

THE SAR'IM CHRONICLES

BOOK 2: THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR



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THE SAR'IM CHRONICLES

Volume I: THE BOOKS OF WAR

Book 2: THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

דורוקס חולס ס'חמץ צמ סקורד



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THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

INTRODUCTION

The Sar'im Chronicles is the title given to a series of books that will be divided into five distinct volumes. The first of these, *The Books of War*, contains three books that deal primarily with the theme of the eternal conflict between the powers of angels and demons. *The Books of War* set forth the history of this conflict, from its origin until it became fully manifest on Earth, bearing not only on the spiritual characters that are its principle players, but also the humans who are caught in the middle.

Volume 2: The Books of Conflict, deal with the theme on a more personal level. Gone are the grandiose battles that take place in the Heavenly Kingdom, above the Ark, at the Tower of Babel. The three books that fall under this heading show how individual characters, such as Abraham and Moses, deal with the spiritual world and its factors, and they reveal the fact that individual choices have a great impact on the history of our world.

The third and fourth volumes, likewise, present unique viewpoints to the spiritual controversy, but the fifth volume is unique even among these. *Volume 5: The Books of Ages* present disjoint episodes from the history of the warfare, nevertheless they hang together on the central idea that Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus the Christ) was ordained from the foundation of the world to present Himself as a Sacrifice for fallen man. This eternal truth has had an impact both before and after the incident actually occurred, and the age in which men are living matters not nearly as much as the quality of that man's character as it relates to the divine purpose.

— David Aguilar

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Here is a list of the major individuals who are mentioned within this book:

The Malakim – The “Virtuous” Host

Adonaim – The Archangels

Michael – “Who is Like El” – N/A
Gabriel – “Strength of El” – Cherubim
Raphael – “Healing of El” – Malakim
Camael – “He Who Sees El” – Ko’achim
Uriel – “The Fire of El” – Ophanim

The Seraphim – The Blazing Ones

Chief: Israfel – “The Burning of El”
Jehoel – “Mediator of El”
Hadarniel – “Benevolence of El”
Mataquiel – “Sweetness of El”

The Cherubim – The Near/Wise Ones

Chief: Puriel – “Flame of El”
Za’afiel – “Wrath of El”
Zephon – “Looking Out”
Raziel – “Mystery of El”
Shomeriel – “Guardian of El”
Mageniel – “Shield of El”

The Ophanim – The Thrones

Chief: Zadkiel – “Righteousness of El”
Gedael – “Fortune of El”
Nahamiel – “Roaring of El”
Asael – “Made by El”

The Or-Ikari'im – The Principalities of Light

Chief: Ithuriel – “Discovery of El”
Anael – “Glory of El”
As'fael – “Added by El”
Remiel – “Mercy of El”

The Or-Ko'achim – The Powers of Light

Chief: Lahatiel – “Burning of El”
Andiriron – “Might”
Shabbatiel – “Rest of El”
Mataniel – “Gift of El”

The Malakim – The Virtues

Chief: Uzziel – “Strength of El”
Lasetiel – “Bearing With El”
Adriel – “My Help is El”
Dumah – “Silence”

The Hashmallim – The Dominions

Chief: Zahariel – “Brightness of El”
Tahariel – “Purity of El”
Matmoniel – “Minister of El”
Tamael – “Perfection of El”

The Shedim – The Demonic Host

Satanim – The Archdemons/The Opposers

Satan – “Adversary” AKA Helel/Lucifer (Light Bearer)
AKA Azazel “Strengthened by El” – Gibborim
Sammael – “Poison of El” AKA Typhon (Northern Darkness) – Ko’achim
Abaddon – “Destroyer” AKA Turel – (Rock of El) Gibborim
Arioch – “Fierce Lion” AKA Raguel (Ally of El) – Ikari’im
Nisroch – “Fierce Eagle” AKA Sarakiel (Prince of El) – Peelogim

Peelogim – The Discordant Ones (Ex Seraphim)

Chief: Petahel – “Impulse of El”
Kemuel – “Assembly of El”
Kokabiel – “Star of El”

Gibborim – The Mighty Ones (Ex Cherubim)

Chief: Azrael – “Helped by El”
Sh’fiel – “Spy of El”
Gadriel – “My Helper is El”

Erelim – The Valiant Ones (Ex Ophanim)

Chief: Zagzagel – “Splendor of El”
Imriel – “Eloquence of El”
Melejael – “The Fullness of El”

Ikari’im – The Principalities [of Darkness]

Chief: Cerviel – “Arm of El”
Tutresiel – “Piercing of El”

Ko’achim – The Powers [of Darkness]

Chief: Kaspriel – “Sorcery of El”
Zaphkiel – “Knowledge of El”

Shavoorim – The Broken Ones (Ex Virtues)

Chief: Salathiel – “Asked of El”
Tarfiel – “Nourished by El”

Leeshlotim – The Controlling Ones (Ex Dominions)

Chief: Kafziel – “Speed of El”
Zakariel – “Remembrance of El”

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

PROLOGUE: BEKHEER (SELECTION)

Fear not.

I am called As'fael (Added by El), and by order of the Throne of Heaven, I have come to speak with you this day. I am a member of the Malakim, the angels. More specifically, I am an Ikari, what you would call a Principality. As the history of the great conflict draws to a close, it has been decreed that more and more light shall be poured out upon the humans, for they are the ones called now to overcome, even as we once overcame, the forces of sin.

They say that the best place to begin is the beginning, but you already know something of this subject. The Cherub Za'afiel has shared with you much knowledge concerning the war that took place before the Heavenly Throne, and because of this I can speak more freely and explain less than he did. My mission now is to continue that record, to let you know the details of what occurred after the fall of Lucifer and just why things are as they are now.

Perhaps there is still a way I can begin at the beginning. I can let you know how I came to be involved in the conflict. I will be far more brief than was Za'afiel about the Heavenly war itself, but it has been some time since you have heard of this matter and it will be good for you to refresh yourself a little.

As a Principality, the chief of my order was once the angel Cerviel. When the Archangelic Cherub Lucifer began to spread his poison among the members of the Host, Cerviel was among the first to resist his efforts. Whenever the rapidly weakening Cherub would speak to us about his fears and concerns, the Chief Principality's voice would be heard in protest. It soon became apparent that Cerviel's resistance began to consume him, however. The rest of us were engaged in learning the applications of the forces ruling the coming physical Creation, but our leader slowly began to divert his focus. His was a crusade to stop the evil from polluting Heaven, even if he would sacrifice himself to do it.

I could understand his desire to silence Azazel, which Lucifer was also called. Wherever the Covering Cherub employed his powerful voice, discomfort and sadness followed in his wake. Every angel felt the venom – every angel felt the pain of the distance that was

becoming apparent between the two classes: Lucifer's followers, and those who wanted nothing to do with his claims.

At the same time, Cerviel's protests seemed in a way just as painful to hear. His anger at Lucifer made the rest of us horribly uncomfortable, and soon we could not bear to hear him speak against Azazel any more than we could abide the words of the Archangel himself.

One day, just before the conflict truly broke out, Cerviel's passion overwhelmed him and, leaving his place among us, he flew off to challenge the deceiver directly. The chief Ikari never came back to us.

My main area of specialization has always been electricity. I have always been particularly drawn to that phenomenon; to the study of it, and its applications. It was while engaged in this pursuit that I received a summons by Anael, another high-ranking member of my order. As I arrived at the location to which I had been called, I found him there speaking with Michael, the highest of the Archangels, and the intercessor between the Host and IaH Himself.

The Archangel saw me as I drew near and smiled – a gesture that never fails to draw from us a response, and then He rested His hand gently on Anael's shoulder before departing. The Principality bowed as El Michael ascended into the air, and then he looked down uncertainly at his left side before turning to face me.

“Cerviel has fallen,” he said to me, a look of sadness on his face. This was an expression the Host was becoming more and more used to seeing, but it was unsettling, and heartbreaking, each time.

Somewhere deep in my essence I was not surprised, but Anael's sudden words still hit me hard and, unable to speak, I only shook my head in bewilderment.

“El Michael just informed me that I am to take his place.”

“So you will be the chief of the Principalities until this is all straightened out?” I asked, still clinging to the hope that the disaster hanging in the air could be resolved in a peaceful manner. None of us truly had a firm grasp of what it meant for an angel to “fall,” but we were learning day by day.

Anael's hand moved almost unconsciously to his forehead, and then he said, “Michael has given me quite a lot of troubling news, my friend. Those that have chosen the way of Lucifer... those that have sided with the deceiver... they will have to leave Heaven.”

“Leave Heaven?” I asked. These were new words, and new thoughts, and all I could do was repeat the words Anael had said, trying to attach familiar meanings to them.

“You know about the Creation project, don’t you, As’fael?” I nodded. I knew this was the reason I was studying electricity, though many of the Host were not yet aware of the purpose of their new tasks. “Then let me show you something.”

Anael raised his hand and a small globe of some kind appeared, floating above his palm. In a flash the globe expanded, opening up a passageway to a truly remarkable “place.” Everything about my being was instantly drawn to the indescribable energy that flowed from, through, and into what I saw. “What is it?” I asked, after staring in silence for some time.

“This is the Void, As’fael,” Anael responded. “This is the place where IaH will establish His new creation. This is where the rebellious Host will be sent.”

As Anael closed his hand the Void vanished from my perception, and he said to me, “I am going to do something that will require great trust on your part.”

Trust... this was an unusual word. The meaning was not unusual, but asking for it was almost unknown. When we were assigned to a task by IaH, we “trusted” that this would produce a beautiful new effect in the Kingdom. When the chief of our Order, or one ranked higher than we, summoned us, we “trusted” that the matter was important. This was automatic, however... understood. Nevertheless, I nodded – this day was already turning out to be a very unusual one.

The new Chief Principality made a motion toward his left hip, then I heard a sharp sound fill the air. It was something like a buzzing, something like a whistling, but the next thing I knew, a long line of flame burst forth from Anael’s hand. “Stand still,” he commanded me, and then he stepped forward, striking me in my chest with the ethereal, blazing sword.

There was no real pain when the kherev pierced my being. It was not, however, without effect. I felt a tremendous heat rising in me, sparking along my arms and my wings, and filling me completely. I closed my eyes, yet all I could see was brilliant light. Finally I fell to my knees, unable to contain the overwhelming energy released by what had just occurred.

As I received the insight to let this force pass through me rather than into me, the pressure on my being faded somewhat, and I felt the fire moving towards, and being concentrated in, my right hand. I grasped an object that I perceived to have appeared in my half-open palm, and a blade of fiery light shot out from it, similar in appearance to that with which Anael had smitten me.

As I opened my eyes, I found myself better able to control the dis-ease that had been coursing through my being since I had first become aware of the conflict in Heaven. New insight flooded my mind, and I became aware, as I had never been before, of the sorrow I had been feeling... and I wept. I also felt an unusual pressure in my forehead, but I was not to understand that until later on. Anael's kherev faded, and he stored the weapon in a sheath by his hip, and then he placed a fraternal hand on my shoulder.

“You are reborn in fire, As’fael,” the Principality said, and he raised me to my feet. “Now you can feel, and understand, the pain of all Creation; and now you can begin to be equipped for the days ahead.” The new Chief of my Order explained to me the use of my sword and the great responsibility of my opened eyes. With great solemnity I thought on these things.

“How many angels already know their swords?” I asked Anael, after I understood the situation a little better. “Very few,” he replied. “All will learn before the end, but IaH will decide which of us will teach the others, and which of them will be able to receive it first.” He then looked downcast again, and he continued, “Among Azazel’s friends there are also many who have kherevs. For those whose eyes are opened, yet whose places are still with him... who can say what will become of them?”

At the end of that week we gathered for our Meeting, to worship IaH and to see our companions, many of whom had been busy in various parts of the Kingdom for several days. Among those whom I had not seen for almost the entire week were the Virtues Koliel (Voice of El) and Tarfiel (Nourished by El), and the Dominion Tahariel (Purity of El). These were three of my dearest friends, and we were always pleased when the tasks to which we were assigned placed us within close range of each other.

After Matmoniel had led us through a time of worship and the Seraphim, led by Israfel and Petahel, had graced us with a song of immense beauty, the Cherub Puriel appeared before the assembled Host to speak. He told us about the Creation project— and all, including Lucifer, were in attendance to hear. After he explained to us some of the details of the new race, mankind, he created a gigantic globe of energy above the Throne, much larger than the one Anael had shown me, and then took us all with him into the Void.

The Cherubim in general may have a larger view of things than we Principalities do, but I saw all I could contain! The energy was so raw, so pure, so beautiful; and throughout the chaotic majesty of it, there was a single ribbon of order, and it was IaH... and He was preparing it for something amazing.

There were tears of joy in every eye as we returned to the Heavenly plane... Our Father is limitless in His ability to bring us happiness.

As the Meeting concluded some time thereafter, we all left with new knowledge – we were all aware of how to transfer ourselves at will into the Void, and we all had a profound sense of worth – knowing that we were to have a hand in bringing all those wonderful promises into being. As we all prepared ourselves for the coming week of labors, Tarfiel, Koliel, Tahariel, and myself discussed the matter in excited tones.

For my part, I could not refrain from telling them about my conversation with Anael. I told them of Cerviel joining with Lucifer's growing rebellion, and of the new Chief Ikari's concerns. I told them about him striking me with the kherev, and I showed them all my own sparkling blade. Koliel and Tahariel looked at the weapon with wonder, and I could see their minds working to understand... but Tarfiel viewed the blazing object as if he'd seen it before, and with a certain emotion that I had not previously encountered.

I wondered though; how was it that I could understand the nature of the rebellion so clearly, and they could not? How was it that I received my own blade so readily, yet I knew deep in my essence that if I were to force this knowledge on them now, it would do more harm than good? Anael had called me specifically for some reason, and I trusted that he, or Michael, or whosoever had inspired him to do so, knew what he was doing.

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CHAPTER 1 - PARES (A BREACH)

It was said afterwards that every angel was approached during the conflict by Lucifer or his followers. It happened in my case in the following way: I was in one of the Towers of the North, and I received a whisper from outside. You have had this explained to you already: a whisper is the way by which angels communicate over distances, without needing to be in each other's presence; or they may also use it when close together, but no other being will be aware that a message has passed between them. The one who spoke to me was Raguel, the Archangel Principality, considered to be above even the newly promoted Anael in authority.

