



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

Once more the legions of Hell surround the Blessed City, the seat of Christ. Once more they are doomed before the battle even begins. They are purged with fire, and at last the spirit of rebellion is gone from the earth. Once more Satan is bound and cast into the pit, this time never to be released.

God the Judge of all appears on a great white throne and the multitudes of all the races and all the ages are spread before Him. Billions upon billions they come, from first to last, from Adam to Anti Christ. One by one they approach the throne, and one by one they are judged. The Lamb opens the Book of Life, and those whose names are not found written there are gathered on the Lord's left hand. The Redeemed of the Lamb are gathered on the right.

Some who come are astonished that their names are not to be found.

"But I always went to church!"

"I did good things all my life."

"I was a preacher! Don't you know me?"

The Lord sadly shakes His head to each; none can stand the measure of his or her deeds without the balance of the blood of Christ. The ranks of the damned are vast; the saved are few, but the joy of the redeemed is as great as the universe.

Families are separated, to be families never again. Those who are the Lord's belong now to the family of God, and none other. They will not mourn the loss of those they once knew in the flesh; the time for mourning is past.

A great wailing and crying commences from those who now remember and regret every lost opportunity, every passed moment. The record of their lives is played before them over and over, bare of all delusion or deceit. They understand finally that they have followed the Great Liar all along, not the wise counsels they imagined of their own conceit.

They have new bodies, all, and like the bodies worn by the Redeemed of the Lord, these bodies will never die. Though they burn, though they thirst, they will never be consumed. Theirs is a torment that has no end, their inheritance from their father Satan. There is no distinction of class here; all are equal, all are lost, all are damned.

For eon past eon they come, and hear the record of their deeds. The arrogant, the proud, the fearful, the weak, the mighty and lowly. Hitler is there and John Smith, the self-styled Pontifex Maxima and Han Wu. There seems no end to them, but the end finally comes. One moment they are standing, weeping, beyond the throne; the next, they are gone, transported to their eternal torment. Forever removed from the presence of God, they are utterly forsaken and without hope. The place of captivity prepared for Lucifer and his angels is their home now as well.

The earth as it was can never serve as an eternal home, so full has it become of corruption. The Lord sweeps it away, and burns it in the same fires as time, which is no more. With a Word of His mouth, God makes a

new heaven and a new earth, forever to live there with his Chosen, the Elect of Christ. Like a bride the Eternal City comes down out of Heaven from God.

The wedding feast of the Lamb is come, the Bride of Christ bows before her Lord. The marriage is everlasting, a covenant that will not be broken. God will live forever with Man, and God the Son surrenders the throne to the Father, for His work is accomplished.

There are reunions in a multitude of places, as old relationships are made new in the Lord. The Disciples of the Lord are together again, and theirs is a special place near the throne. Church members, family members, friends long separated come together again. The streets of the city resound with happy greetings, even as anthems of praise forever rise to the One who saved them all.

I have several faces to seek, for I have been the guardian for many in the ages of the earth. Elijah never knew death; him I have seen often, but there are many others. George is the last, but in Heaven there is no longer first or last, best or worst. In the course of things, in the flow of the River of Life, I see him as well, and we rejoice in the presence of the Lord.

He has found his beloved Betsey, and they are sharing all of the times together they once lost. They bring me into the circle of their love, in the Lord, and we share in the joy of knowing face to face.

“I used to wonder what we would talk about in heaven, when we’ll have all of eternity to do it, but I know that now. I never get tired of talking about Jesus. I’ll do it with everybody in Heaven, then I’ll start all over again. Every time there will be something new to talk about, because the Lord is always new. I guess, to start off with, Betsey and I will spend a few million years sharing together, but that’s up to the Lord, too. Just knowing that He’s always here means I can go anywhere and never be away from Him.”

“You know what I’d like to do, as the Lord pleases?” asks Betsey, his companion.

“Yes, I do, Dear One, and I quite agree. The Lord agrees, too, so let’s do it.”

The heavenly city is large, large enough for all the Redeemed of all the ages, but the earth is much larger. They descend through the levels of the city to one of the outer gates, which are never closed. The wide world awaits.

There is a stream of coming and going, for many walk this path. This new earth has no oceans, no barriers of any kind. The valleys are deep, the mountains are high and the plains are broad, but the Light of the Lord reaches them all. George and Betsey pass places that look familiar, but never the same as they once were. As they walk, and the Lord walks with them, they come to understand that the care of this place is their charge. They are stewards, just as men were stewards of the old earth before they dishonored their charge.

Each animal they see, each flying bird, has its own name, a name that they give. They stop often, not because they need to rest but because of the beauty of a certain place, a lovely grove of trees or a gurgling, leaf-shrouded brook.

From time to time they meet others on the way, some whom they know and many that they come to know. While they stop in one place, Martin and Marcia join them, and from that time on they travel together. This is my trip as well, for this is a time of discovery for me, too. I salute my own kind of the angelic hosts as we meet, for I know them all in their multitudes.

