



THE END

T H E B O O K

THE THIRD WOE

PART SIX

J. L. ROBB

THE END

THE BOOK

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J.L. ROBB

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OTHER BOOKS BY JL ROBB:

- The End Part One: And Then The End Will Come
The End Part Two: You Have Been Warned
The End Part Three: Visions and Dreams
The End Part Four: The Disappearance
The End Part Five: The Two Witnesses

FOREWORD

“They will be divided, father against son and son against father,
mother against daughter and daughter against mother...”

Luke 12:53

This prediction in the New Testament of the Christian Bible foretells a time in which the dearest of loved ones will turn on one another, fueled by hatred borne of beliefs. Some of those beliefs will be based in truth and light; others, by lies and darkness.

The End Times is a popular subject among filmmakers and authors, and the blockbusting accounts are frightening, to be sure. But the Biblical account of the End Times, while not often the approach taken by screenwriters and authors, is truly terrifying. The End of Days is foretold throughout the Bible; in the New Testament, readers learn more about how events will unfold and in the Book of Revelation, the full import and terror – of Good vs. Evil - are revealed.

In this sixth book in JL Robb’s *The End: The Book Series*, atheist-turned-believer Jeffrey Ross confronts and battles Islamic terror in the Bible Belt of the United States, where the roots of Christian faith run deep. While we all like to believe that we know the outcome of the coming war, the battles that lead to that war are not guaranteed. Will Jeffrey Ross and his band of believers survive this wicked wave of terror?

Are friends turning against friends, children turning against parents and parents turning against their children? Is the world in disarray?

Robb takes us on a wild ride of faith and doubt, courage and fear, in his newest book in this gripping 7-book series. Worth a read, and worth considering: where do you stand on the battlefield?

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NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

THE END: THE BOOK

Part Six

The Third Woe

THE END: THE BOOK Series is a fictional account of the predicted apocalypse as outlined in the prophetic books of the Bible. Several readers have asked me, “Is this book true?”

It is true that the Biblical end will happen, but I have written this series as a counter-weight to the apocalyptic fiction coming out of Hollywood, like *Armageddon* and *2012*, that fail to include God and His role in this approaching war of good vs. evil that was predicted 2,700 years ago.

Any similarities between things that are occurring now and things written in this series are purely coincidental. It would be impossible to write a true account of the Biblically described End Times.

The Third Woe is the sixth book of the seven-book series and presents four of the final culminations of God’s wrath on a decadent mankind. The Third Woe begins with a blast of a trumpet and ushers in the final devastation of God’s Great Wrath when the world population rebels against the belief in God and pursues its own idols and pleasures, a world of few rules.

*“Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together
against the Lord and against his anointed...”*

Psalms 2:1-2

According to scripture, mankind has rebelled against God since the Garden of Eden and will continue to do so until the final chapter closes after the completion of the Third Woe and the world war at Armageddon.

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet of Revelation, when seven angels are each given a bowl of judgment, all the world will hear the blast and look skyward in wonder and great fear. Each bowl, when emptied on Earth, is the cause of great destruction and calamity. The horror brings many to God and the forgiveness of Christ, as trauma and tragedy often do; but for most, the rebellion continues.

For those living through these times, it will not be pretty.

What would you do if you woke up one morning, turned on the news and found out the often-predicted End really was near? This time the story was true, and there was no escape. What would you do? Where would you hide? Could you somehow survive; and if so, what then? Would you fall in love? Take the kids to ballet lessons?

I hope you enjoy reading *The Third Woe* as much as I enjoyed writing it for you and for the glory of God and his only Son, Jesus the Christ. Through Jesus, you can escape this tragedy and live again. At one time, I was not a believer. Then I bought a Bible and read it.

J.L. Robb is an author and writer with a Bachelor of Science in Zoology, North Carolina State University. A U.S. Navy Veteran, Robb lives in the Bible Belt with his Great Dane and a kitty named Glock. Robb is a member of Civitan International, Friends of Gideons and The American Legion.

We support our Veterans!

DEDICATION

I dedicate *The End: The Book Series* to God and His Holy Son who saved my life.

A special thanks to my daughter, Erica. She inspired me to write this series and has worked diligently ensuring that the series would be a success, designing book covers, web pages and numerous video presentations.

www.yoniartanddesign.com

“The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.”

Revelation 11:14

LIST OF MAIN CHARACTERS:
ALPHABETICAL BY FIRST NAME

Abe the Bartender: General Manager and bartender at *The Divide Disco & Café*.

Aboud Rehza: Also known as Vinny. In charge of U.S. Operations for Jihad's Warriors. Twin brother of Mohammed Rehza who is in charge of European operations.

Aludra: Sister of Muhammed Khalid, Jihad's Warrior in charge of Afghanistan and Pakistan. She and her brother live in the Korengal Valley of Death, Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

Bill "Wild Willy" Briggs: Master of Nanotechnology. Ex-Navy, CIA and Homeland Security. Works closely with Israel's Mossad.

Bubba Haskins: Immigrated to U.S. after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Real name is Mahmud. Owner of large minority Heating and Air Conditioning company. Married to Jill.

Chad "Chadbo" Myers: Assistant Director, Near Earth Object and Heliospheric Laboratory, Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD.

Chuck Hutz: a.k.a. Hutz the Putz. After auto accident, speaks fluent Hebrew and witnesses to others while in a trance.

Condi Zimmerman: Independent news anchor/reporter and host of The Condi Zimmerman Show.

Dr. Dennis Duncan: Professor of Geophysics and public speaker. Developed the Theory of Vacuous Spaces.

Dmitry Ustinov: Chechnyan-Russian international arms dealer.

Dr. Joseph Rosenberg, PhD: Professor of Apocalyptic Religions, Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

Edgar Allan Poe: Homeless veteran who discovers terrorist plot. Becomes terrorism expert with Homeland.

Erica P. Robbins: Reporter and U.S. War Correspondent.

Farmer Jackson Kinsella: Owns large cotton farm in Clemson, SC. After an assassination attempt, terrorists stole the farm's crop duster for a planned chemical attack on Atlanta.

Gray and Andi Dorey: Close friends of Jeff Ross, philanthropists and owners of *Dine for Dollars*, a restaurant for the homeless or just the hungry.

Jack Russell: United States Senator. Ranking member on the Military Finance Committee. Married to Samarra Russell.

Jeffrey Ross: Ex-husband of Melissa Ross and father of three daughters; Jami and Jenni (twins) and Audry, his youngest. U.S. Navy SEAL until discharged with injury after the Vietnam conflict.

Jill Haskins: Wife of "Bubba" Haskins and Melissa Ross' closest friend.

Judi Ellis: Director of Paleobiology, Emory Primate Research Center, Atlanta.

Judy Blanton: Previous owner of J. Blanton Concrete Company, Lukeville, Arizona.

Kari K. Vermi: News anchor with OLNN, Omega Letter Network News. Columnist with omegaletter.com

Kipper T and Missy T: Angels who appear to Jeff in dreams.

Kyoto Kushito: Founder and Director of The Foundation, a shadowy terror think tank, based in Hiroshima, Japan. The Foundation consists of disgruntled grandchildren of Japanese kinsmen killed by the U.S. nuclear attacks of World War II. Funded the hijacking of the Nerpa nuclear submarine.

Melissa Ross: Divorced from Jeff Ross, mother of twins, Jami and Jenni, and adopted daughter, Audry.

Mohammed Rehza: Ruthless Islamist in charge of European Operations for Jihad's Warriors. Vinny's twin.

Muhammed Khalid: Islamic Jihadist and founder of Jihad's Warriors. Lives in Korengal Valley with his sister, Aludra.

Naomi: Old Jewish woman who carries a cross necklace. Helps Aludra escape Korengal Valley and certain death.

Pam MacLott: Owner of *The Divide Disco & Café*, the South's only News Bar. The café becomes a meeting and planning place for those interested in combatting the Islamic takeover of America.

Robert Jeremias: Missionary, philanthropist. Married Melissa Ross after her divorce from Jeff. Disappeared in a plane crash during missionary trip.

Samarra Russell: Married to Senator Jack Russell. Past Director, Communicable Diseases Research Center, CDC. Responsible for theft of Spanish Flu virus.

Scott Johnson: Assistant manager of *The Divide Disco & Café*.

Sheryl Lasseter: Director of United States Public Relations Liaison. Works directly for the U.S. President.

Terry and Toni Fahey: Next door neighbors and close friends with Jeffrey Ross. Travel the country in their million-dollar RV.

The Admiral: Justin P. McLemore. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and retired four-star Admiral. Director of Near-Earth Object and Heliospheric Laboratory, Goddard Space Flight Center, Maryland.

Three Wild Women: Wanda, BJ and Beverly manage American Legion Post 251. The three women are seen together often. Skilled in self-defense and sharp-shooting, they seem to attract encounters with street thugs and drunks.

