

DALE LISI



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**GOOD
AND
EVIL**

THE PRICE OF LIFE

BY DALE LISI

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Everyone who enters this world has a chance. If you do not take advantage of the opportunity you are given, it is no one's fault but your own. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

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One gentle, tender glimpse
A softly woven stare that bears the secrets only heaven shares
Serenity beyond compare
Celestial invocation
Whispering passions incantation
With divine salutation
On angels' wings descends the sting of kings
As a spark designs the flame it brings
The birth of time, crime, and reason
From a delicate breeze brews a violent season
A season which will come but once an eternity
And in it dwells all the dreams of hell
Exchanged for a coin down a wishing well

Part I

Chapter 1 Loss

There are many ways in which people view this world, many things they believe in, and many things they hope to get out of it, and their actions dictate their pursuit of these passions. Nothing man does is done without motive, and I, like everyone else on this earth, have motives and desires. But my desires have become outside the realm of sane men, and my beliefs, though widely spoken, remain very rarely trusted, so my endeavor had to be kept hidden, until the deeds had been done.

Tragedy brings change—to some for the better, for others the worst, depending on how it is looked upon and dealt with. Sometimes there is no other way for a change that must take place to come about except through tragedy, and when this storm hits, if you can't withstand its wrath, you will be consumed and destroyed by it. I met with such an act of violence as to barely escape with my life, an act carried out at the hand of one of my greatest passions, a tragedy that would change my life, my beliefs, my desires, and my actions, forever.

On July 4, 1992, the prescribed measure was imposed upon me, against my will, against my knowledge, without testimony on my behalf—the fate of my future existence. The omnipotent force that seemed to have haunted me since my beginning once again made its presence and power known, hurling me into torment and toil as it chewed the left arm from my body, its latest assault on my temple. A day of rejoicing and remembrance was violently seized with bloodshed and broken bones—its implement of malice, my beloved boat, the backbone of my joy.

As I headed across the bay that afternoon, I was met by an unseen tragedy, one of many that plague this world, waiting for us all in the shadows, like a serpent, hiding, possessing unyielding patience and undoubting confidence that the opportunity to strike will present itself, calculating the precise time when the window of vulnerability will be left open, and then laying claim to its victim with pinpoint accuracy as it sinks its fangs. A malfunction in the hydraulic steering system of my boat—manifested by a quick-fix alteration I had made impatiently—enabled one of the fittings connecting the hydraulic lines to blow apart, allowing both of the outboard motors to instantly turn full starboard. The severity of this sudden turn combined with our present speed sent me hurling end over end from the vessel. Efficiently, without hesitation, the boat circled back around to move in for the kill as I floated stunned and helpless in the water, awaiting the verdict.

Seconds upon entry into the sea, I regained my vision after having been blinded as a result of my head striking an aluminum pipe—one of several fabricated together as a small observation tower over the helm—during my ejection from the vessel. But this gift of sight now only revealed the raging, screaming jury, headed off by a stampeding colossus, thundering toward its victim with all the fury of hell's heart at the helm, harboring no remorse, recompense, or hesitation. I could not fathom its anger, nor elude its wrath. In a last moment's futile attempt, I raised my arms to ward off my attacker as it slammed into me, relinquishing all my senses. My body offered no resistance toward the unyielding aggressor as it feasted on the flesh that hung on my frame, splintered the bones that had erected my house, and dined on the dreams I held in my heart. Mere seconds of unconsciousness gave way, and I found myself still bobbing in the water, only this time to find that my left arm had been shredded and blood was streaming from my body. The angry jury sat dormant now, not far from its verdict—its justice served.

The horror of my situation overtook my being for a split second, just long enough to experience true hopelessness, a state more horrific than the one I was already in. The only way to describe it is like being cast into hell, an intense consciousness of inescapable doom. After brief seconds of true terror, I was graced with the ability to gather my faculties together mentally and limp my way through the water with my good arm, back to the safety of my sleeping assailant. One of the members of our party had managed to remain on board through the ordeal and was able to subdue the vessel after its work was done. (Had I paid

attention to the kill switches on the boat and their utmost importance, this tragedy could have been avoided, but instead I would fall victim to what I could have never believed.) The other member of our group, who had also been thrown from the boat, had found his way back aboard with only a few minor cuts and bruises. I arrived at the side of the vessel shortly after him, not so fortunate, where I was pulled aboard, greeted by a horrified crew. The mood was that of utter desperation, the other two passengers frantically trying to gain the attention of a nearby boat as I lay in a pool of my blood, reluctantly surveying the damage to my body in short intervals, turning my eyes away when I could accept no more, and then returning to the task that had to be done—curiosity's demands are seldom left unfulfilled.

The trail of destruction led down the left side of my body like a path carved by a steel tornado, a tribute to brutality, my arm crushed and broken, lifeless, the exposed flesh protruding from the openings in my skin where the propellers had slashed and ripped their way through my wrapper like a lion dining on a beast, pulling the flesh from beneath my skin. My fingers were now on display, pointing in all directions, directions they normally couldn't point in—sloppy, patternless, without prejudice. My chest bore the image of a huge *X* that had been scratched into the surface of my skin, easily identifiable by the tiny droplets of blood that trickled out of it but just barely touched me. Farther down, my left leg saw the end of the terror and destruction, with numerous lacerations on my thigh from where the blades of the prop each took their turn carving and pulling out the meat in my leg all the way to my kneecap, where it made its grand exit, leaving a large piece of flapping skin folded back and exposing my knee. I lay on deck, helpless, powerless, at the mercy of others, unable to move the arm that lay tattered by my side—a beloved member of my body, a slain soldier in a blind crusade.

I listened to the sounds of the others as they strived to deliver me to safety, all the while my body attacking me, overindulgent pains gorging themselves on what was left of my existence. During these moments, solace was not to be found, as relentless torment reigned supreme. My friend on board had been making an attempt at stopping the bleeding with a stray piece of rope he had wrapped around my body, a sort of giant tourniquet, though despite his efforts, the blood still flowed from my wounds, for there was just too much exposed meat. He tried to comfort me with words, but I could see for myself that

things didn't look good, and the expression on his face that he could not hide. Perhaps he felt worse than I did. I tried to ease the situation with the only thing I could think to say to him at the time: "You know I love this shit"—not very profound, but it got the corner of his mouth to pull up on one side for a fraction of a second before he returned to task. As the blood left my body, I grew weaker until even the simple involuntary action of breathing had become a strenuous, painful ordeal. I struggled for a deep breath of air to fill my empty lungs, though I received only excruciating pain through attempt after attempt. "I can't f**king breathe. I can't breathe." The words sprang forth with each agonizing syllable as it dawned on me that I was suffocating and perhaps death was not far behind. A quick series of cardio experiments provided me with a system of breathing that incorporated miniscule breaths accompanied by remaining in a completely inert state. This tactic proved to be effective at keeping the pain to a minimum, and though the breaths weren't satisfying, they were sufficient.

The longer I lay there, the better I began to feel, with all the pain and suffering slowly drifting away, leaving me.

The sun shone bright in the afternoon sky as I stared into its warm glow without hesitation, my eyes no longer tormented by its once-harmful rays. It seemed to rain down a foreign but welcome comforting presence. "I'm comin' home, God. Jesus, I'm comin' home." Over and over, my thoughts kept repeating this, without an ounce of doubt or uncertainty, though I neither saw nor heard anything, no pearly gates, no light in any tunnel, no angels or voices, only the feeling of safety and happiness. I closed my eyes, as I had not the strength to keep them open any longer, and just listened to the sounds of those scurrying around me as they slipped and slid in my blood on the deck.

The members of my party had managed to catch the attention of a nearby boat, which reluctantly towed us to a dock (after my friend had cursed them into service) where some paramedics were already awaiting our arrival. Shortly after the paramedics had begun working on me, I could feel my body returning back into the world of torment I had so recently escaped from, the wanton, soft luxury of death now just a memory. Preparations, helicopter flights, gurneys, stretchers, tables, doctors, and nurses all followed the next few days of restoration as life returned to my house, though as I had reluctantly foreseen, what was left of my left arm had to be removed.

That tragedy I endured on that day changed my life and would change my beliefs. And after several years of existing with this new unacceptable condition, I realized the challenge that had been placed upon me: I had to get my arm back. I must try to fix what had been broken. The events to take place over the coming years would be nothing short of epic.

Chapter 2

Sea

For several years after the accident, I lay in misery, lamenting the loss of my arm, growing angry and frustrated with life, as so many before me have done, watching time as it slowly consumed me, as it did all things—a sort of premature midlife crisis. I spent my days reminiscing the past, a time when all the joys of this world seemed to be at my disposal, though none of these thoughts held any value now. When it's over, it's over, and memories only make it hurt worse at times, though it just seemed easier to gaze upon them rather than to stare at the cold, hopeless road that appeared to lie ahead, the road paved with anger, jealousy, depression, and hatred—all the sights that fill the eyes and thoughts of a condemned man. Amidst my daily activities, I pondered the existence of a God, a God such as the one I had been raised to believe in, one I had no use for—until now.

In my spare time, when I was alone, I began to browse the pages of a Bible I had gotten as a gift from my grandmother, saying a prayer now and again as the seed of faith was being planted. When my faith could grow no further with the resources I possessed, I halfheartedly returned to the Catholic Church, the church I had been raised to believe in. Uncertain, uncomfortable, out of place, week after week I went, learning about God and of Jesus from this institution. I was not always pleased with what I heard, but I had no choice at this point, because I could not fix myself, and the things I loved, the things I knew of, the things I worshipped, always attempted to destroy me. I needed to change. My past and track record had been horrific since the beginning of my existence here, and I had always chosen the wrong path ever since I could remember. The world we are all a part of, whether we desire to be or not, possesses many sides, layers, truths, lies, illusions, consequences, and what have you. I was born in the late sixties, was a child in the seventies and a teen in the eighties, and pretty much like all people here, made choices during my time as a teenager that put me on a path. That path has been almost inescapable to this day,

burdening me with payments that can't be paid, labels that can't be removed, and debts and a past that will not be forgiven as they compound daily, increasing rapidly as the seconds, minutes, hours, and days tick on.

Our culture is one of extremes and hypocrisy. Emotions now kept roaming off their leashes, undisciplined, and I was always right there in the middle of it. Our thoughts are consumed with what our hearts desire, and what our hearts desire are so often the most deadly and destructive forces in our lives. We are told not to have sex, do drugs, fight and kill, etcetera, but ironically, the television programs, topics of discussion, activities, and actions we engage in so passionately are exactly the things we are told not to partake in. Could it be because that is what we naturally love? The closest we can get to the flame without getting burned is where we want to be. From our beginning on this earth until our end, we are warned about these things that we all desperately pursue and glorify (some in secret, some boasting) as we constantly attempt to partake in them while at the same time trying to elude their wrath, constantly feeding this addiction to entertainment, from Hollywood, to drugs, to the act of sinning. I have always made horrible decisions, never believing anything until it was too late, and to make matters worse, I was overrun with desire for the "extreme." Ever since I can remember, I was completely captivated by just about everything I was told not to do and did things many times out of dares I posed to myself, from skateboarding to riding bikes and motorcycles, from smoking cigarettes to drinking alcohol, from using marijuana, LSD, and cocaine all the way to doing PCP, where I would find satisfaction at a price and a label that will never go away, like a Scarlet Letter. "It is easier to ask for forgiveness than to beg for permission." On the path I chose, you can ask for forgiveness all you want, but the only one who can forgive the debt is the one to whom you have now become indebted, and it will never be forgiven; as for permission, that never would have been granted.

In this day and age, we would rather put our hopes and beliefs into lies, desperately attempting to make them real, glorifying emotions, feelings, and erotic experiences, placing our power into coins and paper, hungering for them with all our being. And we worship those who have boldly advocated these specters, those who appear to have successfully achieved the treasure these lies have boldly claimed. Like modern-day prophets, these appointed ones lord over our hopes and dreams as we all follow the teachings of these

actors, musicians, and politicians (every interest has a king), molding our lives to pattern theirs, captivated by the wisdom, illusions, and pleasures these icons have demonstrated, never looking at the fact that everything they promoted led to the “eternal dirt nap,” commonly by means of a strict diet of pills, alcohol, and drugs—or they simply sucked on a shotgun lollipop because their wisdom was so great and their life choices were chosen so well they just couldn’t bear to be any happier. Furthermore, we still hold their memories and their works in our highest esteem, inserting their names into sentences containing phrases like “He was brilliant” or “She was so beautiful, what a shame” or “What a genius.” It is tragic what happens to these individuals, because we all struggle to try to achieve the status these men and women have been recognized for. And you are lying to yourself if you say you haven’t wanted it. We all have; it’s human nature. From the classroom to our jobs, clubs, and gathering places, from birth to death, we desire. And unfortunately, I greatly desired as well, but all I had to show for it was a mutilated body, a stacks of bills, and a permanent label from the government that would make paying these bills much more difficult. We have all heard that you can make a deal with the devil to get certain things you want, and you can; however, the formalities involved with these deals are not as conventional as we may have been led to believe. Nonetheless, there is a real deal that has been struck when you pursue things the devil has dominion over, and there will be payment; ignorance of the law is no excuse.

Probably one of the first things we do wrong as kids is lie, usually about something we did that we knew we were not supposed to do. I can’t remember when I told my first lie, but I know I have told plenty of them. And when you tell one, you are attempting to mislead someone in a direction that you want to steer them, a direction that benefits your desires or interests for whatever reason, perhaps so you do not get in trouble for something you did or didn’t do. Lying is an important ingredient in any involvement in wrongdoing and deception.

As a little kid, I was infatuated with girls as far back as I can remember. Sometime when I was about six or seven, my mom threw out all my dad’s *Easyriders*, *Penthouse*, and *Playboy* mags, which I desperately wanted for obvious reasons: naked women. It was my job to take the trash to the curb on Monday for trash pickup, and I couldn’t stand that job, except this week because I saw that pile of treasures being evicted from the house Sunday

afternoon, and I knew exactly where they were supposed to be heading and who was supposed to be taking them to their final destination. I remember being so excited about the idea of getting my hands on all those beautiful images I was not supposed to look at but wanted more than anything in the world, so much that I could hardly sleep. In the middle of the night, when I was sure the house was asleep, I made my way out of my bedroom slowly and quietly, opening my door and heading down the hall toward the kitchen. I can still remember trying to walk softly so as not to creak the worn wooden oak floor in our house and wake everyone up. I listened all the while during my approach in case someone other than me was stirring. If I met another member of the household, I would be ready with a quick lie, something as simple as “I’m going to the bathroom” or “I need a drink of water.” It was getting back to my room that was going to be the challenge. How could I explain toting a pile of smut back to my room?

I made it to the kitchen undetected, slid open the sliding door, the last obstacle before I got the “booty.” We had a few trash cans that I would have to search to acquire my quarry, but fortunately it didn’t take long to locate what I was after. I grabbed every single magazine there was, and it was all I could do to carry them. I snuck back in, piled the mags on the kitchen table, carefully slid the door shut and locked it, retrieved my desires from the table, and made my “do or die” getaway back to my bedroom. This was the part of the mission where I had to have luck because there was no way to lie my way out of this if I got caught. My heart raced with excitement and fear as I executed the task that would fulfill all my wildest desires if I was successful—feelings that are only born through committing forbidden acts, feelings that we all pursue, oftentimes in secret, and attempt to conceal in lies, feelings that never taste as sweet as they did the very first time and never will again. Nonetheless, we chase them with every resource we have until we have exhausted them all.

I made it down the creaky hall, deposited the magazines on my bed, and then slowly shut my door. I had an old desk in my room, the kind with a sloped top to do paperwork on or place reading material on while studying it. It also had an open compartment beneath the seat to store reading and working material. It was a desk I really never used and couldn’t care less about until now. I crammed every single magazine into the book storage area, where I would store them until I could find a better hiding spot later.

The light from the night shone in through the window. It was clear, and the moon was full. Too excited to sleep, I opened up one of the magazines at the foot of my bed, where the light from the moon hit it just right, to the effect that I had no problem gazing upon the most beautiful women in the world as they bared it all, probably in exchange for what they hoped would fulfill their wildest dreams. I wasn't old enough to know anything about sex, but I definitely knew what I loved, and there was nothing in this world that could even come close to the feelings a beautiful woman could evoke. After all, I was just a little kid, and I was willing to risk everything—lie, cheat, steal, whatever—just to look at them. After a few brief moments of celebration, I returned the magazine I had been hypnotized by back with the rest of the magical collection and went to sleep until it would be time for me to get up and complete the final stage of the mission: the cleanup, when I would take the trash to the curb for pickup, the trash that would not be containing the beautiful women I had just rescued from the trash truck.

I woke up early, before everyone else, so as just to be sure to get the trash to the curb without anyone knowing anything was missing. I scrambled out the kitchen door in my pajamas, barefoot, and dragged all the cans to the curb in a few trips. When I was done with the chore of the trash, I returned through the kitchen door. My mom was now up and getting the day started for everyone. I still remember her praising me for taking down the trash that morning without being told—a very rare event. I also remember feeling very guilty for receiving praise for a crime that no one even knew had been committed. I went to my room and got dressed, all the while thinking, “I got the magazines. I got away with it.” I then went to the kitchen, fixed some cereal, and started eating breakfast. No sooner had I started eating when my mom, who had made her way back to my bedroom for some unknown reason, started to summon my dad and then me. I was petrified. I knew the jig was up and all the entertainment and excitement was over—payment was due.

My dad continued about his morning preparations before work as I faced a very upset, disturbed, and disappointed mom. She had found the stronghold of stolen porn. She was not exactly mad but more upset about the massive heist. She opened with, “Well, I guess I know why you were so eager to take the trash down.” I can't remember much more than that other than, “Your father is going to deal with you about this,” which usually meant it was gonna get ugly. I was raised in a house where the mom and dad roles were

extremely traditional. My mom was the sweetest person in the world, and my dad was someone you never wanted to be around because he seemed to have no tolerance for anything a kid would do or would like to do and never got tired of administering discipline.

I milled around the house that morning as my dad said nothing to me while he went about his routine before going to work. The seconds seemed like hours as I was tormented by fears of the unknown, fears that would not let my mind function. When it was time for him to leave, he called me to come outside to talk to him. I remember looking at him as we stood next to his truck, and I could see that he did not appear mad at all. It almost seemed like he was trying to keep from chuckling, completely different from the attitude my mom had. He looked at me and said, “You can’t keep those magazines. When you get older, you can, but not for a while. Don’t do this again.” That was the only pass I think I ever got from him. My mom, on the other hand, did not have much to say to me for a while as she made sure the mags were properly disposed of this time.

This was the first time I can remember plotting to do something that I knew I was not supposed to in an attempt to satisfy my lust for a vice. This was the beginning of how I would spend my life on the hunt for a few brief moments of ecstasy, exchanged for hours, days, and a lifetime of consequences, for myself and everyone around me. In this day and age, a lawyer could argue that my dad was the one who was responsible for this one particular incident, for bringing these forbidden magazines into my reach, or maybe that these women who graced these succulent pages were the ones to blame, for displaying themselves in exchange for some sort of payment. Or perhaps the ones behind putting the women on the pages were to blame. The list of suspects and motives was long, and each one played a key part, but the bottom line was, I was the only one who was truly guilty of this particular crime. Fortunately, I got off easy on this first episode, and through the eyes of our society, it was pretty hilarious when you think about it: a little kid, six or seven years old, lugging a stack of porn as big as he was back to his bedroom and then trying to hide it in plain sight, as if no one would notice a huge pile of magazines crammed into a desk that had served no purpose up until this point. It was about the equivalent of a cartoon character trying to hide under a carpet in the middle of a living room, putting a huge lump or a hill where there should not be one.

As life went on through the seventies, I dabbled in mischief, as all kids do. I tried cigarettes, took sips of beer, looked at nudie books with the other kids in the neighborhood—everything adults enjoyed and told kids not to do. Maybe that made these things even more exciting, I'm not sure. One thing I am sure of, however, is that the hypocrisy woven into our society is unbelievable. As a kid, I knew what I was allowed to do and what I wasn't supposed to do, as probably all kids do. I was on a pretty tight leash as a kid and didn't get much time away from the house and chores, so when I did, I took full advantage of any opportunities for adventure as they presented themselves if I thought I could get away with them. Unfortunately, this path had taken me very far from God and the church, and there were things that would have to be done to come back.

Preparing myself for this journey into the unknown, I received the sacraments of confession (forgiveness of my sins) and communion (the Body and Blood of Jesus) in the Catholic Church, the things I had read in the Bible that were essentials for salvation. I had already received baptism at birth in this church (forgiveness of original sin). These things seemed bizarre as conditions of salvation, and my pride struggled with their authority, but I had no choice. It was all too clear. I could not save myself from death alone, and I planned to go all the way to death's door. There was no room for error. There could be no mistakes or second guesses.

The first order on the bill had been filled—the sacraments were received. The time had come for the second: “What good is faith without works?”—the entire reason for my return to religion. Such claims made in the Bible, of healings through faith, tempted me to search for my solution there. I prayed day after day, relentlessly, always asking God and Jesus for an arm; I received neither reply nor result. Enraged with the outcome, I directed my accusations at the Lord: “If You exist, why do You not do what You claim You can? Are You a liar? Are You a fairy tale?” “How can I believe in You if You do not do as You have said?” This is the standard, generic reply to God all men have when their wishes aren't granted.

After my anger had subsided, I gathered myself together and reconvened on the matter. Perhaps I was going about this in the wrong way. The only one who had ever supposedly performed such a miracle as the one I was requesting was Jesus. What did He do to receive such power? What ingredient was I lacking? John 15:13 says that there is

nothing greater one can do than to lay down one's life for another. I came across this disturbing yet gratifying answer to my invocation and promptly prescribed the next phase of my mission: to lay down my life for this miracle of my request. I plotted and schemed the offering of my life to God. It must be something horrible, but not a suicide and not something that could be interpreted as an easy way out. It must be a confrontation with my worst fear as well as perhaps a sacrifice of my greatest joy.

I still remember it like it was yesterday, my first and oldest memory. I was a child, maybe two or three years old, walking happily along the side of the neighborhood swimming pool, not a care in the world, when I stepped off the edge of the pool deck and into fear and helplessness. I remember going under and sinking instantly, my mind overcome with fear. Then a hand reached in and jerked me out by my hair. It was the old man, my dad, saving me from the depths of the local abyss. Perhaps that is where this fear was born, though its origin is of no consequence at this point, only its reign. Several years later, once again at the pool with the old man, I found myself at the end of the diving board, staring down into the deep, dark, blue depths of the deep end of the swimming pool, with an angry dad yelling at me to dive. I stood frozen while a line of people waiting to use the board formed behind me, impatience on their brows, tempers escalating. Overpowered by fear, I made my way shamefully back down the board, down the steps, and was greeted by failure and a disappointed dad. I can't remember a feeling worse than that of cowardice, a taste fouler than the fear I had savored so many times at the water's edge. As I grew older, the water became my favorite place to be, though in the back of my mind, I could not completely abandon the fear of the open sea and the power she possessed over life and death. On a calm day, there was no more beautiful a place to be, but on a bad day, she would define hell.

Matthew 5:30 says that if your arm causes you to sin, cut it off, for it is better to have your arm thrown into hell than your whole body. This passage hit home a little too hard. Though I did not choose to have my arm cut off, and never would, I could see that perhaps God may not have been pleased with how I had led my life and that there may have been no other solution. But if hell was where my arm was, then to hell I must go into to get it back. So it was decided, my greatest love and my worst fear would become a

challenge of my faith, a trial at sea. I would drive my boat due east, out into the Atlantic Ocean, until it was out of gas, and there I would place my petition before the Lord.

It was the summer of 1994. The time I had appointed approached rapidly, and the following day, Saturday, was the day I had set aside for this mission, for the plunge into the ancient mystery. That night, fear engulfed me, my spirit back on the diving board, cowardice my close companion, only this time much worse than before. No sanctuary or solace could I find, only horror, hopelessness, and cowardice, a prayer I dared not speak, too petrified to even ask for the strength to face this specter. All the modern devices of our world offered neither escape nor comfort. I could not hide in television or find companionship in song. I lay in bed on the brink of insanity as time proved me faithless and unworthy of an arm, unworthy of anything but misery. That Saturday passed slowly, and in silence, a broken man I stood, remembering how I had accused God so many times of not doing what I had asked of Him. And now here I sat falling short of my task, coming to the realization: Who am I to accuse another when I myself do nothing?

Upon the arrival of Sunday, a little more knowledgeable of myself, and a little humbler, I went off to Mass with the hope of executing my task over the following weekend. In the blink of an eye, it was Friday. What I had put off for a week had arrived, and once again, I was skeptical of my willingness, though I had not accepted defeat yet.

I made my journey to Ocean City that Friday night halfheartedly, calling my bluff as I went. The three-hour trek passed in what seemed like seconds, ending in an unwelcoming greeting from a howling wind, running rampant through the region, fueling my fears and trampling my spirits. “Certainly the Lord does not want me to go out into this tomorrow,” I told myself, and I knew now, in the back of my mind, that I wouldn’t go. The next morning, the sky was dark and the wind persisted—not a chance in a million was it going to happen today. How I longed for the weather of the week before and remembered what I had heard so many times: “The longer you wait, the worse it is going to get.”

I drove down to the beach that morning to witness my adversary firsthand. Standing there on the sand, I watched in horror as hell tossed the monolithic sea buoys about effortlessly, knocking them all the way over and then letting them bounce back up, just to knock them over again, like a child’s inflatable punching toy that rises back up every time

it gets hit. With every lick of its lips, it stripped the sand from the shore, foaming at the mouth, showing its teeth, laughing at me and my failed attempts.

The remainder of that weekend was spent as the one before, with periods of sorrow, Sunday Mass, and plans of yet another attempt.

Several weeks passed filled with prayer, conflict, and talk of commitment until the challenge was once again at hand. It was now late August, and summer was almost gone. I knew this was going to have to be the time or it may not happen this year. The days were growing shorter, the air was getting colder, and my spirit grew weaker in this environment, like so many things that can't survive in the cold and in the dark.

I packed my bags and headed off in my usual routine to the shore, trying to remain focused, abstaining from all forms of entertainment. When the morning arrived the following day, it proved to be my third failed attempt. I lay in bed trapped, sick to my stomach with fear, writhing in agony, tossing and turning in the bed, beneath the blankets, finding no comfort or excuse, branding myself a coward.

As the morning passed, the phone rang, relinquishing me from my convictions. It was a friend of mine asking if I wanted to make some money by giving him a hand with putting some shingles on a porch roof. I jumped at the opportunity, thinking it would help me to escape my present situation and to obtain some sense of worth. Work always seemed to be the best way for me to take my mind off my troubles. The work turned out to be just what I needed, not too overwhelming a chore but just enough to keep me occupied and consoled. (I first started roofing when I was twelve, so this was standard stuff.) After we had removed the old tiles from the roof deck, we discovered some rotten wood that had to be replaced, and upon plucking the damaged lumber from the roof, we uncovered a huge hornet's nest hanging from one of the roof joists. Hornets buzzed around everywhere, hindering any further progress on the project.

I stood there gazing at the nest while my buddy went to locate a can of bug spray. The diligent little creatures swarmed around their home with total dedication while the Spirit propositioned me. "Lord, grant me immunity from these hornets so that I may know that you are with me." I said this in my thoughts with a clean, honest, humble tone about it; certainly this action could be interpreted as a noble one. I was putting something up on the table in exchange for this sign—my body, offering to willingly subject it to a harmful,

painful experience. A strange feeling came over me, and I decided to go for it. I said a quick “Our Father” prayer and asked Jesus to give me the strength to trust Him in this matter. Then a combination of anxiety, curiosity, mystery, and hope overtook me, leading me to crouch down to the nest, where I grabbed a handful of it and tossed it to the ground. The hornets swarmed about but never stung me. Fulfillment engulfed me as I reached down for the remaining pieces, humbly, not declaring this my own victory, not boasting of my bravery, but simply being grateful for this sign that had been given to me. As I tossed the last piece to the ground, my friend stood there watching with a bewildered grin on his face, clutching the can of now-unneeded bug spray, totally oblivious to what had truly happened or its significance. I don’t know if he even knew that I believed in God.

My spirits soared after this intervention, and I was confident tomorrow would hold the victory I was striving for. I went to Mass that Saturday evening and then hooked my boat trailer up to my truck, ate dinner, and went to bed, hoping for the execution of this mission. The night passed rapidly and restlessly, and by morning, the dedication to this endeavor had escaped me. I was again a complete and utter failure. Having now become accustomed to this condition, I rose from bed, accepting this title as failure, and milled about the house, looking for some form of escape and consolation. I stared out the window at my boat as it waited like a dog with its leash in its mouth, begging to go out for a walk, though my decision had already been made. This day that was provided for me, to execute this task, was perfect, no excuse to be found, and all the evidence pointed to cowardice, fear, and faithlessness. I shamefully reclined on the sofa, reviewing my situation. “Perhaps if I just went out fishing alone, that would be something”—not much, but better than nothing, and sitting around idle always made things worse. My spirits became slightly lifted after accepting this act of fishing as some form of progress.

Fishing was without a doubt my passion, the mystery of the creatures that lurked beneath the surface of the sea, another dimension, another world, into a place without law, without reasons, a place where neither the inhabitants nor their environment could be tamed, kill or be killed, no threats, no bluffs, no charades, no acting. All its creatures were constantly on the hunt in a world so beautiful, yet so violent, man could not contain or control this force, accuse it, haul it into a courtroom, or play games with it. The sea did as it pleased, without interference, without opposition, without question.

Though I loved to fish, I did not care to fish offshore alone. So much could go wrong. The possibilities were limitless, not to mention the inconveniences that came with having only one arm. As most everything I did now, fishing also had to be reinvented to accommodate my handicap. Unable to hold a rod and crank the reel at the same time, I needed the assistance of some additional equipment to perform this task: a reel harness and a rod belt.

The harness was a sort of belt, comprised of a nylon strap that wrapped around the body's midsection just above the waist. A pad was affixed to the strap that contacted the back to prevent the harness from cutting into the body while fighting a fish. Also attached to the main strap were two short straps that hung off the front, having clips about the ends, much like the clips found on the end of a dog lead. These clips were what attached the reel to the harness when clipped into the lugs found on large trolling reels. The purpose of the harness was to provide the angler with a means of relief while fighting a big fish over a long period of time, enabling the angler to let go of the rod without having to put it down, but for me, not having an arm, it was the only way I could fish with rod and reel.

The rod belt consisted of a simple Velcro strap that wrapped around the waist like a belt, suspending a sort of rectangular-shaped, molded plastic slab. The slab was approximately fourteen inches long by ten inches wide and maybe an inch thick, and it spanned across the upper thighs when in place. The slab's job was to provide a base to rest the butt of the fishing rod on, preventing the rod end from digging into the leg or groin during a fight. In the center of the slab was a round hole with a steel pin stretched across the interior diameter. The opening was about an inch and a half in diameter and held the butt of the fishing rod when it was in place. The pin accepted a groove in the base of the rod. The groove was a common feature found on offshore trolling rods, and it prevented the rod from rotating side to side when large amounts of pressure were applied, such as the activity involved in reeling in a big fish. This belt was worn around the waist, below the reel harness, and together they proved to be extremely effective for me.

The sea was relatively calm that day, a two-to-three-foot chop, not bad for a late-August sea. The sun illuminated the sky with its warm glow, making the journey a little more comfortable for me. The light always helped to give me strength, its unexplainable power invisible yet visible. You can't actually see light, but you know where it is when it's

there, and you can see its work—probably the single most important ingredient in life. I headed out to a fishing area known as the “Jackspot,” a small underwater hill on the sea floor where fish were known to congregate. Located some twenty miles from shore, it was one of the closest areas in which you might get a chance at a tuna or some sort of prized game fish.

An hour passed, and I had arrived at my destination, a little more comfortable with my excursion. Several commercial fishing boats were dragging their nets through the green rolling sea nearby as I put my lines out to begin trolling. Back and forth over the lump, I worked my boat in search of my quarry as I reflected on the events in my life over the last few months and the toll they had taken on me, how they had mentally incapacitated me at times, crippling me, my religious beliefs colliding with my incessant demands. Why did I really even want my arm back? For what reason should God return it? After an honest interrogation of the soul, I realized I only wanted my arm so I could continue on in my life right where I left off. There was no sense in lying to myself. I know myself too well. There was no sense in pretending I was going to change. The only love I knew and truly wanted existed right before my eyes. I had no knowledge of or use for the kingdom of heaven. Things had been great for me right here. Though I can’t say that this revelation regarding my desires pleased me, I knew it was true.

“ZZZZZZ” —my thought was broken by the telltale sound of line being pulled off the reel. I had a fish on. Scrambling for the rod, I attempted to clip my reel harness into the lugs on the reel. I fumbled with the clips on the harness for a moment or two and then just started cranking the rod right there in the rod holder where it sat, not wanting to lose the fish. The longer he was on the line in the water, the better chance he had of getting off. It wasn’t long before I had the fish at boat’s side. It was a false albacore tuna, maybe fifteen pounds. I just grabbed the leader and jerked the fish up over the side and into the boat, no need for the gaff. This species was not a respected catch by anyone, but it was the first fish I’d ever caught on the troll alone in the ocean, and into the fish box he went. I was going to eat that fish no matter what it tasted like.

Morning turned to afternoon without further event. The sea had turned to glass, and I was ready to call it a day, rolling up my lines and heading for shore. Content with my catch, humble at heart, I stopped my vessel when I was about halfway back, shut it off, and

paid homage to my God and His Son with a prayer, thanking them for this day. I had not done what I set out to do, but I had made some effort in this affair. I had done something other than cower in my bed. Returning to the helm, back to the west I went, trying to ignore a haunting voice whispering in the back of my mind, telling me to turn around and head east. A chill ran up my spine at the thought of doing this deed, and I knew my moment of brief celebration was over. The weight of conviction had returned.

After arriving back at the dock, I loaded my boat back on the trailer. Staring at it, I could not ignore the obligation that I had now bound to it, which was now more than I could endure. I set my sights on next year. “Perhaps my faith will have grown more by then,” I told myself. I wasn’t sure if this stance was procrastination, sense, or just a plain lie, but it put my soul to rest for the time being.

Several weeks of convalescence unfolded as September turned to October, and cowardice, fear, and failure had beaten me into a state of worthlessness such as I was unable to exist with. I was raised to never quit, never give up, and fight no matter the odds if what I was fighting was worth the pursuit. This world is a violent place. Perhaps it doesn’t have to be, but it is. And no matter how many sugar coatings you try to put on it, it’s still sour in the middle. You just can’t ever quit or give up or you will have nothing, not even your self-esteem. I could not bear to live any longer as a quitter or a coward. I must go and accept this challenge that was before me.

All that week, I honed my skills, pinpointing my weaknesses and strengthening them, abstaining from entertainment and outside influences, eating very little, engaging in deep prayer, and asking Jesus to let me believe in Him. There was no reason to ask for faith since I guess I really didn’t have belief, and you can’t have faith without belief—first things first. The night before the day I had prescribed for the execution of this quest, my campaign was in place, spirits were strong, and the truth was clear: I would rather be dead than go on a coward. If I died trying to prove my belief, then there never was anything to believe in. If I died trying to get a better understanding of God, then He certainly would be pleased that I tried, since it is said that the Lord hates a coward. And if everything that was written was true, I would have an arm. After going over all the facts, there really was no way to lose. Everybody dies sooner or later. I was a boy yesterday, a man today, and tomorrow I would be an old man. It all is over so quickly.

My spirit was weakest in the morning at dawn, when I would awaken, so I decided I would sleep at home and then make my journey to the beach in the twilight hours of the morning, giving myself some time to wake up and get my wits about me before I launched my boat and headed out to victory.

On the morning of October 6, 1994, at 2:37 a.m., I rose to fight, to shake off the chains of failure I had shackled myself to. I knelt down beside my bed, laid my head on the floor, and prayed the Lord's Prayer—and as always, I added, “and do not subject us to the final test.” With somewhat of a grin on my face, I knew this was going to be the day, not questioning myself and my actions, no judgments, just unstoppable determination. As Matthew 6:3 advises, don't let your left hand know what your right is doing. Not a thought of disenchantment was to be minded. Constant prayer repeated over and over in my head as I made my way through the frosty October morning toward my destiny. There was to be no more discussion on this matter, no turning back. Death before dishonor.

Beating down the pavement, closing the gap, success in the air, a hint of daylight on the horizon, soon I would leave the land, the safety of her solid surface, trading her sure footing for true matter. Just as soon as I had climbed into my truck to head to the beach, there I was, getting out, standing before the boat that took my arm and would take me to get it back. After hitching my truck up to the trailer, I jumped back in the cab, dropped the truck into gear, and hit the gas. The boat didn't budge; the brakes on the trailer were frozen, not allowing the boat to move. For a split second, I thought maybe God was just testing me to see if I would really go through with this, like when He tested Abraham with the sacrifice of his son. But that thought soon passed, and I knew this was just another barricade, a stumbling block. No, today was it, even if I had to drag this boat to the ramp with all the tires on the trailer locked up, squealing and smoking. Fortunately, behind the seat of the truck lay a can of lubricant. Seizing the can, I hosed down the brake drums, leaped back into the truck, and gave her the gas. The tires sank into the gravel driveway as they spun furiously, unable to break free the frozen hubs. My next move was putting the truck into reverse, and upon doing this, the hubs moved a little. Back and forth, I rocked the trailer with the truck—first gear, then reverse—until she broke free and rolled.

The sun had made its appearance on the horizon and was on its way up. It was maybe seven thirty. I only had one more stop, and that was for fuel. Then I would make my way to the water's edge.

On board the vessel were three gas tanks, a large one below deck that held about a hundred gallons and two portable tanks, one holding eight gallons and the other holding twelve gallons. I topped off the large tank and skeptically looked at the two portable ones. "If ya got three, ya gotta fill three. Ya gotta give it all ya got or ya might get nothin'." What's another twenty gallons further at this point?" That inner voice that could not be silenced or ignored in these matters made its opinion known, backing up its argument with the parable from Matthew 25:1–13, of the maidens with their lamp oil: Some took enough, others didn't, and those who didn't did not fare well. There was no room for failure in this matter; the two spare tanks were filled as well.

I had arrived at the threshold, the boat ramp, with the water before me, the challenge finally accepted. I launched the boat while constantly telling myself, "When the sun sets here today, I will have my arm and this burden lifted," never thinking of anything else, never thinking of failure, not the task at hand or how things would go, just the end result. The rest would take care of itself. The motors roared to life, how they seemed to long for this quest, like horses chomping at the bit, raring to go. Across the bay, past where this boat had taken my arm, under the drawbridge, and out through the inlet, I went into the great barrier that divided the lands, into the Atlantic, praying in between bursts of an almost maniacally insane chuckle I could not contain, spilling over with joy at the strength the Lord had bestowed upon me, the strength to do what I myself alone could not. The motors roared as I headed due east into the rising sun. The sea was calm, the air was now warming up, and I shed the sweatshirt I had on as I waited for the fuel to burn off. I had taken the VHF radio and life jackets off the boat so there would be no question of my sincerity and commitment.

Hour after hour rolled by as I tried to maintain my faith with prayer and aspiration. Land had long since disappeared on the horizon behind me. Every now and again, I would look back to see where the land used to be until it began weakening my spirit, crippling my hope, and feeding my fears until finally I decided there was no reason to look back anymore—its only value served not my purpose. Into the sun like a moth to the flame, I

rode to this new shore, to a shore that wasn't on any chart, to the final frontier. No rocket ships, no planes, no cars or trains, no ships, no tanks or guns could storm this shore. The flesh of man could overtake this kingdom. With man's vessels, he had already overstepped his boundaries on and around this earth, always the same result, always the same destruction, violence. Nothing ever changed; it just changed hands. Never happiness for more than a moment.

The ocean had slowly become coarse with an easterly breeze. I was now in a steep four-foot sea, which had caused me to reduce my rate of travel. The sun had moved well into the sky, and bright-blue water now slapped the bow of the boat and lay in the wake behind me. I was out in Gulf Stream blue water. I had been running for hours. There was no way I could make it back now even if I wanted to. I could not believe the gas had lasted as long as it had, and as I trekked farther into the deep blue waters, my faith was slowly being shaken. The reality of a cold watery grave was upon me. Thoughts of the comforting soil of solid earth were starting to take root, though onward I still proceeded. Despite my growing fears, I continued to progress. Not a boat had I seen in the blue water, nothing but the wind, waves, the sea grass, and the occasional sea bird. The shearwaters scouted the cobalt sea, searching for prey, and the Wilson's storm petrels flew back and forth across the bow, occasionally falling back to walk on the water. The indigenous petrel supposedly had a nickname that was derived from the name of Simon Peter the apostle, for the way they appeared to walk on the water. I wasn't sure exactly how these two were segued. Peter actually started to sink when he tried walking on water, and these little birds didn't. Anyway, that was just something I had heard.

After what felt like an eternity, the motors began to sputter until they died. The main tank was dry. I turned on the gas gauge, and it read empty. Advancing to the bow, I hooked up the eight-gallon can to the motors, squeezed the siphon bulbs till they were filled with fuel, returned to the helm, and went back to my fleece. Courage and cowardice rolled over me in waves, dividing my ambition. The sun had been on the down side in the sky now for a little while, evidence that it was going away as it always did, reminding me that it would be dark at some point today. I hoped when it did set, I would be on land.

The waves had grown scales as the wind slowly reviled its power. How powerful the wind, it blew its breath into the lifeless sea, giving the sea form and the power to move

about. Such an invincible power was the wind, completely invisible, no one had ever seen it, only its works. It was a welcome friend on a hot day, when it would dance with a leaf on a breeze, displaying its grace and kindness. But on a bad day, it snapped trees like toothpicks, made its mark in stone, and built mountains out of water. It could not be caught, contained, stopped, or reckoned with, making the earth and all its inhabitants subject to its power.

Traveling southeast, halfheartedly, my desires becoming uncertain, I continued to burn off the eight-gallon tank with reluctance. All distraction was now gone from my mind. I had complete clarity, not the slightest trace of anything except the moment, and nothing else existed. “What do you want? What have you come out here for?” a voice in my head asked as the motors once again sputtered to silence. I stood there thinking about the question, gazing around at the nothingness that surrounded me in this desperate land that was waiting to consume me hungrily. No lie could be spoken, no bravery or cowardice displayed, no acting, only the crisp, clean truth and nothing but. “I just want to go home, Lord. I just want to be back on dry, warm land. I have no other wish. I would like to have an arm, but that is of little importance to me right now.” Then, looking at the last tank, the last twelve gallons of the journey, I said, “Lord, I can go no further. I have come out to what most certainly will be my death, but I would rather die twelve gallons of fuel closer to land than go another step further into this abyss.” I then hooked up the final tank, squeezed the siphon bulbs, fired her back up, and turned the boat around, heading back into the sun, to the west, hoping maybe Jesus would take me back to the safety of the shore with this mere twelve gallons of fuel—kind of like when He multiplied the loaves.

Unfortunately, this did not happen, and unlike the fuel in the other tanks, which seemed to burn forever, this tank appeared to run dry in an instant. The moment of truth was upon me. Safety was now out of my hands (or hand, in this case). Though I had cast my bread upon the waters, I had not done it completely as I had said I would. The fear for my life had shaken my faith in the eleventh hour. Placing my last ounce of hope in the hands of my only resort, I humbly knelt down in the open bow of the boat and, with a ghost of a smile, prayed the Lord’s Prayer and said, “God, Jesus, I guess this is it. I truly have no way back. If You do not save me, I do not know what will happen. I have come out here, and I hope You will return me home before the sun sets. I need some gas.” Saying one last

“Our Father” and rising to my feet, I made my way to the fuel lines and hooked up the line to the main tank. I then squeezed the bulbs several times. With every squeeze, I could feel them get a little firmer until they were as hard as a rock—I HAD FUEL, I HAD FUEL. My bones were filled with joy for a brief moment until my skeptical thoughts had overcome them, thinking perhaps there was a little gas left sloshing around in the main tank, just enough to trick me. I returned to my position at the helm and fired her up. She roared to life, rejuvenating my hopes and happiness. Truly, this was a miracle. Throwing her into gear, I headed off into the afternoon sun, praying, praising Jesus and God for this divine intervention into the life of perhaps one of the worst men on earth.

The seas were beginning to subside, enabling the craft to run at full cruising speed as I raced to the west at around thirty-five knots toward dry land, to the only salvation I knew, spilling over with joy, hoping to beat the darkness that I knew was coming up behind me. I pondered the great gifts the Lord had given to me—the gift of my life, the deliverance from this wasteland, and perhaps the greatest gift, the gift of belief, the treasure of undoubted belief, one of the most important ingredients in faith. Without belief, it is impossible to have faith. How can you place your undoubting trust into something you don’t really know is even real?

Several hours into my return, the sun sinking, land made its grand appearance on the horizon. Its soft tan shore off in the distance never looked so inviting, though not a single structure except a lone lighthouse graced its soil. I knew I must have been south of Ocean City. Silhouettes of several fishing boats loomed in the distance, working the shoals off the beach in the now-glassy waters as I contemplated my position, trying to decide which direction to head to find an inlet to leave this ocean and this day behind me. Amidst my planning, calculating, and celebration, the unthinkable occurred: The vessel, once so full of life, sputtered and then sank into a silent slumber in the still waters of fate. Gripped with fear, panic, and paranoia, I scrambled to the fuel bulbs, squeezing them furiously without result, nothing but emptiness. There was no more fuel.

The last trace of hope whisked away with the unanswered prayers I pled to the Lord. “Maybe now I don’t need gas. Maybe now it will run on nothing,” I thought, in total desperation as I cranked and cranked the lifeless motors, over and over, like a paramedic performing CPR on a dead body, trying to bring it back to life. Slowly being reduced to

muttering profanity against the God I had just praised moments ago, I frantically scrambled about the vessel. My thoughts now in disarray, a mad man fit for the insane asylum, I began screaming at the top of my lungs for help from the boats off in the distance—the hell of my own construction consuming me like a snack. After finding some flares on board, I ignited one as I waved and screamed, hoping to gain some attention. I was now regretting all the trust I had placed in God and Jesus. “I trusted You, I believed in You, and this is how You treat one of Your followers? What good are You? I would be better off if I had died hours ago. Then this would all be over. All You want is to torment me.”

Time was spent howling and muttering profanity at the Lord, accompanied by cries for help at the fishermen until my voice went hoarse, the sun set, and the reign of darkness was enthroned. There I remained, pacing back and forth on the deck, muttering blasphemies to the Lord with what little sound I could muster, my head turned toward the deck, my eyes turned up, spewing all hell’s anger and accusation with my every action as the cold night slithered into my flesh. After denouncing my faith, I climbed into my sweatshirt and curled up on the deck. “The only companion I have is this growling in my belly and this thirst in my throat from where I trusted You enough not to take anything with me.” I had not had anything to eat or drink since the night before, and it was becoming quite evident. I charged the Lord with every accusation I could find as I lay there angrily, curled up in a ball in the cold, trembling, though this did not help or change my situation.

The boat lay motionless on the still sea as I fought for slumber, for some escape from this predicament, from this hopelessness. The only comfort to be found was from my lungs exhaling their warm exhaust onto my chest. I had tucked my head inside my sweatshirt to efficiently utilize my body’s heat, and I guess it was just enough because I slowly drifted off to sleep, into painlessness, away from this cursed abode, off into the land of fleshless existence—no law, no chores, and no responsibilities. So much could happen in dreams. You could see without your eyes, hear without ears, talk without speaking, all the senses in another form, in a form that could not be touched by anyone but yourself, freedom from everything but your soul.

