soap instead.*

*She got down the tattered book from a high shelf in the back of the room, and respectfully brought it to him to examine. He handed it back to her. "Read from it for me."*

*That had been their beginning. Each night they sat face to face on the hard dirt floor in front of the light of the fire, while she read from the Bible. He was most amazed to notice that sometimes she did not read, but she was quoting! Before long, he too was finding a hunger satisfied within his own heart. Hunger that he hadn't known he had. Peace was coming into their lives and their home. There came a time, when he looked at her as she was reading, and he interrupted her by saying how thankful he was that she was in his life.*

*This gave her great joy, not only for his devotion, but because she*

*Psalm 145:17-21*

*The LORD is righteous in all his ways  
and loving toward all he has made.*

*The LORD is near to all who call  
on him, to all who call on him in truth.  
He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;  
he hears their cry and saves them.*

*The LORD watches over all who love him,  
but all the wicked he will destroy.*

*My mouth will speak in  
praise of the LORD.*

*Let every creature praise  
his holy name for ever and ever.*

*understood that he was becoming a believer.*

*The following holiday, the only day of the year the mines were closed, they left their children with a neighbor and went to the river. Although it was winter, and snow was fresh fallen, they hurried to the river together and there they baptised each other in His name. Forever more their lives, their souls, and their fortunes were now bound to Him, and to each other.*

*From that day forward, they were the first of their kind in their family to proudly wear His Name!*

*Later, as with all who wore His Name, came the persecutions, the losses, and the betrayals of those they tried to teach, along with the joys of those converted. But through it all they had the Lord. He was worth so much more than all that they had lost in the old world.*

Miriam loved to reminisce about those hard, early days. She loved to pray, and to sing to her Lord while alone, thanking Him for all that had transpired. Although she had a golden monument in the City somewhere, these memories were her real monument to Him. She knew He had both heard and answered her prayer so long ago. She had even found, and thanked, Genoa Escobal Midori, the devout Christian woman who had perished in a storm off their coast, so long ago. (It was her Bible that she had found on the beach).

So, alone that night, with just Shalamar, her memories, and Jesus; Miriam did rejoice, and pray, and sing. She was eternally grateful and proud that this One had known her name long, long before she had known His.

**Romans 8:28-32**

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all —how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

•••

**ELIZABETH'S STORY**

*It all had happened so fast! There was no time to prepare. No time at all.*

Elizabeth was born in what was formerly Belgium, a few decades before the End. She was only sixteen when she first met Richard, who was already in his last year of college.

For both of them it was love at first sight. There had been little need of discussion between them over their obvious affection and commitment for each other, and for their secret Lord. Even her parents saw it, and soon were giving their blessing to these two.

After week after she graduated from her high school, they were married at her family's home church. Richard was going to try for a military position to be a pilot. Since accommodations were very limited anywhere, she naturally set up housekeeping with her parents, who moved her three protesting brothers into one room so that she and Richard could have their own.

In spite of being well qualified for pilot training, Richard was sent instead to an avionics school in a mid-Continent state. His training was to be for eight months. That left him just enough time to return home to be with her for their first born child to arrive.

So sad it was for them. In spite of all the advanced medical help, their daughter Michelle died in her eighth month during a premature delivery. Richard had flown home on emergency leave, but it was too late. The doctors quickly took the child away and they never saw her. There were no funerals permitted for mere infants in those days.

It was a few weeks later, when Richard was finished with school, that he sent for her to live on the airbase with him in officer's quarters. Although she did not know it at the time, that would also be the last time she ever saw her parents.

They were quite fortunate, Richard said, to be allowed family accommodation on the base. That did little to help the fact that their home was part of an ancient and wretched remodeled barracks. Soon she was making friends with the other airmen's wives and gladly took on baby-sitting for a few of them.

Their eight year tour passed quickly. She gave Richard five healthy sons in that time. That was a bonus for them because the state government paid extra Euros to any family that had children, there being so few children born anywhere.

Looking back on her life, she began to understand their proper place in the world. It was hard for the two of them to understand their recent world history, since most of it was forbidden knowledge. However, Base rules were lax, and people there were more progressive than in the village where she grew up. In their second year together, she and Richard were illegally watching some rare old American movies on a dying video machine he had gotten from a pilot somewhere. The pilot was going to throw them away, when Richard asked for it, expressing interest in tinkering with the old video machine.

Those stories out of a lost world were odd and eerie. Was that how America really used to be? Or were those stories about some invented wonderland where everyone was rich and drove their own vehicles on free-ways? Had there really been space travel before the Fall? Some of the movies they could not watch even part way through because of all the overt sexuality and violence. What perversity! What dreams those movies gave the both of them. Eventually, although they loved the idea of the old movies, Richard in anger and frustration took the whole thing to the dump.

Afterward, their favorite thing to do, although it was not politically wise, was to pretend that they were eating “fast food” for dinner. The boys loved it when Dada came home and Mama would set their food out on the table wrapped up in brown bags. There was “hamburgers and fries.” Although Richard never could understand the American’s enjoyment of those little ham sandwiches or the sliced and fried vegetables.

The world had lost so many millions of people when the Americas were destroyed. Elizabeth knew that much from the scant history taught in school. People never mentioned that part of the world anymore. They avoided the subject like it was unlucky, or hexed. Men never traveled there again, for it was lethal with radiation. Yet this history fascinated her. How did it happen? Why did God allow it to happen? She had learned from some very unauthorized sources that once America had ruled the world, and that everyone had wanted to go live there, or at least to dress and talk like the Americans. People also used to be very immoral. Perhaps those movies were about reality after all.

She never understood exactly how it had happened that they all died, but after seeing those movies, she began to think that maybe God had done this thing to save the rest of the world from such wickedness and violence.

Elizabeth’s faith was nominal in all of this. Her religion was highly ethnic. In the Base housing were Muslims and Jews, as well as Orthodox Protestants and one or two Catholics. Officially, they were all segregated to their own divisions and departments. In the housing there were no such barriers. At the beginning this all frightened her, but time overcame that fear as she and the other women became friends. Religion was never a topic, and almost never appeared in their conversation. Why mess up a good friendship, she thought? She did not yet understand that she was only a “nominal” Christian.

Her husband Richard was the stronger one in her eyes. He was the spiritual leader of the family. He always led the mealtime prayers. He decided what books the boys could read in their little family school. They did not own

a Bible, but it was Richard who told his boys the stories from Scripture about Noah, Abraham, David and Jesus. She would listen too. It was only rarely she would argue with him over some detail or minor doctrine. She tended not to believe there really was a Sampson or a Daniel with lions, but the boys believed it.

Was the story of Noah and the flood the same as their world's rescue from wicked America? Questions like these peppered their early years together. Alone together on that airbase, without books or instructors, or access to any such source, she and Richard could only speculate about the recent past. They were totally unaware that much of their history was misinformation, which the nation states had decreed would be taught in the upper terms. People in those times only went to high school, if they went at all, having been earlier educated, or not, by their families. Children usually began to work by the time they were six or seven, and usually at home since there was little or no automation, and much to do.

Both she and Richard were the lucky ones, having had parents rich enough to allow them a state education. Richard was the only officer on the base who had been to the University. In fact, he was probably one of only a few officers who could read and write. Officer positions in those days were usually purchased billets. Leading men did not require an education anyway.

After their tour was done, Richard was transferred far away to the North. He could not take his family, so Elizabeth gathered her little boys and their few possessions and took the train to her eldest brother's home.

That house had belonged to her parents before they had died in an accident on the street. The front of an old building had collapsed on them as they were out for a stroll. She did not know when it happened. A long time afterward, one of her brothers had written her about it, thinking she should be informed.

Since the house was hers as well as her brothers, she moved with her sons into one of the rooms. This was a difficult time for her because two of her brothers now had wives of their own, and their resentment at her presence was both open and obvious. The eldest brother was always drunk and irresponsible, and took no control over the situation in order to make it better for her. She had little choice but to daily send her boys out onto the street. That was something they were glad to do, since they did not like their new relatives at all.

To Timon, her youngest brother, she had been close. Now he was a newlywed, and even he resented her being there.

So Elizabeth, lacking education or training, went to work. God had smiled on her in those days, for she found a kindly shopkeeper who took her and her boys in, putting them all to work in his hardware store. She was quickly trained in keeping the books and the inventory. Johan, the owner of the store had known her parents. With his own boy away, he had room for them upstairs. The boys earned no pay, but they knew their work was really for room and board. It wasn't all that hard to do either. They understood that it was certainly much better than working in the factories.