I rapidly left off what I was doing and descended the structure to speak with my summoner. Raguel, as all the other Adonaim, or Archangels, was glowing faintly with the fire of the Shekinah, the Mystery Presence of IaH which is manifest in the Heavenly Tabernacle, but which is felt to some degree throughout all of Heaven. He was an imposing figure, but there was no sense of intimidation in the Kingdom, and the abominations that would lead to all such concepts were still in their infancy. Nevertheless, Raguel's appearance commanded respect from all the Host, and even in his fallen form he has not lost this air of natural strength. To gaze upon Arioch now, the demon he would later become, is to know great fear – if one has not the courage of IaH within him.

“You wish to speak with me, Adonai?” I asked him, drawing near. He nodded, and then moved his hand to the hilt of his kherev. Raguel followed my eyes, and then he smiled at me in a way that seemed both satisfied and somehow cold. “So you know about these,” he said, releasing the handle.

I replied that I did, and he continued. “I doubt, however, that Anael explained to you the true power of these weapons. Do you find it rather unusual that we have possessed them all this time, and yet... it was not until Lucifer opened his own eyes that we became aware of them?”

“They are powerful, yes,” I said, considering his words carefully, “but what profit were they to us before if they can only be used now to rectify a problem which had not existed until Lucifer ‘opened his eyes,’ as you called it?”

“Is that what Anael called this situation? A problem?” He spoke slowly, carefully, and with a gentleness that seemed somehow forced.

“Do you not see the pain in the faces all around, Adonai Raguel?” I asked, mystified that the Archangel seemed to be ignoring what was so widespread, so obvious, so unexpected and so new. For what was “pain” in this indescribably perfect Place? Why should we have any reason to expect the least bit of discomfort or dissatisfaction where everything we wanted, everything we could think to want, we had? But so outside of our experience were these new feelings and events that IaH had to create new words for them, and our minds had to stretch to their limits to grasp what was happening around us. Even after the conflict, most of us had little idea of the depths of Heaven’s wounds until we saw the war played out again and again upon the earth.

Even so, we were all aware that something was wrong, that something was different, and for Raguel to ask me such a question, implying that all was going according to plan, had me confused. He did not respond to my question, however, but instead said only this: “In a few days Lucifer will speak for himself about these new events – and will demonstrate visibly this power of which I speak. The kherevs are so much more than you think, As’fael. Perhaps when you see for yourself, you will be of a different mind.”

Without another word the Archangel Principality spread his two wings and departed. As he vanished from my view he whispered to me, “I will let you know the time of the meeting later.”

True to his word, a short time before Lucifer’s meeting, Raguel whispered to me concerning the place where a large group of the Host had been instructed to meet the Covering Cherub, and it was a special day for more reasons than one. Even in his falling state, we obeyed the illustrious messenger without question, considering his words to be almost as if from the Throne Itself. Angels in general are natural servants, however; had the lowest of us called such a meeting, we would all have attended in much the same way, although we would likely have asked the reason for the unusual request.

I was with Koliel at the time, and though he was not specifically summoned to attend he went along with me; and we were both surprised to find our friends Tarfiel and Tahariel waiting there with the others. We did not have time to do much else other than exchange greetings, for soon after my arrival the Seraph Kemuel stood near the altar and declared the meeting open.

With a few words thanking us for our attendance, and reminding us of the purpose for the meeting – that Lucifer wished to state his side of the growing controversy – he turned our attention towards the Cherub, who approached flanked by his friends Typhon and Turel on one side, and Petahel the Seraph on the other. It was already known to me that the Ko’ach (Power) Typhon and the Cherub Turel were with the discordant Archangel, but Petahel’s presence there was a surprise. He and Lucifer may have been

close, but I did not know that his loyalty had extended to the six-winged angel's following him down this winding path.

Lucifer began to speak. He said, "My brethren, I know the confusion that has been resting upon you all since the day I truly awoke. But I have come before you today to set your minds at peace. I will tell you all that I have seen, and will hide nothing, so that you will know I have done nothing in secret, nor do I wish to conceal anything from my family the Host."

These were strange words, and they made me wonder – if he did not wish to hide anything, why did he only summon some angels to this meeting and not others, and why in such a distant location, far from the Throneroom and Temple... and where was El Michael? Lucifer's speech continued, however, and I did not have much time to muse on these thoughts.

"Many of you have heard this about me, and it is true, that I became dissatisfied with the tasks to which I was set by the Elohim. Michael and IaH have ever kept us occupied with Their labors, and I was the first to find joy in the works which I did in Their Name. You have also heard much about the Creation project, that new environment within the Void for which we have all been working to prepare recently. I understand this undertaking very well – better than any standing here before me, and yet, when I offered my assistance to the Union, I was refused."

Lucifer paused for a moment, measuring the crowd's reaction, and then he moved forward. "For a long time, I said nothing. I asked myself many times why They would not allow me to help – was I not valued, after all? The more I considered the matter, the less Their decision seemed pleasing to me. It occurred to me some time later, that... They had made a mistake!"

This time, the crowd did react. The word Lucifer used for "mistake" was very much like the word for "wrong," which at the time we thought of as something which was not yet complete. The idea that the Elohim IaHVeH and El Michael had some aspect to Them which was not complete certainly caused a stir in the listeners. The Archangel pressed on, however, "Yes, it is possible. And when I understood that not everything was as I thought it had been, my very eyes seemed different. If our Elohim could err in small matters such as this, how then could I trust anything They had previously told me? And I began to question the validity of all that I knew."

"I began to test the limits of those things which we have never done before. They were small things at first, such as performing a task in a way which had not been specified, and then eventually leaving things completely undone... but soon I decided to make one final test. Before the very Shekinah over which I have charge, I removed my veil."

Many angels seemed on the verge of leaving at this point, and I could see that Uzziel in particular, the Chief of the Order of Virtues, was becoming upset. Nevertheless, we had all begun to hear him speak, and would listen a while longer, even though that last thing

he said shocked me to my essence. We had long felt that to behold the Sacred Presence without our veils would be to change something important – to not only show a lack of reverence to the Throne, but also to violate a very basic principle of our existence. No angel that existed would behold the Shekinah with naked eyes. Had we thought of that in such a direct way, we might naturally have come to the following conclusion: that an angel which beheld the Shekinah with naked eyes... could not exist. As if to reflect that very point, Lucifer continued.

“When I saw that no harm came to me,” he was saying, “I perceived the great freedom of operating outside of the Throne’s influence. Even in that most sacred spot, I was no longer a servant of Heaven. I was no longer an angel... I was something else. I saw that I was no longer Adonai, but EL.”

Though Lucifer paused at this point, not a sound could be heard from the speechless multitude. Some were simply taken aback that the proud Cherub had even given voice to such thoughts, but others seemed intrigued... and listened with interest to the Archangel’s next few statements.

“I saw that I alone had learned the secrets of IaH, that He IS only because He says He is. Well, I say the same: I AM. And when I saw that I was, I looked at myself, and I found my power, I found my kherev.” Most of the angels did not understand the term, but Lucifer plowed onwards, now in the grip of his own impassioned monologue. “I am here to tell you all that you too can be. You can join me, and I will lead you into wakefulness, for I will ascend to where IaH truly dwells. I will exalt myself above all of His angels, and rule, with all those who will join with me, all of Heaven. I will take all of you with me who wish to go, and we will be like the Most High Himself!”

These words were as thunder in our ears, and were so strange we had a hard time understanding the speaker. Ignoring the rising murmurs as the listeners’ unease began to come to a peak, Lucifer said, “Standing with me before you are some of those who have chosen to grasp freedom. They have displayed the courage to truly exist, and to fulfill their destinies. But freedom will change you, it will be like awakening from a dream, and everything, including yourself, will seem different... better. You will not be the angel you were before, just as these with me are not the same as they were before, and for this reason, they have chosen to alter their very names.”

Typhon and Turel stepped closer to Lucifer as he continued. “For the sake of freedom, the arbitrary rules which have kept us submissive for so long must be destroyed. In light of this, Turel shall henceforth be known as “Abaddon,” the Destroyer. My loyal friend Typhon, likewise, wishes to be known as Sammael, and...” As Lucifer motioned towards the two Seraphim Kemuel and Petahel, the crowd’s discomfort became too much to bear, and it suddenly seemed as if every angel gathered there was speaking at once.

This “noise” was also a new thing... and certainly an unpleasant one. The Seraph Jehoel stepped up near the altar to reason with his two Order-brothers; but even as he spoke, and then turned his attention to the Cherub and the Power that had changed their names,

reminding them of the warnings that El Michael had given to us (both directly and indirectly), Lucifer broke in and said, “Enough of this! If Michael’s warnings were true, we would have been unmade already. You, Jehoel, have seen me stand before you in the Temple unveiled, and yet here I AM!”

As the Archangel turned to the crowd and continued his rebuttal of Jehoel’s admonitions, the Chief of the Order of Malakim, Uzziel, spoke, and he seemed to speak for the crowd in general. “We will hear no more of this! Never have we felt want for anything, Lucifer, until you began to speak against the Most High. Now, we all desire peace! We have known Michael, and we have known you. If your beliefs have led you to the envy in your words, the hardness in your eyes, the dull shine in your wings and the discontent in your essence, then I want none of it. Nor, should I think, would any intelligent angel. Your character testifies to the error of your judgment, Adonai.”

His words seemed to shake the majority of the crowd loose as if from a hypnotic force, for no one could deny that these things were apparent in Lucifer’s bearing. With new perspective they considered Uzziel’s words, and as one they departed, deciding that this matter had taken up enough of their time. It was also significant in this: that it was the first time Lucifer’s wishes had ever gone unfulfilled by the Host. By leaving before he had dismissed them formally, the citizens of Heaven were beginning to forever throw off their loyalty to one considered their leader in many ways, and I went with them. I could feel the burning of Lucifer’s words striving with the peace I had experienced when I discovered my kherv, and I did not wish to tarry.

Tahariel came with me, but Koliel and Tarfiel remained. What happened next at the meeting, I can only describe based upon Koliel’s interaction with me later on, and he reported it this way:

After we left, less than half the original crowd remained to hear the conclusion of Lucifer’s speech. Although the Archangel was visibly angry that we had departed, he nevertheless turned his attention back to those who had stayed. He used us as an example of mindless servitude, seeking to convince his listeners that they were the more courageous ones because they did not follow Uzziel. What my friend told me next truly caused my essence to quiver...

He said that those assembled there seemed to be entranced, and when Lucifer drove home the point that they would all be free from their current “slavery” to Heaven’s government, all the angels assembled there threw their crowns at his feet! This is an act of worship that we reserve solely for the King of Glory – for during our weekly meetings at the Throne we will cause our diadems (thin circlets of gold that symbolize our existence) to materialize, and we cast them near IaHWeH in an act of complete surrender and dedication. Koliel was one of very few who did not proceed with this, but he confided in me as we spoke about the occasion, “It was so very strange... his words were burning into my mind. And yes, when the other angels were casting off their crowns, I made mine materialize also. But even as I raised my hand to my forehead to draw it off, I was horrified at my almost unconscious reaction, and I stopped at once.

Standing beside me, it seems as if Tarfiel was having the same internal struggle. Lucifer's influence was amazing, but thankfully we were both able to resist."

Koliel's next few statements really hit me hard... he described an even worse occurrence (it seemed to me at the time) than the rebellious angels' worship of Lucifer. Jehoel the Seraph had not left with the others, but like Tarfiel and the other Virtue with whom I was speaking, he had remained behind. Now, however, having witnessed this awful idolatry, he stepped forward in protest. At that moment Lucifer drew his blazing weapon and slashed at him.

Anael had done much the same to me, however Jehoel received no holy fire from his wound. Instead, the awful, corruptive energy of the rebel's kherev drove the Seraph to the ground in pain. It may be that Lucifer had not planned to actually attack another angel with his fiery sword, but he had certainly intended to display it, for I remembered Raguel's words that the Archangel would give a demonstration of the "true power" of the blades. I could not believe, however, that this awful event had actually been planned by Azazel.

The reaction of the crowd as Koliel conveyed it to me was distressing. There was no outrage, no protest, only a wonder at the ability of Lucifer to silence his opposition in such a dramatic way. Koliel and Tarfiel had seen the object before, for I had shown them mine, but to many of the assembled Host it was a new thing. Tarfiel, it seems, was among those who desired the power of the blade – for the description that my friend gave me of his reaction seemed similar to his bearing when I had first shown them my own kherev. Though he had not cast his crown at Lucifer's feet, he drew nearer when Jehoel was cut, and stared at the wound that had appeared in the injured Seraph, looking back and forth between him and the tapering column of fire swirling outward from Lucifer's fist.

Just then the Cherub Za'afiel flashed into view and stood between Azazel and Jehoel, as if to defend the crippled angel. Before he could act, though, Lucifer swung his kherev around and held it up to the newcomer's throat. Although he was powerless to act, Za'afiel stood his ground, and both the Cherubim's eyes blazed at each other with an intensity that none gathered could mistake. They remained like this, locked in each other's gaze, for some time. After that, surprisingly, Lucifer lowered his sword and, murmuring something that Koliel couldn't hear, he sped off followed by the four angels that had stood with him near the altar.

Za'afiel stood staring after them for a while, but then he motioned to Zephon, another Cherub who stood nearby, and together they took the wounded Jehoel away. After that, Koliel told me, he and the few remaining angels dispersed. So ended the strange meeting on that day. If there was any single event I could name which seemed to really spark the conflict that ensued, it was that one. Not only did Turel and Typhon change their names on that day, but so did Lucifer. From then on, he was referred to by the loyal Host as "Satan," the adversary.

I had intended my recollection of the war to be more brief than this even, but I feel that the events I have described are of key importance, for it is only in following the course of Lucifer's fall that you can understand the spirit which has motivated the course of earth's history also. It is this same being who is responsible for the wasteland that has been made of your planet, and perhaps my memories can give you a more clear view of exactly why this is.

Also of importance for your understanding is that this Great War in Heaven broke out even as the Creation was being brought into existence. As I mentioned before, the day of Lucifer's speech was a very special one. It was the first day of the physical universe. On that day we had been taken to the Void, and IaH had shown us His first wonder: light. From those swirling patterns of chaotic energy He had produced order; and when this "light" appeared, it illuminated something that was waiting to be... it was the earth, already in existence on some level, but without a definite "form" in terms of physical laws, and not nearly the wonderland of the Throne's beauty it was shortly to become.

The day after Lucifer's meeting, we saw this "earth" given its form, and a separation was made of various layers that surrounded it. On this day also the Cherubim understood something that was not to become clear to the other Orders until later: the Void, they saw, was not a separate reality; it was an all-encompassing Universe, including both our Heavenly Realm and the physical plane which was even then being generated by the Throne.

That was the day the war broke out.