Vinny: Aboud Rehza, a product of wealthy Saudi parents. He and his twin brother, Mohammed, had been child prodigies; and both spoke several languages fluently. A man of many aliases. Vinny resides in the United States after infiltrating across the Mexican border. Aliases include Vinny, Ricky, Jean Philippe, and others.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR:

Part One: And Then the End Will Come

Jeffrey Ross is Duluth, Georgia's most eligible bachelor, but not by choice. Retired Navy SEAL and successful entrepreneur, he had been married to Melissa almost 25 years; and he thought everything was hunky-dory. They had beautiful twin daughters and adopted daughter, Audry and a nice home in a country club community, nice cars and toys, what could be wrong.

Melissa asked for the divorce, begrudgingly. She loved Jeff, but he didn't believe in God, never had; but what was worse was his ridiculing of believers. Over the years, her faith grew stronger and she enjoyed her church community; but she and the daughters enjoyed it alone. No way was Jeff going to step foot in a church.

The divorce and Melissa's subsequent remarriage had taken its toll; and while Jeff wasn't a broken man, he remained in the dumps for the next four years. The most eligible bachelor wasn't available. He was hoping his wife would come back.

Jeff made new friends and maintained most of their old friendships too, as did Melissa, including The Admiral, Sheryl, Chadbo, Wild Willy and Abe the Bartender.

Nine thousand miles away, along the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Korengal Valley of Death festered with various jihadist groups, Muslims with a common cause: Kill the infidels. That would be everyone except them.

Jihad's Warriors, virtually unknown, unlike al Qaeda, had infiltrated the borders of Europe and the United States for years, decades. The U.S. border with Mexico was as porous as Swiss cheese; and jihadists had taken advantage with bribery and murder.

The Chechen jihadists from Eastern Europe looked, talked and acted as American as mom's apple pie. The Arab jihadists passed easily for Latino immigrant laborers, but these were not laborers.

The Divine Plan was to run America and Europe out of money. The warriors knew the West couldn't protect every single nursery school, church, synagogue, campground, shopping center, hospital and highway. It would be easy. Once economically destitute, the Islamic takeover of the world would finalize.

While Manhattan and Chicago remained the desired targets, security was tight. The Islamists would concentrate on the Bible Belt, more Christians that turn the other cheek rather than fight.

Jihad's Warriors were financed, not by Muslims so much as by a group of wealthy Japanese businessmen bent on revenge for the nuclear bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima during World War II. They were the grandsons and granddaughters of those burnt alive in December, 1945, the Baby Bombers. Money was no problem.

Jeffrey continues his pursuit of Melissa, now widowed, and can't help but notice all the people carrying *The End Is Near* signs. They seemed to be everywhere. Then there were the disappearing people, and Jeff remembered his mom's lectures.

"In the last days, sonny boy, people gonna be disappearin', yes they are. You start seeing folks vanishin' in thin air, you better find God. That's all I can say."

A creature of habit, Jeff had a routine that included the Dunwoody Starbucks every morning for coffee and the Atlanta newspaper. He was a news junkie. The Mayan Apocalypse was just around the corner, and people worldwide were preparing for The End. Ridiculous.

One warmer than usual spring morning, record heat the words of the day, Jeff enjoys his latte and paper when suddenly his world changes... again.

The brown cargo van circling the small shopping center explodes with vigor as America's first suicide bomber begins a wave of terror

like the nation has never seen. Two minutes later another explosion several blocks away blows up a Dunwoody day care center. Forty-seven dead in a split second.

Jeff's Navy buddies, Chad Myers and The Admiral, work with the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. Astronomy buffs, their primary concern was space objects on a collision course with planet Earth. Near-Earth objects, mostly small asteroids, had become more commonplace.

Unfortunately, news of the object most recently discovered would now have to be shared with the world as it made its way past Jupiter on a course that would hit Earth in less than a year. The object, still invisible to most telescopes, was dark, massive and unavoidable.

Sixty-five million years earlier, the dinosaurs and most living creatures had been wiped out by an asteroid only six miles in diameter. The Dark Comet was more than a hundred.

As the world reacts to the coming devastation, many begin to believe that the end really is near this time; and there was nothing anyone could do about it. There was little panic.

When Jeff's friend, Samarra receives a strange call, she returns home as instructed. She would follow the instructions as directed, or she would receive her son's head in a box instead of the finger she stared at in desperation. And she did.

Samarra's access to Atlanta's CDC biological disease labs made her job simple and soon the Spanish Flu, one of the great killers of all time, is loosed into an unsuspecting world. It was inevitable, millions would die.

In the Indian Ocean, a hijacked nuclear attack sub vanishes. The only remnants were an oil slick, clothing and assorted debris but not enough to indicate the submarine was at the bottom of the Marianas Trench.

As New Year's Eve approaches, Jeff and Melissa visit Grand Cayman Island to celebrate memories and await the coming comet. To most it seemed the Earth would end months before the predicted Mayan prophecy.

A few hundred miles east of Grand Cayman, on the island of Montserrat, the Soufrière Hills volcano erupts and is blown into the Caribbean Sea. The massive tsunami that is generated speeds across the ocean toward Puerto Rico, Jamaica and... Grand Cayman.

Part Two: You Have Been Warned

Jeff returns from Grand Cayman Island alone. He and Melissa tried to escape the giant wave but were washed off the 4-story roof of their beachfront hotel. Melissa's body was never found, and Jeff mourns his loss. He had prayed they would reconcile, his first prayer since a child; and it looked like it might happen.

The New Year started off with a bang, literally, when the U.S. suffered its first nuclear strikes, one at the Diego Garcia island chain in the Indian Ocean that destroyed most of America's B-52 bomber force. The second destroyed the Buford Dam, Atlanta's fresh water supply.

The Dark Comet continued its journey toward Earth, two weeks until impact. Attempts to destroy the comet with the world's nuclear weapons supply failed to deter the coming tragedy.

The world became unified for the first time in history in their effort to stop the comet, and joyous applause erupted globally when the comet slammed into the moon instead of Earth. Unfortunately, the resulting debris from the lunar collision meant waves of meteor showers for Earth, many of which made it through the atmosphere, destroying numerous communities, including the Three Gorges Dam in China.

Thankful that the world was still intact, Jeff flies to California to buy his million dollar dream car, a one of a kind 1954 Cadillac Pininfarina Cabriolet. Maybe that, he hoped, would occupy his mind a while. Shopping was great for depression.

Upon arrival at the La Jolla Jetport, Jeff's tragic misfortune continues as he is struck with the deadly and pervasive Spanish Flu. During his hospitalization, he begins to have a series of strange

dreams, dreams of small white churches in fields of blooming daffodils. Dreams of a tiny Arizona town named Lukeville.

The European riots had become infectious, and America's cities did the same as gasoline reached \$8.00 a gallon. The police forces, hampered by budget cuts and not enough employees, became brutal; and rioters were killed mercilessly.

The jihadists coordinated closely with a well-organized Christian militia under the philosophy of, *The enemy of my enemy is my friend*. Their common enemy was the U.S. government.

The Admiral's romance with Sheryl blossoms cautiously, at least until the kidnapping. That's when he discovered his real feelings, the ones he had sheltered for sixty years.

Recalling their private conversation, he wasn't really surprised that the President had sold out Israel; only, it wasn't Israel's God that was trying to kill everyone in America, it was Islam's God.

What was surprising, and shocking, was the rumor that there were thousands of infiltrators living and working in the nation's infrastructure: nuclear power plants, water treatment facilities, food distribution warehouses.

Vinny, a.k.a. Aboud, hasn't gotten any nicer as he continues to meet with his deputies at the concrete plant in Lukeville. The meetings, though brief, usually occurred on the Mexican side of the deep, underground tunnel connecting the concrete facility in Lukeville with the beer distributor on the other side of the border. Plans were made, plans of terror, death and destruction; and the stored weapons and nerve agents were the vehicles Allah would use.

Wild Willy continues his work with Mossad and Senator Jack Russell, Samarra's husband. The nanotech spybots were no longer experimental and looked like assorted bugs, but Will was especially fond of the dragonfly style. Looked just like the real thing.

Samarra's case goes to the U.S. Federal Court in Atlanta. The charges are numerous, including international homicide charges for

the tens of millions killed because of the Spanish Flu. During the trial, Samarra's senator husband is arrested in a San Francisco shower house with a young boy and charged with possession of child porn and sex with a minor. Senator Russell stated that he thought the boy was 12, the new legal age of consent in the United States.

After Jeff's recovery from the Spanish Flu, he continues to have the strange dreams about a couple named Missy T and Kipper T, reggae music and disco lights; and the room, the one with the dark door. *You don't want to go through that door.* Missy T made the comment numerous times.