Old Johan, for his part, thought himself fortunate to have them. Help was hard to find, especially someone who could both read and write and do numbers. But he would have taken them in anyway, knowing their situation. It was the godly thing to do. His heart ached over those boys. They were full of odd thoughts and ideas. Their education, while not trivial, had major gaps. Their understanding of history and of God was primitive at best. He in no way faulted Elizabeth or her absent husband, knowing that their education was little better.

Therefore, as they worked together, when a customer was not around, he asked them questions about things. The inquisitive boys, for their part were fascinated with the answers and the stories this strange old man would tell them. They understood that what he told them could never be repeated in public, or even with their friends. They would be in grave trouble if they talked about such things, but they were happy to learn about the truth of how things were from a man who had lived through it all.

Daily Elizabeth was pleased at what she was hearing downstairs as she busied herself over the long neglected books, and restocking orders. More amazing still was the fact that Johan had a Bible. Not too many days after they moved in, she saw him late one night reading it at the little kitchen table. Strangely, she knew immediately what it was, although she had never seen one before. A few days later she shyly asked him about it. He positively glowed at her interest in it. Quickly he brought it to her at her desk and she reverently turned the pages. It was so big! Was this really God's word?

Johan told her that she could read from it every day, early in the morning. He showed her where he kept it. He only required that she was not to eat or drink while she was reading it.

Richard, on his yearly furlough, was pleased and surprised at her. How she had changed. His sons were growing strong and tall. There was also a new light in their eyes that he noticed. Johan was a good man and he was so grateful to him for helping his family. Although the man would take no Euros

from her husband, he practically danced for joy when Richard brought him one of the new electric calculators. He had wanted one but could never find the money for such a luxury.

The month Richard was home saw the two men become fast friends. Johan offered Richard a partnership in the store once his tour was up. His own son was far away, and had no interest in the business at all, and it was a continual worry for him about who would inherit his life's work when he died. Richard, for his part, thanked God for such a blessing, but more so that his wife and sons were safe. He had been full of such foreboding over his family going back home. Elizabeth's brothers drank too much and cared too little for their sister. How helpless he had felt over this. Turning to God in prayer about them was a continual duty for him.

Late at night Elizabeth would tell him about what she was reading in Johan's Bible. She was the teacher now, as he held her close and took it all in. He was most amazed at her new faith. There was a growing strength in her that he marveled at. And for him too, as he found himself growing closer to God's Son Jesus. Jesus was no longer just one of the many Bible characters of his upbringing. In a short time he grew to understand that the whole Bible, indeed all of life revolved around Jesus. It was at this time that Johan was so proud to immerse them all in a watering tub in the back of the store. After Elizabeth suggested it, and after talking to their boys, Richard gladly agreed.

In a few days it was with the greatest reluctance that he got on the plane to leave once again his beloved wife and sons. Elizabeth had given him a wonderful gift. She had handwritten a whole Gospel for him in a little diary. He was speechless over this! Next year she promised to have more for him when he came back to her arms again. How she was missing him already.

Days turn to months and years. More furloughs, and Richard was hers at last. He became the son to Johan that the old man had always wanted. The boys were soon grown and seeking wives of their own. After Johan died, even the roomy upstairs was soon crowded with three new families. Those families were growing. Elizabeth was a grandmother, although only forty years old. The two youngest boys went into the military, mostly to escape the growing crowd at home. Jack, her oldest boy, was expecting to take over the store one day. The other sons were looking for work elsewhere.

Life was good for her in those days. Little did she know that those good days would be short.

life was snuffed out, had given man a chilling terror. Man's heart melted from fear. Denial was the order of the day. They would accept any remedy, as long as it did not involve God. Babylon had finally fallen, and for those who remained, for the most part, the future was dark and foreboding. Christians went into hiding. They clutched their faith close to their chest and hid the light. There were pogroms and massacres in every land for those who would not be quiet. Churches all over the world were emptied and burned in those dark days. Christians, if there were many left, kept their faith a secret.

Time was ripe for a world leader. Anyone could have had the job, seeing the sorry state mankind was in, but no one had the courage. Finally one came. He was a beautiful man: Politician; Statesman; General; and Genius! He was the answer to all Humanities' prayers. Soon he was making peace treaties between the Russ and the Asians, and even between Islam and the Jew. Everyone loved him. All people felt safe knowing that there would be no more atomic terror. The world at last knew peace.

It was within those seventy years that Elizabeth and her husband were born and grew old. Toward the end of that time everything changed again.

It seems there had been secret contact with another world! When it was revealed by their wonderful Leader, the world caught its breath. The offworld Leader was coming to Earth with great riches and miracles. The world had a party! Islam said that Allah was coming to earth. The Hindus and the Buddhist proclaimed that their gods were coming to bless them at last. Atheists said that this was the final proof that there is no god at all. Only the Christians in their seclusion and the Jews in their isolation disbelieved all of this.

The world was not surprised. Those two religions had always been completely intolerant of any other. Revenge was plotted by many toward them both.

The world Leader proclaimed that those who were coming should be properly worshipped. A new world church was established, taking in all of every faith, for it was revealed that these of another world had given the world's religions their own writings many thousands of years ago. Man had just misinterpreted so much of it. A grand new unity of mankind was forming. Only the Christians and Jews refused to participate.

Near the end of the time for their god's Appearance, the world was flooded again with new technology. Television was again everywhere. Satellites were reactivated and mankind again experienced the total immediacy of world events. Only space exploration, and scientific research was left in ruins. Why bother with those when all the answers and the mysteries of the

universe was coming to Humanity?

Part of the new world order involved money and financing. Euros went away, replaced by newly computerized moneyless Credits. People could buy and sell by simply using their new tattooed IDs, which was electronically and painlessly placed on the back of their right hands. Government leaders, and the Elite of Humanity stooped to no such pedestrian methods: Their IDs were placed on their foreheads, as benefitting their status in the New World Order.

Again, only the devout Christians and Jews refused to participate.

By now many nominal Christians abandoned their Bibles and traditions. Many of them, looking for a worldly Kingdom where Jesus would come to earth and rule for a thousand years, proudly proclaimed that these who were coming were Jesus and his Apostles. They all were accepted with open arms into the ecumenicism of the New World Church.

A few Christians remained defiant, in prison or in hiding.

The day They came down was like no other in history. All humanity was watching on their video sets. Millions flocked to the place where They were to land. The world's Leader was there on alone on a mile-wide pavement. A hush fell over the world.

At noon, silent saucers, riding on magnetic energy, landed in the center of the pavement.

Robotic video cameras caught the close-up of the first to emerge from the largest ship. He and the world's Leader clasped forearms.

*They look like us!!*

The world was ecstatic! "Our gods are ourselves. We are their children, and their offspring!"

In the midst of this revelry, someone did the unthinkable! A missile was launched directly into the landing party. The World's Leader was unhurt, having been protected by some sort of shielding, but the offworld's Leader was dead; his head completely cut open. It mattered not who the extremists were. They were soon found and put to death, with their whole families.

This did not mollify the world's Leader, for he personally carried the fallen offworld Leader to a nearby church, placing him on the alter there. He spoke not a word, but stayed there with him alone for three days. Cameras recorded it all, for at the end of the third day, the offworld's Leader came to life!

This world's leader was now the Prophet and spokesman for this new god. He commanded the whole world to worship their Leader, and him alone. This, he proclaimed, was Jesus come to earth, and Allah, and Buddha, and Hari Krishna. The world of course complied.

All except the few remaining Christians, and the Jews in their country, who only saw before them the Lie of the Beast and his Prophet.

What a time for Elizabeth and her children to live! Richard was arrested on the road on suspicion of being a Christian. Some customer had overheard one of his sons quoting the Bible. Elizabeth, instinctively knowing what might happen, quickly sent her three sons and their wives and children into the countryside. She prayed for them to find some place safe to hide. Alone, she waited for Richard's return, there in their little store. Instead, it was her own elder brother who came with the others to arrest her.

From that time she never saw Richard or her children again. Yet she had grown much in the Spirit. No more was she only a nominal Christian. Now that she was in the open, she spoke with boldness. She both calmly answered her accusers and stopped their mouths with her arguments. Her husband and her sons would have been very proud of her.

Although she knew not where any of them were, or if she would ever see them again, she courageously committed them all to her Lord. She knew He would either keep them safe or take them home to Himself.

Unlikely as it seemed, she cared now more for her captors and accusers. Debating with them, she was adamant about the true nature of this new offworld Leader and his Prophet. She could plainly see that he was Satan, and that his Prophet was the Anti-Christ. Why couldn't they all see it? It was all so obvious to her. How could they believe such a lie? So she prayed for them.

Mercifully, her days in prison were short. Soon she was carried to the side of the Ancient of Days, who was the Lamb of God. Proudly He welcomed her into His Paradise, for she had not been ashamed of Him, even in the face of her enemies, and in the face of such overwhelming and world-wide deception.