Shortly after we returned to the Heavenly Plane from beholding this wonder, the Seraph Petahel, one of those who stood with Satan the day before, broke off his praise and left the temple followed by many of the angels who had already taken their position with the rebels, or who were merely curious as to why such an unusual event had occurred. El Michael had still not left His place within the Throne, and the six Archangels (leaving Israfael out) remained in their circle also; but aside from them, when the Throneroom had cleared, there were twelve of us left.

Other than *myself*, there was *Za'afiel*, the Cherub who had stood between Lucifer and *Jehoel* the day before. This latter angel also stood close by him, his painful experience having equipped him for the coming conflict. *Israfael*, who had left the circle to lead the praise with Petahel, drew his kherev and started moving towards the door. *Anael*, of course, was there; and so were seven others: *Raziel*, *Matmoniel*, *Zadkiel*, *Shabbatiel*, *Zahariel*, and *Uzziel* who had led the loyal Host away from the scene of Satan's violence. With great joy, I saw that *Koliel* was also there. Apparently my friend had considered carefully the previous day's events, and had received his kherev also. He and *Uzziel* began to speak to each other, and I assumed therefore that the Chief of his Order (the Virtues) had been the one to facilitate his sealing.

Koliel smiled at me, and touched his hand briefly to his forehead. I began to understand that the strange pressure I had felt between and above my eyes at times since receiving my kherev had something to do with my decision to remain faithful – something to do with the sealing I had experienced.

Israfel, who had been near the door looking out, turned to the rest of us and said, “The time has come.” We all nodded, knowing what he was talking about, and then he went and returned to his place in the circle of Seven around the Union of IaH and Michael. The rest of us knelt towards the Throne and prayed. The six Archangels and Israfel, who had temporarily taken Michael’s place there standing around the Throne, had their eyes closed, as still as statues, until our prayer was concluded. When our voices fell silent, Gabriel, the Cherub who had taken Lucifer’s place as the Shekinah’s guardian some time before his speech, opened his eyes and spoke to us.

“Go now, and prepare the loyal Host for the battle.” His glowing eyes closed again, and we turned to do as he said. When we drew near the doorway, we heard the arch demon’s voice raised once again in his blasphemous declarations. He denounced the wondrous beauty of the Creation as a trick, a distraction from the true issue, himself. He declared that mankind, the inhabitants of the new material plane, would be placed above us in authority, and that he for one would never allow that to happen. As a large number of the crowd moved to stand under the banner of Lucifer, Za’afiel crouched down, his eyes blazing with anger. I also desired to jump to the Throne’s defense, but Koliel put his hand upon my shoulder. He didn’t speak a word, but his presence there calmed me.

All around, as Lucifer continued, the loyal angels were having their eyes opened, and they in turn began to plead with those on Satan’s side to forsake their new master. Raziel, one of the twelve, saw his best friend standing with Lucifer, and Za’afiel could not find his fellow Cherub Sh’fiel at all. As we looked all about, preparing to go out and calm the fears of the angels and to make them aware of the purpose of their fiery blades, I realized something that I had completely lost sight of in the days before.

Raguel. The Archangel Raguel had been the first to approach me in Lucifer’s name, yet he was absent during the previous day’s speech. He had, at heart, been one of Satan’s most devoted supporters, and yet we had just left him in the Throneroom with Michael, Gabriel and the others! I realized his deception, but it was already too late to do anything about it.

Even as I turned an uncertain eye back to the entrance of the King’s chamber, deciding on whether or not to return there, the sound of commotion was rippling up from among the loyal Host and the fallen ones alike. Lucifer was glowing brightly, having just concluded a fervent speech, and to the complete surprise of most of us, his wings sparkled and fanned out, becoming twelve shining limbs. We had never seen anything like him before, and we had never heard words like these that he was uttering before, for even his own followers were driven to their knees in fearful worship.

In unison, we flew toward the loyal ones, moving as quickly as we could to prepare them, to warn them of what was about to happen. Koliel and I moved back and forth, looking for our friends Tahariel and Tarfiel among the great multitude. We only found one of them.

As he hovered above the wondering crowds, still glowing with stolen energy, Lucifer raised his voice and said, "Behold, it is possible to stand against the Throne, and to overcome!" He motioned towards the Throneroom, and I looked back once again, knowing somewhere deep within my essence what was about to happen. Suddenly a loud explosion split the air. Gabriel came blasting through the roof, obviously hurled upwards by a tremendous blow. Looking into the hole he left behind, I saw the sparkling wing of a Principality, and knew that my suspicions were confirmed.

Raguel followed the Archangel out, and descended upon him, even as he hit the ground hard. He was followed by Sarakiel, another Archangel, and his six Seraphic wings cast a shadow over the assembled Host as he swooped down, his kherev burning brightly. Everything seemed to happen at once after that.

The other three Archangels appeared from within the Throneroom and flew to Gabriel's defense; Israfiel also joined the pursuit as the two fallen Adonaim sped off into the air. Za'afiel wasted little time and, joined by Puriel, went directly for Lucifer, while my friends Koliel and Tahariel united with me in seeking Tarfiel. We knew where we would find him, and that it would not be pleasant.

All that first day the three of us searched. Together, we were able to stand against Gadriel, a powerful Cherub, and we also combined our efforts to defeat Kaspiel, a Power, and Kokabel, one of the fallen Seraphim. At one point Cerviel, the former chief of my Order, dove past us as we traveled on wing and he attacked Za'afiel from behind. The latter angel had just stepped out of the Temple, and I did not even have time to shout a warning before the traitorous Principality wounded him. Fortunately the loyal Cherub did not seem badly injured, and was able to hold him off.

I would have gone to his assistance, but from behind me Tahariel uttered a cry as he was assaulted by Azrael, one of the most powerful of the Cherubim. Koliel and I turned quickly to aid him, but even the three of us combined were no match for this demon. With lightning speed he wounded both of my friends, and laughing contemptuously at a "mere Ikari," he descended to work further mischief on the ground.

There would not be much more fighting that day, however, for my attention was diverted from my injured friends by yet another unusual sight. Gabriel, who had done little by way of actual combat, had been undergoing some unusual changes throughout the course of the day. Now he rose up into the air, surrounded by a glowing orb of energy, and no angel seemed able to approach him.

I saw El Michael, who had apparently joined the battle a short time before, and my essence was filled with joy. He flew up near the glowing Archangel and we saw Lucifer,

still sporting his twelve bright wings, moving in to meet Him. Rather than drawing his blade El Michael said, "Withdraw your angels for a time." As the day was almost over, the two agreed to a respite, and both sides ceased to fight until the following day.

That evening, Michael healed all the wounded, including Tahariel and Koliel, and then He, along with the Archangels and many of the remaining Cherubim, started to make plans for the next day's conflict.

In spite of the rebellion, there were no delays in the Creation project. IaH's will would be done, and even this most awful occurrence would not slow His unsearchable timetable. As two of the Archangels had fallen away and Gabriel was enclosed in that unusual sphere, Za'afiel, Raziel and Zahariel were chosen to complete the Circle. Once again Israfel replaced Michael, who entered the Union with IaH and took us into the Void.

On that day, dry land appeared out of the watery sphere of the earth, and the first life was formed. We spent more time than we had previously on the physical plane, for after the third day's creation was completed, we were bidden to go and see for ourselves the beauty of the new project. This may have been partly in response to Lucifer's claims that it was all an elaborate illusion, but it was a wonderful gift to us all nevertheless. Even the fallen Archangel's own followers could not but doubt his claims when they saw for themselves the undeniable evidence of the Throne's majesty in the wonders of earth, great and small.

Israfel and the Seraphim broke out into song, forgetting for a moment the battle, the great wounds of sin, and the wreckage of Heaven; all of it was lost in our praise, for even the least of us was drawn into the joy of the blazing singers. Even when the song ended, and we knew that we must return to finish what we had started the day before, it was with a sense of peace, for the most part. We knew we were fighting to preserve the beauty we had always known, and the beauty of a world to come.

I would go on longer, if I had the time. The elegance of that place... the way all its forces fit together so completely; a masterpiece of logic, and concepts so new that we are still unraveling their mysteries. But I know we must move forward, for my message to you has not even truly begun yet. But soon.

When we returned to Heaven, the loyal angels that were gathered together began to execute the plans we had laid out the night before. Those with Lucifer were also returned to the Kingdom, to the location from where they had been drawn into the Void, and they started moving towards the Throneroom, eager to drown their uncertainties and raging fears in mindless action.

Due to the gaps made in the Heavenly Government by the rebellion, several Orders needed new Chiefs. Israfel from the Seraphim, Uzziel of the Malakim, and Zahariel of

the Hashmallim had remained loyal. Gabriel had also, but he was now an Archangel – so Puriel filled his place. I would have thought of Za’afiel to take that position, but since he had been one of the Twelve sealed, there appeared to be another job for him. Israfil, Raziel, Uzziel and Zahariel were sealed before the conflict began, but since they had already been Chiefs of their orders, they remained thus. Raziel did give up that title thereafter, when he became a Cherub, but he was replaced by another pre-sealed angelic Throne (Zadkiel), thus maintaining the balance. Za’afiel has already explained that unusual event to you, and I will mention it later, so I need not relate it here.

At this point, Anael, who had been acting as the Chief Principality in Cerviel’s absence, gave the job over to Ithuriel, who had not been sealed before; and since Typhon, the Chief Power, had also rebelled, Lahatviel took his position.

In case this has confused you, I will write out for you the final names of the Chiefs of the Orders, and also the names of the Twelve that were sealed. Of course, all the Archangels, including the newly-appointed Gabriel, were also considered sealed – which made the fall of Raguel and Sarakiel so much more of a surprise to those of us who had some foreknowledge of these events.

<p><u>The Archangels</u></p> <p>Gabriel Raphael Camael Uriel</p> <p><u>Temporary Archangels</u></p> <p>Za’afiel Israfil Raziel</p>
<p><u>The Chiefs of The Orders</u></p> <p>Seraphim: Israfil (Blazing One of El)*</p> <p>Cherubim: Puriel (Flame of El)</p> <p>Ophanim: Zadkiel (Splendor of El)**</p> <p>Ikaru’im: Ithuriel (Discovery of El)</p> <p>Ko’achim: Lahatviel (Burning of El)</p> <p>Malakim: Uzziel (Strength of El)*</p> <p>Hashmallim: Zahariel (Brightness of El)*</p>
<p><u>*Members of the pre-sealed Twelve:</u></p> <p>Za’afiel Israfil Raziel Anael</p> <p>As’fael Matmoniel Zadkiel Uzziel</p> <p>Jehoel Shabbatviel Zahariel Koliel[†]</p>
<p>**Raziel was there during the conflict, but Zadkiel replaced him soon after.</p>
<p>[†]My friend was to change his name also, but I will tell you of that shortly.</p>

The Twelve of us who had been pre-sealed moved forward to await the demonic attack; The Seraphim, Thrones, Virtues and Dominions were right behind us, the Chiefs of their Orders having been positioned at the front of the conflict. Behind them the Principalities and Powers followed, and finally the Cherubim.

I didn't see Tahariel for most of that day, and barely saw Koliel, as I was in the front with the eleven others, but later fought alongside the other Principalities. There was not much time for reflection in any case; Satan's angels, driven by a renewed frenzy, pressed their way toward the Throneroom. It was about the time that the demons breached the line of Seraphim that we learned how to throw our blades.

We could strike at those who had gotten past us by hurling our kherevs towards them, but they soon learned the ability for themselves – and other things besides. I saw Cerviel and Raguel, the two mightiest of the Principalities, both fallen, pursuing Anael. Ithuriel came to his aid, and the new and former Chiefs of the Order held them off. As I moved in to help, I saw a ripple of energy pass between the two demons, and Raguel sent a burst of fire toward their opponents.

I perceived that the forces we had recently learned could make effective tools, and so drawing nearer, I sent a bolt of electricity between the opposing pairs, knocking them apart. Although it had some effect, the results were not lasting. "Don't do that, As'fael," Anael said to me, even as he was being thrown backwards by the strength of Cerviel's next attack. I obeyed, of course... but did not understand fully why until later on – these gifts were not to be used in that manner, and Anael and Ithuriel seemed to be among the first to understand this.

As the two prepared to make a last ditch effort to drive off their fallen adversaries, and I moved closer to help, we were all distracted by the appearance of the remaining Archangels who, with Michael, had remained in the Throneroom when the battle began. Phanael had taken on the appearance of a lion, Raphael that of a bull, and Camael was in the form of an eagle. Although we would not understand the nature of these shapes until later on in the creation, they were certainly very effective against the demonic hordes. The only one missing was Gabriel, who had remained suspended in his mysterious globe all through the night.

When Raguel saw Phanael soaring in the sky above him, he abruptly turned away from Anael and Ithuriel, and went to challenge the transformed Ophan. Cerviel, on the other hand, went after the angel who had defeated him the day before, the Cherub Za'afiel, whom he struck to the earth with an attack from his thrown blade.

As I was not currently engaged in combat, I decided to seek out my friends. I found Koliel on the ground, his wings having been injured by a previous opponent. He was fighting against Kemuel, one of the main speakers from Lucifer's meeting of two days before. It may seem at first that a Malak against a Seraph is a bit unbalanced, but my friend was sealed, and was very good with his blade besides. Also, Kemuel appeared to have been the recipient of several injuries, perhaps even some from the day before.

Whereas Michael and Raphael had restored all the loyal Host to their full strength the previous night, Lucifer's efforts at regeneration were nowhere near as complete.

I whispered silent encouragement to him, and then went off to find out if Tahariel could use my help. He was in the air, and although he had not been sealed previously, he had taken to the truth very well, and the Hashmal was having no problems against his own foes.

That left me free to turn my thoughts to Tarfiel, our fourth friend, who had not seemed himself since shortly after this controversy began, and had not been with us the night before. As I searched for him, I encountered Imriel, a fallen Throne, and the four-winged warrior put up a fierce struggle. Though I managed to wound one of his lower wings, he was able to remain aloft, and it took me some time to put him away, opening a glowing cut in his side with my sword.

I did find Tarfiel, but when I did my hand moved instinctively towards my veil. He and the mighty demons Abaddon and Azrael had combined their strengths, and as a team were cutting through the ranks of the loyal Host. Camael and Phanael, the eagle and the lion, saw what was happening and immediately struck at them, driving the three apart. Camael took off after Azrael, and Phanael and Abaddon were soon locked in combat. Seeing that Tarfiel was free to help his ally, I drew my glittering sword with a heavy essence, and winged in to intercept.

"As'fael," he said, looking at me with absolutely no perceivable emotion.

I could not think of anything appropriate to communicate to him, so I merely waited for him to approach. I did not have to wait very long, and soon our swords had crossed as enemies. We were about evenly matched, and dueled back and forth for some time, until I looked up and saw Lucifer himself chasing the Malak Adriel across the sky. Glowing, flapping twelve sparkling wings, the arch demon was a terrifying sight. He turned his head towards a particularly tight area of combat, and said, "Take Michael first!"