Jeff's life, a life that's never dull, continues to change suddenly and often. He finds himself having second thoughts about the whole religion thing, at least sometimes. He really couldn't explain how the Gideons Bible kept showing up.

One day Jeff gets a call from Samarra. Her trial was over quickly, temporary insanity; and her penalty was light. She asked if she could visit, they had been friends for many years.

During her visit to Jeff's Sugarloaf estate, yet another megacryometeorite storm hits North Atlanta. Jeff's home is spared, but a young girl in a Porsche is killed in his neighbor's driveway. The large ice bomb that hit the new Porsche Spyder was estimated to weigh 120 to 150 pounds, larger than a beachball.

Samarra informs Jeff that she and Senator Russell are now divorced; and over the next few months, a new romance blossoms. There had always been something there.

The months passed swiftly, and soon Jeff plans a visit to his dive shop in Negril. Before going to Jamaica to check on the business, Jeff and Samarra become engaged, though a date is not set.

Jeff's journey to Jamaica is plagued with thoughts and confusion, not about his profound love for Samarra but about all the natural disasters going on. It was downright scary.

The Admiral told him about the large rock that appeared to be leaving the Moon's orbit, and he finds himself hoping to God that it wouldn't. He fell asleep and dreamed, dreams of earthquakes and

volcanos, roaring seas and asteroids, drought and poisoned waters... and Melissa. He prayed in his dream, a prayer that Melissa hadn't suffered in the tsunami, that she had been killed instantly in the fall.

Part Three: Visions and Dreams

Hailstorms are the talk of every news station it seems, as Jeff cruises the highways with his new Cadillac, listening to Al-Jazeera News. Millions of acres have been destroyed in Europe, and Northern California's crops are not spared. *Homeless and Starving in the U.S.A.* has become the chant of protesters as the hail batters crops and wildlife into the ground.

Two years after Melissa's death, Jeff finds love with a friend from the past; and his kids are receptive to the romance, amazingly. Amazing because Samara has been acquitted of stealing the Spanish Flu virus from CDC due to temporary insanity. That theft, now in the hands of the blackmailing Jihadist Warriors is doing its job well with estimated global fatalities now in excess of fifty million.

Vinny's (a.k.a Aboud) jihadist terror group continues to wreak havoc in the United States as his twin, Mohammed, known in the small French town as *The Preacher*, wreaks the same in Europe. The penetration of France's largest nuclear power plant's automated facility management system was simple, and access to the plant infrastructure now rested in the hands of Mohammed.

Mohammed has a following of gullible Christians who bought his fakery; but then, he is a good actor. The basement of the small, stone church tells another story as he collects more and more propane tanks, one at a time from different locations. The church is a sitting bomb, but Mohammed loved explosions. It ran in his family. Soon enough he would meet with Dmitry to secure the procurement, now paid for in full by the secretive Japanese group, the Select. They hate Americans even more than the Muslims hate the Jews. Two billion U.S. dollars for five high-yield, thermonuclear weapons.

Jihad's Warriors have penetrated the Mexican border for several years, usually with the help of the drug cartels. Now that had all changed, and the border was more porous than Swiss cheese. The U.S. administration continues to be oblivious to the religion of Islam and seems to think all Muslims are Arabs. That's good for Vinny.

As the earliest hurricane in Atlantic history bears down on Florida, news from Goddard Space Flight Center and NASA is no better. The dark comet's collision with the moon at first seems like a silver lining, since it would have ended all life on Earth had it not been for the moon. The moon was now pink instead of white, and the surrounding rings of debris has a divine beauty of sorts.

The beauty quickly becomes a beast as Earth begins to be bombarded by debris, and meteorites hitting Earth become common news as flights throughout the world are in disarray with many airports closing intermittently. Some reports from China suggest the possibility that the lunar debris may be poisoning fresh water supplies.

Just north of Clemson, South Carolina, a cotton farmer's crop duster is stolen with plans to dust Atlanta's new football stadium during the Super Bowl. The dual-winged crop duster is one of a kind. Powered by Daimler-Benz, the Italian Fiat CR42B engine powers the plane to the horse farm north of Marietta in less than thirty minutes. There the banner will be attached advertising free beer at *Jamaica Joe's*.

Jeff's romance with Samarra blossoms quickly. The chemistry had always been there, even during her marriage to Senator Russell. When the good Senator is caught in compromising positions with young boys in bathhouses, Samarra's divorce follows. Jeff feels it is meant to be.

Excited about his wedding plans, for the first time in a long while Jeff finds himself deliriously happy. He leaves for Jamaica to check on his declining SCUBA business with plans to return during Christmas when he and Samarra will marry on the beach. The flight to Negril is non-eventful, other than a few meteors in the distant sky;

and he checks into the Ross Suite at the Charela Inn. A message from Rosalie, the maid he had grown to know well, is disturbing.

Jeff's flight back to Atlanta does not ease his emotional conflict. How will he tell the kids? How will he explain to Samarra that Melissa is alive and well, rescued after the Cayman tsunami by Jamaican fishermen? How will he let them know that Melissa has no memory of them, or him and is preaching Jesus to a bunch of Voodoos or whatever you call them, in the rainforests of Jamaica?

It seems to Jeff that just as things finally start going good,

God throws in a monkey wrench just to keep you on your toes. Only he still cannot get his arms around the concept of a god who is invisible but created everything. That story was unbelievable, but then a lot of his life is becoming unbelievable. If he could only see a sign.

Chadbo and The Admiral continue to carefully monitor all the things flying around Earth, dismayed that it was only a matter of time before a big one hit the planet. There have been numerous close encounters with asteroids a couple of football fields long, but they are small compared to many they have discovered. Plus there is the unprecedented solar activity and stars that seem to be disappearing. The two men recognized that all stars eventually burn out, only stellar theory suggests that takes billions of years. Why would so many be disappearing at the same time?

The Mother's Day Massacre, as it is now called has caught everyone off guard. Random sniper attacks and bombings on Mother's Day claims hundreds of lives, mostly women and their children. A bombing by a Christian Militia group completely destroys Atlanta's Five Points Marta station and most of the travelers and MARTA staff inside.

As Jeff and Samarra continue to plan their New Year's Eve wedding in Jamaica, at the suggestion of Melissa, Dmitry Ustinov waits in a small Monaco café for The Preacher. The French military guarded the streets of Paris and other affected cities because of the

failure of the Civaux Nuclear power plants. Israel is blamed for the intrusion into the plants' security systems, and anti-Semitism is out of control in all of Europe.

Dmitry warns Mohammed, explaining that the five thermonuclear weapons are extremely dangerous and much more destructive than the bombs of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

"When these babies go off, Mohammed," Dmitry whispered, "you need to be at least thirty miles away."

Of course, as Russia's number one illicit arms supplier, Dmitry planned to be far, far away when St. Petersburg was reduced to cinders and ash. He loved the motherland, but he loved dinars more.

Though Dmitry knows little of Jihad's Warriors' plans, he does know that New Year's Eve in Times Square will be one to remember.

New Year's Eve on a beach in Jamaica turns out to be as surprising as the soon to be *Manhattan Event*, at least in Jeff's mind. The marriage is perfect, the guests are perfect, even the Voodoo priest who accompanied Melissa is perfect, her latest conversion conquest.

Melissa's memories have returned for the most part, and she stands on the beach by the quiet surf, talking with her three daughters and pointing upward to a bright star in the clear, Jamaica night sky. Jeff glances upward at the star and was certain he saw slight movement. Maybe it was a plane.

In Manhattan, eight large, black Mylar balloons are attached to two, 2-kiloton briefcase nuclear bombs, a play being acted out in three other high-rise buildings surrounding Times Square. The suicide bombers high-five each other as the balloons are released from the Penthouse and into the dark night sky above New York City. When the eight bombs go off, they will be in the warm bosoms of seventy-two virgins.

Melissa gives the kids a big hug, turns and walks over to Samarra and Jeff. It is nearly midnight, and her head suddenly feels light. Her skin tingles and tiny goose bumps appear. She truly is happy

for the newlyweds. She glances skyward, searching for the star and is startled to see how much closer it is. Maybe it's an airplane, she thought quietly.

As midnight approaches, less than five seconds away, Melissa kisses Jeffrey Ross on the cheek and squeezes his hand gently. The white light in the sky grows in intensity and moves high above the beaches of Jamaica's south shore; and the crowd stared, mesmerized or too frightened to move. Melissa's parting words will forever stay in Jeff's mind.

"Here's a sign, Jeffrey," and with that she rises into the air, quickly toward the white light, now more like the midday sun, and disappeared. The star quickly dimmed and then it too disappeared, and silence lingered with the small crowd. The Voodoo priest who spent the evening talking with anyone who would listen about "de Lady of de Sea" and how she saved him, vanished in an instant.