After what was probably an hour or so, I awoke, returning to where I had left myself, in the ever-growing-colder night. Sounds from diesel engines hung in the air, making for pleasant company, as I sat perched upon the fish box centered in the front of my

boat, watching the fishing boats lit up like tiny cities off in the distance, working back and forth through the twilight hours, endlessly working to maintain man's existence, answering the call of the demanding master—the flesh we are all subject to, the same way Jesus had to, with the sweat of their brows. How I longed to be on one of those boats, working for the endeavor of the flesh right now, to be warm, my belly full, and content for the moment. But I had made my choice, and the decision could now not be changed. How stern and hard this God was. Taking into account all that had happened that day, as I sat there exhausted from my displays of anger, a little dazed from sleep and the lack of food, I began to make amends with Jesus and God, realizing that I wasn't in any real danger and I hadn't been harmed. The only thing I was really angry about was the fact that I couldn't call the shots, the fact that I thought things were going to go one way and they didn't, the fact that just because I believed something was true in my heart didn't make it true unless it really was true, and the fact that it wasn't going to be over until God said it was over. And God had not shared any of this information with me; I had assumed it. After digesting these truths, I knelt down and prayed to the God who had always been there for me, no matter what I had done to Him.

The night passed slowly, filled with restless sleep, shivering bones, and the occasional prayer as I stared at the night sky, searching for signs of the new day approaching, and checked to make sure I wasn't sinking. The moon shone brightly overhead and stars filled the sky as I waited to be delivered from the sea, hoping to either drift ashore or be discovered by another boat. Hour after hour went by until the glorious light made known it was on its way with its ever-so-pleasing rays warding off the darkness on the horizon. As welcome as this event was and as much as it stirred my heart and hope, the fatigue of the journey was greater than the joy of the sunrise, and back into slumber I slipped.

Sometime after I had passed out, my state of unconsciousness was shattered by the magnificent roar from the diesel engine of the fishing vessel that would be the first link in the chain of events of my rescue from this agonizing adventure. I sat up on the deck, peering over the side of my boat. A huge commercial fishing vessel sat idling off my starboard bow, and several puzzled fisherman lined up on the rail looking back at me.

“You having trouble?” one of the men yelled over the rumbling of the machinery. (No wonder they couldn’t hear me screaming over all the noise from their operation.)

“Yeah, I ran out of gas.” I kept my reply short, not wanting to go into any further details. The thought of telling anyone what I was really doing out here was scarier than the actual event.

The line of questioning proceeded from their deck. “What time did you break down?”

“Last night, right before dark,” I replied.

“You were out here all night?”

“Yeah.”

“Did you radio the Coast Guard?”

“No, I don’t have a radio on board.”

Their faces looked a little more puzzled. “What were you doing out here?”

“I was just taking one last cruise of the season before I put the boat up for the winter.” The lie rolled right off my tongue as I denied my Lord and waited to hear if a cock was going to crow at this point.

“We’ll radio the Coast Guard and give them your coordinates so they can come get you.”

“You hungry or thirsty?” one of the men asked.

“Yeah,” I responded.

One of the men disappeared from the deck and returned shortly with a bag of hot sausage biscuits and a jar of coffee, which they lowered down to me on a rope—one of the best meals of my life. Another man stepped out on the deck and yelled, “We contacted the Coast Guard, and they’re going to send out a boat with some gas. Put on a life jacket—it’s part of their rescue procedure.”

“I don’t have any on board,” I told them, yet another response that would lead into more confused expressions. These men must have thought I was the biggest fool in the world, but I would rather look like a fool at this point than appear completely insane—the world is more tolerant of fools than it is of religion. They threw me a life jacket, wished me luck, and then went back to work as I sat waiting for the Coast Guard and the next line of questioning and confusion that was on its way.

An hour or so had passed by when the Coast Guard arrived with a carbon copy of questions, followed by the same answers I had given to the men on the ship earlier. Their reaction was much the same. They brought with them two five-gallon cans of gas. We poured the gas into the boat's fuel tank. I primed the siphon bulbs, started her up, and headed for the Chincoteague Inlet, where I could refuel and then head back to Ocean City. I followed behind the Coast Guard vessel as we ran parallel down the beach toward the inlet. With another beautiful day, a calm sea, and the undisputed merriment of knowing I would be on land shortly, all the anger and fear of my "night at sea" became only a memory now. After clearing the inlet, we wound our way through the channel, and silence once again fell upon the motors—out of gas again. The small Coast Guard boat circled back around, noticing my progress had ceased. They threw me a line to tie off to the bow and informed me they would tow me the rest of the way in.

Arriving at the dock moments later, I celebrated my reunion with the earth, which I had been dreaming of since this journey began. It suddenly felt like it was truly over, with the safety of solid ground. I refueled my boat, answered a few more questions while they filled out a rescue report, and then fired up my boat and headed for home. I traveled back to Ocean City through the comfort of the back bay's calm isolated waters, protected by the barrier island, thinking about what had happened, how fortunate I was to have made it back, and how an arm didn't seem that important anymore, vowing not to tell anyone what had really gone on. There is such a fine line between insanity and religion, and those in charge of defining it rarely know the first thing about God. Man wants so badly to come up with his own explanations for things with his microscopes, telescopes, probes, and potions, but he can only study matter with these tools. He can't study its intent, and some things you can't understand if you are not willing to accept where they have come from.

Making my way through the bay, nearing Ocean City, I approached the end of the channel, which emptied out into the harbor on the south end of the town. As I entered into the harbor, there were several directions that could be taken. One veered off to the right, which could take me out the Ocean City Inlet. As I passed through this intersection, that horrible voice with its relentless persistence invoked its spine-tingling demands: "Go back out and finish what you started. Get it over with. You're not done yet." Not even responding with thought to this invocation, completely ignoring this insane proposal, I

continued on to the boat ramp to where I had left my truck. I did not care if I ever set foot on a boat again. I had had enough.

As I lay in bed the following day, browsing the scriptures of the New Testament, the meaning of Matthew 7:2 jumped out and hit me: Judge not the Lord or you will be judged, and what you measure out will be measured back to you. I had turned back from my goal with twelve gallons of fuel left, and when the Coast Guard rescued me, they brought ten gallons of gas, not quite enough, and I would be willing to bet anything, exactly two more gallons of fuel would have landed me right at the dock. My own prejudice, my own judgment, that flaw in every man and woman that is the architect of our demise—my judgment had once again misled me. Trusting my feelings instead of trusting the words of Jesus had once again proven their power of deception, causing me to break the commitment I had made with the Lord, to do what I had said I would do, and the result of this detour had landed me in a bad situation, like Peter losing faith and sinking when Jesus told him he could walk on water.

Everything this world had taught me about matter really didn't matter when it came to God and faith. It was just a facade to elude me from my goals, to divide me from the truth, to strengthen my fears. Prejudice has so many faces, and every human being that walks this earth is filled with it, and is steered by it, and most don't even know it, from happiness through wealth, to the appearance of men, the beauty of women, fame and fortune. Though I did not gain an arm on this quest, a little more wisdom was acquired, not that I wanted it, but there it was, a lesson learned at the price of pain. Sirach 2:1 says Jesus told us to be prepared for trials when we come to serve the Lord (Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition, RSVCE),¹ and although I was really just trying to serve myself a helping of some of the Lord's power, this passage seemed to have some relevance here. God was stern when it came to the truth and judgment. He would not budge an inch with His law, the only true law, and there were no exceptions, no matter how much screaming, yelling, cursing, or begging you did. The truth would not be bent, though His patience for teaching seemed limitless if you were willing. He would work with you until you got it right.

¹ The Revised Standard Version of the Bible: Catholic Edition, copyright © 1965, 1966 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Chapter 3

Mountains

Fall turned to winter. The meaninglessness of daily life without a goal, a purpose, or a mission had returned, one day spilling into the next until my desire to separate myself from failure began rekindling my passion to achieve what I had set out to do. Reevaluating my strategy, studying Jesus's life, His words, and His actions, I noticed that He went out into the desert for forty days and forty nights before any miracles were performed through Him. Perhaps the quick fix I wanted was going to take some time, maybe forty days, and maybe I had to learn the responsibility and discipline that went along with power such as faith. Not having access to a desert where I could hang out undisturbed for a long period of time, I set my sights on the Appalachian Trail, the closest secluded spot I could think of.

In the middle of January 1995, I set out to accomplish what I had started so many months back, my plan laid out and my courage strong. A friend and I were returning from Florida. My friend knew nothing of my plans, and I didn't think it necessary to inform her until the last minute that I would not be riding all the way back to Northern Virginia with her. There was no sense in traveling twelve hours in a truck with someone who thought you were insane when you could spare them the discomfort that accompanies strange and bizarre behavior and any discussion of it.

I never spoke to anyone about what my plans were on matters involving my beliefs or the strengthening of my faith. I sometimes wondered if anyone really believed in Jesus as I did or trusted Him to do what He claimed, and there was no reason to start an argument over these things. These decisions were my own to make, and who was to argue with what Jesus said anyway. Everything was said very plainly.

The pavement rolled by under the wheels of my truck in the cold January night as we approached my unannounced route change. As I veered off the highway and onto the exit ramp, I informed her that I wasn't going back with her tonight and that I wanted her to

drop me off in the mountains at Skyline Drive (a state park in the Appalachian Mountains). She had a puzzled look about her but didn't say anything.

An hour or so after our route change, I was greeted by darkness and the frigid winter mountain air as I stepped out of the truck and onto the pavement of the parking lot at Skyland—a park facility, now closed for the season, located in the national park of Skyline Drive. Fumbling through my suitcase, I extracted some winter garments I had packed for the trip and stuffed them into a green trash bag: long underwear, two sweatshirts (one with a hood and one without), two pairs of wool socks, and a hat. I said goodbye, pretending like this was something I wanted to do, turned away from the truck, and started to head off.

“Hey, don't forget your wallet,” she said. I hadn't wanted to take that life jacket, but now I didn't have a choice. I couldn't let her think I was going to walk around with no money. She'd be liable to call someone to stop me. I guess it really didn't matter if I had money or not since there was no place to spend it up here this time of the year. I took my wallet.

I stood watching as the taillights of my truck disappeared around the winding turns, slithering off into the darkness. Chuckling, I thought to myself, “I did it. I made the first step toward the execution of my plan.” These escapades seemed like just worthless daydreams in their gestation period, but once they started to happen, to become real, they were a glorious thing, even if it meant being stranded in the mountains in the middle of winter at midnight. Though I can't say I would have considered this the environment of my choice, or how I envision a peaceful setting, I can say that there was no place I felt I needed to be more than right here, right now, with a purpose—cowardice and fear far behind.

Walking over to the curb in front of the dormant building that was the Skyland lodge, I geared up for the night's events, putting on the layers of clothing I had brought to insulate me from the cold of the season. The night was cold but docile as I headed south along the side of the parkway, which ran through the trees of the forest that covered the hills, their now-barren branches stretched like thin, bony, scraggly fingers up into the clear night sky, illuminated by the glowing moon.

I swam my way through time, one step after the other, watching the breaths of steam rolling out of my mouth, listening to the occasional stirring of leaves by the creatures in the woods, perhaps deer, squirrels, or birds, doing whatever it is they do to survive. The

hike had warmed my body enough to where if I didn't shed some clothing, I would be sweating profusely, so I removed my hat and one sweatshirt, and then traveled on. I had planned to sleep at a place in the park called "Hawksbill." I had been there when I was younger and remembered that there was a stone shelter perched atop that pinnacle, which I thought would make for a comfortable stay for the night before I picked up the Appalachian Trail—running right through Hawksbill—in the morning.

Arriving at the Hawksbill parking area, shortly after embarking on my journey, I said goodbye to the luxury of the paved road and stepped into the woods, onto a gravel and dirt trail. Hawksbill was the highest point in the park and could not be reached by car, only by a hiking trail that wound up the side of the mountain. The trail was about a mile long, and it twisted and turned as it made its way to its destination. Roots and rocks protruded from its steep incline, a far cry from the smooth, clean surface of the parkway. The additional effort required to travel this path caused me to perspire under the insulation of all my clothing. The body never quits doing its thing, such an efficient machine, cooling itself, warming itself, defending itself from the forces on this earth. It has so many chores, this great machine we all must exist in or else not exist, passed down in a seed and then constructed with the same components, the same atoms, elements, and compounds as the earth, the same solids, liquids, and gases.

No sooner had I shed another layer of clothing than the peak where Hawksbill resided came into sight. I could hear the earth breathe its breath across the mountaintop, rustling the branches on the trees now whispering the tales of torment to come. The wind was coming from a westerly direction, and until now the mountain had been shielding me from the wind's harsh currents. Much to my discontent, the hope of a semi-comfortable night's stay, under a roof, was dwindling rapidly.

Arriving at the stone shelter, standing right where I remembered it so many years ago, I flopped down my trash bag of clothes while overlooking the frigid concrete floor that graced this structure, its surface now plagued with puddles of water scattered about it. I guess the fact that they weren't frozen should have cheered me up, but it was of little consolation at this point. I would have gladly traded a few lower degrees for a silent night. The shelter stood made of stone, consisting of three walls, a roof, and a concrete floor. Unfortunately, the wall that was missing was the only one I needed: the west wall. The

wind howled straight into the structure as I attempted to make the best of things, putting on every piece of clothing I had. I said a few prayers and curled up in a dry spot on the floor as nature jogged my memory of the cold night I had spent on the boat. I was, however, glad I wasn't stranded in a completely unpredictable environment such as the sea. The wind howled at my back as I twisted and contorted on the slab, desperately seeking slumber, though finding none.

Perhaps an hour or two had passed, and it had become quite evident that there was no sleep to be had here unless you were dead. I rose to my feet and headed back down the trail I had so recently ascended, hoping to find somewhere to get some rest. The Appalachian Trail would have to wait till later, when there was daylight. I descended down the trail from Hawksbill and returned to the pavement heading south, the wind only a memory now that I was back on the east side of the mountain. I crept through the night, onward, thinking and walking, the usual tone and routine, not too exciting, not too torturous.

I had traveled five or six miles when I came upon Big Meadows visitor center, a small complex resting on the edge of a field. Several buildings were grouped together in man's image, that is to say, how man pictured them in his mind and then formed them from the components of the earth, making them a reality—the same procedure through which all that is created comes about. Everything is so similar, with different levels of complexity. Stalking the facility for any sign of inhabitants, I peered in the windows of the scarcely lit buildings that appeared to be closed for the season. After scouring the compound, I found a nook between a wall and an out-of-service soda machine that would serve as my oasis for the remainder of the night. I tucked into the nook, out of the sight of a first glance if someone were to patrol the facility. I sat down, my back against one wall, my head leaning against another, and traipsed in and out of slumber. It was the first hint of unconsciousness I had seen in about twenty-four hours. Hard to believe I was just in warm, sunny Florida the last time I went to sleep.

Man has come a long way with his inventions, traveling to wherever he wants in mere hours, transmitting information and entertainment through thin air. So much has transpired here on earth over the years, and who can really say if these things are good or

bad? Certainly, I love the comfort and companionship they offer, but what is to be the outcome from their existence?

The damp, cold, lonely night seemed to last forever, broken only by prayer, thoughts of happier times, and intervals of sleep filled with restless dreams, dreams so real I hardly knew if I was asleep or not.

As the first signs of light made their way through the thick, dense fog that had settled in, I embarked once again on my journey. As I traveled south, I could hear the sounds of deer hoofs on the paved road ahead, though the fog was too thick to see them with anything other than my ears. The wondrous human body with its so many senses, all capable of pleasure and torment, could be such a double-edged sword. All I have learned in my life has been taught to me through these senses, and all my life, I have been held prisoner through these senses, all the pleasures and all the pains, black and white, hot and cold, fresh and rancid, harmony and caterwaul, acids and bases, good and evil. The power of the flesh is so strong and so clever when it comes to its matters; it's hard to see through the fog, its arguments very strong, its education very stern. There is so much to learn in this world, so many schools, so much struggling to understand things to be able to survive, and nothing is given up without a fight.

From the time we are born, the information man has gathered through the centuries is passed down to us in hopes life will be better, through mathematics, language, science, history, and religion. Your interests lead you to your schools, and the school that now held my interests was the Catholic Church, for what I was seeking was said to be only possible by the power of God. I stuck with the church I was brought up to believe in because Jesus plainly declared in Matthew 16:18–19, “That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church . . . and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Since Peter was the one who built the Catholic Church and his body is buried under the Vatican, I was pretty sure I had gone to the right place; this was where Jesus said to go to be saved. I fortunately was raised in this church and did not have to change my Christian faith, unlike my mother and her family, who changed from Baptist to Catholic later in life. I only had to change everything else in my lifestyle so I could actually act as a Christian. Just because someone

gives you a car doesn't mean you know how to drive it—it is useless for what it was intended for if you simply show it off in your driveway and never move it.

I was no stranger to the “extreme.” Whatever I committed to, I would allow it to consume me. I had a horrible drug problem in the mid- to late eighties, and cocaine found me sitting around waiting on it. There are many ways things enter into our minds, and TV is one among the many. I typically did not watch a lot of TV during that point in my life, as life was more entertaining than TV ever could be; however, there had been a tremendous amount of advertising about a special investigative report that was coming up on a popular TV show, titled “48 Hours on Crack Street.” I have to believe, to most people, this was a look into the crack epidemic and the culture it had spawned, a firsthand look into the latest plague to sweep the nation; to me, someone who loved crack, this was to become a travel guide. I remember seeing the reporter standing on the side of a New York street, reaching down into the gutter, and coming up with handfuls of empty crack vials, claiming that you could buy enormous amounts of crack for very little cash. They had my full attention, and I knew I needed to head north, where the streets were paved with crack. I can only assume that the majority of the people who viewed this program were probably in shock and awe that drug use and abuse was that extreme in the Big Apple and in our great nation; however, if you're part of the drug problem, it looked like the place to be. The wheels in my mind turned quickly and without resistance. After about an hour of watching the program, I had a plan to go to New York. Later, I had conversations with a few of my buddies, and it was decided, I would skip out of school the following Friday, pick them up as soon as they could get out of work, and head to New York, where we would bask in an “all-we-could-smoke crack fest”—thank you very much, television, you were entirely to blame for this field trip.

Friday finally rolled around after days of anticipation. God only knows what lie I told my folks as to where I was going, but it definitely was not the truth. They were not going to be able to handle the truth: “See you all Sunday night. Heading to New York to smoke crack for the weekend. It's dirt cheap up there.” That was not going to be uttered from my lips. It is amazing the lies that will come out of someone's mouth when they want something they are forbidden to have but are going to do everything in their power to try to

get regardless. I don't know if my folks believed a thing I told them at that point in my life, but that didn't stop me from pouring out the lies—standard protocol at this point. I recall my dad saying at one point to me, “Do you even know how to tell the truth?”

I skipped out of school around lunch on our appointed day, my bags already packed and loaded into the car. I then picked up the other two members of the party who would accompany me on this magical trip to crack town. I picked them up where they were patiently waiting for me at the one's mom's house, where he lived. We had one last quick stop left at the bank so they could cash their paychecks from that week; I had already secured my financial provisions earlier. I had saved thousands from roofing all summer and on weekends. Roofing was a trade that was so brutal a young man could make fast money legally because not many people could handle the physical demand it placed on your body, and not many wanted anything to do with it for obvious reasons. We all roofed. The other two had just dropped out of school to do it full time, but my folks wouldn't allow me to drop out and continue to live at home, so I stuck it out in school against my wishes. Roofing was one of the hardest ways to earn a dollar, which would make you think we would have known the value of a dollar better than most. Unfortunately, when you work that hard, you have to play hard if you want to escape the nightmare you have become entangled in. It was a vicious cycle.

We all hear from our folks, peers, and society (publicly) our entire lives, from the time we are born until we die, about how bad drugs are, but the truth is, a huge portion of the world is on one kind or another, from cigarettes to pharmaceuticals. And they don't do them because they don't work—they work phenomenally. The repercussions are the problem, and every drug has them, unfortunately leaving you worse than you were before you partook of them. I couldn't stand it when all the anti-drug campaigns would come out and try to scare you into not doing drugs because you weren't going to have a good time. That was the biggest load of shit they ever tried to feed us. You were going to have incredible experiences; however, they were not wrong about the price you would pay. In fact, they were probably way low on that estimation. The price was always more than you could afford, and it was going to cost everything you had plus some. The greater the experience, the more you were going to pay. (I am still paying thirty years later.)

We got on the Capital Beltway, headed for Interstate 95 to New York, loaded with great expectations. Five hours from now, if everything went according to plan, our ears would be ringing from the seductive fumes of the glass pipe. We started the journey with a joint of weed we passed around, something to pacify us until we could get to the main attraction. We had almost gotten to Baltimore when a cheesy-looking dude pulled up next to us as we were doing seventy miles per hour on the highway and yelled for me to roll down the window.

“You all want to buy some acid?” he yelled.

“Yeah,” I responded.

He motioned for me to pull over on the shoulder. We both pulled over and got out on the side of I-95 north and proceeded to negotiate a drug deal in broad daylight, all of us looking seedy as hell—it was a wonder we had managed to remain in the free world as long as we had. The guy opened his conversation with, “I was driving by you all and saw that you had a boom box with a power cord plugged into your cigarette lighter just like I have, and I thought to myself, ‘Hey, I bet those guys want to buy some acid.’” Well, he was right. We never turned it down.

The drug world was extremely bizarre, with weird things occurring constantly. What were the odds of getting pulled over on an interstate and being sold LSD?

“What do you have?” we asked.

“I can only sell you ten hits. It’s globe acid.”

“We will take all of it,” we said. We had all taken this brand before, and it was never bad. Acid was definitely one of those drugs that a lot of people would try to rip you off with because it looked just like paper with some kind of print on it (globe acid had a print of Earth on it), and there was no way to tell if it was good until you ate it. And then it took about an hour before you knew whether it was good or not, so it was easy to rip someone off. We bought the ten doses for about thirty dollars, parted ways with this stranger with candy, and got back on our quest for cheap crack, all in agreement that we would not eat the acid until the trip to New York was over. We just could not pass up the opportunity to acquire some acid.

I don’t remember how long it takes to get from Baltimore to Philadelphia on I-95, but that was as long as we could sit in the car without eating any of the acid. “We’ll just

each eat half a tab. That way we won't be too fucked up to buy crack"—once again, we were all in agreement that it was a good idea. We each dropped a half a hit as we headed to the "Big Apple" on our last leg of the journey, with snow flurries starting to fall in the winter afternoon as visions of crack rocks danced in our heads. Obviously, looking back on this, I can recognize that there were serious issues with our group's idea of a good time, between the complete disregard for common sense and decency, and the fact that there was no line that couldn't be crossed. When we descended on the city in the early evening, flurries still falling, we were starting to trip. This was definitely good acid.

The combination of media influence and now LSD had me believing that you could acquire crack anywhere and everywhere in this city. I had been under the impression that it was going to be very easy to find, maybe even with free maps to help tourists find crack easily, available from a crack welcome center. But that was not the case. There were no road signs that said "Crack Street." This was not the way to start out our crack vacation—we could not even do drugs right. We drove around on the highways until we saw a sign for Brooklyn. We had all heard of Brooklyn, so we made our way off the highway.

Descending on the streets of Brooklyn, beneath the L train tracks, we saw a white guy standing on the corner in front of a little convenience store, burning a box. This looked like someone who could help with our quest. As we pulled over to the curb, the man approached us before we could say anything, and in a very heavy New York accent, he began his sales pitch. "You all want to buy some weed? I got dimes, quarters, and if you want to talk quantity, I got ounces." We engaged in brief conversation after his pitch. I don't remember exactly what words were exchanged other than him saying, "Hey, you guys are from Jersey, aren't you?" I remember that seeming completely ridiculous, as we were all from Virginia and definitely did not have New Jersey accents. As it was with everyone we came in contact with and were solicited by on this trip, we bought some of his wares, a quarter ounce to be exact.

After the purchase of the weed, we presented our inquiry regarding obtaining some crack. "Hey, you know where we can get some crack?" It was very straightforward, to the point.

"You don't want to mess with that crack. You'll steal from your family. Stick with the weed," he responded.

“Do you know where we can get some,” we asked again.

He told us to try looking in some place I had not heard of before, nor was I in any condition to remember, rendering that portion of the conversation useless. As we pulled away from the curb with another addition to our collection in what was turning into an illegal drug shopping spree, he was rambling off what apparently were hours of operation for his weed business that he was running on that particular corner.

As the snow flurries fell and darkness descended on the city, we scurried about in the little Toyota hatchback, searching for this crack that was said to be plaguing the town. I have no idea how we ended up in Times Square, but there we were, tripping on acid, surrounded by what appeared to be a huge, open-air drug venue, just as TV had told us. The indigenous populates knew exactly why we were there as they surrounded the car, each one jockeying for a position at a window, with hopes of getting their foot in the door so as to close a deal, trading one desire for another. “Two for twenty, workin’ fifties,” they barked—the generic crack sales pitches you typically hear in this situation.

We started extracting a few twenties from our pockets as we proceeded to make all the mistakes of an open-air drug buy from strangers—taking the LSD was not a wise decision. As a rule, you never buy crack without checking it out carefully, and if you’re dealing with someone who will not let you check it out, then it probably is junk. It was not uncommon to have people try to pawn off pieces of peanuts or macadamia nuts, or in this case some sort of hard bread. We shelled out about sixty dollars as the rear passenger door was opened from the outside by a black man who proceeded to jump in the car, yelling, “You all are buying bread. You’re buying bread. Drive the fuck out of here.”

I pulled away, shaking off the salesmen, leaving them in the rearview, as we were now faced with an additional passenger we knew nothing about, other than his probable crack problem and no way to feed it.

“That’s bread. You all just bought bread. That shit ain’t real,” he said, appearing to be almost frustrated, as if it was his money that had been lost.

I did not know what to believe. Was this guy telling the truth, or was he attempting to trick us into thinking that what we had just bought wasn’t real so he could try to take it and smoke it? I was not in a good position to try to sort out what was going on here, and the acid was making me paranoid. Not wanting to take any chances on being fooled, I

attempted to smoke what did turn out to be something other than crack, with no entertaining value other than perhaps asphyxiation.

“You all wanna get real high, I’ll hook you up. I just got out of Rikers today,” the black man of about forty years of age, with a scar on his cheek, who had let himself into our car said as he held up his prison release papers like some sort of credential. (Rikers Island is a prison in New York.) Under normal circumstances—that is, not being under the influence of LSD—this man would never have gotten into our car, much less be riding around with us. We weren’t the sharpest tools in the shed, but we weren’t normally this stupid. He made idle conversation as he gave us directions to where we were to take him so we could finally get what we were after. We ended up at some sort of general store, where he asked us to give him some money so he could get some crack, which he would bring back to us. I don’t remember how much we gave him at that time, maybe a hundred dollars. He left the car and went into the store, and we sat there, all thinking, “How stupid are we? We just gave some black dude a hundred bucks, and we will never see him again. He will probably go out the back door.”

After ten minutes or so, much to our surprise, he came back out, carrying a boom box, and got back in the car. He pulled a small bottle of apricot brandy out of his pocket, offered us a sip, and started rambling about his idea of how this night was going to go. I can’t remember exactly what he said, but there was talk of getting “real high” and “do you all like the Whispers?” (The Whispers are apparently a musical group, and he had just purchased one of their tapes for his newly acquired boom box.) He took it upon himself to start playing his tape and then pulled out a plastic bag with a few of the “as seen on TV” crack vials filled with crack. We found it, thank you very much, *60 Minutes*—from television to reality.

Not really knowing what to do at this point, we continued to follow the instructions of our new “crack” tour guide in hopes things would turn out well. He gave directions as I drove to the destination of his choice, the destination where we would finally get down to business. As I drove, he and the other member of our original party now riding in the back with him started to smoke some crack. I could hear him whispering, “We gonna get real high,” to the other passenger, almost like they were conspiring to have a separate party

excluding the people in the front of the car. Once again, taking LSD and trying to do any type of calculation was hopeless if you actually expected any kind of result.

When we finally were informed that we had arrived at our destination, we were at Central Park. After pulling over on the edge of the road, in a dimly lit area, we all finally got what we were after. Smoking crack was probably one of the most pathetic things in the world (not that taking LSD was brilliant), sitting around impatiently waiting your turn to experience a fleeting moment of ecstasy in exchange for your, health, money, and soul, your brain releasing intense sensations throughout your body just before it leaves you in a state of desolation.

Every drug has its own lie it tells, and they all sound so sweet in the beginning. Looking back, I think the thing I hated the most about cocaine (snorting it, smoking it, or shooting it) was the complete bullshit that poured out of people's mouths, mine included, when they were on it, the big plans they had, their ingenious ideas that were going to change the world for them and those around them, and all the "I love you's," when the bottom line was, not a damn thing was going to get done other than more cocaine. And when the coke ran out, so did the love. You would steal from your brother if you had to, to get more. Cocaine was truly a disgusting and fruitless spell.

We each took a turn on the pipe until it was gone. Then it was time to go get more. We had not done but a couple hits each at this point, and the intense power of the cocaine had dulled the buzz from the acid just a bit. I pulled away from the curb, listening for direction as we headed to our next stop. We had not traveled very far when I was instructed to pull over again, followed by the request for more money to be handed over so he could go get more crack for us from the apartments we were parked near. For whatever ridiculous reason, we gave him a pile of money. I don't remember exactly what it was, at least five hundred dollars, but he took the money and disappeared into the night. We sat there in the dark, in the car, waiting, now wondering if this guy was going to return or if we had been ripped off. Looking back on this now, we were so pathetic. He probably would have been doing us a favor by ripping us off.

When things were really starting to look bleak, much to our surprise, he came back out of the shadows of the cold winter night. I could not believe how gullible we were to trust this guy to come back, yet he did, and with a big bag filled with crack vials, just like

the ones on TV. “We gonna get real high, and get some girls, and get a motel room and party,” he said to us. This definitely was not in the plans, nor did we have any interest in hanging out with this guy any longer. We just needed to get the rocks and ditch this guy—the rocks we had already paid for that he was holding. The next half hour or so was spent with the stranger and the one member of our party in the back seat with him doing a few hits while I navigated the streets of New York City to what ended up being the “Harlem Motel.” I knew absolutely nothing about New York except what we have all heard from TV, and that is, if you are white, you don’t belong in Harlem.

I parked the car as instructed as he wove some tale that we had no choice but to believe at this point. As we informed him we needed to get on our way soon, he got out of the car and said he would be right back. Then he went into the only building on the street that wasn’t boarded up, the “Harlem Motel.” We sat there in the car like a bunch of rubes, still tripping on acid, the snow falling, and the occasional blacks that inhabited the streets there looking at us completely bewildered as they passed by our car. Time ticked on as people came and went from the motel, a very industrious establishment for late-night customers, although our guy never came back out.

After sitting there for close to an hour, we were pretty sure it was over. Our conversation had turned to what we were going to do to him if we found him as we got out of the car and approached the entrance to the motel. The snow fell, illuminated by the pinkish hue of the sodium street lights, as three lost souls stood in front of a building they would never enter, unable to completely accept the fact that they had been ripped off. We had practically forced him to rip us off in the state we were in. Who plans to go buy drugs somewhere they have never been, in what could be a hostile environment, from people they don’t know, and eats acid on the way there? After standing out front of the motel for thirty minutes as the passersby steered clear of us while they gazed upon us as though there was something seriously wrong with these three white boys standing on the streets of Harlem in the middle of the night, we returned to the car. This trip was over, and it was time to head home with what little money we had left.

I attempted to find my way out of the city as one member of our party tore up our street map and threw it out the window after growing tired of listening to the self-appointed navigator try to read the map while still tripping. We finally found our way to I-95 south

and eventually made it to Ocean City, Maryland, where the remainder of the weekend would be spent consuming the last of the LSD and then drinking tequila until we all threw up and passed out. As an adult, looking back, I don't even know what I thought I would accomplish or why I did anything I did, perhaps for the same reason people watch horror movies.

I think everyone who ends up using drugs has their own reasons for why they do them. There is something in their lives that they cannot deal with or come to terms with, something missing or something they can't get rid of, and before they know it, they have been sucked into a world that does offer some form of consolation as well as intense entertainment and adventure. I think I probably started, as so many do, to be accepted by the people I thought were cool so that I could be cool, and I think the abuse began because my existence as a youth seemed completely hopeless, and drugs definitely take you out of this world for a price.

My teenage years were horrible. I was a lanky kid with terrible acne and a big nose. I had a strict old man who put up with zero shit at home, who only said no to anything I wanted to do, which forced me to have to sneak around and lie a lot to get what little freedom I could. I could maybe blame my dad for my desire to escape reality, but I may also have just been a bad kid who was using someone else as an excuse for my actions. I don't know, and it really didn't matter at this point because here I was, and once you bite that apple, everything changes—you have now been introduced to your new friends who hold great powers.

Matthew 12:43–45 says something like, when an evil spirit leaves someone, it goes out of that person and travels around in arid places, looking for rest. When it can find none, it decides to go back to the person it left. Finding that person in order when it returns, it goes and gets seven more spirits worse than itself and returns to the person, and then their condition is worse than before.

That definitely sums up the drug world pretty well, and I followed that path like a rat behind the piper, of my own will, and my condition got worse and worse. Could I blame these “evil spirits” if I could prove their existence, or should I have just simply had enough discipline to have never let them in in the first place? If they never come in, you will never know them, so they can't go out and get seven of their brood to come back to continue to

work on you. As discomfoting as it is to have to bear the burden of guilt, we have no one to blame for our actions but ourselves. This, too, can be something very hard to come to terms with. Many people seek out counseling just to try to have someone tell them, “It’s not your fault,” or, “You are a victim,” when the truth is, it really is your fault. You may not have intended for things to end up the way they did, and you may not have been able to handle a feeling that you had, but you are definitely guilty. The only consolation is, you are not alone. Everyone has some horrible sin, and they all feed each other. Some just refuse to accept this, and ignorance is no excuse. This world is a festering cesspool of feelings and emotions that are constantly trying to take root.

Who is to blame here for this epic crack journey I went on, the drug manufacturers, the dealers, television, or me? I can tell you that I didn’t do drugs because of TV, but the only reason I went to New York was because of TV. I wonder if that program helped one single person. I would guess it did not change anything for the better. It just gave most of us believable entertainment from the comfort of our sofas for an hour and something to talk about for a few more hours, basically watching the horrors of addiction, watching real people, foaming at the mouth, as they destroy themselves and areas of a city that have been designated for this type of behavior. After all, that is what our hearts desire. If it wasn’t, it wouldn’t be here.

Cocaine, when smoked or shot, is a conquering, mindless rush of euphoria that knocks out any other emotion, thought, or trace of reality for a few brief moments as you desperately trade anything and everything at your disposal, from your money to your morals, to maybe even your soul, all just to visit this deceptive state of bliss that this chemical concoction delivers, this glorious spell that aggressively assaults you and your very existence while it entertains you in ways nothing else can—supercharged consciousness. The unfortunate companions of this drug are the brutal demands it has and the authority it possesses to enforce these demands. It will and does take every dollar you have until you have no more. It will have you defile and disgrace yourself for the pleasure of others in exchange for more, and it will leave you so depressed and desolate when the music is over that you may even take your own life. Regardless of all this, it is so powerful that those who indulge in it worship it by devoting every moment of their existence, scheming how to get more when they are not currently indulging in it at that

moment. I had gone to the extreme with this false prophet, as I would with so many others during that period of my life. Some memories you just wish you could erase. Unfortunately, that part of my life is something I probably will never forget, not even when walking around in the mountains in the middle of winter.

The day passed uneventfully, mile after mile, periods of damp, dismal fog briefly interrupted by scattered sun and scattered thought. Around noon, as I was walking, a police car pulled up behind me in the usual fashion—lights flashing, the signal to comply or run, because you're going to be accused or suspected of something. I chose to comply and stood there waiting as he got out of his car and approached me, all the while knowing I was going to have to go through the formality of the generic questioning that accompanies all police interactions. I had no reason to put up any resistance. I had done nothing wrong.

“What are you doing up here? Can I see some ID?” He rambled off exactly what I knew he would.

I explained I was simply on a hike through the park and nothing more as I pulled my wallet from the trash bag that held my belongings and displayed my driver's license, which bore the number that stood for me—you can't go anywhere without it. The government needs to keep track of all its subjects. The officer told me to wait there, and he returned to his car to run my number. I was no stranger to the police and had my share of problems with them some years ago, nothing too serious, mostly good times gone bad. He returned from his computer check, handed me my identification card, milled around in my bag, told me to stop at the ranger station up ahead and get a hiking permit, and went on his way.

The world is filled with soldiers of every kind, fighting for whatever they believe in or whoever feeds them the best. On earth, a town, city, or country could not stand or exist without a military or they would be defeated by ones who were more powerful—the strongest rule, a true competition. One, whoever could defeat you on this earth, would make you subject to their laws, their wishes, or else you'd suffer the consequences imposed by them. From the schoolyard bully to the greatest army, one will do just about anything for their life. There are many strategies, so many tactics, and so many beliefs, twisted and polished as need be. The kings of the earth conquered countries through bloodshed,

through the mortality of the flesh, through wielding the power of fear for one's life or the pains they might inflict on one's flesh, and those who lived in those kingdoms traded with that conquering ruler's currency, with what the kingdom told them was of value, with what the kingdom told them to observe. If you bought land instead of conquering it, in order to acquire it, you paid for that land with the currency observed by the ruler of the kingdom in which the land resided, and even though you purchased the land, you were still subject to the power (the king) and paid taxes to him and abided by his laws, and those who did not abide by what the king proclaimed felt his wrath if they could not overcome him. The world is such a big picture, and it's so hard to see it all, though it is sometimes easier to see things when you are alone and can get away from others and all the distractions we have created.

I could see the sun through the clouds high overhead when I arrived at the ranger station at Swift Run Gap, another location in the park. I had gone about twenty-six miles since I started, since I got out of the truck last night, and fatigue was now starting to set in. The bottoms of my feet were sore, my legs were tired, and the temperature was dropping. My thoughts were now turning toward abandonment of this trip, for this was no place to learn about anything except pain. I stood there at the intersection of the parkway and Route 33, contemplating whether to hike down to the nearest town and go home or continue on. My lack of effort at this point and time was too much to bear, and I decided to stick it out until I reached the end of the park some forty miles ahead. I figured I could arrive there in about thirty-six hours if everything went well. The ranger station I was told to check in at sat right off the side of the parkway, and after some brief self-deliberation, I chose not to check in for a hiking permit. I didn't feel like talking to anyone about anything, and there was no need to waste any time when I could be getting nearer to my destination. I also did not want to take a chance of backing out. My mind was very clever when it came to excuses, as many are. If I let myself have an opportunity to get out the easy way, I would usually take it, convincing myself it was the right decision, though over the years, I had noticed success was never achieved with this approach. I recognized the obstacles that may arise from a visit to the ranger station and avoided them.

I pounded the pavement up into the final section of the park. The grades were getting harder to climb, and my desires were shackled to images of warmth, food, and

rest—a bad combination for accomplishing a goal that was not in clear sight. I could see some rocks up ahead on the side of the road, with water trickling off them, and I sure wanted a drink right now. That was probably what I wanted the most. After saying the blessing, I drank my fill. God had a way of taking care of the absolute necessities. It's funny how the simplest things mean so much in a crisis: water, light, and warmth. A little ways up ahead lay another rock off to the side of an overlook parking lot. This rock was graced with the rays of the sun, the perfect opportunity to rest and perhaps get some much-needed sleep. I found a smooth area on its surface and reclined there, my feet throbbing, my legs aching and stiffening. I had to get rest where I could, not knowing what conditions the night would bring, perhaps the wind and the cold, and if so, there was no rest to be had with those conditions. I lay there restlessly, unable to find comfort on the hard, cold surface of the rock. The sun's rays were too weak to provide warmth, and the cold from the rock was sucking the warmth from my body, prohibiting any form of relaxation. I staggered back to my feet, and onward I pressed, forced by my cruel master—the same one we are all subject to, the flesh—like a beaten slave, gravity enforcing its law with every movement, the immaculate magnet, relentlessly sucking every form of matter toward the center of the earth, without prejudice, with unquestionable enforcement. Perhaps the Lord of the flesh was imprisoned deep down there in the fiery core in his bottomless pit, in his topless pit, waiting, tumbling over and over as the earth makes its revolutions.

Earth has no top or bottom (we call the north “up” and the south “down,” but there really is no up or down on this planet), so neither does its core, and no man really knows what's down there. They only speculate with what they have seen, though there is much man has not seen. I envisioned a bottomless pit once, while under the influence of a hard drug, a cavity in the core of the planet, rolling over and over with every revolution Earth makes. Again, every drug has its own lie, and PCP lies like nothing I have ever experienced—and so convincingly so as to lead you where it wants you to go until it is too late. Cocaine had become a huge problem very rapidly in my life when I was a teen, and it had ruined it as well as taken all my money and what little dignity I had. From sniffing to smoking to shooting it, it had left me feeling so disgusted and sick about what I had let it reduce me to that I could not bring myself to continue believing in it. Unfortunately, at that time, I

needed something to fill the void it had left behind. I have no idea what drug is worse for an individual, cocaine or PCP. They both can do you in, in so many ways, but I will say that PCP will take you places, whereas with cocaine, you never get anywhere—like a kid in a car who is so excited that he is going to Disney World but never quite makes it there, just thrives on the thought. PCP will take you there, but you just may not like what is there when you arrive, and there will be collateral damage.

I fell fast into the PCP world. I took to it like a duck to water. It offered an almost “living dream” state of mind, sometimes so much that I did not know if I was dreaming. I think all of us while growing up had heard the horror stories about people on PCP, and maybe that made it seem almost more appealing to try, more exciting. I don’t know, but I remember I tried it the first time it was offered to me, like so many foolish choices I had made before, and I instantly fell in love with it, spending all the time I could on it, which was almost every day. It is impossible to describe what that stuff does, but its intentions are nothing less than sinister, and it accomplishes its works with an almost-divine intervention, to the extent that you can completely justify to yourself any action you may execute, no matter how insane it may actually be, like a mad crusader, guiltless, vindicated. I had seen plenty of people completely lose control on the stuff, end up in jail, and die all because of this drug, but unfortunately that was not enough of a reason to stay away from it. PCP is a very mystical drug like no other. They call it “angel dust” in certain circles. (We had a lot of names for it, but I never referred to it as “angel dust,” which was usually a term used by the media.) I can only assume it got that title because it was as if there was a very real presence of something with you when you were on it. At times, in extreme experiences, it would actually control you to the point that you had no power over yourself.

People who used PCP regularly tended to be very spiritual, quoting the Bible and praising God, probably due to the presence felt from the experience of the drug. Unfortunately, the presence is anything but God, and the religious messages received were not from God, no matter how convincing they may have seemed. People have a natural desire for adventure, exploration, and excitement, although nowadays we like to make our own rules, set our own boundaries, try to keep things safe, wear a helmet. PCP has no boundaries or rules. Anything goes, and it doesn’t just want to kill you; it wants to take you to hell along with everything around you. I don’t need to share all the experiences I have

had on the stuff. I am not advocating it. It is extremely dangerous, and I was very lucky to get away from it before it was too late. I will share one experience, however, because it is of some consequence.

One summer night, I had been waiting to meet some friends down by the river, a spot in the neighborhood we frequently hung out at. Sitting in my truck, impatiently, I elected to smoke a dipper, a cigarette that had been dipped in liquid PCP. (PCP typically came in liquid form and could then be put on any number of things and then smoked.) I took a few puffs as I sat listening to the radio in the early stages of the summer night. I had a very high tolerance for this drug by this point in my life; however, the one thing about this drug was that no matter how much you had or had not done, it could and would at some time overtake you and leave you helpless to stop it—if there ever was a magic potion, this was it. I don't recall how long it took before it hit me, and I have no idea how long I was tormented, but I will never forget what took place.

At some point, I became trapped, although I was actually just in my truck. I had no idea that was where I was. I was violently being rolled over and over, and I was unable to stop tumbling, all the while trying to get out of where I was trapped, grabbing at anything that I might catch a brief glimpse of as I passed it by, hoping that I might get free of what I had come to the conclusion was hell. Helplessness and hopelessness had fully consumed my being. Now I was just tumbling, rolling, as I fell in a bottomless pit, a topless pit, never stopping, rolling over and over in the darkness of the night. After some time (after the drug had peaked), I managed to grab hold of the door handle and get free of the truck. It was as if I had escaped from hell. I remember yelling, rejoicing, as I slowly regained control of my body, while further distancing myself from the truck as I headed down the road, barefoot and wearing a torn shirt.

As I was celebrating my freedom by shaking and then tearing out a small street sign, a friend pulled up. He recognized the signs of a PCP meltdown, for he himself was no stranger to the stuff. He got me into the car he and his girlfriend were in and drove me to the 7-Eleven store, where he bought me a jug of milk. Milk was what you drank when you were trying to come down. I'm not sure what it does, but it definitely helps. After I was finished with the milk, the questioning began. I didn't go into a lot of detail other than I had gotten so fucked up that I couldn't get out of my truck, and I left it at that. They took me

back to my truck to find that I had ripped out the stereo and the speakers and broken the door handle. This was the most intense experience I have ever had on PCP, and I have had plenty, but that one was the only time where something actually controlled my body without my will.

They say man only knows what he has seen; he does not create but simply recognizes something and expands on it—for instance, maybe witnessing an apple fall off a tree and roll down a hill and then maybe going and inventing the wheel as a result. In the same way, I had always heard that hell was a bottomless pit, which seemed ridiculous, but after what I experienced, it made total sense. If there was a hell, it could easily be a hollow sphere that never stopped turning, something without a bottom or a top. Earth never stops turning, and it has a core. No one really knows if it is solid or not, so we can only speculate, but it does have all the characteristics of a bottomless pit if there was a small cavity in it. And how hard is it to escape from something when you are constantly falling?

PCP is the cleverest of liars. It feeds you things that seem almost truthful so as to deceive, to keep you enchanted, and when you are under its influence, you will be deceived; however, in this particular experience, it did show me a hell, and I will never forget it in this life and hope never to see it again. The one thing I learned from drugs was that you will never communicate with God when you are under their influence. The only thing God may give you is perhaps a second chance, maybe warning you that you are lost and headed for destruction. You will hear plenty when you are on drugs, but you should know that it is not God who is speaking to you. PCP will definitely show you things, but the things it reveals are evil and that which belongs to evil. Knowing any details about hell is actually useless information, inconsequential. We already have been told it is torture, torment, and inescapable. The mechanics of it are trivial. Some things that we think are of some significance really aren't. Entertainment comes in many forms, but most of it only distracts. The more elaborate and convincing it is, the longer it keeps you enchanted.

The afternoon passed, as all things do. Thoughts of the dreaded darkness imposed on my consciousness, while Earth's star hung just above the mountain peaks. Such a beautiful vision this would have been if I wasn't in such a desperate state.

I wandered up on a picnic table that sat at the side of the road and slumped over it, exhausted, dreaming of some way to get out of here, though I knew all too well that there was only one way out, and I was the only one who could get me there. It was now quite obvious that it was only going to get harder and harder. I prayed to Mary the Mother of God for comfort. The prayers to her seemed to get answered more frequently. Perhaps she was more compassionate—arguably the greatest woman who ever lived, perhaps the greatest person born through man who ever lived, for without her, Jesus would not have come into the world, or so those who believe in Jesus believe, to others just another fable or fairy tale.

