

# CHRONICLES OF THE FINAL DAY



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# **CHRONICLES OF THE FINAL DAY**

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The world was united under ten kings who governed a one-world government, save for a few Christians and Jewish rebels who refused to bow.

A divine light illuminated a fragile papyrus scroll as it unfurled, revealing a timeless text written in Koine Greek: the Book of Revelation. This sacred scripture had been revealed by Yeshua and penned by the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos.

The end of the world was near, but it marked the beginning of something new. Five seals had already been broken, and the sixth was imminent. When the seventh seal was broken, it would usher in a seven-year tribulation. Because humanity continually rejected the Creator's commands and refused to repent, the first half of those seven years would bring the plagues of the seven trumpets. The second half would unleash the seven bowls of God's wrath.

As the vision unfolded, the ancient city of Jerusalem appeared. High-tech cranes and bulldozers dismantled the Dome of the Rock, and in its place rose a structure resembling the Ezekiel Temple.

It was as foretold to the Apostle John: *“Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship therein. But leave out the court which is outside the temple; do not measure it, for it is given to the Gentiles: and the holy city they will tread underfoot forty-two months.”* This event would occur during the first half of the seven-year tribulation.

## CHAPTER 2: THE TEN KINGS RULE

In the year 2046, as the golden hues of the setting sun bathed the desert mountains in warm light, the rugged peaks stood like ancient sentinels, guarding the secrets of a world long lost. Matt, in his early twenties with small, round glasses and messy hair, crouched beside Manfred, who, despite his silly French mustache, was undeniably British. Their hearts raced with a mix of awe and trepidation as they spied on a remarkable sight below.

A large group of men, draped in flowing white robes, had gathered in a sunlit clearing, their faces glowing with a peaceful radiance. They huddled together, poring over sacred scrolls, their voices rising and falling like a gentle melody carried by the warm desert breeze.

“Look at them,” Matt whispered, eyes wide with wonder. “They’re reading the Scriptures. We should go join them!”

Manfred’s expression turned grave, a frown creasing his brow. “No, Matt. You can’t just approach them. They are the holy Israelites —set apart for a purpose. Just in case you ask, I don’t know. I heard it from Sofia.”

“But they look... so serene,” Matt replied, his voice tinged with longing. “What harm could it do to simply stand with them? Maybe they could offer us guidance.”

“Guidance?” Manfred shook his head vehemently. “They’ve fasted for days, Matt. Do you really think you’d find guidance from someone who’s hungry?”

A silence enveloped them as they observed the group, but the desert's tranquility soon gave way to urgency.

“Come on,” Manfred finally said, glancing toward the horizon where the sun dipped lower. “We need to get back to the warehouse.”

Outside an ordinary warehouse, a pair of sleek, formidable military vehicles rumbled to a stop. A squad of soldiers in pristine white uniforms disembarked with an air of precision and purpose. Leading them was Major Phoenix Bates, a striking figure in his late twenties, well-built, with an unshaven face that contrasted sharply with the lines shaved on both sides of his head.

Inside, the atmosphere was anything but composed. Amidst the clutter of maps, charts, and an array of technological paraphernalia, two figures worked with frenzied urgency. Manfred darted around a desk, his movements swift and practiced as he stuffed a laptop, maps, and charts—each marked with a yellow Jewish star watermark—into backpacks.

“Where are you headed?” Manfred asked, glancing at Matt, who was helping to pack, a mixture of curiosity and amusement in his eyes.

Matt pointed upwards, a determined spark in his gaze. Manfred chuckled softly, adjusting his backpack with a gesture of resigned familiarity. “I give you that; you’re consistent,” he remarked with a wry smile.

“I wish you could see what I see,” Matt replied earnestly.

“I deal in only what I see,” Manfred countered.

“So do I. It’s a shame your prejudice and pride keep you blind to the events unfolding as the scripture says. Take care, brother,” Matt said, extending a hand in farewell.

With a chuckle, Manfred clasped his hand. With a final nod, he departed, bags in tow, while Matt turned back to the chaos of the warehouse, feeling the weight of the world pressing down but resolute in his belief that they were part of something much greater.

Moments later, the soldiers moved in with cold precision, sifting through the debris-strewn floor. They tossed aside banned books, crumpled blueprints, and discarded hard drives with careless disregard. Major Phoenix Bates, despite the early hour, had a sharpness to his gaze that cut through the confusion.

He knelt by a pile of discarded papers detailing homemade pipe bomb recipes—a sobering reminder of the threats that lurked in the shadows of this world. With a frown of concentration, he gathered the papers and tucked them under his arm. “Secure anything valuable for the Investigative Squad,” Phoenix instructed. “Disarm and pack up the weapons. And make sure they know this city isn’t theirs to claim!” The soldiers sprang into action.

Outside, the rumbling military vehicles began to pull away, leaving behind a rising plume of smoke. The warehouse erupted into a blazing inferno, dark smoke curling upwards into the sky.

The next morning at dawn, Phoenix awoke to the persistent beeping of his alarm. With a practiced flick, he silenced it and blinked against the encroaching light. His apartment, sleek and modern, hummed softly with the sounds of automation. The lights brightened slightly as the window shades retracted into the ceiling, flooding the room with soft, natural light.

“Good morning, Phoenix,” the female AI voice chimed warmly. “It’s Sunday, 24th of September, 2046. The weather is mild, and don’t forget you have a meeting at 8 with your superiors at the Central Correctional Facility. This is followed by a 10-hour shift. Would you like coffee?”

“Yes, please,” Phoenix replied, his voice still rough from sleep.

As he stepped out of his apartment, he was greeted by the sprawling metropolis of Babylon, a futuristic New York City. The streets buzzed with life; an eclectic mix of people seamlessly integrated with advanced technology. VR headsets adorned many faces, creating a surreal blend of reality and technology. Digital transactions were conducted with a mere touch, showcasing the seamless integration of tech in every aspect of daily life, all using the one-world “UN” currency.

Robots, their metallic forms glinting in the sunlight, served coffee and hot dogs with precise efficiency. Buildings were adorned with bright advertisements, their screens

flashing vibrant messages. Churches had been repurposed into fast-food joints, and schoolchildren, in their uniforms, were on a field trip while teenagers posed for photos to share on social media.

Navigating the city with practiced ease, Phoenix's white uniform stood out starkly against the urban tapestry around him. He exchanged smiles and nods with passing civilians, his demeanor reflecting the city's energetic pulse.

The New York Stock Exchange towered over the surrounding buildings, which included scientific labs and Correctional Centers. Large screens flickered with a cascade of news updates on the exterior.

A red flash cut across the news screens, grabbing Phoenix's attention. A stylish news reporter appeared, her presence commanding as she spoke. "Good morning, Babylon!" she announced brightly. "Another beautiful day in our vibrant city. Unemployment remains low, thanks to the savvy financial deals brokered by our Ten Kings. Though the rebel terrorist threat persists, our Militia has made significant arrests."

As the report played, a homeless man approached a line of patrons at a sidewalk hot dog vendor. His clothes were ragged, and his face bore the marks of hardship. He pleaded for a dollar or two, desperation edging his voice. "Just a dollar or two, please? It's been days since I've eaten."

Most patrons turned away or shook their heads, ignoring him. In a burst of frustration, the homeless man grabbed a woman's arm, his eyes wild. "Open your eyes, sinners! The prophecy approaches—the end of days is near! A seven-year apocalypse! Jesus will return, and you'll all pay the price! Blood and fire!"

Phoenix stepped in quickly, placing a hand on the man's shoulder and gently pulling him away from the woman. "Alright, that's enough. Are you okay, miss?" The woman, visibly relieved, nodded in silence. Phoenix whistled sharply, summoning two of his Militia soldiers who had just rounded the corner.



The soldiers took the homeless man in hand, escorting him away. The news reporter's voice continued in the background, "Let's eliminate misinformation and dissent together! Once all the violent Christians and Jews are found and educated, we can live in total peace and harmony."

The regal UN logo, futuristic and adorned with a "10K" symbol in the center, flashed across the screens. As the logo illuminated the street, Phoenix and the citizens around him turned in unison, raising their right fists in salute. "Hail the Kings!" they chanted, their voices unified in loyalty. "Hail the Kings!" Phoenix responded, his salute crisp and unwavering.

### CHAPTER 3: RIGHTEOUS PERSECUTED

Inside the Central Correctional Facility, the stark white walls loomed overhead, casting an unyielding glow over the bustling activity. This was a place where justice often seemed to blur with cruelty. Staff in immaculate white uniforms moved with practiced precision, while armed guards kept a watchful eye, herding groups of captured rebels with a mix of disdain and duty.

Hogan, clipboard in one hand and chewing a piece of gum, spoke loudly, "Alright, let's get this over with." He pulled a pencil from behind his ear and methodically walked down the line of prisoners. His eyes, sharp and assessing, scanned each person. Among them was a family—father, mother, child, and grandmother—clumped together, their faces marked with fear.

"Ah, a mother and child," Hogan said with a cold, satisfied tone. "Perfect candidates for our little operation." Without hesitation, the mother and child were dragged away in separate directions, their screams cutting through the oppressive atmosphere. The father struggled to resist, but his efforts were futile against the superior force of the guards. Hogan raised a hand, stopping the guards with a curt gesture.

"We're not savages," he said, his tone almost mocking. "Keep them together." He glanced at the father, a smirk playing at the corner of his mouth. "And you—strong and healthy. You'll make a fine addition to our seed program. Your children will be honored to serve the Kings."

The father was forcibly led away, his desperate pleas echoing down the sterile corridor. Hogan's attention shifted to the elderly grandmother, who sat with vacant eyes in her wheelchair. "And the Undesirable," Hogan continued. "Society's dead weight. Looks like those vaccines didn't quite do their job." He glanced upwards at the glass ceiling, tapping his pencil thoughtfully. "The Pit's crowded, but I suppose they can fit one more." A guard moved to take the grandmother's wheelchair, but Hogan waved him off dismissively. "Leave the chair. No need to waste good scrap metal."

The grandmother was roughly pulled from her wheelchair, her protests blending with the general clamor of the facility. Hogan took a seat in the abandoned chair, making notes with detached amusement. The grandmother looked up and shouted trembling, "Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Open their eyes."

"If your God cared so much," Hogan retorted with a smug grin, "He wouldn't have let you live so long, dear." With a final, condescending nod, Hogan watched as the guards took the grandmother away. Through a large glass window, he noticed a group of Militia guards marching by, led by his son, Phoenix.

In the hallway of the Central Correctional Facility, Hogan stepped through a door and called out to Phoenix and his team. "Boys!" Phoenix and his men turned, offering a sharp, precise salute. The familiarity between father and son was evident, though overshadowed by the formality of their roles.

"Where's the hunt today?" Hogan asked.

"Heading to a suspected terrorist penthouse downtown, sir," one of the Militia guards replied. "We've got a nest of vermin to clear out."

"Careful, this one's got a thing for heights," Hogan warned, giving Phoenix a playful nudge.

Phoenix winced slightly. "General, I thought you were headed for Jerusalem?"

"Bogged down with paperwork for a few more days," Hogan shrugged. "Even I have to answer to someone. But that'll change." Hogan touched his sore knee.

"How's the knee?" Phoenix asked, genuine concern evident in his voice.

"Turns out, vermin skulls are tougher than they look," Hogan said, clearing his throat. Laughter briefly cut through the tension.

"We'd better get going, sir. General," Phoenix said.

“Give ’em hell, Major,” Hogan said, slapping Phoenix on the back with a hearty thud.  
“And don’t forget dinner at Angelo’s this Friday!”

As Phoenix and his team moved off, Hogan’s gaze returned to his clipboard. He sighed deeply, lost in thought as he prepared for the next tasks.

In the terrorist penthouse of a downtown building, Phoenix moved silently through the hallway, his gun at the ready. He signaled his men to follow, and they advanced with practiced stealth, taking up positions as they proceeded. Suddenly, a rebel’s voice shattered the silence.

“Die, heathens!”

Through a crack in the penthouse door, a smoke bomb rolled into the hallway, followed by a burst of gunfire that threw everything into chaos. The confusion was immediate and overwhelming.

“Move! Push through!” Phoenix shouted, his voice slicing through the disarray. He pressed forward, firing through the thickening smoke, his men closing in behind him and securing the area.

## CHAPTER 4: TEMPLE'S FINISHING TOUCHES

Later, in the Militia quarters' locker room buzzing with the chatter of off-duty soldiers, polished lockers lined the walls like vigilant sentinels, reflecting the harsh fluorescent lights overhead. Phoenix, his face etched with the weariness of a long day, emerged from the showers wrapped in a towel. He made his way to his locker, where Sergeant Ahmad Shiekh awaited him with a cheeky grin. Ahmad, in his twenties, was heavily tattooed and exuded a no-nonsense confidence.

"Here comes the teacher's pet!" Ahmad called out, his tone a playful mix of mockery and camaraderie. "Had to work overtime just to make us look bad, huh?"

Phoenix, a smirk tugging at his lips despite his exhaustion, responded, "Actually, I was covering for your lazy ass, Shiekh. The General said your arrest numbers were embarrassing." The locker room erupted into hoots and hollers at the exchange.

Ahmad's grin widened as he shrugged off the jibes. "We're hitting Newton's for happy hour. You joining us for once?"

Phoenix shook his head, swiftly changing into a button-down shirt and dabbing a splash of cologne on his neck. "Got plans."

Ahmad raised an eyebrow, his grin turning mischievous. "What's her name, lover boy?"

"None of your business," Phoenix shot back.

"Hey, fellas, Bates here is ditching us for some new lady friend!" Ahmad announced, drawing a chorus of playful boos and catcalls from the men. Phoenix chuckled, shaking his head as he closed his locker and prepared to leave.

As night fell over the Central Correctional Facility, Hogan approached a door marked "Josh Angelos, Architect." The door featured a retina scanner that buzzed softly as it scanned Hogan's eyes, granting him access.

“Welcome, General Bates,” a female AI voice intoned as the door slid open. Inside, Josh Angelos’s office was a chaotic mix of papers, temple schematics, and hologram monitors. Josh, in his late fifties with a prominent nose and thinning hair, was engrossed in a virtual blueprint at the far end of the room. He looked up in surprise as Hogan entered, hastily adjusting his glasses.

“Hogan! General!” Josh stammered. “Yes, of course!”

Hogan, his demeanor commanding, said, “Perfect time for a homecoming, don’t you think? It’s been far too long since I’ve set foot on that sacred ground.”

Josh, still grappling with Hogan’s sudden presence, nodded vigorously. “Yes, General! We’re just finalizing the designs for the exterior of the New Temple. Everything will be ready in time for the opening ceremony.”

Hogan picked up a Star of David ornament from Josh’s desk, twirling it between his fingers with a raised eyebrow before setting it down dismissively. His attention shifted to the virtual blueprint projected before him. “Much better than that eyesore, the Dome of the Rock,” Hogan remarked, zooming in to scrutinize specific details. “And this is all per the Kings’ instructions, right?”

Josh, his hands twitching nervously as he pointed out details on the hologram, said, “These follow the parameters laid out in the Book of Ezekiel, just as the Kings directed. I’ve double-checked everything.”

“Good,” Hogan said. “A real masterpiece of unity. Showing the world that while we honor the past, we’re all about building a brighter future.” As Hogan zoomed out on the blueprint, he noticed a peculiar detail off to the side. “What’s this?”

Josh hesitated before answering. “A clinic—well, a ‘vaccination clinic.’ It’s modeled after the one we have here at the Central Correctional Facility.”

Hogan’s brow furrowed. “We’re supposed to eradicate these people, not help them.”

Josh quickly added, “It incorporates tracers—nanotech tracers.”

Hogan’s expression softened slightly as he considered this. With a pat on Josh’s chest, he said, “Track the vermin to their nests. Smart.” He reclined in Josh’s chair, propping up his sore knee while Josh scrambled to gather his scattered papers. Hogan gazed out the window, lost in thought.

“Well, I’d better get back to it. We still on for Friday—dinner in Jerusalem? Flights pending?”

Josh, looking both relieved and anxious, nodded. “Yes, and thank you for putting in a good word—Abigail was accepted at the hospital in Jerusalem.”

Hogan’s face lit with a hint of smug satisfaction. “Of course. Glad to help.” With a final hearty pat on the back, Hogan exited the office, leaving Josh behind.

## CHAPTER 5: COMPASSION

The night at Babylon Medical College was quiet, punctuated only by the soft patter of Abigail's footsteps along the linoleum floors of the psychiatric hospital. Abigail, a petite and attractive young woman in her mid-twenties with brunette hair, moved through the corridors with practiced calm. Her crisp white lab coat fluttered slightly with each step, while the pastel-colored scarf tied around her neck provided a splash of color against the sterile backdrop. The hour was late—2 a.m., to be exact—a welcome end to a long shift.