Humankind was not so fortunate, for soon they were having their own suffering because of their faith in their false gods. Plagues, terrors, fire from the sky, and deep darkness was theirs, as they witnessed the world coming to an end.

It all began to end when the Prophet declared war on the Jews.

The borders of Israel had been sealed for some time. No one knew what the Jews were doing. Nor could they have guessed the most amazing of all things that took place within each of their homes. All the Jews were weeping in agony and in joy! Moses and Elijah had come to life among them.

Soon enough these two witnesses would go into the broad world and

torment those who were being deceived by the Lie. There these two would be killed and resurrected (these who had never died before). But for now, within their own land and with their own people, Moses and Elijah were opening their eyes to Jesus their Messiah. As the Nation wept, the blindness at last was leaving Israel. The people at last understood who their Messiah was. Each family wept apart from the others, and the men apart from the women: Weeping as for the loss of a firstborn son.

Afterward all the Jews, now believers in Jesus, waited and watched on television as the two witnesses preached and died. Then the whole earth lined up to destroy their nation as well.

Elizabeth watched too, now reunited forever with her husband and her children, as the panoply of God's history played out its final battle, which was fought at a place called Armageddon.

As Elizabeth walked in the cool morning of her garden on the New Earth, she reminisced about those most amazing of days. There never really was another world of aliens, nor was the world's false Leader really dead. Though the whole world believed that Lie, it was the faithfulness of her Lord which had protected her and hers through it all.

Not everyone gets the opportunity to stand against an entire world and win, but Christians everywhere did it everyday on the old Earth, before the Here. In fact, everyone who as here on the New Earth had done so at some point in their lives. *Who are those dressed in white? These are they who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb.*

### GETTING READY FOR CHURCH

*"God has set man in the garden to work it."*

As it dawned on the Seventhday, Hiram's family got up very early for the day's events and festivities, (those who had bothered to sleep). The people of this family were weavers, whose tapestries were in demand everywhere. They all had worked together on a single piece, for almost a decade. It was the best tapestry they had ever produced. This work of art was two hundred feet in length and fifty feet tall.

*This work could probably not have been accomplished in the old earth. The cost would have been more than most business, and some countries, could have afforded. Artist would have to have been paid, and priceless materials obtained. There might have been clashes and disagreements between the craftsmen and artists over who had creative control of the project. Most certainly, it would not have been a work of love, to be given as a gift to the Lord.*

We're Marching to Zion  
Isaac Watts/Lowry

Come we that love the Lord,  
And let our songs be known,  
Join in a song with sweet accord,  
Join in a song with sweet accord,  
And thus, surround the Throne:  
And thus, surround the Throne.

We're marching to Zion,  
Beautiful, beautiful Zion!  
We're marching upward to Zion,  
the beautiful City of God.

*Rather, if it could have been created on the old earth, it would have been of some rich man's passion, or some battle scene showing off fallen Humankind's pride.*

This work of art was therefore much different. The people did not need to be paid: They owned all things. There were no disputes in the decade it took to complete the work, for these people were in love with one another, and Heseb was practiced.

The rare materials used in its production were obtained from several distant planets, and it had been colored with exotic dyes of plants and minerals gathered from many remote places. The scene on the tapestry was of the crucifixion. Jesus was shown in the center. On either side were illustrated all of humanity, the saved and the lost, each to one side or the other. This work was going to be presented by the king of their nation on the next New Moon, or First of the Month service.

It was not pride that drove these people to do this work, but rather the joy of working together, and the honor of being able to give their work to the Lord, who had bought them all from utter ruin. This was their way of practicing Heseb.

Miriam and Elizabeth were already off somewhere, involved in one of the many projects and plans that they delighted in, having been forever freed from housework and drudgery. They spent much of their time creating all the beautiful things only women can make, which their family and nation both enjoyed and honored.

Richard and Hiram had other plans though, for they were already on their way early to the City of God.

*Psalm 145:1-7*

*I will exalt you, my God the King;  
I will praise your name for ever  
and ever. Every day I will praise you  
and extol your name for ever and ever.  
Great is the LORD and most worthy of  
praise; his greatness no one can fathom.  
One generation will commend your  
works to another; they will tell of your  
mighty acts. They will speak of the glorious  
splendor of your majesty,  
and I will meditate on your  
wonderful works.  
They will tell of the power of your  
awesome works, and I will proclaim  
your great deeds. They will celebrate  
your abundant goodness and  
joyfully sing of your righteousness.*

## 6. THE CITY OF GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM

*"I was glad when they said come to the mountain of God."*

Nothing could compare in all of creation to this magnificent City! The New Jerusalem! Here was more than an imperial city for a great ruler. Here was the crown jewel of the Universe! The city was an incredible structure, 1500 miles square, made of nothing but precious stones and gold, and surrounded with a wall of pure diamond. Here was a city made without hands, which was permanent and eternal; connected always to the heavenly realms above, from which it had been sent down to the New Earth. (Revelation 21:2)

This was the eternal dwelling that the faithful Jews had all dreamed

## What Are The Things Above?

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of. This was their Mother Yerushalayim! In her they all longed to be comforted, as a young child on the knees of its mother, dandled and suckled. (Isaiah 66:10-13)

For the rest of us, this is where our Lord Jesus rules: Jerusalem, the City of God, which is our Peace! (Hebrews 12:22-24)

The twelve gates of this city never were shut, by day or by night. Inside it is ever and always perpetual Day. Nothing unclean or improper ever will enter its gates. No war or economic disaster shall ever trouble its inhabitants. (Isaiah 2:4)

All nations continually bring into it their glory and honor, at each Firstday, and at each New Moon. They bring these treasures, to lay at the feet of Him who sits on the Throne, and Who is Blessed forever and ever. (Isaiah 66:23)

Listen now, to another who wrote about the City. This man actually saw it with his own eyes:

*It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chryso-prase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. —Revelation 21*

*Revelation 22:14  
"Blessed are those  
who wash their robes,  
that they may have the right  
to the tree of life  
and may go through  
the gates into the city.*

*Isaiah 12:6  
Shout aloud  
and sing for joy,  
people of Zion,  
for great is the  
Holy One of Israel  
among you*

## THE FIELD OF THE FALLEN

*“Fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.”*

It happened after the final appearance of mankind before the Throne of God, the final Judgment. At that judgment was the complete extinction of the old earth, and the revealing by God, of the New Heavens and the New Earth.

*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was found no place for them. —Revelation 20:11*

There was nothing remaining of the old earth. There was no writing, no work of art, no monument: all were gone. Fallen man in all his glory, *the Humans*, were also gone. Nothing remained of them except a place outside of the New City, somewhat to the South, where there were markers written with each of their names of infamy. These were placed there for all to see. These were the enemies of God, destroyed in the final defeat. All that was left of them in the Here were their infamous names. (Isaiah 66:24)

This place, south of the City, was not the literal Lake of Fire, where the fallen angels were chained, and where the Humans had been destroyed, for that was in another dimension which could never be reached, —*where the worm never dies, (Mark 9:48) where no light will ever shine, (Matthew 22:13) and where God would never again go.* Rather the place outside the City of God was a reminder to the all the saved of mankind of the terrible, permanent, and fatal consequences of falling into the hands of the Living God. (Hebrews 10:27)

As Hiram and Richard traveled together to the City, this place they avoided. Instead, they flew South past the City a long way, and landed upon a gold paved road. Turning around, they beheld the diamond wall of the City, filling the half the horizon! This was the road that would lead them to the particular Gate Benjamin, by which they were to enter the City.

*Jeremiah 51:24  
Before your eyes  
I will repay Babylon  
and all who live in Babylonia  
for all the wrong  
they have done in Zion,  
declares the LORD.*

## THE ROAD INTO THE CITY

*“And a highway shall be there.”*

Hiram and Richard decided to walk the remaining miles into the City. The City had twelve streets that emerged through the outer wall. These

streets on the outside soon divided into many roads in an arcadian pattern, going everywhere over the earth.

The streets were made of gold.

The City was a square, which, as we said, was about 1500 miles on a side. There were three gates on each side. The middle street of these three, again on each side of the city, contained a river which flowed down the center of the street to the outside world. This River provided water for the whole earth. The streets were each 100 miles wide. The Great River, perpetually racing down the middle of each of these four central streets, was about 50 miles wide.

As Hiram and Richard walked toward the City, the fantastic wall 1500 miles high, was before them. It almost covered the whole sky. They could see well inside the City through the transparent diamond, 240 feet thick, of which the wall was formed. The road they were on was so wide that they could barely see either edge. Though there were more than 50 or 60 million people walking this road today, it was not at all crowded.