The path was calling to me while the cold of the evening bored its way through my skin—onward. I had seen signs on the road for a facility called “Loft Mountain,” with camping, showers, a gift shop, you name it, though all closed for the season, perfect for a vagrant like myself. All I craved at this point was a dry place to lay my head and somewhere to get some sleep for the night. Hopefully I would find it there. Driven by my passion to rest, I poured on the steam, stopping only to get a drink when there was water bubbling over the rocks on the side of the road. Mile after mile I trudged, hoping there would be sanctuary for the night at the Loft Mountain facility. When I finally arrived, darkness had long since been instated, rest long past due. As usual, I surveyed the area for any signs of inhabitants—not a soul but mine. Slithering around the buildings, I found a suitable spot to make camp, a space between the entrances of the locked bathhouse, providing three walls and a roof over my head. I put on all the clothes I had, said my prayers, and drifted off into restless sleep for very brief periods, rolling and twisting on the concrete slab, trying to find comfort and maximize my body heat in every position I could think of. As always, nothing worked, and this trip was beginning to remind me of Jesus’s three days in hell. No place to rest, no tolerable climate, not an ounce of sympathy did this place harbor. I had come to the conclusion that I would not find rest until I was out of here. The human body is such a fragile and vulnerable machine compared to the environment it resides in, and its demands are many.

Not a star could I see in the sky. The night was plagued by thick, heavy darkness while spirits of desperation descended upon me. Frustrated and impatient, unable to summon unconsciousness, I returned to my feet and resumed where I had left off, with

twenty-five miles to go until I reached the entrance to the park. How I longed to be out of here. With every step, I dreamed of what it would be like when I got back to civilization, to a warm bed and a hot meal, with this nightmare behind me. As if things weren't bad enough, sleet began to fall from the darkened sky, filling the air with the sounds of ice hitting the dried, fallen leaves on the forest floor. There was to be no mercy shown out here tonight. I traveled on, as always, never stopping, just looking at the pavement pass beneath my feet as I passed over it, my head hung down, broken, too tired to be angry. Not paying any attention to what lay up ahead on the now-wet pavement from where the sleet had been melting on its surface, I walked right up on a skunk who was traveling toward me from the opposite direction, right down the middle of the road, looking about as miserable as I was. Fortunately, upon approach, we just looked at one another, veered around each other, and kept on our separate ways, never stopping. The last thing I needed was to get sprayed by a skunk on top of everything else. I guess I could be thankful that didn't happen.

The sleet soon turned to rain, and if someone had asked which one I preferred, I don't know if I would have been so bold as to make that judgment. I have been the victim of my own wishes too many times. I was slowly learning not to think, just to deal with whatever came my way and try not to do anything stupid. I guess the fact that it was no longer sleeting meant it was getting warmer, and it also meant that I would be getting wet. I raised the hood on my jacket over the cap I was already wearing, hoping to stay as dry as possible. The water dripped off my hood and onto my face, irritating but not too devastating, and fortunately my layers held back the moisture from my body for the time being.

Water is such a fascinating thing, the main ingredient in just about everything. Water is more valuable, more precious, than just about anything if you don't have it. You can't live with it, can't live without it, like so many things on this earth. Water can change into many forms, solid, liquid, or gas. When it's cold, it is solid, hard. When it's above thirty-two degrees, it is liquid. When it's heated, it becomes a gas and rises into the air, leaving behind any impurities that might have been in it. It is truly amazing how billions of tons of matter can rise into the air and disappear and then reappear in another location in its previous form. What a crazy world, with so many things you would never believe if you hadn't seen them with your own eyes, and water is beautiful in all its forms.

An hour or two had passed when I heard the sound of a car approaching, the only one I had seen all night. The car passed by me, the passengers looking at me in the rain, and then stopped a couple hundred feet past me. A man got out. I couldn't really see what he looked like, and I kept my distance.

"Hey, you need a ride?" he yelled.

"No," I replied.

"You sure?"

"Yeah, I'm alright."

He got back in his car and drove off. Man, did I need a ride, but it just seemed like some sort of test, a temptation, the kind of temptation that could put me in a bad spot, maybe even cost me my life. I had taken plenty of rides with strangers, but not tonight. In my heart, I knew I was supposed to walk out of this place, and if I could not at least do that, perhaps judgment might fall upon me tonight. A short time later, I heard the car coming back, and I went up off the road and into the woods till it passed, so as not to be seen. As the taillights disappeared into the darkness, all I could think about was how nice it would have been to ride out of here and leave all this behind me; however, sometimes what seems like the easy way out is not.

The rain finally subsided, but it was too late. The damage was done, and the outer layers of my clothes were now soaked. The water hadn't penetrated through to my skin yet, except on my legs. My legs were now having to struggle with the saturated pants that were desperately trying to constrict their every movement, the latest obstacle to contend with. It seemed as though around every corner was an additional unforeseeable twist. I knew this trip was going to be hard, but I had no idea it would be like this. Things seem so easy when you are sitting in a warm, dry house, but actually going out and doing them is a completely different story. As a rule, though so hard to observe in this world, it is always wise to walk in someone else's shoes for a few steps before you start running your mouth.

I stopped to rest, get a drink off the rocks, and pray for the strength to get out of here. I filled a plastic bag I had in my belongings (which used to house my toothbrush) with water and drank it down as my body quaked with exhaustion. "Should I fill the bag and carry it with me for later?" I thought. "No," came the reply from my thoughts, "drink

when the water is rolling off the rocks, and then only.” Too tired to argue with my invocation, I kept moving and didn’t fill the bag.

The journey was growing more painful with every step, and the darkness seemed to have no end. The thought of maybe being able to find rest here was slowly distracting me more and more, diverting my attention, overcoming the necessity to get out of here, seducing me. I fought these desires, knowing that the only rest to be had was when I would stop at every mile marker just long enough to catch my breath. I would lean on the markers like a cane, say a prayer as I mustered what strength I had left, and then travel on, dreaming of the brief moment of relaxation I would experience at the next marker and the joy that would embrace me when I arrived at the last one, when it would truly be over.

My eyelids were growing heavy and my body had reached its limit when I simply had to stop and collapse. No longer could impatience or the thought of getting out of here fuel my body. If I was going to make it, I was going to have to take my time. I sat there on a cold, wet stone wall at the side of the road, my legs throbbing, my feet pounding, my clothes half soaked, with seven more miles to go.

The morning light was making its appearance on the horizon when I lost consciousness, passed out, and fell off the wall. I was fortunate enough not to have hit my head, though it probably wouldn’t have mattered much at this point. This was not an intended place to fall asleep. It just happened, and the thought of sleeping there on that cold, wet wall for any period of time was not appealing. The reality of what the wall had to offer in the way of comfort was becoming quite clear. Even in my utter state of confusion and exhaustion, I couldn’t bring myself to believe I could get any real rest here. There was a better place to be, and I had to be there at all costs.

Getting to my feet had become an agonizing, pain-filled task. My legs had grown stiff, the muscles not wanting to comply with my brain’s wishes. Each time I would try to move them, they would retort with shooting pains. The bottoms of my feet were wrecked. I had to change the way I positioned my feet when they came in contact with the ground as I walked, so as to allow progress to continue. When one part of my foot could stand no more, I focused my weight to another part of it, constantly alternating between all possible areas of my feet so as not to completely destroy one area. After I had put a few hundred feet between the wall and myself, I managed to get my legs loosened up somewhat to where I

was making a little better time. The second sunrise of the trip was in full swing while I prayed and hobbled on, mile after mile.

Only hours ago, I had thought to myself, “I will be so happy to get out of here I will probably run the last mile,” though that was turning out not to be the case. I would have loved to run out of here, but I could barely stand, and even though the spirit may be willing, the flesh was truly weak—and mine was shot.

When I had about three miles to go, pain began to prove its power over my flesh, a power I could not contend with. It now felt like I was walking on the bones of my feet, my ankles like old worn-out hinges as I flipped my feet out in front of me on them. My knees barely moved, and my ass could hardly lift the weight of my now-crippled legs. Hallucinations plagued my vision, and the sounds of people—who weren’t really there—talking filled my ears from out of every corner of the forest, though I could not make out any words. I, at this point, could not go any farther if my life depended on it. I truly understood the meaning of exhaustion. With those three miles or so to go to the end, I collapsed on the edge of a sewer on the roadside. It was a large, open drain with a bottom a few feet below the opening. Sitting on the edge of the sewer, I hung my legs down into its mouth and lay back on the concrete, drifting in and out of consciousness—so close yet so far.

No thoughts of my grand exit from the park entered my head, no dreams of celebration, no thought at all of anything. My body and my brains were beaten to a pulp, too weak to even pray. I just lay there. I had walked about sixty-two miles, but I just couldn’t go on anymore right now, not without some form of brief rest. No matter how much my spirit wanted to be out of here, my flesh could not move until it had time to rest. After I’d relaxed for a spell, my present situation invaded my consciousness and made its presence known once again: “Get up, get up.” This time, as much as I wanted to climb to my feet, I found myself lying there, struggling, making attempt after attempt to get my body moving again, until I was eventually successful at climbing to my feet. Things were getting harder and harder, but as so many times before, I was able to make it to my feet and journey on, though at not much more than a crawl at this point.

The next mile lasted forever. I wasn’t sure if I had missed the marker, because it took so long to get to it, but finally, I arrived. I rested on the tiny obelisk marker, said a

prayer, and then resumed—standard practice. The clouds had returned overhead and brought with them some light rain, though I couldn't have cared less at this point. If someone had run up and beaten me with a pipe, I don't think it would have bothered me now. Any care or concern I had in the world was gone. Nothing seemed to matter at this point.

As all things do pass one way or another, so was this self-inflicted nightmare running its course. Off in the distance, I could hear the sounds of the highway. It would be over soon, or at least I was convinced it would be.

Dragging my bones down the last leg of the journey, I saw in the center of the road the ranger station to the entrance of the park—my beacon of hope. It was just a shack in the road, but it meant so much to see it there. Unfortunately, though, just as when I ran out of gas on my boat trip, this plight wasn't over, for on the other side of the station, the road stretched on. There wasn't a finish line with a crowd or a car to take me home. Staggering on, drawn to the sounds of the highway, maybe a mile or so more, I arrived at the overpass of Highway 64, atop Afton Mountain, and there, standing in the rain, I accepted defeat, beaten once again by the pains of the flesh—a slave I would remain, unable to defeat this master. And of the quest for my arm, its priority was set aside once again.

There was a little restaurant sitting off to the side of the road, which I made my way toward, all the while a voice telling me, “Why do you not travel on?” To this question, I gave neither reply nor further attention, much like when I brought my boat back to Ocean City, not even wanting to look at the inlet. I crawled into the diner, looking like a hobo, my trash bag in hand, soaked, filthy, and there I stood, waiting to be seated, not sure if I would be. A waitress came over, looking a little confused as she stared at me, and then, surprisingly enough, she seated me at a table, where I consumed a glutton's portion. When I had finished my meal, I gladly paid the bill with this land's currency and then called a cab to take me to the bus station in Charlottesville, from where I would then head home.

I barely had enough money for the breakfast, cab ride, and bus fare, but nonetheless, as always, the Lord had provided me with just enough. Though some would say it was just a coincidence or “what luck,” those who know, know.

I slept all the way back to Washington, only waking once. When I arrived there, it was dark. The only thing that stood between me and the shower and bed was the subway

and a bus ride—I couldn't wait. When I got to the subway, much to my chagrin, I did not have enough money left to purchase a ticket for the train and the bus, just a little short. As I stood there, bewildered, a man came up to me and asked for change.

“Man, I don't have enough to get home,” I replied.

Then, reluctantly, he reached into his pocket, held out his hand, and said, “Man, here,” and he gave me the change he had. This was one of the most generous acts I had ever witnessed. What he had done may have been greater than what I had just done—I was going home, and I don't know if he even had a home.

A short train ride and a transfer to a bus were the final link to uninterrupted rest. Shortly, I would be home.

As so many times before, my calculations were incorrect and I had boarded the wrong bus. The bus I had gotten on didn't go by my house, and at the last stop, I had no choice but to step off and return to the night. The bus driver informed me that another bus would be by shortly and go by the stop I needed. Onto a dark corner, in a residential neighborhood, I stood—no phone, no store, nothing but restful houses and a Catholic Church silently staring me right in the face from the other side of the street. There I waited in the damp darkness, confused and growing angry as the second bus failed to arrive. Forty minutes, fifty minutes, maybe an hour or so passed, and I lost control. Anger consuming me, I began cursing the Lord as I had done on the boat trip. I told Him I loved Him all the time, but when things got to be too much, I would turn on Him. I was only willing to do what I wished and nothing more. I wanted to call the shots, but that just isn't the way it works. What was I capable of doing? I always thought I knew everything, but the truth is, I didn't know a damn thing. If I did, my life wouldn't be in the mess it was always in. Right after I finished my barrage of profanity, the bus appeared and took me to my home.

“Still so much to learn,” I thought as I lay in bed that night, trying to make amends to Jesus and God, remembering the night that had just passed, lamenting the pain that still dwelt in my body and the cold of the winter I had now escaped from.

“Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter,” Jesus said in Matthew 24:20, and that was all too clear to me now. There was nothing but pain and relentless suffering in the cold of winter. The sun was weak, the nights long, and there was no rest to be had in those times, only desperation and the struggle to protect the body's existence.

Chapter 4

Earth

That winter passed as I furthered my education on Jesus and God, always trying to stay occupied, and once again, I concocted my next attempt to achieve faith. Jesus went into the desert in the spring season, when He stayed there for forty days, so the desert is where I would go in the spring, for the period of Lent, and I would once again petition Jesus for an arm.

The weeks before Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent) were filled with prayer and mental preparation until my day of departure, the Monday before Ash Wednesday. That Monday, around noon, I threw some clothes into a bag and slipped out the door, telling no one, and headed to the bus stop, then to the subway, and eventually to the bus station, from where I would be delivered into the desert.

My desert of choice was on the edge of Yuma, Arizona. When I was younger, on a vacation with my family, we stopped in Yuma for gas on our way to Mexico. I had gotten out of the van we traveled in to use the restroom, when my parents, unaware I wasn't sleeping in the back of the van, where I usually was, drove off. I remember coming out of the restroom, seeing the van was not where it had been when I left it, and then walking around the building and looking for it, but it was nowhere to be found. I remember not caring at all that they were gone. I hated riding around in that van, I hated family vacations, and I just wanted to be left alone by them and their rules. I sat on a guardrail on the side of the parking lot of the station, hoping they weren't coming back, thinking how nice it might be to live here without them. An hour passed, and my wishes would not be granted, for down the road came the dreaded red van, with a teary-eyed mother, two laughing sisters, and a silent dad. I got back in, listening to their version of what had happened, and sat there silently as we headed to Mexico. Kids don't know a thing about what is good for them or what is bad for them. They only know that they want the instant gratification that is fed to

them from around every corner. They have no idea about things. I know I didn't at that time in my life. So many other parents would give their kids whatever they wanted, and it seemed like all I ever heard was NO. Looking back now, I could see the reasons I was not allowed many of the things I wanted to have or do. My folks were wise to many things that I was not, and they never tried to win me over with gifts that had no value. They were always parents and never friends.

I arrived at the bus station in Washington, where I approached the counter to purchase my ticket. "One for Yuma, Arizona." When the lady told me how much it was, a slight feeling of joy fell over me because I didn't have enough money. "Maybe God does not want me to do this," I thought. Then she told me to hold on a minute while she went to talk to her manager.

An overworked, stressed-looking man emerged from an office. "Let me see what I can do," he said, and before I knew it, I had a ticket to Yuma with about twenty-some dollars to spare for food, hopefully enough to keep me fed until I got to my destination.

The bus trip was about three days of cramped travel and sometimes-agonizing stops and transfers, but nonetheless, it got the job done. Taking a three-day bus trip was an adventure in itself. There was always a very diverse crowd on the bus and always at least one individual the rest of the passengers would have to put up with, someone who had absolutely no idea how to coexist with others, someone who would sabotage any chance the other passengers might have to relax for at least a portion of their journey while that individual was on board. I don't know how the drivers could exercise the self-control that they did, to keep from beating those people to death, having to deal with them day in and day out. I know that's not a very Christian thing to think, but if you have never experienced the selfishness and complete disregard these people have for everyone but themselves, I don't think there is any way to reason with these individuals other than with force. Unfortunately, these people are not confined solely to buses.

On the night before Ash Wednesday, maybe ten thirty or so, I ate my last meal: chocolate milk and a king-sized pack of peanut butter cups. "No more food for forty days," I thought. The remainder of the bus trip passed uncomfortably as I watched the other passengers eat at our stops while all I did was drink water.

Thursday, around noon, I had arrived in beautiful, sunny Yuma. I stepped off the bus and into the warm sun of the desert, quite a change from the cold I had left behind in Virginia. I felt strong standing there in the parking lot, once again proud of my efforts to take the initial steps of this journey, determined to succeed. Aware of the long safari ahead of me, I went into a store next to the bus station and spent all but a few coins on some twine to make a shoulder strap for my bag, and then it was on. I hadn't any money now but some change, less than a dollar. I had no food or water—off to lay down my life. I walked through the humble little town of Yuma, heading north, past the shops, houses, churches, institutions of every kind, and all the necessary components for a civilization to exist on this earth.

As humans, we have so many requirements. Man has rearranged this earth to better accommodate our wants and needs and to better serve our will. Government, industry, education, entertainment, military, money, and merchants—all of these things are necessities for our kingdoms to thrive, and if it were not for our vulnerabilities, none of these things would exist. Passed down generation after generation, the teachings of those before us constantly hone our endeavors. Our entire existence revolves around us and supporting our needs. We have assembled governments so that the needs of the people of our kingdoms can be met. These governments make laws and regulate education (what is taught in our schools) for our children. They dictate to industry, they judge entertainment, they control the armies, they monitor the merchants, and they distribute their own money. We are constantly producing products to sustain the body's existence, providing for its needs, pleasures, and securities, and by the sweat of our brows do we produce and develop these items and objects. We are an industrious people consumed by our creations and our pursuits. We have schools of all kinds to teach everything for communicating with each other so that we can express our individual messages, language, mathematics, science—all the necessary ingredients to progress in our quest to better provide for our existence. However, if we were not subject to death and the flesh, we would not need any of this information. Unfortunately, we are mortal, so these things are now necessary since they do serve us. We must protect our bodies from the elements or they will die. We must feed our bodies or they will die. We must be aware of the things that are dangerous to them. We

must study our bodies so that we can fix them when they break or go awry. We are taught about government, industry, entertainment, military, merchandising, and the value of money, and we are even taught how to educate others on these matters.

This world is captivated by carefully choreographed plays, games, songs, and dances. It lusts for a life that only exists in the dreams of our earthly existence, displayed on a stage, screen, or field. Slaughter the nemesis, get the beautiful girl or the sack of money—what more could there be? Man solving all his problems, controlling his destiny, creating his own heaven on earth with his own rules and laws, answering to no one. Man entertains himself, in what sometimes seems like a cage, with many games, toys, and tales, simulating accomplishments that don't exist, pacifying himself with his beastly desires until death, the same death that has kept him occupied until it takes back what belongs to it.

Each kingdom on this earth must have an army or their kingdom will be taken from them by another who is stronger. This is a fact of existence here. The strongest survive and rule. They take what they want and do with it what they will for as long as they can hold on to it. The military and the police go in and pave the way for a country's expansion and security, for its rule, for its ideas and intentions, and any who oppose are incarcerated or killed if these forces are successful.

Money is the center of a kingdom, the nucleus if you will. Take it away and the subjects would not go to their jobs. They would serve themselves in a more direct fashion. The entire structure would fall apart. We need a carrot before our noses just as does a beast of burden. Our world supposedly runs on what we call the "gold standard." Everything is directly tied to it. You can't eat it, you can't drink it, and it does nothing more than exist, but it is in our heads to recognize it as valuable and has had us trade for it, steal for it, kill for it, and degrade ourselves for it, though it is lifeless.

When a kingdom is conquered, the victors print and distribute their own marks with the images of their own leaders on them. And these marks are what the people of that kingdom are rewarded with when they serve the needs of that kingdom, though the kingdoms do not give their subjects the object that the notes represent, only a mark with an image on it, an image of a man, a man made of flesh, a beast if you will, a man who has been influential to the establishment and existence of that kingdom.

Our world is filled with merchants of all kinds, selling goods everywhere and of every sort, from the oldest profession to whatever the newest is, trading services and products in exchange for payment, usually for the currency of the kingdom they reside in and usually in hopes of getting ahead, though sometimes just to survive. We are obsessed with money and the joys we are convinced it will bring. This endeavor has completely consumed us, and I am no different. We are all merchants of some sort, whether you go to a job and trade your services for money or you sell goods. Whenever you give in order to receive something that satisfies your own desires, you become a merchant. Whenever you promote something in order to gain something for yourself, you are a merchant. There are merchants of all kinds.

All of these realities have arisen into our world because we must have them or cease to exist. We have organized them and cultivated them, and they are authorities to all men, women, and children on this earth. And we all inhabit them, doing our part, typically eight hours a day, forty hours a week, and we also tend to indulge in them in our spare time. These things are our society, from a person, to a neighborhood, to a city, to a state, to a country—everything the same, just on different scales.

When I neared the edge of town, I came to a bridge spanning across the Colorado River. A homeless man stood there on the side, looking over the edge, down at some makeshift tents pitched below, near the riverbank, and some other homeless people who were gathered around the tents. Then he looked at me, nodded a sort of hello without speaking, and went back to his gazing. I had noticed while walking through Yuma that this town was filled with homeless people who, for whatever reason, could not or would not support themselves. Fortunately, my parents (whom I could not stand most of the time when I was younger) kept that from happening to me by instilling in me the utmost necessity of determination.

I remember when I was maybe ten or eleven years old, my dad told me to change a tire on one of the rims to the van, an operation I had witnessed and helped with many times before. The procedure was to lay the tire on the ground, set the base of the bumper jack on the edge of the tire, right next to the edge of the rim, and then jack the vehicle up. The weight of the vehicle perched atop the jack would then break the bead of the tire from the

rim. I had no problem with this part of the procedure; however, I had not paid close enough attention to the remainder of the operation. After breaking the bead of the tire off the rim, you had to use two tire irons (long rods with an almost-spoonlike feature at the end of each one, kind of like giant shoehorns) to work the tire off the rim by prying the bead of the tire over the edge of the rim as you worked your way around the rim. I had not paid attention to the proper positioning of the irons, which was vital if you wanted to get the tire off the rim. I fought and cursed that tire for more than two hours, from the afternoon into the darkness of the evening, and I had been forbidden to go in the house until the tire was changed. Finally, the old man came out, extremely displeased, said a few insulting and degrading words, and angrily helped me change the tire. As mad, upset, and humiliated as I was at the time, I never forgot how to change a tire after that, and a few days later, I changed a tire alone. That event, at the time, was quite traumatic for me, and I'm sure there are those who would say it could have been handled differently, but that is how it was handled, and usually critics don't handle anything other than words. Those who actually do things become frustrated with those who don't or who won't pay attention, and even though they may blow up at times, it is better they do that than to give in and give up.

On the other side of the bridge lay a beautiful Catholic Church—an old Indian mission, a place of conversion. I didn't have to convert my religion. I was raised Catholic. I just had to convert my way of life. All I truly loved was sin. It's all I wanted, the desires of this earth. Perhaps that is sort of changing your religion—it was hard. I had followed my desires for so long and loved them so much, and I could feel them without question. I guess you could say I truly believed in them and trusted them, but I had heard of other things that were supposedly better, and my former ways could not save me, so what choice did I have? Live for a moment, or live forever.

The road I traveled wound down a hill, and I could see the desert some miles up ahead. Traveling on, past the lettuce fields where the migrants worked, I came upon two dogs running loose in the street, violently barking, trying to attack the cars that passed by. One was a large dog, maybe 120 pounds, and the other was small and following the large one, displaying the same attitude. When I saw them, I wished I had a big stick to beat them with if they attacked me, but I had nothing, so I said a prayer as I walked and asked Jesus to let me pass this obstacle. I looked at the ground as I approached their turf, never slowing

or increasing my pace. The big dog rushed me with the little one right behind him. I never flinched or acknowledged their presence. Barking and growling furiously, they circled me as I walked. The big one would brush up against me, trying to move me, to gain my attention, but I just kept on ignoring him. The little one would run up to my heels and bark, following the big one. This went on for a minute or two until they gave up and began to follow me. The big one would run up ahead, a hundred feet or so, and then run back to me, like a scout. The little one stuck right by my side, never leaving it, looking up happily at me now, giving out a friendly yap now and again. They were quickly becoming welcome company.

When I got to the edge of the desert, the pavement ended and the dirt road began. My new companions were still with me, following in their same fashion. I don't know if they had plans of leaving me or not, but it didn't look as though they did. They had been following for about a mile at this point. A river, maybe an irrigation river, ran next to the road, and across it lay a dam. I knew I would have to leave the dogs here. I knew I could not take them with me where I was going. Where I was going, they could not endure, and whoever they belonged to would probably miss them. I sat down on the edge of the dam, feeling happy and sad at the same time—happy because the company the dogs had given me was comforting, sad because I had to leave them now. I petted them both for a few minutes while they jumped on me and licked me. I then crossed the narrow path across the dam. When I got to the other side, I looked back at them, the little one trying desperately to get the courage up to cross the narrow concrete wall. He would get right to the edge of the dam and then back away, over and over. The big one was losing interest now that I was gone and just ran in circles—the big one kind of reminded me of myself at times.

I love the companionship you can receive from a dog, definitely one of God's greatest gifts to man (if you believe in God). They always want to be with you no matter what. If you are having a tough time, they are there with you. They don't judge you when you screw up, and they love you just the same. They're always glad to see you. They all have jobs they can do, and they love doing them—hunting, fetching, protecting, and just being companions. They are truly incredible creations. It is said God is always with you, that He always loves you, and that He is ready to welcome you at any time. It's hard to

believe after some of the things I have done; however, dogs do just that if you let them, so maybe God does as well. So many things imitate their masters or creators.

Up into the hills of the desert, following no trail or road, I went. It was a beautiful place, with rocks, flowers, occasional vegetation—coarse yet charismatic. I don't know if there is a more beautiful place on earth. It was warm and friendly in the late-afternoon sun. I thought to myself, "I might even be able to sleep tonight, so much easier than my plight in the mountains." Walking through the gullies and ravines, I thought about the story of how the devil had destroyed all mankind with his introduction of the flesh and how I wanted God to take this evil I embraced from me. I began to spit on the ground, trying to dehydrate myself as quickly as possible, hoping to speed up the trip to death's door. This brief display of self-righteousness and boasting was short-lived, realizing I was going to have to have patience and let things run their course. My lack of patience was perhaps my greatest fault.

As I walked, I pondered the flesh of man. Perhaps when Adam and Eve ate that alleged fruit, something in it bored itself into their bodies like a parasite. We have seen many parasites that feed off the living. We have seen different types of worms that get into your body and live off your flesh until they kill you. We have seen diseases that are passed on from mothers to children, and we have seen diseases that are passed on through sex. Perhaps the brain is nothing more than a giant worm coiled tightly in the skull, orchestrating its kingdom in us, with its legions of segments all working toward its goals, its organs all tending to the masses, and generation after generation, it hides in man, building kingdom after kingdom in the ultimate piece of real estate, like some horrific sci-fi creature.

Man is a kingdom, just as there are kingdoms on earth. Does not one part of the body govern while another part tends to the masses? And do not the masses serve the one that governs? And do not the legs and arms take what the brain demands? Is not the seed of a man nothing more than a tiny worm that invades the flesh of a woman, finds purchase in blood and flesh, and grows? Is not man's kingdom also founded in blood? Do you know of a single kingdom that did not establish itself without bloodshed? Perhaps the fruit from the serpent, from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was nothing more than tiny serpents or worms, the first sperm that moved into our clay. You see them every day, but it's just so hard to believe, so horrible, so preposterous, and we have been born into this

world and lived with it for so long that we know not of anything else. Anyway, it's just some crazy story.

The day was coming to a close when I decided to make camp under some high-tension electrical wires that stretched across the desert, great towers man had constructed to carry power to tend to his needs. I put on some clothes to ward off the chill that was growing in the air, knelt down, said some prayers for strength and accomplishment, and then lay down in the dirt and curled up. Light still hung on the horizon when I closed my eyes, but I was not graced with sleep, only with restless thought. I should have known better than to think I was going to rest this soon into the trip. I got to my feet and continued on to the north in the last traces of light. I didn't get very far before the sun disappeared behind the mountains. I began stumbling over the rocky terrain, and it became evident that I would have to make camp somewhere. I could make out the silhouette of a large hill rising up out of the desert floor. That is where I decided I would take a stab at some shut-eye.

The hill was barren of vegetation, covered with small rocks. I found a slight depression in one side of the hill, where I dug in for the night. The ground was hard, and rocks poked at my body as I lay there slowly drifting off into slumber. I awoke sometime later to a wind whistling and howling through the region, cutting through my clothes, chilling me to the bone, forcing me to make my way to the other side of the hill, where I found a spot out of the wind, not quite as choice as the other in texture but unaffected by the wind. It was there that I resumed my rest. On through the night, I rolled and turned. When the small rocks I lay on grew too uncomfortable in one spot, I would shift into a different position. Though there was no escape from the discomfort of the stony exterior, I would move every so often, kind of like having a pebble in your shoe, so you just move it around when it has irritated one spot for too long. The night seemed to last forever, as they always do when you're miserable. I lay there impatiently awaiting the arrival of the sun, trying to force sleep on myself, occasionally getting a little. When I had finally worn out all possible positions to lie in, and I just wasn't exhausted enough to maintain unconsciousness, I sat up and looked at the stars that filled the sky and at the town of Yuma lit up in the distance. How I missed civilization right now. I loved to drink in its bars, hear its songs, and believe its sweet lies of happiness, though it never could quite deliver them.

Just the thought of what was whispered kept this mule chasing the carrot that dangled before it. What this world ministered, I ate up.

Ideas and influences come from so many avenues. Everyone usually has a source from where they choose to receive these viewpoints, perspectives, and oftentimes persuasions. From as soon as we are in this world, we are exposed to music. We all have songs from artists we enjoy listening to, and they help us to enhance experiences, feelings, and emotions. Quite frequently, these artists have a physical appearance that is appealing to the audience they hold captive, and it reflects the tone they are emitting. During the years we spent in school, when we were younger, music was one of the greatest influences, so great that many people defined themselves with it. In the circles we traveled in and as individuals, it influenced the way we dressed and acted. It was a companion for whatever circumstance we were experiencing.

When I was growing up, one such character was called “Madonna,” the image of a physically attractive, slutty tramp who had the world by the balls, without any repercussions. Having men fall at her feet as they did her bidding and other women envying the power she possessed was an appealing idol to many girls who didn’t know any better. She had some catchy tunes, boasting about how great she was and how she led men around, as well as songs of female behaviors and experiences. There has been and will be a Madonna for every generation, but this particular one just happened to be the one of my generation.

We had punk rockers at school who were influenced by the punk attitude, which was conveyed through punk music as it taught their disciples how to act. There was the rap community, which cooked up its image into those who found a home with it. There were the metalheads who payed homage to their prophets. And there were probably more genres, but those were the main ones I can recall. It is truly remarkable how susceptible we are to carefully orchestrated sounds, sounds capable of creating an image we find some sort of fascination with, be it a beautiful woman or someone masquerading as the devil. I listened to lots of different types of music throughout my teenage years, but the organization I had become completely intrigued with was Jim Morrison and the Doors. I didn’t go to the extreme of defining myself solely by the existence of this band; however, what was coming

out of them greatly influenced my life, molding my perspective on life—and looking back now, not necessarily for the better.

There was a brand of music and an artist out there for every kid who was starting out in life, and for whatever unknown reason, the combination of music delivered with intense passion was probably the most influential force in a young person's life. I remember hearing a minor news story, back in the day, about how some kid's parents were trying to sue a spiritually questionable rock musician because they said their kid killed himself because of a song that artist had brought forth into the world. I'm sure it was not solely a song that was responsible for his death, but I definitely could believe that it could have given that kid a tiny nudge at just the right time, where he may have lost his balance and fallen off the edge forever. Would it have happened if this song did not exist? We will never know, but what I do know is that when you combine an almost-spiritual or ritualistic musical experience accompanied with drugs and those ignorant to what they are being exposed to, shit happens, and the consequences are very real. (Please understand that I am not saying people will kill themselves by listening to a song while under the influence.) I have no idea what this artist's intentions were with the song, and until now, I have not given it any thought; however, I do think everyone knows the theme of the majority of heavy metal music as well as the image it portrays. Most people have been taught to be able to differentiate between entertainment and reality, and if they haven't been, who is at greater fault, the musician or those who raised them?

I don't know the intentions of these modern-day prophets who grace our airwaves, fill our television screens, and are invited into our homes. Realistically, I have to believe it is monetary and social gain (money and power) by means of the captivation of a large group of people who can contribute to their existence and well-being, and celebrate them, in exchange for the fleeting companionship of a feeling, mood, or spirit that they have the authority to disperse. Those who have developed these special talents and know how to use them to their advantage are often easily persuaded to share them unyieldingly under the condition that they will receive reward for doing so. There were countless crooners, bands, and groups infiltrating our minds with what has been infiltrating theirs, spreading the good word, on their way to the bank and then the orgy. Some brands of this entertainment were extremely transparent, like gangster rap, which was basically a compilation of pride and the

promotion and demand of instant gratification of all the senses. There was also death metal, typically rants denouncing organized religion (Christianity for the most part), claiming to know “the real truth,” dabbling in hopelessness, touting the ridiculousness of God, promoting the idea that the place called hell was “the place to be”—a place they had never been to.

I have never actually been to hell, but I have had two separate drug-induced experiences where I was completely convinced I was in hell, and maybe in our minds is where hell begins. Without getting into too much detail about how I arrived in that state for the time I was there, in short, this particular time, it was the result of consuming a ridiculous amount of LSD on a Saturday when my folks were away for the weekend, after having taken a standard amount of LSD on the previous day. (Typically, it can be very hard to have an LSD experience two days in a row without taking a lot the second day.) Within a few hours of consumption, the wheels had come off. I chased the other two members of the gathering down the street, throwing rocks and whatever was in my reach at them. (I vaguely remember throwing a newspaper that was lying rolled up in someone’s driveway at them.) I can still see their horrified faces looking back at me as they ran down the street, fleeing a situation that was coming unglued.

It was late afternoon in October, and the sun was going down. It melted while I watched it as I walked down the middle of the road, back to the street I lived on, barefoot, wearing nothing but a pair of jeans, cars passing me as they avoided hitting me. It was right before Halloween, and some of the people residing on the street had set up Halloween decorations in celebration. About halfway down the street was a house that had some sort of zombie tied to a tree that seemed to be real in my present condition. I avoided it as I kept a close eye on it. By this time, there were several adults—I was seventeen at the time—out in the street who had been witnessing this episode. Most kept their distance. I assumed later that they just wanted to keep an eye on me as they waited for the police to arrive. One of the older men on the street approached me, extremely concerned, as he attempted to question me.

“Dale, are you OK?” He said this a few times as he maneuvered in front of me, staying several steps away for obvious reasons. I don’t know what I said exactly, but I remember being very angry, and I remember him getting out of my way as I turned off the

street, went through his yard, ripped the gate off his fence, and headed into the woods behind his house.

I don't recall much after that except eventually not being able to walk any farther and collapsing in a briar patch. I lay there on my back in horrible pain as the thorns stuck in me, not wanting to move because every time I did, it made it worse. I lay there, my ears filled with cackling and laughter from dark shadows that flew circling just above me as the moonlight illuminated the sky around the shadows, the barren tree branches of the forest ceiling closing in, in complete unison with the sinister shadows circling like vultures getting ready to descend upon me. Shortly after, darkness and hopelessness ensued, followed by unconsciousness.

I regained consciousness at what I would find out later to be about five hours after I had become unconscious. Still alive, in a less intense state, I stood up, freezing cold, completely lost, standing in the woods, still in the briar patch, not knowing what to do, too scared to move, and not knowing where to move to. I stood there for some time, stationary, looking around, as some form of brain activity and reasoning devices slowly began to return to my being. I could see a light off in the distance through the almost-leafless trees that occupied the woods I was in. Slowly realizing that things were not going to get better until I did something, I headed off toward the light. Every step I took was riddled with pain, but standing in the middle of a briar patch with nothing but a pair of pants on, freezing, was no longer an option. I made it out of the briars and onto the rough gravel road that was leading me to the light.

When I finally made it to the light, I began to recognize the area I was in. I had been here hundreds of times, just a few thousand feet from where I lived. Under the light, I could see where my chest, arms, hands, and feet had all been cut up. The blood that had come out of the scrapes and cuts now coagulated from my time in the briars. My thoughts and memory were slowly returning as I traveled toward where I lived, down another gravel path on the edge of the woods and then onto a paved path that was a sort of nature trail. There was a set of concrete stairs that connected to the paved path that led up and out of the woods across the street from where I lived. Upon ascending the stairs on my way home, I discovered three police cars parked in front of my house. I was not going to jail tonight,

and I did have enough sense at this point to realize if I came in contact with the police, I was definitely going to jail.

I descended back down into the woods, where I would circle back around to the street behind my house, sneak through their yard and into my backyard, and climb in a window on the back of the house. Once I gained entry into the house, I kept all the lights off so as not to alert the police who had been parked out front. No one was home at my house, and no one was coming home for two more days. I made my way, creeping through the mostly dark house, with only the light from the moon revealing what had taken place there earlier. I had broken records, smashed up the turntable on the stereo, and torn things up. It would appear that a bomb went off, an absolute statement of madness. I peered through the corner of a window that faced the street to find that there was now only one police car, and that car would leave a short time later. I lay on the couch, covered with a blanket, trying to get warm, wishing I was dead, filled with hopelessness and depression—the product of pursuing a lifestyle advocated by my idols.

So many of these musicians, in every genre, promote a lifestyle that is in direct opposition with what is written in the Bible, and most of these individuals have read the Bible for one reason or another—though they fail to tell their audience these important pieces of information. Those entertainers and craftsmen who have successfully manipulated the Bible and its message so as to convincingly mislead others, through an almost new “religion” of their own flavor, have had the pleasure of dining on the fruits of others who long to believe that the path of sin leads to eternal happiness along with all the answers to the universe. As teens, we are all ears and easy prey—I know I was. I think the most dangerous things and people in this world are the ones that don’t appear to be what they really are. After all, do you think the devil told Eve the truth? You catch more flies with sugar than with vinegar.

The relevance for this brief examination of music genre is to explain the influence it has played in my life. Back to Jim Morrison, here was someone who appeared to have it all. Women loved him, and we would believe he lived a lifelong party. He had his own following and had a tremendous amount of mystery surrounding him as well as incredibly thought-provoking lyrics accompanied by almost-hypnotic tones, making them even more surreal, and these lyrics could be interpreted many different ways. He had a tremendous

power to influence the way people looked at the world and the things that are most important in it, and because he was unable to accept God and Jesus, he attempted to manipulate others to do the same. It was not until much later in life that I realized he had completely ripped off the Bible for his own purposes, in an attempt to make himself a modern-day “rock-and-roll messiah,” a character he would try to create through the manifestation of a source he publicly denounced through all of his actions. Almost all of the songs he wrote were directly influenced by the Bible, with his added tone of hopeless, melancholy, “holier than thou” mystique, parading himself as though he knew more than God and was greater than Jesus, or that God had held something back from us that he would proclaim, and furthermore proclaiming that there was no salvation or need to worry about it. Probably the thing that made this individual such a threat was the fact that he was using pieces of the truth he had extracted from the Bible and twisting them. It is easier to deceive people when you are giving them some truth in what you are telling them so they don’t realize they are being led astray until it is too late. I have heard somewhere that it is of grave consequence to attempt to mislead people from God, and eventually, this guy paid the ultimate price for accepting the offer to play a “false prophet.” Like in 2 Peter 2, it drove the false prophet insane. Dead in a bathtub, jammed up on drugs, possibly a suicide—infinite wisdom at its finest.

I think we all have a Jim Morrison in our lives at some point, some celebrity we have propped up and think we can relate to as we go through life, someone we idolize for whatever reason, someone who captivates us and tries to consume us with their influence, an almost Antichrist, someone who testifies to the things we are told by Christianity not to partake in—the things that we naturally gravitate to. This all seems like some paranoid theory until you look at how we are affected by things we see and hear, such as setting the mood with soft music for a romantic moment or fight songs at sporting events. The military has even been known to blast loud music at an enemy. Some things are pretty harmless for the most part, whereas others are much more sinister. When you combine hard drugs with powerful influences in the minds of children who have not been trained to know the difference between right and wrong, you have a volatile cocktail, one that no one here can prosecute.

I cannot blame one dead celebrity for my own self-inflicted insanity and highway of bad decisions, but I can tell you that the culture so arrogantly promoted in society when I was young was more than appealing, and I unknowingly devoted much of my curiosity to listening to the ministering from this individual. It seems utterly ridiculous at this point in my life that I could have been influenced by someone who never really did anything other than run his mouth, get jammed up on drugs, and then kill himself. (We are a strange people.) We hold these celebrities in our highest esteem in our society, in our thoughts and actions, as we tell our kids not to partake in the very things that gave these people their stardom. If any of these rock stars would not have done drugs, acted like assholes, and had sex with everything that moved, do you think they would have been idolized as they have been? We all love to see debauchery, deviant sex, and violence on TV, and those we are convinced are actually partaking in these acts are our heroes, as we root for them from the sidelines while we watch and wonder. What makes us enchanted by those who commit and have committed atrocities? Is there something instilled in us that we are unaware of? Something that is extremely curious as to what would make someone gamble so recklessly with their soul, the curiosity of someone who does not fear God when they should? In this world, we definitely pass judgment on those in the spotlight, and from these judgments, we appoint their positions and place the appropriate crowns for the kingdoms they rule over. It's a very strange and mysterious place we reside in, and my present residence was now located right in the middle of it.

I sat huddled in a ball, trying to keep warm, praying now and again, too cold and uncomfortable to sleep, my mind wondering and pondering memories and mysteries, those of my life, of the world, and the reasons why. This whole escapade started because of my desire for an arm, and it had caused me to open a Pandora's box that could not be closed. I received a brief moment of comfort, gazing on a bright burning star that glowed in the last remaining hours of twilight, one I had never noticed before. It was probably always there, but I just never noticed it, like so many things that go unnoticed. Society has a way of directing us to observe the things it wants us to, and not necessarily things we need to.

Some headlights far off in the desert, maybe traveling on that road where I left the dogs behind, snaked their way up into a mountain range far off to the east, a sign that

people were awakening from their nightly slumber to go about their daily tasks, commencing their service in the kingdom.

The sun rose on the horizon, and every time it did out here was better than the last one, for the night was past and gone. The new light of the day gave me passage through the desert, illuminating all of God's creation. So many colors, all the things on the earth came out and glowed for the sun. Without the sun, without light, there was no color, no beauty, only nothingness. We take a lot of things for granted when we grow accustomed to always having them. The light graced the earth and brought with it the warmth I craved, so much that I removed my shirt and changed into a pair of shorts I had in my bag. I made my way up into the hills throughout the day.

Thoughts of earlier civilizations, like Moses and the Jews, came to mind. They wandered in the desert for many years with not much more than their hope in God. Despite the extreme hardships they were forced to endure, they kept their faith most of the time. For their devotion, God freed them from slavery, from the kingdom of Egypt, never to be enslaved again, and God made them a great, powerful nation. God sent them Moses to lead their new kingdom because he had faith in God and loved God (more information from the Bible). God loved Moses because he listened and obeyed. When the Jews grew angry with their hardships, as many do, God had mercy and gave them water from a rock and bread from the heavens. No one had ever seen anything like that before, but the Jews recorded that event in history so that it would be remembered. God loved the Jews so much that the devil attacked them, filling their minds with the ways of this world, blinding them, trying to tear them from God and His kingdom. And perhaps the devil did this because maybe they did not recognize what God was doing and they were unable to accept an honest, hardworking man as their king, one who did not fight battles the way man does, killing and plundering. Maybe Jesus conquered what they could not see, for they knew only the ways of this world, and for these ways, they became blind. God gave them freedom from other men. He gave them water from a rock. He gave them bread from heaven so that they might see how salvation would come about, but they were blinded by the devil's power. Not until after they drank the water from the rock and ate the manna in the desert did they inherit their kingdom, so maybe it is the same with the kingdom of God. That great big storybook, in John 6:53, says that not until you drink the Blood of Jesus and eat His Flesh will you

enter God's kingdom. Supposedly, man had no trouble eating the flesh from the serpent. Why, then, do we stay away from the Flesh of God? This is a violent, brutal land, and as horrible as it may seem, maybe there is no other way.

I grew weary and impatient as the day went on, bombarded with invocation, sometimes traveling on paths left from off-road vehicles and other times walking where there were no paths, stopping now and then to rest, sometimes under a tree in a gully, sometimes atop a hill, just kind of wandering around and heading in a sort of northerly direction. When the sun was high overhead, a thought told me, "If you believe, throw down your bag and leave all you have." I questioned this thought for a moment. Then, not wanting to go against what I had read in the Bible about taking things with you when you go to serve God, I dropped the bag I had carried on the side of the path I was traveling on, leaving it behind, never looking back. Thoughts persisted, exposing my fears and taking an account of my possessions: I still had a shirt. Unable to argue, I threw down the shirt, and now I had nothing on but a pair of shorts and a pair of boots. A mile or so passed, and I was hoping there would be an unmistakable sign, one that could not be misinterpreted, one telling me to end this journey, but it did not happen.

My thirst was overwhelming by this time. All I could think about was water. I hadn't had a drink in over twenty-four hours, and my throat and mouth were parched. "Maybe I should leave my shoes also," I thought. Desperate to impress the Lord and hopefully gain some recognition, I removed my boots and socks. The desert floor was covered with rocks and burs, all of which assaulted my feet with every step. For maybe twenty minutes, I walked, pulling burs from my feet when they became lodged in them, all the time wondering how far I would have to go before I was recognized, acknowledged, but nothing happened.

Finally, out of total desperation, I lay down in the dirt on my back, looking to the sky, my feet bleeding a little, my heart bleeding a lot, and said to the Lord, "I can go no further. I am exhausted. What do You want from me? I have faith, but You do not heal me. I have trusted You. I have followed You. I have given up everything, but You have done nothing for me, and it is here where I will die, where You have killed me." I lay there, unyielding to the rocks that poked into my body, complaining like a spoiled baby until a little voice said, "Get up and shut the hell up. Quit your crying, stop acting like a complete

fool, go back and get your boots, and get your ass moving. You're not even close to being done. Quit playing games." I rose to my feet and hobbled back the way I had come until I found my boots and socks. I put my socks and boots back on over my tenderized feet and got going. I assumed I was allowed to keep the boots, but as for the shirt and bag, I did not go back for them.

Not long after I had come to my senses, I realized that I was going to fail once again, and I had to break the news to the Lord. "I don't want my arm. I just want water, and I want to go home. You have broken me." Right about that time, I came to a small gully and a little voice inside my head spoke to me, saying, "Follow this gully and you will have water before the sun sets." This wasn't that pleasing because there was plenty of daylight left and I was thirsty now, thirsty to the point of insanity, but I complied with the instruction, for I had no choice. The walls of the gully grew into a gorge, and on the floor, I could detect traces of the paths water had taken in days past. I tracked my quarry, hoping that the promise of water would be where it was supposed to be.