In the staff room, Abigail hung her lab coat neatly on a hook and approached the mirror. She adjusted her hair and examined the dark circles under her eyes. With a weary sigh, she walked out of the room.

Abigail exited the building and quickly spotted Phoenix waiting for her, a single flower in hand. A smile broke across her face as she hurried toward him. Phoenix's arms opened to embrace her. They shared a warm hug and made their way to a nearby park bench. As they settled down, Phoenix lay his head in Abigail's lap.

Abigail gazed down at him, her fingers gently running through his hair. "What a day," she began. "So many people just... broken, clinging to religion like it's all they have left."

Phoenix looked up at her. "Can't imagine," he replied with a hint of sarcasm. He reached up, taking her hand in his, his touch warm and reassuring. "You're nervous about going back to Jerusalem, aren't you?"

Abigail softened. "A little. I already know my mom's going to be a wreck. She's so worried about Matt. But she'll be happy to have us both home."

Phoenix's brows furrowed slightly. "Have you heard from Matt since he left?"

Abigail shook her head, her gaze distant. "No. He's always been a bit... lost, you know? He used to say he didn't fit in anywhere. Maybe being home will help."



Phoenix gave her hand a comforting squeeze. "You're a good sister." A smile touched Abigail's lips. "What about you? Ready for your dad?"

Phoenix chuckled, though his eyes betrayed a hint of apprehension. "Weeks feel like months with that guy. He'll probably spend the whole time grilling me about when I'm getting promoted to Lt. Colonel." His mood shifted, growing somber. "I wish he wasn't so hard-headed, so stuck in his ways. He'd lose it if I ever told him about us. My mom would've loved you. She cared about other people too. And these ridiculous scarves, she would have worn them too."

Abigail playfully punched him on the shoulder. "Did you pick this from the bushes out front?" she asked, her tone teasing. Phoenix froze for a moment, caught off guard. "No?" he said, the word trailing off uncertainly. Before he could react further, he leaned in and captured her lips in a kiss. She laughed softly against him. "I want to show you something."

Abigail and Phoenix made their way along an abandoned street, the walls marred by graffiti. The few shops that lined the street were boarded up, with other windows shattered. A few stray pieces of trash fluttered across the empty road, driven by a soft wind. Phoenix looked around with evident unease, his gaze darting from shadow to shadow.

"It's just a little further," Abigail said as she gently pulled Phoenix along. "I know it looks bad, but we're almost there." Phoenix's eyes remained cautious as he glanced around. "I'm not sure this is a good idea," he replied. "This place is... well, it's pretty rough." He continued to survey the abandoned street, his discomfort growing. "I know this place. You shouldn't be here."

They approached an old, rusted dumpster hidden in the recesses of an alleyway. Abigail crouched beside it. Phoenix flicked on his flashlight, the beam cutting through the darkness beneath the dumpster. The light revealed the outline of something small and trembling. Abigail's voice was filled with compassion. "Can you hear him? He's so scared."

Phoenix, kneeling beside her, squinted into the dimness. "It's a dog! You came out here for a dog?! What were you doing out here in the first place?" Abigail's hands were already at work, trying to shift the heavy dumpster. She paused, glancing up at Phoenix. "I couldn't just leave him here."

Phoenix hesitated, and after a moment, he let out a reluctant sigh. "Alright." With a coordinated effort, they maneuvered the heavy dumpster away from the wall. The space underneath gradually became visible, and Abigail quickly grabbed a couple of old towels from her work bag. She gently reached into the darkness. "Come on, little guy," she whispered softly. "We're here to help."

A tiny, shivering ball of fur emerged from the shadows, its eyes wide with fear. Abigail wrapped the puppy carefully in the towels. Phoenix shone the flashlight to keep the area well-lit, his voice softening as he spoke. "He's so tiny... and he's trembling," Phoenix observed, his earlier reluctance fading into concern.

Abigail nodded, her gaze fixed on the small puppy. "He's just scared and alone. We need to get him out of here and find him a home." Phoenix took the bundle from Abigail's arms, cradling the puppy. The tiny creature licked his face, its tail wagging weakly. As Phoenix looked down at the puppy, his tough exterior seemed to melt away. "You're kinda cute, Casper," he said. Abigail quickly fired back, "Oh, that's his name, is it?"

They continued down the street, holding the wrapped puppy between them. When they turned a corner, they encountered a homeless man sitting on the sidewalk. His weary face was partially obscured by a comically oversized beanie, and he was surrounded by a few possessions and a tattered blanket. His eyes lit up as he saw them approaching.

With a kind smile, Abigail kneeled and extended a small bag of food and water from her work bag. "Hi there," Abigail said gently. "I have some food and water for you. I hope it helps." The homeless man's eyes welled up with gratitude. "Thank you, miss. You're an angel."

Phoenix rolled his eyes, and surveyed their surroundings. The homeless man accepted the food, his hands trembling slightly. "Can I bless you with something?" he asked sincerely. Abigail nodded, a kind smile on her lips. The man reached out, touching her hand with a trembling gesture as he began to pray. "Heavenly Father, touch her with your presence in Jesus' name, Amen."

The words of the prayer had an immediate and unsettling effect on Phoenix. His face tightened, and he quickly pulled Abigail away from the homeless man and led her away. Without a word, he retrieved his military phone. "I have to report it," he said quietly, pressing a button on the device.

Abigail's eyes widened in alarm. "Seriously!" She struggled against Phoenix's grip. "We can't just leave him like this!" Phoenix led her away, his face a mask of regret and resignation. The distant sound of heavy boots grew louder. As the militia arrived, they began to beat the homeless man with brutal force, their actions violent and unrestrained.

Abigail turned back, horrified by the scene unfolding behind them. "Stop! Please, stop!" she shouted, her voice cracking with desperation. She rushed towards the militia, but Phoenix's strong grip held her back. His face was a mask of sorrow as he tried to pull her away from the violence. "Abi, Abigail, it's the law. And this could've been a social test for us." His voice was laced with sadness. "They're just enforcing it."

Abigail struggled against him, her face contorted with anguish. "But this is still wrong! They're hurting him!" Phoenix's grip remained firm as he turned her away. "We can't interfere. It's dangerous." The militia continued their ruthless assault on the helpless old man.

## CHAPTER 6: FAMILIES DIVIDED

Josh's home in Jerusalem, though modest, bore the marks of pride and accomplishment. The living room was decorated with a UN logo statue on the wall, the 10K symbol prominently displayed in the center. Rachel, Josh's wife, was busy adjusting a "WELCOME HOME" banner, her nerves evident as she fussed over its placement. Her dyed black hair was pulled tightly into a bun, and her anxiety manifested in her fidgeting hands.

"It's crooked," she insisted, holding one end of the banner.

Josh tried to placate her. "It's fine. Are your contacts in?"

Rachel responded sharply, "I'm telling you, it's crooked."

Josh sighed. "Matt's been out in the desert for two years. Do you really think he'll notice?"

Rachel darted back, her eyes flashing. "It's the first time the family's been together in ages. I want it to be perfect. And where's Abigail? She should have been here by now."

Josh shrugged. "Probably with that new boyfriend. She said his family is also in town for the Temple unveiling."

Rachel's frustration was evident. "The boyfriend we've heard about but never met. And why is Hogan coming again? This is supposed to be a family gathering."

Josh adjusted the banner again, trying to make it straight. "Hogan kind of invited himself. I couldn't refuse, especially after he helped get Abi into that exclusive hospital. Besides, he is my boss."

Rachel finally seemed satisfied with the banner's position. "There, that's better." A knock at the door interrupted them. Rachel hurried over to answer, causing one end of

the banner to droop. Josh and Rachel exchanged a glance before opening the door together.

“Surprise! Welcome home my son!” they exclaimed. Hogan stood in the doorway, holding a crate of “Gold Star Export” beer with a grin. “Sorry, it’s just me. Don’t look so disappointed. I brought good stuff.”

Josh took the beer, forcing a smile. “Wonderful to see you, General. Welcome to our home.”

Hogan stepped inside, surveying the room with an air of familiarity. “It’s just Hogan tonight, please. We’re practically family, right?” Josh nodded, though Rachel’s nerves were evident as she watched Hogan’s inspection of the room.

“Make yourself comfortable,” Josh offered. Hogan inhaled deeply, savoring the air. “The place looks exactly the same. It’s been far too long. We’ve missed Jerusalem. Feels good to be back.” Another knock at the door interrupted the moment.

“That must be him!” Rachel said, hurrying to answer. “Surprise!” Rachel called out, but Abigail walked in, absorbed in her phone. “Thanks, guys. I forgot my key,” Abigail said, barely glancing up.

Josh, visibly annoyed, said, “Where have you been? You were supposed to be back an hour ago!”

Rachel’s irritation flared. “See, it’s that new boyfriend of hers.”

Hogan raised an eyebrow. “Boyfriend? Wasn’t she in diapers just yesterday?”

Abigail blushed. “It’s nothing. Hi, General Bates.” Rachel added, “You should have brought him. It would’ve been nice for him to finally meet the family.”

Josh closed the door, but it was blocked by Phoenix, holding a bottle of wine. “Am I late?” Phoenix asked, looking around.

“Not at all, son,” Hogan said with a warm smile. “The party doesn’t start until you get here.” Phoenix presented the wine to Rachel. “Mrs. Angelos, I brought this for you.”

“Thank you for having me, sir,” Phoenix said to Josh. Josh awkwardly extended his hand, which Phoenix shook. Hogan stepped in, giving him a hearty slap on the shoulder. “And, uh, hi Abigail,” Phoenix said, turning to her.

“Phoenix,” Abigail replied. “Long time no see. Did you find a home for Casper?”

Phoenix's smile was faintly ironic, his eyes twinkling with a touch of mischief. Abigail subtly widened her eyes at him, hoping he might sense her discomfort. He chuckled softly, the sound warm and relaxed, as he hung up his coat. Just then, another knock echoed through the room.

Josh opened it to reveal Matt, looking disheveled and unshaven, a stark contrast to the other guests. “Matt?! Are you okay?” Josh asked, stepping aside to let him in. Matt dropped his dirty backpack and smiled. “I’m home.”

Josh pulled him into a tight embrace. “Welcome home, son,” he whispered.

Later, the dining room was filled with the sounds of clinking glasses and murmured conversation as the families gathered around the table. Matt sat quietly at the end, lost in thought. Hogan, holding a glass of beer, began a story.

“You know, this reminds me of a situation from my younger days. We were stationed in a rough spot—out in the middle of nowhere, with a bunch of men who were starting to lose their edge. The locals didn’t trust us, supplies were low, and tensions were high. There was this one guy in our unit, though, who always thought he could make the best of a bad situation. Real idealist... which got me thinking. We had this dirty, undrinkable water, and he says, ‘I’m going to turn this into wine. All it takes is a little belief and a lot of effort.’”

Hogan paused, his gaze cold as he studied Phoenix and Abigail. “He took a sip of that water, pretending it was something it wasn’t. He told us, ‘Sometimes, you have to make

hard choices and take risks, even when you know it's not going to end well. But if you push hard enough, you can make anything happen.”

The tension in the room grew. “The problem was, he underestimated how quickly things can go wrong. All the mental gymnastics in the world are less powerful than taking one sip. It was still dirty water.”

Hogan took a deliberate sip of his beer, letting the weight of his words settle. His demeanor lightened. “Which got me thinking, I could use some of that water-into-wine action right now.” Phoenix and Abigail chuckled nervously. Josh looked over at Matt while pouring Hogan wine.

Rachel said, “Who wants dessert?”

“I’ll help clear the plates,” Abigail offered.

“Let me give you a hand!” Phoenix jumped up, almost knocking over the plates. Abigail laughed awkwardly as they headed into the kitchen.

Hogan finished his beer and turned to Rachel. “Rachel, wonderful meal. It’s been a while since I’ve had home-cooked food. It’s nice to have both families together like this. Just like old times. Sarah would’ve loved it.” Josh nodded in acknowledgment, and Rachel squeezed Hogan’s hand sympathetically. “You must miss her.”

Hogan softened. “I do. Phoenix and I both do. But she would have been proud of what we’re doing, the advancements we’ve made under the Kings. And in her honor, I won’t rest until every Christian and Jew is captured, reeducated, and brought to peace.” He cleared his throat and changed the subject. “So, Josh, the Temple—everything on track? No hiccups?” Hogan’s gaze turned to Matt. “Having such a renowned temple built on the plans of your Jewish forefathers is a big deal. You must be proud of what your father has accomplished?”

Rachel nudged Josh, and Matt chuckled. Hogan’s attention remained fixed on Matt.

“Something funny, Matt?”

Matt raised his head, meeting Hogan's stare. "Is it really something to celebrate? Ironic don't you think—a Temple without God?"

Hogan's gaze hardened. "What kind of camp did you go to again?" Hogan's tone was edged with menace. Rachel's face turned pale, and Josh shifted uncomfortably.

Rachel, her hands trembling as she poured coffee, tried to defuse the situation. "It was a wellness retreat," she said.

Hogan scoffed. "Come on, I wasn't born yesterday. He's been out in the desert with those sandal-wearing hippies." Rachel's hands trembled as she poured coffee, and Josh looked visibly distressed. Abigail exited the kitchen with desserts, followed by Phoenix carrying a pot of tea. Phoenix glanced around at the tense atmosphere.

"Was it something I said or didn't say?" Phoenix said, trying to lighten the mood. "Just so you know, Abigail held me hostage in the kitchen, trying Mrs. Angelos' famous brownies."

Abigail responded with a weak smile, "And one clearly wasn't enough. You had to have four?"

Phoenix chuckled, taking another brownie off the plate, revealing now five fingers. Hogan raised his glass for a toast. "I'd like to make a toast to the Kings, who've brought us all together again to celebrate their cause. Hail the Kings." Hogan raised his fist toward the UN logo on the wall. Josh and everyone else followed suit, except Matt, who kept his head down.

As the toast concluded, Hogan's gaze lingered on Matt. "Matt, aren't you going to honor our Kings, who brought us peace through science and unity?"

Matt looked up. "True science? Peace? You asked about the camp I went to. It was a camp for peace, for those who can think for themselves without being forced to conform. There's only one true King, and you don't know Him."



Hogan gestured to Matt to continue, but Phoenix interrupted. "Well, that's quite a statement, Matt. Let's focus on celebrating your return and less on politics."

Hogan's eyes narrowed as he took another sip of wine. "He's your son, Josh," Hogan said, his voice firm but tinged with the hint of an old friend's exasperation. "But I'm your friend. I'll overlook this outburst for now, but you need to think seriously about sending him to the correction facilities before it's too late."

Matt, his face flushed with anger, shot back defiantly. "You mean the concentration camps."

Before anyone could react, Rachel slapped Matt's cheek. The room fell into stunned silence, the sting of the slap hanging in the air. Phoenix stood up abruptly, his brownie half-eaten on his plate. "Thank you for your hospitality," Phoenix said, his voice tight. He glanced at Josh and Rachel.

Rachel, her face pale and trembling, turned to Phoenix and Hogan. "I'm so sorry. He didn't mean it."

Phoenix gave Abigail a look of regret and sympathy before heading for the door. Hogan, standing and clearly agitated, shook his head as he grabbed his coat. "If he were just some kid spouting Rebel propaganda like that... well, let's just say he'd be getting very acquainted with those camps he knows so little about."

As Hogan stormed out of the house, he threw one last comment over his shoulder. "Don't be late tomorrow."

Matt, clearly upset, stormed out. The sound of slamming doors echoed through the house. The room was left in heavy silence. Josh buried his face in his hands at the table, while Rachel, her nerves frayed, took a shaky sip of her wine. The once festive atmosphere had turned dark and strained, leaving the family divided and uncertain about the future.

## CHAPTER 7: FEAST OF TRUMPETS

The afternoon sun blazed fiercely over Jerusalem, casting an unrelenting light on the bustling street as the Bates and Angelos families made their way through the crowd. Dressed in their finest attire, they moved with a sense of purpose, though Matt trailed behind in simpler clothes.

Hogan walked alongside Phoenix, casting frequent, disapproving glances back at Matt. “Why is he here?” Hogan’s voice was low and tinged with irritation. Phoenix, maintaining a calm demeanor, replied, “They’ve brainwashed him in the desert. This is his chance to see things for himself. Let him witness the Kings—truth has a way of winning people over.” His gaze flicked toward Abigail, who was standing close by.

As they wove through the crowded streets, militia patrols acknowledged Phoenix with respectful nods, leading the families through the sea of spectators. Hogan tapped Phoenix on the shoulder and pointed to a preacher standing on a stack of crates nearby. “Tell the boys to sweep the street. Looks like some are still slipping through,” Hogan instructed.

“On it,” Phoenix replied, signaling to his men with practiced efficiency.