Here and there, some were traveling alone, and some in groups. Some were singing or praying, and some just drifted above the surface of gold in rapt contemplation. We might be surprised to find that for some of these, walking this road meant so very much to them. Formerly some had no legs, or were too weak from illness and disease to travel that way at all. No one in this wonderful New Earth was crippled or handicapped in any way. Each person was fit and strong. Therefore, walking the length of this wide ribbon of gold was too easy for any one of them.

These two friends of ours, however, walked close to the River which flowed down the middle of the road. Richard was reminded of an old song from the old earth. It was a hymn about the River which flowed from the Throne of God.

### THE GATES TO THE CITY

*“Enter in by the narrow gate.”*

(Revelation 21:21) As they came to the Gate of this road, they could see written across it, ***The Gate Benjamin.***

It had been named after the firstborn of the tribe Benjamin, who was the last of the twelve sons of Jacob, also called Israel. The Gate was made of a single pearl which was a perfect sphere a hundred miles in

*Isaiah 35:8-10*  
And a highway will be there;  
it will be called the Way of Holiness. The  
unclean will not journey on it;  
it will be for those who walk  
in that Way;  
wicked fools will not go about on it.  
No lion will be there, nor will any  
ferocious beast get up on it;  
they will not be found there.  
But only the redeemed will walk there,  
and the ransomed  
of the LORD will return.  
They will enter Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy will crown their heads.  
Gladness and joy will overtake them,  
and sorrow and sighing  
will flee away.

*Isaiah 66:1, Acts 7:49*  
*This is what the LORD says:*  
*"Heaven is my throne,*  
*and the earth is my footstool.*  
*Where is the house*  
*you will build for me?*  
*Where will my resting place be?*

diameter. There were eleven other gates similar to it, equally spaced around the four walls of the great City.

Through this Gate was cut or drilled, a large opening for passage, but this Gate was narrow at its center. Flooding out through the Gate was the eternal Light, from the Mountain of God. Even though there was bright sunshine outside, their eyes were momentarily blinded by the glory that was shining through the Gate, from the presence of God. It seemed to their eyes that the Light also lit up the pearl so that it glowed softly, as with fire from within.

This particular Gate was different from the others. They all were unique, but this one was special. The road was twenty-five miles wide on either side of the River, before it came to the gate, but they knew it would narrow considerably high up, inside that great pearl.

As they approached the entrance, the road began to climb steeply upward. It appeared that the river was now coming from a waterfall in the center of the road ahead. To either side of the waterfall, the road narrowed more, to pass sharply upward over the fall, to either side, and through the gate before them.

As they passed within the Gate itself, the road now arched above the River, so that the River passed far beneath them in the falls. This they could see below, through the transparency of the gold pavement on which they walked.

On the other side of the gate, at a higher altitude, the road again emerged to its 100 mile width, the River again 50 miles wide, flowing as before, through the middle of the street of gold.

Hiram and Richard, walking this journey through the Gate, felt as if they were entering a huge tunnel, which had a center that was very narrow, almost claustrophobic. It reminded them of passing into death, for it seemed to grow darker and colder as they neared the very center of the gate made of pearl. Inside, it was very quiet, and it felt cold there, deep within that passage. It seemed to them that they were alone, there inside this suddenly difficult opening.

As they passed beyond the center, the Light from within the City grew brighter. This reminded them of their passage into the Life of the Lord Jesus, who had brought them out of their death.

*This might sound like a somber way to enter the City of God, for all the other gates were wide open. Yet for those who live on that side of Heaven, this gate was neither painful, nor frightening. Rather, it was a*

*beautiful and a continual reminder of how the Lord had personally raised each of them from the dead. Because death had been forever destroyed, reliving their own death held no dread for them.*

### THE TREE OF LIFE

*“And to him I will give to eat of the tree of life.”*

Within the City, along both shores of the River, was the Tree of Life. These Trees stood for many miles in two long rows along either side of the river. Each tree was perfectly created, and was well over three miles high. These Trees provided twelve different kinds of fruit, one kind for each month, throughout the year. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:2)

Mankind ate of this fruit because it gave eternal life. That was also why they drank the pure water from the River, because that too, gave eternal life.

Why eat and drink of that which gave eternal life, since they had all been given eternal life at their Beginning? This is the super-abundance of God. There were multiple ways for mankind to obtain eternal life in that realm, for God’s provision of Life was complete and overflowing to all His people.

*There should be much more to tell about the tree, but the Book of Books does not say more, or at least this writer cannot discern more, as yet. Some have suggested that the tree of Life is the cross. I cannot argue this, for it makes for a great sermon, but for this story, we consider these trees to be just what God said they are. (Please see the Alternative Views article for other explanations of these major concepts.)*

### THE RIVER OF LIFE

*“I shall give you water to drink so that you never thirst.”*

(Psalm 46:4) As we said before, this River flows out over all the New Earth, giving life to all creatures. It waters the whole earth, so that it blossoms forever. But the River comes from the Throne of God, which is high upon the Mountain of God, in the center of the City. This water was unlike any water on the old earth, for a single drink of this water will give healing for the body, and it will give life to the one who drinks it; life forevermore. (Revelation 22:1-2)

Imagine a river flowing in reverse. Up the tributaries, up the

*Revelation 22:17  
The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”  
And let him who hears say, “Come!”  
Whoever is thirsty, let him come;  
and whoever wishes,  
let him take the free gift  
of the water of life.*

streams, and up the brooks, to the smallest glade. This seems impossible, but God is a very good designer and engineer so that nothing ever floods. How He will do this is hard to imagine, so we will take it on faith that He will do as He said. We are used to this environment on this old earth. Now, here are droughts, floods, and places where rain never comes. We are used to an evaporation-cloud-rain-river cycle. We have never set foot on a planet where water is perfectly channeled in just the right amount to the uttermost part of the whole world, there to water it perfectly. *There is an earthly example of this, however, so that this concept is not entirely foreign to us: Our own bodies are constructed this way. Your blood stream flows everywhere in your body, bringing life to every cell, and in just the right amount.*

I believe that God has designed a very marvelous eco-system for the New Earth, the third one from creation (Genesis 6-8)

### THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

*“Flee as a bird to your mountain.”*

(Hebrews 12:18-24) The ancient Mountain of God, Mount Zion! It is the one feature within that awesome City of God that you could not fail to see. Stand anywhere at ground level and you can see it in the distant haze, towering up into the center of the area, far above the City. The base of the Mountain is a square, 600 miles across. It would almost look like a 600 mile high pyramid, except it was so rugged, and craggy. The hard granite at the base of that Mountain is formidable, and the eternal evergreen trees of the forest upon that Mountain are very tall and grow close together. It would be almost impossible for you and I to climb this Mountain.

Standing at the base of the mountain, it appears like a wall that reaches out of sight into the haze of the atmosphere above. People do not stand there long, for the Light at its top is blindingly bright, and there are continual loud thunderings and lightnings. Nor do they go near the River there, for it is deafening. It is a mighty and impossibly huge waterfall, many miles wide, cascading ferociously down the Mountain on each of four sides, going out into the City, down the center of each of four roads, and so out into all the earth.

*Perhaps the mountain is where the angels live in the City of God.*

From a great distance away, you can see that the top of the Mountain is flat and wide. Almost, you can see the Throne there, protected in

*Revelation 22:1  
Then the angel showed me  
the river of the water of life,  
as clear as crystal,  
flowing from the  
throne of God and of the Lamb  
down the middle of the  
great street of the city.*

the midst of the four mighty ten-mile-tall Seraphim, that guard each corner of the pavilion where God sits. You could see all of that, perhaps, if the Light from that Throne were not so awesomely brilliant. That Light fills all of the City, reflecting off the far distant walls, each constructed of a single diamond, and completely emptying the City of any shadows.

*Psalm 2:6*  
*"I have installed*  
*my King on Zion,*  
*my holy hill."*

## THE ANGELS

*"He shall give His angels charge over you."*

Angels are everywhere in the City, and on the New Earth. God long ago, had created more than ten thousand times ten thousand angels. A third of these angels were overthrown in the only war Heaven ever knew. Only their infamous names are remembered in the Here, in that horrible place to the South, outside the City.

The rest of the angels are ever faithful to God. Some of these are fearsome warriors; soldiers of the Most High. Some are very tall, nearly a hundred feet high. Other angels resemble you and I, except that we could not look at them now, because their faces reflect the Sh'khinah, the Glory of God. Angels always behold the Face of God.

*All of them are different from one another; as different as birds or butterflies are different from each other. Their coloring, and their features are remarkable, for they are each utterly beautiful in their creation.*

Angels are different from mankind. For a while mankind was below them; —created beings, made out of dust. Yet forever ago, these angels were each created to be the servants of mankind.

In the Here, they continue to serve God, and gladly continue serve redeemed mankind, who are the Children of God.