Part Four: The Disappearance

As a group of large, Mylar balloons float over Times Square, the New Year's Eve celebration never turns chaotic as the nearly one million celebrants in the crowd below are vaporized in an instant, not the result of the Rapture but the detonation of several low-yield nuclear weapons, hanging below the large, helium filled balloons. Wall Street will never be the same, and ATMs across the country cease to operate.

A minute prior to the detonation and seen by only a few, some people in the crowd disappear, simply vanish; and this disappearance of people occurs all over the world. It is the beginning.

Heat records are broken daily and environmentalists continue to scream and demand more funding to prevent the warming caused by mankind. Only there is no more funding. The free world is in financial

disarray, as Jihad's Warriors continue their battle to run the West out of money.

The continuing Islamic attacks have terrorized the nation and the world; and every three months, like clockwork, the death toll dedicated to Allah, rises.

Iranian nuclear sites come under nuclear attack from an unknown source somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea, only to learn that the sites were exotically constructed decoys.

If man's attempts at destroying civilization are not enough, nature's fury raises the human and animal death toll exponentially. Unprecedented hailstorms flatten entire villages, killing people and livestock, pets and plants as leaves and branches are stripped from trees.

Chadbo and The Admiral closely monitor numerous incoming meteors, one of which the world must destroy or be destroyed by the massive, arsenic laden rock. The strike is successful; and thousands of miles above Earth, the incoming asteroid is destroyed. A large cloud of arsenic dust slowly descends on Earth, pulled by gravity.

Vinny and his Islamist gang plan small nuclear attacks along the West Coast but have no idea the West Coast will soon be no more, at least no more life.

A small asteroid makes its way from the moon's rings toward Earth but is given little priority. It is heading for the Antarctic with virtually no potential for damage.

Chadbo, concerned with possibilities, monitors the small space object and his fears are recognized. The asteroid explodes high above the Ross Ice Shelf, slamming a five-mile stretch of the shelf into the ocean. A large surface wave, a wave the size of no other, rushes northward toward New Zealand, Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States.

At 2,700 feet in height, the wave sinks a third of the world's navies and thousands of pleasure craft. Skirting along the California

Coast, the skyscrapers of San Diego and Los Angeles are no match and collapse to what had been ground below.

In less than ten hours, millions have died along the coasts of California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska. The death toll in Japan, China, Indonesia, India, Australia and New Zealand top ten million and continues to climb. There are no longer Mexican resorts along the Pacific coast.

Jeffrey Ross and Samarra, now married, have had little honeymoon so far; and Samarra continues to recover from the strange bite. A physical toll has been taken, and she wonders if she will ever have her strength back.

Jeff rediscovers an EPROM that a homeless man gave him a couple of years earlier and finds there is a Christian extremist group in the mountains of North Georgia that appears to be working with the jihadists.

Well aware that he should take someone with him, Jeff heads to the mountains alone. His million-dollar sports car is later found in several pieces at the bottom of Tallulah Gorge.

Part Five: The Two Witnesses

With the nuclear annihilation of Manhattan, the financial hub is no more. Though ATM issues are gradually repaired, getting cash is iffy at best; but life goes on. It must.

The strange disappearance of people slows dramatically, though more of the vanishings have made their way to social media outlets. Youtube and Vimeo are awash in live videos of folk disappearing at dinners, weddings, funerals and underground churches.

President Morsi, a Shi'a Muslim of Iranian heritage, is the leader of the world it seems as more and more nations join the New World Order Federation and turn over control of their militaries. The United Nations is extinct.

Climate change is more than the talk of the town these days, and temperatures continue their upward trend. The extreme winds feel more like a blast furnace than a fresh, summer breeze.

The death and destruction caused by the collapse of the Ross Ice Shelf is realized. The West Coast of the Americas, as well as the eastern edges of Asia are not recognizable; and millions are drowned. In the process, most of the world's navies sink to the bottom of the sea.

Hailstorms are epidemic in parts of the world, even worse than the raining lunar asteroids.

In Jerusalem, two strange and tall men appear on the ancient Temple Mount, dressed in dark, burlap-looking clothes and begin to preach to the Israelis.

"You missed the Messiah," they proclaim, day after day with the same, consistent message: God brought you back to Israel, and you have betrayed Him again. You cannot keep enough of The Law to make it to the next life. Only through recognizing the Christ will you achieve that glorious goal.

Time passes and the two preachers continue their daily rants, condemning Israel for rejecting the Messiah and the entire world for their decadent ways. As months become years, the people of Israel and the world begin to hate and despise the two men who now proclaim they are the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11.

Assassination attempts become routine but to no avail as the Two Witnesses call down the wrath of the God of Heaven, and the world catches fire. Anyone who tries to harm the Two Witnesses are engulfed in flame, what science is now calling cases of Spontaneous Human Combustion.

Extreme drought encompasses Earth, and the Middle East has no rain for nearly three years. The only sources of fresh water are the frequent and horrific hailstorms. Millions of livestock and thousands of people are killed by the *Hail from Hell*.

The Two Witnesses, because the people do not repent from evil, call down fire from Heaven; and the world suffers her worst lightning storms in history.

Fires rage from the Appalachian Mountains to the Rockies, from the Pyrenees to the Alps; and smoke and toxins fill the air. Those with respiratory problems have no chance.

Jeffrey Ross and his group of senior citizen friends seek meaning in a world of anarchy. Vinny, a.k.a. Aboud, and the Jihad's Warriors continue their reign of terror on the United States while his twin brother does the same in Europe.

President Morsi stuns the world with miraculous acts, some not seen since the days Jesus walked the earth; and the Children of Israel become convinced Morsi is the Messiah.

PREFACE

All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

PSALMS 22:17-18

“Another day, another denarius,” Romulus said to Antonius.

The Roman guards stared at the sky, obscured with dust and sand. The loose netting that covered their eyes did little in the way of protection.

“We have not seen sunlight in days,” Antonius said.

That was true, Romulus knew. It had been this way for two weeks, ever since the Teacher disappeared from the tomb. The Roman guards who were guarding the tomb of Jesus were harshly disciplined for allowing his escape.

“I have a question, Romulus.”

Romulus slapped a horsefly, amazed that it could maneuver in the gusty wind.

“Make it an easy one, Antonius. It is early, my friend.”

Antonius paused, considering. It was not a simple question.

“Do you think the Teacher is God... I mean, the God of the Judahites?”

“There are many gods in Roman society,” Romulus answered. “Only the Jews have but one God.”

A few years earlier when Romulus first began to hear of the man the Jewish people called Teacher, the concept of only a single god seemed ludicrous. But the Romans tolerated Judah and their unusual history of following a god they could not see.

“I have never heard his followers refer to the Teacher as God, Antonius. They call him their Messiah. Do you know who that is?”

Antonius did know of the rumored Messiah but had learned of him only recently, from Mary the Adulteress. The concept was bizarre to him, especially if true.

“I had not until... until Mary told me the story.”

Romulus was disappointed in the comment, stunned actually.

“So you have been visiting Mary again, Antonius? You have a wife.”

Antonius blushed and could tell his close friend was disappointed in his weakness for women, but he was no different than most men.

“No. No!” Antonius replied. “You do not understand. Mary is... changed, *very* changed. It is as though she is a different person since she met the Teacher. It is like she has been reborn or recreated.”

“Born again,” Romulus said.

Romulus and Antonius had been assigned by Herod to keep an eye on the trouble-maker, Jesus; and they had. Only he was not a trouble-maker but a peace creator. They had both heard his comment about being born again.

“Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

“Yes,” Antonius said. “Almost like she was reborn as a different person. She does not think like she did when I met her.”

“Or her soul was reborn,” Romulus said and continued.

“I do not know how to answer your question, my friend. I have never considered that the Jewish Teacher might actually be the Jewish God, what do they call him, Yahweh? He calls himself the Son of Man

and acknowledges that he is this Messiah they are awaiting. What do his apostles think?”

“They are confused, still,” Antonius said. “Especially since his reappearance.”

They had seen Jesus after his death, had seen with their own eyes. They had seen him die and put into the tomb, so thin his bones were clearly visible. They had seen his crucifixion and the people mocking him, gambling for his garments. They saw the heavy stone rolled to cover the entrance. No one could escape from inside the tomb. But he had.

“I do know this,” Romulus said. “No mere man could do what we have seen the Teacher do. Only a god could do these things. Curing men born blind, healing the deaf and dumb...”

“And raising the dead,” Antonius added.

“Yes, that too.”

Romulus pondered Antonius’ question, having no idea that the question would become so important over the centuries to come.

“He rose *himself* from the dead,” Antonius said. “Has any man ever done such a thing? No man could do that. So there is something much different about this man.”

“I would not tell your wife, Antonius.”