The preacher’s voice, amplified by a makeshift speaker, cut through the noise of the crowd. “My brothers, my sisters, surrender to God! The time is at hand—the prophecy will be fulfilled. Yeshua is coming back! Be ready! Seven years of torment! These are the ten kings spoken of by the Prophet Daniel and the Apostle John. They will lure you with their lies. You are their lambs for the slaughter! He who has ears to hear, hear.”

Hogan’s hand twitched toward his gun as shouts of “Treason” erupted from the crowd. Phoenix calmed him down. “Just watch.” A squad of militia moved in to drag the preacher away.

Arriving at the Temple, the militia stood in vigilant formation, checking papers and saluting Hogan, Phoenix, and Josh with clenched fists. The three men returned the gesture. “Any trouble and you...” Hogan began, turning to Phoenix.

“I know. Zero tolerance,” Phoenix responded.

A red ribbon adorned the entryway, and a sea of spectators filled the raised seating in front of the Temple. The Ten Kings were seated above, waiting for the ceremony to commence. Hogan and Josh stepped onto the stage, and the crowd erupted in cheers. Josh, though clearly overwhelmed, tried to maintain a composed demeanor, while Hogan basked in the adulation, leaning into the microphone. “Hail the Kings!”

The crowd responded with fervent chants, their fisted salutes punctuating the air. “Hail the Kings! Hail the Kings! Hail the Kings!” Hogan adjusted his uniform, smoothing it down as he prepared to address the crowd. “Brothers and sisters, I am General Hogan Bates. Our team has worked tirelessly to build this magnificent Temple in honor of our Holy Kings and the worldwide unity they’ve brought us. As outlined by Ezekiel and led by this Jewish man, Joshua Angelos.”

Josh shot Hogan a sidelong glance. Hogan continued, “... ex-Jewish man, Joshua Angelos.” The crowd applauded. “This Temple stands as a symbol of a united world and will serve as the new headquarters for our Ten Kings,” Hogan declared.

The crowd erupted once more in chants. “Hail the Kings!” Photographers and press captured the scene from a distance, and drones buzzed overhead. Josh scanned the crowd, spotting Rachel and Abigail among the clapping and cheering faces. Matt, however, remained silent, his gaze distant and critical.

As the ceremony continued, Matt took a sip of water and muttered to himself. “A sacred place, originally meant to honor Yahweh, is now used by those trying to erase Him... ironic.” Rachel, overhearing, shushed him sharply. “Matt, enough! I don’t want to hear any more of this treason.”

Matt’s eyes darted around. “Each of them is more corrupt and wicked than the next.” Abigail, her anxiety evident, nudged Matt. “You’re going to get us locked up!”

Matt shrugged. "He won't let anything happen to you." Abigail looked puzzled. "What are you talking about?" Matt replied, "You know what I'm talking about. I have eyes." Abigail's scowl deepened. Matt sighed. "Not to worry. No doubt I'm getting the boot after today."

Back at the Temple, the crowd performed the fist salute once more, their voices chanting in unison. "Hail the Ten Kings! Hail the Ten Kings! Hail the Ten Kings!" The Kings, seated in their elevated positions, acknowledged the cheers. Tietan, a towering man known as "The Beast," took the stage with a commanding presence. His charisma was undeniable as he addressed the crowd.

"Thank you, General," Tietan began, turning to face the audience. "I am Tietan, your Admiral, known as the man of war." Tietan smiled. "Many of you know I come from Istanbul. But why am I here, in Jerusalem? Because this city has always been my second home. My parents, you see, hailed from the Jewish tribe of Dan." He paused deliberately, a knowing smile on his face. "Notice that I said, 'my parents,' not myself. For I am the offspring of someone far greater." The crowd applauded with excitement.

"It is my honor to serve as the Military Secretary for our Ten Kings. Throughout history, so many senseless battles have been waged in the name of religion. How fitting, then, that the very faith born here thousands of years ago meets its end today." The applause grew louder.

"It has been just under two thousand years since the last Temple trumpet sounded. Today marks the Feast of Trumpets, and once more, a trumpet will sound. But this time, it heralds not division, but true peace for us all."

Tietan savored the moment, his smile widening. "This Temple, my friends, stands as a symbol of our unity, our true strength. No more religion. No more conflict. From this day forward, everything and everyone under the reign of the Ten Kings." The crowd erupted in thunderous applause as Tietan pointed up toward the Ten Kings seated above. A map of the world projected onto the sky showed ten distinct regions. As each King stood, their respective region illuminated, bathing the sky in light.

After the last King stood, a loud shofar trumpet sounded. Suddenly, the sky darkened rapidly. The sun was cloaked in a sackcloth of coal-black, while the moon glowed blood red, casting an eerie shadow over the Temple and its ecstatic spectators.

## CHAPTER 8: THE RAPTURE

As the crowd stood in awestruck silence before the Temple, the earth beneath them suddenly convulsed with a violent quake. The stands swayed precariously, and panic erupted like wildfire among the spectators. The ground trembled violently, sending waves of terror rippling through the crowd.

Above them, the sky burst open with flashes of lightning, revealing a shadowy figure obscured by storm clouds. The mere presence of the figure was both electrifying and terrifying.

On stage, Tietan's expression shifted from curiosity to a slow, knowing smile. Hogan sprang into action, rallying the militia men stationed by the Temple entrance. "Fire at will! Now! Don't let it get closer!" he commanded. The militia responded, unleashing a barrage of lasers into the sky, but their efforts were futile. The guards, faces taut with urgency, scrambled to usher the Ten Kings off their platform and into the safety of armored vehicles.

In a crackle of thunder, two brilliant lights descended into the Temple courtyard behind Tietan. A few people scattered in the crowd began to glow. Those whose bodies were not glowing were too terrified to notice.

Abigail's eyes widened with panic as she tugged at Matt's arm. "Matt, Mom, come on! We need to get out of here!" Matt, who was also glowing, calmed her down with a reassuring smile. He placed one hand on Abigail's shoulder and the other on her head, looking up at the sky and mouthing something. In an instant, those who were illuminated were lifted skyward in a flash of blinding light, surrounded by crackling lightning.

Abigail and Rachel stood rooted to the spot as Matt and the others were whisked upwards. Phoenix, navigating through the chaos with purpose, grabbed Rachel and Abigail. "This way! Now!" he shouted over the uproar, shielding them from the surrounding mayhem.

Inside the twilight of the caves, people flooded in like sardines pressed together in a tin. A woman in her thirties, with wide, frightened eyes, held her child close to her chest, her heart racing with each echoing footstep and whisper. “Quiet! This whole damn thing could collapse on us!” Nearby, a shorter man found himself shoved against the cold, unyielding stone walls, gasping for breath as he struggled to maintain his footing. “Better to be crushed than to face Him who sits on the throne!” A tall male, visibly trembling, raised his voice in near-hysteria, his words reverberating off the rocky surfaces. “Flee the Wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His vengeance has arrived!”

Phoenix barked orders as he pushed through the crowd. “Out of our way—now!” he commanded. He pulled Rachel and Abigail behind him, maneuvering through the throng of panicked people. Abigail, dazed and disoriented, was pushed around by the surging crowd. Despite Phoenix’s best efforts to protect her, she collapsed amidst the chaos. “Abigail? Abigail!” Phoenix called out, his voice laced with concern as he frantically searched for her.

## CHAPTER 9: THE 7-YEAR COUNTDOWN

### 30 SEPTEMBER, 2046. THE 7-YEAR WORLD TRIBULATION BEGINS.

Outside the Temple, night had fallen. The courtyard was a battlefield of chaos. Militia guards trying to enter the Temple were met with a catastrophic blast of fire. Some were disintegrated on the spot, while others were engulfed in flames coming from inside the Temple courtyard. The ground was strewn with burned corpses, and cameramen and news reporters scrambled desperately for safety.

In the midst of the pandemonium, Abigail appeared, moving with an unsettling calmness amidst the chaos. Her demeanor was almost trance-like. All eyes turned to her as she approached the Temple entrance. “These are the Two Prophets, Moses and Elijah, sent to declare God’s judgment and bear witness of Yeshua, the King of Kings,” Abigail proclaimed with solemnity.

Suddenly, flames erupted from the Temple’s entrance again, engulfing the militia at the Temple entrance. Two men in long white robes stepped out from the Temple—Elijah, in his sixties with a wild mane of hair, and Moses, an eighty-year-old with a barrel-chested build and a flowing grey beard. Flames spewed from their mouths. Despite their apparent age, they appeared remarkably fit and agile.

From behind them, a vast crowd of men in off-white robes emerged from the Temple. They walked eastward towards the desert, hands raised in praise, each forehead marked with the name “YHVH,” which seemed to glow.

A voice from the crowd declared, “These are the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel, sealed by God.” Abigail continued, “Listen to them, for they bring the good news of Yeshua to the world. Let those with ears hear, hear!”

“Over the next three and a half years,” Elijah’s voice was calm yet foreboding, “seven trumpets will unleash the judgments of Yahwah. A third of the earth’s vegetation will be destroyed. This is the first of the seven trumpets.”



As Moses and Elijah re-entered the Temple, the 144,000 disappeared from view. Overwhelmed by the events, Abigail collapsed, her strength giving out. "Abigail? Abigail!" Phoenix's voice echoed through the chaos as he desperately searched for her amidst the turmoil.

The grand hall of Bet Shemesh was in the UN HQ. Its towering ceilings adorned with elaborate banners that draped gracefully down the walls evoked a sense of bygone grandeur. At the center of this opulent space was a round table with ten thrones spaced evenly around it, filling the center of the room.

The ten kings sat on their respective regal thrones. In the middle of the table, a hologram projected the evening's dramatic Temple events into the air.

Tietan and Hogan made their entrance. Hogan, ever the disciplined soldier, stood with military precision, his posture immaculate. Tietan, in contrast, moved through the room with an air of ownership, as if he were the true leader.

Among the Ten Kings, three figures radiated an unmistakable aura of authority. Dimitry, a formidable Russian man with a striking resemblance to Stalin, was seated behind an engraved placard that read "NORTH ASIA." His intense demeanor was accentuated as he slammed his fist onto the armrest of his chair.

"Tietan!" Dimitry's voice was deep, tinged with a thick Russian accent. "Your self-aggrandizement today did not go unnoticed. Watch your place." The other Kings nodded in agreement.

Mao, a figure reminiscent of Mao Zedong, sat behind a placard that read "EAST ASIA." His presence was equally imposing, his gaze sharp as he spoke with a heavy Chinese accent. "Our plan is unfolding as expected," Mao declared. "We've provoked Him and His son. It's only a matter of time before He arrives to fight His own battle. But those two strangers at the Temple—they must be eradicated before they start converting the people."

Tietan remained calm, his demeanor unruffled by the harsh words. "My men and I will take care of it," he assured, his voice steady. "There's no need to worry." Mao's eyes narrowed, his voice sharpening. "Have you forgotten your place, Tietan? You will do exactly as we command—nothing more. You will tell the people of Jerusalem that during the Temple ceremony, we executed the Christian extermination program from space."

Tietan's eyes gleamed with a challenging spark. "You mean using lasers to vaporize the last of the vermin?" A murmur of agreement rippled through the Kings as they nodded in consensus. "But why lie?" Tietan pressed. "What are we trying to hide? Tell them the truth!" A tense silence fell over the room.

Muhammad, a stern figure who resembled Ayatollah Khomeini, sat behind the "SOUTHWEST ASIA & NORTH AFRICA" placard. His gaze was piercing as he leaned forward. "The truth? And what truth would that be, Tietan?" Muhammad declared. Tietan continued, "Enough with the games and the atheist rhetoric. Let's be honest with the people. The choice is clear. Yeshua left the rest to be destroyed. Those two henchmen at the Temple have already started His work by killing all those who try to enter."

He pressed on with fervent intensity. "Thereby stripping the remaining rebels of any hope of heaven. Then we unite as one people to fight back. Didn't Yahwah, the God of Israel, say in the forbidden Book of Genesis, 'The people are one, and they have all one language; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do'? What those at Babel failed to accomplish, we will finish!"

Dimitry's gaze was unyielding as he addressed Tietan. "You will say exactly as Mao instructed. Understood?" Tietan cast his eyes downward, offering a half-hearted nod. "What about the two henchmen at the Temple?" Dimitry inquired, his tone brooking no argument. Hogan stepped forward. "We have missiles ready. Just give the word." Mao snapped, "General, you were responsible for security today! How did those vermin slip through the crowd? If not for Tietan's vouching for you, you'd be finished! No more mistakes!"

“And General, you have our full support to eliminate those two henchmen at the Temple and their followers. By any means necessary. But—” He paused. “Under no circumstances are you to damage the Temple. It is our symbol of unity and peace. We must keep it intact to provoke Yeshua to return.”

Hogan gave a curt nod, acknowledging the directive. With a final glance, he exited the room.

## CHAPTER 10: THE HUNT

Josh's house, once a sanctuary of calm, was now a whirlwind of military activity. The night thrummed with the relentless clamor of soldiers and the rumble of armored vehicles. The front door swung open and shut like a revolving door, soldiers trooping in and out with heavy boxes and equipment, each new arrival adding to the mounting sense of dread.

Inside, Abigail's normally tidy room was completely disheveled. Phoenix stood amidst the disarray, his gaze roaming over the space now stripped of its personal touches. Hogan's sudden entrance shattered the quiet.

"There you are! I've been looking all over for you."

Phoenix turned. "What was that thing in the sky? What is going on? I can't reach any Angelos member."

"They're all traitors, Phoenix," Hogan declared, his voice hardening. "The entire Angelos family. I should've seen it coming when their son started spouting that dangerous Rebel talk. They've gone underground. I had my men here within ten minutes of the chaos at the Temple, and they were already gone with the Temple and the underground tunnel plans."

"No," Phoenix's voice was firm. "Abigail is not a traitor! The Rebels must have pressured her. You know how they are. I'll talk to her."

Hogan's lips curled. "Remember, son, women can be a greater weakness than you think. The Christian and Jewish vermin may have powerful weapons, but it's nothing we can't crush. But a woman—she impacts the heart, which is more difficult to crush without collateral damage."

Hogan checked his watch. "Let's move—we don't want to be late for the briefing. There's a lot to get done."

The briefing room at the Militia Headquarters was buzzing. A crowd of Militia officers, including Phoenix, was gathered and attentive to the presentation of maps and diagrams shared by Hogan.

“We’re splitting the city into zones,” Hogan’s voice held an authoritative edge. “With round-the-clock patrols. Each of you will receive a list of assignments and a roster of Rebel suspects for your sector. The Kings have escalated Jerusalem’s security status—lethal force is authorized if necessary.” Ahmad, sitting a row ahead of Phoenix, twisted in his seat and flashed a grin at him, his fist pounding into his hand.

Meanwhile, in the dim, dusty basement, Rachel and Abigail huddled together in the corner, their hearts pounding in time with the distant footsteps and muffled voices that echoed overhead. The air was thick with tension, each sound sending a shiver down their spines as they strained to listen. Suddenly, the voices ceased, and a heavy hatch creaked open above them, the noise reverberating like a distant thunderclap.

“It’s just me,” came a voice, low and reassuring.

The two young women breathed a collective sigh of relief as Manfred descended the stairs, his weary face illuminated by the faint light filtering in from the hatch. It was clear that he hadn’t slept in days; dark circles framed his eyes, and his hair hung disheveled around his face.

“They searched everywhere, but didn’t think to look under the rug,” he said, a flicker of a smile breaking through his fatigue. He turned to Abigail, his expression shifting to one of concern. “What happened at the Temple?”

“I honestly don’t know,” Abigail replied. “All I remember was Matt putting a spell on me before he was taken away by the Ten Kings. Then I woke up in your car. Did you find Matt yet? Do you know where they’ve taken him?”

Manfred shook his head. He pulled out his phone, methodically dismantling it with deft fingers.

“We’ll find him,” he promised. “But first, we need to bring down their communication network. It’s the only way to stop them from tracking our people.” At that moment, Josh, who had been quietly observing, suddenly remembered something. He reached into his pocket and produced a small USB memory stick, turning it over in his hands like a precious artifact.

“I managed to smuggle out half of the Temple plans,” he said, his voice filled with urgency. “The rest are still at my house. Hogan will be after them—trying to find a way into the Temple to stop those two, whoever they are.”

Manfred nodded, his mind racing with possibilities. “Yeah, we need to buy them some time. The more the focus is on them, the less it’ll be on us. But we’ve got to move to somewhere safer.”

Manfred, Josh, Rachel, and Abigail huddled in the back of a truck driven by Manfred. The vehicle rumbled down a rugged gravel road, the landscape scarred by devastation. Burning trees and charred farmland flashed past in a disorienting blur.

Suddenly, a meteor streaked through the sky and crashed onto the road ahead, exploding in a fiery blast. Manfred reacted instinctively, swerving violently to avoid the fiery obstacle, but the truck skidded uncontrollably and crashed into a tree with bone-jarring force. Smoke billowed from the wreckage as the truck came to a halt.