Hiram and Richard had met their guardian angels moments after their deaths. It was these two particular angels who had carried our friends to the Lord.

When Hiram died, he found himself looking up at the one carrying him, and recognized him immediately as Aztosh, his servant and friend. Hiram had a lot of faith, for he understood right away what was happening, and so he was content.

Richard was different, for although he knew this was an angel who was taking him away, he was not sure *where* he was being taken. His angel, Zobar, reassured Richard of their destination. Perhaps Richard did not really believe it, until he was ushered into the presence of the Lord Jesus, in the Paradise before the Here.

**Revelation 4:11**  
*"You are worthy, our*  
*Lord and God, to receive*  
*glory and honor and*  
*power, for you created*  
*all things, and by your*  
*will they were created*  
*and have their being."*

*Hebrews 1:14  
Are not all angels  
ministering spirits  
sent to serve those  
who will inherit salvation?*

In a sense, you could say that most of these angels were now unemployed. Aztosh and Zobar had always been on guard for our two friends. In the old earth, these mighty warrior angels did the bidding of the Lord Jesus, by keeping the forces of evil at bay, for our friends. Only those parts of evil which these two could safely handle, were allowed to pass before these ever vigilant guardians. It was their holy duty to keep their charges among mankind from being tempted beyond what they could endure. These angels had a great part in protecting these Christians from falling before their enemies, and thus being forever lost.

Here, Astoth and Zobar were continually at the home of our two friends, by invitation. They never would have intruded, and would only come if specifically invited. At other times, they were in the City, at the foot of the Mountain of God.

What might they be doing now, since mankind had no need of being protected, and were so free from any danger? Some of these angels might have become fast friends of their masters, the men and women of mankind they had protected. There was so much that they could have shared about their Lord. These incredibly gentle angelic beings had a unique perspective, having been around eons before Man. Perhaps our two friends had more than one friendly conversation with their own guardian Angels, concerning the Eternal Father, and eternity past.

*In the far distant future of that great land, who could say what great and mightily feats that these two races, mankind and the angels, might accomplish together.*

### IN THE LAND OF BENJAMIN

*“There is good land there.”*

As Hiram and Richard walked along the road aimed at the Mountain, they came to a side road that led into the section on their right. This section was named after the Apostle Paul. The Jewish tribe of Benjamin inhabited it, and it was but one section of twelve. These twelve sections inside the City were laid out around the Mountain of God, which was in the center of the City. *(Please see the drawings in the chapter, beginning on page 67)* Each section was 300 miles square. The people who lived in this section preferred to use Paul’s Jewish name Saul, when they referred to him. He was their chief, and a fellow Benjaminite, for this was where the renowned and revered Apostle Paul lived, with those of his beloved nation who had believed in his Lord.

*Revelation 14:6-7  
Then I saw another angel  
flying in midair,  
and he had the  
eternal gospel to  
proclaim to those  
who live on the earth  
—to every nation, tribe,  
language and people.  
He said in a loud voice,  
“Fear God and give him  
glory, because the  
hour of his judgment has come.  
Worship him who made  
the heavens, the earth, the sea  
and the springs of water.”*

Our friends were impressed with how this section looked at ground level. The buildings there were all very interesting, for all these habitations were clustered in twelve cities, each about thirty miles apart, and each thirty miles square. The rest of the 300 mile section was open land, with a mountainous emerald gemstone at its center. The smallest of the buildings at the edge of the nearby city of Gibeah rose three miles into the sky, and was about half a mile wide at the base. It was emerald in color, like all of the buildings in this section, for the emerald was the foundation stone for this section. This building was named after its inhabitant, Nehemiah, who had been a faithful scribe to the Lord, having lived and died under wicked King Ahaz.

All of the Jews living within the city Gibeah were the servants of the Lord. Every Jew in all of their 144 cities were the servants of the Most High. This was why their nation was appointed a possession within each city, inside the New Jerusalem. The Lord had long ago promised them a city for an inheritance. Theirs also was the land outside of the City, given for their animals, a thousand miles in all directions. (Ezekiel 36)

*Was it the fact that the Lord had a sense of humor in making the Jews live in sections named after the Apostles, and making the Gentiles to travel through gates named after the twelve tribes? Perhaps it was really the Lord's way of helping all people to understand that they needed each other, and that their lives were intertwined, and they were incomplete without the other.*

All the people of the tribe of Benjamin had taken to the idea of the vertical dwellings that the Lord had placed there for them. They were at first, amazed at seeing their land. This was because there were so many of them and their families were so numerous. Yet this sector was the same size as all the others. That is, each sector was three hundred miles square, this vertical format gave them much open land, which they dearly loved. Each cluster of buildings in the twelve cities belonged to a patriarchal family within their tribe.

This was different than the arrangement the Gentiles had in the New Earth. While they were placed in families according to their ancestors, the families in the Jewish tribes were placed according to their patriarchs. The buildings usually housed no more than a few thousand, so none of them were crowded. Because of the great size and number of these buildings, many people had several whole

### **Luke 12:22-34**

*Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?" Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

## The Book of Heaven

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*Psalm 149:1-3*

*Praise the LORD.*

*Sing to the LORD a new song,  
his praise in the assembly  
of the saints.*

*Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;  
let the people of Zion  
be glad in their King.*

*Let them praise his name  
with dancing and make  
music to him with  
tambourine and harp.*

***Philippians 1:20-24***

*I eagerly expect and hope that  
I will in no way be ashamed,  
but will have sufficient courage  
so that now as always*

*Christ will be exalted in my body,  
whether by life or by death.*

*For to me, to live is Christ  
and to die is gain.*

*If I am to go on living in the body,  
this will mean fruitful labor for me.  
Yet what shall I choose?*

*I do not know!*

*I am torn between the two:  
I desire to depart and be with Christ,  
which is better by far;  
but it is more necessary for you  
that I remain in the body.*

floors to themselves.

Outside entrance to each of the floors and levels was through airy portals and parapets. People could be seen coming and going at nearly every level of these buildings.

Try as he might, even after so many centuries, Richard never failed to marvel at the delightful ease of travel through the air that all the children of God possessed. No wings like the angels used, and no old earth technology was required; just the simple movement of their bodies, at whatever speed was desired.

From their view from the ground, there could be seen forests and streams among the green rolling hills of the open land in this section. Most of the land looked untouched. There was a particular sweetness about this land, that came from the way it was maintained. That is to say, not overdone. Other sections were different, each with their own unique and subtle ways. This uniqueness was more just the predominant color of the section, coming from one of twelve precious stones. It was the architecture, the way the land was utilized, the predominance of vegetation, and the special design employed by the Master Architect, the Carpenter from Nazareth.

Richard had visited each of these sections from time to time as he came to the City. He had visited each of the apostles, and many of the patriarchs and their families, being blessed by each of them in many ways. God had understood each of these and their most basic desires, and had provided a dwelling for each that was special and individual. Of the thousands of buildings in each of the 144 cities, no two were alike. How like the Master Carpenter Jesus, who does all things well, to be such an amazing Designer of dwellings.

### HIRAM'S MONUMENT

*"For Him I will raise an edifice there."*

As they walked along the street, Hiram noticed that the gold in the street here resembled cobblestone. The street they walked was very small, no more than half a mile wide. Monuments were placed here at mile long intervals, along either side of the street. There was a low curb of platinum, which was ornately trimmed with silver, that they stepped over, as they walked up a grassy hill, to the nearest monument.

This monument was a square gold and silver spire about two hundred feet tall. The top of it dazzled the eyes, for it caught the direct

light from the Throne, at the top of Mount Zion. The name on the spire was Hiram's. It listed, in the handwriting of the Lord, the faithfulness of His servant and friend, in the face of persecution and opposition at the mine, where He had worked on the old earth.

Everywhere in the City, were these monuments to all the Gentile Saints. Their Jewish counterparts were all over the New Earth; at the lakes, the mountains, the valleys, and in all the special places. All these monuments were named after one of the Saints. Each one had a story, a song, or a saying about the person they had been named after, recounting their deeds done in the Name of the Lord.

Richard was surprised that they had come here. Hiram rarely had ever visited this spot, for it embarrassed him a little that the Lord had made "such a fuss" over his faithfulness to his King. Hiram stood there for a while, looking at the edifice. He walked slowly around it once, and then without a word began to stroll up the street, toward the nearby city of Gibeah. Richard followed silently. He knew his friend well enough: Some thoughts are too private, only to be shared with the Lord. This occasion was for those kind of thoughts.