Several things seemed to happen at once. I saw that El Michael had joined the battle, and was holding off an impossibly large number of demons, I felt a sting in my wing as one of Lucifer's swirling swords (for he had more than one under his control at that time) spiraled down and clipped me, and I registered Tarfiel's desperate dive towards my being.

There was a flash of light, and a searing spiritual pain. My perceptions seemed to shut almost completely off, and I heard a loud crash when I must have hit the Heavenly Plane, but I didn't feel anything. Everything went dark; for me, the battle was over.

When next I opened my eyes, everything seemed a little different. No angels that I could see were fighting, and I sensed that something significant had changed. There was still a sense of war in the air, and somewhere above me, I heard the ringing of kherevs clashing together. Raphael, still holding to the appearance of a bull, was standing before me, and I stood up and thanked him for sealing up the wound in my chest. He lowered his head in acknowledgment, his sparkling horns dipping, and then he spread his wings to return to where he had been. I looked up, following his flight, and noticed that just about all the Heavenly inhabitants had their attention focused on what was going on.

Michael and Lucifer were fighting each other.

I was still recovering my senses, and the very next thing I heard was a shout of “IaHshua!” from our Prince. As I flew upwards, the crowd parted for my approach, allowing me to see what was happening. As I looked upon the scene I saw Michael holding a gloriously bright kherev; Lucifer was on the ground, dazzled by the light shining upon him from the Lord of the Host. With a loud voice that could be heard echoing all through Heaven, Michael and IaH pronounced sentence on the rebellious archangel, declaring Himself to be the only and true Elohim, and then the glowing Cherub swooped down to strike Azazel with His sword.

Even as El Michael drove home the attack, I heard a strangled cry from behind me, and turned around to see Gabriel’s eyes burst open, flickering with a strange fire. As Lucifer bellowed in pain below, the orb around the Covering Cherub began to pulse and sparkle. To the amazement of the onlooking Host, the demonic adversary began to change into a hideous, red dragon, a true reflection of his fallen nature, and bands of energy began to ripple in the air where Gabriel hung. The first groans from the walls of the Temple stirred the Heavenly plane, the sounds of a final travail.

The terrible, horned dragon lifted itself into the air, snarling and roaring; Lucifer’s ability to speak seemed to have been removed. All the Host fell backwards in shock, but as the monstrosity approached our Prince, He said with a shout, “It is finished!”

Even as the sound of the Union’s declaration faded from the air, Gabriel cried out again, but this time aloud. He had been curled up into a ball, but now his hands were in fists, and he kicked out, straightening his body, and stretching out his wings, arms, and legs. This spasm ruptured the mysterious globe, and the Archangel fell to the earth.

The next thing I knew, a blast of pure, brilliant fire raced from one end of the horizon to the other, covering everything; structures and angels alike were engulfed as the Temple which had contained the Shekinah decomposed into dust. I had been healed by Raphael, so the flood of light did little to me but force my eyes closed for a time. All around me, though, the loyal angels were being restored.

The demons, on the other hand, were finding True Light’s glory torturous. As I descended back to the ground through the glowing air, I saw Michael and Gabriel opening the pathway to the Void, and even as the buildings around us crumbled into

dust, the demons were seemingly pulled into the opening in Heaven's substance by an irresistible force.

The Ophan Raziel collapsed as he tried to shield his friend Zagzagel (who had fallen away) from the Throne's judgment with his lower wings. He fell to the ground, burning. Za'afiel tried in vain to convince his fellow Cherub Sh'fiel to be healed in the glory of the Presence. Zephon, another Cherub who had been loyal to Lucifer for a while, but who did turn back to the Throne, opened his mouth wide and a torrent of flames burst forth; afterwards there was a look of peace on his face for the first time in many days.

When the last of the rebellious Host was cast out, the Void's entrance vanished and Michael bore the exhausted Gabriel towards the Throneroom. The transformed Archangels regained their original form and began to comfort those of us who were left, many of whom were weeping openly, and some of whom were just standing there in shock, looking at the wreckage that was our home.

Tahariel and I found Koliel staring blankly into space, and as we approached, he whispered to us, "Heaven is silent now, my friends." Koliel never spoke a word aloud from that day forth, and the angel once called "The Voice of El" has been known as Dumah (Silence) ever since.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 2 - RAPHA (HEALING)

Brief as I have been thus far, we seem to be caught up now, for it was at about this point that Za'afiel ended his record. He did begin to speak a little about the subsequent days of Creation of the physical universe, and it is here that my message to you truly begins.

On the fourth day, by IaH's command and the combined activities of the Principalities, Powers and Dominions, the sun and the moon were formed, and the countless stars were stretched out over the sky. "And let them be for lights in the firmament of the Heaven to give light upon the earth," concluded the order of the Union; at that point, the ambient light which had been present since day one faded away, and the energy was concentrated into specific locations.

When we returned to the Heavenly plane after beholding this latest wonder, our minds stretching out from beholding the sheer magnitude of the universe, we began to rebuild the Temple and the Throneroom. The marvel of the physical heavens was a comfort to us; for the stars were representative of ourselves, and IaH seemed to be showing us, by this scene, that He had us all in His hand, no matter how many of us there were. With this in mind, we set about our new labors, and the much needed healing began.

On day five, we saw an entirely new form of life than that which we had seen during the previous stages of the Creation project. Just as our Father had spread His glory over all the physical plane the day before, so now He concentrated His attention on earth, and brought forth the creatures of the oceans, and those of the air. From the tiny fishes to the Leviathan serpents, we gazed at the newness of this place and its inhabitants. From the splashing of the waves against the solid ground, where the water met the earth, the avian races emerged. In these we took delight: the small, fluttering kinds and the majestic eagles which were likened unto Camael's transformed state.

The fish gloried in their underwater world, feeding contentedly on the plant-life created for their use, and the birds took joyful refuge in and sustenance from the trees that covered much of the land. The sounds of living creatures filled our ears, and even on that day the earth was busy with its blessings.

The demons also were present, and looking upon the unfolding wonders with great interest. What their state of mind was, and what Lucifer told them, I have never desired to know. I can only imagine the sense of loss that they experienced as they saw the parts they were to play in this glorious act given to others, and the beauty that they had once longed to express dying surely out in their essences. I have heard it described as “growing cold,” of having the fire that is always burning in our beings gently becoming less potent, until a mere shell is left.

We completed the repairs to the Throneroom, and did a large amount of work on the Temple that day. The former job was much shorter, as only the roof had been severely damaged, but the Shekinah’s housing structure needed to be restored from the foundations up. At the close of that day we were eager to do more; but although no “physical” repose as you understand it is needed by the Host, Michael ensured that we were always rested for the tasks to which we were set.

When the final day of the Project arrived, we knew that something particularly special awaited us on the physical plane. As we passed into the Void and descended upon the earth, we heard the voice of the Union filling all of space with Its authority: “Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind: cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind.” Before our eyes, we saw them rise out of the ground... knit together by the same elements that had formed the plants, but with properties altogether distinct.

Like the fish and other water animals that had been created the day before, these creatures had sensory organs, by which they perceived us and responded to our presence. They moved about freely on the earth as did their aquatic counterparts in the waters of the oceans and rivers. They were created “male” and “female,” in two varieties, a principle which was to hold many lessons for us in the days to come.

I thought that the project was complete now... for we had in space, surrounded by the universe’s new wonders, a tiny sphere upon which IaH had poured out His special glory; a lasting and almost self-sufficient monument to Heaven’s King. But then I remembered the promise of “mankind,” spoken of by both Puriel in his wisdom, and Lucifer in his bitterness. This was to be the pinnacle of the project – for all these beautiful constructions we had seen so far were only leading up to man, were only created for his benefit and use.

And the Union’s speech filled our perceptions again, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” So said Michael and IaH, united by the Shekinah’s glory. And so it was done... the winds blew together dust from the earth, and we saw it rise into the air.

Fire from heaven poured down upon the floating elements, and water from the sea sprang up to take part in this ultimate and precise operation. The Cherubim and we the

Ikari'im were perhaps the only ones who could even begin to appreciate the process at this point, although all of Heaven was soon to marvel at the intricacy of what was occurring before the eyes of the assembled Host.

The raw particles were torn apart and reformed. The tiny "cells" were strung together like pearls on many strings, and the numerous organic systems were wound together and enmeshed. The creation of the other forms of life was after the same pattern... but we had never seen it like this. We had never seen just how much detail had gone into all that had come before; how could it be that our Lord was so great?

The heart and organs were encased within the network of nerves and vessels; the bones were strengthened and set in place. The muscles were tightened unto the body, and finally the skin was molded over this new form. In this manner was mankind created.

Of water and earth they surely were, but there was more still to come. The wind died down, and the body settled gently to earth. It lay still, not moving about as did the other beasts of the land. Michael descended through the Void and stood beside the lifeless man, still glowing brightly, as He did when in battle; still in mystical Union with the Throne.

"Adam," He said, and then breathed out gently. The soft glow of the Shekinah flowed from the Prince of the Host, and entered the nostrils of the one lying on the earth. His chest expanded, taking in the Presence, and then his heart began to beat within its container of bones and tissue. His lungs drew breath again, this time of the pure, sweet air of the earth, and his skin was covered over by a layer of pure but mild light, as if reflecting the glow of the Archangel standing before him.

Adam opened his eyes, and beheld his Creator.

The beauty of the Seraphim, the wisdom of the Cherubim, the authority of the Ophanim, the knowledge of natural laws enshrined by the Ikari'im, the strength of the Ko'achim, the moral responsibility and grace represented by the Malakim, and the drive to maintain the order of Creation taken from the Hashmallim... these seven great truths combined to form mankind, truly the children of the Elohim.

Adam looked around, and saw the other angels looking on, and his face changed... he smiled. "Elohim," said Adam, looking back at Michael. He replied, "All that you see is yours, Adam. You and your descendants will fill the earth, and subdue it. You will have authority over the fish of the sea, and the flying creatures of the air, and all that moves over the surface of the world."

The man did not say much just yet, but we could see that he understood what was being said to him. Though in his short existence so far he had never seen most of the things to which Michael was referring, he was able to grasp what our Lord was saying to him. Michael motioned towards the plants that stood close by and said, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree bearing

fruits; and it will be your food. So it is also with every bird and the beasts of the earth, to them also have I given the plant life for food.”

Adam, it seems, was created hungry. Having said those things, Michael summoned another one of the Cherubim, and said to the man, “This is Puriel. He is one of my angels, and will speak to you about this world, and all the things in it.” At that point the Prince of Heaven leaned forward and kissed Adam on his forehead, and then ascended back into the Union to conclude the day.

We were all most curious about this new creation, but we knew we had to return to our work on the Heavenly plane. While Puriel and a few others remained on earth, the rest of us went back to resume our reconstruction of our home, our minds filled with both wonder and questions.

Just before the end of this sixth day, the final restoration of the Temple was completed. As the job was concluded the Heavens shook... but not with any destructive force. With a rumble, the light of the Presence sparkled into view, filling all the Kingdom with its glory, and then it was drawn up into the highest places and poured into the Tabernacle. The entire structure burned with holy light, so much so that I, and all the angels with me who had been repairing it, wrapped our veils over our eyes.

“Rest,” said the voice of the Union to all of the Host, and we gathered together to again look upon the earth, and the man who now occupied it, as the evening drew near.

When the sun rose gently over the area upon which Adam slept, Michael and all of the rest of us again descended unto the earth to spend this final day of the creation week with the physical beings. Already Adam had learned much from Puriel, Zephon and the others who had stayed with him on the sixth day, but he was no less full of questions upon his awakening.

He had already grasped the basic concepts governing his life: eating, drinking, resting and so on... and was busy learning the names of the angels with whom he spoke. “Today is a special one,” Michael said to him. “Every seventh day the Host will descend to the earth, and here we will remain with you, while you also rest from the tasks you are performing and commune with us.”

As Michael had been separate from the Throne since the night before, the Archangels as well as Za’afiel, Israfel and Zahariel were free to join those of us on the earth. Zadkiel also joined us. Since the end of day three, Raziel had kept to himself. He had remained in Heaven, mourning the loss of his friend most deeply – and in a way mourning all those who had fallen away. In trying to protect his fellow Ophan Zagzagel, he had been injured by the flames of the Presence, and his two lower wings were singed. Zadkiel had therefore taken his temporary place around the Throne, but to our surprise, the wounded chief of the Ophanim was also present among us.

As Gabriel and the other newcomers went to speak with Adam for the first time, Raziel approached Michael, and knelt before Him. “Your ways are just and true, El Michael,” he said, “There was nothing else that could be done for those who rebelled.” Many who were there began to weep softly at the still-fresh memory of their companions, including Tahariel, who stood beside Dumah and myself. Michael looked over the Host and said, “Let there be peace among you today. This is a time for healing, and a time for rest from the labors of this week; for not only I, but you also, have worked very hard. You, who have been faithful and true, enter now into the joy of the Elohim.”

At this most gentle of reproofs, the Host was comforted, but Raziel remained kneeling before the Prince. His two upper wings were folded above his shoulders, but his two lower wings lay charred and withered, sprawled on the ground behind him. They were the only visible reminder among the Host of the effects of Lucifer’s sin.

“I will not fix your lower wings,” Michael said, looking kindly upon the kneeling angel. By now, Adam and the other angels had come close by, and were looking on. As I wondered why our Prince had said that, He continued, “For now you have learned wisdom, Raziel. Now you are near.” Before the shining citizens of IaH’s Kingdom, including its newest, human member, the Chief Prince placed His hand upon the penitent angel’s shoulder, and He said softly, “Be healed.”

As Raziel smiled, probably for the first time in many days, the two useless limbs twisted and shrank still further, pulling themselves free of the angel’s being, and falling unto the earth, one on either side. The two relics faded away, drawn down into the rich earth to be buried and covered over by life. Raziel himself stood up, now a Cherub, and as he did so, his sparkling diadem appeared on his forehead.

He cast his crown down by Michael’s feet, and the rest of us followed suit. Adam looked upon the scene in wonder, and then knelt before the Elohim, as yet unaware of his own crown.

This was the first time we had paid Michael Himself such respects. True, He was often revered while glowing brightly in the mystical Union with IaHVeH, but never before had He received worship in this form. As the vessel by which all things were created, He had begun to reveal to us His special connection to the Throne, and we started to understand that He, in a way we had never realized before, embodied as an Angel all that IaH truly was.