“Is everyone okay?” Manfred’s voice was edged with concern as he looked around the wrecked vehicle. Abigail, her ears ringing and a bruise forming on her head, managed a weak nod. “Let’s move—we’ve got to go on foot,” Manfred urged, grabbing the radio from the dashboard. “The Militia will be here any minute.”

They scrambled out of the truck. Josh held on to Manfred as he got out. “What was that?”

Manfred replied, “The first of the Seven Trumpets.” Shaken, they all fled into the dense forest.

At Josh's house, the living room bore the marks of recent upheaval. Furniture was overturned, and personal belongings lay strewn across the floor. Sofia, a short Hispanic cleaner with a colorful vacuum, was accompanied by a large Corporal and three other Militia members, who sat in the corner absorbed in a card game. One of the Militia members glanced up and asked with a hint of curiosity, "What's with the room service?"

Sofia, clearly uncomfortable, replied awkwardly, "No hablo inglés." The Corporal, noting the UN Approval seal on the orders, nodded in confirmation. "General wants this place spotless." Sofia began her task, vacuuming the debris amid the mess.

The desert sun beat down mercilessly as a truck trundled across the arid landscape. It came to a halt at a rugged outcrop of mountain rock. Sofia emerged from the vehicle, her colorful vacuum in tow. She approached a Rebel Guard, draped in a sand-colored cloak with his hood pulled low. His voice was gruff. "Password?"

Sofia confidently replied, "Yeshua is King." The Rebel Guard, satisfied with the answer, stepped aside, revealing a hidden door in the rock face. Sofia passed through the concealed entrance.

Colorful tents dotted the landscape; families moved about their daily routines, campfires crackled, and merchants bustled. Sofia made her way toward a large tent prominently marked with a cross. She ducked inside. Manfred, Josh, Rachel, and Abigail were gathered around a table, their faces illuminated by the glow of a large virtual map of Jerusalem.

"Sofia! Thank God you made it out safely!" Manfred exclaimed, rising to greet her. Sofia set down her vacuum with a thud. "And not just that—I managed to recover all the papers our dear Architect hid away before you left Jerusalem."

With a practiced motion, she unlocked a panel on the vacuum and retrieved a collection of files and papers. The sight of these documents seemed to momentarily lift the weight of their situation.

## CHAPTER 11: THE KINGS' PLAN

At the Militia Headquarters Garrison, Phoenix sat hunched over a desk in a sparse room. His gaze was fixed on an old radio that crackled intermittently with static. His fingers hovered over the speaker button as he said, "This is Major Phoenix Bates, requesting the location of Abigail Angelos. I repeat, requesting the location of Abigail Angelos. Over." He released the button and listened intently, but the radio responded only with silence. Frustration etched deeper lines into his face as he adjusted the dial, shifting to the next channel.

"This is Major Phoenix Bates, requesting the location of Abigail Angelos. I repeat, requesting the location of Abigail Angelos. Over." Still, there was only static. Phoenix glanced out of the small window over the desk. The night sky stretched out before him, and he whispered, "Oh Abi, just give me a sign, please. My father's on the warpath, but I can protect you."

Months passed. Day and night, Hogan led brutal raids across Jerusalem, targeting suspected Christian and Jewish households with relentless aggression. Phoenix, always at his side, fulfilled the role of second-in-command. Hogan's methods were harsh and unforgiving; he dragged people into the streets, using violence to subdue anyone who resisted, kicking them and, without remorse, shooting their families and pets. Phoenix, though loyal, occasionally intervened and stopped some of the killings. All the while, Phoenix continued to search for Abigail.

At the Jerusalem Correctional Center, Hogan walked through the lines of captured Rebels, his clipboard clutched tightly as he took meticulous notes. Two Militia members escorted a pregnant woman in her thirties past Hogan. The sight caught the attention of a Militia member who remarked, "Looks like we've got another hell-spawn on the way."

"I'll take her down to the lab," another added. Hogan's eyes gleamed with sinister interest. "I'll take it from here, boys."



Hogan escorted the pregnant woman, an IV drip attached to her arm, down corridors devoid of windows, illuminated only by harsh fluorescent lights. Rows of men, women, and children lay restrained on hospital beds or chairs. They were drugged and docile.

“The Ten Kings aim to create superhumans by reengineering the seed,” Hogan explained to the woman he was escorting. “Making us more powerful than ever before.” He creepily looked her up and down. “And you’ve got plenty of spare parts to work with.”

A door opened ahead, and a doctor with blood-stained gloves waited for Hogan. As Hogan turned to leave, Phoenix arrived, his face etched with urgency. “Forgot the haloperidol.”

Hogan responded while tapping his gun, “Don’t hesitate to use something more sedating. And don’t be late for the meeting.” He handed the pregnant woman over to the doctor with a curt nod. “I’m sure you’ll find a use for this.” The doctor nodded curtly, accepting the woman as Hogan exited. Phoenix, his gaze unwavering, stepped forward. “Doc, she’s mine.”

The doctor hesitated, glancing at the name stitched on his uniform pocket: "BATES." Reluctantly, he handed the pregnant woman over to Phoenix and then left.

The war room buzzed with tension and activity. Phoenix stood before a large map of the city, surrounded by his officers, watching the big screen showing Tietan speaking in front of news reporters. “You’ve been left to be trampled. This is no God of Love, but a God of Terror! We must fight back. I know His weaknesses. Unite with me, and I promise you—we will win.”

Phoenix’s finger moved decisively across the map, pointing to various locations marked with red pins. “We need to root out every last one of them. No hiding places. No sanctuary.” Someone in the crowd interrupted, “No mercy.” The officers nodded in agreement. Phoenix responded, “No, we’ll show mercy, but we will not retreat.”

As night descended over Jerusalem, Phoenix and Ahmad surveyed a dark, lonely alleyway. As they approached, a homeless family huddled together in a corner. A young girl, her eyes wide with fear, looked up at him. "Why are you taking everyone away?"

Phoenix stopped and crouched down to her level. "Have you seen any Christians? Can you guess where they are?"

She shook her head. "We are not supposed to speak to Christians." Phoenix nodded. The girl's mother watched him warily, but the young girl tentatively reached out her tiny hand. Phoenix hesitated for a moment before gently clasping her fingers. He left a wrapped package beside them, then stood and walked away into the shadows. The family, stunned, tore open the package to reveal food.

## CHAPTER 12: THE BEAST REVEALED

At the UN grand hall of Bet Shemesh, the Kings sat in their imposing thrones around a round table. At the end of the room, Hogan stood at attention, with Phoenix behind him at the door, awaiting orders. They all watched the events unfold on the holograms and awaited further instructions.

The first hologram projected images of vegetation devastation. A stark voice announced, "A third of the world's grass and vegetation... gone. But that's just the beginning."

The image shifted to fiery eruptions engulfing the Hawaiian Islands. Lava cascaded in molten waves, consuming everything in its path and leaving destroyed ships adrift and floating dead marine life. Mao continued, "Hawaii erupts just as those FALSE prophets predicted! Impossible! The Pacific drowns in bloody lava. A third of our oceans poisoned, our ships destroyed!"

Next, the hologram showed a comet hurtling toward Earth, its trajectory unchanged despite desperate missiles and lasers. It struck Lake Superior, spreading a pale green substance into the other Great Lakes. Muhammad proclaimed, "Then this star called Wormwood struck Lake Superior, poisoning a third of the Earth's fresh water supply! Spreading death to all who drink."

The hologram then displayed an explosion in the night sky. The sun, moon, and stars were each marred and missing a third of their surfaces. Dimitry's voice strained with frustration. "And recently, a third of the sun, moon, and stars refuse to shine. All because of those two."

The final hologram revealed Moses and Elijah standing at the Temple's entrance. "You defy Yahwah by mocking His Son and persecuting His people. Repent!" Moses declared. "Blind guides, leading others into eternal darkness," Elijah added. Moses continued, "Woe, woe, woe, the final three trumpets are about to sound." Frustration overtook Dimitry as he cut the hologram feeds. "Why haven't we obliterated them yet?"

Hogan solemnly replied, “We’ve tried every strategy that wouldn’t risk destroying the Temple.” Dimitry snapped back, “Have you located the Architect or the Temple’s underground tunnels yet? Then why are you still here?” Hogan nodded, preparing to leave with two Militia members. At that moment, Tietan strode into the room and gestured for Hogan to halt. Phoenix and the Militia left.

Mao’s voice interrupted sharply. “Maybe, King Dimitry, it is the weed of division that needs to be uprooted.” Dimitry nodded. “General Hogan, arrest that man!” he said, pointing to Tietan. “He’s been spreading treasonous lies to the people.”

Hogan hesitated, caught between the gravity of his orders and Tietan’s commanding presence. Tietan stepped forward, his demeanor both defiant and assured. “We Kings are developing transhuman beings, yet we fight a spiritual war with feeble weapons. I hold the key to true power—the power that will obliterate the Two and all who follow Yeshua. Their flesh will feed the birds, and their blood will be mine!”

Dimitry’s face contorted with disgust. “You’ve overstepped! Who do you think you are?” Tietan raised his hand and proclaimed, “I am your future King. Born of a power greater than you can imagine—the DRAGON!” The reaction from the Kings was immediate and unified. Shock and outrage marred their faces. Muhammad’s voice rang out with finality. “TREASON! You’re finished!”

In a coordinated motion, the Kings inserted their rings into a glowing panel before them. The sound of approaching footsteps echoed ominously as guards made their way toward the chamber. A grin spread across Tietan’s face as he motioned for Hogan to follow him. With a swift movement, Tietan and Hogan slipped out of the room. Hogan’s pace faltered as pain shot through his knee.

In the dimly lit corridors of the UN Secret Passageway, Tietan and Hogan moved with precision, their footsteps echoing off the stone walls. The maze-like corridors twisted and turned, but Tietan navigated them with an air of familiarity. The voices of pursuing guards grew louder, and they quickly ducked into a shadowy alcove.

Tietan, with a tone of smug satisfaction, said to Hogan, "I knew you'd stand by me. They've taken you for granted for far too long. You'll be my second-in-command. I need a leader I can trust." Hogan replied, "I would be honored." Together, they vanished into the labyrinthine streets of the city.

Spotting a hidden stairwell, they descended with haste. The ancient steps creaked softly beneath their feet. They emerged through a concealed passage into a bustling courtyard. Outside, Hogan and Tietan blended seamlessly into the crowd.

Back at his desk, Phoenix desperately tried to reach Abigail. "This is Major Phoenix Bates. Looking for Abigail Angelos. Can anyone hear me? Over." The radio crackled with static, and then, through the interference, a voice emerged. "Phoenix, is that you?" Abigail replied.

Phoenix's face lit up with relief. "Abi! It's me! Thank goodness you're alright." Her voice, though faint, came through. "We're okay. We're safe. The Rebels have given us sanctuary. They're good to us." Phoenix responded, "You need to come in. It's the only way I can protect you. Are you sure you're okay?" Abigail softly replied, "Yes, I miss you so much."

"Me too," Phoenix said. "Tell me about the Temple ceremony. What happened? Why did you say those things?"

There was a long pause before Abigail's voice returned. "They weren't my words. They were spoken through me. Matt said something over me before he was taken. I've been seeing things... visions, things I never could've imagined. It is either divine or I'm losing control of my own mind."

Phoenix's heart ached at her distress. "We'll figure this out, Abi. I promise. I'll talk to my father. Can I see you?" "I don't know. I have to go before they know I'm speaking with you. I'll call you again." "Abi? Abi?!" Phoenix's voice rose with desperation as static crackled in response.

At Militia HQ Garrison, Ahmad had leapt up onto a table, drawing the attention of the room with his brash confidence. His arms were raised high as he rallied the men around him. "The Kings are too lenient!" he bellowed over the din. "We should follow the lead of our great General and unite under Tietan!" The men roared their approval, their voices rising in a thunderous chorus. Ahmad's eyes flicked toward Phoenix, who sat apart, lost in his own thoughts.

Ahmad's grin widened into a sneer as he addressed Phoenix directly. "What do you say, Phoenix? Intimidated by Tietan's unyielding methods? Or do you still want us to play nice with the Rebels?" Phoenix's gaze slowly lifted from his drink. "I say, let Tietan and my father stamp out every last piece of evil from this Earth."

The response from the men was even louder this time, a thunderous approval that seemed to echo through the Garrison. Phoenix exchanged a hard, calculating look with Ahmad, his smile strained and insincere. "But we need to wait for the General or Tietan's command. They're in Istanbul."

## CHAPTER 13: THE BEAST vs. THREE KINGS

In the heart of Istanbul, Tietan's estate radiated an opulence that mirrored the sleek, black cars departing from it. Inside one of these cars, Tietan lounged comfortably in the backseat. Hogan, gripping the wheel, reported, "The Kings have declared war on us, just as expected. As we speak, Dimitry's forces are crossing the Black Sea from the north, while others are advancing by land."

Tietan's eyes gleamed with anticipation. "Then it's time for Israel to witness my power. Let's head back to Bet Shemesh UN HQ and take it. Prepare Dragon Protocol." Hogan nodded in agreement.

As Tietan's convoy of black SUVs rolled through the streets of Bet Shemesh, they stopped in front of an old mosque. The stillness was abruptly shattered by a barrage of bullets from the south.

Inside the lead black car, Tietan leaned back with a smug smile, seemingly unfazed by the attack. "Right on time," he mused, his voice dripping with satisfaction. "I knew Muhammad would be the first to attack." Hogan's eyes narrowed. "Muhammad?" Tietan's grin widened. "Indeed. They're swift. But do not kill them! Bring them to me." As the exchange continued, Tietan leafed through a Bible, sipping a dark, ominous liquid that looked disturbingly like blood.

Hogan and his team sprang into action, engaging Muhammad's forces with a combination of EMPs, sonic devices, and other high-tech weaponry. The clash sent Muhammad's Thawb-dressed soldiers crashing to the ground, many dead.

Hogan dragged Muhammad to Tietan's feet. Muhammad's ring was presented to Tietan, who examined it with a handheld device. Muhammad's voice was laced with disbelief and anger. "How did you do this? I have the strongest forces in the world."

Tietan smiled as he tossed Muhammad's ring back at his feet. "Had," he corrected with chilling calm. "My powers surpass anything of this world. Thank you for your cooperation, King Muhammad. Isn't this better than losing a hand?"

As Hogan received a message on his earpiece, he hurried over to Tietan, whispering urgently. Tietan sighed, a flicker of frustration crossing his face. "Show mercy," he instructed. Just as the words left his mouth, a fresh barrage of firepower erupted around them. Despite the onslaught, the invisible shield held firm, deflecting the explosions with an eerie calm.

Outside the city, Tietan's Militia vehicles sped through the desert sands and approached a cloud of dust near the caves. Mao issued commands to his men, dressed in red uniforms, to advance.

Tietan's forces once again overpowered the soldiers, and the sonic weapons caused rocks to tumble and crash, trapping Mao under a cascade of falling debris.

Moments later, Mao, shackled, was pushed down to his knees in front of Tietan. Hogan handed Tietan Mao's ring, which Tietan scanned and then threw back to Mao. "I must rescind the decree against me by the strongest Kings. This will deter the rest. I don't want more people dying."

Mao looked around at his dead soldiers, panting heavily. "Is it worth it, Tietan? All of this bloodshed?" Tietan commanded the nearby soldiers, "Remove those chains. He's a King, not an animal!"

His men hastily removed the shackles. Tietan continued, "Thanks to my mercy and commitment to unity, you have survived this." Mao, still shaken, asked, "How?" Tietan responded, "You questioned my Kingship—do you believe my abilities now? We must unite to stand a chance against our common foe and defeat Yahwah, the Elohim of Israel. I am your ally, not your enemy."



As Tietan's grin widened, Hogan received an urgent message on his tablet. "Dimitry is approaching from the Mediterranean Sea and northern Israel." Tietan's eyes sparkled with dark anticipation. "Ah, that relentless Russian dog still hunts me. The last of the three mighty Kings will soon bow. Let's not disappoint him, Hogan."

In the courtyard of Tietan's Bet Shemesh compound, Hogan paced the open space, his phone pressed to his ear. "Everything's coming together, son," Hogan said. "By tomorrow, Tietan will meet with the Kings and rise as our new leader. I'll be back in Jerusalem soon, standing by his side." He paused and asked, "How are you holding up?"

Inside the dimly lit Garrison room, Phoenix responded, "I've spoken with Abigail—I found her on the radio. They're not really Rebels, Father, just caught in the crossfire. I was thinking, if I can convince her and her parents to surrender, I could offer them protected status. Do you concur?"

Hogan replied, "Of course, son. If that's what you wish." There was a brief moment of static before Phoenix's voice came through again, urgent. "I have your word. They'll be safe?"