I stopped to rest on a bank in the ravine, when a man in a four-wheel-drive truck happened by on a path along the ridge of the ravine. I assumed he was probably out for a day of off-roading in the sun, climbing hills and getting away from civilization in his vehicle—in his vehicle that civilization had provided him. He looked at me from out of the truck, bewildered and confused like everyone I had encountered on these journeys. Then he kept on going without speaking. I guess it's not every day you see a one-armed man in nothing but a pair of shorts and boots sitting on a rock alone in the middle of the desert.

Deep down in what had slowly become a canyon, I came upon a small pool of stagnant water in the shade of the canyon wall. Man, did I want a drink. I stood there looking at it, dreaming of how good some water would taste right now, though it seemed like a trap. This water was nothing more than another test. It would still be a few hours till the sun set, and I thought if I drank that water, I would probably die. Looking at that water, all I could think about was all the cattle skulls lying next to small pools of water I had seen in so many westerns on TV. I wasn't going to take a chance here. I would know when I was where I was supposed to be. Endless twists and turns snaked on as the walls of the canyon grew higher and higher. I stopped to collapse in the shade of the canyon wall, where I lay in the cool sand that resided there on the canyon floor. My heart pounded in my

chest furiously as I lay there, but I could not rest for long. My body's need for water was stronger than my desire to rest. The beast's need was great, and its kingdom that was in me served its wishes. I could not refuse its command.

Progress stopped when the canyon floor turned to rock and then disappeared. Peering over the edge of what was a huge cliff, I could see a large pool of water below, big enough to swim in. I salivated at the thought of the pleasure that the water promised, though to get to it, I would have to climb down the cliff—a cliff I could see I would be unable to climb back up if I went down it. And furthermore, on the other side of the pool appeared to be a greater cliff, one I most certainly could not climb down. The geographic formation that existed here left me with a vision of my skeletal remains lying on the rocky surface surrounding the pool. This was not the place. There was only death there, just another temptation. I had reached a dead end by traveling the canyon floor. I would have to backtrack until I found a spot where I could climb the canyon wall and get out. I figured I could follow the rim of the canyon until I could get around the obstacle. I found a navigable area where I could traverse my way out. When I got up on top, I could see in the distance that the canyon opened up to where it was very wide. I knew I had to be close to water. Onward, I traveled the ridge, until there it was, in the distance, a mighty river ripping through the land. That was the place. I could see that there would be no more obstructions on the floor of the canyon, so I made my way back down. "I'm going to dive into that river when I get there and drink till I burst," I thought. I picked up my pace, following a four-wheel-drive trail that was there on the canyon floor. Like a kid at Christmas, I could think of nothing else, nothing but the gift I was to receive, the gift of water.

As I got close to the river, I came upon what appeared to be a fairly heavily traveled dirt road (judging by the compactness of its surface), though I saw no vehicles. I followed the road, and it led right down to the river, to where there was a little pavilion with a picnic table. Off to the side was a sign; I was in a California state park. I sat down on the picnic table, took off my boots and socks, and then waded into the water. The water was cold, too cold to dive into, so I just said the blessing and scooped water to my mouth. After I tended to my immediate needs, I got back out and walked over to a trash can resting beside the picnic table. Inside the trash can, I found an old paper cup, just what I needed to really

satisfy my desires, and then I returned to the water's edge and drank till I could drink no more. The sun was now setting. The promise had been fulfilled.

With the darkness settling in, the bugs came out in force—the mosquitoes, the bloodsuckers—and began to feast on me. I put my boots back on, swatting them off as best I could, now wishing I had my clothes. Certainly this night would be spent in misery. Looking over at the trash can, I noticed the liner draped over its rim—that would be my shirt. I pulled the trash bag out, dumped out what little trash there was into the now-linerless can, tore a hole in the bottom for my head and one in the side for my arm, and put it on. It wasn't the best shirt I ever had, but it was certainly the most appreciated one. I walked over to a large sign posted on the edge of the picnic area and studied a map of the park. There appeared to be a camping area down the road a ways, where I was sure there would be more water and probably a nice spot to rest for the night. Not wanting to waste any more time, I got moving again, my legs sore, my feet tender. The dirt road wasn't too bad. It could be traveled at night without much problem. An occasional rut would catch me off guard, causing me to stumble, but I never fell. Heading toward my next destination, I wondered how long it might take to get there. Things always took longer than I thought, so I tried not to waste too much time worrying about it or get too excited about getting there anytime soon.

After walking for a while in the dark, I could see some lights in the distance. It looked as though people were camping there. When I arrived at the illuminated area, I could see that it was a campground, and a trailer sat parked with some people gathered at a picnic table. I sauntered up to their table wearing my new shirt, and I could tell by their expressions that they didn't know what the hell was going on.

“Can I have a drink of water?” I asked.

They didn't say anything but yes. They gave me a drink, and I asked them where the ranger station was. “Just up ahead,” they told me, and off I went. I felt kind of bad, having to impose on them in my present state, but I had no choice. Hopefully their trip wasn't too disturbed by my interruption. I don't know how well I would have slept knowing there was a one-armed man in a trash bag prowling around in the dark.

When I got to a bend in the road, there was a small stable with some horses or mules in it, and right by the stable was a water spigot. I reached for the handle and turned it

on. Water flowed out. “Yes,” I exclaimed to myself and drank until my belly hurt. My thirst had been quenched. The next item on the agenda was a place to sleep.

I wandered down the dirt road a short ways until I came to another camping area. The standard procedure applied as always before I went to sleep. I surveyed the area until the appropriate spot was located, a spot where I could remain undetected from the human eye. Tonight, it would be under a tree next to the little ranger station that stood in the camping facility. The station was closed for the night, and no one was around as I made my way under the tree. The tree’s branches were low and hung just above the ground, concealing me from sight, and the dirt beneath its branches was soft and free of stones. I tucked my only arm up into the trash bag I wore and curled up, trying to keep warm as the night wind began to introduce itself. The trash bag was better than nothing, but it couldn’t ward off the cold night air. Had I some clothing, things would have been much more comfortable there. As always, I was forced to stand up and mill around in circles to try to keep warm, though tonight this tactic proved to be unsuccessful. I didn’t want to travel in the dark tonight. I wanted to get some rest. I wanted to turn myself off for a few hours. I just didn’t know how I was going to do it.

As things would have it, there was a small electric transformer humming on the porch out front of the ranger station. It was a small, green, metal box, maybe eighteen inches by eighteen inches on top and about eighteen inches above the deck, and it was hot. I sat down on it for a while as it warmed my ass and then got down on my knees and slumped over it, laying my chest on it until I had to shift around for fear of being burned. I drifted in and out of sleep through the night, curled up around the humming transformer like a snake on a hot rock—not a bad night’s sleep for a crisis. The Lord had once again provided me with what I needed, if you believe in that sort of thing.

When I could see the next day approaching, I departed from the transformer, not wanting any trouble from the rangers who would probably be arriving soon. I wanted to go back to town, but I did not want to go back wearing a trash bag. The shame of that was currently greater than the pain of being out here dying of thirst. I decided I would have to go back and get the bag I had left behind.

I returned to the water spigot next to the stable where I had quenched my thirst the night before, said some prayers, the blessing, and then drank up. From my calculations, I

figured I could cut across a mountain range to the west and save some time rather than go back the same way I came. It appeared that if I did this, I would be able to circle back and retrieve my bag with my belongings. I was hoping that my bag would still be there and that I could find it. Just as I was thinking this, the little voice said, “You will find it at noon.” The voice hadn’t steered me wrong about finding the water by sundown yesterday, so I put some hope in this invocation. It was hard to tell if these voices in my thoughts were real, an actual truth, or just a hope or desire my mind manifested out of desperation. I had plenty of thoughts that weren’t true when I wasn’t attempting to get closer to God; they seemed so real at times but just never materialized. I had been pulled in so many directions over the years, by so many things, that it could be hard to recognize what was real and what wasn’t.

The day progressed as usual, up and down hills, the warm sun on my back, as I went off to reclaim what I could not give up. I said I believed and would follow, but I just couldn’t give up everything right now, or perhaps I had learned more than I had recognized and there was no longer any need to go without these things. I had spent almost twenty-four hours outdoors in a pair of shorts and boots, and I was in as good a health as ever. The Lord had provided me with a shirt. Though it was a trash bag, it was clean and warm. And when it got too cold, I found the transformer, and when I was thirsty, I had water. I can’t say I suffered anything more than my own fears of what could happen that never did. Still, I guess I had to question my faith in Jesus, for if I truly trusted Him, I would not go back to civilization until I spent the forty days.

Trust in God is a hard thing to acquire when there are so many things trying to prevent you from trusting in Him. And when you do attempt to trust Him, you become bombarded by reasons, reasons that seem to make more sense for why you should not abandon what you have come to trust. This burden of learning to trust God completely was a relentless struggle of the mind, but it had to be done at some point in time.

Up a ways, I came upon a heavily secured area surrounded by tall fences bearing signs labeled “Danger: Cyanide.” I could hear the sound of heavy equipment operating behind the hills. It must have been some kind of dump or something, a place for man to bury his crap. Our existence demands so much of us and of the things of this earth, and we refuse to live without the things we desire, even if they kill us. The signs were everywhere. We have trampled this planet like a stampede of wild animals. I’m not trying to point the

finger at anyone in particular; we are all guilty in one way or another. Having to deal with the repercussions of mortality is definitely not an easy task, and what makes it even worse are the ones who start wars amongst each other because they think they know what is right and what someone else is doing wrong. If you eat, you have to crap. There are no two ways about it, and everybody here on this earth eats, although they just may have a different diet than the one you prefer. I guess some people think shit will magically go away, but it runs out of everyone's body just the same. Maybe they need to stop sniffing everyone else's ass and sniff their own or, as in John 8:7, let he who is without sin cast the first stone. We create our own distractions by allowing ourselves to get into arguments, feuds, fights, and wars over many things that don't really matter or things we don't even really know much about, so often just to fulfill a sense of superiority over others, to feel wanted or included, or to get attention. Unfortunately, many times, when we have our turn on the soapbox, we don't know when our turn is over, or maybe we just wanted a turn on it and had nothing of value to even offer. Some even broadcast from bigger soapboxes, endlessly, about nothing.

I walked away from there and on toward where my bag hopefully was, knowing that if man was going to live with this beast, this place was necessary. On up ahead, some water ran out of the ground, and I stopped to drink. It was uphill from the dump, so I figured it would probably be safe to drink.

I got to the edge of the mountain range I had been climbing and could see the big valley that swept between the range I was on and another range to the west. Somewhere in that valley was my bag. Descending the mountain, I tried to think about where I was when I left it. The desert was beautiful, as it always seemed to be, provided you were warm and not thirsty. No one lived here, but it didn't seem like a bad place to live. Some of the first civilizations were built in the desert. Abraham lived in the desert, one probably not much different from this one. God loved him because of his unquestionable devotion to God. No matter what God asked, Abraham did it. It always seemed strange to me that God asked him to kill the son God knew Abraham loved more than his own life. I had learned on the boat trip that what you give to God, God gives back to you. Perhaps God was judging all of man through this one man, Abraham, and if Abraham did not do this, God would not have given His Son, Jesus, whom He loved and knew would be killed, murdered by an angry mob—an angry mob of descendants of Abraham. The Old Testament, in Exodus 21:24

says, “Eye for eye.” Could it also be, “a son for a Son”? Truth is stranger than fiction—to the blind.

Nobody in the world could ever do what Jesus did. I couldn't even last out here for more than a couple of days, and I was out here for my own personal gain, not to save anyone else. I had problems I had created, and though I was trying to fix them, this was not for charity, no matter what I told myself. I knew deep down that I came wanting something; Jesus came giving. We are told He left heaven, a perfect kingdom, to come down here to save us, a wretched people, a people God knew had become His enemy, and He knew exactly what was going to happen—still, He came. No one forced Him to come. God would have loved Him just the same, whether He came or not. He still would have a kingdom regardless, but He came anyway. He saw, and He truly conquered—that is to say, if you believe what has been recorded in the Bible. Who on this earth leaves behind something perfect (if that were possible here) to go out to war when they aren't in any danger at all? We only fight for our needs here when they are threatened, when we become scared, or angry. I know that when I am threatened, my first thought is to stop the one threatening me by whatever means necessary. But Jesus did not kill the ones threatening Him, for He knew they were blind and did not act on their own. They were deceived. They could not see the one He was after, despite the fact that they were carrying out its will.

Scouring every hill and gully, I searched for some landmark I might remember from the day before. There was a huge round hill I could see off in the distance, which I remembered from yesterday, and I remembered that I had my clothes with me when I passed by it. Now I just needed to find the trail I was traveling down when I left my bag. This part of the reconnaissance was not easy. It was hard to detect any difference from one trail to the next. There were so many that all went in the same direction, all looking exactly the same. I would follow one for a while and then abandon it, not recognizing anything familiar on it, and cross over a couple of gorges and then pick up another trail. The parallels to your life could be maddening out here. They came fast and in numbers.

As the morning progressed, I picked up a trail where I recognized some twists and dips from the day before. I hoped this was the trail where I had dropped my belongings, and I hoped that no one had happened by and picked them up, perhaps someone like the man I saw in the truck the day before. What if I could not find them? What if I had to go

back into town in this trash bag, walking through the streets in complete shame? Maybe this was going to be another brutal lesson of some sort, a lesson in humility. While I tried to calculate and control my fears of returning to town in my present state, there it was, up ahead, lying on the side of the road, right where I had left it, sitting there waiting for me. When I got to it, I knelt down and prayed, "I can never thank You, Lord, for what You have done for me, for I am just a man, but You have filled my heart with happiness." When I looked up, the sun was directly overhead. I didn't need a watch to know it was exactly noon. Invocation could be clear out here, away from the modern world. Unfortunately, the embrace of our kingdom was great, and life in the flesh was much more comfortable in the world we have created for it. As fulfilling to the soul as it was out here, I was still a slave to the beast that was my flesh, and I longed to satisfy its desire for comfort. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak, and my flesh had reached its limit. I followed the road and shortly found the shirt I had left. Everything I had lost was now found.

My actions on this trip would most certainly have appeared insane to anyone who did not believe in God and to people who did not really know God, my walking around, leaving things, and then returning to get them, not carrying any water, subjecting myself to discomforting situations. But this trip had brought me more understanding and more appreciation for God, and whether you believe or not, when so many things you have trusted in your thoughts happen the way they were supposed to, you can only deny their existence for so long. Everyone has spirits in them, whether you want to believe it or not. They are recognized by what we call "thoughts," and the spirits in us are identifiable by what thoughts they invoke. As scary as that may seem, we are all possessed by many spirits that we have invited in, through our ears, eyes, and senses, from television, radio, newspapers, people, etcetera. We don't do anything unless we are provoked by a thought, and every thought has a messenger of some sort behind it.

Thirst had once again plagued my body, and the closest place I knew of to get water was the river. The gully I'd begun to follow the day before wasn't far, and I soon got there, following the path of yesterday, grasping tightly to my hopes of water. I entertained myself with thoughts of history and reasons, a welcome companion with the ability to distract me from this laborious task of trekking to the watering hole. This consuming entertainment eased the burden of the journey.

I wonder how the first day and night on earth was if the tale of Adam and Eve is really true—perhaps in desperate search of water and maybe not knowing where to get it. It is said that God gave them some clothes and sent them on their way. Having clothes would have been great, but having no other knowledge of this world would have been horrific. They must have been desperate, so desperate that they would listen to anyone or anything they came in contact with that could produce any tale of comfort or relief, regardless of whether it held any truth, turning a blind eye to any motives that may have been hidden, like a child separated from a loved one, lost in a deviant department store. I was here of my own accord, and I would presumably be able to return to a safe, warm, dry place and be able to eat and resume a comfortable life protected from the elements. I would not have wanted to start from complete scratch, totally uneducated, without knowledge of my now-present state and its needs, oblivious to the changes taking place and unable to do anything about them, a captive, a victim, with no means of escape, all the while knowing deep down, I truly was f**ked in all senses of the word—never has it been more defined than then.

As I walked through the canyon, growing nearer to my destination, I slowly began to think that maybe there was a lot more going on in man than I realized—in me, in all of us—like some bad science-fiction film come true, the conspiracy theory of all conspiracy theories.

The day held its burden as had the day before, but knowing where I was heading and what awaited me made the journey easier. Yes, it was going to take time, but now I knew there was definitely going to be a reward at the end. I passed the stagnant water I had passed the day before, only this time without temptation. I headed up the canyon wall when I was near the great pool below the cliff, just continuing on without rebellion.

When I was going down the last descent into the mouth of the canyon, I saw a coyote run up into the hills. This reminded me of the two dogs that had followed me earlier on in my journey. At one time, perhaps, their ancestors were wild like the coyote, but through the years, man broke them of those ways of the wild and made them companions. Man loved his dog, and if a man spent time with him, teaching him and caring for him, that dog would die for him, for a dog knows no joy without a good master.

The journey to the watering hole was drawing to a close, and I began to confess my sorrow to Jesus for the abandonment of my attempt. “I cannot make it another day. I cannot

do what You have done.” A quick reply in my thought followed my confession: “All you can do for me is set an example and tell the others of me.” In my thought, I said, “I will do this for You. I do believe in You, and I know You are who You say You are, and You have done so much for me.” Nothing more did I say after that, not wanting to offend the Lord with a dragged-on bullshit speech to try to cover up my failure. Deep down, I knew the Lord let me off without insult or injury, especially when this attempt, like the ones before, was just a drop in a bucket compared to what I had claimed I was going to do. I’d told the Lord that I would spend forty days out here, but three days and two nights was all I could do—a far cry from forty, not even close.

I reached the road that led to the river, when a truck with two older couples in it stopped next to me to ask for some direction about the road ahead. I told them I hadn’t gone down the road that far and didn’t know what was down there. They asked me what I was doing, and I told them I was hiking around for a few days on vacation, nothing more. I was glad I wasn’t wearing the trash bag anymore. I then asked them for a ride out of the park. They said they were going to go drive a little farther down the road but would pick me up on their way back and give me a ride as far as the campground where they were staying. Then they went on their way. I went to the river as I had done before and drank. Then I headed back in the direction of the ranger station I had slept near the night before. I hadn’t gone but a mile or two when the truck pulled up. I jumped in the back, in the bed of the truck. We roared down the bumpy dirt road, bouncing all over as I held on, looking out the back at the dust of the desert flying up behind us. I sat there knowing I was beaten once again, and this time perhaps worse than the times before, though I wasn’t too sad because I knew I gave it the best fight I could at this time—three days out here, and not a bite of food in four. I said my goodbyes to the desert as it sat there silent in all its majesty. I had learned a lot in the brief time I was out here, and my knowledge of the Lord had grown, though once again, I was unsuccessful in acquiring what I came for. My faith had grown over these past few days, and I had quite a vacation, maybe the best one I had ever had. That’s not to say I wasn’t glad it was over, just that it was very fulfilling.

I rode in the back for some time, hoping this truck was going to go most of the way to Yuma, not wanting to walk anymore, my feet and legs exhausted. We rounded a turn, and I saw the dam I had crossed when I went into the desert and the paved road I had come

in on. When we got to the pavement, the truck stopped and the driver asked if I wanted a ride all the way to Yuma. I couldn't have been happier about that. I told them I did, and then off again we went. We hadn't gone too far when there they were, barking and chasing the truck as we went by, the two dogs that had followed me. They had safely made it back home. I don't know if they recognized me or not, but I could never forget them, and it was pleasing to see them safe and doing their thing.

We had just about reached town when the California police pulled up behind us (the civilian military), popped on their lights, and pulled us over. Apparently it's against the law of that state for anyone to ride in the back of a pickup truck. The one cop took a look at the driver's license and informed him of this law while I stood next to the truck, hoping they weren't going to give him a ticket for helping me. Luckily, they didn't. Then the police moved on to me, with the usual questioning: What are you doing out here? Do you have any drugs? Are you wanted anywhere? They went through my bag, took my ID, and ran my number through their computer. Then they sent me off on foot when all my information checked out okay. I guess man can just never know who is a threat, and we are forced to be on our guard from each other because of the actions of a few. Unfortunately, I can say that until the last few years, I had been guilty of just about everything I had been accused of and more, so I couldn't hold this against them, though I was a little perturbed by the whole production and procedure. I was not allowed to ride in the truck any farther. Back to the pavement for me.

The hike into town from this point was short, and when I arrived there, I was welcomed by a water fountain that resided on a building at the border of Arizona and California. I drank from it until my belly hurt—standard practice by this point. Next came the hard part, maybe the hardest part of this whole escapade: the call to my folks to have them send me some money. What was I going to tell them? I certainly couldn't tell them that I came out here thinking I was going to get my arm back; they had enough problems without having to think I was totally insane. Would I tell them I was a changed man and came out here to be like Jesus? I decided I would tell them that. After all, I told Jesus I would tell of Him. The collect call was made.

My sister answered with a little chuckle and then began the questioning. "Where are you? What are you doing in Yuma?"

“I just needed a little vacation.” I froze. I couldn’t say the first thing about Jesus, kind of like Peter’s denial, I guess. I told her that I needed her to send me some money so I could get out of here. She told me she would wire me some money and instructed me to call her back in a few hours so she could tell me where to pick it up.

While I waited for the marks to arrive, for the printed images on the notes that would gain me access to food and the comforts of the civilization I desperately longed to return to, I milled around the peaceful town, enjoying the summer breeze that existed here in March, a pleasant change from the cold that existed back home. Thoughts of a hotel room and food entertained me while I passed the time waiting for the money to arrive. The few coins I had floating around in my bag were just enough to get me a soda from a vending machine I happened upon. Then I was completely broke. I had plenty of money back home, and credit cards, but I hadn’t wanted to take anything with me that might hinder my success, though now I wished I had. How much I longed to be back in the comfort of the world of the beast, with all my senses being tended to.

When I called back after the allotted time, my sister informed me that she and my dad had wired a few hundred dollars. I told them I would call them back when I got it so they would know everything was alright.

The sun had long since gone down, and another night had arrived, although I anticipated this one would be spent indoors. When I got to the money-wire office to pick up the funds, the store was closed. By this point, I was sick of walking. The thought of having to go any farther was extremely annoying, but as was always the case in my life, I didn’t have a choice. I wanted to be indoors, needed to be indoors, so I consented with this obstacle. I asked a few people on the street for directions to another office until I got wind of one on the other side of town. (Fortunately, it was a small town.) I hurried along, not wanting that office to close before I got there. This office was located in a grocery store. When I got there, the store was open, but unfortunately, I found the money office was closed and wouldn’t be open till midmorning the next day. Talking to a person who worked there, I was informed that there was not an office in town that was open now and that none of them would be open until tomorrow. I was devastated and furious once again. It wasn’t going to be over just because I wanted it to be over. I refused to believe I was going to have to stay out another night. This was almost impossible to accept. “Why?” I thought. I angrily

scoured the town, searching relentlessly for hours for an office until there was no hope left. Heading through the streets, trying to come up with a plan, I passed a man who appeared to be down on his luck.

“Hey, you know anywhere I can buy a sleeping bag?” he asked.

“No, I wish I could help you. I’m actually trying to figure out where I’m sleeping tonight,” I replied.

“You got any money,” he asked.

“Not a dime.”

He reached into his pocket, pulled out some money, and held out two dollars.

“Here,” he said.

I looked at the money and said, “One is fine,” not wanting to take this man’s money, knowing I would have plenty tomorrow.

He said sternly, “I’m giving you two. You take two.”

I had no problem arguing with this, so I took it and thanked him, and we went our separate ways. This is a crazy world. Here was what appeared to be a homeless man—the last person in the world I would expect to get money from—forcing money on me. It is always inspiring to experience the good side of humanity. This man did not give to be recognized or for tax purposes, and he did not appear to have a surplus of wealth, just like the man in the train station who gave me his change so I could go home. They only gave out of their concern for another person, for no other reason. They might not have been overjoyed at having to do this, but they did it. There are kind and wicked people in all walks of life. I was very fortunate to have run across a few kind ones on my travels. The Lord works in mysterious ways. After we departed, I went straight to a convenience store and bought a big slushy drink, which ate up about half the money.

After scheming of some way to get off the street, I made another call home. Perhaps my sister could call a hotel and give them a credit card number to get me a room. She agreed to this, so I told her I would go to the hotel next to where I currently was and see if they would do this, and then I would call her back. Unfortunately, upon talking with the desk clerk, I found out this method of securing a room was unacceptable. I have to admit, I wasn’t looking like the average customer. My clothes were filthy from sleeping in the dirt for the last two nights, my hair was messed up, and I had a tattered bag over my shoulder.

Sadly, I walked away, truly knowing I was going to be outdoors for the remainder of the night. I called home once again to inform them of the news and to let them know I would call tomorrow when I got the money so they would know everything was okay.

There was a field across the street from where I was that looked like a good spot to stay the night. It had small trees and shrubs all about it. Spying a clump of bushes that looked like they might offer some concealment, I wandered over to investigate. When I got right up on them, I found there was already someone sleeping in them. Not wanting any trouble, I crept away quietly. I walked a little farther until I found another spot that looked good, but when I got to that one, it, too, was already occupied. I searched on, only to find another man in the next spot I selected. This place was filled with homeless. After my third attempt to seek solace in that field was foiled, I thought it better to move on to a different area away from here. I would never sleep well with this many strangers so close by. Not only couldn't I sleep inside, but now I couldn't sleep outside either. And what was even more frustrating was, the air tonight was warm enough that I figured I could get a good night's sleep, and I was exhausted. I just couldn't find a place to lay my head. Even the manger didn't have room here.

My search continued as I approached the interstate that ran through the town. It was there that I found my spot. There was an off-ramp from the interstate that encircled an area of land, with shrubs and overgrowth much like the field I had just left. Further examination ensued until I was confident no one else was occupying this area. It was the best spot in town, and not a soul but me in it. Kneeling down, I said my prayers and drifted off to sleep, listening to the comforting sounds from the highway, thinking toward the future, when I would be reinstated into society.

A peaceful night departed, making way for Sunday, the Lord's Day. I would go to Mass at the Catholic Church I had passed on my way to the desert and then pick up my money. I dusted off my clothes (I was filthy) and then headed off to Mass. Walking down the road, I happened onto a lawn sprinkler running, shooting water into the air. My hair was a mess, so I stood next to it, soaked my head, and slicked back my hair. I was now ready for church. The church was a beautiful oasis with palms gracing its courtyard and a Spanish hint of architecture about its structure. The only fault I could find with it was that the first Mass was to begin about the same time I was to pick up my money. Another blow

struck my heart. Would these conflicts ever cease? I was angry but didn't fight it. There was just no use, just a little more salt in the wound. Everything on these adventures would push me right up to my breaking point. They were relentless.

It was several hours until Mass, so I thought I might occupy my time by walking through the center of town, browsing the streets. Passing by a little store with a table in front of it, I stopped to rest. I wasn't there long when an older man who appeared to be homeless sat down at the table. He had a smile on his face and started a conversation.

"Not a bad night last night," he said happily.

"No, it wasn't too bad," I replied.

This was a tough old dude. I don't know how he ended up where he was or what kind of person he was, and it really didn't matter now, but he hadn't given up, he had a good attitude today, and he was pleasant to be around. I don't know if he believed in God or not, but maybe one day, if not today. The Lord does like people who are tough when the chips are down, and He has a way of helping them to see the light if they want to see it. (Usually all you have to do is ask sincerely.) We sat making idle conversation for a while, watching a bicycle race that was taking place through the town, passing right by the table we were seated at. While we sat there passing the time, the store behind us opened, and the owner came out, started talking to us, and offered us some coffee and something to eat. Regretfully, I had to decline. It wasn't that long until Mass was to begin, and you're not supposed to eat anything for at least an hour before you eat the Body and Blood of Jesus. I had come this far, no sense in screwing things up now. When my time at the table came to a close, I said my goodbyes and went off to church.

The church was packed when Mass began. I stood in the back because there weren't enough seats for all who were there. Every kind of person in the world appeared to be there—most, I assume, with the hope of heaven and a better life here until they got there. The pastor spoke with a commanding authority when he delivered his homily, not insulting or placing blame on any one individual but simply teaching sternly yet compassionately of what Jesus had said to teach. When the Mass was nearing the end, it came time to shake hands with those around you. It seemed as though when you shook someone's hand in this environment, they would let go of their defenses for a brief moment, forgetting about everything that tore us apart and divided us in our lives, and put it aside long enough to

share the gracious gift of brotherhood, peace, and unity, the gift that Jesus had brought to man—a true unity, one comprised of love for your fellow man, love for God, hope of salvation. Unfortunately, this typically didn't last too long for most, sometimes not even into the church parking lot, where we would become impatient and frustrated while trying to get out, a mere fifteen minutes after we all just had Mass and shook hands. We truly are stubborn in our ways so often.

When the time came, I received the Body of Christ, the first bite of food I'd had in five days. It didn't fill my belly, but it did fill my soul. When the Mass ended, the people poured out of the church. The pastor was standing out front, greeting the people as they came out. As I made my exit out into the courtyard, with my bag draped over my shoulder, he came over to me, looked me straight in the eye, and shook my hand. Though I can't remember what he said, I could see that this man did seem to care for all those who came to him to learn about God, and he certainly went out of his way to make me feel welcome. He definitely appeared to be following one of the main functions in the job description.

After the Mass, I went to the office to pick up the money. I provided the person there with the necessary information, and in return, they handed me a stack of notes with the faces, with the images on them. No one trades without these notes, and they are always on our minds. This world pounds the authority of these marks and their value into our minds. We make it our life's work to seek these marks out and acquire them. Tending to my earthly needs, I got some food at a fast-food joint and then got a room at the hotel I'd been rejected from the night before. I got a room, took a long bath, and washed my clothes. Then I turned on the TV I had become addicted to, enjoyed some of its instant false companionship, and went to sleep. I was back in the arms of the flesh. I wasn't proud to be here, but I could fight it no longer, and my body definitely loved the rest and relaxation.

When I awoke, it was evening, an evening much more pleasing than the night before. I had money now, and I was somebody recognized by this kingdom once again. When my belly growled, I obeyed it, catching a cab to the best Mexican restaurant in town, where I ate my fill. After dinner, I returned to my room, content. I'd had one of the most enjoyable nights out I had ever had. It seemed like God was right there with me in celebration the entire time, smiling on me, and that is a joy that can't be bought. Though I had failed miserably, it felt like He had acknowledged my effort as valid, and in return, He

gave unto me what I loved even though it was a desire of my beast. It was all I could understand and enjoy.

The next morning, I caught the bus for home. The ride was long, but I needed the rest, so it didn't matter. I occupied my time by looking out the window and talking occasionally to the person who would end up sitting next to me. One gentleman in particular was a military man who was going to retire soon and become a preacher in the Christian faith, not the Catholic faith but one that was based on Jesus. We talked briefly on the subject of Jesus until I offended him by telling him that if you don't receive the Body and Blood of Jesus, you won't go to heaven. I guess his heart just couldn't accept that then. It's so hard to have someone tell you that your most cherished dreams will not come true or that you are wrong about them, but to have a true faith, you must have complete trust in what you are placing your faith in, and to truly trust Jesus, you must put aside what man has said to believe and obey, and believe every word Jesus has spoken.

Religion can get wrapped up in right and wrong with so many people, but it is very black and white if you simply look at exactly what is in the Bible and don't try to twist it to suit your desires or judgments. He may not have liked hearing it from me, but it originated from Jesus. He plainly said, in John 6:54, that if you do not eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, you do not have eternal life. I guess my problem with those who say they have faith in Jesus but do not believe everything He said is, how can you have faith if you ignore one thing He has said? Do you think He was lying about this? How can you have faith in someone if you do not believe every single word they have said? If you do not believe what they have said, you do not trust them, and if you do not trust them, then you cannot have faith in them. These things may be hard to accept, but what choice do you have? Only Jesus has eternal life. No one likes everything Jesus says because typically it involves having to do things that are extremely uncomfortable and frustrating, and we would rather try to rationalize with them until we have come up with an excuse that we can be thoroughly convinced is what we want to believe. Things of the Bible are very clear if you let them be and accept them. Don't bother to bring a lawyer here—it won't change a thing.

As we traveled on, our bus was pulled over and some men from immigration got on board the bus, checking several of the Hispanic passengers for identification. They then removed those who did not have a number that stood for their name in this kingdom. No

one lives or trades here without a number that stands for his name. We then resumed our journey without further interruption. The remainder of the trip was uneventful, filled only with sleep and casual thought. I arrived in Washington, DC, very early Friday morning, where I was greeted by my dad at the bus station. He then dropped me off at my house. When I got home, I never confessed to the real reason for my trip. I never kept my promise to Jesus. I was just too afraid, like Peter, only there was no rooster crowing anywhere except in my head.

Chapter 5

Second Sea

I continued to pray and go to church every Sunday through the spring and into the summer, trying to grow and lead a sin-free life, though it was hard and I was unsuccessful. When the month of July—the month in which I lost my arm—grew near, my hopes to regain an arm had arisen once again. This time, I thought I would try my chances at sea, where I had lost my arm. I decided I would go out on the Fourth of July, driving my boat once again, until I ran out of gas, and then pull the plug on it, sinking it and leaving myself truly at the mercy of God, showing Him that I had true faith in Him.

Several days before the Fourth, my spirits were soaring. I decided I would depart on my quest a day or two earlier than originally planned because the sea was calm at this point. On the second of July, at about four in the morning, I slipped out the door of my home and headed off to death's door once again, hoping to find what I had been searching for. This trip harbored no fear whatsoever. I had grown to trust the Lord, and I knew how to defeat the fears that would attack me when it came time to do these things. Out into the night and onto the highway I went, filled with joy, all the while thinking, "Surely when the sun sets, I will have my arm." I hadn't gone very far down the road when I saw a person standing on the side of the highway, waving a red cloth, in need of some sort of assistance. I didn't know whether to stop or keep going, so I just kept going, thinking, "Certainly God wants me to stay on track. The police should probably be by soon. That's their job, and this is a very busy road even in the middle of the night. This area of town is not a good one, but it doesn't look like this person is in any immediate danger, just broken down." I felt kind of bad, but it passed.

When I got to the shore, I was strong in spirit, anxious and willing. I hooked the boat trailer up to the truck, pulled it to the gas station, filled all three tanks without hesitation, and headed to the boat ramp. I uneventfully launched the boat, and off I went,

through the inlet and out into the sea. The sea was calm today as I roared through it heading due east. The sky was plagued with clouds, and a fine mist fell from it, but that didn't bother me today. I had learned to get strength from faith and not from the sun. I had taken my fishing poles and my tackle along to offer them as sacrifice as well, since that was my passion. I had also taken my global positioning system (GPS) so that I could stay on a straight path of ninety degrees, due east.

As the trip progressed, I occasionally passed a fishing boat working the sea, but for most of the time, I was surrounded by nothing but water. I thought of Noah and the great flood, and how God was said to have wiped all men but Noah from the earth. It was said that Noah did not perish because Noah listened to God. God would have saved anyone who listened, but no one else did; they only served themselves, so that is all they heard—their own desires. I would not put myself in the same class as Noah, but I had come to see that the more I excommunicated myself from society—such as TV, media gossip, indulgence of the senses, intoxication, or consumption of daily life—the more clearly I could think and interpret my thoughts. I'm guessing Noah probably didn't talk to a lot of people back then or get caught up in any scandals going around, and he probably prayed a lot so as to stay in touch with God. From what I had seen, invocations were very clear until I started doing things God was not pleased with or things that were damaging to myself and others; then communications would slowly slip away. When one speaks, if no one listens, how long will they speak while continuing to be ignored?

In Noah's time, other men were probably ignoring God, so God did not speak to them, meaning they knew not of the flood. Noah apparently listened to God, knew God, trusted God, and obeyed God. When God told Noah to build a boat, Noah did not ask why or say, "I don't believe I need the boat to survive." Noah did exactly what God said to do, and Noah was saved by the vessel God told him to build. Noah did not say, "I will do this, but I won't do that," for he knew God never spoke of things that weren't absolutely necessary. Noah knew everything God said was to be strictly abided by. God only spoke of that which was of the utmost necessity. There was nothing said that was not to be observed. For those who did not listen, whose fault was it that they died? Do you think no one saw Noah building the huge boat? Do you think no one knew who Noah served? God shows no prejudice. He gives the same to all. It is your free will to listen and your free will to

observe what He has said, and He gives all who have ears a chance to hear, but if you refuse to listen, whose fault is that? I had a lot of distractions in my life that I loved, that I struggled with, but I kept trying to get a little better all the time—not because I didn't love these things, just that I knew where they were leading me.

The sea remained calm as I headed into the now-blue waters of the deep. I spent my time in thought and prayer with all the confidence of victory on my brow. I never stopped praying even though I felt confident and strong at the moment. I had learned how easy it was for a spirit to come unexpectedly and take away my strength. Usually that could happen when I was overconfident or began to relax or exhibit pride as though I perhaps had strength without God. There are so many things in this world that you can't see, and they do so much more in this world than things you can see. Actions are caused by decisions, and decisions are made by thoughts, but who makes these thoughts? There are so many links in these chains, and they are so often connected to an anchor.

Sailing on, with the pains of anticipation increasing, time taunted me: "How much longer? How much farther? How many more hours will it be before the fuel is gone?" I wanted to be there, and I wanted to be there now. The sea conditions this trip were much more favorable than the last, allowing me to cover a much greater distance with the amount of fuel I had on board. Everything in life always seemed to be a double-edged sword. My prejudices always seemed to get the best of me, and this time, my prejudice led me to believe it would be better if it were calm when I departed. It seemed like I could just never win. If it were rough today, my boat would have probably been out of gas by now, from consuming more fuel, working so much harder to climb the sea, but not today. The vessel raced farther and farther into the sea, farther away from land, efficiently and without resistance.

Reaching the edge of the Gulf Stream, I was greeted by a current that bore the sea a rougher texture. The sea rose up and down, wearing an eerie turquoise face on its waves, crowned with a hint of pewter it received from the foaming peaks reflecting back the light from the cloud-filled sky. The conditions had gone from perfect to very unpleasant. Though the sea was bearing its fangs, this felt as though it was just another test. It actually brought me joy, for I knew I was getting closer. Nothing would make me turn back this

time. I remembered what had happened last time I turned back. I would not make the same mistake twice.

The main tank went dry at long last, and I hooked up the twelve-gallon can as the sea tossed the now-lifeless boat. I said a prayer for strength, fired the boat back up, and continued climbing the seas, due east. According to my GPS, I was over one hundred and fifty miles out from the inlet I had left, and I was still going farther east. The day was well into the afternoon, and off in the distance, I could see some holes in the clouds lined with sunlight. The holes weren't large, and darkness surrounded them, but nonetheless, they did exist.

The larger of the two spare tanks had been installed for about an hour before it went dry. I scrambled to the front of the boat as it tossed in the steep five-to-six-foot sea, hooked up the final tank, and continued on to the last leg of my offering. I was finding it harder and harder to keep my feelings of pride and vanity suppressed as they were encouraging celebration for having come so far—as if I was the only one in the equation. Not wanting to offend the Lord, I kept to task and disregarded any provocation from these feelings, knowing in the back of my mind that none of this ever would have happened if God had not given me what I had asked for in prayer. This trial was nearing its end, and the thought of victory was upon me. This time, I was going to do what I said I was going to do, and victory would not be denied.

The boat crashed up and down on the waves as the final tank went dry. Dedicated to my task with all the enthusiasm of a lottery winner right before he picks up his check, I took the two portable tanks and threw them over the side so as not to have anything to cling to when my boat sank. I took off my shoes and threw them overboard. Going to the front of the boat, I prayed that Jesus and God give me an arm and deliver me safely back to land today. Arising to my feet, confident my prayers would be answered, I proceeded to the back of the boat, where I then removed an access cover in the motor well. I stood in the very back of the boat to keep it as low as possible in the water, to help it to sink as fast as it could. The water stampeded into the six-inch hole as it gorged itself on the helpless vessel. All my chores were done now. I just had to wait.

Overcome with joy and expectation, I returned to the bow, my body losing control of its involuntary functions such as breathing, which had now become completely erratic,

my heart with no particular rhythm. Not knowing whether to laugh or cry, I sat there embracing the greatest joy I had ever felt. I gazed out over the sea, where I saw a ray of sunlight that had broken through the dark clouds and appeared to be slowly making its way toward my boat. The vessel was partially submerged at this point, with waves rolling in and out of the stern and the ray of light now shining directly on me and my tiny vessel. I was in the true spotlight. There were no fans or cheers, nor a spectator. The only sound was that of the sea around me, but not a greater honor could this life have bestowed upon me, even if the entire world bowed down and worshipped me. God had recognized me, and there was no denying this. As the light laid its graces upon my bones, I removed my shirt and asked Jesus for an arm, but nothing happened. I guessed I would have to wait until the boat sank. Perhaps God was just letting me know He was here so I wouldn't worry.

Just as quickly as the light had arrived, it disappeared and the sky was consumed with thick, black clouds. I went to the stern of the boat; the boat had stopped sinking. Water rolled in and out of the back, but it would not sink any further. "The big empty gas tank under the deck must be keeping me afloat," I thought. I took off the cap to the tank and began filling it with water with a bailing jug I had. Gallon after gallon I poured into the tank, though it sank no further. It then occurred to me, "This boat is not going to sink." The boat must have had a flotation hull, one that was supposed to keep the boat from sinking. It had never dawned on me that this boat wouldn't sink. I figured with all the overrated horsepower the boat had, the extra motor weight would take her right to the bottom like a rock. Not today. Knowing I was powerless to do anything further, I gave up and returned to the front of the boat. Sitting down on the deck, I watched as the sea rolled up the deck from the back, stopping only a few feet short of where I was. Then it would roll back down. I thought maybe I would have to wait out here till the Fourth of July. After all, that is when I originally said I would come out. Certainly Jesus would not deny me this time.

The darkened sky brought forth a cold, hard, driving rain accompanied by thunder and lightning. The light of the day was disappearing as night pursued it. Placing my shirt back on, I lay on the deck, immersing my body up to my neck in the warm water of the Gulf Stream that had consumed the back half of my boat. I laid my head on a spool of rope to keep it out of the water that occasionally would roll up the deck to where my head rested. I took one of the canvases that was on board and draped it over my body, trying to

conserve some warmth and keep the cold downpour off my skin. My body shivering and exhausted, I drifted off to sleep with my broken heart. Not a care did I have left in the world, not even for my life. I now could only try to keep the hope alive with excuses I made for why Jesus had not done what He had claimed to be able to, and that just wasn't enough to keep it alive.

The rains persisted throughout the night, while the boat remained afloat, and I twisted and turned in the water, trying to find warmth. When I could sleep no longer, I emerged from my resting place. The rain was now over, the sea had calmed, and I sat upon the giant fish box in the front of the boat, waiting for the sun, soaked and shivering. Halfheartedly, I said a few prayers, trying not to hold a grudge, thinking maybe it would still happen.

The sun came up and displayed a calm, flat sea, not a ripple on it—an ideal day on the water if you wanted to be here. The day was spent in prayer and thought as I drifted on the gentle sea, pondering Jesus, God, and what They were all about, what Their purpose was, and how exactly They were going about getting it done. I thought about man. I thought about history, the things of this world, and myself. I did not pray for an arm, and I did not blame Jesus for not giving me one the day before. I spent most of my time wondering what I was doing wrong, why my faith wasn't strong enough. I could think of many reasons Jesus might not do what I had asked of Him. The passage Luke 11:11 came to mind, which asks, what father gives his son a snake when he asks for a fish? And I thought of John 5:14 and the time when Jesus healed the man and told him to go now and see that he didn't sin again and have something worse happen to him.

These things stuck out in my mind as valid, but at the same time, I couldn't help but think about Matthew 7:7, telling me to ask and I will receive, knock and the door will be opened. Perhaps God did not give things to those who were not responsible enough to have them, unlike those of us who sometimes give our children and others things they are not responsible enough for, just because they keep asking and we want them to love us. When I honestly thought about it, I did realize that I probably wouldn't even make it one night without sinning if I got an arm, no matter how much I wanted to believe it. Realistically, I would probably head straight to the nearest bar and celebrate my newly acquired arm with alcohol and some female companionship. Just because I was willing to risk my life to get

something I wanted didn't mean I was worthy of it. It just meant that I would stop at nothing to get what I wanted. Lots of men died digging for gold.

Intoxication and carousing were a tough combination to beat. The greatest desire man has in this world is for intercourse with women, and just about every facet of our existence is centered on this apex ceremony. Men and women indulge in the pleasures that are distributed when this ritual is performed. The more intense and enchanting, the greater the reward, and those who could not actively participate would join in as spectators to the greatest show on earth. I knew God did not approve of these things, but their lure was so powerful, and I would be a bald-faced liar if I said I could resist their charm. Having an arm would put me right back in the middle of that, right where I longed to be.

I sat in the bow of the boat in the hot sun, my legs resting down through an access hatch to the hull of the boat, my feet soaking in the water that filled the boat just beneath the level of the deck, accompanied by a small trigger fish who had made his way into what was slowly becoming a floating reef. I occasionally took a sip of a thirty-two-ounce sports drink I had found buried in a compartment on board, forgotten and left behind from some past fishing trip. The Lord had once again provided me with all that was needed as I drifted aimlessly and uneventfully through the day.

When night fell back upon the earth, I climbed into the fish box, which I found I could fit into, and drifted off to sleep, wrapped up in a skull-and-crossbones flag that now served as my blanket. That night was spent with brief interruptions of my sleep, in which I would awake to see if my boat was sinking any farther than it already had, and to pray and wonder.

When the day broke, it was the Fourth of July. Perhaps today would be the day. When I said my morning prayers, I asked for an arm, though as before, I did not receive one, and at this point, I did not really expect it to happen. The sea had remained as calm as the day before, undisturbed except for the thrashing of the giant yellowfin tunas leaping out of the water all around my boat. These were the biggest yellowfins I had ever seen. I frantically scrambled around, gathering together my fishing gear. I put on my fish-fighting belt, got my rod strapped into the harness, hooked up a green machine—a green rubber-squid fishing lure—that was lying around, and drifted it back behind my boat. Then I jerked it as I retrieved it, hoping to hook a fish. As I did this, I thought for a moment,

“Maybe this is another test to see if I can resist the temptation of catching one of these great fish.” I loved fishing—I hate to admit it, but probably more than God. Paranoid that engaging in this activity might land me in a bad predicament, I put my gear away. My thought was that if a boat came by now and saw me rigged up, they might think I was out here fishing and may not stop. I was ready to go home now, with or without an arm. It had also dawned on me that perhaps one of these fish might pull me in if I got off balance. After calculating all the horrific scenarios, I just sat and watched the great fish, with all their fury and might, pursuing and consuming their quarry. It was a fisherman’s wildest dream, but I had to let it go. It was said that Jesus was tempted by the devil with a loaf of bread. I think it would have been easier to resist the bread than these tunas.

When I was finally starting to reach my breaking point and I could no longer stand floating around out in the middle of the ocean, I thought maybe I would petition Jesus for some fuel. He did it before, so maybe He would do it again. I knelt down in the bow of the boat and prayed for gas. Then I closed up the access cover in the stern and tried the bilge pump—it worked. Even though the batteries had been submerged for over thirty-six hours, they had enough power in them to pump the boat dry and get it up on top of the water again. I was overjoyed. “Surely I’m going home,” I thought. I went to the helm and cranked her over. She sputtered once and then nothing. I proceeded to crank her over until the batteries died. Growing enraged, I returned to my seat on the fish box, angrily wondering why.