*What was Hiram thinking? Hiram was visiting himself, long ago. It was in a mine shaft, deep below the surface. The air was bad, and the mine was dank with mineral water at the end of the long tunnel where he was digging with a pick, looking for the vein of silver the owners wanted. Hiram stood behind himself and looked around through the nearby sedimentation. "Over to your left you will find a big vein. . ." But he knew he could not hear himself, nor in his flesh did he have the eyes to see the heavenly things which he already possessed.*

*Hiram remembered this day, and what he was thinking. He had been at it so long. Too many days down here, no sunshine in his life. It was dark when he went to the mine, and night when he left it. He was beginning to feel like a perpetual worm. Worst of all, he was feeling his mortality. His hands were not so steady. His arms were not as strong as before. His eyes were not as good. It was if the first wind of winter was suddenly blowing through his heart. He shuddered, and stopped his digging, kneeling there in the cold water and the feeble light of his candle. He had wanted to preach the gospel, and to teach people about the Lord, but he had no education, and therefore, no credibility before the men above. If he did not work harder in the mines, there would be no bread for his little ones. . . and no hope for them for their education, and a better life. Their*

*Revelation 3:12  
Him who overcomes I will make  
a pillar in the temple of my  
God. Never again will he leave  
it. I will write on him the name  
of my God and the name of the  
city of my God, the new  
Jerusalem, which is coming  
down out of heaven from my  
God; and I will also write on  
him my new name.*

*Matthew 10:32  
"Whoever acknowledges me  
before men,  
I will also acknowledge him  
before my Father  
in heaven.  
But whoever disowns  
me before men,  
I will disown him  
before my Father  
in heaven.*

## The Book of Heaven

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*Isaiah 45:17-19*

*But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting. For this is what the LORD says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness; I have not said to Jacob’s descendants, ‘Seek me in vain.’ I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right.*

*Psalms 63:1-8*

*O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.*

*fate would be his. No! He could not be weak, everything depended on him! Maybe he should dig on into the right. . .*

*Oh, he was weary, so tired and ready to give up! As he stood behind himself, Hiram spoke of the future. “You did not know it did you, old man? You’re in a meat body. If I could encourage you I would, for each day you dig here, your Lord is adding a hundred million gold coins to your treasure! You are precious to Him, regardless of how you feel right now.”*

*He knew he would not be heard. Not even by his own heart. . . It did not matter. The Lord’s reward did not depend on how anyone of us felt in our earthly trials. Our victory was assured, no matter what we happened to believe about it at the time. We overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and not by our feeble efforts. Our reward was exceedingly great, even when we did not understand that we were paid for each day we were faithful, and for each time we got back up to try again, after falling. (Revelation 2:10) Even if we did not do a righteous deed on a particular day, we were growing rich. But good deeds were even more rewarded. What was a cup of cold water worth, as it was given in His Name? A billion dollars in gold? A hundred thousand years of life? How much for a little prayer on behalf of another? (If we had believed more, we might not have lived so far below our priveleges.)*

*If he had only known! If he had only believed, he might not have felt so hopeless.*

*Yes, the gift was out of proportion to the service, but it was not out of proportion to the generous gift given by the greatest of all Kings! Jesus was not just the Lord. He was the wealthy Lord of the whole universe! And he loved Hiram. (He loves us all.)*

*So Hiram stood at his monument for a moment, his thoughts between the mine and the monument, and as he turned and walked away, his heart was glad.*

### MEETING YACOB

*“And you and your families shall inhabit the city.”*

They lifted off the ground presently, for they were going to visit Jacob, a contemporary of Hiram’s, who was a Jewish believer, and an acquaintance in the old life. About a mile into the air, they approached a large building deep within the city Gibeah, which looked outwardly to be made of nothing but solid emerald. The floors between the levels of this

building were of made of gold, and the walls within were trimmed with white marble and ebony. Yacob's floor was just ahead. The two landed lightly and silently on the wide marble balcony jutting out from the side of the building. Joyful, happy music greeted their ears as they landed.

Yacob was already coming out, with his wife, and other relatives who happened to be home. He wore a white robe, as most people did, but it was most Jewish, with the hood, and tassels of the earliest national period.

Our two friends got a warm and prolonged greeting from this family. They had not seen each other for several decades, so they were happy to follow their formal greeting together. There would be no meal today, for everyone was preparing for the Firstday worship which was close at hand.

Hiram and Richard would not be attending with this family, because they wanted to be with their own family, but it was good to see old friends face to face, and to observe how the Lord was blessing each of them.

Yacob presently showed his friends a new project he was working on. Yacob was a writer, and his chosen work was a written history of all the faithful people of his tribe. Hiram understood this kind of work, being his family's Recorder. This kind of research was most interesting to him, because all it really involved was a quiet time alone to sit and think, and a good supply of empty books!

Because everyone knows everything, you might think this work unnecessary, somehow. At least it gave pleasure to the one who wrote it, satisfied that his knowledge was not just in his recollection. There was something very appealing about holding a well made book, which was perfectly written, either by hand, or transcribed by thought. Other people, acquainted with the writer, also enjoyed reading his thoughts and views about their life in the Here.

The process of bringing knowledge to remembrance once intrigued Hiram in the beginning. Long ago, he sat for hours under a tree, or by a stream, bringing all the details to light of what he was studying. It did not matter the subject, for anything knowable was able to be understood, by anyone who desired the knowledge.

He remembered how he was, how long ago was it? He had been lost in this particular kind of remembrance for many months, when he looked around, and discovered that he was alone on the top of a mountain somewhere. He had been learning all about the earth's history, about

*2 Corinthians 4:16-18  
Therefore we do not lose heart.  
Though outwardly we are wasting  
away, yet inwardly we are being  
renewed day by day.  
For our light and momentary troubles  
are achieving for us an eternal glory  
that far outweighs them all.  
So we fix our eyes not on what is seen,  
but on what is unseen.  
For what is seen is temporary,  
but what is unseen is eternal.*

## The Book of Heaven

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*Isaiah 43:1-11*

*But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth-- everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf. All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of them foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true." "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.*

*Psalms 128:5*

*May the LORD  
bless you from Zion  
all the days of your life;  
may you see the  
prosperity of Jerusalem.*

physics, and the biological sciences, absorbing each little detail, and seeing new correlations with other sciences and disciplines. He had been completely lost in reverie. Suddenly, he found that he was very weary. He was weary of it all, as if he had spent months in a library somewhere. He found that he missed his family very much. *Solomon was right, he thought, book learning is much weariness!* (Ecclesiastes 12:12)

So he had roused himself, shaking his overfilled head, and wished himself home again, to the waiting arms of many loved ones, who had patiently waited for his return. That was the first and last time that he had sought so much knowledge. Instead he was content to spend his time with the family he loved, and he used that universal gift of recollection only as the information was needed.

Therefore, as Yacob was showing them his handiwork, Hiram openly admired his friend's great capacity for real, painstaking, and thorough research, knowing the full well the price to be paid for it.

\* \* \*

### TO THE WALL

*"There is a wall there which surrounds the city."*

After many good-byes, the two, in time to the joyful family music, walked off the edge of the balcony and began the remainder of the journey to their designated station along the North-western corner of the wall of the city, about seven hundred miles away.

Off in the distance to their right was the Mountain of God. The towering buildings of the city dwindled off in the hazy distance toward the Mountain. Although the air was always perfectly clear, those buildings most distant were lost in the unbroken brilliance from the Light at the top of the Mountain. *That light was always cool, unlike the warm light of the sun upon the New Earth.*

It took Hiram and Richard some time to traverse the vast airy distance to their place. Far below them, and off in every direction, they could see millions of people moving about, in preparation for the Firstday services. Their own place in the assembly, again by habit, had been theirs from the Beginning. Like old world churchgoers, going to their own pews, these two were in anticipation of the great assembly of worship and praise that was upon them.

*How long had it been?*

Hiram laughed to himself to think just how long a time it had been since he had gone to wake Richard from that hill. How long was it from the Secondday when he woke Richard until now, the Firstday? It had been six weeks in apparent time, but only six days in reality. Or should he factor in that long amount of time he had spent in microtime at Michael Hapsberg's home. That, he decided, was about another week in apparent time.

"Yes," Hiram thought to himself, "It was good to be here again for worship."

"What did you say?" Richard said, "It has been a long amount of time since you were here last, but do not forget that it was much longer for me." Hiram laughed again, thinking about the sleeping form of Richard which was still on that hill, and would be for several more decades. Time was fun!

## 7. WORSHIP IN THE CITY

*"I was glad when they said to come to the house of the Lord."*

From their vantage point near the wall, they could look down toward the Mountain of God. Their place was about forty miles higher than the top of the Mountain, and was near the corner of the wall, about seven hundred miles distant from the Mountain of God. Even here, it was a little hard to look directly at the Mountain, and the pavilion that covered the top, because of its awesome brightness.