"You have my word," Hogan assured him. "And well done, Phoenix. Keep this up, and you'll be a Lt. Colonel before you know it."

## CHAPTER 14: THE BEAST RULES

### 2 YEARS LATER, 2048.

At the Bet Shemesh UN HQ, Tietan paced confidently before the Ten Kings, with Hogan standing to the side. “Thank you for your time, Kings. You’ve heard what I had to say,” Tietan said, his voice smooth and authoritative. “The decision is yours.”

Dimitry leaned forward. “I agree, to vanquish God once and for all, we must stand united—a single leader guiding us against the Two Deceivers, the 144,000, and their followers. I propose Tietan, who has ruled alongside us for one hour, become our leader—the King of Kings.”

The Kings nodded in unison. “As decreed, so it shall be,” Mao declared. In a synchronized movement, the Kings inserted their rings into a central panel. The panel glowed with an eerie light as they beat their chests. They stood and raised their fists in a unified salute. “Hail Tietan! Hail Tietan! Hail Tietan!” the Kings chanted, their voices reverberating with fervor. Tietan modestly raised his hand for them to stop. “I accept,” he said.

Muhammad responded, “How are you going to stop those two?” Tietan replied, “Abaddon, the Angel of Destruction, the master of war.” He turned to Hogan. “And find that Architect.”

In the dimly lit Qumran cave, Tietan reverently knelt before a shadowy figure whose serpentine silhouette flickered on the cave wall. “I know Abaddon is the only one who can stop the Two Temple dwellers. If the price for releasing him from the pit is leading the locusts against the people for five months, so be it. Send my friend, the prophet.” The voice from the shadows responded, “As you wish, my son.”

That night, at the edge of Jerusalem, two Militia soldiers stood guard where the city met the desert. Phoenix arrived, his vehicle stirring up a cloud of dust as he approached.

The soldiers saluted him, and he returned the gesture with a nod. "I've got the next shift, Captain," Phoenix declared.

"Sir? We've still got thirty minutes left," the Militia Captain protested.

"It is an order, soldier," Phoenix insisted. The captain saluted again, and he and his companion headed back to their vehicle, leaving Phoenix to take their position. Phoenix glanced at his watch, his gaze fixed on the barren expanse of the desert. "Come on, Abi, where are you?" he muttered under his breath.

A cloud of dust appeared on the horizon, steadily growing larger until it resolved into the shape of a truck. The truck stopped at the edge of the city. Abigail stepped out, her face lighting up as she saw Phoenix. Without hesitation, she threw herself into his arms. Phoenix buried his face in her hair, overwhelmed with relief. "I'm so happy to see you," he said, his voice trembling with emotion.

"You too," Abigail replied softly. Phoenix pulled back slightly to look at her. "You're okay? You're unharmed?"

"I'm okay," she assured him. Their reunion was abruptly interrupted by the sound of a gun being cocked. Phoenix and Abigail turned to see Hogan standing there, flanked by a squad of Militia men. The sight of his father brought a look of horror to Phoenix's face.

"Looks like the Jew finally wandered out of the desert," Hogan said coldly.

"Father!" Phoenix exclaimed, stepping protectively in front of Abigail. Hogan's gaze was unwavering as he instructed his men, "Take her." The Militia men moved forward, and Phoenix stood firm, blocking their path. "You promised she would be protected," Phoenix said, his voice filled with anguish.

Hogan responded, "I am protecting you from her. I'm disappointed you can't see the bigger picture. Your mother died at the hands of a religious fanatic like her—never forget that."

“I won’t let you take her,” Phoenix declared fiercely. Hogan stepped closer, speaking quietly with Phoenix. “Many truths have come to light, son. There are things you don’t know, and I won’t let you get caught in the crossfire. You’re the only family I have left. And as long as you stand by me, she’ll be safe. Let’s find a way to bring them all in.”

Phoenix stepped forward toward the Militia to free Abigail. Bang. The butt of a gun hit Phoenix, sending him out cold.

## CHAPTER 15: THE LOCUSTS

### 5 MONTHS LATER - JANUARY, 2049.

In the dimly lit underground bunker, the soft hum of computers filled the air, punctuated by the anxious tapping of keys. Manfred, sporting a scruffy beard, hunched over his screen, his eyes darting with urgency.

“According to my spies,” he said, glancing toward Josh and Rachel, “there’s a transfer request for Abigail to the Correction Facility. We’ll get more details once we breach their central communication network.”

At another computer, Josh yanked out a USB drive in frustration, his expression a mask of determination. “I’ve got to break her out of there,” he muttered, banging his fist on the desk.

Manfred looked up, concern creasing his brow. “You won’t do Abigail or Rachel any good by getting yourself caught—or worse. She’s only alive because of you. They’re going to use her as bait for you. We need to be smart about this.”

Just then, Odi—a tech-savvy man with bushy, Einstein-like hair and glasses that sat awkwardly on his nose—entered with a tray of coffee, trying to lighten the mood.

“Are they working yet?” he asked, setting the tray down with a hopeful grin.

“Patience, dear Rachel,” Manfred replied, his voice steady despite the tension in the room.

“It’s been months!” Josh interjected, his frustration bubbling over.

“So what’s a few minutes more? Those demonic locusts have been messing with our signals for nearly five months!” Manfred shot back, his eyes darting between the screens as if they might hold the answers.

Rachel sighed deeply, her heart heavy with worry. “An eternity, Manfred. My poor children. Matt was braver than I could ever be, and my Abi—suffering who knows what. I just wanted to protect them.”

Josh put an arm around her shoulders, offering comfort. “She’s strong. Her mother raised her well.”

But Rachel’s mind was racing. “I just... I can’t help but think of what Matt told me would happen before the end,” she murmured, her voice tinged with longing. “That Yeshua would come, and this is one big test to see who is ready to be with Him for eternity. What if He really is the Messiah—our Messiah? We know that the Kings lied about the Christians. What if He can save Abigail?”

Suddenly, the computer began to beep loudly, cutting through the weight of their conversation. Manfred’s eyes lit up with triumph as he pulled Josh and Rachel into an exuberant hug.

“I’m a genius!” he declared, his excitement bubbling over.

The room erupted with energy, the tension shifting to a renewed sense of hope.

“We’re in!” Manfred continued, beaming. “Our virus has taken down their central communication network and is still spreading. They’ll be forced to rely on old-fashioned radios now. We can seal off the Temple’s underground access and get to Abigail.”

Outside, in a decrepit house on the outskirts of Jerusalem, vehicles and drones converged. Militia soldiers, moving with precision, entered the rundown building, their eyes scanning for traps. Inside, the Sergeant and Hogan examined a radar monitor, frustration evident on their faces.

“The signal was coming from here, but it disappeared when our comms went down,” the Sergeant reported. “The last transmission was the 144,000’s coordinates in the desert and that Tietan wants the media on-site.”

“Could this be the cause?” Phoenix appeared, carrying an antenna and power supply.

“Check the perimeter,” Hogan ordered the Sergeant. “I’m heading to the desert. Phoenix, you’re in command. Just stay out of the locusts’ way.”

Phoenix nodded as he looked at the sonic readings. The Sergeant interrupted, “People have begged to die when stung by them. The radar had them heading towards this area tonight, so we have time.” Hogan exited.

Outside the decrepit house, Militia soldiers used sonic scanners to probe the ground. They discovered something alarming. Back in the underground bunker, Manfred signaled for silence, powering down the last computer. The flickering fluorescent light overhead cast eerie shadows. A scratching noise came from the secure door. Outside, excavators began digging up the ground. They uncovered the ceiling of a concrete bunker.

“I want them alive,” Phoenix commanded.

Inside the bunker, the Rebels scrambled to gather their essentials and set timers on their devices. They prepared to escape through a tunnel, but a sudden cave-in blocked their way.

Outside, the excavators finally broke through the ceiling. A low buzzing sound, like the distant roar of racing chariots, filled the air, cutting through the moment. Suddenly, a swarm of locusts descended upon the Militia, their stings inflicting sharp pain and sending soldiers into violent seizures. Chaos erupted as the swarm tore through the ranks, spreading terror and confusion in its wake.

Phoenix barely escaped, diving into an SUV and slamming the door behind him. A locust crashed against the vehicle’s bulletproof window with a sickening thud. The car’s camera zoomed in on the creature's grotesque features: a face disturbingly human, framed by a golden wreath, with lion-like teeth, long hair, and a scorpion-like tail.

Disoriented but aggressive, the locust struck the window with its tail, the force cracking the glass as venom dripped down its surface.

Phoenix remained unfazed by the locusts. Speaking into the radio, he barked, "What? The transfer has been denied again? By who?" His frustration mounted as he paused briefly, then snapped, "Okay, I'm on my way!"



## CHAPTER 16: GOOD EVIL, EVIL GOOD

Inside the dimly lit Militia Garrison's holding cell, Abigail huddled in a corner, cocooned in blankets and coats. Her eyes darted nervously, listening to the casual conversations of the Militia members as they went about their duties. Ahmad, among them, would occasionally shoot her a smirk, his gaze unsettlingly persistent.

One of the soldiers peeled off his shirt, leering at her with a crude grin. "Like what you see, sweetheart? It's been a while, hasn't it?" Abigail turned away, pulling the blanket over her head in a desperate attempt to shield herself. Ahmad unlocked the cell, and two men barged in, ripping the blanket away to reveal her handcuffs. Ahmad swaggered over, his tongue flicking lasciviously across her cheek, making Abigail recoil in disgust. Another soldier held her down, his grip firm and unrelenting.

"Get away from her!" Phoenix stormed in, his eyes blazing as he fixed Ahmad with a furious glare.

"Ah, Storm of Samaria," Ahmad sneered, "you can wait your turn."

Phoenix commanded, "Get away from her. Now."

Ahmad chuckled. "Haven't you heard? Anyone who's been with the Rebels either dies or learns some humility. You've been protecting her long enough. I know you're the one trying to transfer her, and it was denied. By guess who?"

As Phoenix looked around, clearly outnumbered three to one, he said, "Fine, let me through to get my watch."

In a swift, fierce move, Phoenix dislocated one soldier's arm and sent the other crashing to the ground. Ahmad quickly grabbed him in a headlock, while the soldier who had fallen got back up, pummeling Phoenix mercilessly. Abigail's desperate cries for help echoed through the garrison. "Help! Somebody help!"

Phoenix's own Militia team burst in, pulling the attackers off him. Blood streamed down Phoenix's face as he limped toward Ahmad, kicking him repeatedly in a surge of fury.

Moments later, Phoenix walked down the corridor with Abigail. "I'm so sorry," he murmured, his voice heavy with regret. "I'll get you somewhere safe while I sort out the rest."

In the distance, Ahmad stood at the exit, wiping the blood off his face with a cloth. Phoenix looked at Ahmad with pure hatred. "Any objections?"

Ahmad responded, "You don't have the clearance."

Phoenix pointed to his shoulder, displaying his rank. "I know who you are, but I still need to see the APPROVED transfer papers." Phoenix stepped closer to Ahmad, his voice a menacing whisper. "Listen to me. You want to tango with me and end up scrubbing vermin cells as a private?"

After hearing this, Ahmad cowered and backed off. Phoenix and Abigail continued to walk by while he covered her shivering shoulders. Ahmad barked, "Arrest them!"

The Garrison soldiers rushed in to arrest Phoenix, only to meet Phoenix's hardcore soldiers, who were more imposing. The Garrison soldiers backed down.

Phoenix pointed to the Garrison soldiers. "I haven't seen you around here before?"

One of the soldiers responded, "We're the third shift, just started today, Major." Realizing Phoenix's rank, the soldiers stood at attention.

"Okay then, you are forgiven. Now arrest that man," Phoenix ordered, pointing to Ahmad. "For disobeying orders. He is to be court-martialed. Understood?"

They handcuffed Ahmad and escorted him away.



## CHAPTER 17: THE 144,000 AND THE FLOOD

In the blistering heat of the desert, a helicopter thudded down onto a dusty mountain peak, its blades whipping up a frenzy of sand. Hogan and Tapper disembarked. Tapper, a pompous reporter with slicked-back hair and an air of self-importance, held a pair of binoculars in one hand and a two-way radio in the other. He motioned to his large team of reporters to follow the soldiers arriving in various vehicles.

Tapper adjusted his binoculars with exaggerated care, peering through them with an air of superiority. “Why aren’t they being stung?” he asked, frustration evident in his voice. “Is it those ugly tattoos on their foreheads?” Through the binoculars, the 144,000 Israelites moved serenely across the desert, their foreheads glowing faintly. They appeared untouched by the locusts swirling around them.

Hogan surveyed the area. “It doesn’t matter,” he said firmly. “We finally have them right where we want them. Move out!” Like a flood, the Militia trucks and media convoys closed in on them, cornering them against the desert mountains. They were trapped.

Meanwhile, Tapper’s eyes were drawn to his portable Temple news feed. Moses and Elijah stood at the Temple entrance with their hands raised. “You reap what you’ve sowed, fire for fire,” they intoned solemnly. “The Fifth Trumpet is over. Now, we release the Sixth of the Seven Trumpets. It will last one year, a month, a day, and an hour.” They pointed in the direction of the desert to the east. Elijah commanded, “Earth, we command you to help them.”

Just as a curtain of fire descended from the sky, narrowly missing them, they withdrew into the Temple courtyard. Abaddon, a towering man taller than Tietan, dressed in a black Imam Thawb, emerged untouched by the flames.

Suddenly, a massive earthquake shook the ground where Tapper and Hogan stood. They barely made it to the chopper, which struggled to rise against the turbulence.

Hogan watched in horror as the ground near the 144,000 cracked open, swallowing the flood of Militia and reporters. The earth then sealed itself. Remarkably, the 144,000 continued their march, their hands still raised in unwavering praise. The locusts were gone.

In the distance to the east, the Euphrates River belched thick, black smoke onto the land, accompanied by fiery flashes. Unlike the locusts, which flew, these creatures were smaller but swarmed in much larger numbers and were land-bound. The smoke spread over the land, darkening the horizon.

Hogan's alarm grew as he observed the dark surface advance. Tapper, concerned, said, "Network down." The pilot nodded. "Yes, nothing coming in or out."

"Back to Bet Shemesh. We must warn Tietan," Hogan ordered. The helicopter veered sharply.

Across the world, chaos and devastation unfolded as the darkness touched down. Streets were littered with dead bodies, burn holes in their skin. The small, firefly-like entities continued their rampage, spewing fire and brimstone from their mouths. Their tails sliced through skin like a hot knife through butter.

## CHAPTER 18: VIRUS ENDS

### 13 MONTHS LATER - FEBRUARY, 2050.

Inside the opulent Bet Shemesh UN interview room, Tapper sat across from Tietan. Papers and charts cluttered the polished mahogany table between them.

“Well, you are a man of war. It’s been thirteen months since the fire and brimstone virus swept the world,” Tapper reported. Tietan’s eyes briefly flashed red. “How many deaths?” he inquired.

“One in three,” Tapper responded.

“How many able to fight?” Tietan asked.

“Unknown,” Tapper sighed.

“And?” Tietan pressed, his gaze intense.

“Our top scientists report that the vaccines from Babylon have subdued the firestorm,” Tapper continued. “The communication network that the rebels destroyed has been restored. We’ve had round-the-clock coverage showing how we’ve brought the virus to its knees.”

Tietan’s fervor ignited. “Good,” he said passionately. “We will honor the fallen by defeating the one who unleashed it! Let the people hear it and be heartened!” Tapper nodded.

Meanwhile, in the dark corridors of the Correction Facility, Phoenix moved with a sense of purpose, holding a package under his arm. Accompanied by a room guard, a fat, sweaty man, he passed by cell after cell, each one filled with correction candidates whose eyes betrayed their fear and desperation. Phoenix stopped at an empty cell with Abigail’s scarf draped in the corner. He turned to the guard, irritated. “We meet weekly. Where is she?”

The guard responded sheepishly, "It's the female thing, you know." That seemed to calm Phoenix down. He entered and placed the package of food and treats next to her scarf. He gave the guard a knowing nod. Phoenix paused at the door. "Have you been taking good care of her?" The guard nodded.

"Make sure she gets it all. Understand?" Phoenix persisted. The guard nodded again. As Phoenix was about to exit, he took out a chocolate and handed it to him. "Before I forget. Give her this. It's her favorite." Phoenix exited.

The next day, Josh and Rachel, their faces concealed, cautiously hurried through the streets. They carefully avoided Militia patrols and CCTV cameras, their movements deliberate and stealthy. Reaching the entrance of an ancient sewage tunnel near the Temple, Josh and Rachel finally reunited with Manfred. They made their way in.

As they navigated through the dark tunnels, their flashlights the only source of light, Manfred said, "The Comms and network are down. You two go in and I'll stand guard." Manfred's eyes were steady, his voice firm. "It was the right call. This is about the movement, not any one of us. And Odi was there. Now, go get Abi, and let's finish this once and for all." Josh and Rachel switched to night-vision goggles and continued their way through.