Together we wade through a stream, which we could just as easily walk across, and relish the squishy mud that squeezes between our toes. We climb a high mountain and look out across God’s world, though we could just as easily see it from the heights of the skies.

George remembers how his Sunday school teacher taught him in the long ago that all of his time in Heaven would be spent playing a harp. The others laugh at the memory. They come to understand something else as they walk; this earth they walk will be forever new, every time they see it, just as the Lord always gives us a new song every time we sing it.

Once as we travel through wooded hills we hear gay laughter up ahead of us. In a few moments we meet three beautiful women and a tall, handsome man. Martin and Marcia recognize them at once.

“Andrea! Jennifer! Rebecca! Trent! Over here!”

All of the Henry children come rushing to their parents. George and Betsey smile as they watch the furious round of hugs and kisses, then it’s their turn. Trent, they know, was Marcia’s child who was taken from her before he was born.

When things have settled somewhat, George asks Jennifer what happened after he saw her at Max’s farm. She smiles at the memory.

“Mom and I slipped out of the room just before the soldiers rushed in. When we got outside we managed to slip through the men who were wandering around the farm after the gun battle. Just when we thought we were safe, though, we heard some men coming straight toward our hiding place in the bushes. Mom gave herself up so they wouldn’t find us both.

“Later, our guide, the one that took us to the sanctuary, came and found me and took me back to the others. We stayed there throughout the time of the Tribulation. None of the things happening around us affected us except for the people that came to us from time to time for help. When the end came, we were taken up with Christ, but we didn’t come back for the Millennium, of course.

“By the way, has anyone seen our guide since we’ve been here? We would all like to meet him and thank him, and I know Mom and Dad would, too.”

I speak up for the first time. “When we get back to the city, I’ll introduce you. He speaks often of you.”

We meet others on the way, like Max and his beloved Louise, Bob McCrattick and others from the church and the Bakers. George is especially fond of Liz Leighton, no longer Gran. His thrill of thrills comes, though, when he meets his mother Letitia on the way. She is as he remembers her, only young and beautiful again. She knows Martin and Marcia, and Betsey, and soon knows the others as well.

When this first walk is finished in its meandering path, we come into the heavenly city by the eastern gate; we had left by the western. As soon as we’re inside we enter anew into worship and praise. When the Lord’s time is right, we seek out the guide the others have wanted so much to meet.

His appearance is not what they expected, but they recognize him, nonetheless. He wears the robes of an angelic prince, which indeed he is. What Michael is to the people of Israel, Mitrael is to the people of what was once eastern Kentucky. He was, and is, my overlord in the angelic hierarchy, and he reports directly to Michael himself.

The greetings are warm and unhurried. They have no need for hurry now, in anything, since hurry is a product of time. Mitrael relates to them many stories of the saints he has nurtured and watched over, all of whom are now with us. He also tells how the hiding place in the wilderness came to be set up. It was he who talked with the old caretaker, who is also here, and persuaded him to make something special out of what had once been a school.

The school has a story of its own. Many of its former students and teachers are with us, including the pastor who helped lead George to the Lord. What George and the others weren't told before is that Liz Leighton was also a student there as a young girl. It was there she found Christ. She had an encounter with an angel there at the school, her own guardian, and he told her many of the things that later came to pass in her life. Armed with the insights and training she gained from the school, she returned to Bentown, got married, gave birth to Mary, lost her husband to an early death, and endured the years of Satanic attack instigated through Brett Harman.

There are other connections that George and the others did not see at the time. Green Halcomb's mother was a cousin of Miriam and Henry Camp. Miriam had met her once and felt impressed to add Bessie to her prayer list. By extension, she also prayed for the town where Bessie lived.

Stan Lee married Carol Camp, who is Miriam's first cousin. In all of the excitement of the revival, George never bothered to find that out. The two cousins had played together often as girls and when Carol turned away from the Lord as an adult, Miriam continued to pray for her.

The people of the caves, and the church in Beckley, were martyred during the Great Tribulation. George had seen them all many times during the Millennium, but the subject of kinship and relationships had somehow never come up. Since the Lord's understanding is perfect, though, He wants His children's understanding to be perfect as well.

Other things come to the light. Max's wife, Louise, was related by marriage to Jack Baker. It was she Liz Leighton was seeking when she was killed. Louise had met Jack when he was a boy, though at the time he didn't remember who she was. She had also met Liz Leighton, who took a real liking to her. From that time on, Louise prayed for Jack and for Liz. She was also Marcia Henry's godmother, and she prayed faithfully for Marcia when her own parents would not.

Max, himself, was saved at a revival in which Marvin Reynolds was the evangelist. He held Marvin and his wife in special regard for many years and was delighted when he finally had a chance to really help them. He was also Betsey's Sunday school teacher, responsible for leading her to the Lord.

All of these things Mitrael speaks of, and the others are amazed at the tapestry the Lord has woven from the relationships He helped to forge. As they learn more, they will be even more amazed, for the tapestry is much larger and grander than they could ever expect, even now.

There is a new wave of praise and triumph. I step aside now, and let the song be sung.