As I sat there gazing on the horizon, a ship appeared, heading my way. I sprang to my feet and stood on the bow, anxiously awaiting its arrival. When the ship got closer, I began waving my red shirt in my hand, trying to get their attention. This went on for about twenty minutes until they passed by, not stopping and then disappearing. Maybe they didn’t see me, or maybe they just didn’t feel like stopping. As I stood there wondering what more I could have done to get their attention, it hit me like a ton of bricks: the person on the side of the road who stood there waving their red cloth for help on my way down to the beach, the person I passed by, not stopping, not caring. Things had a way of being brutally clear out here. The truth is so hard to accept but too clear to be denied, and now I was suffering for the choice I had made, and I was helpless to do anything about it now. I

returned to my seat on the box, wondering now if I would be rescued or what other unforeseen twists might be in store for me on this trip.

I had heard that there is nothing greater than to lay down one's own life, but perhaps I was laying mine down for a reason that was evil. Perhaps that was the worst thing one could do. Perhaps I didn't realize what I was asking for. We are very complicated beings, and there is so much going on in us, so much that we aren't even aware of a lot of it. If you look closely at our motives, the reasons behind many of our actions, if you actually sit down and sort them out, it can really scare the hell out of you. Being truly honest with yourself is not easy, nor is it pleasant, and the unfortunate thing about it is, if you can't face the truth, you will never get anywhere. One truth I had to face was that I did love the things of this world, and I loved them more than God. I know this is not what God wanted to hear, but He already knew it, and as unfortunate as it was, at least I was not lying to Him. One day, this would hopefully change, and I knew honesty was the first step.

When the morning was drawing to a close, my patience had grown thin. I was tired of waiting. Maybe Jesus just wanted to see if I would give it my all and try to start the motors again. After all, the Lord helps those who help themselves. I knelt down and prayed for gas and for the motors to start. The batteries were now drained, dead, so I would have to try to pull start the motors. Each motor came with an emergency pull cord. This cord was some last-feeble-attempt kit they put inside the cover of the motor that supposedly would allow you to pull start an enormous engine with a tiny cord when all else has failed—an instrument of false hope and preoccupation. I followed the instructions printed on the motor for the manual starting procedure using the cord. After wrapping the cord around the flywheel atop the motor, I pulled it as instructed. The giant motor barely moved. I tried again and again until one of the attempts ended with the cord coming loose from the flywheel, stinging me in the face like a whip. This pushed me over the edge until I was completely consumed with anger. I knelt down and began screaming obscenities at the Lord. "I have come out here. I have trusted You, and look what You have done to me. You have made me look like a fool for my belief in You."

Instantly, as soon as I had finished my tirade, I raised my head, and there before me was a huge ship heading straight in my direction. I ran to the bow with my red shirt, frantically waving it, hoping I would not be denied. As the ship grew near, I could see that

I had been recognized and that they were slowing down, though I never quit waving my shirt. It takes a ship of that size several miles to stop, and they had to pass by before they could get the ship to a halt. When I was confident that I was going to be rescued, I guzzled down the remainder of the drink I had been rationing since the day before. When they slowly came back, they pulled up alongside me so that my boat lay up alongside their ship, and they threw me a line. A man up on the deck asked me what the problem was. I told them that my motors were swamped and wouldn't run. They had become swamped, so I convinced myself it wasn't a total lie. Though it really was, I just didn't feel like explaining my beliefs right here. He said they didn't carry any gas on board, and I assured him I did not need any gas and told him all I needed was a ride out of here. They threw down a long rope ladder, which was attached to a hoist that pulled me up to the main deck.

Once I was on deck, they took me to see the captain. I walked past the men who were there, barefoot and wearing nothing but my red shirt and a pair of shorts. They must have thought I was the dumbest son of a bitch in the world, over three hundred miles out, with no shoes, with no nothing. The captain had the same questions I had grown accustomed to hearing so many times before, and I told him the same story. The last thing I wanted was to be stuck on a ship with a bunch of men who thought I was crazy. No one I knew of in the world really seemed to believe that Jesus and God were really here in this world at all times and that They could do things on a physical plane, the same things that were done when His body walked the earth. There may be a church on every corner of the world, but I'm not sure if they really believed these guys were real. The captain accepted my answers to his questions, though he did appear to be a little skeptical. It was a pretty unusual situation. They raised the Coast Guard on the radio to inform them that they had picked up someone at sea. I was too far out to be towed back, and I was too far out to be picked up, so the captain informed me that I would be going to Holland with them, to their destination, from where I could then take a plane back to the United States. Much to my displeasure, they could not get my boat on board and would have to set it adrift.

As the ship got back underway, I gazed out the window of the galley, drinking some fruit punch and watching as my beloved boat floated aimlessly off into nothingness. It was one of the saddest things I had ever seen as she wandered with no one to guide her, abandoned. She had taken my arm, but I had gained so much more on her deck. Perhaps it

was wrong to mourn an object, perhaps idolatry, but I just couldn't help it. Some things, no matter how hard, you have to let go of when their time is up. This world is filled with sadness.

That evening, when I said my prayers in my cabin they had appointed me to on the ship, I told Jesus that this time really was the last time I would go out and lay down my life for the cause of my arm. I had proven that I wasn't a coward, though unfortunately, I had also proven that my heart wasn't in the right place, that I only served myself, and that I did that a little too well, and without restraint. I had no grounds to argue for my arm any longer. I just accepted that I may be a little grim until it was time. I liked to think I knew what was best for me, but my track record throughout my life had reviled countless disasters that were direct results of my judgments and desires.

The man in charge of communications on the ship notified my folks, telling them that I had been rescued, though they were unaware I was even missing since I hadn't told anyone where I was going, not wanting to cause any unnecessary problems or worries for anyone else. The men on board gave me some clothes and shoes, and I was well fed. I couldn't have asked for a better cruise if I had paid for one on a luxury liner.

When we arrived in Holland, I caught the first flight home and never spoke openly about what truly had been done until now.

I have not received an arm, but what I have received may be much more valuable. This body will pass away one day, as all do, but what I have learned will not. True faith is God's most powerful gift, but faith is not something that is given to those who are not worthy of it, just as you don't give a child a loaded gun. Faith is not given to those who are ignorant of its power and undisciplined, and I guess for right now, I still have much to learn.

Many of these things I have done or have expected to happen may seem to be the acts of a fool, but what Jesus do you believe in? Do you not believe He is capable of what He has claimed? Do you not believe Him? How can you say, "Well He is our Savior, but I don't know about moving a mountain"? How can you believe in Him if you don't believe in what He has said? What do you think is more difficult, putting an arm on someone who does not have one or raising someone from the dead and taking them to heaven? Don't we have funerals every day, where we expect God to raise our loved ones up to heaven, or are

we just chucking them in a hole like a coin down a wishing well? It is probably much easier to put an arm on someone than to bring them back to life and transport them to another world. When you go to Mass and the ceremony of turning wine into blood and bread into flesh takes place, do you really know that it is actually happening, or do you think it is just another showing of the same play that has been on Broadway for the last two thousand years? Do you truly believe that God is doing these things? If you find my expectations foolish, you may want to ask yourself who the real fool is. Do you have any faith in God and Jesus? When your flesh falls back to the earth, when it goes in that hole, with what faith is it that your soul will be saved? If you do not know God now, when is it that you think you are going to? If you do not believe in Jesus, what do you believe? What do you think is more foolish, worshipping a God you do not believe in or getting to know one you do believe in? You may want to get to know yourself. Some may say I was testing God, and it is said that you should not put your God to the test, and in some ways, perhaps I was; however, I did not do these things for God to perform miracles for entertainment purposes or for Him to demonstrate His power without reason. When it comes to anything in life that you can include God in, it is better to do something than nothing.

I am a corrupt individual who has exploited every opportunity that has come my way in hopes that I might benefit, and perhaps it is because of these actions that my request has not been fulfilled. I am not angry that I do not have an arm. The quality of my life has greatly improved since I have gotten to know God through Jesus, and I have experienced the better side of many people because of my new physical condition. Perhaps at this point in my life, it would be like handing me a snake when I have asked for a fish.

We all will suffer many things while we are in this world, of which there is no escaping, but you can work toward a better life, and if you listen to everything Jesus has said you must do, you can expect that you will receive what God has promised. Many of us have gone a long way from God, and it does take time to get back. There are many hardships we must endure along the way so that we may be found worthy to inherit God's kingdom and His power.

Jesus and God are everywhere. You don't have to go out and physically risk your life to find them. All you must do is live according to what you have been told by Jesus to do, and They will come to you.

Part II

Elements

After all of my travels, I have come to the conclusion that there are some very strange things going on in this world, things that we may or may not be aware of. Regardless of our ability to recognize them, they are definitely happening and are very real. Ever since the beginning of recorded history, people have been searching for “the meaning of life.” Everyone has their own beliefs on this matter, and there are many avenues you can go down. I have chosen to explore this mystery with the teachings of the Bible. Many people consider the Bible to be preposterous, and many who only believe in the Old Testament of the Bible consider Jesus to be preposterous, and furthermore, there are those who consider the existence of God to be preposterous as well. Your beliefs are yours, and you are welcome to believe what you wish. I am simply laying out my synopsis. I feel that I have a reasonable explanation for what God has been doing, and it has shed some light on why we are supposed to do what God and Jesus have instructed, if you believe in that sort of thing.

Judgment

Most religions share some common ideas, and one is that there is a time of judgment for all men on this earth and there is an afterlife we all will pass into, and this afterlife is our final state. For those who have lived good lives, our religions have taught us to believe we will go to a place called heaven, to live in eternal bliss. For those found not to have led good lives, we believe they will be cast into eternal damnation, pain and suffering without end. Despite how our beliefs in God and our prophets and saints differ, the one thing most all believe in is heaven and hell. For most people, the belief is that hell is for other people, but in reality, we did not create heaven, nor do we have any authority there to say who comes and goes. Hell, on the other hand, we have assumed is much like a dumpster, so you don't have to do anything to get there, and it is a very unfavorable place to be. God is said to be the ruler of heaven, and Satan is said to be the ruler of hell. These two kingdoms are what most believe are eternal kingdoms, and their kings are assumed to be the eternal rulers of these worlds. If you end up in heaven, God is your King. If you end up in hell, Satan is your king. And whoever your king is, you must serve their wishes under their rule if you can't overthrow them (standard dictatorship-style kingdom, not a democracy). So according to the Bible, you are judged by some rule and then shipped off to an eternal destination.

The Rule

In order to judge something or someone, you must have a law to judge them by or a measure by which you judge. You cannot judge justly without a law or a measure, and it must be the same for all in that kingdom. This world is sitting in wait of judgment, as most seem to believe, since all of the major religions are in agreement on this theory of judgment. However, by what rule and what measure do you believe we will be judged, and by what means are our crimes to be forgiven? If two in a kingdom commit the same crime, how can a just and righteous judge set one free and convict the other and still remain righteous and uncorrupt? How can one who is just throw one into jail and set the other free? How can God remain righteous if He throws one into hell and lets the other go into heaven when both are guilty of the same sins, the same crimes? From what the Bible says, one can't, because if He did, He would be corrupt, and God is all good (another theory all of the major religions seem to be in agreement on). It would seem that it is by this righteousness that this world has been held hostage by evil. If God were to condemn one man on this "Day of Judgment" for stealing or committing adultery, or any other broken commandment (law), how could He not condemn you for the same crime if you had committed it as well? How could He remain uncorrupt? If He allowed you to pass into heaven after committing these crimes and sent another into damnation, would He not have something to judge Him? If God became corrupt, what would He be serving?

Judgment is a very strong and powerful force when it is in the hands of authority, one who can enforce it. Maybe judgment exists because evil has come into this world. I don't think God wants to judge man, but I'm thinking He has been forced to, so that His kingdom can be saved and separated from evil once and for all. There are many things we do not recognize or understand in the Bible, many things that may seem ridiculous because

our world is completely corrupt. It does not run on righteousness; it runs on our desires. And we do not understand the means by which things live. We only understand the flesh we live in and the commitments we have to it.

We have a tendency to manipulate things such as our rules and laws in order to better serve our wants and desires, to reason and convince ourselves and others of our actions and the righteousness of these actions. We even make laws that exist solely to try to legitimize things that are said to be immoral rather than depart from them. The courtrooms of this earth can be far from just, and those who frequent them often bend and shape the rules and judgments for their convenience, with very convincing testimony. God, on the other hand, has set His laws in stone, ten. And these ten laws were given to man so that he would be aware of the true law so there would not be any question as to what is permitted and what is not, and they have never changed since they were introduced, nor will they—that is, if you believe in God.

God is not a man of this earth. He can see things we cannot, allowing Him to judge immaculately. As men on this earth, we cannot see everything God can, making it more difficult to make the right judgments regarding our laws. Every kingdom on this earth has laws or rules, and different kingdoms sometimes have different laws and enforce them according to how the ruler or rulers of those kingdoms want them to be enforced. So it would be safe to say that if the kingdom of heaven exists and the kingdom of hell exists, they, too, would have rules or laws and a ruler who would judge and sentence those of their kingdoms as they wish as long as they remain in power as king. Being on this earth, in a state of what we are told is an existence, subject to consequences (grave consequences) makes it convenient to know how the supreme legal system may work.

Sin

We have all heard of sin. Sin is an act against the law of the kingdom of heaven. It is an assault against the living, man, and God. God has defined what actions are punishable by condemnation with the Ten Commandments. A sin is a true crime. Sins don't change from forbidden to acceptable. A sin has become a tool that is used as a weapon to condemn a soul, and destroy a soul, be it all at once or slowly, over a period of time.

Adam and Eve

“In the beginning”—the first words of one of the most unbelievable and ridiculous stories we have ever heard, in the Bible or anywhere else for that matter—begins the story of Adam and Eve, the alleged first man and woman on earth. This story, from Genesis 1–4, definitely seems like a fairy tale; however, this world is full of strange things, things that seem unbelievable but yet are real, and hiding in plain sight. It does seem preposterous that a serpent could talk and even more preposterous that anyone would hang around listening to the words and teachings from a snake, but if you look in your mouth, you can see what allows you to form words: your tongue. (Your tongue could be considered a wormlike-looking thing. We are familiar with our tongues because we have been seeing them in our mouths our entire lives, but if you had never seen a tongue before and you saw it for the first time, creating sounds and forming words, it would probably freak you out.) And that tongue is a device your brain uses, and a brain does look like it could be a gooey worm or a snake all coiled up, tightly packed into a skull. So if you look at it like that, it is possible to see that a serpent could be considered talking—perhaps like a wolf in sheep’s clothing. This idea is furthermore supported by Mark 9:48: “Where their worm dieth not.”

As the story goes, Eve ate this fruit the serpent had enticed her with, and from that point on, all hell broke loose. She seduced Adam as she had been seduced, and on down the line things went, sin after sin, complete lawlessness. Comparing for a moment things we are aware of in this world, perhaps when they ate this fruit, it wasn’t the fact that they had simply disobeyed God but that there was a parasite in this fruit, and this parasite grew into a creature inside man’s body. Haven’t we seen microscopic worms that enter into our bodies, feed off them, and grow in us? Does not a man’s semen, when placed into the flesh of a woman, become a being over time, one that grows and lives as part of her body for a

short time? Isn't that creature the son or daughter of the one whose seed it came from? Doesn't a man's semen look like tiny worms under a microscope? Is it not possible that the anatomy of man as we know it was at one time different? Is it not possible that there could have been a horrendous organism in that fruit? Just because we are only familiar with our present anatomy does not mean that things may not have been different at some point. After all, we do believe that we could have evolved from frogs, so it should not be too hard to believe that maybe things were different. And personally, I think it is easier to believe that some kind of nasty parasite could live in us than it is to believe that my ancestors hopped out of a pond. (I would not find it hard to believe, however, that this parasite evolved from a frog in a pond—a tadpole, to a frog, into us.)

Is it not possible that perhaps they placed the infamous fig leaf over their groins because that area of their bodies had now become something it was not before they ate this fruit? Does it not say in Genesis 3:16 that as a result of eating this fruit, woman shall now give birth in pain yet her urge will be toward her husband? Maybe something physical did happen here to cause this? Some find it ridiculous that man was said to be formed from the clay of the earth, but have not scientists found that man's flesh is composed entirely from the same elements that the earth is composed of? Do we not eat what grows out of the earth? And if it grows out of the earth, isn't it earth? Are we not hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus, etcetera—the same stuff in a scoop of dirt?

If you compare things we already know about in this world to things in this story, there is a lot of evidence that does allow it to be possible. The only thing in this story we really are unfamiliar with is the anatomy of a being that does not have all the components of a beast (the anatomy of Adam and Eve before eating the fruit). However, we have seen that when semen is placed into a woman's body (into the egg her body produces, into the egg that is flesh), nine months later, another body crawls out and detaches itself from her body (Genesis 3:16). So it could be conceivable that you could grow a beast in someone, and in fact, we all came out of the same place: an egg of flesh.

The next part of the story with monumental significance is when God basically threw them out and banished them for simply eating a piece of fruit. This seems drastic, especially when God is said to be all loving and forgiving. I can only assume that God was fully aware of what was to follow and that if He did not remove all that was evil from His

kingdom, it would consume it. Perhaps God would have forgiven man for eating this fruit if man had wanted to be forgiven, but man had now become part of Satan's kingdom, through flesh and by acts, and he had become evil. Man had chosen to believe Satan's teachings over God's (as demonstrated by the eating of the fruit that God had told them not to when Satan told them to), and it had killed what man was. And when he was confronted by God about eating the fruit, the lies and deception sprang forth from his mouth, just as the lies and deception sprang forth from Satan's mouth. Man may have now been condemned for the beast that had grown into his body from the fruit, and for his sinful acts. He was condemned by his flesh because what had grown inside of man now was the offspring of Satan, a parasite if you will, one that survives on man but has its own agenda. This flesh was condemned by God because it was evil and served but one purpose: destruction. This flesh was evil because it was designed to die, it was designed to torment, and it was designed to make man desire to sin. It was designed to kill man. (We all die. We all feel the pains our bodies inflict on us. We all lust after each other.) This flesh also did not belong to God.

We are all aware of the horrors of drug addiction and how those who choose to touch drugs slowly center their entire existence on them. Drugs become their greatest joys and desires, and they put these pleasures and desires before all else, becoming completely controlled and consumed by them. They make it their will to serve this addiction, and they destroy everything and everyone around them when they become addicts. These drugs and powers they possess have made murders, thieves, liars, and whores out of all who partake of them, and there are even some who have introduced others to these things specifically to enslave them. There is nothing that can be done with someone who is addicted to drugs if they do not wish to change. No matter how much you want to help them, they will destroy everything, typically starting with those who are trying to help them. Adam and Eve did not wish to leave sin, and God knew there was nothing that could be done with them. They would eventually die from this "original sin."

When this "Eden" was eradicated, man had now become a subject of Satan's kingdom. (They all three were tossed out. Adam and Eve were now stuck in the same place. They were now vulnerable to Satan.) Satan received his kingdom by being banished to what I will assume is this earth, since that is where we are. When judged, if condemned,

you have to be sent somewhere. Even if you are sentenced to death, they have to put your remains somewhere. Let's say that this somewhere is the earth and it now has become the prison for those who have committed crimes against God. I think it would definitely be safe to assume that in prison, the most powerful individual is the one who is the ruler of it, and I think it would be safe to assume Satan would be that individual, thus making the prison his kingdom and all that is in it his and under his command, his rule. God, who never partook in evil, left the earth to its own convictions, so as not to be consumed by it. God knew that the Word was now with Satan. Satan was the authority over the earth, and his influence was now in power. Just as an addict is constantly thinking about feeding their addiction, man had new desires that consumed his every thought. And it was now in man, where it could constantly keep his soul in the dark and lie to him about anything that he wished to in order to keep man from the truth. Satan would not allow man to be set free from condemnation, and God knew that Satan would never let His children live in peace. He knew that if Satan was allowed to walk with man, God's kingdom would be consumed.

Probably the biggest question I have about this story is, why didn't God simply throw Satan out of the Garden since Satan was the one who was responsible for the entire problem? And if God is all knowing, how could this have happened? This seems crazy, but I really don't know that much about "good." True good is foreign to me, and probably most of us, and we don't know really what is involved with it. And it definitely seems to get in our way when we try it out. The only conclusion I can come up with is, God gives all things free will, since that is a trait of good (I am told), and "you are innocent until proven guilty," and up until that point, perhaps Satan had not committed an act that could be considered wrong.

So, in a nutshell, Satan tricked man into eating this parasite so that he could kill man, so that he could have man condemned along with him, so that he could make his will that of man, so that he could make God's children his subjects as he pillaged, plundered, and raped, so that he could assault God, so that he could rule the world, so that he could try to become a god. Man freely and willingly placed this seed into his own body, and the creature that grew from this seed has killed him, tortured him, and enslaved him throughout his existence, moving through man, generation after generation, without mercy.

This event that took place was the first time judgment came down on man, and that judgment banished Adam, Eve, and Satan from God's Garden, which I am assuming was heaven at that time—the original crime, the original sin, the original judgment.

There is a lot going on here in this fairy tale of “Adam and Eve,” downright scandalous! Whether you believe it or not, it has all the ingredients we love in a story: intercourse, lies, murder, and justice.

Noah and the Flood

More wild and unbelievable stories of judgment and condemnation appear here, in the story of Noah and the great flood, in Genesis 6–9. It was recorded in the Bible that very early on in history (after Adam and Eve’s introduction to original sin), man was lawless and filled with sin, and his desires were that only of sin. We are told that God saw no future for His kingdom with man in it, except through one guy who did obey Him: Noah. So with no end to man’s evil in sight (as a result of this abomination being born into man through Adam and Eve), God had to wipe all man from the earth in the time of Noah. Noah was saved because he served and obeyed God, despite the evil that dwelt in his flesh (Genesis 6:5).

Noah was subjected to the great flood, to the great judgment, just as all men were, but Noah followed exactly what God instructed him to do in order to survive. God hoped that through Noah’s faith, perseverance, and righteousness, Noah would survive the flood and man might be fruitful and have a chance at existence and salvation. According to the Bible, Noah did survive along with everything else in his boat. This was the second time man was involved with a judgment by God. All were judged by the flood for their sinful actions, and only Noah survived this judgment. All the other men, women, and children were wiped out, killed. (I’m not sure how many of them thought they were going to heaven, but none made it.) No one else listened to God, so they all perished, very similar to when Adam and Eve didn’t listen to God and supposedly died. Adam and Eve were judged for possessing “original sin.” Noah’s generation were judged for their works.

Abraham and His Judgment

Generations after Noah came a guy named Abraham, a product of Noah surviving the flood. It is said that God loved Abraham, and vice versa. (It would seem that our entire existence on this earth is nothing more than a very long trial: judgments, laws, sentencings.) What separates this particular judgment involving Abraham from other judgments is that God is judging Abraham in order to establish to what limit this guy Abraham will go to for Him. God is not judging him in a situation where He is going to wipe him out, necessarily. God asks Abraham to kill his son in a sacrifice to Him. (In this day and age, you would be locked away in jail forever or executed for doing this; however, things were a lot different back then.)

Abraham obviously loved his son very much. God never would have loved someone—in this case, Abraham—who did not love their own children, and God loved Abraham. I would not be surprised if Abraham loved his son more than anything else in the world, other than God, even more than his own life. God told Abraham what He wanted him to do, and Abraham went to do it. Right before Abraham was going to kill his son, God stopped him. God just tested him to see if he would, and he was 100 percent going to do it. I'm pretty sure if Abraham had not done this, God would not have sent Jesus here when He did, where He knew Jesus would be killed, sacrificed. But because Abraham did this, all man would be offered a chance at salvation. This judgment was “an eye for an eye” or “a son for a Son.” God judges many things, great and small, both good and evil, with the same rule.

(There certainly seems to be a lot of invisible legal activity flying around in the universe.)

Moses and Law

Moses was another huge significance in the Old Testament. God did a lot of things with this guy. In the time of Moses, God finally had a large group of people He could teach, people who listened and tried to observe what He told them to observe—the Jews. He was so pleased with them that He called them His people. It was during this time of Moses that it is said God laid down a set of laws in stone. Man had progressed enough to where we were old enough to know right from wrong. Things were changing, and we were being told what we could and could not do, and why. God was starting to treat man as though he was maturing somewhat.

Things were definitely starting to evolve for man. He was developing a relationship with God that was based on love and understanding.

The Laws

In the Big Book, it says God handed Moses the Ten Commandments written in stone (Exodus 20). These were to be observed to avoid condemnation, which meant you wouldn't be condemned if you did not break these laws. Man, it would seem, was being condemned or was going to be condemned for these actions that had now been exposed as punishable by condemnation. These laws were established to protect man from Satan, to protect man from evil, and to protect God's kingdom and its immortality. God gave these laws to man to establish a righteous kingdom and to have a measure by which to separate the good and the evil. He gave them to man so that man would no longer be ignorant of the law and would know how to distinguish between right and wrong.

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Maybe the devil has tried to make himself a god, placing himself before God and before all of God's creation. Maybe that is what this law is about, and maybe God has imposed this law so that we would not be led astray by anyone or anything who would have us not follow the path to salvation that He has laid out. There are a lot of beliefs out there, and you have free will to believe what you want. And you don't have to be angry if you don't believe this, but if you want the heaven that the God of Abraham has promised, you do not want to follow anyone or anything else because you are not going to get there. I'm speculating that Satan is being condemned for trying to be a god and trying to destroy everything he can possibly destroy, and I am also assuming that anyone who attempts to imitate these actions of Satan is also someone who hates God and would definitely be a threat to God's kingdom and its subjects. Upon further assumption, that is probably the reason this law was put into existence. (Some people think Jesus set Himself up as a god; however, He never said He was God, and He even said, "There is none good but one, that is, God," in Mark 10:18. He said this when someone

called Him “good,” thus making Himself less than God. He openly worshipped the God of Abraham and the God of Moses—not Himself—while He was physically with us. He furthermore followed every word of God and never altered or abolished one word God ever said.) Satan set himself up to be greater than God when he told Eve to believe what he said over that what God had said. (Satan convinced Eve that God was wrong.) Eve believed Satan, not God. She followed him by observing what he told her. (The Word was now with Satan, in Eve. She listened to him.) She put Satan before God, thus making Satan her god.

2. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” or “bow down thyself to them.”

Could it be that the devil has placed images of his design over the entire earth, and has had man place images over the earth as well, so as to have man desire these images, in hopes that they come between God and man and that they may come between all people, separating us from God and from each other? Maybe in the story of Adam and Eve, when Eve takes the fruit from the devil (the piece of fruit that she desired more than anything in the world), the fruit was an object the devil had constructed into a “graven image” by sculpting it out of lies, into a desire that was so great to Eve that to acquire this fruit, she would even take the chance of being killed. (Nothing in her power was going to come between her and that fruit.) As a result of the teachings from Satan on the great value of this fruit, Eve chose to believe God was wrong about this fruit and Satan was right. Eve did this because she allowed her desires for the fruit, the desire for this object, to consume her. As we all know, she was convinced to the point that she ate it and it came between her and God. It separated the two, which is what all graven images are designed to do: send you to the grave. If Eve had followed God instead of her own desires, she would have listened to His word, believed Him, and kept His word, but because Eve followed her desires, this object (the bait) killed her.

When you worship something, it means that you follow it, trusting it before all else in your life. We may place our desires in objects that we are convinced will bring us happiness. (Happiness is what we all are in search of, although many of us are so lost that the things we search for happiness in have become so distorted and perverted that they destroy us.) And if we are convinced that within these objects is where our happiness lies, then we follow these things. (We all have probably worshipped many things we maybe

shouldn't have. I have had a problem with boats and fishing and allowing them to consume all of my time. My boat, unfortunately, may have become a graven image to me, and in fact, it did almost kill me. This is not to say that my boat was designed to be a graven image or that it was evil, just the fact that I was not disciplined enough to realize that there was a time and place for these things, that it was not always time for them, and that they were not greater than God.)

As legend would have it, into the grave Eve went in the end; and Adam, who didn't really seem to want the fruit but was crazy about Eve (apparently more than he was about God), followed her words instead of God's, and off to the grave he went. Even though this "timeless classic" seems ridiculous, it is a great example, and it would make complete sense to show why you would not want things hanging around in your kingdom that would sabotage its existence, its inhabitants, or its king's objectives. Now, I'm only guessing, but because of what graven images promote (separation and division), this is maybe why this law came into effect (makes total sense), and I can see where it would be considered wrong to set these graven images in place to destroy someone or their kingdom. Any object that you put before God or that comes between you and God is a graven image.

3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This is kind of a hard one to define, but I would have to say from my own unfortunate experience with this commandment that it is to be avoided because it is a demand of God to condemn or curse something, manifested through extreme anger and hatred. Looking at what Satan had been up to in the story of creation, it would appear that he hated God and His creations, and Satan's plans were to have everything damned and to do so by the hands of God's own creations. According to Genesis, the first book of the Bible, Satan was trying to force God to damn the kingdom God had built when he made Adam and Eve guilty by eating the fruit. Only God can damn something because the act of damning something is to have it removed from God (divided from God or separated from God), placing it in a state of true condemnation (or damnation). Satan knew God would have to remove Adam and Eve from His kingdom for what went down in the Garden—God did, and they died. If this story is correct, God has now made the earth a place for the damned because of Satan. Satan made all man guilty with "original sin," thus making them subject to damnation by separating

them from God with this event and having them reside in the same place as Satan. Satan, it would seem, was attempting to force God to curse the earth.

This commandment would obviously be implemented by any ruler who did not want his kingdom or its inhabitants divided or his kingdom cursed. This commandment defends against what may be one of the most horrific acts there is: making a demand that God condemn something or someone based upon a judgment other than God's. (This could almost be considered making a demand for God to commit a mortal sin, if that were possible—demanding that God remove His presence. Without God, there is only misery.) Most of us don't mean this when we utter those ancient words, but all the same, it is the crime, and for whatever reason, when we are completely enraged, those always seem to be the words of choice, and upon uttering those words, we become subject to condemnation because we have cursed something.

“Divide and conquer,” the oldest trick in the Book.

4. “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” This seems like a strange law to have and maybe one that might seem a little vain: a God who wants you to devote an entire day to Him. Back to these crazy legends, it is said that the devil has sought to consume man with his desires and keep man busy, distracted, laboring for what cannot save him, for the devil knows man will die if he can lead him astray from God. Probably this law is so that you can get away from all distractions for a brief time and stay in touch with God. From my experience, God is very hard to stay in touch with when you ignore Him and put other things before Him. If you are not in touch with Him, you can't get what you probably need from Him. What little I know of God is that there is really nothing you can do for Him that He can't do for Himself, other than have you accept the salvation He is supposedly trying to offer and have us try to help each other.

The punishment for breaking this law is condemnation by your own hand, because you wandered off and got lost and did not know how to survive judgment. God made this law so you would know how important it is to spend time with Him, so that you know what is going on. This law is not to keep Him company when He might be bored or to have His ego filled by people chanting how great He is. He knows how great He is. He doesn't need a bunch of condemned people praising Him. He wants you to keep His Day so that you will

come to Him and He can then serve you, and hopefully one day, you won't be condemned. (I have to say this, and please forgive me, but that is some backward-ass shit in this world, because no one here on this earth, especially anyone with power, is going to create a law where you are demanded to do something once a week so that they can serve you, especially if you go around so often doing what they so clearly do not like.) This law has truly made me aware that I am mostly blind to true love. The only thing you can do is set aside some time to make yourself available to Him so that He can save you. He has said to do this on Sunday, and He would like everyone to observe this day so they can all become closer together around Him and around each other so that all might be a whole. You would be surprised how a little bit of truth for an hour or two can overtake a week of bullshit.

5. "Honour thy father and thy mother." I'm guessing this means you must appreciate the ones who cared for you and got you through childhood when you could not fend for yourself, the ones who gave you life, looking out for your best interests when you were not wise enough to know better. (Not all blood-related people are mothers and fathers, but most people have someone who was there and did the job.) This is another law designed to put an end to the destruction of God's kingdom. The devil hates, despises, dishonors, and tries to kill the one Creator, the One who gave him free will. This law defines one's character. Whether or not you are overjoyed with your parents (unless they purposely brought you into this world to harm or torment you), they deserve respect from you because you would not be here if not for them.

If I were king, I could see where it would be necessary to throw someone out of my kingdom if they hated me and dishonored me after I housed them, clothed and fed them, protected them, and served them—someone who constantly dishonored me unjustly. We all get mad at our guardians from time to time, and we all look back at things we think could have been different, but nothing is perfect here. (We are probably in a war zone on this earth.) Adam and Eve were ungrateful, they had been given everything except what was harmful to them, and they chose to listen to something that had never done a single thing for them—until it killed them. Not honoring those who have looked out for you will have you condemned because you are not worthy to live in a kingdom that you do not respect. And just as those who were mothers and fathers to you here, so has it been said that God is

the one true Father, and although we do become angry with Him at times, we are children to Him, and He does deserve the greatest honor.

6. “Thou shalt not kill.” This law doesn’t really even need an explanation. The devil has killed every man who has walked the earth and all those who have not yet been born (according to local lore). The problem with killing someone is that you are making a final judgment on one’s soul, and you are making a judgment when it may not be the right time for that soul to depart from this world—a soul that may or may not be ready to be harvested. It is definitely convenient to dispose of one who is a constant source of trouble for you; however, as man, we have been forbidden to make such a judgment call on another’s soul and perhaps send them into condemnation. For breaking this law, as with all the others, you are subject to condemnation with the one who first killed someone.

7. “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” This law, if you believe it, is the toughest one to abide by and to even understand. It almost seems like it was put in place as a joke, considering how the world is now. We have actually filled our world with stages where we perform, celebrate, and exalt this crime. This supposedly forbidden activity is the act of performing the ancient ritual that joins the flesh of one soul together with the flesh of another soul, creating a union that God did not join. (Out-of-wedlock sex is any sex that is not between a lawfully wed man and woman.) As the story goes, the devil had intercourse with Eve, placing his flesh (the forbidden fruit) in her, joining together what God did not join, and it is obvious from the story (whether you believe it as true or not) that this unholy ceremony slowly killed Eve and modified her flesh—this act of intercourse, the act of desiring the fruit from the serpent, the act of joining one’s flesh with another. Unfortunately, we all go around chasing this desire as soon as we start to mature, and I’m not sure who can resist this desire when it is presented in the fashion they prefer.

According to the book of Genesis, this was the bomb that took out man—first Eve, then Adam, and so on down the line. If there ever was the perfect trap, this was it. We all begged for fornication and unfortunately worshipped it, and it gets served up 24/7. This law is probably the sharpest of all the horns—hence the phrase “I’m so horny.” Satan definitely designed his flesh to love to condemn the ones who wore it. This sin of adultery was more

of a fountain of sins. So many scandalous events could be spawned from committing this sin. The possibilities were limitless: diseases, unwanted pregnancies, lies, murders—it is like a bomb of sin. Passions and emotions were unleashed into the hands of the undisciplined and irresponsible: us. It's the most deceptive sin in the world because we want it so badly and its pleasure is so great. If you think you are above it, you really better watch yourself because you are probably much closer to it than you know.

As much as God knows how much we love sex, He does not allow it without conditions. You must be lawfully married or else you will be condemned for this crime. He does not tolerate sex out of wedlock because of all the sins it breeds. If you are going to share that bond of the flesh, you must be married so that you share the responsibilities that end up coming along with it. This sin is definitely a thorn in our sides, and we all have desperately believed and schemed that we could somehow make it possible for this adultery to take place without consequences, looking for some way to justify it.

8. “Thou shalt not steal.” This one seems very simple. Don't take things that belong to someone else. Most of us work very hard for what we have, and despite the fact that we will have to work that much harder to regain what was unjustly taken from us, the feelings that come from having someone else disrespect us by making decisions that involve what we have worked for is infuriating. When someone steals from you, it means they have no respect for you. This action spawns many other actions that usually are sinful. The devil has stolen all that exists on this earth—that which he did not create, nor purchase—and uses it as he wills, for the purpose of himself. This is another crime we probably all are guilty of at some point, whether it be a piece of candy or a car—stealing is stealing. Obviously, you can't have those in your kingdom running around stealing things. Every kingdom on this planet has laws against that.

9. “Thou shalt not bear false witness [lie].” The devil deceived the entire world with lies. For this, he is charged and so will we be. It's another classic sin. We start this one almost right out of the womb. Lies ensnare all of those surrounded by them. They deceive others and conceal others from the truth, and they often cover up things that can harm us and others. Some lies can destroy kingdoms, so all lies are forbidden. And typically, when you

tell one lie, you have to tell another. It was said that Satan lied to Eve about the fruit, so I guess you could say that, according to the Bible, we were killed by a lie, because that is where it started. Lies are illusions. They may amaze, entertain, and distract, all while other things are actually going on. When lies are told and then discovered, they create distrust, uncertainty, and skepticism. They furthermore confuse and inhibit one's ability to see, recognize, or accept truth when it is present. Lies are an assault on truth; they attempt to conceal it at all costs. Lies separate us, they divide us, and they force us to fight amongst ourselves. If it weren't for lies, you would not have to struggle with the thought "Does God really even exist?" You would know without a doubt that He does.

10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, . . . wife, . . . nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." Yet another sin that will unleash an avalanche of sins. If God has joined two people together in holy matrimony, no one should come between them, nor scheme to come between them. When this happens, those two no longer serve each other. They have broken the commitment they made to God and to each other. The happiness that was once shared between the two is now destroyed. There is a total loss of respect between each other, there are horrific feelings of betrayal, and all trust has been destroyed. I'm pretty sure this is how God probably felt when Adam and Eve deceived Him. Most of us have had our hearts broken at some point in our lives. It is maybe the most painful thing you will ever experience. The feelings that ride around with this event are the most poisonous there are, and they definitely mean business. Not typically as painful to the victim as having their spouse coveted is the scheming to acquire others' possessions and make them your own. Taking something that is an element someone depends on, or has come to depend on for their very existence or their joy, is very similar to stealing but is a much more passionate crime, one that has been carefully plotted and involves something they have shown favor for. This is a horrendous event when it is executed.

These ten laws are what the Book says our actions will all be judged by in the end, and if you are found guilty of these crimes, you will be condemned for eternity—unless you can be forgiven. Now, this is just what the Book says.

Mary the Mother of God (allegedly)

We do not hear a tremendous amount about God's relationships with women in the Bible, and we did not hear tons of things about this "Mary" either, but it did say that she had never committed a sin and that because of this abstinence from sin, she was found worthy to bear the alleged "Son of God." It is also said that Jesus was conceived by an immaculate conception, meaning there was not a sexual act that brought about His conception in the womb.

The significance of Mary's sinless life was monumental. No man or woman had ever done this, not to our knowledge: not Noah, not Abraham, not Moses—no one. I'm pretty sure God was probably very pleased with her, more than any other person who has ever lived on this earth and was born to a man and a woman. She had been born of original sin, but she never followed anything to do with Satan, and that's what I'm pretty sure no one else had been able to do (since the beginning of time). She never doubted God. There were some who followed God throughout history, listened to God, and were devoted to God, but without sin completely? I don't think so.

There are many opinions and definitions of what strength is, but nothing in this world is more difficult, nor more fatiguing, than maintaining complete abstinence from the instant gratification and pleasure that only sin can provide. Our strongest, most powerful desires in this world are inhabited by sin, and they have dominated every one of us at some point in our lives. There are all kinds of strong people in the world, but Mary had been found to be the strongest.

This immaculate conception, this conception of Jesus in the flesh, without sex with a man, seems ridiculous; however, it certainly could be completely believable in this Bible Book. And if original sin could be born into man and woman by eating some fruit that

entered their bodies through their mouths, I have no trouble believing that God could have impregnated Mary without having traditional sex. (Especially when the sex we all have does not feel like it has anything to do with God. Furthermore, when I prayed for fuel for my boat at sea, it was there—immaculately.) Sometimes you have to assume that just because we have not seen certain things happen before our eyes does not mean they are impossible. If we had not seen the current process through which we are all born, how hard would that be to believe? A man and a woman have sex, then a person grows inside the woman, and then it crawls out of her—that is crazy. So let's not assume we know how everything is. We have seen events that take place and the results of these events.

Mankind is destroyed by one woman (Eve) through an unholy conception; mankind is saved by one woman (Mary) through an immaculate conception—an eye for an eye. The universe remains in balance, fighting fire with fire.

Jesus Christ

Quite possibly the most monumental event in biblical history is Jesus, as well as probably the most controversial, from the claimed “immaculate conception” to His humiliating public torture and execution by His own people, to His alleged rising from the dead.

I am going to come back to Him after discussing evil. (It is easier to understand Jesus after you have seen evil.) However, I will mention at this time that we have heard that God sent Him into the world so that sins could be forgiven, original sin and the act of sin. Unfortunately, no one (other than Mary) could go through life without breaking the Ten Commandments; therefore, no one could be forgiven from sin.

Condemnation

I'm pretty sure no one really wants to be condemned, not even Satan. No one wants to go into an existence of endless pain and suffering, not even Satan. (Although I don't really know, I am speculating.) Any person who says they do knows absolutely nothing of it, and they definitely haven't experienced it (Luke 8:31). Satan may not want to live in God's kingdom, under God's rule, but it would seem that Satan doesn't have any interest in going to condemnation either, and I have drawn this conclusion because Satan has been attempting to take over God's kingdom since he was slithering around in the Garden. And typically, when you get thrown out of somewhere (as was said in Revelation 12:9, Satan was thrown down from heaven), it is because you did not want to leave on your own accord.

To truly be condemned is to be cast into constant pain and torment for all eternity, to be thrust into complete exile from God, to be separated from God and all His creation. When all on the earth are judged (on the presumable final judgment), those not found written in the book of life—the mysterious book where all those who will be saved by God have their names recorded, another item mentioned in the Bible—will be condemned forever (Rev. 20:15). They will be judged by the law (the Ten Commandments) for their sins that they have physically committed, and they will be judged by original sin, and it is by these sins that they will be condemned. Now remember, this is just what the Bible says. You don't have to believe it, but something as consequential as this should be looked into with the utmost importance.

Part III

Calculations

Evil

Everything in this world is comprised of tiny particles revolving around each other, forming relationships with other particles. And within these tiny universes these particles have created, there appears to be mostly empty space; however, in this empty space are invisible forces that govern these particles to form their structure so that they are assembled in a way to enable them to perform a unique task. There are very specific forms for very specific purposes, with very specific characteristics and properties, and those in their number decide what element they are as well as their forces. Such is everything, from the structure of an atom to planets in a universe.

In this section, I will attempt to explain my theory of the calculation of “the number of the beast” by examining a few of the clues mentioned in the Bible, and attempt to demonstrate how they support my theory.

All of these passages listed below have been greatly influential in the conclusions I have drawn.

Mathew 24:15 and Mark 13:14. These passages mention an abomination in the temple that is destroying it and is not supposed to be there. Since our bodies are commonly referred to as “temples,” I have assumed that the temple that is being referred to in this passage is the human body.

Jonah 4:6–10. This passage is about a gourd that Jonah loved, which God gave him and then sent a worm to destroy. Jonah is very upset when the gourd dies, and God mentions that a city that doesn't know what it is doing is dying.

Mark 9:48. “Where their worm dieth not.”

John 2:18–19. This passage is when Jesus talks of the temple being torn down and rebuilt in three days. This passage is later known to be about Jesus's body, another reference to the body being a temple.

Revelation 12:3. This verse describes an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads.

Revelation 12:9. This verse talks about that ancient serpent.

Revelation 13:1. A beast rises up out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns, the horns having crowns, “and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.”

Revelation 13:2. “And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”

Revelation 13:3. One of its heads was wounded.

Revelation 13:4. “And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast.”

Revelation 13:5. “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.”

Revelation 13:7. Basically, this passage says that the beast was given power over the whole world.

Revelation 13:11–12. A beast comes out of the earth, and this one has horns like a lamb but speaks like a dragon, and it has all of the power that the first beast had.

Revelation 13:13. He makes fire come down. (Reference to military.)

Revelation 13:14–15. The second beast makes an image to the first beast that has the wound.

Revelation 13:16–17. No one can buy or sell (live in the kingdom) unless they have the mark of the beast in their right hand or in their forehead (have money of that kingdom or work for that kingdom).

Revelation 13:18. “For it is the number of a man.”

Revelation 17:1. “The great whore that sitteth on many waters.”

Revelation 17:3. “I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

Revelation 17:5. “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

Revelation 17:7–8. The mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and ten horns. The beast was and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into eternal damnation. “When they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

Revelation 17:9. “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.”

Revelation 17:10. “And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.”

Revelation 17:11. “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into damnation.”

Revelation 17:12–14. “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them.”

Revelation 17:15. “Where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”

Revelation 17:18. “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

Revelation 20:10. “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are.”

Revelation 20:14. “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.”

Revelation 16:13. “Three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.”

Matthew 13:33. “Three measures of meal.”

When examining the pages of the New Testament, it is hard not to read the book of Revelation, the most mysterious, violent, and disturbing book in the Bible. It is filled with

riddles, symbolisms, debauchery, sex, supernatural creatures, supreme judgment, and “happily ever after” for some and eternal damnation for others—all the ingredients for an epic tale. In fact, some of the most profitable stories of our time are almost exact copies of this book, only masked with different characters, pagan gods and heroes, and spacemen and forces, allowing the general public to be able to digest them easier, without prejudice. When examining this book, it is necessary to look closely at the terms being used to identify the figures being mentioned so that you can see how they fit into the equation. I will define key words as needed, and in an order in which to help better understand how I have come to my conclusions.

The Dragon: Revelation 12:3 (the kings)

The great red dragon, this dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and its heads all having crowns on them. So it appears to me that this dragon is being described as having seventeen members of importance or significance so far. It is also appears to signify that its heads are kings of some sort since they are said to be wearing crowns. I have identified the heads of this dragon by exploring; “What is a king?” The definition that I have come up with for a “king”—the one I prefer to use for this term—is “someone or something that rules a kingdom, one who has made subjects of all that are in its kingdom, one who owns everything in its kingdom, one who has absolute power over everything in its domain.”

There are many kings and kingdoms, and the kings remain on their thrones by using many different methods of power to secure their thrones, subjects, and kingdoms. One cannot be a king without subjects and a kingdom or if there is another in the kingdom who is greater.

From this definition, I have drawn my conclusions as to who these kings on this dragon are, and they are as follows: the serpent, the beast, the false prophet, the harlot, the whoremonger, the Antichrist, and death. These are the heads of the dragon, and they are kings because they have conquered man (God’s kingdom), and when one conquers a kingdom, they then become king. They do with what they have taken as they will, because it is now theirs (to the victor belongs the spoils) as long as no one can take it from them.

The Seven Kings

The serpent, I have concluded, is a head of the dragon that is a king since it was said that it was the serpent that convinced Eve to eat the fruit she was told not to. The serpent was said to be the most cunning of all the creatures. It takes part in the kingship of the dragon because it conquered Eve with its clever and calculating scheme, to destroy man and conquer God's kingdom, from the first stone to the complete decimation, and all stemming from one sinister glance. From behind the eye, the serpent is the mind of Satan, and this serpent wears a crown.