Romulus was correct. The wife of Antonius was known around Jerusalem. She was what most called the *elbow rubber*. She was a queen in a commoner’s skin, and her peers were in the upper class. She would probably turn him in, and he heard her voice in his mind, *Antonius does not believe in the gods*.

The men worked their twelve-hour day but found it melancholic since the Teacher disappeared, supposedly into the clouds which was not possible. Only, much of what Jesus did was impossible. Who has ever been born of a woman who could do such things as the Teacher?

The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.

REVELATION 17:8

Oh, eternal and everlasting God, direct my thoughts, words and work. Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb and purge my heart by Thy Holy Spirit. Daily, frame me more and more in the likeness of Thy son, Jesus Christ, that living in Thy fear, and dying in Thy favor, I may in thy appointed time obtain the resurrection of the justified unto eternal life. Bless, O Lord, the whole race of mankind and let the world be filled with the knowledge of Thee and Thy son, Jesus Christ.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, PRAYER

PROLOGUE

Summer of War

Goddard Space Flight Center

Near-Earth Object Lab

“Oh crap!”

The Admiral hurried to Chadbo’s worn, gray-clad cubicle.

“Watch your mouth, young man,” The Admiral laughed.

Chad was usually a laid-back soul and ate a lot of food but never got fat. No one could figure it out. Today he was nervous and sweating profusely, unusual. Never a large man, he was losing too much weight too fast. He had never been what one would call skinny. And the sores...

“What’s up?” The Admiral asked.

A lot had been up lately, he thought. Nothing seemed the way it had been just a few years earlier. The economy was in shambles in most cities of the world, including Atlanta where Peachtree Street remained closed and grown over.

It was hard to believe, he thought, that Atlanta’s famous thoroughfare would ever be shuttered and desolate with only a few homeless sleeping on the rusted park benches. Sources of sustenance were few and far between, and stabbings had become the felony du jour.

He guessed it had to happen, once the Buford Dam was blown up; and Atlanta's main water source was no more. Nothing had been the same since then, the first nuclear attack on U.S. soil.

A man had been arrested for the attack, Bubba Haskins who turned out to be Mahmoud; but he escaped from the new maximum security prison. The government that he dedicated forty-two years to, serving in three wars, had done little to recapture the dangerous man. It was almost as though the left-leaning administration had wanted the escape to succeed.

"Another incoming," Chadbo said loudly. Three other astrophysicists and a visiting dentist hurried over.

"Oh man! Look at this."

The Admiral peered at Chadbo's monitor. The sun was in a roil like he had never seen; and he had studied solar flares, CMEs and the other forms of plasma explosions for many years.

"Wow. Look how bright it is," William Williams said.

William B. Williams was not an astrophysicist but could be if he so wished. A child prodigy, he graduated from Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry at age nineteen. That was thirty years earlier, and now he was the Chief of Dentistry for NASA.

"Wow is right," said The Admiral. "Not sure why it would be brighter than normal."

The sun had been in an uproar like never before the last two months, or at least like never before known to mankind. Actually, he thought, the sun had been in an uproar of sorts since the temperatures started climbing so drastically years earlier. He checked the outdoor temperature monitor: 107° and 20% humidity. At least it was a dry heat.

The sun *was* brighter. Astronomers the past month began making note, but the change had not been noticeable to the naked eye until recently. It was not unusual for some stars to vary ever-so-slightly

in brightness, but this was no longer ever-so-slightly. The sunscreen business was booming.

“I’m surprised the temperatures aren’t greater than they are,” Chad said, studying the heliosatellite’s data. “The surface temperature of the sun has increased almost fifteen-hundred degrees. That’s fifteen percent.”

“Hard to believe,” The Admiral said. “A week ago, I was thinking the worst had passed. Daily temps in the seventies and calm breezes.”

“Me too,” Chadbo said. “Looks like we were wrong.”

Chadbo and The Admiral, twenty minutes later, turned into the parking lot of the empty Waffle House in Greenbelt and were surprised it had closed. They made a U-turn and drove three blocks to the Burger Shack, also closed.

“Man,” Chadbo whined, “I’m starving.”

“IHOP is open,” The Admiral said. “At least it was at breakfast. Do you have any extra sunglasses?”

Chadbo opened the center console and handed The Admiral a pair of extra-dark. The lenses were almost black like a welder’s mask. The brightness of the sun actually burned his eyes, and The Admiral wondered if the effect was the same on younger folk.

Finally sitting in a booth at the Greenbelt Loop IHOP, they both unfolded the flexible plastic screens and spread them carefully on the table. The screens, the latest from Apple, instantly opened to Hubble III images of the sun.

“It’s not even solar max,” The Admiral said, “and our sun is in an uproar.”

“An understatement,” Chad said. “I have never seen it so active and violent. See this?”

Chad pointed to a large, dark emptiness on the surface of the sun, a dark void of some kind, larger than he had seen in the past. Coronal holes were not unusual; but one this huge, was.

“These electromagnetic storms should be few-and-far-between unless in solar max. We are supposed to be in the solar minimum phase. Makes no sense.”

The Admiral loved the sun, and anything solar was a mini-obsession. Space photos of the sun, coronal mass ejections and flares filled the walls of his office.

One of the mysteries that enticed him to the field of solar physics was the mysterious eleven-year solar cycle. It was odd; but just like a near perfect sine-wave, over-and-over, century after century, the sun maintained the eleven-year cycle. Like clockwork, the sun would hit maximum sunspot activity and then the activity would slowly die out over the next five-and-a-half years and then increase the next five-and-a-half years until reaching another solar maximum. There had to be a God, and The Admiral recognized this constant cycle as just one more proof. Now he sometimes wondered if God had abandoned them.

“However, they are not few-and-far-between,” Chad continued. “The sun is filled with them which is probably what’s fueling the brightness.”

“Are we responsible for monitoring the brightness or is JPL?”

“Admiral, there is no Jet Propulsion Lab anymore. After the wave hit California, JPL was destroyed, and...”

The Admiral held his hand in the air, interrupting.

“I know that, but didn’t they set up in Arizona?”

“The temporary facility went down with the sinkhole last Friday.”

“What?” The Admiral asked incredulously.

“Yep. It’s not in the news yet, but it happened Friday morning,” Chad explained. “And get this.”

The Admiral waited and after a few seconds said, “Get what?”

“It fell into a grave yard.”

“What?”

“You’re repeating yourself, Admiral,” Chad laughed. “It fell into an ancient, Native American burial ground. New discovery.”

The IHOP waitress appeared out of nowhere with coffee and ice water. The name tag read AGATHA.

“You guys need a menu or do you want me to bring you some steak and eggs? You look hungry.”

The Admiral liked the woman’s accent and glanced her way. Her dark skin was flawless and beautiful, like an African princess.

“I like the accent,” he said.

“Well thank you, thank you,” Agatha answered as she poured the coffee. “Liberia. That is where I am from.”

“I know you,” Chad said, and Agatha looked at him. “Mt. Pleasant.”

Agatha studied Chad a few seconds and a smile appeared across her face. She never forgot a face.

“The sun spot scientist!” she said excitedly.

Amused at the coincidence, The Admiral listened as Agatha explained how she met Chadbo one Saturday morning at the IHOP in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, just before she decided to move inland. The coast was beautiful but had become dangerous.

“Anyway, IHOP offered me a job here after half of Charleston was blown up and irradiated. Then the Canary Islands threat came. God knows, I wonder what the people did to make the Lord so mad.”

The Lord *was* mad, Chadbo knew that for sure and scratched another sore that appeared. The La Palma eruption had been forecast by many pseudo-scientists, at least so it was deemed. The theory was, about a third of the island’s Cumbre Vieja volcano would collapse into the Atlantic Ocean, should a large eruption occur. Chad thought it likely to happen sooner rather than later. Maybe, much sooner.

Chad sometimes worried about his own employment as cutbacks began again at Goddard; but as long as the disasters continued, he had a certain amount of job security. That was *not* comforting.

Washington politics remained in disarray as the White House and Congress built near-permanent quarters at Warner Robins Air Force Base. Much of Washington had been abandoned, partly out of fear of the potential disaster from La Palma but mostly the fear of nuclear attack was the impetus to abandon. For the most part, the East Coast had already moved westward several thousand feet in many areas because of Hurricane Abigail.

The two men ordered, and Agatha gave a smile that could warm cold coffee as she headed to the kitchen. They revisited the solar images.

“This is in the Bible, you know,” Chad said, sipping his hot coffee.

“How so?” asked The Admiral.

“The sun is supposed to get hotter, much hotter... and seven times brighter. The moon is supposed to get a lot brighter too.”

“The Bible says that?” asked The Admiral.

“Exactly,” Chad said. “It says *exactly* that. I think it is happening at this very time, except for the moon. That’s something I haven’t figured out.”

