

The Lord chooses to let George see who his real enemy is. George takes a step back in astonishment when he sees the demon's form. It laughs when it realizes he can see it.

"So, human ant, you can see me now. It will make destroying you more fun."

"You won't destroy anyone, spawn of Satan. I bind you and your master Satan in the name of Jesus and I claim the blood of Jesus against you."

"You think that frightens me, pup? I've roamed this world for thousands of years and I'll be here for thousands more after your bones rot away."

"You're a liar, demon filth."

"Oh, a liar, am I? I was the spirit of Jezebel. Ask your friend the coward. He was there."

He assumes the shape of a voluptuous woman, dressed like an oriental queen. Part of what he says is the truth, but the rest is not.

I speak. "He was the spirit of Jezebel, that much is true. The rest is untruth; he will walk the earth no more after this day."

The demon snarls, "Enough of this chatter. I'll do what I came to do."

He causes Green to step toward George, who takes a step back, stumbles and falls. Green jumps on top of him and tries to choke him, but the blood of Christ constrains him. He rises part way and looks about wildly. Seeing a large piece of masonry near by, he runs to pick it up, and starts to bring it smashing down on George's head. His hands stay poised above his head; he cannot release the rock.

With a roar of fury, he dashes the fragment to the ground and it disintegrates with the force of the blow. He rushes about the ruins like the madman he is, smashing whatever he sees, until finally he stops once more near George. He stands there, his chest heaving, while the demon considers what it might do. George scrambles to his feet.

"You are defeated, Satan. In Jesus' name, demon, I command you to tell me your name!"

"*NO!*"

"You will tell me, demon, in the name of Jesus!"

The sound tears from its lips. "Blel'lach."

'Now, Blel'lach, by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God and the risen Lord, I *command* you, *come out of him!*'"

"I *will* not!"

"You have no choice! I cast you out into the depths of Hell for all eternity, in the name of Jesus! *Be gone!*'"

The demon picks Green's body up from where he stands and throws him twenty feet through the air, hoping to kill him in a last act of defiance. When it turns back to George to jeer, a tear opens in the fabric of the earth beneath it and it is sucked screaming and cursing into the pit, just like the demon that had infested Art.

George turns to me, for he can still see me. "Is he really gone?"

"He's really gone, although it's not really a 'he' as I am not. It has murdered thousands of people and caused the deaths of thousands more. When it controlled Jezebel it tried to kill Elijah, whom I guarded, but the Lord would not permit it. Now, go to Green, for he is still alive. He must invite the Holy Spirit in to fill the emptiness, or a worse lot will befall him."

I step back out of his understanding.

He walks down the street to where Green's huge form lies motionless. Kneeling by the big man's side, he places his hands on Green's head and prays. For half an hour he continues without any response.

Finally, Green moans and opens his eyes. He turns his head toward George.

"I know you, don't I? I've been trying to kill you, but I couldn't. Or – I don't know if it was me, or not. I feel all funny inside, empty. I don't feel like I have to kill anymore. What happened to me? Why am I lying here?"

"A demon controlled you for many years. It made you do whatever it wanted, to satisfy its own lust. In the end, it tried to kill you. It's gone now. You're free from it."

"Demon? Yeah, I remember. My father invited one to come into me, and I agreed. I couldn't stop it from doing whatever it wanted to do. I don't know how many people I killed. That little girl with you – I cut off her head with an ax. Oh, God, help me. And that's not the worst of it – I even ate some of the people I killed. God must really hate me. Am I going to Hell?"

He sobs like a small child, his face full of shame and self-loathing. George pats the shaggy head, just as if Green were a small boy.

"God doesn't hate you. It's because He loves you so much that He delivered you from that demon filth. I love you, too, or I wouldn't be here."

"But how could you love me? I tried to kill you!"

"No, it wasn't you. I hate the evil you did under the demon's power, but not you. What you must do now is confess your sins to God, ask His forgiveness and ask Jesus into your heart."

"I don't think I can. I remember them all, all those people I killed, everything. Besides, do you think God can really forgive *me*?"

"Of course He can, and He will. Jesus died for your sins; He's already paid the price for them."

"But, how could He? I wasn't even born when He died."

"He knew you before you were ever born, and He didn't just die, He rose again. He died so you can live."

"I don't understand it all. It seems too good to be true. But – I'll try whatever you say. What must I do?"