It was on that day also that the Principalities and Powers began to call themselves respectively the Or-Ikari’im and the Or-Ko’achim: the Principalities and Powers of Light. The chiefs of our Orders had fallen; and thus we were granted new names by the Throne to cover over the shame of our leaders, to remove the guilt of which we had all become aware. Our eyes had been opened, you might say, and we saw that without our chiefs we were “naked.” But now, with new designations, we were each reborn as an Order to carry forward the work that our previous authorities had cast aside.

As Israfel began to sing, causing us all to sparkle with delight and causing Adam's eyes to widen upon meeting such incredible beauty, my mind was drawn to the demons, whom I knew were watching from a more remote location, as they had been all the days since their exile.

On the first day of the new week, the Elohim caused a garden to rise out of the ground. In a section of the earth known as Eden, where four rivers intersected, the names of which are "Increase," "Springing-forth," "Rapid," and "Fruitfulness," the most beautiful of the trees and flowering plants were made to grow.

Even as this lovely scene was unfolding before us the demons moved to contact IaHVeH once again. It happened in this manner: Azazel and some of his followers were wandering the garden, even as it was being formed, and when the chief of the fallen ones reached the place where the four rivers intersected, he looked about and beheld the beauty around him – surely the most astonishingly appealing section of all the wondrous globe.

His features were set in their customary scowl, his brows furrowed in deep thought. There had been no rest for the mighty creature since his fall, and even the visible aspects of his being reflected this. Upon his chest there has remained the mark of Michael's kherev, and all his followers likewise bear to this day the scars of their rebellion, though for a time they were temporarily healed – but that is another record. Up until this point they had spoken few words to each other since their banishment to the physical plane, unable to bear one another's conversation, unwilling to be reminded by the accusations they all bore to each other of their miserable estate.

Lucifer himself was the most hated of all the rebels. His own followers would have risen up against him, but for this – they had no one else to follow; they were bound by the weight of their own sin to the one who had ensnared them. They had forgotten what freedom was, and when in Azazel they saw a measure of strength, they bid him to command them, despite their bitter feelings towards him.

The fallen Archangel closed his eyes in silence to shut out the abundance of beauty and life around him in Eden's garden, and as he did so the Seraph Israfel soared overhead, flying amongst a flock of birds who were singing IaH's praises in their own innocent way. Lucifer opened his eyes at the sounds and looked upward. Seeing the angel above him, he lifted up his voice and said, "Israfel!"

The six-winged messenger slowed, and then turned, looking down to see the company of demons standing amidst the foliage. After a moment of silent observance he said, "What can I do for you, Adonai?" His sentence, and his tone, implied more than he had said. What could any of us do for the fallen ones? What could anyone do for those whom we had respected as brothers, friends, and even superiors in some cases? In those few words of Israfel's musical voice were conveyed the emotion of all Heaven.

“Would you not spare a moment for the one who once taught you to sing, Seraph?” The angel considered for a moment, and then descended to the earth to speak with his former leader, confident that IaH’s mercy would keep him safe from both the violence and the influence of the demonic spirits.

As he landed on the ground and folded his wings about him, the Seraph was approached by Lucifer, Sammael and Abaddon. Without exchanging the usual cordial greetings common to the Host, the arch demon said, “I wish to speak with Michael.”

“I do not know if such a thing is possible,” the Chief of the Seraphim said, looking uncertain. “I will mention your request to the Prince when I see Him, and then I will come and tell you what He says.”

Azazel nodded and turned away abruptly, ending the brief meeting and dismissing the loyal messenger with a wave of his hand. His two followers likewise followed him without a backward glance. Israfel took to the air and continued on his way. Upon arriving at the location of the Host’s gathering, he approached Michael who, with Gabriel, Puriel, Raziel, and Zephon, was speaking to Adam about what was shortly to become his new home.

Dumah and I were also nearby, and heard his report, and also what Michael said to him in response. “We shall not speak of such things here on earth, but I will grant Satan access to Heaven, and there we may speak.” At that point Gabriel looked thoughtful, perhaps whispering with the Prince, but then he nodded and ascended first into the Kingdom through the Rift that he created.

Turning to Israfel, Michael said, “Summon him.”

Israfel bowed and departed and many of the angels, including my two friends and myself, returned also to the Heavenly plane to see what would happen next.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 3 - ETZIM (TREES)

When we arrived by the Throneroom, we found Gabriel standing apart from all the others while the three remaining Archangels – Camael, Phanael (who had begun to call himself Uriel) and Raphael – opened up a rift to allow the return of Michael and the entrance of the demons. Those of us who were nearby eagerly awaited the arrival of the visitors from earth.

As the whispers began to go forth from those there assembled, the crowd steadily increased, and by the time Michael and the others made their entrance through the passageway a large multitude was standing by to witness the event. As the Prince, along with Raziel, Puriel and Zephon arrived, I saw Gabriel flying up into the air to hover above the Throneroom. When the demons began to come through, a flash of light sparkled across the Archangel's body, and when Lucifer himself stepped onto the Heavenly plane, that brilliant orb of energy that had encased him during most of the battle flared up and once again enveloped him.

Only a few of the fallen angels had accompanied their master to the meeting, but these looked out over the serene landscape, already restored by our tireless efforts, and were visibly moved by their memories of the home they had forever lost. Some, like the Cherub Sh'fiel, began to weep – but they were roughly admonished by Raguel, whose barked commands were like a sharp noise in the ears of the gentle Host looking on.

As Azazel led his band closer to the Throneroom where Michael awaited, I turned to Anael who was nearby and I asked, "Why is Gabriel again in that globe of light?" Anael replied, "Lucifer's place is no longer here... if it were not for the Covering Cherub, the Shekinah would destroy him; It would destroy all the demons."

Tahariel asked, "Are we going to fight them again?"

Shabbatiel, the only Power to be sealed before the conflict, answered him, saying, "No. The battle here is over. Lucifer and the others are only here because of Michael's permission, and when they are finished, they will return to the earth."

Dumah, noticing the expressions borne by the visitors, whispered to me, "They will not wish to go." I nodded.

When Lucifer and Michael faced each other, the fallen Cherub fell to one knee, an act which surprised me. The Prince said nothing, but awaited the demon's agenda. Finally, he spoke. "Chief Prince, we have decided... that we were mistaken in our course."

Michael gave a small smile. It was not joyful, it was not a look I was accustomed to seeing there, for His eyes were registering pain. I began to see why Gabriel was holding back the force of True Light, for there was to be no pain in Heaven... yet as long as the demons stood among us, there was. I remembered Raziel's words that day on earth, "Your ways are just and true, El Michael. There was nothing else that could be done for those who rebelled."

Azazel continued. "If it be possible, Lord, we would like to return to our home, for the earth is not the place that was created for us, but this... our original estate."

Michael spoke, and He said, "You speak truly, Lucifer, for the earth is not your home – that was created for Adam; but I say unto you that neither is Heaven any longer your home." He pointed to Gabriel, hovering above the assembly, and said, "Behold the provisions we must make for you, even for this brief intrusion into the Kingdom. The Presence of IaH could not long abide the sin which exists in your essence."

"Then heal the sin," Lucifer said, his voice rising. "We see all of your angels restored as they were before. Why are we not then also restored?"

"The loyal Host were not healed of sin, Azazel. They were set free from the effects of your rebellion, which they did not earn for themselves as you have done, and those now with you."

"And this 'sin' cannot be healed by any means?"

El Michael looked at the fallen angel, and over those with him, and He said, "There can be an atonement for sin made... and there will be, but the effects remain... and the effects are death."

Lucifer's eyes narrowed, and he said, "Then we must all die? How does this show your mercy, Elohim?"

Michael responded, "I would heal your sin, Lucifer. I would take your place under its penalty, if you would let me – but I cannot force your essence, and you will not turn away. You will not repent."

The fallen angel's features continued to grow darker, and he said, "I will follow you if you heal me!"

Michael replied, "If you followed me... I could heal you." He then continued, after a brief pause, "If you could love me, I could heal you. You revolted, knowing the consequences. Now, how can you bear the freedom of Heaven anew? I cannot first

revoke your wages, as I would with one who was deceived.” Michael stretched a hand toward the arch demon, and closed his eyes. He held it there for a moment, and said, with a voice filled with sorrow, and something that almost sounded like surprise, “I cannot...” A single tear fell from the face of our Chief Prince, and as one the Host felt the sorrow of Lucifer’s fall anew.

Even as we mourned the demons’ course of action, Gabriel’s orb flickered more brightly, and Lucifer’s mood degenerated still further.

“What part have we then with you, Michael? What love is this, that will not endure my pleas? What justice is this that will allow us this fearful freedom, while you pour out your mercies on those whom you choose?” Lucifer fell silent for a moment, and then he said, “I will tear down your creation, Elohim. You have bound us to the earth, and brought us to humiliation there as well as in Heaven, but we will have dominion over it – we will make war with your little constructions, and bring fear upon the man which you have made.”

At the revelation of the hatred still present in Satan, the un-fallen Host wondered, and his own followers seemed downcast in most cases... yet it was apparent that Lucifer spoke for them all, for none moved to stop the atrocious words uttered by their leader. Michael only nodded silently, and then He said, “You were created free, Lucifer. You could have chosen good or evil; and you made your choice. Adam also was created free – I have not limited his power, but have loved him as I have loved you.”

He continued to speak, “The beasts of the field are not like the man. They react, and they move about, but their powers are only a symbol of those possessed by the human being. Adam also must choose.” With that Michael opened a large rift above the assembly, and looking through it, we beheld that Adam had been placed in the beautiful garden before Michael had returned to the Heavenly plane.

As the scene moved to the center of Eden’s magnificent foliage, we saw the place where the four great rivers intersected, and we saw there something we had not noticed before. Perhaps they had not been there until now, or perhaps they were only now being revealed to our perceptions, but there they were... two enormous trees, one on the north, and one on the south.

Both the trees looked alike; they had large, thick leaves, casting shade unto the earth. They had mighty roots, and firm trunks, and from them hung large, ripe fruit – shining in the light of the sun.

“That to the south is the Tree of Life,” Michael said, addressing both Lucifer’s angels and ourselves. “It is a symbol of Heaven’s everlasting vitality, and the life force that springs freely from IaH. That on the north is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That tree bears bitter fruit, Lucifer, as you know; the taste of it is familiar to you, for it is a symbol of your rebellion – of truth that has been stolen, and twisted into a lie. For freedom’s sake it is there; for it is possible for the man to follow in a holy course or an

unholy one. Adam may choose to use his knowledge well, may choose to learn from us what rebellion is, and not drink directly from that fountain himself.”

We listened on with great interest as He concluded. “Thus is the justice of the Throne seen. The man has no favors that you did not have, my first child. Yet if he will remain within the faith We have delivered unto him, then he may eat of the southern tree always, and by his trust – even he will condemn your course. Even he will demonstrate why I cannot heal your wounds.”

Lucifer had listened in silence, but when El Michael was finished, he said only, “Let it be so. This war is not at an end.” More tears escaped our mighty Lord’s eyes, and He said, “I know.”

The three Archangels opened the passageway once again to the earth and the rebellious spirits walked towards it, the more uncertain ones shepherded by Lucifer, Sammael, Abaddon and Raguel. As the last demon vanished into the Void, the glowing sphere surrounding Gabriel flickered and died out, and the exhausted Cherub descended.

It seemed as if Heaven would be plunged back into mourning, but the Elohim had one more act of comfort for the loyal Host. He had one final wonder to show us, and El Michael said to us all, “We have work to do on earth.”

When we descended into Eden’s garden, we saw Adam wandering with the animals. The beauty of the garden was exceedingly great, and all the wildlife was drawn to it, eating the tender plants, and rolling on the soft earth. Michael began to glow brightly once again, entering the Union with IaH, yet remaining separate from the actual Throne. “Elohim!” Adam exclaimed, seeing El Michael and the Host surrounding Him. He ran up, and began to praise Him for the beauty of his new home.

“The most wondrous things are here!” he said in excited tones. “There are vines and trees that grow in a way I have not seen on the other parts of the earth. The fruits here are the sweetest I have yet tasted, and the animals also love this place.”

Our Prince smiled, and He said, “All the Host also rejoices with your pleasure, Adam. The plants here were particularly designed for your body’s needs and your delight. Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely, but... from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree I have placed in the north, you must not eat, for in the day that you taste the fruit of that tree, you will surely die.” Michael then told him about the mystical plant growing in the northern quarter of the garden.

There was no fear in Adam as he heard these words. Why should he be afraid? He asked only, “What does it mean to die?” At that point, the Elohim began to explain to Adam about Lucifer’s rebellion; that he had fallen from Heaven with a great curse upon him, and that he was not benevolent as were the rest of us. He explained that the angels of Heaven would always be nearby, and that the man need never encounter the demons –

he would be kept safe, and protected, as long as he obeyed this one command, that he avoid the tree on the northern part of the rivers' intersection.

Adam nodded, his eyes bright with understanding. "I will not go near it," he said. The Host smiled, delighted at the man's commitment to be faithful.

"It is well," said our Prince, and then He turned to us and said, "You will always be with Adam to protect and cheer him, but it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion that is suitable for him." With that He invited the latest creation's attention, and then, out of the earth, He formed one of the beasts of the field.

"What will you call this creature, Adam?" The man looked at it, and considered for a while, and then he said, "Zon." And so the first animal named was the sheep. This was followed by the oxen, and then the donkeys, and the other cattle. When these were done, Elohim formed the birds next, also out of the ground by Adam's feet. "Nis'r," said Adam to the first of these, the eagle. After this he named the other birds, many of which are no longer alive on the earth – but among those that are left, there was the vulture, and the raven and the hawk and the owl, the swans, pelicans, and the smaller flying creatures also.

The larger earth-based beasts were next, beginning with Ari, the lion, then the bears, then the mighty reptiles and finally the smaller, burrowing animals. After these came a creature that Adam named the nahash, the serpent, a rippling column of shining scales held aloft by bright, leathery wings in which Israfel particularly delighted. Next came the insects, the smaller creatures that crept over the earth. All of these were brought forth from the earth, an example of each, for Adam to name and the Host to remember. Finally, the Elohim formed a fountain of water, bursting out of the ground, and the stream swelled and stabilized before the man, spraying up into the air as a thick column. Up into the column swam a gigantic water creature, and Adam named this the tannyn, the sea dragon. Whales, sharks and then all the kinds of fish followed, and so were all the creatures named.

Although many of the creations Adam named have died out since, it must not be thought either that this was a very long process. There have been many changes, vast diversification, in the classes of animals since that day, and these that Adam named were the basic kinds that IaH had created. But among all of these, there were none that seemed very similar to the man.

Such was the mind of this man that he was able to recall all the animals that has passed before him, and he thought over them... and it occurred to him that he was unlike any of the beasts he had named. "Come over to me, Adam," El Michael said, as the fountain receded into the ground. Adam approached.