Outside, a convoy of vehicles arrived, pulling up to the metal fence surrounding the Temple. Tietan, Hogan, and the Militia soldiers, along with Phoenix, all stepped out, armed. Tietan addressed them. "Gentlemen, tonight, it all ends!" Abaddon nodded to Tietan from the other side of the grounds. Tietan acknowledged him and turned to Hogan. "Get her. We need the bait. And bring Tapper; he needs to broadcast this."

Inside Abigail's cell at the Correction Facility, the same guard Phoenix had spoken with the previous night strapped an exhausted Abigail down. The package Phoenix left was ripped open, with the guard munching on the goodies and enjoying the sweets.

"He's a keeper," the guard said to Abigail with a mouth full of her food. He then turned to face Jeckle, an evil-looking man in a lab coat, preparing his equipment. The guard

continued, "We tried all night; she just wouldn't talk. Maybe you'll have better luck." He dropped a handful of Abigail's sweets on Jeckle's torture table as he exited.

Jeckle connected the electrical probes to her and pressed button "1." The lights in the cell flickered ominously, crackling with energy as her body convulsed violently. The straps were the only thing keeping her from levitating off the table. She passed out, the probes still smoking. Jeckle casually picked up a sweet, popped it into his mouth, and threw water on her. Slowly, she began to come around.

Jeckle's face remained impassive. "Honey, that was only level one. There are ten to go. I can make this much worse. I'm not about to let you ruin my perfect record. Tell me where your father is so I can go home to my wife." Jeckle pointed to his machine. "And you see this?" He pointed to a red button. "This explodes the nanoparticles in your blood with Wi-Fi frequency—BAM! It's pretty cool to see. So—" He adjusted his machine. "Do you have anything to tell me?" Abigail, still a little groggy, turned her head away. Jeckle sighed. "Okay, as you requested. But let's skip four and go directly to level six." Jeckle was excited but still expressionless. He was about to press "6."



## CHAPTER 19: ECHO OF BETRAYAL

Just then, a bomb exploded, and the wall behind Jeckle disintegrated into rubble. Josh and Rachel entered with masks, moving swiftly to release a groggy Abigail. Jeckle lay on the floor, disoriented, his ears ringing. Abigail's voice was barely a whisper.

"Mom... Dad?"

Tears rolled down Rachel's cheeks as they cut her free.

"We're here, sweetie. You're safe now."

Outside the Correction Facility, Hogan, Phoenix, and his team were making their way up the steps. Hogan's watch beeped urgently, and he reacted immediately.

"Phoenix, with me," he barked.

They headed inside with the Militia.

Hogan and Phoenix stormed into Abigail's cell, interrupting Jeckle's frantic attempts to salvage his machine. Phoenix looked around in horror at the broken torture straps and scattered probes littering the floor—a stark contrast to Abigail's room the night before. Without a word, he rushed out and stabbed Jeckle in the stomach, locking eyes with him as he twisted the blade. Jeckle gasped in pain.

The room's guard rushed in, holding Abigail's half-eaten chocolate bar. Phoenix turned and fired a shot that hit the hand holding the chocolate, then another into the guard's right kneecap, sending him crashing to the ground. Phoenix approached and finished him off with a cold stare.

Spinning around, Phoenix got in Hogan's face.

"You lied to me!" he shouted, fury blazing in his eyes.

The Militia ran in, but Hogan ignored Phoenix, gesturing for them to move quickly. He pointed to the hole in the wall, and the Militia entered the tunnel.

Hogan switched on the machine, muttering to himself,

"Tietan needs her, but I will be merciful..."

Just as he leaned in to press the red button, Phoenix fired, destroying the machine. Hogan turned, his expression unreadable.

"Very well," he said coolly. "You've made your decision. Tietan's, she is." He turned to the Militia standing by.

"Arrest Major Bates."

In swift action, they arrested Phoenix.

Meanwhile, in the tunnels, Manfred waved urgently from the exit. Josh, Rachel, and Abigail rushed toward him, their breaths coming in quick, panicked bursts.

"All clear. Let's go!" Manfred's voice cut through the chaos.

As they moved, gunfire erupted from deeper in the tunnel. Rachel spotted a soldier aiming at Abigail. In a split-second decision, she leaped in front of her daughter, taking the bullet meant for her. The impact caused her to collapse, blood seeping from her chest.

Manfred fired back at the attackers, causing the tunnel to collapse around them. Josh's heart shattered as he dropped to his knees beside Rachel, desperately trying to stop the bleeding, but it was no use. His voice cracked with anguish.

"My love!"

Rachel, her breathing shallow and labored, shook her head, gesturing for Josh to stop. He held her hand tightly. Abigail, overwhelmed with grief, clutched her mother. Rachel turned to Abigail, grabbing her hand.

"Matt was right you know," she whispered, her voice trembling. "Yeshua is the only way to eternal life, and I want to see you and—" She turned to Josh, squeezing his hand. "And you there. Surrender to Him before it's too late."

With her strength fading, Rachel looked upward, her final breath escaping as she whispered,

"YESHUA, forgive me."

She exhaled and died.

Josh kissed her hand, his face streaked with tears, while Abigail hugged her mother's lifeless body, her sobs echoing through the crumbling tunnel. Manfred's voice was soft but urgent.

"I'm so sorry, but we have to leave her here. There's nothing we can do."

Abigail responded sorrowfully,

"She's not here."

Moments later, a large stone near the Temple entrance shifted, and Manfred, Josh, and Abigail emerged, their faces pale and weary. The desperate cries of Phoenix cut through the air.

"Abi, ABI! Please help me!"

Phoenix's voice was filled with anguish. Abigail's heart pounded as she turned toward the alley from which the cry had come.

"Phoenix," she murmured.

"Abi, I need you, Abi!" Phoenix's pleas continued. Without hesitation, Abigail ran toward the source of the cries.

"Abi, no!" Josh shouted, but it was too late; she had already disappeared into the darkness.

"Abi, Abi," Phoenix's voice called out. Abigail ran down the alley, her eyes scanning for the source of Phoenix's voice. Phoenix persisted,

"Abi, where are you? Honey—"

Just then, Abigail rounded the corner and found herself face-to-face with the Militia and Hogan. Hogan held an AI voice changer to his mouth, his tone mockingly sweet.

"Honey, I have found you, my perfect sacrifice."

Abigail struggled fiercely against the grip of the Militia soldier who had seized her. Her pleas were desperate.

"No, please! Let me go!"

Manfred held Josh back as he saw Abigail exit the alley flanked by two soldiers, his own eyes full of tears.

## CHAPTER 20: TWO PROPHETS KILLED

### 1 MONTH LATER - MARCH, 2050.

The night was darker than usual. Tietan, Hogan, Dimitry, and Abaddon gathered outside the towering fence that encircled the Temple. A massive stream of fire erupted from the Temple entrance, pushing the militia back. Abaddon, with a touch of sarcasm, remarked,

“Too predictable.”

In a dramatic counterpoint, a vertical column of fire shot down from the heavens, orchestrated by Abaddon’s hands, melting the fence. Abaddon stepped forward, his laughter ringing out over the tumultuous night.

Hogan and Dimitry shielded themselves from the scorching heat, their skin reddening and blistering under the intense blaze. Tietan, undeterred by the flames, strode confidently through the fire, his confidence unwavering. Abaddon followed closely behind, dragging a figure with him.

Moses and Elijah emerged from the Temple’s entrance. The media, gathered in anticipation of the ultimate showdown, turned their cameras toward the prophets. Moses’s voice rang out with fervent authority.

“Repent for sacrificing to devils. Repent for leading people astray with your pharma. Repent for rejecting Yeshua!”

Abaddon directed the fire from the heavens toward the prophets. Moses and Elijah countered with their own torrents of fire from their mouths. The fire collided, shaking the Temple’s pillars and sending tremors through the ground. The fire subsided, and Tapper focused his camera on Tietan, who made a dramatic reveal. Abigail, battered and handcuffed, was paraded by Tietan in front of the live cameras and released between the prophets and Abaddon.

Tietan walked strutting,

“My followers!” he proclaimed, gesturing toward the Temple entrance and drawing attention to the altar behind Moses and Elijah. On the wood of the altar lay the flesh of a ram, with the fat and the inner parts separate. The ram’s head, with horns, rested on top.

“You’ve all witnessed the cruel, barbaric burnt offering sacrifices made by the Two Deceivers during their time among us,” Tietan declared, turning to the Prophets. “Step forward, Deceivers, and take one of your own—a gift, a peace offering.”

Moses and Elijah looked down at Abigail, who knelt with a look of desperate fear. The coat she wore fell open, revealing a bomb strapped to her body, the harsh reality of her predicament laid bare.

“It is time,” Moses said. “For the Seventh and final Trumpet. This will release seven bowls of God’s wrath. What has been written about us must now come to pass,” Elijah added, his voice somber. Moses and Elijah moved in unison towards Abigail.

“Now!” Tietan commanded. Abaddon leapt onto the entrance behind Moses and Elijah. With arms outstretched, torrents of fire descended, striking the prophets and knocking them to the ground. Their bodies smoldered, the heat so intense that reporters dared not approach. Though the prophets remained unburned, they were unmistakably dead. Abaddon approached the fallen figures, kicking each one forcefully. The Militia erupted into cheers, their voices raised in exultation.

Abigail’s eyes filled with tears as she gazed at the lifeless faces of Moses and Elijah. Abaddon dragged the bodies and tossed them before Tietan, who stood with arms raised in victory.

“Hail Tietan!” Abaddon declared, as Tapper’s camera broadcast the scene live.

“Hail Tietan! Hail Tietan!” chanted the Militia and the gathered crowd, their voices blending into a cacophony of adulation. Tietan addressed the gathering crowd and the cameras.

“The ones who brought the world to its knees for the past three and a half years are dead. And I’ve saved you. I am your savior, and I will never leave nor abandon you like the God of Heaven.”

Abaddon affirmed,

“Tietan is the true Messiah! Our one, true leader!”

The crowd responded with fervent chants.

“Hail Tietan! Hail Tietan!”

Tietan turned his gaze toward the Temple.

“Take three days to purify the Temple, and on the Sabbath, I will take possession of my new home.”

The sounds of animals from the Temple made Tietan clearly irritated.

“And free those helpless animals. No more sacrifices.”

As he left, he pointed toward Moses and Elijah.

“Leave their bodies where they are. Let them rot so that the world sees my glory.”

Televisions around the world broadcasted the lifeless forms of Moses and Elijah. In response, wild celebrations erupted as people danced in the streets, exchanged gifts, and embraced one another.

## CHAPTER 21: THE BEAST MORTALLY WOUNDED

Three and a half days later, the Temple loomed majestically against the morning sky. The streets gleamed with pristine clarity, except for the two bodies of the prophets lying starkly visible. Flags bearing Tietan's face fluttered proudly above.

With an air of triumphant grandeur, Tietan made his way up the Temple steps. He approached the bodies of Moses and Elijah with a smirk of disdain, delivering a cruel kick to Moses before standing over him, his foot planted on Moses' neck for a dramatic photo op. The crowd erupted into cheers.

Abaddon bowed deeply as Tietan approached. The two men embraced.

"Hail Tietan! Hail Tietan! Hail Tietan!" chanted the crowd. A few paces behind Tietan, Hogan surveyed with a wary eye. Into his radio, he barked orders, his voice edged with frustration.

"I don't care! Tietan demands ten groups of seven thousand for each parade to honor the Ten Kings! Just make it happen!" His voice was sharp and urgent. "Have they found Major Bates yet?" He paused. "That's not possible. Interrogate those holding him. Double Abigail's guards and keep searching."

Across Jerusalem, ten parades of seven thousand marched in disciplined formation, each with a different colored uniform and each parade waving flags proudly displaying Tietan's face in the center of the 10K "UN" flag. The streets were alive with celebration, flowers showering from every direction as people cheered.

Tietan stood on the top step of the Temple entrance. The crowds, fists in the air, chanted,

"Hail Tietan, Hail Tietan, Hail Tietan."

Tietan boldly addressed the people.



“Enlightened ones, my friends! I promise to lead us toward peace, prosperity, and happiness. My people deserve no less. Today marks—”

Suddenly, from the shadows of the Temple entrance, Josh emerged, wild-eyed and disheveled, wielding an ancient Jewish dagger. He lunged at Tietan, the blade slicing deeply across his neck. Blood sprayed from the wound as Tietan collapsed, his body lying lifeless on the ground. The Militia surged forward, tackling Josh with brutal force and dragging him away.

Doctors rushed to stop the bleeding, their faces filled with despair as they looked up at Abaddon, shaking their heads. Tietan’s wound was too grave—he was pale and lifeless. Abaddon, unwilling to accept it, pushed the doctors aside. He stood over Tietan and shouted,

“Tietan, you have been given the power of the Dragon. Get up! It is time to show them the true Messiah!”

Dark smoke enveloped Tietan as the doctors fled. A mysterious force sealed the wound with searing fire. Miraculously, Tietan stood with a smile, his neck now scarred. He raised his hands in triumph. The crowd, unable to believe their eyes, erupted into frenzied cheers, bowing and worshiping him.

Tapper shouted to the crowd,

“Who can stand against Tietan? He cannot be defeated! All Hail Tietan!”

The crowd continued to bow and worship unrestrained, cameras broadcasting the scene live with Picture-in-Picture of Moses and Elijah’s dead bodies. A thunderous voice echoed from the heavens,

“Come up here.”

Moses and Elijah stood, their bodies restored, and ascended into the clouds before vanishing.

The crowds stopped worshipping, their faces filled with confusion as panic began to spread. A violent earthquake followed, its tremors shaking the ground and causing a tenth of the city to collapse. Amid the devastation, one of the ten parade groups lay dead beneath the rubble. An eerie silence settled over the scene.

Meanwhile, at twilight, Phoenix secretly looked through a window of a second-story building adjacent to the Correction Facility. He saw battered Josh being dragged toward a half-sunken, crowded holding jail. As Josh was thrown in, he accidentally turned toward Mount Zion and witnessed the 144,000 ascend into the clouds before vanishing. No one else saw this.

Josh made his way through the crowded jail. Some were praying fervently, some chanting "Yeshua," others "Jesus," while some were curled up in despair. A short woman in her fifties, looking a little crazy, grabbed Josh's arm and pulled him lower.

"Hold on. Just three and a half more years. Yeshua will return!"

Phoenix, disguised, was tying his shoes outside the jail, near where Josh was. Phoenix whispered,

"Mr. Bates. Mr. Bates."

Josh looked around and noticed the voice coming from the main entrance, where Phoenix was tying his shoes. He yanked his arm away from the woman and pushed through the prisoners.

He arrived at the end of the jail, where Phoenix was still crouched, tying his shoes.

"Yes," Josh said.

Phoenix turned, made eye contact, and Josh was momentarily taken aback. Phoenix pleaded,

“I’m sorry, sir. I didn’t mean for anything to happen to Mrs. Bates and Abigail. You’ve got to believe me. I love Abi.”

Josh responded quickly,

“What do you want from me?”

Phoenix whispered,

“Tell her to hold on. I’ve got a plan to get you both out. Just don’t give up.”

Josh, surprised, said,

“I don’t know where she is.”

Phoenix replied,

“She’s in there with you, sir.”

Stunned, Josh quickly left, searching for her in the darkness and calling out,

“Abigail! Abigail!”

Tietan faced the trembling crowd.

“See how the cowards run in fear?” he declared, his voice dripping with disdain. Fire from Abaddon shot toward the spot where Moses and Elijah had disappeared. Tietan continued,

“Stay strong and courageous. Together, we will defeat Yeshua once and for all!”

Tietan strode across the Temple entrance.

“Unlike the story of Babel, where the people were divided by language, we are united. Together, we can achieve anything. But remember—”

Tietan's tone grew menacing.

"If you're not with me, you're against me. Those who refuse to worship me are dividers and enemies. They will be hunted down and beheaded, like these." He pointed toward the Correction Facility's outdoor holding cell in the distance.

"No more mercy, no exceptions. We must unite before Yeshua's return at Megiddo!"

Abaddon raised his arms, and lightning streaked across the sky in a dramatic display. He thrust his hands downward with finality. The Temple doors creaked open, revealing a colossal statue rising from the ground amidst swirling dark mist. The statue, though motionless, breathed with a malevolent presence and said,

"The mark is clear, on your right hand or forehead. His image, his name, or his number—666."

Fireworks erupted in a brilliant display of light conducted by Abaddon's hands. But this was interrupted by a streak of fire arcing through the sky, followed by a booming, resonant voice that echoed with divine authority. An angel's voice thundered,

"Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made heaven, the earth, the sea, and the fresh water."