“Just repeat the words of the prayer I’ll pray with you, and mean them, and the Lord will do the rest.”

He leads Green through the sinner’s prayer, asking at each pause if he understands. He takes longer than usual, claiming Scripture promises along the way. When the prayer is over the result is the same as it always is when it is prayed in faith. The emptiness inside Green is filled and the Lord comes into his life. His new guardian is one I have worked with many times before and we greet each other to the glory of the Father.

George spends several days with his new brother in Christ, instructing him in the truths of the Word and teaching him how to pray. Green wants to be baptized, so they travel down to the river and find a pool of water deep enough to do the job. Green is too heavy for George to lift, so the big man kneels in the water while George pours water over him and repeats the ritual words of baptism: “Green Halcomb, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen”

The water feels so good to Green that he decides to bathe himself completely. He has not had a bath, he says, in many years. George holds his nose and nods; the man’s size is not the only big thing about him.

He also washes his lice-infested furs, though George tells him they’ll probably shrink when they dry. George makes a fire to dry them, because the day is chilly and the night promises to be cold. Green is so covered with hair all over his body that he hardly seems to notice the cold when he comes out of the water.

It takes several hours for the furs to dry out enough to allow Green to put them on again. While he waits, he shares some of his story with George. Parts of it George has already heard.

“My father was the meanest man I’ve ever known. He used to beat me and my mother just for the fun of it. I was a big kid, and I eventually got to where I was almost as big as him, but I never stopped being afraid of him. Sometimes I felt like taking my anger out on the other kids, but I only did that once. I almost killed another boy who looked at me the wrong way. After that I would just go out into the woods and throw rocks or break down trees. Sometimes I would kick a dog if no one was around; I killed a couple of them that way.

“When I was fourteen or fifteen, my father started getting into Satan worship in a big way. I was his first convert. I was too afraid to say no. When I gave myself over to the demon, it felt great at first. I felt powerful, not just strong, and I knew I could frighten other people or hurt them if I wanted to. I was my father’s hatchet man; I beat up or drove away most of the people who opposed him and made the others come to his ceremonies.

“As time passed, I lost all control over what I did. I got so violent and wild that even my father was afraid of me. He made the people of the town drive me out, so I lived out in the wilderness.

“They still used me, even after I left. They used to tie people to trees where they knew I would find them and I would kill them all, sometimes a piece at a time. Once when I was hungry, God forgive me, I ate part of a woman I killed. From time to time after that I would have a craving to eat human flesh so I’d go looking for a victim.

“That’s what I had in mind for Julie Baker. I killed Gran Leighton to get her out of the way, but she prayed for Julie before she died and I couldn’t touch her. That’s when you came along. The demon hated you so much for robbing him of Julie that all I could think about after that was killing you. Whenever you’d go somewhere I couldn’t follow, I’d wait for as long as it took and follow you when you came out again.”

“What happened after you fell off the cliff?”

“Some branches broke my fall on the way down, but I hit the ground so hard it knocked me out. I don’t know how long I stayed that way, but when I woke up, the demon drove me on. I found your trail and followed

you. Several times near the caves the demon wanted to get at you, but he couldn't.

"He really meant to kill you in that outlaw place, and he made me eat part of one of the guards. It makes me sick now to think about it. He was really afraid of the warrior angel; I could tell that much.

"The last time you came out of Beckley, I lost you for a while, but I found your trail and followed you here. The demon was certain he could kill you then, but he just couldn't make me do it."

"Where will you go now? Do you have any idea?"

He waves vaguely around him. "This is my home. I wouldn't be comfortable living in four walls any more, with people around. The difference now is that I can help people I come across instead of wanting to kill them."

"You do need fellowship, though. It's hard to grow in the Lord without it."

"Oh, I may visit some of the small towns from time where you started churches, but my place is out here."

"Well, one thing you *have* to do is stay in the Word. I'll give you the Testament I got while I was in Beckley; I'll find another one.

"I found your mother, Green, in a little place up north of here. She rededicated her life to the Lord before she died."

"I knew you had seen her. I saw the grave marker you left with her name scrawled on it. At the time I didn't care, but I'm glad that she at least is with the Lord. I feel sorry for my father, but he made his choices."