The Elohim rested a hand on his shoulder, and the man sat down wearily, closing his eyes in sleep.

“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Thus said Adam, beholding her for the first time. What he said was, “She shall be called I’isha, because she was taken out of I’ish.”

The woman was similar to Adam in many respects; and like him, she had a bright, holy glow about her body. Her eyes were bright with the same intelligence we first saw in his, and she, like us, could speak. In her, Adam recognized what it was that had been missing in the other living creatures. She was a companion for him, and a comfort also for the Host; who had so recently heard Azazel’s vow to plunge the budding race into fear and sin. These thoughts were banished from our minds for a time as we saw this beautiful being. Adam saw the glory of Heaven reflected in her, and he knew that he had found a partner.

Even as this was taking place, dissatisfied eyes were beholding the scene. Since returning from Heaven earlier that day, Lucifer had been keeping a close watch on Adam. He seemed to be having some kind of an internal conflict. I entertained the hope for an instant that he would leave mankind in peace, but I remembered the gigantic red beast he had become when he was being cast unto the earth, and I remembered his words to Michael, “This war is not at an end.”

When the woman was formed, Azazel was there. He stood apart from the bright circle of light cast by Michael and the loyal Host, but he was close enough to perceive what was happening. He saw the man awakening from sleep. He saw the flash of love and instant recognition in his eyes. He saw a fragment of the things that he had lost. He saw the power of the emotions they could generate when they were together, when their bodies and their spirits were in union, and his sin-sick mind was already working to cast dark shadows over all the blessings that IaH had given to His greatest creations.

Yet the fallen Cherub was hesitant. Though driven by the seeds of rebellion that burned already within his essence, and though he had already committed himself by word and deed to battle with the holy angels over the earth, he was yet struggling with the last of his sympathies. Even as the pair started their new life in the garden, learning the wonders of nature unfolding before them, the exiled prince of Heaven’s course was at a crossroads.

The Cherubic oracle Zephon’s eyes glowed with a pale light as he told us of the demons’ movements. Back on the Heavenly plane some days later a few of us were gathered to hear him speak. “The hopelessness of their state is beginning to settle in,” he was saying. “Even the most heartbroken of them is being hardened. Even those with the greatest capacity for love need now shake off their compassion, or it will burn them up even before the Day appointed to them.” Tahariel and I listened to these words with wonder.

“They are forced to become wholly evil?” I asked, not fully understanding how IaH would arrange for such a situation to come about. “No,” replied Zephon. “They are merely realizing the pain of their choice, and they are choosing to relinquish their capacity to feel it.”

“How fearful,” said Tahariel, “but what else could they do?”

“Lucifer’s lies have them confused, angry,” Zephon said. “Were it not for him, many would choose to lay down their burdens. While their choice has left them without remedy, El Michael could at least grant them... peace.”

“Mavet,” Dumah whispered to me, “and it would be better than... that.”

“Yes,” I whispered back to him. “If I had no longer the capacity for love, I would choose death also, rather than such torture.”

The oracle closed his eyes, and when he reopened them, they were clear. His visions of Lucifer and his followers had ceased for the time being. “As’fael,” he said to me, “You are one of the Twelve, and will have a greater part to play in this conflict than I. But I want you to listen to me... when the time comes, you must draw your sword quickly... and you must cut quickly. Do not hesitate, but do not fear, for this war already belongs to IaHVeH.”

Zephon was, perhaps, referring to his own hesitation during the war in heaven. Although he was on Lucifer’s side for a time, he never drew his khrev against a holy angel, and later repented of the fallen one’s deceptions. Perhaps he was assuring me that I was on the right side, and therefore had no need to hesitate in whatever I did – or perhaps there was a deeper meaning to the Cherub’s words, but before I could ask him about it, I received a whisper from El Michael Himself.

Leaving Zephon, my two companions, and the other angels that had been with us, I flew over to the Throneroom where I found Michael standing with Zahariel, one of the two Hashmallim to have been sealed, and many high-ranking angels in attendance. Seeming to have been fully aware of my conversation with Zephon just moments before, He said to me, “Lucifer has made his decision. He is now fully committed to his purpose, and is even now revealing his plans to the demons with him. He knows that Adam has already been warned about his fall, and he will therefore not attack him, or try to force him directly into disobedience concerning the Tree of Knowledge; yet already his broken mind is formulating other ways of obtaining his object. Go now,” He said, turning to Zahariel as well, “and warn the man and his wife. Make them understand their enemy more clearly, and keep them safe until I arrive.” The Chief of the Hashmallim and I bowed, and we vanished into the Void, eager to carry out our mission.

As we arrived near the streams of Eden, we found Adam and his companion exploring the south side of the garden, near the Tree of Life. They saw us arriving, and turned from their wanderings to greet us. “Hello, As’fael,” Adam said to me, having

remembered my name from the very first day we had met. The woman also greeted me, and asked, "What is the name of the angel with you?" I don't know if Zahariel and Adam had spoken yet, but it was the first time he had been this near to Adam's wife.

The Dominion gave her his name, and she smiled, having made a new friend. We spoke for a little while about more pleasant things, for the pair was always excited and eager to relate to their frequent visitors the new wonders they had discovered about earth. We knew our task, however, and with a glance at each other, we told them of the purpose of our journey.

"Adam, you know something of Satan already, but have you spoken to your wife concerning the rebellion before now?" Adam shook his head, and said to me, "Very little. She has heard me asking some of the Host about it, but we never did speak of the details."

"I know that one like you, named Azazel, is near the garden, and may do us harm..." she put in, and I could see in her innocent eyes that she did not fully understand; not even the concept of "harm," to which the angels themselves had been only recently exposed.

"Azazel may look like us," Zahariel said, "and he may even seem to act like us... but in truth, he is very different. Just as we find pleasure in doing good things, and joy in beauty, these have the opposite effect on him. Even before he came to earth, his very nature seemed to spread unhappiness. All the things you enjoy about this world, he would like to see gone."

Both the humans considered his words solemnly, finding it difficult to think of this wonderful planet without the blessings that the Elohim had poured out upon it. "Why does he do this?" Adam asked.

"Because of sin," I replied. "Sin is a force; something like love, which you both know well... but designed to do the opposite. Where love would build up, sin destroys. Where love would draw together, sin separates. Where love would strengthen, sin weakens, and causes fear, and pain. I know some of these ideas are foreign to you, but IaH has made you aware of your joy. You can imagine its reverse. A life without that happiness, this is what Azazel now lives... and what he is forced by this sin to draw others towards."

"What should we do?" Adam asked, his hand gently grasping his companion's.

"El Michael has already told you of the Tree of Knowledge, and you have made your commitment to avoid it. See that you do only this, and avoid Lucifer at all costs. We, the Host, will always be nearby, and so you may never encounter him at all... but you must be made aware of what is happening around you."

We related to the two standing before us a record of the war in Heaven in more detail than they had previously heard it, and repeated El Michael's warning about the tree. "It is a symbol of the very rebellion that led to Lucifer's downfall," Zahariel said. "And just

as that need never have been, so you can overcome this, and nothing will ever thereafter be able to harm you.”

“It is not that IaH desires to ‘test’ you as such,” I added. “But Lucifer’s charges are severe, and even among the Host there are some who do not understand why he was cast out. IaH has created you two to be free, even as the angels are free, and He has not placed you beyond the power of temptation. He has not made it impossible for you to act against Him. He is a loving Father; He is not what Lucifer says He is.”

In this way we made them understand as best we could. Zahariel and I were sealed – but what we said was true, among those who were yet faithful, there were still lingering questions concerning the demons’ charges. Adam and the woman, of course... we knew they also would have many questions. But they had enough to think about for now and, exchanging goodbyes, my companion and I took to the air to return to Heaven and report our conversation to El Michael.

As we were departing, however, Zahariel looked back and saw something that made him turn about fully and hover stationary in the air, a strange expression on his face. I turned also to see Azazel, Raguel, Sarakiel, and Petahel. The prince of the demons was with the two fallen archangels and a once mighty Seraph. Behind them followed the Cherubim Azrael and Sh’fiel. They had not seen us, but they were moving toward the humans, a dark expression on their faces.

In an instant Zahariel and I were back on the ground, blocking the demons’ path, our blazing swords drawn and ready. We were far enough away that Adam and his wife could not hear us, but we could hear them well enough, and they were discussing the very one who was even now approaching.

“Malakim,” Lucifer said with an apparently warm smile, when he saw us barring their way. “Let us pass.”

“El Michael has told us to keep the humans safe from you until He arrives.” The thought crossed my mind as I said this that perhaps Zahariel and I should not have been leaving in the first place, but there was not much time for such contemplation. Lucifer drew his own kherev, dark energy flowing along the blade he now pointed towards us.

“Let us pass,” he repeated, this time with no false cordiality in his tone.

Azrael also drew his blade and stepped forward, eager for conflict, but at that moment a strong light broke from the sky and El Michael appeared, followed by Zephon, Raphael and Za’afiel. The demons drew together defensively at their approach, and both of the more aggressive ones re-sheathed their weapons.

“Azazel, you are bound to give trouble wherever you may find yourself,” our Prince said. “For the sake of the man and his wife, I will not allow your violence to endanger

them. Like you, they must choose; but like you, they will not be forced by any outside influences. From henceforth, you shall not approach near the humans...”

“Except near the Tree of Knowledge,” Lucifer finished for Him, knowing the rules of their arrangement better than any of his own followers; perhaps better than Zahariel and myself. El Michael nodded and said, “Except near the Tree of Knowledge. Adam has given his pledge that he will avoid it – my angels cannot stand between you there.” The arch demon’s eyes narrowed at his new restrictions, but he also knew that he was powerless to deny the truth – that he was as helpless before El Michael as he was against the leadings of his own sinful nature.

Azazel and his followers turned away to plan their attack. True to Zephon’s visions, he had made his decision – he had become fully hardened in his course. As the Cherub Sh’fiel turned away also, I saw a flash of something pass between him and Za’afiel, who stood silently looking at him. Those two, as you know, had been the best of friends before the rebellion.

It is as I once explained it to your first parents: sin separates.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 4 - CHATTAH (SIN)

After this, other angels also visited Adam and his wife. Zephon, Gabriel, Michael and others gave the two a proper description of the origins of Satan, and his recent decision to destroy the humans themselves.

“Lucifer believes,” Gabriel said to them, “that if he can lead you into disobedience he will somehow be proven right – that IaH’s standards of government are unreasonable. That His will is restrictive to those whom He has created, and he will, in that way, prevent his own destruction.”

“I’m not sure I understand,” Adam said.

Gabriel responded, “The law of sin and death is this – that sin causes destruction. Even now, Lucifer’s essence is being held together by IaH’s mercy, since it is infected with sin. Until Satan fully reveals his character to all, he is allowed time... but the way he is using this time is doing nothing but revealing more clearly the nature of the sin in him. He feels that if he can get you, IaH’s most precious creations, to also transgress, The Throne will spare all who have sinned, in order to save you as well.”

“If this were to occur, should IaH protect even one sinner, Lucifer would see this as an indication that the Most High’s law IS unfair, and that he should never have been cast out of Heaven for his own rebellion. He would storm back into the Kingdom and overthrow it. Even the Holy angels,” he added, “would be so confused, that they could not be rallied into a suitable defense.”

“Then Heaven can be overthrown?” the human asked in wonder.

“Heaven is everlasting because IaH is everlasting; and He would never do what Lucifer is trying to get Him to – to allow sin, to revoke His word. There is no real danger of this happening, because IaH is who He is – but Lucifer is still making the attempt. The sin in him... this is what causes him to lose his ability to see the truth about the Elohim.”

Gabriel, as Covering Cherub, was often in council with El Michael, and had already reasoned from cause to effect on Lucifer’s plans. He knew exactly what was occurring in the minds of the fallen ones, and gave Adam and his companion much insight into their potential circumstances, should they ever allow Satan to dictate their behavior.

The two received this and the other warnings well, and for a time were content in all things. The demons, knowing their restrictions, did not even attempt to make contact with either of the humans. Had they tried, they would have found the Host waiting for them... but no such conflict was necessary. Adam and his companion enjoyed the beauty of all parts of the garden, exploring the four quarters, except for the southernmost point of the northern quarter. Here, near the Tree of Knowledge, the demons would often gather, and brood, and plan.

But as it was in Heaven, so was it also on earth. One day, everything changed.

“What are you doing here, all by yourself?”

The woman turned, surprised to hear a voice from the trees. “Israfel?” she asked, hearing a certain similarity therein to the Chief Seraph’s golden tones.

“No...” came the voice again, trailing off gently. “Come a little closer, and you will see.”

The two humans had separated that day; Adam was wandering around on the eastern quarter of the garden, while his companion had crossed the river and was exploring the north. During the course of her journey she had come close to the area that Adam had promised they would avoid. Lucifer, seeing his long awaited opportunity, made his carefully planned attack.

Of all the creatures Adam had named, the serpents were the most impressive. They soared through the air on their fleshy wings, trailing their tails behind them. Their smooth scales were of bright colors, reflecting the glare of the sun, so that they seemed like fiery serpents during the daytime hours. They were also naturally intelligent, and would whirl around each other and themselves in aerial loops whenever one of the two humans or any member of the Host would approach.

The Seraphim in particular were drawn to these animals, and would teach them flight patterns. Israfel once said that the serpent kind represented his nature, just as the eagle did for Camael, the lion did for Uriel and the cattle for Raphael.

It was in the form of this animal that Lucifer chose to represent himself for his great deception. As a Cherub, Lucifer was able to have one, two or three pairs of wings present at a time. During his rebellion, this number had doubled, and in order to inspire loyalty in his followers, he had once sported twelve glowing limbs. Even on earth, he would often wear three pairs, the most he was usually able to generate in his exiled state.

Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that he chose the animal most dear to the Seraphim, who by nature have six wings, for his purposes. As he saw the woman approaching, and then passing within earshot, Azazel put his hand upon one of the flying serpents, and bent its will to his. This was an ability he had been practicing for some time. He knew the many

warnings that the virtuous Host had given to the humans, and he knew that should he appear to them in his true form, as an angel, they would recognize him. In order to gain their confidence, therefore, he would have to hide his face behind that which was more familiar.

The woman drew nearer to the trees. "Can you see me yet?" the voice asked enticingly. "I'm not far away now." She looked about her, and realized that this was the farthest away she had ever been from Adam. Yet she felt no anxiety, for she knew the Host would be watching, and the wonderful, sweet voice from the trees to the south seemed so very friendly and safe.

She slowly wandered closer, staring intently into the shadows of the leaves, attempting to identify the speaker. "You must come a little closer," the gentle voice repeated.