The beast, I have concluded, is a head of the dragon that is a king since it is the temple of the dragon. All of the dragon's works are performed by this beast, from sustaining existence of the dragon to doing all its killing, and everything in between. With its many chemicals, compounds, and electrical charges, and the formulas for pain and pleasure, this beast's allegiance belongs to the dragon, and because of this, it is a king in the dragon's kingdom. The dragon's kingdom, literally, cannot stand without the beast. The beast is the body of Satan—the temple.

The false prophet, I have concluded, is a head of the dragon that is a king since—just as we are made up of mind, body, and spirit, and God is the “Mind” of His kingdom and Jesus is the “Body” of His kingdom, and the Holy Spirit (the truth) is the “Spirit” of His kingdom—the dragon must be made up of the same components. Therefore, the false prophet (the lies) must be the spirit of the dragon. And this spirit takes part as a king of the dragon because the false prophet is the lies that lured Eve into the trap, thus resulting in Eve taking and eating the fruit, the fruit that was said to be good and was to make Eve like God (an item served by lies) but actually made her a subject to Satan and his kingdom. The false prophet is the lies and illusions that Satan uses to communicate with. Without these lies and illusions, Satan could not have enslaved Eve, and man, and could not have come into his kingdom. The false prophet is the minister of “want.” It is what promotes all that is evil.

The harlot, I have concluded, is a head of the dragon that is a king since the harlot has populated the dragon's kingdom with its subjects. This king is a head of the dragon because it wants, it desires, with all its being the things of the dragon. The harlot is one with the mind of the serpent. It lords over the power of the flesh of the beast, and it worships the lies of the false prophet. It loves these things, brings them about, and nurtures them. It is the mother of the dragon's kingdom and all that is in it. The harlot is the "wanter" of the kingdom of Satan. Eve embraced wantonness, and she became the first harlot when she ate the fruit. She became a brood sow for the dragon, passionately mothering and raising hogs, solely for the slaughter, in exchange for the promise of wealth. In order for a kingdom to thrive and prosper, it must have subjects, and they must have great drive and desire. The harlot is a king because, without it, there would not be any subjects or the desire to bring them about.

The whoremonger, I have concluded, is a head of the dragon that is a king since it protects, serves, conquers, and plants the future of the dragon's kingdom, attempting to fulfill all the desires the harlot has, in exchange for her favor and intercourse with her. Without this "whoremonger," the harlot would not have the luxurious things she has acquired, nor would she be able to populate the kingdom with subjects, since it is through the power and desire for destruction that the whoremonger possesses that these things are planted. The whoremonger's desire is to penetrate the flesh of the harlot and plant the seeds of the kingdom in her flesh. He obeys the harlot before all others in exchange for the pleasure it receives for violating her. In order for a kingdom to reign supreme, it must have the complete dedication and devotion of its army so that they will give their life to serve the kingdom. The whoremonger is the warrior of the kingdom of the dragon. Adam became the first servant, the first soldier, the first warmonger, the first whoremonger of the kingdom of the dragon, when he took the fruit from Eve at her command, when he chose to serve her over God, when he worshipped her before God. The whoremonger is a king of the dragon because it conquers the flesh, plants the seeds of the kingdom, and secures its presence and existence.

The Antichrist, the seed from which all that is evil grows and comes again, is the seed of the flesh of Satan's kingdom. Just as the Body and Blood of Jesus is the Christ, is the seed from which all that is God's grows and lives forever, so does all that grows from the Antichrist die, and is condemned. The Antichrist kills. The Christ gives life.

I have concluded that the Antichrist is a head of the dragon that is a king because it is the seed that grows into the dragon's kingdom when planted in fertile soil, over and over again. Just as all things that come about from a seed grow to be what they fell from, so does this seed. This is the same seed that grew into Eve and Adam and made them one with Satan, expanding his kingdom by making them his, by making them him, and what is his belongs to him. One cannot have a kingdom without subjects, and some subjects are slaves as well, and some slaves are children. This Antichrist is a king because it keeps the kingdom of Satan alive through the ages. It allows for the dragon and all its number to walk the earth and elude eternal damnation. The kingdom could be no more without the Antichrist. It rules the past, present, and future.

Death (Rev. 20:14) secures a soul in the flesh of a beast that has expired. The soul is still with the remains of this beast, but the beast has worn out the flesh that it was made of and now must sleep because it now no longer has the strength to exist, and because it has not the strength to wake up. The flesh begins to decay since it is now no longer strong enough to care for its needs, and it returns to the earth that it grew out of. The soul that is with this dead flesh is now left stranded, helpless, trapped in what remains of the beast. It cannot escape because that soul's eyes and ears, and all of its senses, were all that it could communicate with the outside world through, and its body is all that it could move about with. The soul now just rests, in darkness, because there is no light (John 11:10). It just sits in the remains, unable to do anything except wait, completely powerless. Death is the condition of a soul that is stranded and in a debt it can't pay.

I have concluded, death is a head of the dragon that is a king since death secures the subjects of Satan's kingdom from ever leaving it. It holds them hostage, and it keeps them obedient through the fear of death. If a slave cannot escape, it must remain in the kingdom it is trapped in. Death is a king because it keeps all souls under the authority of the dragon until it can have them condemned to eternal damnation at the end of the age when all that is

of Satan is dealt with by God. Death is a king but has not yet come, and when it does, it must continue only a short space. We worry about death our whole lives, preparing for it by saving money and trying to secure a comfortable place where we can live out our final days here on earth. This “death” is a great fear, from birth, but yet it occupies a very brief part of our existence.

These are the seven heads of the dragon, and they are seven kings: five have fallen, one lives (the Antichrist, the seed), and the other has not yet come (death, what follows after the others have run their course, the fruit of the others’ labors).

These heads have been crowned because they are original sin, have defeated man, and have conquered the kingdom for Satan—the kingdom God had given to man. As the victors, these seven heads became the rulers of their newly acquired kingdom, and they have made all man their subjects. Just as when one country conquers another country, the victor crowns themselves king and rules it as they wish, doing with it what they will. All in the kingdom must serve the king or suffer the consequences. On this earth, these seven heads of the dragon rule man, and they have set up this earth so that it serves the seven kings. They are all kings because one is not greater than the others, and if not for each one of these kings, their kingdom could not exist. They all have a very specific role in the creation and existence of this empire, and they are very powerful in their kingdom. They are seven kings, but they are all of one, and they have conquered man.

Ten horns on the dragon: Here, it is necessary to take a look at what a horn is, in order to understand what they are in this equation. This is the definition I have used to help describe a horn. A “horn” is “a weapon that is a member of a beast that is used for fighting or defending, just as a bull has horns to fight and defend itself with. A beast that has these horns has a weapon that can kill, maim, control, defend, and secure its existence when it is able to overcome its opponent. There are many types of horns, but what is important to remember is that they are weapons that defend, conquer, and secure, for the one wielding them. If a weapon has the power to make you go where you do not want to go because of it, is not that weapon just as much a ruler as the one who is wielding it? Is it not by the power of the horn that the king defends and secures its throne and its kingdom? Without this

power, the king would not be king. Though the horn is lifeless and acting solely under the command of the one wielding it, it is the implement that holds the power of life and death over the flesh, and it does carry out the will of the one it is a part of. Those that possess horns typically conduct themselves differently than those that do not because they have something with a power over another, just as one who is possessing a gun acts differently than they might if they did not have a gun. These horns allow those that wield them control over others.”

The ten horns on the dragon are the ten sins that violate the Ten Commandments:

1. Worshipping false gods
2. Making of graven images
3. Taking God’s name in vain
4. Not keeping God’s Day holy
5. Dishonoring your mother and father
6. Murdering
7. Adulterating/fornicating
8. Stealing
9. Lying
10. Coveting/scheming

These horns are the ten works that were forged by the dragon to enslave man to the dragon’s kingdom; however, these horns do not have crowns on them because the dragon created them, not to control him but to control those of his kingdom—his slaves. These horns do not make the dragon come and go where it does not want to, though the dragon does use these horns to make its subjects come and go as it wants them to. (Revelation 17:12–14 says that the Lamb will wage war with the horns and will overcome them. Jesus did this by allowing sins to be forgiven. These sins could no longer force man to go into damnation if man chose not to be a part of Satan’s kingdom.)

The dragon’s heads have become the kings of the earth. The dragon is original sin, and that is why its heads have crowns. The dragon received its crowns when it conquered Adam and Eve (God’s kingdom) by having them eat the fruit by their own hand, of their own will. That is when the dragon was crowned, when it created a kingdom that’s sole purpose was for sin, and to sin, and was sin—when God threw it out of heaven and onto the

earth along with Adam and Eve. The dragon received a kingdom because it was now the greatest in this place, and all who were in this place followed after it. It now had subjects to rule over, and it had soil it owned, where it could expand its kingdom and do its works. Satan only received his power, kingdom, and rule, by taking it from God. God was forced to give up His kingdom to Satan if He did not want to see all of man destroyed. Anything that has a crown in the kingdom of the dragon has their crown because the kingdom of hell cannot exist without it. (I will discuss horns that have crowns on them later, in the discussion of the beast).

Three demonic spirits (Rev. 16:13): There are many different spirits in the world, some good and some evil, and often they are hard to tell apart. There are three, though, that are the core of all that is evil: cowardice, hopelessness, and hatred. All that is evil springs forth from these. These spirits are said to have come out of the dragon (as well as a few other things we will discuss later). These spirits are evil in its purest form. These spirits are the opposite of the spirit of faith, the spirit of hope, and the spirit of love. When these three demonic spirits inhabit us, they separate us from each other and God. When we are filled with cowardice, we have no faith in God. When we are filled with hopelessness, we are condemned. When we are filled with hate, we are lost. When they completely overcome us, they reduce us to a state in which we cannot function with any sort of capacity any longer. If we are fortunate, they will leave us after a short while. If they do not leave, they will destroy us, for they are very real and very powerful.

I believe these were the spirits that Jesus drove out of the man who wandered amongst the tombs (Matt. 8:32), the spirits that went into the swine and then drowned themselves. Spirits are invisible, but their works are very real. Can you see a magnetic field? No, but you can see how it moves a compass, and you can see how it attracts and repels. You can't see a wave. You can only see the water it is moving when it flows through it. The water is only moving because of the wave. When the wave is gone, the water remains lifeless. Can you see electricity moving through a wire? No, but it is very much there. These three spirits are briefly mentioned in Revelation 16:13, as coming "out of the mouth of the dragon." It does not tell us what they are, but I have assumed they are the opposite of faith, hope, and love since the dragon is the opposite of God. So I have

determined that they are cowardice, hopelessness, and hatred. Since they came out of the dragon, they must be in the dragon and therefore part of its number. (It would seem that everything in this world has an anti-particle.)

All of these things in the dragon add up to twenty (a score).

Number One: the Dragon Twenty (the kings/the ruler/the mind)

The Seven Heads, All Having Crowns

1. The serpent
2. The beast
3. The false prophet
4. The harlot
5. The whoremonger
6. The Antichrist
7. Death

The Ten Horns

1. Worshipping false gods
2. Making of graven images
3. Taking God's name in vain
4. Not keeping God's Day holy
5. Dishonoring your mother and father
6. Murdering
7. Adulterating
8. Stealing
9. Lying
10. Coveting your neighbor's spouse/goods or scheming to

The Three Demonic Spirits

1. Cowardice

2. Hopelessness
3. Hatred

Total: Twenty members of the dragon (a score)

The Beast (Rev. 13:1) (the heads)

It was said that a beast rose up out of the sea. This beast is the creature that all evil rides on. Without this beast, the dragon's kingdom cannot exist and cannot perform its works, which is why the beast, as a whole, is a head of the dragon that is a king. Even though there are seven heads on the beast, the beast is just one king of the kingdom. Imagine seven seats on one throne of one kingdom, with a king sitting on each seat of the throne. And now imagine that each of the kings sitting on the seats had many heads that were part of their bodies—they are just one king but made up of many parts. Imagine a molecule made up of several elements; the elements have their own number that they then combine with another's to create something. Picture the dragon as a molecule and the seven heads as atoms that have come together to create the dragon.

The beast sustains existence to the dragon's kingdom, while it allows the dragon to roam the earth and continue its works. (When we see an animal of any kind, we see the beast, not what is inside it). This beast is said to have seven heads and ten horns, the horns all having crowns, indicating that these horns on the beast have authority. They are a ruling power. They are the power that makes one's soul come and go at their will and not at one's soul's will. The beast's will is only that of the sensations of the flesh and the attempt to preserve the flesh. The beast blindly follows its master, not concerned with what work is being done by it, only performing the tasks demanded of it in exchange for the rewards it receives for serving its master, or to avoid the pains that can be inflicted upon it.

So as to help better explain this beast and its heads, you need to look at what a head is.

Head: One that is a member of a conglomerate who has been appointed as an authority in a branch of that entity as a result of their utmost necessity in the successful execution of that entity's works, prosperity, and existence, not necessarily aware of or concerned with anything other than satisfying the concerns and desires in its area of authority in that entity, although possessing the authority to use all of the power of that entity at its discretion—such as the head of a donkey that sees a carrot dangled in front of its nose motivates the body of the donkey to move it and all of its members, having it exercise all of its power in an attempt to acquire the carrot to satisfy its desire to eat, and not necessarily out of necessity. The heads on a beast typically don't know why they are doing what they do, other than for reward, just as a donkey that follows a carrot dangled before its nose may be pulling a plow behind it. The plow may be of no concern to the donkey, for it is only concerned with the acquisition of the carrot. But the bigger picture is, the donkey is being used to accomplish the work of its master; the carrot also acts as a payment that the donkey is being promised in exchange for pulling the plow. Some motivations are rewards, and some are punishments—the donkey could have been whipped to pull the plow. However, without the donkey and motivation, the work would not be done, and without a head filled with desire or fear, the donkey would not work and would be a worthless subject.

The senses: The first head of the beast is the senses, and these senses are all over the beast. These senses are observed and processed by the serpent (the brain). Vision, taste, touch, hearing, and smell, all the beast's motivation and education come from these sensations. This head of the beast rewards the flesh for doing the will of its master as well as the pains and punishments that are associated with its master. There are many rewards the serpent delivers throughout the beast through these senses when the beast partakes: savory food, alcohol, drugs, sex, etcetera. There are many rewards when the beast selfishly follows its senses; however, every one of them has a punishment that will follow as a repercussion, some so small you don't notice them until it is too late. When you eat too much, you get fat and become unhealthy. When you drink too much, you can't function and end up with a hangover, or worse. You get the picture, and when you commit a sin, regardless of why, you are secured to condemnation. This head acquires and retains its knowledge through what it experiences through its senses, and it uses this education and builds on it to execute

its schemes in attempts to acquire whatever is of interest to its kingdom, its temple, or its person.

The body: The second head of the beast is the structure of the beast, its organs, its bones, its skin, its muscle—this is the assembled machine that enables the temple to roam the earth and sustain existence to the condemned. It is the industrial section of the temple, the motor and chassis. It brings oxygen into the temple, it processes the fuel, it flows the rivers of blood through the temple, it gets rid of its waste, it supports the temple structure with its bones, and it enables the condemned to have the ability to dance and sing, to run and jump, to fight and kill—it is the reactor.

The tongue: This is the tool that the temples use to communicate with each other through sound. It is used on the beast by its master to steer others, or attempt to. It is used for speeches, for song, for boasting. It divides, starts wars, and leads into destruction. And it lies when it is following the ways of the dragon, the beast, or the false prophet. That wormlike feature, housed in our mouths that we sometimes have a hard time controlling, is a power we frequently act irresponsibly with, and this tongue is one of the most powerful weapons at our disposal. A few simple words can ignite and destroy a kingdom. This tongue breeds the lies of its master.

The vagina: This is number four, the head that appeared to be wounded. All the beasts that come into this world come through this head, the opening in the temple. It is the passion of the beast. It desires, it lusts, and it provides entrance into the beast, to allow for recreation of Satan's kingdom. It keeps the beast's kingdom entertained and enchanted. It is the door to the vault of the treasure of the harlot. It is the enthusiasm and the allegiance of the whoremonger.

The penis: The fifth head of the beast, this head is the one said to be like a horn and is mentioned as being pronounced on the beast that came out of the earth (one of the two horns that were mentioned to be on the second beast that rose out of the earth). This head penetrates the wounded head on the female beast (the beast that came out of the sea). It

unlocks the vault to get to the treasure of the harlot. It invades the temple and delivers the seed of the empire, for the pleasure it receives and to expand the kingdom onto new soil. It goes into the body of the beast through the vagina so that future kingdoms may exist. Just as the serpent bored the Antichrist into Eve, so does this head bore the seed of a beast through the opening of the flesh. It is the weapon, the warrior of the flesh. It makes way for new kingdoms, invading and settling more of its subjects on fertile soil. It arouses the beast's entire being at the execution of this event, the event for which it was specifically designed.

Semen: Number six is the seed of the kingdom that the beast carries, the seed of the temple, where the future of the entire kingdom of the dragon lives. The microscopic worms reconstruct the kingdom into flesh, out of flesh, creating an image for the beasts, creating more beasts, expanding the reign of the dragon upon man and the earth. If this seed cannot purchase, the beast will not come again, the seed of the flesh, made of flesh. This semen is the second horn identified on the "second beast" (the penis being the first horn).

Flesh: The seventh head of the beast is the flesh, the soil, the material, the raw elements that the beast is constructed of. Just as a building is made of bricks or wood, so is this house built of flesh, the fragile material demanding constant maintenance and attention. The beast must feed it, clothe it, and provide it with shelter, from its beginning until its inevitable end, by the sweat of its brow. This flesh was created by its creator to sensate, die, and serve evil.

Satan has designed the beast so that its passion and drive is the reward and payment it receives for serving and committing sin, for destroying itself and multiplying the dragon's kingdom. All physical sin that is committed on this earth is a result of an action executed through this beast—through this body, through motivations and rewards, through this flesh.

Ten horns: It is said that the two beasts that rose up (one out of the sea and one out of the earth) each had ten horns. These ten horns on this beast are the ten sins that violate the ten laws of God (the Ten Commandments). Just as the kings sitting on the throne of the

dragon's kingdom each have many heads, so do they possess horns of their own as well. (I will explain this in more detail later. Right now, just know that it was said that the beasts did have ten horns. Ignore crowns at this point.)

Three demonic spirits (Rev. 16:13): It was said, "out of the mouth of the beast" came three evil spirits, adding three more members to the beast (the same three that came out of the dragon).

All of these things in the beast add up to twenty (a score).

Number Two: the Beast (Rev. 13:1) (the heads/the servants/the body)

The Seven Heads

1. The senses
2. The body
3. The tongue
4. The vagina
5. The penis
6. The semen
7. The flesh

The Ten Horns

1. Worshipping false Gods
2. Making of graven images
3. Taking God's name in vain
4. Not keeping God's Day holy
5. Dishonoring your mother and father
6. Murdering
7. Adulterating
8. Stealing
9. Lying

10. Coveting your neighbor's spouse/goods or scheming to

The Three Demonic Spirits

1. Cowardice
2. Hopelessness
3. Hatred

Total: Twenty members of the beast (a score)

The False Prophet (Rev. 19:20)

The false prophet represents the lies and illusions of this kingdom. Think about the word “false” and the similar word “profit,” and it may help you to see this king. The word “false” means “not true or a lie,” and the term “profit” means “to gain something of value to you, to better yourself,” so obviously a “false profit” would be a lie about something of importance or value. Similarly, the false prophet is something that is real but not real until we place our authority in it as a result of a lie, but it has great influence and power over us when we do.

For example, the fruit that the serpent showed Eve, and had Eve believe was for her gain, actually killed her, doing the exact opposite of what she was led to believe. The fruit was a real object (like a Trojan horse), but it wasn't what the serpent said it was at all. The fruit, in fact, had the Antichrist in it (much like the army that hid in the Trojan horse), all the number of the dragon's kingdom, waiting to conquer. Eve probably would not have eaten this Antichrist and let it into her kingdom if she had not been lied to about what it really was and if she had not let the serpent's lies about the fruit (the object) seduce her into lusting after it so as to have to have it. But she did, and everything then entered into her body, just as the people of Troy brought the statue into their city and, at night, the army hiding inside came out and destroyed the city. It was an object and spirits (or feelings) that played key roles in making this event possible. If the statue was of no appeal to them, they

would have left it outside and done nothing with it, but it was desirable to them—enough to where they brought it into their city.

The false prophet is what you believe is benefitting you but in actuality is serving another (typically one that is just using it for their gain at your expense). The false prophet has to have an object (or a temple or institution) where it can proclaim its lies from so as to achieve its goals. The false prophet has to have two components to be successful, just as it is two words, “false” and “prophet.” You cannot have a lie without an object. (Revenge can be an object just as can be a coin.) And objects of the false prophet have to have its representation to achieve their status. The heads of the false prophet are very persuasive, and they are the feelings (or spirits) that minister over the dragon’s subjects. They are tied to everything in its kingdom. Revelation 13:5 says that from out of the mouth of the beast is proclaimed these lies. In this case, the beast is the temple, and from its tongue come the lies.

There are many works man performs with the power of his beast as a result of the motivations and persuasions of these heads of the false prophet. These works are done to promote and sustain the dragon and all of its kingdom. They are things that are of no value to our soul or are detrimental to it. They are things that occupy our time, keeping us away from God and bringing us closer to them. They are things that consume us with their lies, having us believe they are to be trusted over God and His word. They are things that struggle to lead us to sin and death. They oftentimes convince us that we are just in our actions because of the convictions we have placed in them, and there are those who promote and exalt these obstacles, these self-proclaimed authorities, these hills, these mountains.

There are seven heads of the false prophet: pride, greed, envy, lust, wrath, gluttony, and sloth. These heads are also part of seven hills that are a “profit” of the “false prophet.” The heads are just the “false” or lies that are bonded to the “profit,” like seeds that when planted grow into huge, elaborate lies. Just as a noun can become a verb, and when it becomes a verb, work is being done, these heads are the nouns. The false prophet is the yeast that makes their bread rise. The false prophet is what makes the hills rise.

Pride: A selfish presence of superiority over another, usually as result of an action or accomplishment that appears to have elevated one to a level of authority and respect over that of another—never acknowledging the works of others who may have been key elements in the execution of the accomplishments that are now being celebrated as that of an individual.

Those who exhibit pride successfully use it as a tool to intimidate and manipulate others by making them feel inferior, as though they are not competent to make choices and decisions on their own and as if they should follow their commands over the commands of others, or even one's own self.

The serpent used the spirit of pride to intimidate Eve into allowing her to give it audience, after she was told by God to have nothing to do with that tree. Unfortunately, those who exercise "pride" only use it to accomplish one purpose: their own.

Greed: Amassing things of value and of great importance to gain control or power through the act of retaining, regulating, and distributing these things for one's own purpose and at one's own discretion, without regard for others who may require these things as necessities solely to exist.

Satan took the lives of Adam and Eve when he already had a life. He trapped them in a temple that was created solely to serve, support, and sustain evil, its kings, its subjects, its kingdom, and nothing else. He has made them slaves to serve him and his flesh, and he does everything in his power to keep them from seeing anything other than what he wants them to see. No man lives on this earth except as the beast, the beast that belongs to Satan, the beast that peruses what Satan has told it to peruse. And when they have served his purpose, he kills them. (Not even for one hour on Sunday does Satan want to ration to another.)

Envy: A desire to have something, something that you have sought out for yourself, something that another possesses, and solely because it has caught your eye, not because you are in need.

The serpent promoted this fruit so that Eve allowed it to become the center of her attention. And after listening to the teachings about this fruit, from the serpent, Eve wanted

the fruit so she could be like a god. Eve allowed herself to believe—to believe a lie—because what the serpent told Eve was very appealing to her, and she was easily convinced that she should have something she didn't have to work for, something of great value that she could possess for herself. Envy is used as a great motivator, convincing others that they deserve more than what they have, as you attempt to get what you selfishly desire for yourself at their expense. The serpent told Eve she could be like God if she ate the fruit, so she pursued the serpent, and the serpent pursued Eve so it could be like a god. Eve ate up the serpent while the serpent ate up Eve, like a “yin and yang,” two pursuing each other, each behind the other's back, in an attempt to achieve the same goal, only at the expense of the other.

Lust: The passionate desire to have greatness, pleasure, and fulfilment through the seemingly simple act of intercourse.

Eve passionately devoured the fruit, with all her being, completely convinced that she could have her greatest desires fulfilled through this forbidden act of intercourse, of which she was made a slave by the serpent, the beast, and the false prophet. Lust is the unquestionable and undeniable feeling that the unachievable is achievable, very easily, through intercourse.

Wrath: A desperate attempt to resolve a problem or situation using the same method of resolve in which you created the situation to begin with, without any regard for the consequences of others.

Eve probably knew she was truly f**ked (in the most pure sense of the word) after she ate the fruit, and in a desperate act, she used all of the skills she had so recently acquired from Satan and convinced Adam to obey her word over God's. (Misery loves company.) This attempt only made things worse, as Adam was now dead as well.

Gluttony: Habitually consuming everything you desire, as a method of filling a hole or void that can't be filled (a bottomless pit), relentlessly trying to remedy a problem with the cause of it.

Eve and Adam were allowed to eat of everything in the Garden except one thing: the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They ate it because they believed it had power, and now they must eat because it took their power for its own purpose. Satan not only had a life in the Garden of Eden. (And we do not know what its actual appearance was before it was found guilty of tricking Adam and Eve. We are told it was turned into a worm or serpent as a punishment. It may have had a great existence but just wasn't content for its own reasons. It had free will.) But it also took Eve's life, making her its slave, knowing full well it would have Adam's life as well—and furthermore, the lives of everyone and everything on this earth, and all those to come. And it did this to enslave them to do its work and gain asylum while doing its work, work that will never be done. Gluttony is pursuing the feeling that has convinced you that you will be satisfied through excess consumption, all the while creating more serious problems as you try to satisfy the original.

Sloth: Indulging in relaxation, the neglect of one's responsibility toward work that must be done, out of the fear of physical or mental exhaustion, leaving that work undone or in the hope to be done by others, the avoidance of work while still attempting to acquire the fruits of its labors at another's expense.

Satan had Eve and Adam put his flesh in themselves so that they would have to tend to it to keep it alive, and if they do not tend to it, they will die. And while it is in them, they must do the work of his flesh or they will die. His flesh is weak and dying as soon as it is born, and he uses its weakness and mortality to have man do his works in exchange for his brief existence that the beast provides. (Death is a hell of a motivator in our lives. We go to work to feed ourselves so we don't die. We work to protect ourselves from the elements, etcetera.)

All of these heads of the false prophet are just lies and illusions to attempt to steer man in the directions the dragon wants man to go in.

Just as the seven kings of the dragon are the mind of its kingdom, and the seven heads of the beast are the body of its kingdom, so are the seven heads of the false prophet the spirits of this kingdom, the ministers. (There are the three other spirits spoken about in

this kingdom, but these are the seven spirits that are the heads of the false prophet. The other spirits are in the soul of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. They are different bonds. You may have heard of ionic, chemical, and metallic bonds. Think of these in the same way, certain bonds for certain elements, certain compounds.)

The false prophet has horns just like the dragon and the beast because its only purpose is to steer the ones in the beast to commit the ten sins that violate the Ten Commandments. Though the sins the false prophet is responsible for are brought about through the actions of the beast, the false prophet is the one who instigates these acts; in fact, if it weren't for the ministering of the false prophet, sins would not be committed by man, so this "false prophet" is just as guilty as the others. The horns of the false prophet have no crowns because the false prophet is spirit—it is evil by nature—and receives the kingdom with the dragon and the beast. It will receive royal authority with the beast for one hour in the final judgment for what it is (what it belongs to). Part of "original sin," the beasts suffer the conviction for the works of the false prophet; however, wherever the beast goes, the false prophet will follow. The false prophet cannot perform any work without a temple to reside in.

The false prophet is the opposite of the Holy Spirit, just as the dragon is the opposite of God the Father, just as the beast is the opposite of Jesus Christ. All these heads of the false prophet revolve around each other, bonded together, working together of one mind and one purpose. The combinations are many, but the heads are seven.

Number Three: the False Prophet (the unholy spirit/the lies)

The false prophet has seven heads and ten horns as well as the three demonic spirits.

The Seven Heads

1. Pride
2. Greed
3. Envy
4. Lust

5. Wrath
6. Gluttony
7. Sloth

The Ten Horns

1. Worshipping false Gods
2. Making of graven images
3. Taking God's name in vain
4. Not keeping God's Day holy
5. Dishonoring your mother and father
6. Murdering
7. Adulterating
8. Stealing
9. Lying
10. Coveting your neighbor's spouse/goods or scheming to

The Three Demonic Spirits

1. Cowardice
2. Hopelessness
3. Hatred

Total: Twenty members of the false prophet (a score)

The First Beast That Rose up out of the Sea/Eve/Babylon (Rev. 13, 17:9)

The first beast that rose up, the one that rose up out of the sea, rose up into Eve—the beast with the seven heads and ten horns. The horns on this beast, it is said, had crowns, and one of its seven heads appeared to be wounded (Rev. 13:3). When Eve ate the fruit (the Antichrist), she placed the seed of the flesh and blood of the beast in her body, the seed of the mind of the dragon, the seed of the spirits of the false prophet, making it one with her.

Eve became the actual mother to all that is evil—this was a real physical event. She bore the offspring of Satan in her body, and eventually onto the earth. If it were not for Eve, the kingdom of Satan would not exist. Satan would exist, but he would have no kingdom, nor slaves, nor be of any consequence to us.

The dragon, the serpent, the brain (Jonah 4), the mind took its position in the top of Eve's temple, in her head, and with it came all its number—a score.

The beast, the flesh, the body, the temple grew into her image that was given unto her from God. It gave her image the ability to appear almost the same as it did before eating the fruit, except for the wound (the vagina) where the leaf was placed. This head that appeared to be wounded created that appearance because it bleeds for several days every month. It does this when the flesh inside this beast's egg dies, unless the Antichrist has found purchase in this flesh and tends to its needs, keeping this flesh alive, as it serves the Antichrist's needs in return. (The chicken came first. The egg came later).

Though the penis is one of the heads of the beast, Eve (the female) did not permanently have the penis attached to her; however, it was one with her flesh when engaged in intercourse. And the penis did belong to Eve as well as Adam because Adam did whatever Eve asked, and what was his was hers. Eve's body was now a beast with all the number of the beast in her—a score.

The false prophet, the lies, the treasure, the spirit now dwelt in Eve's temple, ministering to Eve, so as to have her perform Satan's works through the power of her temple. The false prophet brought with it all its number—a score.

This beast that rose up out of the sea was observed to have ten horns with crowns on them. This beast's horns have crowns because this particular beast has come; this beast became the beast that Eve became. The horns have crowns because Eve has been condemned for doing the works of Satan (among other things). The sins she committed through the power of her flesh (her temple, her beast) are the sins that are punishable by condemnation, just as all who come in the flesh will commit sins. This "first beast" (Eve) was but is no more—Eve is dead—but yet comes again, and again, and again. (It is the female beast.) The beasts that have already existed and are in existence all have crowns on their horns. The beasts that have not yet been born onto this earth do not have crowns on their horns as of yet but will receive them briefly at judgment, as these horns will have

them condemned for their works, just as Eve was. It is because of these sins, these horns, these weapons that the temple will be forced to go where it does not want to go, but it cannot escape.

That which wears crowns on its heads is condemned because it belongs to Satan and is original sin. That which has horns with crowns is condemned for doing the works of Satan.

The “beast” I spoke about earlier, as being one of the kings of the dragon, does not have horns with crowns because it keeps coming again each time we reproduce and has not yet gone into extinction and been cast into eternal damnation, whereas an individual who is presently walking the earth or has died (Eve) has crowns on their beast’s horns, unless they have had their sins forgiven (Rev. 17:12). This “beast” that is one of the heads of the dragon is a king because it belongs to Satan, but it has not physically done Satan’s work until it comes about bound to a soul.

This “first beast,” it was said, was given a mouth to utter blasphemies. This mouth is the tongue, and I don’t think we need to discuss the existence of a foul mouth, as most all of us have cursed and raved plenty. This first beast is also said to have spots like a leopard, because this beast uses woman for camouflage, hiding in woman’s beauty, grace, and pleasure; however, woman can be a deadly beast when she promotes the sins we can rarely deny. This creature is now so often the harlot’s pet. It is said that this beast had feet like a bear’s, because it boldly goes wherever it wants, led by its own desires, trampling anything in its path with regard for nothing but itself as it wanders about, and a bear is very rarely interfered with. It is said it had a mouth like a lion, because it can devour anything on this earth, and like the lion, it is the king of the beasts. We have all seen that when a beautiful woman wants something, she gets her way; there is no disputing her wants (Matt. 14:7). (There is a difference between playing a whore and being a beautiful woman, and there is nothing wrong with looking beautiful. The line is when one makes themselves beautiful for the purpose of promoting or attempting to promote intercourse or in the attempt to influence others for personal gain through the means of their beauty.)

Eve is this first beast, the great city Babylon, the mother of all harlots, the mother of all abominations of the earth. Revelation 17:9 reveals that the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are all part of Eve, where it says that the beast the woman rides on has seven

heads (the heads of the beast), when it says that the seven heads are also seven hills (the heads of the false prophet, explained later in the chapter), and when it says that they are also seven kings (the heads of the dragon). Along with all these heads, hills, and kings come all of their number—a score from the dragon (Eve’s mind), a score from the beast (Eve’s body), and a score from the false prophet (Eve’s spirit).

This gives Eve a total of sixty (or three score).

All man is made up of mind, body, and spirit, just as God is the Mind, Jesus is the Body, and the Holy Spirit of God’s kingdom is the Truth.

**The Second Beast That Rose up out of the Earth/Adam
(Rev. 13:11)**

The second beast that rose up, rose up out of the earth. That beast was Adam, after having eaten the fruit given to him by Eve. This second beast became the beast that Adam became and is exactly the same today as it was when it became Adam—it is a male beast, a man. This “second beast” was said to have risen up out of the “earth.” My interpretation of why this beast is said to have risen up out of the earth—whereas the first beast is said to have risen up out of the sea—is that since it was said that Eve gave Adam the fruit, it could be said that the second beast came out of Eve, or you could say that it came out of Eve’s works. Adam was said to have been made from the clay of the earth, and it was said that Eve was originally made from Adam’s rib, which would then mean that she, too, was made from the “earth.” I have drawn the conclusion that the “earth” is signifying Eve as the origin of this second beast. That is how this beast came to be, whereas Eve’s beast, the “first beast,” came about from the sea. In the New International Version of the Holy Bible, it specifically states that “the dragon stood on the shore of the sea,” and the first beast came “out of the sea” (Rev. 13:1, NIV),² meaning that this first beast came about directly as a result of the dragon, whereas this second beast came about directly as a result from Eve

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(who was said to be made of earth). The first beast came about because of the dragon (sea), and the second beast came about because of Eve (earth). (Those who believe we came out of a swamp are partially correct. Some things in us did come out of the sea. What will your argument be now?)

This beast is said to have had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon (Rev. 13:11). The two horns are the penis and the semen. The penis penetrates the flesh of a woman's temple, and the semen penetrates the flesh inside the woman's temple (the egg). It is said that these horns are "like a lamb" because they are being described so as to appear innocent. (A lamb has always been a creature that has been referred to as something of innocence.) Man has assumed the role in our society as the one who desperately tries to put his seed into a woman's temple, and that has become man's goal in this world (to score), and he will say anything or do anything in an attempt to execute this intercourse. A man attempts to convince a woman (with many different approaches) to engage in sexual acts by convincing her that it is alright and is for her best interests, just as Satan first did with Eve—hence, spoke like a dragon. Girls have been told by their fathers not to have sex until they are married (just as Eve was told not to eat the fruit), and boys have been trying to have sex with them as soon as they are able to—you get the picture. These horns are trying to maintain their appearance of innocence, but those who yield the horns use them exactly as Satan did: to fulfill their desires and also to bring about more beasts.

This second beast, which is most definitely the temple that was Adam, is said to have had the same power as the first beast (Rev. 13:12), so I am assuming that it has all the same heads and horns in it that the first beast had, as well as the number of its mind and spirit. Though Adam did not have the vagina permanently attached to him, he was one with it during intercourse. And man thinks about this vagina (has it on his mind) constantly, and his semen became one with the flesh in Eve, when he gave her beast the power to reproduce their image and breathe life into it, when his semen would fertilize her egg. And last but not least, every man, woman, and child enters this kingdom through this gate that is the vagina.

This second beast (Adam) was the first whoremonger, the first beast to engage in activities with a whore, the first one to exalt the works of Eve, the first one to continually proposition her to keep committing intercourse, the first one to commit his existence to the

harlot, over and over. It was said that this second beast performed great sights, such as having fire come down from the sky, and that this beast had the whole world worship the beast. We have all seen these sights in wars that have taken place on this earth, and we are all subject to one country or another on this earth. And typically, men are the ones who directly engage in these things, so hopefully you can see this parallel I have drawn. (I will discuss these things further in this chapter, in the section titled “Hills.”)

Adam’s temple has all the exact same number of kings, heads, hills, and horns as Eve’s—mind, body, and spirit.

This gives Adam a number of sixty (or three score).

The Third Beast/the Image to the Beast (Rev. 13:14–15, 17:8)

This third beast is the beast that has come again. It is the offspring from out of Adam and Eve (the first two beasts), the fruit produced from the seed of the kingdom of the Satan. It is the image for the beast (the spitting image) that was allowed to have life breathed into it (Rev. 13:15). This beast is the next generation of the human race as we know it. It is in us, it is what came before us and what comes out from us, it is the body we now dwell in, it is the temple that our brain (the serpent) lives in, and it is the haunt that spirits now rest in and lie to us day and night—the spirits we believe without any doubt. It is the kingdom Adam and Eve brought about after they ate the fruit, having all the same kings, heads, horns, and spirits as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. We exist with and in original sin. We have it in us, and we are born through it. Every one of us on this earth has grown from this same seed, this seed that is the seed of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

Our very conception is a reenactment of the soft battle that took place when man and woman were first conquered—a serpent desiring to plant the seed of his kingdom in the flesh of a woman (another’s kingdom), hanging around, attempting to gain her attention and curiosities, entertaining her as he proudly introduces himself, educating her on what he has to offer in exchange for her participation in this act of intercourse with him. A woman, now procured, displaying herself so as to arouse this man, lustfully catching his eye and

having him desire to engage in intercourse with her. The two join as one, using each other to get what they want in this exchange for pleasure received and distributed from the vagina and the horn. The horn penetrating the flesh of a woman, stabbing over and over again until the seed of the kingdom has been planted—payment and pleasure exchanged. Just as Satan deposited the Antichrist into woman, so does man seek to carry out this endeavor with all his heart, though he knows not what his master is really doing.

This second beast carries out this act with its horn in exchange for payment of pleasure from the serpent (the brain), and the more ferocious and degrading this act is, the more aroused this beast becomes—the more beautiful, the greater the reward. The first beast, a woman, lusts for the pleasures promised through intercourse, for doing what she has been told not to (wrongdoing), for ruling from the throne Satan has given to her, for lording this ritual above all things, exercising her power to have the other beasts desire her and worship her with their entire being, ruling this male beast by entertaining its lust of original sin as she entertains her own—the greater and more powerful the man who succumbs to her intercourse, the greater her pleasure. The woman plays the harlot, while the man becomes the whoremonger. Generation after generation, man recreates this image with the very act that killed him, with his utmost passion. No one was conceived (except Jesus) by anything other than this ancient ritual that brings about the beast that comes again, forced to commit sin in order to exist. (“I’m coming” and “F*** me” are common phrases often recited by the blind during this ritual. It is coming again, and we are f***ed.)

With every generation, the harlots and whoremongers populate the kingdom with great enthusiasm, mothering and soldiering. It was said that the harlot was adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls as her reward for her fornication. We have all seen how beautiful women on this earth receive expensive jewelry, gifts, and luxuries of all sorts, in exchange for their favor (though usually only when they are youthful and the beast they are on is in his prime). Typically, when women desire to be worshipped, admired, and paid attention to by those of power in this world, and to have things of this world without working for them as others must, they must play the “harlot” in order to achieve their goals. The female beasts often play the harlot when it can serve their interests. The beasts have no greater passion of this earth than this harlot. Whoremongers lust for the harlot with all their being to such a degree that they even become violent, and harlots tend to their beasts so as

to have themselves desired over everything. You have seen it in all your movies, when in the end, the hero kills his apparent nemesis and gets the beautiful girl (one he typically really knows nothing about) as his greatest reward, but in reality, who got whom? We have seen this story a thousand times.

When a beast that has survived by doing the works of the harlot becomes old and withered, the harlot can no longer get what it desires from the whoremongers. (In actuality, it was really only by the power of the whoremonger's beast that she survived.) Then the beast the harlot rode on becomes a haunt filled with misery, consumed by what it consumed. The harlot exists generation after generation, not to be condemned until final judgment along with the Antichrist, when all that is evil will be condemned. That is why it was said that the horns on the beast the harlot rode on had no crowns as of yet (Rev. 17:12). It is said that the horns and the beast will hate the harlot and that they will consume her with fire at judgment for her deeds. They will leave her naked and eat her flesh. These horns will then receive royal authority, briefly, as the harlot will be condemned by them and thrown into hell because of them. As hard as it is to accept, many have become temples for the harlot. Satan has modified woman by Eve's hand, in hopes to mislead and have all destroyed. God created woman and made her beautiful, but He did not create her to be the harlot. Satan uses the harlot to keep all man distracted, like a magician with a beautiful assistant onstage who grabs the attention of the audience and distracts them while he is performing his works. They are devoting all their attention to the assistant. The men lust over her appearance while the women are consumed with envy over her power to be the center of attention.

Just as there are countless harlots throughout the world, so are there countless whoremongers, those who make women into harlots, those who lure, persuade, adorn, and in some cases force them into doing the works of the harlot, just as the serpent first did with Eve. The harlot and the whoremonger are two, but of one. You don't have one without the other, and where the harlot goes, the whoremonger follows.

This third beast is in us, and we are guilty as a result of the works of the ones who brought about our flesh, and to whom this beast belongs. We are born through and with original sin, and as a result of what it is, it will sin and always does. (A bad tree cannot bear good fruit.) Satan has tricked man and rewards man with man's greatest desires in

exchange for the glorification of murder. This third beast has all the heads and horns of the beasts that created it. (It is the spitting image.) It has learned all the things that the beasts before it have taught it, and it makes its contributions with each generation keeping the empire alive. We have the beast that existed once, but exists no more, yet has come again—in us and with us, just as all those who came before us and all those who come out from us.

The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet—we are the eighth king that is “of the seven” (Rev. 17:11).

This gives the third beast a number of sixty (or three score).

The Hills/the Thrones (Rev. 17:9)

Hills: Areas pronounced by elevation above their surroundings, uprisings on a surface, accumulations of matter gathered in areas creating a noticeable presence and significance. Hills can be a point of lookout, they can be a foundation, they can be observed, they can be beautiful, they can be a stronghold, they can be created, and they can be vital to the functions of a kingdom, allowing that kingdom’s subjects to protect, secure, and expand their kingdom’s existence from these hills. Hills can be plowed up by donkeys in exchange for carrots from their masters. In many battles throughout history, the primary objective was often for one kingdom’s subjects to take a hill from another kingdom’s subjects so that they could defeat that kingdom. Hills have always been strongholds for a kingdom’s existence, a vital asset that serves in the expansion and preservation of that kingdom. If you could not take a hill that was of significance to the existence of that kingdom, you could not defeat that kingdom, its subjects, or its king.

Man has modified this earth to better accommodate his wants and needs and to better serve its will, just as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet modified man’s flesh to serve their will. The false prophet has convinced man to use the power of the beast to plow up these seven hills onto the earth for their kingdom (Rev. 19:20), and these hills are government, industry, education, entertainment, military, merchants, and money.

Government: The assembly of kings to watch over and control the needs, prosperity, and future of the kingdom. Government forges the laws that serve the kingdom. It regulates and controls the industry that serves the kingdom and those of it. Government dictates the education that serves the kingdom (what is taught in the kingdom), they judge the entertainment that is allowed in the kingdom, they harness the military that protects and defends the kingdom, they monitor the merchants that create the kingdom, and they distribute the money that is honored in the kingdom. Government must keep a tight and constant hold on the kingdom so that the kingdom will not fall, and it has many tactics (rewards and punishments) to accomplish this. In order for this kingdom to be successful, it must have proud leaders that are respected by its subjects or the subjects will not follow. Some respect is earned by reward, other by fear, but either way, without respect, one cannot lead because no one will follow. The government of this kingdom serves itself before its subjects, and it uses its subjects to serve its needs, telling them what is to be observed, with great authority, the authority we have put in it. We are rewarded when we obey it, and we are punished when we do not.

From the serpent, from the senses, from pride, government is proclaimed.
From the dragon, from the beast, from the false prophet, with all their number and calculation.

Government: Sixty (three score).

Industry: This kingdom and all that are in it have many needs that must be met to sustain and prolong its existence and prosperity. This “industry” is what accomplishes this work on this earth. It manufactures all of man’s needs—water, sewer, gas, electric, appliances, food, guns, dreams, whatever is necessary—so that the kingdom can continue its pursuit to satisfy itself through this beast, the same way that the human body handles all of its requirements through its flesh so that we can continue to function, go about our business, and do what pleases us. This “industry” has isolated the subjects of the kingdom from what they require, need, and desire, except through purchase with marks or notes that the kingdom distributes to those who serve it.

From the beast, from the body, from greed, industry is manufactured.

From the dragon, from the beast, from the false prophet, with all their number and formulation.

Industry: Sixty (three score).

Education: This hill of the kingdom has schools of all kinds, to teach everything from mathematics so that those of the kingdom can calculate, to science so that those of the kingdom can formulate, to language so that those of the kingdom can communicate—all the necessary ingredients to sustain and progress in our quest to better provide for our beast and its kingdom. However, if we were not subject to death, the flesh, and money, we would not need any of this information of this kingdom, but we are mortal, so these things are now very necessary. Since we must serve the beast that is our body, we must protect our flesh from the elements or it will die. We must feed our flesh or it will die. We must be aware of the things that are dangerous to it. We must study our flesh so we can fix it when it breaks. And we must entertain our flesh so we have a desire to be in it. We must learn how to defend our flesh from others so they not kill us. We are taught about all these things: government, industry, entertainment, military, merchandising, and money. We are even taught how to educate others on these matters, but one thing this kingdom tries not to teach us about is God (separation of church and state). All things that are dying must learn what they must do to prolong the inevitable.

Those who have come before us have made their contributions to the kingdom in an attempt to secure its prosperity and immortality for the next generation to come. Education in this kingdom is the struggle to acquire, retain, and pass on the necessary knowledge so the kingdom will remain. This kingdom has many very specific needs that have to be met in order to survive, and these needs require one to be trained so they can be executed properly. In order to have a job well done, the one doing it must have some sort of motivation and training. If they are not motivated, they probably will do a poor job, or maybe not do the job at all. If they have not been trained on how to do the job, they won't be able to do it, whether or not they wanted to do it to begin with. This kingdom relies on its servants to keep it alive and prospering, and it has to educate its subjects by holding their attention through the promise of reward in exchange for service (getting money in exchange for work or simply following directions on what you must do to stay alive,

staying alive being the reward). “If you pull this cart, you will get this carrot, and here is how the cart is to be pulled.” Listen and learn, “Pulling this cart is the answer to all your problems. Do it every day and save some of these carrots, and one day, you can retire a rich donkey.” They never tell you about what happens after retirement, and you never get to see what was in the cart.