Green's rough furs are at last dry enough to put on again, though they fit somewhat snugly. He and George look for food and Green returns with two rabbits. George's contribution is three snakes. Green shows no revulsion at the idea of eating them. They skin the animals and roast them on spits over the fire. George eats one of the rabbits; Green eats everything else.

They spend the night by the campfire. George shares his own testimony, especially the parts that Green doesn't know. When George falls asleep, Green still sits, staring into the fire and praying. He carries many burdens which he hasn't relinquished to the Lord.

The next morning Green tells George he has something he wants to show him. Curious as to what it might be, George follows his big friend across the shallow river into Kentucky. Once across and up the other bank, he leads George to the north along the course of the river.

About five miles upriver he turns up a stream bed, dry now, and they follow it for several more miles. Green then scales the hill on one side of the creek bed. On the other side of the hill is a small valley. In contrast to everything around, the valley is green, with a sparkling stream running through the middle of it. In the middle of the valley is a collection of buildings, with plowed fields spreading out on every side.

George stands with open mouth. "What is this place? Paradise?"

"I'm not sure. The demon would never come any closer than right here. I used to watch the people moving about or working in the fields, but I could never figure out what was so special about this place."

"It's like a little oasis in the desert. Let's go down there and talk to them!"

“Do you think we should? I mean, maybe it’s dangerous to go there or something.”

“If the demon was afraid to go there, it has to be because the Spirit of God is in that place. Let’s go; this is the Lord’s doing.”

They walk down the hill into the valley. When they are about halfway to the settlement, two men come out to meet them. One is tall and stately, with graying hair, and the other is short and plump. When they are close, they stop, smile and raise their hands in greeting.

The taller one speaks first. “Hello, brothers! Since you come here unhindered, we know that you are the Lord’s people, like we are. I’m Brother Martin and this is Brother Phillip.”

“Martin? Martin Henry?”

“Prematurely gray hair and all. Do you know me?”

“I’m George Alfred. We went to school together, up through high school. Don’t you remember?”

He smacks the palm of his hand against his forehead. “George! Of course! I used to tease you unmercifully. It’s the beard, which is very becoming, by the way. Didn’t you marry Betsey?”

“Yes, but she died of cancer. For the past several months since she died – seems like years – I’ve been a missionary, traveling from one place to another preaching the Word and helping start churches. This is my new brother in the Lord, Green Halcomb.”

“My, he’s a *big* brother, isn’t he? Never mind my sense of humor, Green. I’ve always been like this, only worse.”

Phillip speaks for the first time. “Brother Martin, shouldn’t we take our guests to meet the others?”

“Of course, Brother Phillip. I ramble on and forget my manners. Let’s go into the village.”

The four continue toward the village. As they draw near, as if on cue, the people of the place pour out into the street that runs between the buildings and walk or run to meet the strangers.

The first to greet them are three lovely little girls, ranging in age from about seven to twelve. They all run to Martin and crowd around him, glancing sidewise at the newcomers.

The youngest one hugs Martin’s leg and says eagerly, “Daddy, daddy, who came? Who is that man wearing fur Daddy? Why is that man’s skin so dark?”

“These,” Martin says, reaching down to pick up the youngest girl, “are my daughters. They aren’t used to meeting new people and every once in a while they forget their manners.

“This forward young thing is Andrea, my youngest. The middle one is Rebecca and the oldest is Jennifer. That’s their mother coming there. You remember Marcia Roberts? Come here, Hon.”

There are greetings all around. Green seems bemused by the confusion of faces, and he sets himself apart a little from the crowd. This does not last long, though, as many of the village people seek him out. The children, particularly, are curious about him.

When at last the rush of introductions is over, Martin leads them into one of the houses, which he evidently

shares with two other families. They all go in together with an air of the familiarity that comes from intimate association. He explains that they have a shortage of homes right now, and they had to set up their houses almost as barracks.

Marcia and the other two women of the house prepare a sumptuous meal for their guests, food of the sort George has not eaten in many months, even in Beckley. When they finish and sit down in the living room, George makes his thanks for the meal and turns to his friend Martin.

“Okay, Brother, you know we’re both dying of curiosity. Why this oasis in the desert? What’s behind all of this?”

Martin smiles and stretches out his long legs. “Just put in the spring crops. I love springtime, when everything turns so green, don’t you? Only teasing, George. Get comfortable and open your ears. I’ll tell you the whole story, if Marcia will let me”