The sky roared with thunder, punctuating the angel's declaration, and another streak of fire followed.

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication," declared the second angel, his voice a thunderous warning.

The heavens crackled with another resounding thunderclap as a third angel's voice sliced through the air.

“If any man worships the Beast and his image, and receives his mark, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation,” the third angel proclaimed.

A sonic boom echoed as the angel’s voice continued,

“They will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark.”

A solemn beat followed before the angel’s voice softened with a note of divine promise.

“Here is the patience of the saints: those who keep God’s commandments and the faith of Jesus.”

Abaddon stood at the entrance of the Temple, firing streams of flames toward the angels. He addressed the crowd, saying,

“Good, the entire world has heard their feeble threats. Now, worship Tietan, who was dead and is now alive. Give your life to him by taking his mark. The choice is yours.”

Across the world, Tietan’s reign unfolded with relentless and disturbing efficiency. Clinics and stores became hubs of desperation, their long queues stretching like serpentines of unease, all waiting to receive Tietan’s mark. The mark came in three forms only, placed either on their foreheads or right hands, never on the left. Some bore Tietan’s face, others simply displayed the name "TIETAN," and some bore the ominous number "666." Only those with the mark were able to purchase food.

On the central social media platform, heavily monitored by the Ten Kings, users flaunted their newly acquired marks with a perverse sense of pride. Pictures of marked individuals were posted with triumph and defiance, their statuses becoming a testament to their submission and conformity. The digital realm buzzed with images of the mark, a sign of loyalty and a way to showcase their alignment with Tietan’s oppressive rule.

In stark contrast, those who refused the mark faced brutal ostracism. They were violently ejected from stores, their belongings tossed after them like refuse. Militia checkpoints sprang up across the cities, handcuffing anyone who failed to bear the mark. The air thickened with terror and control. Many lashed out at loved ones who had not taken the mark, escorting them to the long lines.

Fast forward, TV report 1: Those with the mark began to develop painful sores, large painful boils over their faces, necks, and arms. Their suffering often led to outbursts of wrath against those who didn't have the mark, blaming them for their boils.

Fast forward, TV report 2: The entire ocean changed to a red substance, like the blood of a dead person—dark and clotty. Marine life died, dead whales and dolphins washed up on the beaches, causing panic.

Fast forward, TV report 3: All lakes, rivers, and fountains changed to blood. People spat it out.

Fast forward, TV report 4: The sun blazed with intensity. Sun flares scorched homes and people alike, including the patrolling militia.

Fast forward, TV report 5: The world was totally black.

## CHAPTER 22: SUMMON TO MEGIDDO

In the former Holy of Holies inside the Temple at the far end, the grand chamber was illuminated by the Temple Lampstand, casting eerie shadows that danced across the walls. Tietan sat on a lavish throne, his face a mask of absolute authority. Beside him, Abaddon stood like a silent sentinel, ever watchful and stoic.

The heavy doors of the Temple burst open with a resounding crash as Tapper stumbled in, his face etched with urgency.

“Hail Tietan! Hail—” he began, but he stopped abruptly as Tietan raised his hand. Tietan mused,

“The atmospheric conditions caused a world-wide EMP, disabling all electronics and networks?”

Tapper apprehensively nodded, wincing as he gnawed on his tongue, the sharp pain drawing blood that spilled over his lips. He thrust a tablet towards Abaddon, who received it with practiced ease and then handed it over to Tietan.

Tietan’s gaze remained fixed as he examined the tablet’s screen.

“So, the Euphrates is dried up?” he asked flatly.

“We have water stored.” He swiped through the device’s contents with a languid air.

“This makes it a lot easier for the Kings in the East to reach Megiddo on horseback,” he added dismissively. Tapper, still wincing from his painful mistake, ventured cautiously,

“But they’ll destroy those cities on the way.”

Tietan shrugged indifferently.

“They need to eat and play.” He turned to Abaddon. “I want one billion souls there—far more than those who gathered at Babel. We need a grand display of unified strength when we finally face Him.”

“What about the communication lines?” Tapper pressed. “How will we rally them?”

Tietan’s gaze was chillingly detached.

“Dragon protocol. In other words, the Dragon has already provided a way; all we need to do is use it.”

Without warning, Tietan threw his head back, and from his mouth emerged a grotesque, frog-like creature. Abaddon mirrored the gesture, and another similar creature appeared from him. The room seemed to shudder as a shadowy dragon materialized at Tietan’s left side, accompanied by yet another frog-like creature. The three creatures hovered ominously, their presence unsettling.

Tietan snapped forward.

“Summon the Kings of the earth and their armies to Megiddo,” he commanded. “Use signs and wonders if you must. The time for unity is now.”

With that, the three frog-like entities touched and soared off in different directions, their departure a foreboding signal of the chaos to come.

Under the moonlit sky, a vast desert stretched endlessly. Dust rose in swirling plumes as a massive militia advanced, their numbers swelling both on foot and horseback. The dry riverbed of the Euphrates was now nothing more than cracked earth.

In Jerusalem, chaos erupted as southern soldiers descended upon the city, plundering homes, tearing jewelry from civilians, and seizing young women. The once-peaceful streets were transformed into scenes of violence and despair.

Without warning, the ground beneath Jerusalem began to quake violently. Buildings trembled and cracked, splitting the city into three distinct parts. After a brief pause, the soldiers continued their rampage.



## CHAPTER 23: BABYLON REJECTS THE KINGS

The streets of Babylon—New York City in its most resplendent form—buzzed with an almost feverish energy. A few luxurious chariots drawn by prestigious horses, accompanied by the Militia, wove their way through the bustling, candle-lit streets. The occupants waved graciously to the throngs of people lining the streets, their faces alight with adoration.

“People hail Tietan!” the crowd chanted, their fervor unrestrained. They surged forward, eager to catch a glimpse of their revered leaders.

The chariots stopped at an outdoor venue that served as the centerpiece of the evening’s grand celebration. The air was charged with anticipation as the crowd gathered around the stage, their faces bathed in the bright lights of the venue.

The Kings exited their chariots. Dimitry was poised to address the gathering. As the murmurs subsided, all eyes turned expectantly towards him.

“Good evening, citizens of Babylon,” Dimitry’s voice rang out, smooth and authoritative. The initial ripple of polite applause followed, but it was tepid compared to the earlier cheers. A few people in the crowd exchanged puzzled glances and whispered among themselves.

“Where’s Tietan?” one onlooker murmured, confusion evident in his voice.

“Is Tietan going to speak?” another asked, her concern clear.

Dimitry pressed on.

“Tonight, we come together to celebrate nearly seven years of collective achievements since that sign first appeared in the sky. The prosperity and progress we’ve accomplished together are unparalleled!”

Despite his words, restlessness began to simmer within the crowd. Faces turned, scanning the horizon for the familiar figure of Tietan. Discontent spread like wildfire, and

a noticeable shift occurred as people began to drift away from the venue. Their earlier excitement had given way to visible disappointment.

Dimitry's speech faltered, drowned out by the sound of shuffling feet and murmured disinterest. The crowd's collective disillusionment transformed their initial fervor into muted apathy.

Inside the chariot, the mood was decidedly less festive. Mao, Muhammad, and Dimitry sat in silence, their faces etched with a mix of anger and frustration.

"No respect for their Kings?" Muhammad's voice cut through the silence, thick with irritation.

Mao's response was sharp and bitter.

"We've guided them through one crisis after another—ungrateful fools!"

Dimitry's eyes narrowed, his anger simmering.

"Babylon has turned its back on us. We'll return the favor. They'll regret crossing us."

As their chariot passed a brightly decorated storefront, a jovial store owner waved cheerfully at the passing crowd. His exuberant greeting seemed starkly out of place amidst the mounting tension.

"Evening, folks!" the store owner called out, his voice brimming with enthusiasm. "We've got everything you need for the festival!"

## CHAPTER 24: THE GAMBIT

The store owner's once-cheerful demeanor began to crumble as he spotted Phoenix approaching. His smile faltered, and he nervously displayed his marked right hand, a desperate gesture of compliance.

"I know who you are, Major Bates. I've seen you on TV."

Noting the scrutinizing gazes around them, Phoenix quickly ushered the store owner inside.

Inside the shop, the store owner fumbled with his register, extending a hand filled with cash towards Phoenix. After a moment's hesitation, Phoenix covered the store owner's hand with his own. With a deliberate motion, he lifted his hand to reveal a rosary.

The store owner recoiled in horror, dropping the rosary, which clattered to the floor.

"That is not mine," he stammered. "Such an item is forbidden."

Phoenix's eyes were steely, his tone unyielding.

"Very true. One could be arrested for possessing such an item."

"It's not mine," the store owner insisted, his voice trembling.

Phoenix shrugged nonchalantly and placed a Bible beside the register.

"Then who does this belong to?"

The store owner's eyes darted nervously.

"Do you know what happens if they find this?"

As the argument escalated, a few customers, sensing trouble, quickly exited the store.

Phoenix and the store owner arrived at the imposing Library of Celsius. The grand old building, with its towering columns and sprawling trees, stood as a silent sentinel of history. The store owner gestured towards it.

“In there. Odi is the gatekeeper. The recruiter.”

Inside the library, ornate shelves were lined with ancient volumes, each a testament to a bygone era. Odi, fulfilling his role as a janitor, was busy with his duties, his long sleeves concealing his hands. He leaned on a mop as Phoenix approached.

“They say the Book of Revelation contains prophecies of future events,” Phoenix began.

Odi did not reply and continued mopping.

Phoenix pressed on,

“Or current events. Depends on what you’re looking for.”

As Odi began to unpack a stack of books, Phoenix’s patience wore thin. He lunged at Odi, pressing him against a bookshelf with a knife poised at his throat.

“Where’s Manfred?”

Odi’s response was calm and somewhat mocking.

“I’m scared. Don’t kill me. Or make it quick.”

Defiantly, Odi revealed his right hand, unmarred and untouched by the mark. After a tense moment, Phoenix eased off, shoving Odi into a secluded cubicle and slowly retracting his knife. With a deliberate motion, Phoenix peeled away his bandage to reveal the ominous “666” etched into his skin.

Odi nodded knowingly, then looked surprised as Phoenix removed the mark with his fingernails.

“That’s not how that works,” he said, watching in disbelief as Phoenix removed the last traces of it.

“I needed to know if I could trust you,” Phoenix explained, his voice steady.

Odi was stunned.

“They’ll kill you for this.”

“What I thought was love was just a lie,” Phoenix said softly. “I see now that true love is found with Yeshua’s people. I need to meet Him.”

Odi’s eyes glistened with tears as he looked up at Phoenix.

“She prayed for you daily since you saved her.”

With trembling hands, Odi pulled out his wallet, showing Phoenix a picture of his wife—the same pregnant woman Phoenix had rescued in Jerusalem. Another photo showed Odi, his wife, and a baby.

“This was the last picture before Yeshua took them,” Odi said, his voice choked with emotion. “I was angry at first, but then I realized He was merciful to take them when He did.”

Odi carefully returned the photo to his wallet.

“I’ll take you to Manfred. He can use your skills and access. That’s why you came, didn’t you?”

Phoenix nodded.

Odi continued,

“But be warned—he won’t see you unless you bring him something of value.”

Phoenix replied,

“I have something.”

## CHAPTER 25: THE SURFACE OF UNITY

In the dimly lit office of the Militia Headquarters in Babylon, Hogan sat hunched over his desk, his brow creased in concentration. The name "TIETAN" was embossed across his forehead. He held a large brochure on the upcoming Babylon Festival. The quiet of the room was broken only by the flipping of pages.

A sudden knock on the door drew Hogan out of his intense focus. Without looking up, he called out, his voice clipped, "Enter."

The door creaked open, and Phoenix stepped into the room. His presence was marked by an air of tension, but he carried himself with calm determination.

"Father," he said softly, the word carrying a mixture of reverence and weariness.

Hogan completely ignored him and continued reading the brochure.

"Sorry, you must be mistaken. My son died three years ago."

The disdain in his voice was palpable.

Phoenix took a seat across from Hogan's desk, his posture stiff as he waited for his father's full attention. Hogan's eyes remained glued to the brochure, his concentration seemingly unshaken.

Phoenix said coldly, "I wonder how Mom would have reacted to hearing that."

That pushed Hogan's buttons, causing him to grow angrier. He looked up and stared at Phoenix, eye to eye.

"How dare you?" Hogan said forcefully.

"I'm sorry," Phoenix began, his voice laden with a mixture of sincerity and sarcasm.

"Sorry for hunting you down as if you were a wild animal. Sorry for not trusting you, for

ignoring the fact that you've been fighting alongside me against the rebels. So, where have you been all this time?"

"Glad you asked," Phoenix continued. "But what is the one thing Tietan wants above all?"

Hogan's lips curled into a self-satisfied smile.

"Unity. Loyalty."

Phoenix leaned forward, his eyes narrowing.

"The greatest of these is unity. And as long as Manfred and his rebels are out there, he is unable to achieve complete unity." He let the statement hang in the air, then added, "And you're no closer to catching them."

He paused, rising from his seat with a sense of purpose. Hogan's gaze followed him.

Phoenix continued, "What if I told you I've spent the last few years learning how to get close to Manfred? I can help end this disunity once and for all. I can bring you the leader of the rebel movement."

Hogan responded sarcastically, "I suppose you want me to release Abigail as a reward?"

Phoenix said honestly, "That would be nice! But I need something better. I want my father back and to become Lieutenant Colonel."

Hogan's demeanor shifted from hostility to something softer and more contemplative. He stood and walked around the desk, pulling Phoenix into a brief but heartfelt embrace. When he pulled back, his hands rested on Phoenix's shoulders with a firm, reassuring grip.

"I knew you'd come back to me, son," Hogan said, his voice tinged with emotion. "Your mother would have cried to see us reunited."



Hogan's gaze fell on Phoenix's bandaged hand, his brow furrowing in concern.

"Your mark... it's infected?"

Phoenix winced as Hogan gently touched the mark on his hand.

Phoenix added, "There's one thing. I can't get close to Manfred without offering something he needs. It's a quid pro quo."

Hogan's expression grew thoughtful.

"I can't give you Josh," he said after a moment's pause. "He's the main attraction for the upcoming Babylon Festival." He made a dismissive gesture with his hand. "The one who tried to behead Tietan gets beheaded. Punny or ironic, I never can tell the difference."

Phoenix's eyes gleamed with determination.

"I suppose if we had the dynamic duo—Josh and Manfred—then—"

Hogan's interest was piqued, a small smile tugging at the corners of his mouth.

"Then you'll get the Lieutenant Colonel status you've always wanted."

Phoenix's mind was already racing with possibilities. He reached for a map he had brought with him.

"You did say that you catch more ants with honey than with vinegar?"

Hogan nodded in agreement, and together they huddled over the map as they began to strategize.

## CHAPTER 26: LOYALTY QUESTIONED

The prison's cell block was a shadowy realm, where flickering lights struggled against the encroaching darkness. Distant clanging sounds echoed like ghosts in the night, a harsh reminder of the place's grim purpose. Guards clad in tactical gear patrolled the narrow corridor, their footsteps muted against the cold, unforgiving concrete floor. Phoenix strode in with a burning conviction that set him apart from the soldiers around him.

He stood in front of the control room's reinforced glass window. The Prison Warden, a stern man with a number "666" tattooed on his right hand, looked up with a mixture of surprise and trepidation. Phoenix slammed his fist on the counter, the sound reverberating through the air like thunder.

"Release Abigail. Now."

The Warden frowned, shaking his head.

"You don't have the authority to—"

"I'm not asking," Phoenix interrupted, his voice as cold as steel. "I'm ordering. Hogan's orders. Open her cell, or you'll regret it."

The tension crackled between them, thick as fog. The Warden hesitated, clearly intimidated by Phoenix's commanding presence. With a weary sigh, he relented.

"You do know she's one of those rebel leaders?" he said, a note of warning lacing his voice.

Phoenix's eyes narrowed, unyielding.

"I know exactly who she is."

With a series of clinks and clatters, the Warden began the laborious process of unlocking the cell doors. At the end of the block, the heavy door creaked open,

revealing Abigail. Her face was pale, and as her wide eyes met Phoenix's, tears of joy glistened in their depths.

"Phoenix!" she cried, her voice breaking with emotion.

She rushed toward him, enveloping him in a desperate embrace. Phoenix wrapped his arms around her, the stern facade he wore softening as he buried his face in her shoulder.

"I'm here. I've got you," he whispered, a resolve settling in his heart. "I'm one of you now."

Abigail pulled back slightly, her hands resting on his shoulders. Her expression was a mix of joy and disbelief, as if she couldn't quite comprehend the miracle unfolding before her.

"I knew you wouldn't leave me here. I knew you'd come," she said, her voice thick with gratitude.

Phoenix met her gaze, his heart swelling with unspoken promises.

"I promised I would. We're getting out of here, together."