From the false prophet, from the tongue, from envy, education is instituted. From the dragon, from the beast, from the false prophet, with all their number and communication.

Education: Sixty (three score).

Entertainment: This is the captivation and enchantment performed by carefully choreographed plays, games, songs, dances, and rituals, and illusions executed on stage and screen, on fields, and in bedrooms and courtrooms—slaughter the nemesis, score, get the beautiful woman or the sack of money. What more could there be? Man solving and resolving all his problems, controlling his destiny, creating his own heaven on earth, with his own rules and laws, answering to no one, reigning supreme in complete fulfillment, at the expense of another.

This kingdom entertains itself on its way to the grave with many devices and vices, games, toys, and tales, all simulating accomplishments that we will never achieve, lusting after visions of grandeur, only to get up and walk away with less than we had after their spell has run its course. This kingdom and those of it pursue the passionate lies that have intercourse with our mind, body, and spirit. These things that entertain, they drive us, they keep us on the trail in our trials, they keep us in pursuit, they keep us in line, they are our passions and our goals that we never reach but refuse to turn away from, and they have us believe in them, over and over, again and again, all the way into our graves, just as the harlot enchants the whoremonger. So its greatest desire is to pursue it and serve it, working and fighting for a dream that doesn't exist, refusing to believe it doesn't exist, with extreme prejudice, never knowing or wanting to know of anything else that exists.

From the harlot, from the vagina, from lust, entertainment is cast. From the dragon, from the beast, from the false prophet, with all their number and fornication.

Entertainment: Sixty (three score).

Military: A kingdom must have an army if they are vulnerable to another and want to defend against it. They must also have an army if they want to take a kingdom from another—the strongest survive and rule. They take what they want, and do with it what they will, for as long as they can hold on to it. A kingdom’s army goes in and plows the way for the kingdom’s expansion, rule, ideas, and existence. It plants the seeds of their kingdom on the soil of the one it has conquered so that the kingdom can then grow larger and do more of the same works it has done on the soil where it originated. Any subjects belonging to a kingdom that was defeated in a war either must become subjects (willing participants in the service of the conquering kingdom), must be incarcerated or enslaved (forced to serve the conquering kingdom by force), or must be killed by the conquering kingdom (if they are of no use to the conquering kingdom and either cannot or will not serve, or are a threat).

The military of this kingdom is under the authority of the whoremonger (basically just another word for “warmonger”), one whose greatest desires are the acts of destruction and devastation of another king, his family, and his kingdom. And this “whoremonger” uses all the power of its number to conquer other kingdoms, solely to hand them over to that which it serves and worships, the kingdom it came from. There are many strategies implemented during a war. The standard one is to kill your enemy so that they will be of no further threat or consequence to you. If you cannot kill your enemy, you must try to subdue them so that they cannot interfere in your business. If you cannot subdue them, you will lose the war. One strategy to subdue another is to hold things that are precious to them hostage while you sack their kingdom. (Whoremongers sometimes entertain their desires by subduing harlots while they ransack her kingdom and plant seeds.)

From the whoremonger, from the penis, from wrath march the military.
From the dragon, from the beast, and from the false prophet, with all their number and decimation.

Military: Sixty (three score).

Money: This is the yeast of the kingdom. It rises up all the hills. Everyone in this kingdom performs their tasks in exchange for these notes that are bonded to elements and metals,

flesh and commodities, and soil and real estate that belong to the kingdom. It is here where the power of the kingdom is stored and exercised from. These deeds are traded between subjects (typically of the same kingdom) with the faith of the kingdom behind it pledging that they are real, meaning that there is some form of the kingdom's property actually bound to the note and that it is not just a worthless piece of paper vouching for a piece of real estate that doesn't exist.

A kingdom must have three things or there is no kingdom: elements (gold, precious metals, and such), living things (flesh, commodities), and soil (real estate). All of these three things are similar but different. Money of this world is and are deeds that claim the possession of these raw things, and it is the power of money that turns these raw materials into man's creations, by the use of money, with what the money represents. (Money represents raw materials. Everything in this world is made from raw materials.)

The kings of this world must have rewards for their subjects (the king's commodities) if they want them to serve them and their kingdom. (Some commodities get carrots. Some get fertilizer. Some get money.) A subject who is only beaten by their master so that they will work will never like that master, and if given the opportunity to escape, they will try. One who is rewarded by their master for doing their master's work will want to stay with that master and perform work for him for as long as he is content with his rewards.

Our kingdoms on this earth regard the possession of these things that back our money to be one of the determining factors in the power of a kingdom, just as the subjects with more of these things are the more powerful in a kingdom. All works on this earth are done through the power of the flesh of a man. There is no greater power in any kingdom here. (Man is the most valuable commodity.) True power is energy and the ability to be able to direct it. Energy alone is useless, but if you have great amounts of energy that can be directed at your command, then you have a great power. Money is used to direct man's energy through the promise of wealth. We may have great and powerful tools and weapons, but they all are formed by man. Without man, there is no usable power for this kingdom.

The bond between the power and the money is only as strong as the king (or government) that is distributing it can make it. If the king can have his money and its promise be trusted as a dire necessity, then the king has complete control over his subjects

because they can only get what they need and want by using what actually belongs to him. Without borrowing what is his, they cannot survive; he has complete control.

We rarely think about what money really is because it was here long before we were in this world. We know what it allows us to do, we trust it and serve for it for the power it gives to us, and we work for these notes or marks that belong to the kingdom we belong to, so that we can engage in trade in the kingdom, for the things we need and desire of the kingdom. And in return, most of us are content to serve in the hills we were trained to serve in the kingdom, under these conditions. We have flesh that has demands that must be met or it will die.

If a kingdom's money represents a percentage of the kingdom's power, then while that percentage of the kingdom's power is in a subject's possession, that percentage of power is being used by that subject and cannot be used by the king or anyone who does not have that money in their possession, until it is returned. For example, let's say an ounce of gold is worth a thousand American dollars. Then if you have a thousand American dollars, there needs to be one ounce of gold somewhere in America that has been set aside while that thousand dollars is in circulation, and that ounce of gold cannot be used for anything else. Those notes for a thousand dollars have bound up an ounce of gold that is being stored in a reserve in the kingdom. That money belongs to that gold, and that gold belongs to that kingdom, and that kingdom belongs to its king. Now, let's say that you have borrowed a pound of flesh from the king. You have power that is flesh that belongs to him, and he is perfectly content to let you use the flesh (his power) while you are part of his kingdom, but if you leave his kingdom, he wants what is his before you can go. And if you cannot return this flesh that you have borrowed, that is his, so how can you leave? If a king is more powerful than you, you can't. You are now a slave. Money or mammon is never given to anyone. It is only lent out.

Money is like the carrot of the kingdom that can't be eaten but can buy a million carrots that can be eaten. Let's say that you have some of the kingdom's money, one dollar to be exact, and let's say that a carrot in the kingdom costs one dollar apiece, as long as that dollar is traded a million times for a carrot. For example, one person buys a carrot from another by exchanging a dollar for it. Then the one with the dollar buys a carrot from another person for a dollar. Now that same dollar has bought two carrots. The carrots get

eaten up, but the dollar remains powerful, and if this dollar is traded again, it can get another carrot, and so on. The dollar cannot actually be eaten, whereas the carrot can, so in one aspect, the carrot could be considered more valuable, but since the dollar is obeyed by all in the kingdom and one can only obtain a carrot by the trading of a dollar, one cannot live in the kingdom without a dollar; therefore, the dollar has tremendous power over life and death. And if one must have flesh to live and the only way they can get this flesh is through and by “original sin,” then they are in debt to the one who owns it because that power belongs to him. And if that one who owns it does not give it, then it has been borrowed and still belongs to him. And if it can’t be returned, how can this debt be satisfied? How can you leave his kingdom if you owe a debt that you can’t escape from?

Money is payment for the flesh that inhabits these seven hills and does the works of these hills. If we did not have this carrot before our noses, we would not plow up these hills. But because of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, we believe the promise of money and trust it, and it has become very real, so if we have money, we have something. Everything else is of lesser value. Therefore, we can acquire anything in the kingdom that we want by trading money for it. And if we are not getting paid, we have no interest in performing most of these services that are very necessary to the king and the kingdom because all we can see is how we can directly profit from our actions. Money is constantly on our minds because we must have it. We need it to exchange for food, we need it to exchange for shelter, we need it to exchange for the things of this world that we desire and get pleasure from, and we need it to simply exist here. We attempt to acquire as much as possible in hopes that we might be able to rest. We all try to acquire as much as we can, and different jobs pay different wages, depending on their level of importance.

Money is the mark of the beast (Rev. 13:16–17) because “beasts” are who use it and accept it as payment for services rendered. Money is the mark we receive in our right hand. Our money has the images of man (biologically beasts) on it, and often our money has images of elements and symbols that are linked to this kingdom (buildings and such). It is referred to as being in our right hands because that is a term meaning that you trust something—for example, the old phrase “my right-hand man,” and most people are right-handed. Money is not prejudiced. You can work for it, trade for it, steal for it, even kill for it, and it works the same for all when traded. You just have to have it, and despite what

anyone says, it is very real in this world, and you will not live without it. If you are, then you are living on someone else's money.

It is also said that these marks are on our foreheads, because whenever we need to accomplish something, money is almost always an element in the equation, and we must always consider it in our thoughts. When we do work, or take a job, we think about how much money we will make. When we want something, we must think about how we can get enough money to acquire that something. When we fight with each other, it is very common for it to be about money, and we are constantly thinking about how we can make more money. Some trade goods for money, some trade their sweat for money, some trade their knowledge for money, some trade their flesh for money, and some trade their lives for money, but all in a kingdom trade with money of some sort. Be it gold (elements), real estate (soil), or commodities (flesh), all are really the same, just in different forms. Just as protons, neutrons, and electrons make up all atoms, and atoms make up all elements, and elements make up compounds, it is with the protons, neutrons, and electrons that they exist.

No one trades in the kingdoms on this earth except he who has the image of the beast in his right hand, or in his forehead, or the number that stands for his name. It stands for a man, and man is now a subject to the kingdom, and only a subject can trade with the currency of the kingdom. This kingdom has been conquered by the dragon, built by the beast, and its society flourishes through the ministering of the false prophet. We depend on the power of our kingdom for our survival, and our kingdom depends on our flesh for its survival, and it rewards us appropriately for the level of service we have provided to the kingdom, through money. We still, to this day, trade the flesh that was borrowed from the dragon with each other, the flesh that contains all the number of the one it came forth from, with all its number still in it just as it always has been. This hill is the seed of the kingdom.

The false prophet, the beast, and the dragon give this hill all their number, and all their number is in the hills. From the Antichrist (the dragon), from semen (the beast), from gluttony (the false prophet) comes forth money, in the colored paper and shiny metal that holds the future and prosperity of the entire kingdom.

Money: Sixty (three score).

Merchants: They inhabit these other six hills' produce, and it is the gill that produces the other gills. Merchants are the consumers of this kingdom, and this kingdom is being consumed by merchants. Everything in this kingdom is here as a result of merchants and to serve merchants, ones looking to profit off the backs of others who are looking to profit off of them. This kingdom is filled with merchants of all kinds, selling goods everywhere and of every sort, from the oldest profession to whatever the newest is. They trade services and products in exchange for payment, for the currency (or power) of the kingdom they reside in, in hopes of getting ahead of the others of the kingdom, though at times, just to survive.

We are all obsessed with money, wealth, and power, and the joys we are convinced it will bring. We even give great respect to those who have been incredibly successful merchants. This pursuit of power has completely consumed our being. As soon as we are old enough to make observations, we begin to obey this power, and this behavior does not cease until we are dead, until it has consumed us. John 2:17 says, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." We are all merchants of some sort, whether we go to a job and trade our services for money or we sell goods. Whenever we execute an action with the intention of receiving money, power, or a commodity for ourselves, we are doing the works of a merchant (Matt. 21:13). Look around you, everything in our kingdom was created in exchange for payment. Even churches have been built in exchange for money. Even people are all over this earth as a result of two people receiving payment—the payment of pleasure in exchange for planting the seeds of the kingdom in intercourse.

The goal of a merchant is to be able to enjoy life for as long as it can be possessed. Having everything one desires, to live without any worries or struggles, on our own terms, without regard for how this may affect others—this is the ultimate goal of every merchant in the kingdom. Unfortunately, one can only achieve this state by having others do large portions of their work for them. One must have slaves or servants to achieve this state, and if one cannot acquire servants or make slaves of others, they must then be a slave to themselves and others. In this kingdom, all pursue happiness, security, and relaxation by pursuing this power that we trust will provide these things to us. Just as a fisherman pursues fish, so does a merchant pursue money, struggling for it from start to finish, never getting enough of it. And those who touch it are pursued by those who want to take it from them, and will, and then they, too, will have the ball until they are tackled, only no one ever

scores except the three. In this world, there are merchants of all kinds. Some accept cash (money), some accept pleasure (flesh), and some accept your life (your soul) as payment, and all are trying to get ahead of whoever is in front of them.

From death (the dragon), from the flesh (the beast), from sloth (the false prophet) come merchants, with all their number and splendor.

Merchants: Sixty (three score).

All of these seven hills were created by Satan to control, operate, sustain, captivate, protect, grow, and enslave the subjects of its kingdom and to secure it, its kingdom that is now man and the earth. Every nation on this earth exists by these exact same seven elements. They are of one mind, body, and spirit—they are of its number. These hills have arisen because the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are now in man, and man is in them. These hills are the thrones upon which the kings of the earth sit and rule from. They are like stages upon which actors dress in costume and assume roles in order to make believe that they are real. And in return, the players become consumed by the roles, just as we are consumed by the beast. Each one of these hills has all the same number as is in every man, woman, and child. We are all a part of them, or will be. We have placed all of our authority and trust in these hills, and they rule us. All of us are now subject to these hills as a source of existence and survival, and they have become very real. We have to serve them in order to eat and shelter ourselves. (I love the phrase “I’m sorry. I’m just doing my job.”) We have killed over them and killed ourselves over them, killed to protect them. Only a king can free us from them.

**The Hills/Mountains 420
(the kingdom: hell)**

Each of the seven hills have been plowed up on this earth by the desires and works of man, through the power of his beast. All of the number that is at work in man is at work in each of these hills, giving each of these hills a number of sixty, the same sixty that are in every man, woman, and child (twenty from the dragon, twenty from the beast, and twenty from the false prophet), and a total of 420 altogether ($7 \text{ hills} \times 60 = 420$). These hills do not have

a number of their own; however, they do have a number (sixty) when man is sitting on these thrones. They share the number of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

These thrones do have great power, but they do not exist without man. We are the power that occupies these hills. We give our power to these hills. Just as a wave is not part of water, a wave can move through water and create a hill in the water where there was not one, but when the wave is gone, so is the hill. When the wave is present, it uses the water as a very real and powerful force. When the wave is gone, so is the power. Something has to make a wave. Water cannot make a wave, but a wave is very real. When the light of the day on this earth meets the darkness of the night that is coming, there is often a conflict in the atmosphere due to the change in temperature. The sun is warm, but darkness is cold. Whenever you have conflicting temperatures, it creates wind. When you have wind on the water, you have waves. When you have waves, you have given the water tremendous power. These hills are like the waves on the earth, brought about from the heads of the false prophet, the beast, and the dragon creating a wind—a wind that is man, and man has created these waves.

Man has put these hills here because of the faith and trust we have placed in the seven heads of the false prophet. These hills are the deeds to the spirits of the false prophet, just as money is a deed to gold of a kingdom. The dragon has used the false prophet to persuade man to do his work, and the beast has built these hills because we have commanded it to. Just as Satan's kings exist to serve it, just as man's heads exist to serve him, so do these hills exist to serve themselves. All of these hills revolve around each other and are absolutely vital to the existence of each other. All of man's heads revolve around each other and are absolutely vital to man's existence. All of Satan's kings revolve around each other and are absolutely vital to the existence of each other.

The mathematics of a room that holds a bride and groom

An even cater

Celebrants and waiters, Shiny chrome polished alligators

Snapping between crapping, All the while tails slapping
Assembling illusions, collusions; fabrications of accusations

Stealing feelings for private dealings

A gallery of made-to-believe

Make believe

Make believe with casualties

Six Hundred, Three Score, and Six

Government	Industry	Education	Entertainment	Military	Merchants	Money
60	60	60	60	60	60	60

THE OFFSPRING/THE EIGHTH KING

60

ADAM

60

EVE

60

THE FALSE PROPHET

20

THE BEAST

20

THE DRAGON

20

AND 6 – The Dragon - The Beast - The False Prophet – Eve – Adam – The Offspring

666

600 are the 10 sets of 60—the 7 hills each having a number of 60 in them
[7 hills x (20 of the dragon's number + 20 of the beast's number + 20 of the
false prophet's number) = 420—all placed on the soil of the earth] +
60 from Eve (20 of the dragon's number + 20 of the beast's number + 20 of the false
prophet's number—all placed in the soil of Eve) +
60 from Adam (20 of the dragon's number + 20 of the beast's number + 20 of the false
prophet's number—all placed in the soil of Adam) +
60 from the offspring, the one that lives (20 of the dragon's number + 20 of the beast's
number + 20 of the false prophet's number—all placed in our soil).

These 600 are the number in the thrones of the kingdom (Rev. 17:18, 17:1–2, 17:9).

20 members of the dragon

20 members of the beast

20 members of the false prophet

This three score are the servants of the kings.

1 The dragon

1 The beast

1 The false prophet

1 Eve

1 Adam

1 The offspring/the eighth king

These six are the kings. (Five have fallen, and one lives.)

Six hundred, three score, and six—it is a number that stands for man. This calculation is not describing one particular individual, but it is in fact the anatomy of man as we know him and his kingdom on earth—all that is in man and all that springs forth from man. In order for a kingdom to be a kingdom, there must be a king, there must be subjects, and there must be soil that the kingdom can occupy and exist on or else it cannot exist. Just as a man has a mind, body, and spirit, all of these included in this number are what rule, serve, and provide for man and his beast in this kingdom he has brought about on this earth.

The serpent, senses, pride: government (calculating) hatred—the king.

The beast, the body, greed: industry (formulating) cowardice—the temple.

The false prophet, the tongue, envy: education (communicating) hopelessness—the lies.

The harlot, the vagina, lust: entertainment (fornicating)—the mother.

The whoremonger, the penis, wrath: military (sowing)—the soldier.

The Antichrist, semen, gluttony: money (producing)—the seed.

Death, flesh, sloth: merchants (consuming)—the fruit.

All of these things revolve around each other, like the particles of atoms, forming elements, forming compounds. All held together with bonds, particles, and charges, they are many but of one. A solar system is made up of enormous particles that revolve around each other, and solar systems are made up of tiny atoms, which are particles made up of even smaller particles that revolve around each other, and all these particles have invisible

charges and bonds. Just as protons, neutrons, and electrons make up atoms, so is man made up of three things—just as Jesus said in Matthew 13:33, “three measures of meal.”

Everything in the world is basically the same. The earth is made up of solids, liquids, and gases. Atoms are protons, neutrons and electrons. We are mind, body and spirit. The list goes on forever. Everything testifies to the truth—except man’s tongue.

We all sprang forth from semen in liquid (“from out of the sea”) from a penis from a man. Out of his number, we all entered through a vagina of a woman, where we entered into an egg of flesh (into soil of a kingdom) that had been tended to by her number, where we then had to eat the flesh of that egg in order to purchase life. And this trade of life for this flesh occurred because of invisible spirits (gases are typically invisible, and many things that are solid can become gases) that were present and brains that delivered rewards through senses to two people for conducting this ritual. Every one of us had to eat that flesh or we would not be here now. We would have never made it through the wall of the egg if we didn’t chew through it, and that flesh we chewed and consumed belongs to Satan and is the same exact flesh that Eve put into her body, that same currency, that same dollar that bought her soul, that same mammon that has purchased again. And no one lives in this kingdom without it, and no one leaves this kingdom because of it, and the power that is bound to that mammon is our souls—the commodities of the kingdom.

Out of a vagina, through the gate into this world, we crawled and were then separated from the beast we fed off of. And we became our own beast (onto the earth), with all the number of the ones before us and now in us, and with the debt they could not pay now bound to us, just as was with our parents and their parents, all the way back to the beginning. And we all still must go out into the world and inhabit the hills that the beasts cannot live without, becoming part of the kingdom we were born into and must serve until death. We give the hills/mountains/thrones of the kingdom all our number. Just as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet multiplied their number into Adam and Eve, just as Adam and Eve multiplied this number into us, so have man and woman (us) multiplied this number onto this earth in these hills. The soul is the power, and it works for the flesh it is bound to.

The serpent, the beast, the false prophet, the harlot, the whoremonger, the Antichrist, and death are the root of sin. They are original sin, they are the dragon, they are Satan, and they all inhabit this flesh.

From the mind of the dragon, to the body of the beast, to the spirits of the false prophet, and into man and onto the earth—together all these things serve each other in order to secure their existence in this present state, at the expense of man. Who can argue that our bodies are not beasts? Who can deny the way we come about on this earth? We have knowledge beyond any other creature on this earth; however, there is very little difference (if any) in how our bodies function as compared to the other beasts here. We may be shiny and polished, but we are still animals. We may have meticulously organized and orchestrated devices that we have implemented in pursuit of our endeavors, but we are still beasts.

For centuries, man has wandered after the beast. It walks on four legs in the morning, two during the day, and three in the evening.

Not man—the beast.

Revelation 17:3 *tells of a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.* The scarlet beast is the temple of the dragon, and the scarlet beast is the original beast—the beast that was, and is not, but will come again. Eve became the first beast of man. Her beast died, but she bore all the other beasts with her beast while her beast was in the world. And with the beasts she brought forth came all the exact same number that she had, and as a result of this, every generation is filled with harlots we worship that are exactly like Eve. It is said that the woman was “seated” on the scarlet beast, because that scarlet beast is the female body and the female body rules this world. Women enchant the inhabitants on this earth as well as bear all future inhabitants.

This scarlet beast is the twenty from the dragon—a score. This scarlet beast is the body of woman, as well as the harlot, as well as Satan.

Revelation 17:9 says, *“The seven heads are seven mountains.”* This is referring to the false prophet. This is the twenty from the false prophet—a score. Yes, the false prophet is one of the kings of the dragon and is counted with a value of one, along with the other six heads of the dragon; however, just as the beast goes out and becomes another, having all the number of the ones before it, so does the false prophet do the same (Matt. 12:45). The false prophet takes part as a king with the dragon, but it also has come again like the beast. John 3:6 says, “That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of Spirit is spirit.”

Revelation 17:9 continues, *“on which the woman sitteth.”* The woman is Eve—the first harlot as well as all the harlots that were, and are no more, and have and will come again. It is said that she is sitting on these “hills” since it is because of her and her harlotry that these things came into the world. And it is as a result of her offspring, who are now in the world, who are the ones who have built these “hills,” so technically, she is sitting on the power. She is the one who is in control. Without her, none of the kingdom exists—no kings, no heads, no hills. Man carries the seeds of the kingdom, but woman ultimately decides. A beautiful woman can have intercourse whenever she wants, at any time, but a man cannot. And a woman can choose who lives and who dies (who is and who isn’t).

Revelation 17:10 says, *“And there are seven kings”* (the heads of the dragon), *“five are fallen”* (the five originals: the chickens that came before the egg, the ones the egg was built for, and the ones who built the egg—the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the harlot, and the whoremonger), *“and one is”* (the Antichrist, the seed for the egg, for the flesh that in actuality is the next generation of the seven kings), *“and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space”* (death, which is said to have not yet come because the Antichrist has to be born into the flesh before death can be born). Something has to exist in order for it to die. Satan builds offspring to have something to torture while it serves him, until it is worn out and he kills it. It is said to only continue a short space because death and the flesh are basically the same thing, and the flesh wears out quickly, and when it does, that flesh is dead along with that child of the kingdom. The flesh gives the existence it possesses to the Antichrist so that the Antichrist can exist, and as a result, the flesh dies because it has no life. It only has existence; it is dead—hence, death. This event is the debt we owe, right back to money and what it is deeded to, and its

promise of wealth, which does not exist, right back to Adam and Eve giving their temples to the Antichrist so it could live and modify their flesh so that it could kill them but so that the beast could live and come again, solely to cause sin, torment, and destruction. Both death and the Antichrist are like terrorists that hold souls hostage, from conception to damnation.

Revelation 17:11 says, “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.” This is the beast that came out of the sea from the dragon and became Eve’s body, the beast with the seven heads, with one appearing to be wounded. This is the beast that keeps coming again, and when it does, it brings the empire with it. This is the “first beast” to carry the beast. This is the first beast to fornicate with the beast, and as a result, it bore the twenty of the false prophet, twenty of the dragon, and twenty of the beast—three score. This beast is the house where the spirits that create the hills rest, and it is the beast that carries the beast that is the temple for the kings who have come again. These are what have joined themselves to every woman and man. Some have embraced them, others not, but regardless, no one lives on earth without this number in them, and they have made all subject to condemnation. All of these things existed once, but exist no more, but have come again, and they all have come again because of Eve and the harlot.

This is the abomination in the temple (Matt. 24:15).

I find it very interesting that the ancient Egyptian kings had a serpent on their headdresses, and the most famous “King Tut,” aka “Tutankhamun,” had both a snake (king cobra to be exact) and a vulture on his headdress. The snake perhaps symbolized the obvious, and the vulture symbolized the spirits of the “false prophet.” And the dove is a symbol of the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit, a spirit that is considered to be clean), so it could be that the opposite of the dove would probably be the most unclean bird (the vulture). It would make sense. (Revelation 18:2 talks about a haunt for every unclean bird,

meaning evil spirits.) The name “Tutankhamun” means “living image of the Amun” (Amun was the Egyptian god whose name literally means “hidden one”), which could possibly have something to do with the Revelation passage where they say that the beasts were allowed to create an image for the “beast.” Interesting how you have three things recognized on the throne of perhaps one of the oldest kingdoms on earth—the serpent being the mind, the vulture being the spirit, and King Tutankhamun being the beast or temple that these things lived in. Egypt was a pagan civilization, which means they worshipped something other than the only true God, which then means they worshipped Satan (whether or not they knew it). These civilizations that existed before Jesus came into the world and had direct communication, at times, with God and Satan. It was only after Satan was condemned that God stopped direct communication with man, and that was perhaps because there was nothing more to communicate about.

After all these calculations, examples, and explanations, how does this change anything, or how will it save you? It doesn't. Just like all the other calculations in this world, you still have to get up and go to work here, and you still have a beast to tend to; however, hopefully you will be able to see what you are up against.

Part IV

Solutions

Jesus the Son of God, the Savior of Man The Light

And now back to Jesus. Many find Jesus hard to accept and difficult to understand because we have no idea what is going on in this world. This world desperately tries to keep us in the dark, having us distracted with things it wants us to see—“pay no attention to the man behind the curtain.” God does know what has been going on, and that is why He sent down His only Son. This entire world has had to become about judgment because evil must be separated from God’s kingdom. These judgments that must take place are the only way that evil can truly and righteously be separated from man. Whenever God decides it is time for judgment, everything that will be judged must be judged by the same measure, by the same law or laws.

Jesus came into the world when the time was right so that the ruler of this world could be judged by God. This judgment by God was not going to be with a flood but rather by the Ten Commandments.

Because Abraham had been willing to sacrifice his son, God could justly send His Son to man to be sacrificed—an eye for an eye. Jesus had to be born of a woman of this earth so that He had the flesh of a man of this kingdom in Him. He needed this flesh so that He could pay it back to Satan. You might say to yourself, “Why didn’t God just create a pound of flesh to give to Satan to repay him, if God can do anything?” God could not do this because Satan would not allow it. Satan would have said to God, “Where did this come

from? Where did you get.” God would have had to tell him the truth, and then Satan would have said, “Well, that is not mine. It did not come from me. I do not know where that came from or what it is, so you keep it.” Jesus had to give back Satan’s flesh from a man born to a woman of this earth, and there could be no question—the flesh repaid had to be of that kingdom, just as one of a kingdom does not accept currency of another kingdom, nor do they accept counterfeit money.

God had Jesus conceived in the womb immaculately. God joined His seed with a woman who is without sin. (Other than being born into the flesh of man—she was born with original sin.) Mary always did the will of God, so she willingly conceived Jesus, a Son of God who grows in the same flesh as all of man, only from the seed of God. All of man was destroyed by Eve, a woman who conceived the flesh of Satan in her body. So would all of man, those who wished to be saved, be saved through this woman, the mother of salvation, and the Mother of God. If you live by the sword, you will die by the sword; Satan will be destroyed by his own measure.

Jesus grew up a man in the Jewish community. He worked as a carpenter and a fisherman until it was time for Him to teach man about God. Before He started His ministry, He went out into the desert for forty days to fast, to be tested, and to be prepared by God for what He was going to have to do. After He had been prepared, He returned to society. He then showed man everything man needed to know in order to be saved. There was another man in the kingdom who was also going around doing the work of God: John the Baptist. He was baptizing people in the water so that they could have original sin forgiven. This baptism could only take place at this point in time in the world, because Jesus had come into the world, and as result of Him being present in the world, He was now able to give back sin to Satan. The debt was now going to be paid, so sins were now going to be able to be forgiven. John had to baptize Jesus so that there was a well-known witness, who was a man of God, who could testify that Jesus asked of His own free will of God (the God of Abraham, the God of Moses) to have this flesh (original sin) returned to Satan—and so that everyone would know that it was by the power of God that this sin would be removed and that it was not being done by anyone other than God. John was eventually killed by the king at the request of a harlot, for doing these things (great example of how women really do rule).

Jesus performed many miracles during His time on earth so that all those who wanted to see God could understand. Satan began to fear Jesus because he was unable to have Him commit a sin, and Satan knew who Jesus was but was unable to get rid of Him. Satan used all of his power to try to conceal who Jesus was from the Jews and the rest of the world. And as a result of Satan's deception, he had some of the Jews arrest Jesus and bring Him to trial.

This world judged God at the trial of Jesus (they judged God because they judged Jesus's teachings, teachings that Jesus said were from God, which some of the Jews did not believe), so God judged this world in return—an eye for an eye. This world judged Jesus in a court of their law, in a court of a kingdom of this earth, the most powerful kingdom on earth at the time. They then executed an innocent man of another kingdom. Since the kingdom had charged Jesus with a crime, and sentenced Him to death, the blood fell on the hands of the king, and since Satan was the king of the world at that time, Satan would be judged. The blood of an innocent man was on Satan's hands now—the blood of a man who was not from Satan's kingdom. (Yes, Jesus was born into the flesh of Satan's kingdom, but His seed was God's.) God brought judgment down on the ruler of this earth and his kingdom because Jesus was from God's kingdom. Since Satan had judged Jesus and struck down Jesus, the Ruler of God's kingdom, God would strike down Satan, only God's judgment was just, fair, and powerful. Satan was guilty and could not withstand the hand of God. Satan was condemned by the laws of the Ten Commandments, and the punishment for breaking these laws was to be cast into hell, into the bottomless pit, condemned from the face of the earth for as long as God sees fit.

When Jesus died on the cross He was nailed to, when He breathed His last breath, He cried out to God and His spirit left Him, many tombs opened up, and there was a great earthquake, and the sun was eclipsed (Matt. 27:51). When Jesus cried out, those who knew God's voice—the ones who came out of the tombs, ones who had been baptized and were saints (John the Baptist was one of them)—rose up just as Lazarus had and walked about on the earth briefly (Matt. 27:53). Jesus's lifeless body was taken down off the cross, His side was pierced by a soldier, and blood and water ran out of it, and those who saw this were now concerned that they had killed someone who was not exactly like us. Jesus's body was laid in a tomb, and the tomb was sealed. Jesus had not been condemned as Satan

had, but the flesh of Satan still existed in Jesus, and Jesus's body could not go into heaven with this flesh because it was evil and belonged to Satan. (God takes nothing that belongs to another). By the power of God, Jesus's body went down into hell, where Satan was, and what belonged to Satan, which was in Jesus's body, was now returned. Satan had now truly been overthrown. Jesus conquered Satan by the power of God. Jesus could now sit on His throne in His kingdom with those of this world who had become part of His kingdom. Jesus had survived God's judgment by being found completely innocent of ever committing a sin (the law by which God judged both Satan and Jesus). Satan did not survive God's judgment. Satan was guilty of killing a man who was not his property, who was innocent, who did not belong to his kingdom.

When one commits a crime in another's country, they are subject to that country's law, if they have broken their law. But if they have not broken the law there but are being falsely accused and punished, then that country has committed a crime against another country. And if that country punishes a foreigner who is innocent, any country that truly cares about its people will come and wage war to avenge this injustice that has been done to its people. And if the one who comes to avenge can destroy you, He is going to for what you have done, and He is going to make sure that this never happens again.

God does not take what is not His, and Jesus follows every word of God, so He asked God to give back what belonged to Satan, the flesh of the beast, and make new flesh for Him, a temple for His soul to live in. When Jesus went into hell, God tore down Jesus's temple and rebuilt it in three days—hence, give to Satan what belongs to Satan, and give to Jesus what belongs to Jesus.

Jesus was a foreigner; however, He entered this kingdom on earth lawfully, just as all do, through the gate that is the vagina, a vagina that was lawfully part of this kingdom. He was not a slave to this kingdom except through the flesh of His mother, who was a slave, but His Father was not a slave or part of this kingdom, and that is where His seed came from. He could come here, so as long as He was invited, and Abraham did arrange an invitation for Him. Nothing could be found against Him; He was not trespassing. By returning this flesh to Satan, all man's debt to Satan was paid. In the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, one piece of fruit was taken. Now, that one piece was returned. Though there may be millions of souls walking around with original sin, it all came from just one

piece (just as one dollar can buy a million carrots), from Satan. And he never forgave this debt of us having what was his, and until now, not one piece could ever be rightfully paid back because we could not exist outside of this flesh. (Life is bonded to Satan's flesh just as gold is bonded to money. And just as you can hold money of a kingdom, you never get to touch the gold of the kingdom that it is bonded to—just as hydrogen is bonded to oxygen so that water can exist.)

We had to remain trapped in this flesh until death, and at death, we still remained bound in this debt we could not pay, but now we would no longer be held captive by a debt we could never pay (a pound of flesh for a pound of flesh). Satan was perhaps the king of all shyster lawyers, but in a true court, his deception and motives were defeated. Jesus freed all man, both good and bad. This flesh had been taken from the tree by Adam and Eve, by man. It had to be given back by a man. Even though Satan told them to eat it, he did not tell them that they could have it, just as if someone were to hand you a sandwich and you were to assume that it was a free meal, but then after you've eaten it, they hand you a bill—what if you can't pay this bill and you cannot return the sandwich? In order for this debt to be rightfully paid, it had to come from a man born unto a woman of flesh and blood of the beast. Jesus paid this bill. Satan remained in power on his throne by keeping his subjects enslaved with the debt of the flesh they received from him and by making all in his kingdom guilty of sin and accusing them before God and not allowing them to be forgiven (Rev. 12:10)—by the power of the horns.

Jesus gained His freedom from condemnation by being judged by God as a man and being found without sin. The horns of the beast had not condemned Him, nor had the heads of the dragon, nor the hills and spirits of the false prophet. He, by the power of God, returned the original sin that was in His Flesh. Though He was not conceived by original sin, He was flesh and blood just as we all are. Matthew 21:5 says that He came riding on the offspring of a beast of burden. His Flesh was the beast of burden that we all are riding on.

Jesus then ascended out of hell after the three days. Those souls who were raised at the resurrection—but were still hanging around in the flesh of this world for the three days while Jesus made His new temple—then left the flesh of this earth and went into the new flesh that they were promised (John 14:2), and were raised up to heaven with Jesus when

He ascended. He went up to heaven because He knew where heaven was, because He came down from heaven and He has the light in Him (His soul is not trapped in darkness), so He can see all things (John 17). Those few, who were raised with Jesus, were raised because they had been devoted to God, and they knew God and God knew them, and they knew God's voice when they heard it, and God raised them just as Lazarus had been raised from the dead—only, unlike Lazarus, now Jesus had prepared new flesh for these souls, and God had prepared a place for them to live for eternity. All of them may not have had the opportunity to be in the world when baptism was available, but they would have been baptized if they could have. They did everything that God told them to do while they were on top of the earth, always, so they would have done this, without question, and they were with Jesus now, so He could forgive all their sins at that time. They were saved by Jesus, because Satan was overthrown and Jesus could now do all the works of God without being accused of being unjust—the kingdom was now His. (This has not been directly told to me, but this is the conclusion I have come to after looking at all the events that have taken place as recorded in the Bible.)

Every word Jesus said and every action He performed was so that you might understand and so that you might see how God was saving man. When He cured the blind, it was not just for those individuals but for all man to know that God could open their eyes. When He raised the dead, it was to show you so that you could see that God can raise the dead. When He fed the thousands with a few fish and some bread, it was to show you that His Flesh will never run out as long as He is here, and it will feed countless numbers of people. When He turned water into wine, it was to show you how He would turn wine into His Blood.

Satan wants to have all things condemned and destroyed, and he, unlike Pharaoh, would never release man from the sin that he had bound man with because he knows that God does not want to destroy man, and he knows that God cannot save man if He destroys Satan's kingdom, because man was part of his kingdom. God had to send Jesus to free man so that when Satan's kingdom falls, man can be saved from its destruction.

Jesus is the ark of the covenant. Just as all that was gathered into the ark of Noah lived when all else died, so will it be at the final judgment. All that are in Jesus will live,

and all that are not will remain on earth. Everything in the entire Bible reveals Jesus when you understand what He had to do to defeat Satan. Not one word contradicts Him.

John 8:31–46

Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed in Him, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Part V

Conclusions

Jesus conquered this earth when He conquered Satan, and by conquering Satan, He freed all men. He has built His kingdom. He has laws to govern His people (many currently here on earth). However, Jesus is not evil and does not enslave anyone, and if you do not want to be part of His kingdom, you do not have to be. No one is going to trick you into slavery, and you can live out your existence for as long as you possess it. Although, if you do not wish to be part of Jesus's kingdom, you should be aware that you will remain on this earth for eternity. Where else can you go?

The purpose of Jesus's coming to man was to give new flesh to man that would not die, where man could dwell for eternity, to separate man from Satan, all evil, and to save man from the judgment and condemnation man could not save himself from. The two things that were condemning man were the flesh—the debt his soul was bound to in birth—and the sins he committed, in and for this flesh. Jesus paid this debt and ours as well (Matt. 17:27).

By Jesus conquering Satan, original sin could be forgiven through baptism. The flesh we are bound to death in at birth could be returned. The only reason baptism came into the world when Jesus did was because, until that time, there was no one who could defeat Satan and pay man's debt, which is what had to be done so that nothing could be found against God (so that God could not be accused of being an impartial judge). Original sin is still in us exactly as it always has been since Adam and Eve, except that now it belongs to us. (Jesus overthrew Satan and gave all man freedom from this debt to Satan.)

So we have the right to give it away. We own it. If you don't want to give it away, you can keep it. If you want to get rid of it, you can ask that Jesus return it (forgive it). If you do decide to keep original sin, you cannot enter into Jesus's kingdom because original sin is evil and did not come from God. Therefore, it does not belong to God. Jesus freed all men, and Jesus makes a slave of no man, just as God makes a slave of no man. To all man, They give free will. If you are baptized, your original sin will be given back at judgment.

Just as we are bound to condemnation by original sin, likewise we are also bound to this world by the sins we commit. You must go to confession to have these other sins forgiven (Rev. 22:14). You must go to confession so that there is a witness from Jesus's kingdom who can testify that you asked to have whatever sin you have committed forgiven. Those who have the authority to forgive sins are not there to judge you, only to be a witness that you have asked, of your own free will, to have Jesus remove these sins. But you must do this, just as Jesus had to have John be a witness to Him—He asked to have the sin (original sin) that bound Him to this world forgiven. These servants of the Catholic Church are forbidden to share with anyone other than Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit the sins you have confessed. Always remember that this sacrament was not put here so that we can have a license to sin but that on the occasion when we do, we will not be condemned by it. And also know that the spirit of "cowardice" is what prevents you from confessing your sins.

Jesus said that unless you eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, you will not have eternal life in you (John 6:51). Just as all of this earth have been killed by the flesh and blood of the beast, from that one piece of fruit that was the seed of the flesh and blood of evil, so are all those who eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of Jesus, brought to life from this one Savior. Just as all are born into this world from the Antichrist, so are they born into salvation from the Christ. Just as Satan placed his seed in man so that the beast could come again and the flesh of his kingdom could multiply, so has God placed His seed of His Flesh on earth so that man can be born again, so that His kingdom can live and multiply. Just as Satan gave man the fruit so that he could bind man's soul to his kingdom in his house, so has Jesus given His Flesh and Blood so that man's soul can have a new home to dwell in, in His kingdom of heaven (John 14:2). Only, with Jesus's kingdom, you have free will to choose if you want to be part of the kingdom of heaven, unlike the kingdom of hell—once

you are in hell, you are trapped. If you decide you want to leave Jesus's kingdom, you can walk away owing nothing.

You must receive the sacrament of baptism, the sacrament of confession, before you can receive the Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ. If you do not do these things first, the Body and Blood of Jesus will not become one in you. Matthew 9:16–17 says that you do not put new wine into old wine skins, and you do not mend an old cloak with a new piece of material—meaning you do not waste Jesus's Flesh and Blood by putting it into something that will not last, something that will perish.

There is to ultimately be only one church, one family, one kingdom, united under one God, the Father, assembled for God by His only Son, Jesus, and that church is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was founded by Saint Peter, and that was the only church that Peter founded. Jesus said plainly, “And I say also to thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:18–19). This was said exactly the same and with as much authority as when God said that if Adam and Eve ate that fruit, they would die (Gen. 2:17). Do not think that it means anything other than exactly what was said—there are no exceptions. Anything that tells you different is the false prophet, and if you follow the false prophet, you will die.

If you believe in someone, you have to trust everything they say completely and everything they do or you really don't trust or believe in that someone. If you truly believe in Jesus, you believe in every word He has spoken, not just the ones that suit you. How can you possibly have faith if you don't believe? Jesus has plainly told you what church is the church of salvation and where you need to go if you wish to be saved. If you choose not to go there, you have made your choice of your own free will and have no one to blame but yourself and those whose words you have believed over the words of Jesus. Remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:10—that the words of Jesus are to be followed, not the words from men. Picture yourself at a fork in the road, Jesus plainly telling you which road to take and someone else telling you to take the other road, convincing you that they lead to the same place. And you decide to take the road that Jesus did not tell you to take. Who are

you placing your faith in? There are many who speak, who inspire, and there are many who do great deeds, but if you do not go and receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, where you have been told by Jesus to go, you will not have eternal life in you, and you will perish just as Adam and Eve died when they put their trust in another. God cannot show partiality in judgment, despite your intentions.

The scriptures from the Bible spoken in all Christian churches and the sermons given are just as real and just as powerful (and sometimes more inspirational) as those in the Catholic Church, but you need to build a house for your soul to live in when the house your soul lives in now wears out. There is no difference in the love in most other churches on this earth. There is no difference in the Spirit in most of these churches. The Holy Spirit can dwell in these temples exactly the same as it can in those of the Catholic Church. The only difference is, your soul must have a temple to dwell in when the one we are currently in wears out, and that is why you must have the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Prayers are answered by those of other churches just as much as they are answered of those in the Catholic Church. And those of the Catholic Church, just because you may have the building blocks of the Flesh and Blood of Jesus doesn't mean you know what to do with them if you are not practicing the Christian faith.

We are all stumbling around in the dark, and we sometimes happen across things that we need to make it to God. And there are people all over this world who make tremendous efforts to help achieve this goal, and it is amazing sometimes who these people are and where they come from. The people of the Catholic Church are the exact same people you are. They are not better than you, they have just as many faults, and they are no different than any man or woman, except that they have been baptized, had their sins forgiven in the sacrament of confession, and received the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ—if they are actually practicing the faith. (The Catholic Church might even have one small thing or two that it could work on, such as referring to its officials as “Father.” I’m not sure why or when this tradition started, but it is definitely something that contradicts what Jesus said in Matthew 23:9—“call no man your father.” This is something for which there is not an excuse, and it just needs to stop. Pastor, shepherd, captain, general, etcetera—anything but “Father,” except when you are addressing God, such as in confession.)

There are many who may not currently be in the church but who do great things on this earth; however, the authority of Jesus has been given to this church by Jesus, and Jesus has not given his authority to any other church. That is not to say that He cares any less for those who love their fellow man and do good works that are not Catholic, and it is not to say that the works they have done on this earth are not great because they are not Catholic. But they must come to the Catholic Church and bring with them the blessings they have acquired and brought about, and receive the sacraments to be saved or else all of your great works will be lost. John 10:16 says, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there will be one fold, and one shepherd.” This may not sit well with you, but as Peter once said, “What choice do I have?”

Do not let pride, tradition, or others confuse you. Listen to what Jesus has plainly said, not to those who may have manipulated scripture to serve their needs or desires instead of God’s. Do not dwell on those who try to discredit and destroy the Catholic Church by condemning the church for the actions of a few. Was not Judas evil, and did he not make himself appear as a disciple and travel with Jesus? Unfortunately, there will be evil people infiltrating every establishment until the end, and there are a few slithering through the Catholic Church as well, but they cannot destroy anything other than themselves and their number. Those who lead the Catholic Church have given up having wives and husbands, children, and most possessions so that they can serve those who come to them, undividedly. And except for the few Judases who hide in sheep’s clothing, they are some of the wisest men and women on earth.

Beware of people and things that promote deception and division concerning the Catholic Church, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Anything that removes one word or contradicts one word Jesus has said is that of the false prophet and is there to destroy us. Jesus said things very plainly and straightforward. When God said not to eat the fruit, that should have been the end of it. What Jesus has said is what it is, exactly. Don’t argue amongst yourselves. It’s right there in black and white, end of discussion. If you do not eat the Flesh and Blood of Jesus, you don’t have salvation in you. If you don’t go to the church where Jesus placed His authority (the Catholic Church), you are not going to get the Flesh and Blood of Jesus—that is the only place that has been authorized to distribute it. When

you go to the Catholic Church, you must prepare your body for the Body and Blood of Jesus. You must be baptized and have your sins forgiven through the sacrament of confession. If you do not do these things, you will not become one with the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Though you may physically eat it, you will not become one with it. No one enters this kingdom except through the gate.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matt. 7:1). Forgive so that you be forgiven. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Love God with all your heart and being, and become one with Jesus in the Flesh and Blood so that you not be condemned by God with Satan and his works.

These things are much, much easier said than done. They are a constant violent battle. If you wish to be saved, you will have to fight relentlessly, with your thoughts and feelings. You will have to pray, questioning everything you know and hear, but you don't have a choice if you wish to be saved.

This world is corrupt, and no one is innocent, but there are many men and women who strive to try to follow what Jesus has shown us to follow, and who continue to struggle with sin and the kingdom that is part of us now rather than rejoice in it. There are many who have not given up, in hopes that one day we may have this thorn taken from our sides. Satan has tricked man into placing the flesh of his kingdom into himself, making man his property and the vessel for his offspring by man's own hand. Satan has bonded with man, something that is evil and is consuming man, like a worm that consumes an apple (or a gourd) and then moves on from apple to apple until it has destroyed the entire tree (Jonah 4:7).