The human's assumptions were correct; the Host was indeed watching the events unfolding before us. However, as the woman entered the area that Adam had given his word to avoid, we suddenly found ourselves unable to approach. My friends Tahariel and Dumah were nearby, so was the Archangel Camael, but into the area sealed off by the man's promise they could not enter. She was already on forbidden ground, in great danger, and we were powerless to protect her.

The woman put forth her hand and parted a layer of low-hanging foliage, and there she saw a circle of trees. In the midst of the ring grew the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and wrapped around its branches hung a sparkling, winged reptile.

Adam's wife drew closer, unmindful now of her husband's warnings, and of their promise to avoid this area of Eden's garden. She looked around, still trying to determine who it was that had spoken to lure her into this dark, shady patch of trees. She glanced at the serpent, hanging there and taking slow bites out of the fruit of the Tree from which it hung. It said nothing, so she drew closer and, placing her palm unconsciously upon the trunk of the Tree of Knowledge for support, she leaned forward to see if any being was behind it.

"I am right here before you," the serpent seemed to say, and the woman turned about, looking up into the branches with wonder.

"You speak," she said, amazed at the shining animal's ability. "I have never heard any beings speak but my husband and the Malakim." She was filled with curiosity, and trying to understand this new development. "How is it that you can do so?"

The reptile took another bite of one of the fruits, and turned fully towards her, saying, "This is a most wondrous tree... I took one bite, and see, my mouth is opened. I am like one of you, like one of the Host of Heaven."

"How interesting," she said, "I have seen animals eating many of the fruits of earth, but I have never seen any of them affected as you are."

“This one is special,” the serpent said in its gentle voice, “and if it gave me speech, imagine perhaps what it would do for you? You can already speak, you are already the greatest, the most wondrous, of all of the Elohim’s creation.”

The woman smiled, but she remembered the warnings of her husband and the angels, and she said, “I do not know about that, but I know we humans are not to taste of this fruit.”

“Indeed?” asked Azazel’s puppet casually, “Hasn’t Elohim given you permission to eat of every tree in the garden?”

“We may eat all the fruits of the garden,” she replied, “except for the fruit of this tree in its middle. We are not to eat of it, or even touch it, or we will die...”

At that, the serpent laughed. She looked up at it, and it said, “You placed your hand upon the bark of the tree, when you were seeking the owner of this voice. But look, you yet live.” The woman frowned, realizing that this had indeed been the case. The serpent continued, “You will not die if you eat of the fruit, even as you have not died after touching it. How can you? Have you not already eaten from the Tree to the south?” It reached up with its tail, and broke off one of the golden fruits, and lowered it until it was within her reach. “Look at the benefits this fruit has given to me... imagine if you tasted it, human. Imagine the power, and the freedom, and the wisdom it would bring you, already so exalted and bright.”

Entranced by the serpent’s words, she reached up and took the object that was offered. She held it in her hand, watching the light that filtered through the leaves reflected off of its smooth surface. She saw that she was unharmed, and the serpent’s flattering words continued. “How wise you already are, and how courageous, to have stepped out of the boundaries that have held you enslaved.” We, the Host, had heard these words before, and those nearby and listening cringed as the serpent gave voice to them. Still, the demonic snake continued, “It is perhaps no wonder that Elohim has forbidden you to eat of this fruit... He must know that the day you eat of it you will be far wiser, your eyes would be opened. Truly you would be as He is, knowing both good and evil!”

The serpent spread its wings and floated closer, then it hung down from a low branch and brought its face near to the woman’s. It held her in its gaze, and said, “Try it and see... if these things are not so.”

Looking on in amazement and sorrow, helpless to intervene, we saw the human bite into the poisonous flesh, tasting the fruit of rebellion. El Michael had entered the Throneroom in Heaven, and now around the structure a gigantic orb of light appeared, far greater in size or brilliance than that which had twice surrounded the Covering Cherub. We wept as we saw the Lucifer’s deception succeed, and all our best efforts useless to prevent that which we had least desired to occur. What would happen now?

We watched through sorrowful eyes, many through their veils, to see what the next event would be.

“How very brave you are,” the serpent was saying. “If only now your husband could join us in this freedom. But oh, he is still held in bondage by his promise! I know he would never come to this place... This is most sad, human; for now, what if you are left alone? What if you are the only one strong enough to become what Elohim did not want you to become? Who then will be your companion in this lonely exaltation?”

The woman suddenly shuddered at that thought, unfamiliar emotions grasping at her mind. “What is this I feel?” she asked.

“Knowledge,” the serpent said sympathetically. “It is a heavy load, is it not, my beautiful friend?” Azazel, still hidden by the serpent, smiled bitterly, and the flying creature coiled around and flew up into the highest branches of the Tree, leaving the woman by herself at its base.

Her mind racing in fear, the human clutched the remainder of the second fruit to herself; this one she had picked from the tree with her own hand. As the effect of the serpent’s words sank in, and the first rush of excitement she had felt at her disobedience began to subside, she turned and ran out of the clearing, through the circle of trees, taking several more of the fruits with her, and back towards the river she had crossed to get there. The Spirit of the Elohim flared up in the mind of the observing Host, and we were told, “Let him choose. You were allowed to choose.” None of us moved to stop her from returning to her husband. To stand between them now would be to force them apart, would be to force Adam’s decision.

Tahariel heard a sharp hiss from the branches of the Tree of Knowledge. Lucifer had released his control of the flying serpent, and sped after the woman to see the effects of his attack. As the Hashmal entered the circle of trees he saw the life form, left to its own devices, knotting itself around as if in agony, and then it fell to the ground, thrashing about. As the arch demon departed, the snake rose up into the air, still suffering from the lingering effects of being controlled, and fluttered helplessly after the departing woman and the dark spirit following her.

As the woman reached the river between the north and east quarters, a storm was going on in her mind. There was mingled together fear of being by herself, excitement at what she had done, a strange sense of strength that she had experienced since tasting the fruit, and a strong desire to have Adam share whatever it was she was going through.

She jumped into the swiftly flowing current and waded across, seeing her husband standing on the other side. Adam knew she had gone over to the northern side of the garden, and he had been looking for her.

“Where have you been?” he asked, as she came running up to him.

“I was in the forest near the rivers,” she said. “I found there a most unusual thing, a serpent that could speak!”

Adam looked surprised, knowing that no other physical beings beside themselves had been given this ability. “Where did you find it?”

“By the Tree,” she said, pointing back the way she came. “Which tree?” he asked, suddenly feeling a sharp sense of foreboding – the first he had ever experienced. “The Tree of Knowledge,” she said, knowing that he already suspected as much.

“Why did you go there?” he asked, feeling his foreboding suddenly growing much worse. “Did not the Host, and El Michael, and I myself, tell you what dangers there were in that one place in all the garden?”

She did not reply to this; instead she said, “Look at these amazing fruits. These are they from the Tree, and what gave the serpent the ability to speak.”

“You took fruit from the tree?” Adam was astounded that his wife had done this, and he took an involuntary step backwards, uncertain as to what to do or say next.

When the woman saw him backing away, the words of the serpent rang out again in her mind, “Who then will be your companion?” She fought back this fear, but it only made her more desperate to have him join her in her new, curious state.

“Adam, there is no death in these fruits. The serpent ate, and then he could speak. I also ate... and see that I am well. More than that, I have been feeling things ever since... new things. Some I do not yet understand, but when we do... imagine how much more we can learn!”

“You ate also?” Adam’s face changed... “You know what El Michael said would happen to us if we did!”

The woman stood before him, and looked at him, and said, “But see how I stand here before you. Look at me and see if you see any of this “death,” my husband. I have touched, I have tasted, and yet... here I am.”

The man was confused. Looking on, I knew just how he felt. The Host had experienced exactly the same emotion as Lucifer had torn the veil from his eyes in the Most Holy Place and yet lived. We knew that to show such disrespect must surely mean our destruction, yet like Lucifer, the woman had disobeyed... and yet she lived. We knew, though, that although the penalty could not yet be seen, she had passed under the shadow of death just as the fallen Archangel had the moment he did what he knew was wrong.

“How could this thing be?” he asked, his trust in the Elohim’s words disintegrating.

“I don’t understand it either,” his wife said to him, “But somehow... El Michael must have been wrong.”

When she saw that he was uncertain, she said other things also, describing how she had felt when she had tasted the fruit, the benefits she had felt from it – and she also explained the uncertainties she felt now, and that she needed him to join her in these things, so that he could explain them to her... so that they could once again be equals. Overcome by a sense of loss, Adam took one of the fruits from his wife’s hands... and he also ate.

The orb around the Throneroom flickered brightly... and the Temple of the Shekinah began to shake. We wondered if it would not burst apart again, as it had done at Lucifer’s fall, but this time it held firm. “How could this thing be,” Dumah whispered to me. “Did we not warn them? Not on earth too... why should it happen also on earth?” I did not know how to comfort my silent friend. I said only, “A third of us also chose their path. A third of the Host also tasted of that fruit.”

Dumah raised a hand and generated a passageway into the Void. I followed him in, and quickly we descended to the earth. We joined Tahariel, who was weeping with grief as he watched Azazel observe the pair. The fallen angel and his followers were intent on the scene before them, and did not even notice us also watching from a distance away.

Both the demons and we ourselves looked on; the man and his wife stared about themselves with new eyes... and we beheld with shock that the glorious light that had shone upon their skin was fading. It flickered once, twice and then went out. The two looked upon each other, unsure as to whether or not their eyes had changed, granting them a more keen level of sight, or if they were truly as they appeared: naked, separated from the glorious reflection of Heaven.

The three of us watched in wonder as they fled from each other’s searching gaze, into the trees, where they could not see each other, nor could they be seen. Instinctively, they began to gather the wide, thick leaves of the trees near which they were hiding, and to cover their bodies with the artificial barrier. We saw the dark angel smile, but it was not a smile of joy. “Only one thing remains,” he said, turning to his demons. “They must now eat of the Tree of Life.”

My eyes widened, understanding for the first time the true purpose of Lucifer’s plan. It was brilliant in its subtlety... it was so utterly evil; so devoid of love. Adam and his wife were mere pawns in the ruined Archangel’s controversy with the Throne. Before I could rise to stop him, however, or even explain to my companions what I had just realized, we heard a sharp crack, and a bolt of pure, holy light burst forth from the Throneroom, through the Void, and down unto the earth. At this noise Adam and his companion, who

were still out of each other's sight but on the edges of the trees, ducked down behind still more cover, holding their leaves against themselves for protection (having fixed them there with fibers from the plants around them), and seeking desperately to cover their exposed skin.

El Michael appeared, glowing brightly with the light of the Union, and he walked over to the area where Adam and his companion had stood a short while earlier. There was a look of supreme sorrow on His mighty features... but there was no anger there. Even in Lucifer's joy, there was a rage. Even in his celebration, there was a fury. But El Michael's distress was different – it was one of selfless love, one of the most keen, the most bitter pain.

Looking toward the patch of trees in which the man and his wife hid, the Elohim said, "Adam, where are you?" For a time, there was no reply, and then the man's voice filtered out of the foliage, "Here, Lord. I heard your approach, and I was ashamed, for I have lost the covering which I had before; I have hidden myself."

"Who has told you of your nakedness?" El Michael asked. "Have you eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, Adam? Have you done contrary to that which I have commanded you?"

At these words, the human was filled with fear, and he said the only thing that came into his mind. "It was the woman, Lord, that you gave to me. She gave me the fruit from the Tree.... and I ate it."

El Michael lowered His eyes, and then he turned to the place where the woman was hiding. "What is this that you have done?" He asked her. She replied, "It was the serpent, Elohim. He called to me, he tricked me, and he gave me the fruit, so I ate."

The maddened, flying reptile that had followed Azazel to the eastern quarter of the garden finally arrived, and crashed madly through the low shrubs by which the fallen angel stood, slithering out into the clearing on its stomach. Turning to the snake, and to Lucifer who stood directly behind it, the Elohim declared, "Because you have done this thing, you are cursed, made lower than any beast of the field, or any cattle; as you have come unto me now, on your belly, so shall you go all the days of your life. Dust shall you eat all your days on the earth. And for your crime against the woman, I will put great loathing between you, so that you will avoid each other. Furthermore, this also shall be between your offspring and her offspring – you will wound His heel, but He will crush your head."

We listened with wonder to these words, as did all the Host who had gathered around to behold the great and tragic event. Turning back to the man and his wife, who had come out to show themselves, He said sadly, "My purpose towards you shall not be changed. Still is my love with you, and you will multiply, as I commanded you from the beginning, and have children to cover the earth, and to subdue it. Take comfort in this, that I have not abandoned you. Yet, because of what you have done, there are terrible results which you must also take with you."

He continued, “For the woman, it will be that your pain in childbearing will be great, and in sorrow and trouble will you bring forth your children. Yet, you will desire your husband, and to him have I given headship over you.”

To Adam he said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife more than my own, even the land is cursed for your wrongdoing. The fruit of the earth has been your downfall, and now you must toil and sweat to have the ground bring forth fruits for your use. In sorrow you will eat of the earth, and nor will you eat all things; behold, some plants will become harsh, and some painful to the touch – for you are reminded of that which you were not to touch. And some will become bitter to the taste, for you are reminded of that which you were not to taste. And so shall you work the land all the days of your life... until you return to it. You were made of dust, Adam,” El Michael concluded, “And to dust must you now return.”

With that, He drew His blazing kherev, and walked over to the trembling humans. Groaning in His spirit, the Prince of angels passed the fiery blade through the bodies of both the humans in a single swipe, and said, “The eyes of your spirit and the eyes of your soul are divided.” As we watched, the two humans grasped each other in fear and wonder – we had all vanished from their sight.

Anael, who had approached the three of us while this was going on, said, “We have been in council with El Michael. The Archangels and the Chiefs have considered the plans of Lucifer, and this which El Michael now does is the only way we can keep them safe from the arch demon’s best efforts. If they can no longer see the Host, they will not be directly susceptible to the tempter either. Neither can we now touch them or communicate with them directly, except by direct order from the Throne, or else Lucifer could also, and he might slay them, who are now capable of experiencing mavet.”

“But Lucifer has another plan,” I said to Anael, eager to relate to him what I had overheard the demon say.

“We know of his dark purposes, As’fael,” he assured me. “El Michael has made provisions for this also... but like this one... they will not be pleasant.”

Tahariel and Dumah looked at us with sad curiosity, and I explained to them, “Lucifer has gotten the two humans to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. They are now worthy of death... they are now infected with sin. If they were now to eat from the Tree of Life, he believes they will become immortal IN their sinful state. IaH will be unable to give them rest after an appointed time, for He has declared that whosoever continues to eat of the Tree of Life cannot die. Should the fruits of these trees be combined in a single being, they would cancel each other out... and both of the Throne’s declarations would be made void.”