“What don’t you have figured out?”

Subconsciously, The Admiral fiddled with his extra-dark sunglasses. If this was true, Earth’s population would have to move underground; or possibly, there would be no Earth population by the time the sun got so much hotter.

“It says the sun will get seven times brighter,” Chad explained. “Think about that. Can you imagine the temperature? But there is no reference.”

“What do you mean?” The Admiral asked.

“I mean... seven times brighter than what? Does that scripture mean seven times brighter than the sun is today or seven times brighter than it was when Earth was formed? And the moon. The moon has turned so dark red, we probably can't see if it is really getting brighter or not.”

The Admiral considered Chadbo's comments, seven times brighter and the heat it would bring. Asphalt would melt. Plants would wither and die. People would go blind if they could manage to survive the heat.

“Where did you hear that this brightening is in the Bible? I've read it and never saw that.”

The Admiral had read the Bible, sort of, some verses here and some verses there. Now that Bibles had been banned by most bookstores, under pressure from the government, they were difficult to find. Even the libraries had removed the Bible in all forms. Plenty of Qurans though, even in the schools. He was very glad he didn't have school-age grandchildren.

“Bible study at Jeff's house last month,” Chad said. “I'm not a regular but was there when all these people showed up with Bible reference books. Jeff has learned an awful lot about the Bible in the last year or so. Who would've figured that Jeffrey Ross would be having Bible studies?”

“How soon before this CME hits?” The Admiral asked, pointing at the most recent image. His thoughts wandered more than usual.

Jeff had informed The Admiral about some wafers his *guardian angel* had given him in a dream, a lady he called Missy T. The guardian angel story was strange beyond belief, but he had seen one of the wafers. It looked more like a Vanilla Wafer to him. Jeff called them his CliffsNotes Wafers. He said the wafers gave him great insight into the Bible.

“Well, if there is any good news,” Chad said, returning to the Coronal Mass Ejection at hand, “it is the speed. The solar wind is

traveling at about ten-million miles an hour. That means the effects, if it hits, may be brief, hopefully. Man, look at the extent of this thing.”

The Admiral examined the series of images, and he had never seen such a massive expulsion of plasma from our now non-friendly sun. He examined the time-stamp, and a quick mental calculation indicated a rendezvous with Earth in approximately nine hours.

“I suppose NASA is in action?” The Admiral asked.

“Oh yeah,” Chad said. “Satellites are being powered down as we speak. That’s why cell phones are useless today.”

The Admiral took out his iPhone-9 and sure enough, no signal, nada. Chad’s images came through because his access initiated from a well-shielded, military solar-study satellite.

“What about the electric grid system?”

“That’s a different story,” Chad said. “The utilities have known for years, maybe decades, that a Carrington-type event could happen that would take out many major transformers. If intense and long-lasting enough, a CME like the Carrington event in 1859 could take out nearly all transformers... *in the world.*”

“How does this CME compare to Carrington’s?” The Admiral asked; and worry-wrinkles appeared across his rapidly-ageing brow.

“This one appears to be about the same. However, this particular CME will give Earth a glancing blow rather than a direct, head-on hit. We really do not know how glancing it will be. That is the determining factor.”

“You said ‘this particular’ CME. How many more?”

Chad studied the series of images and scratched his head. A clump of hair floated to the table.

“Who knows?” Chad answered. “We have never had such a *series* of extreme solar flares and CMEs since we have had the technology to detect. In the last forty-eight hours there have been six, all heading away from Earth. This one is not.”

“Could it change life as we know it?” The Admiral asked, glumly.

“Admiral, life has already changed as we knew it five years ago; but this latest image is troubling.”

The Admiral examined the image and checked the date and time-stamp. Thirty-eight minutes ago.

“I would say ‘troubling’ is a good assessment. Where is this?”

“Pakistan. Looks like India has fired several missiles into Pakistan.”

An hour-and-a-half later, The Admiral pulled into his parking space in front of his white, brick Georgetown home; and Washington, D.C. was extraordinarily quiet for mid-afternoon, even in its near-abandoned state. Many businesses were boarded up, and homeless were chased away by police. Sheryl met him at the door.

“Hey,” she said. “You’re off early today.”

“You too.”

“Why so glum?” she asked.

Her morning had been hectic. The meeting with the new President had certainly not been pleasant as he outlined the growing quagmire in the country and the world itself. Europeans continued rioting, food riots mostly; and the refugee influx had already taken Greece to her knees. People around the world were starving in numbers that were unprecedented. There was that word again, she thought. *Unprecedented.*

“Let’s get married,” The Admiral said as he took her in his arms and held her close. He was mesmerized by the smell of her skin. Why had this taken him so long?

She laughed and pulled back a little, looking him in the face.

“When?” she asked, puzzled by the suddenness.

“Today.”

CHAPTER ONE

Eighteen Months Earlier

“*T*he weather forecast shall be rain, lots and lots of rain; and a turbulent sea will wreak havoc in the East.”
Chuck Hutz repeated his forecast in Hebrew.

“Look!” Audry screamed. “It’s Mr. Hutz. He’s giving the weather report.”

Jenni and Jami walked to the pool patio where Audry was eating Honey Nut Cheerios, curious that Chuck Hutz would be doing the weather report. Of course, nothing really surprised them about the man many called Hutz the Putz. He was too weird.

Audry’s red hair glowed in the December morning sun, and the twins knew she was growing up too fast in an uncertain world. Like their father though, Audry was a news junkie. And Audry had already noticed that the strange disappearances of people seemed to have ceased. She worried that Mr. Hutz was still here.

“*Mr. Hutz, a lot of viewers want to know why you have been saying that we will have unprecedented rain starting soon,*” Condi stated as she conducted the interview with Hutz, at least the best anyone could conduct an interview with the very odd man. He was somewhat difficult, and it seemed a lot of people were trying to kill him. “*And by the way, the temperature in Jerusalem is ninety-four degrees. Why would you believe it will snow there in three weeks?*”

“*Because it’s true,*” Chuck said matter-of-factly. “*And hail. The Two Witnesses will be dead, and the climate will change.*”

Jami looked skyward, squinting her light-blue eyes, not a cloud to be seen in the very bright sky. A single black and blue Monarch butterfly flew to the edge of the pool, landing in a tiny puddle of water

on the tiled edge. Even the insects are thirsty, she reckoned; and it was surely too early in the year for Monarchs.

“But Mr. Hutz,” Condi continued, “it hasn’t rained for months, years in some areas of the world. Will these rains, should they happen, put out all the fires?”

Condi paused, waiting for Hutz’s answer. Her navy-blue blouse was damp with perspiration, and she was so tired of heat she could scream.

She was correct that the whole world was burning and large swaths of Europe were burnt to a crisp, complete towns wiped out. Some figured it was the lightning storms, but most thought it was the Muslim refugees.

Four jihadists had been caught in the act last week in the Alps, shooting burning arrows into the dense and scorched forest. The tension between Muslim and secularist Europe rumbled like Mt. Vesuvius once again did, looking over what had been Pompeii. Condi wondered if the world would soon look like Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 AD?

“Also, Mr. Hutz,” Condi continued, “reports out of Jerusalem state the Two Witnesses were not killed in the latest attack. The two attackers were men dressed as nuns, and they burst into flames right in front of thousands, including children. Are you saying these reports are false? Or will this be a new attack?”

“The Two Witnesses will be killed, and here is a clue: They will be killed by a leader, a leader that seemed to come out of nowhere, a leader who does wondrous miracles. Like Jesus the Christ, this leader will be killed and come back to life.

“And as to the fires, many will be extinguished by rain for a short time,” Chuck said calmly. Condi thought Hutz had a defeated look across his face.

“Villages will be washed away, kind of similar as in the days of Noah. Large forests are gone, burned to the ground. There is nothing

to hold the water back. There will be little absorption, and dams will be overwhelmed. The floods will lead to great sinkholes, and mountains will sink into the ground.

“Yahweh’s anger has stirred as mankind continues to drift farther away from his ways, and the fires have only started. Soon the towers of Dubai, Jeddah and Mecca will lay flat on the ground in total ruin as great earthquakes make the earth shake like a bowl of jelly. The great pride of Babylon, her Towers of Babel, will sink into the earth and disappear, just like they fell in the days of the ancients.”

Uh oh, Condi thought. She had lost control, and Chuck was on another rant. It would be good for ratings though, and she said nothing.

“Woe to you Babylon the Great, Yahweh will slap your new Bride Tower to the ground. Did you think you could build the tallest tower in the world and not get the attention of Yahweh? Will you never learn? Another Tower of Babel bites the dust; and Iraq will be a land of total desolation, a land like Damascus will become, a desert where even the wild animals avoid. The land will be dark for three days, and the ground will be like poison.”

“Wow,” Jami said. “Chuck sounds ticked.”