Satan has made man, as himself, guilty of all the sins he is guilty of so that man would be condemned along with him. Satan has used man to try to destroy all of God's creations. Satan has blinded man to the truth with lies, and he is destroying man. Jesus came to bring man back from the dead by forgiving the sins that bound man to the dead and to build a new temple for man to dwell in (John 14:2), but if man does not go to be baptized to have original sin forgiven and go to confession to have his sins forgiven, he will go to hell. And if man does not eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of Jesus Christ, he will not have eternal life in him. God has fulfilled His every promise to man. There is nothing that He has withheld. There is nothing easy about salvation. There is much in this

world and in your head that is trying to keep you from it. There are many feelings and emotions (spirits) that will try to confuse you and keep you separated from it. Desires are not going to go away. They are going to get stronger in hopes of destroying you, but if you persevere to the end, those who have fought hard will receive the reward.

Just as in the time of Noah, the world was filled with wickedness and unbelievers. So, now, is our world slowly returning to those days, where it is fashionable to do evil works. We have been led so far away that most of us don't even know what we are doing half of the time (myself included).

If you truly wish to be saved, pray that you may believe, that you may have faith through this belief, be able to see the truth and accept it, and have the strength to endure it. For those who are skeptics, you must learn to pray honestly, try to step outside yourself, look at the world, look at what we do, and look at our motivation for doing these things. We are all skeptics at times, and we all get fooled at times, but do not discredit something without honestly testing it. If you do that, you are truly prejudiced. No one needs to know about your relationship with God—that is between you and God. It is never too late to change your position. Remember Saint Paul.

Every single word Jesus spoke and every miracle He performed was for the purpose of saving man, saving you, saving us. Beware of those who would lead you to believe that even one of His words was not necessary.

God has not placed these burdens on us, and God has not condemned us. Satan has, and we all have followed willingly. We are all surrounded by evil that most of us do not recognize, evil that is lying in wait to destroy us by our own hands. There is only one way out, and that is through Jesus Christ. The Bible has told us exactly what we must do to be saved by Jesus, and hopefully this book will have helped you to better understand what has been done for us by God.

Do not fear shame. Go and confess all your sins so that they be forgiven. Do not let the power of the horns overcome you and destroy you. It is very difficult to confess some sins, and most people are burdened with a sin or two that are so horrendous, so unspeakable, that perhaps even the recollection leaves you restless, uneasy, sleepless, and haunted. That is exactly what it was designed to do by its creator. Go and be rid of it. Those who serve the Catholic Church, who have the authority to absolve your sins, have heard

everything before, and they are fully aware that we all have a part of us that is absolutely horrendous and is capable of limitless evil—we have Satan in us.

Today, man walks the earth, bound to the flesh at our conception (the flesh Satan assembled and Adam and Eve passed down to us). In our skulls, all of the heads, horns, and spirits of the dragon are secretly dwelling, working to attempt to destroy us, our temple, our kingdom, our happiness, and our souls. In our bodies, all the heads, horns, and spirits of the beast are at work trying to have us serve the needs and desires of the flesh, committing the sins that the beast was designed to commit. Through our hopes, dreams, and society, all the heads, horns, and spirits of the false prophet are trying to destroy us, and they are all in this evil empire that resides in us, attempting to consume our souls. And now the time is here when we do control our own destiny. What do you want for yourself? We now have free access to freedom. It is offered to those who want it.

God has not placed His final judgment on this earth, and no one knows when it will take place, maybe today, maybe not for a thousand years. Only God alone knows, and you need not concern yourself with the end of the world because your existence on earth could possibly end today, making that event of no consequence to you. Worry about your end in this world, the end that you can do everything about, and if you do what Jesus has told you to do, then you have nothing to fear of that day.

God is going to judge this world, and I am assuming that all original sin is going to remain here on earth. And all that is Jesus's here on earth will go to heaven at that time. Jesus has not yet returned to the earth, but when He does, there will be no mistaking it. Every soul on this earth will know when He returns, whether they believed in Him or not. He will receive what is rightfully His, and it will go with Him to His kingdom. If you have not done the few things He has told you to do, He is not going to allow you to enter His kingdom (no one enters except lawfully through the gate) because you have chosen not to follow Him, nor do you observe the laws of His kingdom, and if you do not follow Him, then you are divided—if a kingdom is divided, it cannot stand (Luke 13:24).

Nothing is impossible for God. His power is without limits, and He can give His power to whomever He sees fit. He gave His power to His Son, and His Son has used it to save us. When you eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, you have what belongs to Jesus in you. And when the final judgment comes, what belongs to Jesus will be given to Jesus and

be judged by Jesus. What belongs to Jesus will go to His kingdom: heaven. What belongs to Satan will be given to Satan, and it will go into hell (Matt. 13:30), and there it will be condemned with all in that kingdom.

God has done everything possible to save man. He has warned him of the dangers of sin, He has warned man of Satan, He gave us the ten laws by which we all are being judged, and He sent His only Son, Jesus, to save us. God has raised man from a child to an adult. He has given man the truth, and He gives man time to recognize the truth. He has given him every opportunity to succeed if he so wills. We will all taste the death of this flesh, but we do not have to go into hell, to the second death, “where their worm dieth not” (Mark 9:48). God has done everything He can do to save us, and now we must do something for ourselves. Go to the Catholic Church (the gate, the church founded by Saint Peter), be baptized, confess your sins, and receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Judge not, lest you be judged, and obey the two commandments that Jesus gave us, the commandments that are the rule of the kingdom of heaven: love your neighbor as you love yourself, and love your God with all your being. If you obey these two commandments, you will not break the other ten. Pray for your loved ones who have passed, who did not perhaps have these sacraments take place in them, so that they may somehow be saved. Perhaps the ones who have passed can be raised as Jesus raised the ones who loved God but could not survive God’s judgment at the first resurrection. Maybe they will be raised as a result of your works, at the final judgment, and be saved by Jesus because they were part of the tree from which you grew, which now bears fruit for God—we can only hope, as that has not been said by God.

Pray for each other and for your enemies so that, one day, they might not be your enemy. (They are of man. Do not pray for Satan, who has already been judged and condemned by God.) Saint Paul is an example of a horrendous individual who was guilty of violently persecuting Christians. He was an enemy of all Christians, Jesus, and therefore God. He was heavily embedded in the movement to rid the world of Christianity. (In those days, they threw Christians to the lions and stoned them to death.) His sins were forgiven, and he went from being one of Jesus’s greatest enemies to one of His greatest allies. Do not think that you know who will be saved and who won’t. There are many people out there who are still trying to figure things out, and there are many people who think they have

things figured out who may not. Do not think you cannot be forgiven if you truly want to be, and do not listen to anyone who tells you otherwise—always remember Saint Paul. Moses did murder a man and cover up the body, and he did still make it to heaven. (Moses did do this before he was given the Ten Commandments and was made aware of the law, but nonetheless, he did murder someone.) Mary Magdalene was a prostitute who was at one point said to be filled with demons (evil spirits); she changed and was saved. The thief on the cross next to Jesus was saved in the last few moments of his life. These people did some very evil things in the beginning but were forgiven and saved in the end. Anyone who attempts to stop you from receiving salvation has committed a sin greater than the ones you have committed.

Satan has scattered brothers and sisters, generation after generation, destroying families and setting them against each other—each side believing that they are right and the other is wrong. If you want to go to heaven, forgive each other when one comes to you for forgiveness, and if you have wronged someone, ask them for forgiveness. God has sent Jesus so that we can be forgiven for what we have done to Him. So should you forgive when one honestly asks to truly be forgiven.

Even though we all have many things in us and surrounding us, constantly trying to destroy us and lure us into sin, many have worked to help each other and ourselves in the struggles we must face every day. We are capable of love for each other, and God has recognized this, which is why He wants to save us. Many people, both men and women, of all races and walks of life, have worked tirelessly to raise families the best they can, sacrificing and denying themselves for the sake of others, helping strangers, doing many good works that are not of the world we are trapped in. Although we may be forced to live in a house that is rewarded for committing sin, it has not completely consumed us, and God has not destroyed us. In fact, He has allowed us to remain in His image that He intended for us, despite what has been dwelling in our temples. Man is capable of love one day, and it is recognizable in everything from the hopes and dreams we have when our children are born, to the help we give to each other in this life, to the remembrance of our loved ones at their funerals.

God has spared no expense in His hope to save man. God has had unparalleled patience with man. God so loved man that He sent His only Son (John 3:16). We know

very little about God, but what He has shown us is that He will stop at nothing when something attempts to keep us from salvation and eternal happiness, and that He can conquer anything. Have patience even though it may seem impossible, one day at a time. Things will be different one day, and what is evil will be separated from what is God's, forever.

We have filled this world with what we have willed, we have tried to build a home here, and we have tried to make life with the beast as comfortable as possible. This is not wrong as long as we abide by the laws given by Jesus and do not put these things of the world before God or our neighbors. We do need all the elements of our society while we exist as beasts because we are beasts. We need farmers because we must eat—we have no choice in this. We need doctors because our flesh can cause tremendous pain, and it is constantly in need of attention, and we must coexist with this beast until God says differently. We must have military here because there are those in this world who do practice evil works and who want to keep man from God, religion, and freedom. (There are soldiers who try to keep the peace and protect it, and there are warmongers who go out and plunder and murder. Because of warmongers, we have to have soldiers.) We need law enforcement (local military) for the same reasons. (The Bible has guidelines for these necessary jobs.) We need governments because there are many people with many needs and demands, and whenever you have large populations, you can have many different opinions on how these needs and demands should be met. Unfortunately, all the demands can't be met, so we must have a level of compromise on most things so that people can exist safely together without harming each other. We need construction workers and teachers of all kinds. We need many different jobs that service ourselves and our possessions. We must learn about how to take care of ourselves and survive until things change. We definitely need moms and dads, grandparents, etcetera. There are many jobs that we need because we do have a physical condition that we now have a responsibility toward, and we do need time to relax and enjoy the things (that are not sins) that bring us joy and relief from time to time. We need to survive until the end time comes, and we do not have to be completely miserable until that time comes.

God wants us to be happy, though not in sin. We do not need to hide our faces and be miserable. God made man to be the most beautiful of all His creations, and we should

try to be as healthy as we can and look our best, but not for the wrong reasons. God is fully aware that we must support this beast and contend with it (Gen. 4:7) while we are in this world. Even His Son had to work by the sweat of His brow to support the beast. It is our responsibility to conduct ourselves in these hills, in our life, and in our work in a manner that is acceptable to God and in accordance with His law. When His Son was here, He also came to set an example for how we should live while in this flesh. God has been overwhelmingly kind to man, but do not confuse this kindness for weakness. Read the New Testament. It tells you how you should live while you are here. Nothing is going to change from what Jesus has said.

Everything I have shared here is what I have learned from Jesus, through His teachings that are recorded in the Gospels. No one or no thing has physically stood before me or come to me, appearing to me before my eyes with these things. I did experience several miracles that I shared with you in this book, but nothing was said into my ears by God during these events; however, Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit are very much alive, and if you want to speak with them, you can do so with the Bible and in prayer. Things from God, you can hear through your soul, but you must now test the spirits in you to see what is speaking to your soul. You will know what is speaking to you if what you are hearing in your thoughts contradicts anything Jesus has said. If it does, then you will know what you are hearing is not from God. We all want to have God appear to us in an elaborate production, but I believe when that does happen, it is going to be at the end of this age. We all want to have magic powers, to be able to throw lightning bolts around for no real reason other than meaningless displays of power, and we want to see the future—not going to happen. All the power that man needs in this world is right there in the Bible, and to those who do well with what they have, more will be given. To those who do not, what they have will be taken away. The only future you need worry about is in the Bible.

One of the few things you can do for God (other than practicing the faith the way Jesus has instructed) is to help each other. This does not mean just giving out handouts and then sending them on their way but actually taking the time to help each other. “Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” Probably one of the biggest things you can do for someone is to give them a job if they need one, if they are capable, if they are worthy of one, and if you can provide one for

them. And probably the best thing you can do if you have a job is to do your job well, especially when someone has placed enough trust in you to give you a job. No one wants to work, but there is not a much more rewarding feeling than knowing you have value and are needed. (It sucks when you are doing it but feels great when it is over.) We all have bills to pay and mouths to feed. Those who ask for help, remember, no one owes you anything. If they help you, that is great, but just because they may be successful, do not think that gives you the right to distribute their wealth that they have worked for and you have not. Those who employ, try to be as generous as possible and not extort your employees. To those who persecute and extort their employers, law enforcement, and others unjustly, regardless of what some may tell you, you are destroying the lives of many, and what you sow you will reap.

Money is very powerful and is the way this kingdom of this flesh operates, and it is not going to change until the end. God is aware of money, and Jesus has many references in the Bible about money and how it should be handled. (What He says is exactly how it goes.) People who do nothing get nothing, people should be rewarded for working hard (read the Gospels), and people who have been successful and fortunate should be as generous as possible, but they do not need to cast their pearls to swine, and no one needs to distribute what others have earned. (*Robin Hood* was a fable about a lazy thief.) If those without wealth want to share wealth, then they should go out and earn some wealth to share if they want to distribute it to others. It is very easy to convince those who “want” that they deserve something they have not worked for. Everyone wants a free lunch, but unfortunately, someone has to work for that lunch. If it doesn’t belong to you, you have no right to give it away—you are a thief. Though we have many parasites bonded to us, we decide what works will be done through our flesh. We are greatly influenced and persuaded by the three, but ultimately, we have the final say in what we do.

True faith is obtained when we truly follow God’s teachings without exception. We receive faith when we actually believe everything Jesus has said, and we will know if we believe Him completely when we do everything He said to do, and when we don’t do the things He has said not to do. I try to pray, go to church, confess my sins, and receive the Body and Blood of Jesus, and then read the Bible when I have questions or concerns. (The Holy Spirit loves questions that are sincere and honest.) This power is there for everyone

exactly the same. I am no better than the worst, and I still battle with many problems every day and still fall victim to sin, but I'm still trying to get better. Some days are definitely better than others, and I still make wrong turns.

All of these things I have written about may seem completely insane, but the fact is, there are many bizarre things in this world, starting with our own conception as tiny worms, semen, serpents, or tadpoles (whatever you prefer) produced in a beast that came before us and planted in the flesh and blood of another beast. (Even the atheists believe this 100 percent.) In the Bible, there are many scriptures that speak of horrible things, and throughout history, God has given us examples of things that seem very strange. They are there to attempt to make you aware of things that are real and of consequence, things that are almost inconceivable and hard to accept for us as man. Here are some examples: the gourd Jonah loved that God destroyed with the worm (Jonah 4); the reference “where their worm dieth not” (Mark 9:48); and the “abomination” in the temple (Matt. 24:15)—all these things are real and have been here since we fell victim. The Bible is the oldest book in the world, and it has existed here unchanged for a reason: to save man from Satan. And Satan has very cleverly confused all of us to where even the mere mention of Jesus makes us want to turn away or change the subject.

Everyone wants to belong to a family of some sort. Every gang, group, club, and congregation is based on this human desire to be wanted, accepted—somewhere we can feel safe, feel like we belong and are loved, respected, and cared for. Everyone is subject to this desire to be united, no matter how much we may pretend we don't want to be. The fact that we are members of organizations exposes this inherent desire to be a part of a family. It is impossible for man not to desire this unity. People may have given up on this hope or may be scared by personal experiences with family (or what have you) and abandon all hope of ever having this unity, opposing it because they have never been able to achieve it. This human desire of unity is often used as a tool of Satan, to separate by whittling down each other into smaller and smaller groups, dividing one another. (The enemy of my enemy is my friend, but for how long?) Some groups are organized to try to legitimize things that are not legitimate. There are many organizations that are tremendous sources of division. One thing that you should be made aware of is that there is no unity of any sort in hell. The threads that bond many of these organizations on earth will be severed after they have

served their purpose. Everyone in hell will be divided against each other—there is no unity, no companionship, and no brotherhood.

God does attempt to speak to everyone, not just those who are members of the Catholic Church. In fact, He may attempt to speak to those who are not in the church even more than the ones who are there so that they will come to Him. And just because you go to the Catholic Church does not mean God is going to speak to you if you don't listen. You have to practice the faith Jesus has taught. You need to take time to think about what Jesus has said and not perhaps what others may have told you. You need to spend time alone, reading the Gospels and thinking about them. They are just as real today as when they were written. God does not love or help those of the Catholic Church any more than anyone else who loves Him, and just because you may not be a member of the church presently doesn't mean you don't love God. God has always attempted to help everyone on earth who has tried to do good works, and He has done many things for all people, and God always will while we are walking the earth. However, this life has become a trial, and God cannot show partiality in judgment, which is why the Catholic Church exists: so man can escape condemnation. Think about how bizarre so many of the things Jesus said and did seem, and think about why He would have said them and done them. But remember, He always did everything for a reason.

If you do not want to believe what has been said to you in this book or in the Bible, you do not have to. That is your choice, and no one from the church is going to force these beliefs upon you, ridicule you, or call you a fool. I'm not trying to offend you or what you believe in, or argue with you. This is just *my* interpretation of the oldest book in existence. You can live your life exactly as you always have, you do not have to change one single thing in your life, and you can worship what you wish as long as you respect my right to do the same. I would not lift one finger to stop you from that right, so if that is your will (not to believe this), relax, do not be angry. I'm just some guy.

Some call it heavenly in its brilliance,
Others mean and ruthless of the western dream.

Case Closed

Part VI

Author's Notes and Ramblings (the cutting-room floor)

These are things I have entertained and observed, things that have influenced my conclusions and by no means should be considered anything other than that (unless I have quoted a Bible passage). And please remember that whereas those who wrote the Bible did physically see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, words and visions, I have not. I have only witnessed a few undeniable miracles, where during the physical actions that took place, nothing was said except in my thoughts, the same way we all hear thought. The events I witnessed were more like scraps being thrown to a dog so that he would stop barking. I did not perform any miracles the way that Jesus did. I begged for a miracle and then witnessed one.

I do not discount science and man's observations and discoveries, and I do not deny their findings. The idea of man evolving from a swamp may not be as far-fetched as some critics believe. Frogs and humans have very similar DNA, and even though I typically compare the appearance of human semen (in this book) to serpents and worms, it is also very similarly in appearance to a tadpole when examined under a microscope (maybe even more so than serpents and worms). And although we do not resemble frogs on the outside, our insides might not be that different. I would never say that we evolved from swamp filth, but I could definitely see where we could have devolved from it and frogs could have evolved as result. ("Evolve" would suggest that we moved forward from something.

“Devolve” would suggest that we went backward.) I do believe that we have been poisoned with a parasite that was never intended to be part of us (an unholy matrimony), and since we are all born into existence from sperm, and sperm does look just like a tadpole, and a frog is a tadpole before it has appendages and evolves—who knows? It says in Revelation 16:13, “I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.” All evil executed on this earth is done so through man and no one else. All man (except Jesus) has been born from sperm, and we have all come from a man who was also brought into existence from sperm. And if my theories are correct, this sperm does come about as a direct result of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

It is incredible what man has learned about this world we live in, and the tiniest of things are maybe the most interesting and consequential. Scientists have been able to study atoms and even the particles that make up atoms. I know very little about these things, but what little I know is that light is a major factor in all things that exist. Scientists have said that all of these tiny particles have come from stars. (Stars are light.) Whereas I could believe that stars were tools that could have played an influential role in creation, I do not believe they did this on their own accord. Just as a hammer and saw don’t build a house on their own, there is a conscious being behind them, and things are not assembled by accident. I do believe that the stars are from God, and I find it very interesting that Jesus would say, “I am the light” (John 8:12), and that He could change things like water into wine by the power of God.

Many people do not believe in Jesus because we were not there and we have never seen it done, but scientists have seen and studied what we call “isotopes,” which can be atoms of one element that are changed into completely different elements by the simple interaction of a tiny particle that has a charge (either positive or negative, or actually $+2/3$, $+2/3$, or $-1/3$). Carbon-14 is a classic example of an isotope. It is actually nitrogen-14, but its nucleus changes, it loses a proton, and it becomes carbon. It is no longer nitrogen. It does everything that carbon does—everything except that it dies over the course of time and turns back into nitrogen, which is what it really was to begin with.

If you look at Jesus as if He were a scientist with complete knowledge of all of the things in the universe, and one who had the power to have all things serve Him as He

commanded, it is very easy to see how He could have manipulated protons and changed things into different things. (Everything is made up of these same tiny particles, just organized differently. There are many particles, quarks, bosons, neutrinos, antineutrinos, etcetera.) I believe that if someone actually created something, they would most certainly know how it works, and if you were the son of someone who created something, your father would share with you all he knows and give to you what he has. (This is a trait of a good father). We have to force atoms to change with extreme violence because they do not have to obey us. (For example, a super collider, a tool for smashing atoms to pieces.) I have no idea if this is how Jesus did the things He did, but scientists say things can be changed simply by adding or subtracting protons in a nucleus.

Scientists have made incredible discoveries here, and as a people, we have profited in many ways from these discoveries. However, scientists still don't know very much about these things. They can observe them and their habits, and they can experiment with them by interacting with them and manipulating them, but they do not know why or what. Why does a nucleus like to be balanced (have the same number of protons and neutrons), and if it is not balanced, it can be very unstable (radioactive), and why does it go through internal changes to make its nucleus balanced? We know through science that these things happen when these circumstances exist, and we know how to create these circumstances. But we don't know why these particles desire to exist in this state of balance, and if they are forced to become unbalanced by an outside force, they go through an event that ultimately returns them back to their original balanced and stable state, and when they return to this state, they eject a particle (called a daughter) to achieve this balance—a particle that was not originally part of them. (These daughter particles are radiation—physics 101).

Many people will acknowledge every form of energy, charge, and bond in the world—positive and negative, male and female, acids and bases, hot and cold, light and dark, up and down—but they refuse to acknowledge good and evil as a real force that exists (outside of the labeling of a man's actions). But it is very possible that every particle in the universe obeys its creator. It may seem crazy, but we cannot prove that they don't, and there are things that seem to support that they do. Do not think that God is an illusion or an illusionist. God is in everything, down to the tiniest particle. God is real and is a solid, liquid, gas, and the light. I don't believe in coincidence, and I don't think it is a coincidence

that Jesus said He was the “light.” I have witnessed God change an empty fuel tank into a full fuel tank, to create fuel where there was no fuel at the time. It did have atoms of some sort in it (air is filled with atoms), and they could have been changed into whatever was demanded of them by one they obeyed. After all, what is the difference between that and an atom of nitrogen becoming an atom of carbon except that we have been able to study that? But what is the difference? Nothing, except the magnitude of the event.

We know that God is fair and balanced, by His law (“an eye for an eye”), another trait that apparently the nucleus of an atom lives by in its attempt to stay balanced. It would not surprise me if Satan has been using man since the beginning to do his work, to create things such as a nuclear bomb to destroy the world. The chain reaction of events that could occur if calculated perfectly could quite possibly create enough kinetic energy to ignite the entire planet. After all, everything burns if it gets hot enough. I could see this world becoming a “lake of fire,” just as the sun is. Hydrogen is extremely flammable, and the earth is covered in water, so if you could separate the hydrogen and oxygen, all that hydrogen would burn. I am assuming that Satan is probably very aware of “particle physics” since we are aware of it. When Satan had his people turn a stick into a snake before Pharaoh and Moses, as you recall, God did the same thing and the snake from God swallowed up Satan’s snake.

It would not surprise me at all if the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was some kind of carbon-based thing that bonded to us and caused us to become something that we were not before. We are like reactors. We take in carbon, burn it, and exhaust it. You could even say we were “fire-breathing dragons,” and you really wouldn’t be lying. We load ourselves up with carbon-based food, burn it in our bodies, and then exhaust carbon dioxide (not fire but ash, the byproduct of fire). In the book of Genesis, it says that the serpent will eat dust. (Carbon can be dust.) Maybe this furnace was installed to keep a serpent or a frog warm from the cold. A serpent is cold blooded, and so is a frog. They need to be at a certain temperature in order to operate, and this body of ours provides that: fire-breathing dragons. We are presently a carbon-based life-form, and carbon bonds to many things. Maybe it bonded with our flesh, and maybe when it did, it brought its own DNA plan. Much of our energy is presently derived from carbon. One of the main reasons we must work is to feed ourselves things with carbon in them so that we can stay alive.

This is basic biology. Now, this is just a thought and could definitely be completely inaccurate, nor is it anything other than trivial at this point. “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone” (John 8:7). The first stone cast may have been a tiny neutron, thrown at a proton, and from there, evil attempted to take over and destroy the kingdom—with that one little spark. (It is impossible for one who is without sin to cast that stone. The one who cast that stone is sin and has exposed thyself.)

Here is another interesting application. Revelation 17:10–11 says, “And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast who once was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.” You could almost say this riddle is very comparable to the nitrogen-14/carbon-14 conflict. There are seven protons in the nucleus of the nitrogen atom in the beginning, but then a tiny negative particle smashes into one of nitrogen’s protons in its nucleus (first stone cast), and it changes that proton into a neutron as a direct result of this action. And by doing this, the nitrogen atom has fallen (nitrogen no longer exists) and becomes carbon, but only for a while, because it really is nitrogen—but it isn’t. Of the seven kings (the seven protons in the nucleus), five have fallen (these protons are no longer nitrogen), one lives (the sixth proton, because it makes that atom carbon, the other five are needed, but they are not the final deciding factor in whether that atom is carbon or nitrogen. We are just discussing carbon and nitrogen, and the carbon and nitrogen battle between the sixth and seventh proton to decide what the kingdom will be—carbon or nitrogen), the other has not yet come (the seventh king, or proton), and when he comes, he must stay a short while. That king is death as far as the carbon is concerned because when it comes, the atom becomes nitrogen and is no longer carbon. This seventh king that once was, and is not, is actually an eighth king but is of the seven and will go out into perdition. That eighth king could be considered the radioactive particle that is shot out of the eighth neutron when it decays back into a proton (beta decay).

Obviously this riddle is a stretch when comparing it to this isotope of carbon, but it is interesting. And if you built a house out of bricks of carbon that were solid when you constructed it, but at some point those bricks became a nitrogen gas, your house would collapse. And what if you had DNA that was held together with carbon atoms that were not

really carbon atoms (carbon-14) and they turned back into nitrogen? What would happen to that chain? This riddle is very specific to Satan and is not about an isotope. But at the same time, things can be very similar, only on a different scale. Little things make up bigger things and so on, from an atom's tiny universe to our solar system to our universe. We really don't know that much about why things do what they do. We have witnessed many things here and recognized patterns and characteristics, but that is about it. If one could take apart a brick in their house and redistribute the protons, neutrons, and electrons, they could build atoms of uranium. They are the same simple components (according to our scientists) that are in that brick, just arranged differently; likewise, you could also create atoms of gold in the same way. Everything that exists here on earth is made from these three things: protons, neutrons, and electrons. The only thing that prevents us from altering these things is the strength of their bonds.

One might say that our existence is similar to the cycle of an isotope, a particle that is charged and shot out of an object millions of times larger than it is but made of the same material, just as a star shoots out tiny particles with charges, particles that are made up of what the star is made of. The particle then enters a larger particle (egg) and becomes one with it for a period of time. Maybe that tiny particle is carrying a charge that sparks the conception in the egg. We know that when you rub certain things, they can build up charges (static electricity). Maybe the friction that occurs during this event gives semen a tiny charge. Maybe these charges interact in the egg and create something as a result of their presence. We have a lot of things going on in our bodies. We are like a giant science fair: chemicals, electricity, particles, radiation—it's all in there. After a while, when the particle that took on the tiny particle from the other particle can no longer accommodate it, it spits out another particle—beta decay. Sometimes one uses the same strategy for all their works, only on different scales.

Back to the $^{14}\text{C}/^{14}\text{N}$ situation, it is also typical for Satan to destroy his offspring (his own creations), so this is a great example: he steals something (nitrogen), changes it to what will serve him, and by doing this, he has created something that will decay and die. And it will also bear a particle that has no home and is cast out into nothingness. And maybe it will strike something, causing damage and changing it—it is, in actuality, a radioactive particle—on its way into the abyss and hopelessness.

Everything starts out very small: particles, atoms, elements, compounds, mixtures, kings, subjects, kingdoms, planets, moons, stars, and the universe. From tiny seeds spring forth mountains. The last item about carbon that I find interesting is that it is known in the scientific world as the “king” of the elements, and it coincidentally has the number 666: six protons, six neutrons, and six electrons (normal carbon)—carbon-14 has eight neutrons. Another item of coincidence is that the most precious gem in the world is pure carbon (the diamond), and the harlots are covered in them. (I do not believe in coincidence.)

What if the earth was like a proton at one time that came in contact with something negatively charged and that charge was causing the earth to go through a sort of “beta decay” as a result of its presence? The book of Revelation talks about some pretty horrendous events taking place at the end of the world that could be much like what happens in a large-scale “beta decay.” And it is said that Satan is in the center of the earth and that he is going to be released when this “end of the world” event happens. Maybe when this event takes place, it is all going to stem from a tiny spark of carbon—seems crazy, but truth is much stranger than fiction. Maybe the earth is like a proton, maybe a quark, or maybe just a boson, or maybe something even smaller—we don’t know, but everything is relative, and the most powerful forces in the universe are good and evil. All the others are less. Until you are ready to accept good and evil as a real force and understand that it is the primary source, you will never know; you may as well just be playing high-tech marbles. Perhaps God is going to allow man to destroy everything with Satan so that man can see for himself what happens when one does serve evil. God said that the tree we ate from was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and here we are. We certainly have learned something. One tiny spark that we could not see has ignited the world.

There are many things in this world that we try to discredit because of the unpleasantness they pose or the fact that we can’t explain them. We don’t like to think we don’t know everything, and we would rather deny their existence than admit we don’t know, but they cannot be denied. We have discovered many things on this earth, and man has lived a brutal existence on this journey, enslaving one another, having to create weapons to defend himself from himself, tricking each other so we can get something from another, ruining the lives of others for mere moments of pleasure. And now, maybe that

little spark of carbon has brought the power to completely destroy the world by means of nuclear war—the means of splitting atoms. Things are very real here, and they are taking place right under our noses. And if you think that a lake of fire is a fable, look at the sun. And if you think that this entire earth cannot be ignited by splitting atoms, look again. The six hundred, three score, and six are the number that are the kinetic energy setting their own kingdom ablaze, from one spark, from one stone.

One more item about light, tiny particles from the sun pass straight through this planet every second. (Scientists have reviled this.) And if they can pass through this earth, it is conceivable to see how one who could command particles to obey them could pass into the earth by separating every particle in their body and then reunite them at their leisure, all by charges and bonds. And it is also easy to see how they could leave this place at the speed of light. Once again, please do not think that this is how God does what He does. It is just an example of how some things we are familiar with conduct themselves.

Time is a commodity here because this kingdom only has so much of it (just as a radioactive atom only has but so much time). When the clock stops ticking, there is no more time. What is will be forever, and what isn't will not be. Since we were not alive over two thousand years ago, it can be hard sometimes to wonder if Jesus was a fraud or not; however, one thing you can be sure of is that nothing in the history of the world has ever changed our calendar except Jesus (from BC to AD), and no one has ever done that, nor will they. Many people want to believe that aliens are going to fly here in spaceships and perhaps take them away or solve all our problems. This is not going to happen that way.

Now, next point, I have no idea where God came from, and we also don't know why Satan is what it is. They may very well have come from another place. Jesus has definitely gone to another planet or place. (He has said so.) He also said that He will return. With that being said, it would make Him an alien of sorts. We don't always look at things except in the way we know them to exist—things such as spaceships, large vessels that haul around fuel for travel, accommodations for the flesh, and provisions for the flesh. This is how we see aliens and spaceships; however, this may just be the only way our imaginations can comprehend these mythical machines. I have no evidence, but it would seem to me that if you wanted to get anywhere in space, of any consequence, you would need to travel at the speed of light. And as anyone who has ever paid any attention to

anything that travels at a high rate of speed knows, machinery tends to fall apart, so basically, you aren't going to travel at the speed of light in a machine even if you could figure out how to propel it at the speed of light. The only way you could travel at the speed of light is if you were able to manipulate particles at your command. We cannot do this, but that does not mean it can't be done or that it hasn't been done.

Last thing, when one is a True King, everything in His kingdom obeys His every command. Right down to the tiniest particle, everything in His kingdom exists to serve Him because He exists to serve them. The kingdom's passion is to serve their King. He has immaculate dominion over everything. If a tree falls in the woods and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? It does make a sound. God is everywhere, and not a hair falls to the ground without God hearing it. Maybe atoms are like the flesh of God, the fabric of God. Everything in this world is moving at all times, spinning and revolving. There are millions of atoms swirling around on the head of a pin. In these atoms are tinier particles swirling around in formation, and now in this age, we are slowly finding out that there are even tinier particles that make up those tiny particles. The further we look, the more we discover that everything we see is mostly empty space except for a few tiny presences that occupy areas they are confined to by the power of invisible forces. And these tiny fragments of energy have assembled themselves into everything we are, see, hear, touch, taste, smell, and feel. But as we dig and dig, we keep finding nothing but swirling forces made up of swirling forces, like tiny cyclones revolving around other cyclones, but are never able to grasp anything, only the ability to experience the force of the cyclone, the power of the invisible wind, the power that is but is not. What is spirit and what is flesh, or is flesh just an illusion created by spirit for us to see? Spirit is very real, and what it does is very real, but what of this flesh? Is this flesh just an assembly of energy so powerful that it creates an image? The images we are able to see are really mostly made up of empty space, and in all this empty space are both good and evil.

The things of this world are trying to separate us from each other and from God. They are trying to separate us so that we must become more dependent on them so that they have more and more control over us. This world used to have much less government, industry, education, entertainment, military, money, and merchants, and families used to be bigger and closer—not necessarily happy and smiles but dependent on each other,

dependent on those they knew were really looking out for them, instead of just sniffing out an opportunity to feed themselves. Moms raised the kids, and grandparents lived at home when they retired. These hills have been picking apart families like killer whales separating a whale calf for consumption. We have been seduced by mammon and as a result have been forced to serve these hills and their demands. They are coercing us to fight over things that are not even real, in hopes that they create something that is real, like spectators of a sporting event who become so enraged that they resort to violence over the performance or the outcome of a struggle over a ball. They have us choose up sides over trivial things and have us place blame on one another, when in actuality, the source of the issue is inherent of the hill itself. Our governments have become crippled and have turned into useless sources of surreal entertainment. Our elected leaders have become perverted by the will of their secret backdoor constituents as we the people prop them up as opponents in a ring to fight for a prejudice instead of a necessity. We cheer and support our side with extreme prejudice, regardless of the tactics, ethics, or actual accomplishments. We allow them to consume all of our resources, fighting with each other, with ridiculous allegations and lawsuits, unable to accomplish anything except chaos. We allow this to happen because we now don't know any better, and we consume what we are fed without question because it is what we want to hear at times. We must stop consuming what we are being fed without testing it and, if it is filled with deception, depart from it completely.

All of these hills are guilty of many things, and they all depend on each other for survival. They cannot exist without each other, but yet they hate each other, and as a result, they will eventually destroy themselves. There is no way around these things destroying the world. They are going to, but you do not have to let them take you with them.

You want the news? Read the Bible, and give it the attention that you have given the hills. (It may make more sense now.)

Please remember, government brought about things like the execution of Jesus. Government brought you the Third Reich. Government is a great concept when beasts have to live with beasts, but power corrupts men, and the larger the government, the greater the power—the greater the power, the greater the corruption.

All Christians, regardless of the denomination, have the biggest thing in common: we all have placed our hopes, dreams, and lives in Jesus, which means that there is nothing

more sacred to us than the relationship we have with Jesus. Good relationships can be a very hard thing to maintain. It takes two to have a relationship, and when there is more than one person involved in anything such as a relationship, you have to let the other have a turn to talk, and you must listen. Often, it is not easy to accept at first what the other is telling you, but you will not have a relationship if you do not do this, and the other half of the relationship may stop wasting their breath trying to communicate with you. You will just have a false sense of companionship and a relationship that is not productive. One of the members of the relationship may not know what they are doing and may be completely unaware that they don't know where they are going. (It is a well-known fact that men do not like to ask for directions—ask any woman, although this trait is not exclusive to men.) I know, most of the time, all I do is complain to Jesus and God because we can't see them as we can see each other, and we don't hear them the way we hear each other. I complain and get enraged sometimes with them because I feel that they are supposed to be at my beck and call, to do my bidding. I think this pattern of behavior also occurs in a marriage after the honeymoon is over.

The Bible is here so that we all can have a working relationship with God if we want to have one. If you choose to have a relationship with God, you can listen to everything He has to say in the pages of the Bible. I choose to stick primarily to the New Testament because life is short, and as it says in Isaiah 54:13 (Old Testament), “All thy children shall be taught by the Lord,” and Jesus is the Lord. There is nothing that Jesus has failed to say that is not in the Bible, and there is nothing more that needs to be said. You can choose to listen to what He has said, in its entirety, or you can just pick out the things you want to hear. Only listening to what you want to hear will not let your relationship grow but so far. Everyone in this world is going to struggle and fight with Jesus and things He has said that are almost impossible for us to accept, but you have no choice and your struggle will never end until “the end.” The stronger your relationship with God becomes, the more that which is evil will try to destroy it. Do not think you can beat Satan—you cannot. No one can, except Jesus. Do not think that you cannot be tricked by Satan—we all have, are, and will be until the end. Those who have a strong relationship with God, or try to build a relationship with God, are under constant assault because of this relationship. The stronger the relationship gets, the stronger the opposition will grow. No one sends an

army to do the work that a few can accomplish. They send an army when they have to secure a territory that is strong and is a threat. Satan is just as real as God, and do not let anyone lead you to believe that there is any good in it, and do not think that you know more than Satan—you do not. The Jewish society publicly executed Jesus because they were tricked by Satan (basically through their media of that time). They were tricked by Satan. They were evil's greatest trophy because they held a true working relationship with God. This was an unfortunate event. This was perhaps one of the greatest works evil had accomplished since Eve ate the apple. Not only did Satan have the Son of God slaughtered, but he had it done passionately by the hands of God's own people.

*The city streets lined in furious celebration
Exalting condemnation
Blindly thrashing salvation
Flying the flag of desolation
They ravel down
Tight-braided twisted clowns
Smiles covered with painted-on frowns
Peering out from behind the confetti stacks
As the show begins
The stage set for sin
The tree bears its fruit again
Upon His back He drags his cross
As an ox which plows through stone
To plant God's seed in the hearts of man
In the soil where nothing has grown
Never yielding the plowman's whip
By every word of God, He steers His ship
Not a blasphemy upon His lips
He never slips
Through the dirt, sand, and sun of the road
Through sweat and blood
Past fear and anger
Never stopping to smell the fragrance of sin
As He passes its flower again and again
Chants and banters
They curse and rave
With party favors upon His grave
Evil's anger, anger's trade
The climax of hell's parade*

We all look at this event that took place on this earth, in the very heart of the city that God called His city, and we find this very hard to understand. We point fingers at those who are currently members of the Jewish community, wondering, “What in the hell were they thinking?” We don’t execute our worst criminals in this manner. We all think to ourselves and some even openly say, “I never would have been a part of such a thing.” The truth is, we are all very easily manipulated into just about everything we have been told we should not do. We are all very easily convinced to carry out evil works, and oftentimes in celebration. Did not the ruler of New York City light up its greatest building in honor of the right to kill unborn children? Did not millions celebrate this great victory of evil and perversion? There is no one who can give you a license to kill an innocent person. They can allow you to do it, but YOU will bear the sin of murder, and those who have so gleefully tried to convince you that it was perfectly fine for you to do so will not be there to comfort you when you realize what you have done. Abortion is a huge political topic in our world, and it is propped up to stir up the masses (which it does extremely well every time). I would like to believe that the pro-abortion people are really just upset that someone else is telling them that they can’t use their own judgment when it comes to their bodies, and not that they want to slaughter innocent babies, but I do not know, and I will never have to know.

Do not think that you are too wise and too clever to be tricked—you are not. The media is controlled for the most part by evil because evil is what sells. It is what we are interested in, and the media has a tendency to control us when we watch it. It manipulates our judgment and actions, and helps form our opinions. (And for the atheists out there, I’m going to quote the dead Jim Morrison: “Do you know we are ruled by TV?”) The media can convince the masses of anything, and they do it at their discretion, but we ultimately suffer by our own hands when we allow them to pull our strings. Unfortunately, society and all its elements do not care about you. The only people who really care about you are hopefully your friends, your families, and God—once you come to realize this, you will make fewer mistakes in life.

Another part of maintaining a working relationship with God is that when you have done something that is wrong, you admit it to God so that you can start to heal and move forward in your relationship. (Once again, this works in all relationships that are good

relationships.) Oftentimes, we have things bearing on our souls that seem so abominable that we cannot even bear to consider just the thought of them. We even try to convince ourselves that these actions were justified. Unfortunately, most of us have done some pretty fucking horrible shit that we may be convinced God could never forgive us for, so much that we even hold endless private court cases in our heads to try to exonerate ourselves for what we have done or been a part of, so much to the point that we are able to believe for brief moments that we didn't do anything wrong and we are innocent—we aren't. (Remember, God forgave the Jews for killing His Son, so you can definitely be forgiven, if you truthfully admit that you have done something wrong—and let no one tell you different.) This does not mean that you have the right to break God's commandments. It means that you can be forgiven for being manipulated by Satan, and if anyone condemns your crime (from killing Jesus to abortion, to whatever it is) that you honestly confess to God as being sorry for, they will have something to be judged with. This does not mean that you are not going to suffer repercussions in society for your crimes. It means that when it is all over, you can be saved. The media has taught us to love pointing fingers so as to have us pass judgment and condemn, based on only the information that they allow us to see. The media will do whatever it can to keep you entertained until it can have you destroy yourself.

Unfortunately, as a man, I do have a lust for violence that relentlessly begs to be satisfied, as many of us do. And we judge the things that are propped up before us that we can easily convince ourselves are undisputed evil as justification to commit acts of violence in the name of righteousness and at the same time satisfy our lust for violence. These media spotlights fuel these fires. We choose to have these events take place so that we can have an excuse to fulfill our desire for violence rather than prevent them before they happen. Those who have become casualties in our society, in such a way that we become outraged by these acts that they have experienced or been victim to—what did we do for these people when they were alive? Probably nothing, but we did use the memories we never had of them to destroy our town.

It is said that there will always be wars here, and I believe some of them have been necessary or you would not be reading this right now; however, in all these wars, they are only appealing to those who are not victims of them. Those who have to bear the weight of

these conflicts will not forget them for what they really are—there are many wars, and there are many soldiers. There are also many unnecessary wars that are started strictly to create chaos.

During these trying times, it can be very easy to become distraught, consumed by spirits that mean you harm as well as others. When this happens, stop and ask yourself, are you actually in pain? Are you out in the cold? Or are you just scared that you could be? Are you just in fear? Are you being persecuted unjustly?

All of the hills are now turning on each other as they mature, and there are some who dwell in them who are deliberately using the masses as their puppets. They attempt to use their power to have them serve their wishes. They show and tell the masses what they want them to see and hear but not the truth.

If you want a real relationship with God, one that will ultimately take you to salvation, you are going to have to listen to the Bible and every word Jesus has said, you are going to have to accept the fact that we all are “screwed up,” and you are going to have to do the things Jesus has said to do, regardless of how hard these things may seem to accept. You are going to have to accept that you may not know everything about God, but if you do these things, God will bring you closer to Him with each obstacle you conquer as well as each other. Know that many of the things Jesus has said are only hard to accept because something does not want you to accept them.

When I was younger, I did some unorthodox things in my pursuit of God and His power. During those adventures, I learned nothing more than what was already written about in the Bible. The experiences did help me to completely believe in Jesus, and they did help me to understand the Bible. Much of this book and the things I have come to trust and believe were learned about while I was in seclusion, after these experiences, while fasting, praying, and studying the Bible. Anyone who wants anything from God—anything that is good—can achieve it that way if they can accept it. There are no hidden secrets anywhere. There is not one single thing more that I learned that was not already in the Bible, or in science books, only things we have failed to recognize. Anyone who claims to know more than Jesus does is evil. Anyone who thinks they know exactly when the world is going to end is a liar. Jesus said that no one knows when the end will come except God

alone, so don't be fooled. Always remember that, and remember that a thousand years is like a day to God, and a day is like a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8).

My reckless stunts (though I did not see it at the time) were for selfish gain, attempts to extort God's power so as to have Him serve my desires that are sinful. Fortunately, I was spared by God's mercy. As much as I would like to plead a case to God to have an arm again, at this time, I don't think I would be able to live a life that was not corrupt. An event such as that would dramatically change my life, and the opportunity for monetary gain and the fame that would accompany it would seduce and destroy me. To many, this will seem like an excuse (a cop-out) for not getting an arm. Many will laugh at my actions, continuing to publicly and privately dismiss God as a fairy tale; however, in my heart, I can see that I am still a monster, and God knows this. As I have grown older, I still pursue many of the same desires as I always had, and unfortunately, I may not be responsible enough to have two arms. And if I were to regain my arm, with what restraint would I control this power? How does one learn to say no when the only thing stopping them is thyself? We are all corrupt to a certain degree, and for some of us, the only way to salvation is to have God keep us on a tight leash so that we don't run off chasing our desires to our eternal demise.

We have become consumed with daily existence and storing up money to survive to retirement, but what have we done to secure eternity? We will only be old for a short while (though it may be painful at times), but we will remain for eternity.

I would like to question the church: Why would you close your doors and deny people the Word, Body, and Blood of Jesus because the government has told you to be afraid of dying? Why would you allow your family to be separated when they need you the most? Do you think that this world is the final resting place and there is no heaven? If you are afraid of death, then you do not believe in heaven, and if you do not believe in heaven, what are you serving? The job of the Catholic Church is to get souls to heaven, not to cower at the words of sinners. If you died from going to church, I would suspect that you are probably going to wake up in a great place. Revelation 21:8 says that the Lord hates cowards.

The main things in your life that you need to be concerned with are being baptized, going to confession, receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus, loving your neighbor as you love yourself, and loving God with all your heart and being.

When you pray, ask, “Lord, let us see and accept the truth. Give us all belief, faith, hope, and love, and the strength to endure them.” All of these things are very hard to hold on to and are enemies of our society as well as foreign to us. When we attempt to embrace them, this world tries to take them from us and turn us against them. As humans, for some reason, we have a need to have an enemy, someone or something to direct our hostility toward, someone to blame for our troubles—most of the time, we are our enemy, and there is no one else more at fault for our problems than us.

It can seem almost impossible at times not to fall victim to many of our emotions and what they lead us to do, but try to contemplate eternity for a moment and where you want to be in it. This existence we are in is very short, but in the next one, there is no reason to count time because it will never run out.

The meaning of life is to learn the difference between good and evil and to make the choice of what you wish to be a part of for eternity; beyond that, there is no meaning.

Ask yourself, “Why would God let me go to hell for eternity? He loves everyone. Why wouldn’t He save me? I’m a good person.” My question is, what have you done to save yourself? How do you know what God would or would not do? From whom or from where did you learn about God? Certainly not from the One He sent: Jesus. What effort have you shown in this matter? How do you think God can save you if you refuse to listen to what He has said? Do you know more than God? Did you do

what God told you to do, or did you do what you wanted to do? Until you are able to look at the truth and accept it, you will not receive Salvation.

Read the Bible.

Follow the instructions.