From that pavilion Light flowed continually into all the City. Enough of the Light reflected off of the distant facets of the diamond walls to dispel every shadow within the City. The Light that shown through the walls, clear as glass, was refracted into every possible color, and nearly lit up the whole hemisphere of the New Earth.

From their location, Richard could look out through the thick, clear diamond of the wall, at the curve of the earth out on the horizon. The rising moon was visible off to the south, its waning signaling the New Moon Festival in less than a week. Sometimes the Festival of the first of the month coincided with Firstday services, sometimes it was the day after. In earlier centuries, it had either been on the Firstday, or it had been the day before; the precession of planets was that perfect. In a few thousand years it would cycle back again. It was all like the gentle ticking of a mighty clock in eternity; precise, peaceful, and perfect.

*Psalm 22:27  
All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn  
to the LORD,  
and all the families  
of the nations  
will bow down before him.*

Oh, Worship the King  
Grant/Haydin

Oh worship the King!  
All glorious above  
Oh gratefully sing  
His power and His love.  
Our Shield and Defender,  
the Ancient of Days  
Pavilioned in splendor  
and girded with praise.

Oh tell of His might!  
Oh sing of His grace,  
Whose robe is the Light,  
whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath  
the deep thunderclouds form,  
And dark is His path on  
the wings of the storm.

Frail children of dust,  
and feeble as frail.  
In You do we trust,  
nor find You to fail.  
Your mercies how tender,  
how firm to the end.  
Our Maker, Defender,  
Redeemer, and Friend.

## The Book of Heaven

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*Isaiah 60:14-22*

*The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. "Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations. You will drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts. Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze I will bring you gold, and silver in place of iron. Instead of wood I will bring you bronze, and iron in place of stones. I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler. No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise. The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end. Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor. The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly."*

Within the City, there were twenty-eight days, or four weeks to a month, and thirteen months a 360 day year, after the old Jewish calendar. Such was the silent and endless perfection in motion; all things being upheld by the power of His Word.

Richard was blessed in thinking about how it all worked together. All things were very good in the land of Always.

Here and there along the corner of the wall, fading into the distance in two directions, Hiram could see people rising up to their stations. This was a procession of kings and leaders of all the nations, who had come earlier to leave their gifts and blessings at the base of the Mountain. Other people, not needing to stop along the way, were popping into the scene in increasing numbers. Soon the whole interior of the City would be solid with people, all forming an open globe of people around the Mountain of God in great anticipation.

### THE SONG OF SONGS

*"They sang a new song."*

Off, in the distance toward the pavilion on the top of the Mountain, a song was about to begin. Its beginning is so soft, you would think it might have been but a single singer, singing partly to himself. The angels were sometimes that way. Hiram knew from experience that what he would be hearing in the distance, was probably several thousand angels, singing, and sweeping up the sides of the mountain to their appointed positions.

There was silence everywhere in the great city, in anticipation of the Song of Songs.

*The Song!* How to describe it?

For as long as they had been Here, for all the thousands of years, the Song was perpetually upon their lips, and ringing in the back of their thoughts. They never grew tired of it.

Of course there was other music, and countless thousands of other songs about Jesus. These were from every tribe, and nation, and tongue, and time. Yet for man, there was only the one Song, the Song of the Lamb and His Bride, the Song like no other!

It was almost impossible to sing. There were so many utterly beautiful smaller melodies to be found woven through and hidden within the Song. People were almost always singing or humming one of these, as they were discovered. But the way they were all woven into the whole of

the Song, was beyond anyone's ability to sing, except for those to whom the Lord had given the ability to sing it.

Hiram knew that the Song started with the long absence of any sound; a breathless anticipation of what would follow.

All people knew the Story of the Song by heart, for that Story was of Jesus and His Bride, the Gospel, which was both the theme and the words to the Song of songs: *The New Song*.

As the one person appointed began the Song, you could envision the prelude to Creation. Hours of lyrics and melody went quickly by, in stately splendor. Rhapsody and crescendo built, and built yet again, one upon another, until suddenly there was room for other voices. Again the melody built and waned. Still other voices of the chosen 144,000 singers were added. These all were the celibate Jewish preachers of the Good News, who added their skilled voices to the Song. (Isaiah 56:4-5, Revelation 14:1-5) Toward the middle of the day, fully all of them had found their part and were grandly singing with all their might and talent; each one lost in the stately grandeur of the message of the Song: but the best was yet to come.

Within the Song was the story of the Fall of man, the Flood, and the long, long road from sin and slavery. As the Song continued, it crescendoed to a sudden, breathless, silence at the birth of Emmanuel. The Story in the Song was reaching its sweetest, most beautiful point. This was not only the Story of a cross, and of a sacrifice, but it was a love story about a Bridegroom and His Bride. It sang its way through the ages: Of how He redeemed her; of how He went away to prepare a place for her; and of how He returned in glory and triumph for her; of how he had conquered her every enemy in Victory; and of how He had brought her finally and victoriously Home to Himself.

*This was the Song people were arriving in anticipation of hearing, at the beginning of the Firstday worship. Why, you ask? Because before them all, was the reason for the existence of the Song: Here, before them, was the face of the One who had inspired the Song of Songs.*

### THE WORSHIP BEGINS

*"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty."*

Our two friend's family were beginning to arrive. Joyous shouts of greeting, and warm embraces met them, as each of their family arrived to find them already there. All were eager to hear the Song at its beginning.

*Revelation 21:22-25*  
I did not see a temple in the city  
(the New Jerusalem),  
because the Lord God Almighty  
and the Lamb are its temple.  
The city does not need the sun  
or the moon to shine on it,  
for the glory of God gives it light,  
and the Lamb is its lamp.  
The nations will walk by its light,  
and the kings of the earth will  
bring their splendor into it.  
On no day will its gates ever be shut,  
for there will be no night there.

How great Thou art  
Carl Boberg/Sweden

O Lord my God, when I  
in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds  
your hand has made,  
I see the stars,  
I hear the rolling thunder,  
Your power throughout  
the universe displayed!

And when I think that God,  
His Son not sparing,  
sent Him to die,  
I scarce can take it in.  
That on the cross,  
my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died  
to take away my sin!

When You shall come,  
with shouts of acclamation,  
And take me home,  
what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then I shall bow in humble  
adoration,  
And there, proclaim  
My God how great You are!

—chorus—  
Then sings my soul,  
my Savior God, to You;  
How great You are!  
How great You are!

The walls of the City disappeared from view, as all people on earth found their place in that great assembly. They all began to form a wall, an open globe of people around the Throne.

Soon all of Heaven, every soul, and every angel, was present, there before the Throne.

The music of the Song of Songs began exactly as the last person arrived at the appointed time.

Long after, as the Song ended, they could all see the Face of the Lord, shining in glory and splendor, within the brilliant radiance of the Throne. They could see Him, because He had allowed the Light to fade enough for all to see. This, the Everlasting Father, smiled in greeting to them all. He also, was eager to bless all of His children.

*Here before them, was Life Forevermore.*

*Here was the Eternal Father.*

*Here was the Ancient of Days.*

*Here was the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords.*

*Here was the Lamb that was Slain from the Foundation of the World.*

*Here was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.*

*Here was the One whose Name is "I AM."*

*Here was Love Everlasting: the Redeemer of all mankind,  
the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Every person, and every being, bowed in unison, in respect, and in humble gratitude before the King, the Creator, the One called Yaweh, who dwells in Glory forevermore.

They all said:

*"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,  
who was, and is, and is to come."*

*"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory  
and honor and power, for you created all things,  
and by your will they were created and have their being."*

*"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,  
because you were slain,  
and with your blood you purchased men for God  
from every tribe and language"*

*Romans 12:1  
Therefore, I urge you,  
brothers, in view of  
God's mercy,  
to offer your bodies  
as living sacrifices,  
holy and pleasing to God  
--this is your spiritual act of worship.*

*and people and nation. You have made them to be a  
kingdom and priests to serve  
our God, and they will reign on the earth.”*

*“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
and honor and glory and praise!”*

*“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”*

*“Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks  
and honor and power and strength  
be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”*

*“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom  
of our Lord and of his Christ,  
and he will reign for ever and ever.”*

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under  
the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

*“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor  
and glory and power, for ever and ever!”*

*“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”*

*“Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and  
power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”*

*“Now have come the salvation and the power  
and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.*

They all held harps given them by God and sang the song of  
Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb:

*“Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.  
Just and true are your ways, King of the ages.  
Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name?”*

*Revelation 22:19  
And if anyone takes  
words away from  
this book of prophecy,  
God will take away from  
him his share in  
the tree of life  
and in the holy city,  
which are described  
in this book.*

*1Chronicles 16:25  
For great is the LORD  
and most worthy of praise;  
he is to be feared above all gods.*

## The Book of Heaven

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(Note: These scriptures are all the praises of the book of Revelation)

### **I Corinthians 15:49-58**

And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

*For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

*"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! "*

Then, again in unison, with a unity that was unique to that place and time; all beings, all people, all creatures great and small, began a song of praise and adoration to Him who is worthy of praise, and honor, and power, and dominion, forever and ever.