Or drunk, Jenni thought and scanned the sky. Usually, when Chuck said something would happen though, it did. The sun shone brightly; and a flock of geese flew overhead, searching for water, no rainclouds to be seen.

“Mr. Hutz,” Condi interrupted. “Let me interrupt if I may.”

Hutz wiped perspiration from his brow, and his overweight frame perspired profusely. He loosened the bright, red necktie and sipped his bottled water.

“The Two Witnesses,” Condi started, “caused the heavens to shut, as they predicted; and some areas have had no rain for three or more years. Yet President Morsi at the United Nations said he would open the heavens; and Israel will have much needed water.”

Chuck sipped his bottle of *Sweet Southern Tea* flavored water, paying little attention to Condi Zimmerman. His head was suddenly pounding, and he felt his heart-pumped blood pulsing through the arteries of his flabby neck. He would start a new diet January first, and he would really do it this year.

“President Morsi has performed,” Condi continued, *“what many are calling miracles the last few months. And his miraculous recovery from the Spanish Flu... well, you must admit that is remarkable. But do you believe that President Morsi can control the Two Witnesses?”*

Three geese landed in the Ross pool with a splash, and the three sisters jumped in fright. Audry started giggling, and the geese frolicked in their newfound paradise, swimming in and out of the waterfall.

“The Two Witnesses will soon be dead,” Chuck said. *“Morsi is the leader from the other side and will lead many astray, like the Two Witnesses proclaimed in Jerusalem. He already is leading others astray, and some think he is God.”*

The bright morning dimmed slightly, and Audry removed her sunglasses. She scanned the cloudless sky and wondered what caused the sudden dimness. Jami and Jenni didn’t seem to notice. They were enthralled with Mr. Hutz.

“The other side?” Condi asked.

A loud clap, not an explosion but more like a thunderclap filled the studio; and two technicians hurried to the control room.

“The side of Lucifer, the Great Deceiver, the performer of wondrous miracles to deceive God’s people. Morsi will take credit for the rain; and when the multitudes die in the coming deluge, most will blame Yahweh.”

Hutz paused, a pensive expression appearing as he thought about the coming days.

“Mr. Hutz,” Condi asked, *“how will Morsi kill the Two Witnesses?”*

Condi thought about the possibility and how thrilled the world would be if they were dead, especially the Israelis.

“Yahweh will remove their protection. Once that happens, they will be vulnerable. Then they will die.

“The whole world will be pleased, and for three-and-a-half days the two bodies will lay on the ground where the crowds will defile them in many ways. This will anger God greatly.”

The Day of God’s Wrath was well at hand, Chuck knew that for sure; but the people paid no heed. Churches and synagogues were closing; and the movement to ban the Bible was gaining strength, pushing the United States more toward Europe and away from Yahweh, the only true God.

“How do you know this, Mr. Hutz? Why would God remove their protection?”

Chuck held his thoughts, pondering his answer. He rubbed a nonexistent itch on his chin, a habit; and he seemed to actually *feel* his blood pressure drop.

“I am not sure, Condi. I do not know why God decided to grant this power to me, to restore my life after the accident, to give me the gift of Hebrew and another chance. I was far from what one would call Godly. I had never heard a word of Hebrew in my life, nor did I care. Yahweh has let me see bits and pieces of our future.”

Condi’s heart beat rapidly, realizing the magnitude of the story. If the Two Witnesses *were* going to be killed in a few days, there would certainly be partying in the streets of the world. An alarm sounded from the control room and then went silent.

“As far as protection, I’m not really certain why he removes it, but it sure fits the story well. When they come back to life and float up to heaven in a cloud, at least this is what the Bible says will happen, the crowds will be astonished. Maybe this is why; to make a point. And no,” Chuck laughed, *“I cannot give you winning lottery numbers.”*

“Pardon me?” Condi said, not catching the joke and then laughed. *“Well, darn!”*

J.L. Robb

“The Two Witnesses will be left where they die for the tourists to see and rejoice at what they think is good fortune, but it is the beginning of the third and final woe. This is not good fortune.

“After three-and-a-half days, the Two Witnesses will be resurrected, rising high into the sky, covered in clouds; but the people will pay little attention to the miracle, as though blinded by the light. They will not repent. They will shake their fists at Yahweh.”

“Wonder why Samara’s sleeping so late?” Audry said, and walked into the kitchen. Ten o’clock. Samarra never slept that late.

“There will be a great earthquake in Jerusalem that day, and thousands of the tourists, the rejoicers and scoffers, will be killed.

“And unfortunately...”

Condi waited in silence.

“Unfortunately what, Mr. Hutz?” Condi finally asked.

“Unfortunately, Condi, that earthquake will lead to many others around the planet as Earth’s fault lines are altered. The earthquake will not be massive but will shake the earth’s foundations. It is the plan of Yahweh.

“There will be great waves around the world; and the oceans will be turbulent and red. Woe to the eastern seaboard of the United States when the La Palma falls into the Atlantic.”

The Condi Zimmerman studio set was relatively small and operated with a crew of five. Condi heard the three technicians chattering that Hutz was *nutz*, snickering in the background. She would have it edited out if the show wasn’t live.

Audry walked across the large kitchen, grabbing a Snickers from the dark, granite countertop and down the long hall that led to the master suite. The bamboo flooring was cool to the bottom of her bare feet.

“The Canary Islands rumor has been around for a while, Mr. Hutz,” Condi said and glanced at the time display. *“Like the Yellowstone eruption. How are you so certain of floods and turbulent oceans?”*

Chuck again scratched the imaginary itch at the bottom of his chin. He was anxious to leave. The glaring lights and the heat had taken a toll, and his head throbbed in pain.

“God predicted it. Revelation 12:12.”

Jami and Jenni looked at each other, wondering if Mr. Hutz was accurate. He did have a great track record. They grabbed the Gideons Bible from the shelf above the roll-top desk.

Audry never doubted Chuck’s stories, but the twins still held a little skepticism. Audry knew that Mr. Hutz always spoke the truth, like that guy in *Liar, Liar*. He just couldn’t help it. She chewed the caramel, almond and chocolate bar, thinking this might be the longest hall in world history. She picked up her pace.

“Want me to read it to you?” Jenni asked.

“Sure,” Jami said. “Why not? Go for it!”

Jami and Jenni opened the Bible, never too far away, but dreaded what they might read. The sea had been turbulent for almost four years, and millions had died as a result.

“But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

“I don’t see anything about the Canary Islands,” Jenni said and turned the page.

Audry knocked on the bedroom door but received no answer. She knocked again, a little more assertive.

“The devil’s and God’s great contest is coming to an end. Satan has lost and doesn’t even know it. His anger is great, and he will have a field day with our planet.”

This was especially troublesome to Hutz. He knew that Satan's coming wrath would be almost as bad as the wrath to follow. He did not want to go through any of it, and he wondered, only briefly, why he had not disappeared with the others. He knew he wasn't worthy, but who was? He definitely believed that Jesus was who he said he was, the Messiah.

Audry swallowed the Snickers, caramel now sticking to the roof of her mouth, and opened the bedroom door. Samarra lay on the bed, sleeping soundly it seemed.

"Where did Audry go?" Jenni asked, interrupting the scripture reading.

A large clap of thunder sounded in the distance; and hail began to fall in Norcross, large hailstones the size of small grapefruit, providing some much-needed water.

Four rabid dogs, wild from thirst but afraid to drink, foamed at the mouth and ran through the small patch of hardwoods behind Jeff's home and across the golf course, seeking protection from the coming storm.

Audry recognized Vinny though she did not know his name. He held the Glock, Samarra's gun she thought, pointed confidently at her small head. He was the man she saw in the parking lot that night long ago, in her dream. It had been a dream that seemed so real. He was the man who hit Jami, and Audry realized that it had never been a dream at all.

"Think she was looking for Samarra," Jami replied and headed toward the master bedroom. "Where is Harley?"

Good question, Jenni thought. Where was the Great Dane? Harley had not been seen all morning, and that was not normal.

CHAPTER TWO

The largest naval facility in the world, Naval Station Norfolk, bustled late into the night, as always. With the ability to host seventy-five ships and one-hundred thirty aircraft, the base was the home to the largest population of military personnel than any other base. By the time of World War I, the first war-to-end-all-wars ended, there were thirty-five thousand troops stationed at the base.

Off the coast, unseen by eyes but watched closely by U.S. Navy surface radar, the medical cargo ship *Mecca* drifted. Drifting ships were not unusual from time-to-time, and the radar tech made a mental note. It was unusual to have a Red Crescent cargo ship though. They usually operated only in Muslim lands. The Red Crescent Society had been Saudi Arabia's answer to the American Red Cross but with an Islamic slant.