As they began to move toward the exit, Abigail looked up at him, her expression shimmering with love and hope. But Phoenix's thoughts were momentarily drawn to the Militia around them. He took a deep breath,

"We don't have much time," he called to the soldiers. "Move out!"

With his words, the soldiers sprang into action, following their orders with mechanical precision. He turned to Abigail and secretly whispered,

"Buying us time. I'm sending them to the other side of town."

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Sometime later, the sun hung low in the sky, casting long, slanting shadows across the cracked pavement of the Babylon Abandoned Warehouse. The same group of Militia soldiers gathered around a high-tech command van parked nearby, the tension in the air palpable as they prepared for their next move.

Inside the van, Hogan surveyed the screens before him. Surrounded by a group of technicians, he focused intently on the movements displayed on the monitors. A female silhouette glowed as it entered an underground room, and Hogan's eyes gleamed with a mixture of admiration and contempt.

"Love technology," he mused, his voice low and gravelly. "We would never have been able to track them if they didn't have those nanoparticles."

The technicians nod, their faces illuminated by the glow of the screens.

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Meanwhile, in the Babylon Underground Bunker, Manfred paced furiously, his thin frame vibrating with tension. The air hummed with the clacking of keyboards and the glow of flickering screens as his rebels worked feverishly.

The rickety old elevator creaked and groaned as it descended, finally shuddering to a halt. The doors slid open to reveal Odi and Abigail stepping out, their arrival a stark contrast to the bunker's bleak interior.

Manfred's face brightened with a mixture of relief and joy as he saw Abigail. He rushed over and enveloped her in a tight embrace, his frazzled nerves easing momentarily.

He pulled back to look at her.

"I can see it now—Yeshua's touch!" Manfred exclaimed, his voice a blend of awe and excitement. "You've crossed over."

He paused, catching his breath before adding,

"Me too!"

As the words left his mouth, Phoenix emerged from the elevator behind them. The atmosphere in the room shifted palpably. The rebels and Manfred's eyes widened with surprise and unease as they took in Phoenix's imposing figure.

Abigail, noticing the growing tension, quickly turned to Manfred.

"It's okay," she said, trying to be reassuring. "Phoenix saved me. He has a plan to get my father out too."

Manfred's relief was short-lived as panic set in. His eyes darted around wildly, realizing the gravity of their situation.

"It's a trap—they're leading them to us!" he shouted, his voice cracking with fear.

Before anyone could react, the blaring sound of a perimeter alarm filled the room. Manfred spun around, desperately trying to locate the source. Abigail and Odi turned their attention to Phoenix, who raised his hands in a gesture of desperation.

"It's not me, I swear. I risked everything to bring you here," he pleaded urgently.

Without warning, the entrance of the bunker exploded in a thunderous roar. Dust and debris surged into the room, obscuring everything in a thick, choking cloud. Through the smoke, the Militia forces stormed in, their weapons raised and ready for combat.

The rebels, caught entirely off-guard, were thrown into disarray. The once orderly bunker became a battlefield, the air thick with the acrid smell of gunpowder and the cacophony of shouting voices. Dust and smoke billowed into the room as the Militia forces stormed in, weapons raised.

Manfred's face turned a ghastly shade of white as he saw the Militia advancing. He turned to Phoenix, his voice barely audible over the chaos.

"Take him down!" he shouted.

Without hesitation, the rebels surged toward Phoenix. They tackled him to the ground, their numbers overwhelming him. A few began kicking him mercilessly while he struggled against their relentless assault. Despite his best efforts, Phoenix was quickly subdued by the sheer force of their attack.

Abigail's anguished cry cut through the tumult.

"Phoenix!"

Just then, Hogan made his entrance.

"Secure it!" Hogan ordered his men, his voice slicing through the clamor.

Hogan's men moved with precise efficiency, pushing through the chaos and quickly subduing the remaining rebels. Handcuffing Manfred, Odi, and Abigail, their disciplined actions contrasted sharply with the earlier confusion, swiftly bringing the situation under control.

As the Militia released the battered Phoenix, Hogan's eyes immediately focused on Phoenix's unmarked hand and pondered. Then he approached Phoenix with a smile and a nod of approval, patting him on the back.

"Well done, son!" Hogan said, his tone a mix of pride and satisfaction. "The hand—a brilliant trick to earn their trust. And of course, you knew we tracked Abigail's nanoparticles."

Odi, his face a mask of realization, said,

"The vaccines."

Hogan's smile widened with smug satisfaction.

"Of course."

Abigail, her face a picture of shock and betrayal, turned to Phoenix. Her eyes were filled with the deep pain of being deceived. As the Militia started escorting the rebels out, Phoenix stepped toward Hogan with his hands out.

“Dad, it’s too late. I’ve crossed over.”

The ground started to shake uncontrollably. Hogan and the Militia hastened to get out while grabbing Phoenix.

Phoenix whispered, “The seventh and final bowl of God’s wrath is being poured out.”

## CHAPTER 27: THE FINAL BOWL

Earthquakes rippled across the world. In China, bridges collapsed into rivers below, sending waves crashing against nearby villages. In Panama, the land sunk abruptly, creating a stark divide between North and South America. Mediterranean islands vanished beneath rising sea waters, and continents ground against each other, merging into a single landmass—Pangea Ultima.

Atop the semi-Mount Megiddo, Tietan lounged on a newly constructed throne. He looked up.

“Is that the best you can do?” he scoffed.

“Coward—”

Abaddon stood nearby, his hands raised as he summoned fire from the sky. Shards of light pierced the dark heavens, illuminating the devastation wrought by the earthquakes. Half the mountain had sheared off, filling the valley below. The battlefield cast an eerie glow on the massive military forces gathered, extending as far as the eye could see.

“Embrace your destiny!” Abaddon’s voice rang out. “Let your fear drive your fury!”

In a bizarre display of bravado, soldiers stood defiantly, pulling down their pants and mooning the sky. Abaddon turned to Tietan.

“They’re united.”

Thunder rumbled overhead in response, accompanied by great hailstones the size of footballs, falling on everyone except Tietan and Abaddon, who were protected by Abaddon’s fire shield. The hail smashed through buildings and bunkers alike. People scrambled for cover, their cries of desperation drowned out by the deafening impact of hail against stone.



The carnage was relentless. Some ran for cover, losing limbs to the unyielding hail. Even in their agony, they took time to curse God with desperate gestures.

## CHAPTER 28: BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION

Later at the Babylon Festival, a team of workers moved swiftly and purposefully, repairing the damage left by the recent hailstorm. It wasn't as intense as at Megiddo. Babylon's bright festival banners, emblazoned with Tietan's face, waved proudly. The city was illuminated with millions of candles of diverse sizes.

Before the stage, a sea of spectators gathered, their excitement undiminished by the storm's aftermath. Long dining tables, weighed down with lavish food and drink, offered a stark contrast to a more sinister display. Nearby, a table labeled "BABYLON'S SPECIALITY – BLOOD OF THE 'SAINTS'" stood ominously.

The crimson liquid in the glasses was consumed with unsettling casualness, even by children, who raised their drinks in toasts to Tietan's image. Drums and instruments rose slowly to a crescendo, drawing people to the stage, where five guillotines awaited, with people already in the headstocks.

Hogan limped onto the stage with a non-electric megaphone in his hand. People gathered around the stage, eager for the main event. "For our main event," he announced, his voice ringing through the night, "we present the last of the Rebels: Manfred the leader, Odi the Recruiter, Josh the Chief Temple Architect, the Temple herald Abigail, and—" He hesitated, his voice catching slightly. "—her lover, Phoenix."

The crowd responded with a unified roar as the executor, a large man dressed in black, walked past, raising the head of each condemned person. The crowd chanted in unison: "CHOP! CHOP! CHOP!"

Hogan raised his hand to silence the uproar, and the crowd fell into expectant silence, eagerly awaiting the spectacle. Hogan continued, "As is the tradition," he turned to those in the headstocks, "Any final departing words of repentance?"

Odi, in a trance-like state, declared loudly, “The Lord says, ‘Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. Babylon is fallen!’”

Phoenix struggled to raise his head and keep it up. “There is only One God worthy of worship!” he declared. “No other! Those without Tietan’s mark, there is still time for you!”

The executioner, showing no patience for Phoenix’s defiance, struck him in the face with the butt of his gun. Blood streamed from Phoenix’s nose, but he remained steadfast. “There is only one way to be free,” he continued, his voice steady despite the pain. “Accept Yeshua as your Lord and Savior and be beheaded for Him! HAIL YESHUA!”

Abigail joined in. “Hail Yeshua!” Odi, Manfred, and Josh followed suit. “Hail Yeshua!”

The crowd’s response was swift and violent. Objects flew through the air, landing on the stage. “Away with them! AWAY WITH THEM!” they chanted, their voices rising in a frenzied crescendo.

Hogan’s eyes, filled with tears, closed for a moment. The crowd’s unrest continued to grow. Phoenix raised his head and made eye contact with his father, mouthing something to him. “Thank you for letting me go.” The executioner urged Hogan to give the signal. Phoenix continued, “I love you.” He struggled to keep his head up.

A tear rolled down Hogan’s cheek as he closed his eyes and slowly nodded to the executioner. The guillotine blades fell with a decisive swoop, and the crowd erupted into thunderous applause, their cheers echoing through the city.

Meanwhile, in the heart of Babylon, the Ten Kings advanced, their faces hardened, leading their relentless Militia, made up of modernized WWI tanks. The tanks rumbled through the streets, their powerful treads crushing everything in their path. Explosions rocked the air, sending debris and flames spiraling skyward. Screens shattered,

buildings crumbled, and smoke and ash billowed into the night sky. The city was ablaze with fire.

Amidst the destruction, Hogan struggled to his feet, a solitary figure among the wreckage of the festival stage. Each step was a painful ordeal, his twisted knee making the journey excruciating. He paused to look back at the vaporized guillotine where Phoenix had been.

From the outskirts of Babylon, Dimitry, Muhammad, and Mao observed the destruction. Babylon, once a symbol of power and opulence, now lay in ruins. Dimitry nodded. "Pride comes before destruction." Muhammad's voice was a harsh whisper. "That great city destroyed in a single hour!" Mao nodded gravely. "It's for the greater good."

Dimitry's gaze remained fixed on the burning cityscape, his eyes reflecting the flames. "We have conquered all. Our greatest and final conquest lies ahead: defeating God Himself." Muhammad's response was curt. "Now, off to Israel."

## CHAPTER 29: ARMAGEDDON

The night atop Mount Megiddo was thick with tension as Tietan stood imposingly before the gathered forces. By his side were the Ten Kings, Abaddon, and Hogan. Tietan's arms were outstretched, his voice carrying over the vast assembly.

"Today, our seven-year journey ends!" he declared. "The God of Destruction has tried to bring us to our knees, but we are unified and refuse to bow! The time is now! The final battle is upon us!" Tietan turned to face the heavens in total arrogant defiance. "Face us, coward, if you dare!" The crowd below erupted into frenzied cheers, their voices merging into a thunderous chant.

"HAIL TIETAN! HAIL TIETAN!" they roared, their fervor echoing through the night. With a dramatic sweep, Tietan turned to face the North. All, poised with their hi-tech bows and arrows, mirrored his readiness for the coming confrontation. On the horizon, a brilliant light began to manifest, growing steadily brighter as it drew nearer.

At the base of the mountain, the Militia prepared for the impending clash. Weapons were drawn, and war horses snorted impatiently, their restless energy reflecting the brewing storm of battle. As dawn approached, the sky remained dark and heavily overcast.

In the upper atmosphere, a blinding radiance heralded the arrival of YESHUA. Adorned with many crowns and draped in a robe stained with blood, His face remained hidden by divine brilliance. Across His garment and thigh were the words: "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Following Him was a vast multitude, riding on white horses and clad in pure white linen. Among them were familiar figures: Josh, Matt, Rachel, Odi, his wife, Manfred, Abigail, and Phoenix, alongside Sarah, Phoenix's mother, and a seemingly endless line of followers.

A mighty Angel stood in the sun, silhouetted by his brilliance. His voice, thunderous and commanding, called out, "Come, birds and animals! Gather for the great feast of God. You'll eat the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses, and their riders. All people, both free and slave, small and great."

Across northern Israel, including Mount Megiddo, waves of birds and beasts assembled around the outskirts of the mountain and region, surrounding the Militia forces with a sense of impending doom. Fiery boulders were hurled toward Yeshua, but He remained calm. Opening His mouth, a flaming sword emerged, slicing through the air with divine precision. The boulders exploded mid-flight, turning into clouds of smoke. The sword began cutting down the Militia gathered, causing them unwillingly to drop to their knees. Hogan, his gaze fixed in astonishment, looked up at the sky. His eyes fell upon his son and Sarah, a mix of shock and sorrow etched on his face.

Abaddon's voice bellowed, "FIRE!" The remaining Militia released a volley of fiery arrows toward Yeshua and His followers, but the arrows disintegrated into nothingness before they could reach their targets.

On the mountaintop, Hogan's eyes, filled with smoldering fury, turned toward Tietan. He secretly drew his sword, prepared to strike Tietan. Abaddon's casual wave of his hand caused Hogan to collapse. Abaddon finished him off with a foot to the neck.

Tietan aimed his bow at Yeshua, but as Yeshua drew closer, His radiant presence knocked Tietan's bow from his hand, sending it crashing to the ground.

Now Abaddon collapsed under the weight of Yeshua's divine power, his legs buckling under the pressure, forcing him to kneel. The voice of an Angel echoed, "Every knee shall bow."

From the heavens, Archangel Michael, towering and majestic, descended swiftly and seized Tietan in one powerful hand. Michael's gaze remained unyielding as Tietan struggled defiantly. Michael then turned toward Abaddon.

“Michael. I stood with you,” Abaddon declared with arrogance.

“You made your choice,” Michael replied, his voice carrying a finality that allowed no argument. With unmatched strength, Michael seized Abaddon and carried them both away. Yeshua’s presence was so overwhelming that it caused the blood of the Militia to pour from their eyes, ears, and mouths, turning the ground into a flowing crimson.

The blood surged, flowing into the Megiddo and Jordan rivers, rising to a height of one and a half meters.

The birds and animals that assembled now descended upon the fallen, feasting on the remains.

Yeshua descended upon the Mount of Olives with a blinding brilliance, so intense it illuminated the broken city of Jerusalem. The Mount trembled violently beneath the weight of His arrival. The earth cracked and split, creating a north-to-south chasm between the mount and the city. Additionally, the Mount of Olives split down the middle, east to west, causing part of the mountain to shift north and part to shift south. The split extended from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, and started to drain the Dead Sea.

Those Militia forces who had specifically come against Jerusalem knelt like statues, unable to move as their bodies began to melt away like wax in a furnace. Their eyes dissolved within their sockets, and their tongues within their mouths. What had once been a formidable army was reduced to haunting remnants, consumed by the brilliance of Yeshua’s light.

The Dead Sea, now empty of water, revealed a horrifying lake of fire. Its flames reached toward the sky, casting a glow over the land. Michael descended with Tietan and Abaddon, casting them alive into the searing inferno.

## CHAPTER 30: ONLY THE BEGINNING

**OCTOBER, 2053.**

The first light of the new day spread across the horizon—the earth’s Sabbath and the one-thousand-year reign of Christ.

The Prophet Daniel, now an elderly figure with a beard of wisdom, stepped forward. Behind him stood the resurrected Rebels in white glowing robes.

The vast assembly before him consisted of those who had not gathered against him at Megiddo. It was a mixed crowd—those marked with Tietan’s mark and those who had remained unmarked.

Daniel surveyed them with a solemn gaze, a look of peace settling over his features.

“Now the sacrificial lamb, God's Son Yeshua, reigns as the Lion of Judah,” Daniel declared, his voice resonating with authority. “Justice, mercy, and grace be multiplied to you all for the next thousand years. And at the end, Judgment Day.”

He let the weight of his words hang in the air before continuing. “But now, for forty-five days, the Earth must be cleansed.”

Phoenix, now clothed in a radiant white robe, placed a comforting hand on Matt’s shoulder. The gesture spoke of gratitude and solidarity. Matt, gazing toward the horizon, reflected the hopeful glow of the new day.

“This is only the beginning.”

**THE END**



# CHRONICLES OF THE FINAL DAY

In 2046, Earth hangs in the balance—caught between destruction and renewal. The prophesied apocalypse from the Book of Revelation has unleashed chaos, and Major Phoenix Bates finds himself torn between duty and love. Under a one-world government ruled by ten kings, only a few brave Christians and Jewish rebels dare to defy the regime. Five seals have already been broken; the sixth is imminent, and the seventh will unleash a seven-year tribulation from God. The first half brings the terrifying plagues of the six trumpets, leading to the second half, which will release the seventh trumpet, that is, the seven bowls of God's Wrath.

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