Our two friends were well lost in their rapture: both of the spectacle of all mankind; of all creation worshipping together; of the beauty of the music of the ages; and of the holy sight of the Father and Jesus, with His Holy Spirit on fire within the bosom of each one of them.

The Lord Jesus, with His Father, were also standing at the Throne.

They were standing to honor and to bless them, one and all.

Their blessing was upon Mankind, the Children of God.

All people watched, as the Father lifted His mighty right arm, and pointed upward. Their eyes moved as one to see what it was that He was pointing to.

Above them all, in the mighty open area between the four great walls of diamond, a scene was forming. *This was the great area where Heaven touched the New Earth, there far above the Throne of God.* No, it was really not a scene, but the area above was opening up to a great, infinite expanse. It was of a color that could not be described. Inside the expanse were multiple universes, infinities, other eternities, — and mysteries almost incomprehensible. Was this eternity past, or eternity to come? Or was this a completely different reality? Whatever it was, it glowed and pulsed with light and beauty, exciting the heart, and the firing the imagination.

No one spoke, no one moved, for a long time.

*The image faded.*

God had given them a vision. Perhaps like a father, gently taking his young child on his lap, and speaking of many things to come, which the little one would someday grow up to see. Perhaps the child could grasp a little of it, but not all.

When does the dream, the vision, become the reality? *Is there a*

*difference to those who truly believe?*

Softly, reverently, a song began again, filling the City of God. They all again fixed their eyes on God the Father, and on Jesus; *who was, who is, and who will ever be: the Son of man and the Son of God.*

They were all filled with His Holy Spirit, with a oneness, and a wonderful joyous belonging and wholeness that is ever unique to that forever land of Love.

*Praise be to God, and His Christ, forever and ever! Amen!*

## FAREWELL

*“Set your heart on things above.”*

So it is that we leave our friends, in their own proper place in Eternity. May you, dear friend and fellow believer in Jesus, find your place at His Throne, on the Day that He is revealed.

You have not yet seen your own Beginning!

I know that you will, for it does not depend on your own effort and ability to find your salvation there, but rather it depends upon His single act of sacrifice on the cross, accomplished so long ago.

He has already paid for your entrance into that abundant Life.

He is able to keep you, body and soul and spirit, until His return, just as He promised that He would do. (I Thessalonians 5:23-24)

*God richly bless you and yours!*

*See you, in Eternity!*

*See you, in His presence!*

Oh, Victory in Jesus  
Bartlett

I heard an old, old story,  
How a Savior came from glory,  
How You gave Your life on Calvary  
to save a wretch like me;  
I heard about Your groaning,  
of Your precious blood atoning,  
Then I repented of my sins  
and won the Victory!

I heard about a mansion  
You have built for me in Glory,  
And I heard about the streets of gold  
beyond the Crystal sea.  
About the angels singing,  
and the old redemption story,  
And some sweet day I'll sing up there  
the song of Victory!

Oh Victory in Jesus! My Savior forever.  
You sought me and bought me  
with your redeeming blood!  
You loved me ere I knew you,  
and all my love is due you!  
You plunged me to Victory,  
beneath the cleansing flood.

## EPILOG OBERON'S STONE

I remember it even though it was thousands and thousands of years ago, back when the New Earth was very young. Oberon was the sweetest person I have ever met. He was an angel of God, who became my friend, and told me the truth about all things.

*I remember it even though so much has happened in my life. We live in another arm of the universe now, in a far star formation you could not even see from the New Earth. My descendants and I moved here aeons ago. Even though I know all of my children by name, I could never count them all; for they are so many. (Though I am young, they all call me grandpa).*

## The Book of Heaven

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### *1 Corinthians 15:20-28*

*But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.*

### *2 Corinthians 1:19*

*For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes."*

*I love this part of the universe. This planet bears my name. Now that it has had life all these centuries, it really does resemble the earth. How many worlds do we have now? Again, I can barely number them all. We, God's children, are filling this universe with joy, and with love, —and with ourselves. God is causing us to inherit all things, just as He promised. What will come after we are done filling this universe, God only knows.*

*We still go visit God our Father and our Lord Jesus every week, but now it is in a much bigger place. He needed to open up a special place, or a dimension, where there was enough room for us all to come and worship. Such fun we have there; its like a reunion!*

*Oh, some had thought that eventually man would become like God. Can you imagine? We could never. He alone is unique in all creation. What are we? We are His children. We are made in His image, and we are still learning things.*

*But I digress.* Oberon lived at the base of the Mountain of God, in a cabin near the western falls. The first time he invited me to his home, I could not hear anything but those awesome falls, even though the mighty evergreens there were so tall and so numerous, and the falls were yet miles distant. But inside his cabin, with the door shut, it was quiet and still. His place seemed very much bigger on the inside. I remember that he had a number of pets, or so it seemed to me at the time. There were many animals in his cabin who conversed with him and ate from his hand. He was a very gentle angel, though beforetimes he was a fierce warrior. To me, he was wise in a special way.

He placed a small stone in my hand while we were sitting there. I looked at it with a questioning look on my face. He told me it was *matter*. "Well sure," I said, "This mountain and everything in the New Earth is matter." "Yes," he agreed, but he asked me how much this rock weighed. I thought for a moment and said it weighed about four or five thousand pounds. I was astonished at my own answer, but I knew it was the truth. Again with a questioning look upon me, he told me why. Oberon said, "In the end of the old earth, you could transmit three dimensional images, couldn't you?" I agreed that mankind once had such a thing. He asked me if we could touch them, or were they real? I said they were not real at all, except to our eyes. He explained that *we* were not real then either, there in that old earth. Nothing there was real. The matter we were made of was only shadows and light. I remembered that at the time, it appeared very real to me. Up until the time I died, everything

seemed permanent and real. *And that reality was all there was, or so it had seemed.*

I remember coming through my death. *(This is something you have never known, since you my child, can never die.)* On this side it seemed that I was waking from a dream, because where I awoke was so much more substantial than where I had been. *There are times I sometimes wonder if it were all just a dream, in the Before.*

Oberon explained it to me. He said that in the Here, matter was so much more dense, and so much more heavy because it was real, and not made of shadows and light. He explained to me the physics of the old earth, how everything before had such intense gravity, and electromagnetic properties, because they needed such things to hold them intact, being that they were just bits of light bound together by God into a temporary state of matter. Back then, a board or a rock was hard to the touch, but very light in weight because of what they were made of. I, me, myself was housed in a meat body back then. *Can you imagine?*

But, he said, in this new universe things are more dense, being made of real matter. There is not the need for so much gravity and all that electromagnetic nonsense, to hold things together. Our first planet, the New Earth was *huge!* Much, much bigger than the old one. But we were not crushed in a heavy gravity well, for matter in the Here did not have such heavy attraction. It was not needed.

I lightly tossed Oberon's stone up and down in my hand. It was small and light, even though I could never have lifted it in my meat body. I doubt that I could have picked a flower, or lifted a leaf in the Here. *Flesh and blood was never meant to inherit eternal life.* I knew from talking to Oberon, that I would have been a ghost in the Here, had I come Here in the state I was in the Before.

*I still have that stone. "Here, take it and look at it for a minute. It is smooth and pretty, isn't it? It is really is matter, taken from the falls on the Mountain of God. I love the striations of the tan color of the minerals, mixed with the milky quartz. I keep it to remind me of my sweet friend Oberon, who was the first to tell me the truth about how things really are in the Here."*

1Corinthians 3:21-23

So then, no more  
boasting about men!  
All things are yours,  
whether Paul or Apollos  
or Cephas or the world  
or life or death or the  
present or the future  
--all are yours, and you  
are of Christ,  
and Christ is of God.

Daniel 7:9-14

As I looked, thrones  
were set in place,  
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.  
His clothing was as white as snow;  
the hair of his head was white like wool.  
His throne was flaming with fire,  
and its wheels were all ablaze.  
A river of fire was flowing,  
coming out from before him.  
Thousands upon thousands  
attended him;  
ten thousand times ten thousand  
stood before him.  
. . . I looked, and there before me  
was one like a son of man,  
coming with the clouds of heaven.  
He approached the Ancient of Days  
and was led into his presence.  
He was given authority,  
glory and sovereign power;  
all peoples, nations and men of every  
language worshiped him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
that will not pass away,  
and his kingdom is one  
that will never be destroyed.