Founded in 1963 by Saudi King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, the Red Crescent and Cross icon bore a remarkable resemblance to the American Red Cross icon. To some degree the two organizations had similarities with a motive to help those in need, only the Red Crescent Society focused predominantly in the Muslim regions rather than the entire globe.

The *Mecca* masqueraded as a humanitarian medical cargo ship carrying aid into a devastated world; but the disguised and refurbished *SS Savannah* carried no humanitarian cargo, only three nuclear-tipped missiles, thanks to a Pakistan supply of nuclear weapons for sale and North Korean ingenuity. North Korea could miniaturize a gnat.

The large ship shuddered as the three missiles ascended briefly before leveling-off and stabilizing at an altitude of twenty feet above

the waters of the Atlantic. At that altitude, the waves would hide their approach, hopefully, insha' Allah. The seas were unusually calm.

The three mid-range missiles climbed in altitude, but quickly dipped to skim the surface of the water. The Saudi insurgents danced in glee, no longer dressed in their white robes with the red crescent.

The missiles quickly turned toward their designated targets: Norfolk, Virginia; Charleston, South Carolina and St Marys, Georgia.

Though the independent warheads were nuclear, because of weight they were limited to 100-kilotons each. Six times more powerful than the nuclear device that incinerated Hiroshima, the weapons had the ability to incapacitate large areas of real estate and reduce electrical microcircuits to melted silver and other exotic metals.

The 1945 atomic explosion nineteen-hundred feet above Hiroshima killed every living creature, plant and animal, within two miles of the blast center and destroyed virtually every structure within one mile. At 15-kilotons, the bomb was small by today's standards. Fifteen *thousand* tons of explosives incapacitated an entire city. Sixty-five thousand were killed in an instant, including twenty thousand Japanese troops.

The bomb ended the Great War, and Jihad's Warriors figured to use it to start the next Great War, the *Final* war, the war that would introduce the Twelfth Imam. Insha' Allah.

A 100-kiloton bomb would incapacitate the nuclear submarine base in St. Marys, though the Spanish Flu had done that job for them. Most of the U.S. nuclear subs had been grounded, a suspicion of the *Mecca's* commander, Captain Soetoro.

After the successful launch, with one missile heading northward to Norfolk and the other two headed south, the crew of Saudi Jihad's Warriors prepared to scuttle the ship.

"Let us wait until the last minute, Captain," the young and enthusiastic sailor said, wishing he could see the destruction of the military bases before joining the seventy-two virgins in Paradise.

“Besides, the Americans may not find us. They think we are the Red Cross.”

The two men laughed at the joke, but the captain of the vessel knew it was no joke. The Americans would not be fooled, the ship would be scuttled and they would all die the death of the martyr, many leagues below the cold, dark surface of the Atlantic Ocean.

“Turn on the news,” Captain Soetoro said. “Condi Zimmerman will be the first to report the devastation on her website. We will scuttle at the last moment.”

Soon, Captain Soetoro thought to himself. Soon the Great Satan's remaining navy would be useless.

CHAPTER THREE

Tina took a seat with her two children at the Naval Station Norfolk *Coffeehouse*, and she was glad to have a seat. The place was always crowded with so many small but deadly wars going on around the world. She glanced at her watch, three minutes past midnight.

The new year had begun with no reports of terrorist attacks, so far; but she knew it unlikely that terrorists would pass on a New Year's Eve opportunity.

Naval Station Norfolk was much larger than she remembered from her visits as a child. Her entire family was Navy in some form or fashion, and both her grandpa and her father had been stationed there.

When she arrived in November right after the divorce, her responsibilities included but were not limited to, training on the proper use of the Navy's *new and refined* rail gun system. The NRG was an awesome weapons system.

Some of the greatest scientific minds in the nation had developed and perfected the huge electromagnetic firing system, including herself. A PhD graduate from Georgia Tech, she and her kids would live on the base temporarily.

The men and women she would train in the 90-day course were some of the best and brightest the Navy had to offer. She figured there would be some potential husband material in the classes, though the sailors' addictions leaned more to explosions, missiles and smart artillery and less to romance. If they could handle all that stuff, she figured, they could handle a feisty brunette.

The children fidgeted as they waited for their grandfather to arrive; and the smallest finally laid down on the booth seat, dangling her leg over the blue vinyl covering.

“Did you hear that, Mom?” the older of the two children asked.

Tina was thinking about Ben, the gentleman she met at the Physics Seminar the week before and did not hear the question. She was hesitant to get involved too quickly, and she preferred to wait until the kids graduated from high school.

“Get real, Tina,” her best friend, Virginia would say. “You mean you are not getting involved for eight more years?”

She liked Ben and thought maybe some chemistry could develop. Dark hair, blue eyes and a Masters from *John Hopkins Krieger School of Arts and Sciences*. Maybe...

“What’s that *noise*, Mama?” the young girl in the black dress repeated, alarm in her voice this time.

Sure seemed like a lot of people were suddenly falling in love, she thought, still daydreaming. Three of her girlfriends were now engaged. There was no way she could wait eight years. She *did* have to get real. The world was falling totally apart; and she did not want to die without someone, without a decent father-figure in her kids’ lives.

The noise rushed into the coffee shop, and the late night crowd was startled. Tina awakened from her daydream and recognized the sound of the Aegis anti-missile system. She was puzzled as to why they would be testing at this time of night.

“Mama?” the child repeated, startled and frightened.

The sound of the anti-missile system was not a good sign if this was not a test, and the din in the coffeehouse came to a halt. Most of the patrons ran to the windows, looking skyward into the black night at several small but intense lights moving upward at a high rate of speed.



The lone, northwestern-bound missile from the *Mecca* traveled along the ocean's surface and awaited the proper GPS signal that would steer the sword-of-death upward over the largest Naval installation in the world.

Captain Barry Soetoro continued to stare into the dark sky, wondering if he would see the nuclear explosions. The dual-warhead missile would soon separate from the body, each programmed for different targets. Captain Soetoro was unaware of the exact targets, only that it would be something Navy. He hoped that Dahlgren, Virginia, would be one target and recalled his conversation with Vinny about the change of plans.

"Bubba made a last-minute change," Vinny told him.

Vinny had not agreed with Bubba's change of plans to attack the Naval Station Norfolk rather than the Weapons Testing site at Dahlgren, but the coordinates had been changed without his notification.

"What about the defenses, Mahmud?" Vinny had asked Bubba over breakfast that morning in South Carolina. "The Naval Station will be surrounded with the latest defenses. The U.S. Navy will have more defense systems than the old lady had shoes."

Bubba looked at Vinny oddly.

"What old lady, Vinny? What are you talking about?"

"You know, Bubba," Vinny said, smiling. "The old lady with all the children who had so many shoes she did not know what to do? I love that story."

"You have that backwards," Mahmud laughed. "She had so many *children* she did not know what to do, my friend. You always confuse the American sayings. It had nothing to do with shoes, only one my friend."

Bubba explained that he wanted to light up Norfolk, irradiate the world's largest naval base and felt that Allah wanted the same. Besides, why would he want to kill the brain power in Dahlgren? They could be a big help to Jihad's Warriors... technical slaves.

Four hundred miles to the south, the other two missiles skimmed the surface of the Atlantic Ocean. The Charleston missile would take care of business before the other reached St. Marys Submarine Base; but there would be no time for the military to react, at least that had been Bubba's hope. What wasn't destroyed at the three sites would be too irradiated to be inhabited.



"Stay here," Tina commanded her two daughters and walked quickly to the window of the coffeehouse, accessing the Defense Network App as she walked across the faded tile floor. She stumbled over a loose tile and silently cursed the military budget cuts.

The sound of two more missiles and the tell-tale lights from the engine thrust filled the room. Outside, the evacuation alarms began to sound; and the coffeehouse crowd rushed out the doors, heading for shelter or for designated positions.

Tina hurried back to the table, grabbed her purse and two daughters and ran as fast as possible to their silver Honda van. The base was loaded with shelters in case of just such an event; and Tina's brain whirred like a hard drive, trying to figure out what was happening and where to go. She did not want to be trapped in a traffic jam.

"Hurry, girls," she said, breathing heavily while trying not to alarm the children. That would be impossible, as the children were already alarmed.

The *Aegis Goliath's Sword* missile system was quite capable of destroying most incoming projectiles, no matter how small or how

stealthy. Working closely with the Israelis, the U.S. Navy had modified the design of the Israeli *Iron Dome IV* Missile Defense System.

Israel expressed its displeasure when the Pentagon decided to name the system *Goliath's Sword*, the Goliath who tried to kill David almost three thousand years earlier, a Philistine terrorist and a giant of a man, Israel's sworn enemy.

Tina thought it ironic that the Pentagon would name a missile-defense system after a failure. After all, David did slay the giant Goliath with a slingshot. Goliath's large sword had been no help at all.