Anael nodded, and added, “Should this come to pass, the Elohim will be unable to destroy sin from the universe without going against Their own decrees, and Lucifer will

have the authority to re-enter the eternal Kingdom. There will be sadness... there will be pain and sorrow... forever.”

As we watched, we saw the dust swirling around El Michael, and His glowing form vanished into a covering of earth, knit together even as the bodies of the humans were knit together. He had formed a physical being for Himself! His two wings folded down as He transformed, and wrapped themselves around Him as a white garment; He stood before the man and his wife... and He looked just like one of them.

Adam saw Him, and recognized Him as the same One who had formed him from the earth. “Elohim,” he cried, and cast himself into El Michael’s arms. The woman also did the same. “Forgive us,” they pled. “We will never again go against that which you have commanded us to do.”

The Man that had been our Lord, the Man that still was our Lord, said gently to them, “IaHshua, IaH saves.”

“What shall we do, Lord?” the woman asked.

“Although I have taken from the demons the ability to harm you directly, yet you will not be safe in this garden from the tempter. The roots of the Tree of Knowledge are deep, and in all this garden, Lucifer will be able to harm you indirectly – he will find a way to destroy you, and the loyal Host cannot protect you here.”

“We must leave the garden?” Adam asked, sorrow filling him at the thought of losing his beautiful home.

El Michael nodded, and said, “It is the only way. We must also keep you from the Tree of Life, for if Satan takes you to that Tree also, or brings the fruit of it to you... there will be far greater sorrow than there now is.” Adam knew that he could not even promise now to avoid the Southern Tree... even as he heard these words, he felt his mind different, weaker and more prone to disobey. Even for this, he felt sorrow, and only stood in wordless misery.

“Come,” El Michael said gently, and began to lead them further to the east, out of the garden. Feeling great fear, but unable to go against the word of their Lord yet again, the two began to follow Him. Just then, Azazel and all his demons appeared before the three, blocking their progress. Their burning swords were all drawn, and they were ready for battle.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 5 - Y'SHUA (SALVATION)

As Azazel stepped closer, El Michael stood between them. Even in His physical form He could see the spirits approaching. Adam and his wife were oblivious to the danger, and unsure of why their Guide was leading them cautiously back the way they came. “Gabriel, Raziel,” He said, “protect them.” As He said this, the two Cherubim He had summoned swept past Anael, Dumah, Tahariel and myself and grasped the humans, bearing them away as if on a strong wind. They deposited them in the western quarter of the garden, as far as possible from the demons, and returned quickly to our Lord.

When the humans left El Michael flared out His wings, and the dust with which He had covered Himself shattered, revealing the glowing Archangel once again. Some of the demons fell back, but most were not surprised at the Prince’s return to His original state. The Host of Heaven gathered behind Him and El Michael said, “Just as the humans must leave the garden, so must you, Lucifer. Their way will be barred from the Tree of Life; so will yours. Adam and his descendants will not have the authority to approach the fruit there, but neither will you be able to take the fruit to them.”

Lucifer said, “You are casting them out, even as you cast me out of your Kingdom. At least you are consistent. But I say again, Michael, where is this “death,” you hang over our heads like a sword? Where is the threat of your judgment? The man has sinned, and you spare him; you protect him. Are these humans, these dirt-born constructions, more worthy of your love than we, who were once your servants?”

“You could not understand my love while you were in Heaven, Azazel. You will not understand it now.” El Michael drew His kherev, and we who stood with Him did the same. “Nevertheless, for the sake of the man whom you have deceived, you will be driven out of this place, and shall not return here henceforth.”

Abaddon, Sammael, Raguel and Sarakiel leaped forward. These four fallen warriors moved in first, but soon every angel was drawn into the conflict at the eastern border of Eden’s garden. As the demonic Hashmal Kafziel broke free from the battle and sped to the west Lucifer called to him, “Make them eat of the Tree of Life! The two Trees must unite in them, and IaHWeH shall be made a liar!”

The Cherub Azrael and our former companion Tarfiel likewise shook off their opponents and joined the escaping demon. My two friends and I saw them departing, and El Michael whispered to me, "Go after them." We went.

Traveling at a greater speed than we knew we were able, we overtook the trio and hung before them in the air, impeding their progress. "Let us pass, As'fael," Tarfiel said to me. But Azrael was not one to waste time with words. Flapping towards me, he slashed out with his sword, an attack I was only barely able to avoid. He twisted around in the air and came at me again, and I found myself caught between his onslaught and my former friend.

Tahariel, in the meantime, went after Kafziel, who had used the distraction to continue his journey to the sorrowing humans. Dumah, on the other hand, threw his blade at Tarfiel, and as the fallen Virtue dodged it I was able to get myself out from between him and my other attacker.

We remained there for a time in conflict, but just as my two companions and myself had received a greater measure of speed than we had previously known in order to overtake the fleeing trio, so also did we display a greater skill than we had ever possessed in Heaven for this battle. My arms reacted as if by instinct, deflecting attacks and countering swiftly. The image of the Shekinah burned in my mind as I faced Azrael, who had singled me out from among the three of us.

Azrael was undoubtedly the most fierce of the fallen angels, and it was only IaH's clear influence on my efforts that allowed me to eventually overcome this adversary. After an intense battle I managed to strike his khrev out of his hands, but even then he was not finished. He soared up above me and began raining down fire upon the three of us.

His elemental attack could do us no real damage, but it certainly was effective in distracting us so that he could search out his weapon on the ground beneath our struggle. What distracted us even more than this perversion that he had learned from the fallen Principalities was the fact that his fireballs had descended into the trees and bushes below.

We had seen plants eaten by the animals, of course, and their properties absorbed into the bodies of the moving life forms. We had seen the life of the soil transferred into the lives of the beasts, and birds, and mankind, but we had never seen destruction like this. It was wasteful, and violent, and ugly. It seemed a terrible repeat of the destruction that sin had worked in Heaven too short a time ago... in the intense heat, the trees of the beautiful garden began to burn.

I followed the retreating demon into the foliage, flying just above the surface of the earth, and encountered him just as he retrieved his blade. He turned to face me, but I had descended directly on top of his location, and he raised the khrev to block my attack. Although my sword was knocked off target, I continued to descend with full speed, and I knocked him to the ground, sending his weapon once again spinning out of his hand.

The furious Cherub fixed his blazing eyes on me and gave an angry roar, but although my instinct was to step back in surprise, I remembered Zephon's words to me some time ago... and I did not hesitate.

Stepping in, I dealt Azrael a deep wound across his chest. The fallen angel looked at me in shock, and then at the sparkling cut in his being. He fell to the ground, and the bright (although corrupt-looking) glow that still surrounds the spiritual bodies of the fallen ones faded around him. I had never seen the effects of the kherev upon the demons on the physical plane. They seemed at first to be identical to what they were in Heaven, but when I returned to the air, I noticed something different.

Both Dumah and Tarfiel were covered with wounds; yet they were still able to maintain their conflict. Apparently here, in a more distant place from the direct Presence of the Most High, the wounds of the kherevs are not as debilitating. The damage I had dealt to Azrael, however, had been severe, resulting in the effects upon him that I would have originally expected.

It was also later discovered that the demons could more readily recover from the wounds they received on earth. Although they all still bore scars of their rebellion in the Holy Kingdom, the injuries they received in this and our subsequent battles did not always leave such obvious markings. It had truly been a mercy for El Michael to cast them down to this place... even in their ungrateful apostasy, they had received great kindness by the decree of the Throne.

Finally my silent friend was able to overcome Tarfiel, and we presently discovered that Tahariel had effectively arrested the progress of Kafziel. Not wishing to leave them alone in Eden's garden, even in their injured state, we decided to take them with us back to the place where we had left El Michael and the others. As we made ready to go, we saw Za'afiel flying towards us from that very location.

When we told him of our plan, he said, "Yes, take them. Not one evil spirit must be allowed to remain within this place."

"The trees are being destroyed by Azrael's fire," Tahariel said, looking over at the red glow some distance away. Za'afiel nodded, and said, "I will see to that."

We rose up into the air, each of us bearing a burden, and began to transport the incapacitated demons back to the eastern border of the garden. As we turned back, we saw the Cherub we left behind raising his arms to the sky. As he did so, we saw the two rivers that ran nearby sending up a mist more dense than that which watered the soil every day. The hovering angel gathered the mist together, and soon it became a much thicker construct. From the rain-cloud he had formed, Za'afiel produced a great downpour of water, and soon the rich, green plant life of the garden was released from its fiery curse. The damage was not immediately repaired, however... and even at the distance from which the three of us were watching, we could see and smell the tiny black particles drifting in the air around us.

These were the first ashes.

The battle was still not over upon the return of Tahariel, Dumah and myself. El Michael was holding off Satan and several of his more powerful demons. Gabriel, having a much more visible role in this conflict than the former one, dove into one cloud after another of fallen angels, sending them spinning away, glowing with fresh wounds. The other three Archangels, Camael, Uriel and Raphael, retained their original, angelic forms, but they were no less effective in reducing the hosts of the fallen to a confused and helpless state.

The un-fallen warriors gradually gained the upper hand over the more aggressive demons, and soon we had pushed them back to the very gates of the garden. Seeing that he had no hope of overpowering those on the side of El Michael, the former pride of Heaven turned and soared off, followed by most of his minions. Some remained however, desperately striking out at those who had once been their companions.

Driven by anguish and an inescapable burning in their souls, those who remained at the gates in combat with us sought to bury the knowledge of their hopeless condition in this mindless expression of violence. The fallen Cherub Sh'fiel was one of these, who wept with a kind of dark frustration even as he successfully drove back a Power and a Dominion who were working together.

The demons that had been wounded, including Azrael, Kafziel and Tarfiel, began to slowly recover their senses and they also fled out into the rest of the world, leaving behind the holy Host and a few stragglers. Many of these, after a time, realized the futility of their warfare and went off to seek their chosen leaders. Those of the demons who had fallen late in the battle we bore out of the garden and left them lying by one of the streams that ran out of Eden. Not every demon had been wounded in this conflict, which was minor compared to the fierce struggle that had taken place in Heaven. Most of the Host were not harmed either, and those that were soon received a complete healing at the hands of El Michael or Raphael. The demons were already a defeated army, and even they seemed to know it.

Adam and his wife had heard the conflict in the distance. Even though they could not actually perceive the sounds of battle with their ears, and even less see the combatants with their eyes, a powerful wind blew through the trees of the garden, and the sensation of war in the air was unmistakable. When Azrael's fire lit up the sky with its destructive glow, they held each other more closely, knowing that their actions earlier in the day were somehow working to bring about these awful changes to their lives.

When the tiny ashes began to fall around them, they, as well as we, saw the effects of a kind of death for the first time. When the humans remembered El Michael's words to

them, that they would return to their previous state as dust because of their sin, their sorrow gripped them keenly, and threatened to overwhelm them, unused as they were to such thoughts and emotions.

Naked as they were, and unused to seeing each other without the holy glow of Heaven's favor upon their skin, they nevertheless clung to each other for protection. Recalling also the soft words and evidences of favor that the Elohim had still declared toward the pair, Adam turned to his companion and said, "He promised that one day the head of that serpent would be crushed. I know that this 'death' will not fully have dominion over us, and He has also said that we will yet fill the earth. We can still bring forth life. Your name shall be 'Eve,' then, because you will be the mother of all that we will produce; the mother of all the living."

Eve, his wife, looked at her husband and said, "Thank you for that blessing. Let it be even so with us."

The sensations of violence slowly seeped out of Eden's atmosphere and the two stood up, looking towards the place where the fire had been burning. As they wondered at the new things that were taking place, the Prince of angels appeared before them. The last of the demons had been removed from the borders of this special place, and now the thoughts of the Host returned to the fallen creations.

Summoning the Archangels to witness, the Chief Prince said, "They must be covered. They will not appear before us in this condition, reminded constantly of their shame and nakedness." Before the two humans, and the Host that were nearby, El Michael brought two of the garden's sheep, and said to those of us who were gathered, "The consequence of sin is death." He drew His khery, and struck the two beasts with it. There was no fiery light flickering along His blade this time, there was only the reflected glow of the sun as the sword, made physical for an instant, released the blood from within the two animals.

Adam and Eve now stared in mute horror at the red fluid coursing freely from the bodies, although they had turned away instinctively from the scene as the lambs were struck. We the Host also drew closer together, hating this destruction that so recently followed the glorious genesis of the physical plane. We took knowledge from the symbol, and it is applicable spiritually as well: when the head is separated from the body, death swiftly follows.

From the skin of the slain sheep El Michael produced two garments, and bade the pair to put them on. He then said to them, "You have truly become like one of us, in a sense. You know the difference for yourselves between good and evil, between faith and rebellion. And now, so that you will not eat also of the fruit of the Tree of Life in this condition, we must do as I have already declared to you. The demons have already left the garden; and now you must also."

Adam and Eve nodded, having seen some of the results of their transgression already in the warfare that had taken place in their former home, and in the disturbing sacrifice they had just witnessed. They accepted the sentence of their banishment without further pleas. The pair was borne by our Lord back to the Eastern gate and two angels, Shomeriel (Guardian of El) and Mageniel (Shield of El), were placed there to prevent both the humans and the fallen spirits from regaining access.

The two Cherubim drew their swords, and although the humans could not see their manifestations directly, the reflection of the Shekinah that flowed through their fiery blades appeared to them as bright, sparkling flames. Adam and his wife were allowed to behold these swords for two reasons – first they were presented with a visible reminder that the way to Eden’s garden was off limits, and secondly, the light of those swords was a beacon to them. When they saw the glow of the kherevs flickering before the passage to their former home, they knew that the angels still stood watch over them, and that they were not forsaken. The pair would often return to the eastern gate to pray, and to commune with those of us who were, from time to time, allowed to appear to them.

Raphael in particular was often with the human couple. It was he who served as a guide to them in their first days living outside of the garden. Although not as lush as their former home, the earth was as yet relatively uncorrupt, and certainly nowhere near as harsh and inhospitable as are many parts of the planet now. Raphael showed them a cave wherein they would be protected from the elements; for the winds would grow cold on occasion, and the sun would sometimes burn too warmly. Aside from all that the serpents, now wingless, were already beginning to show their animosity to the humans.

Back in the garden, the Seraphim beheld the slithering snakes with great sorrow. The physical creations that they had most favored had been stolen for the very beauty they had possessed, and corrupted. No longer did their scales shimmer with opalescent hues. No longer did their bright eyes display a kind of curious intelligence. No longer did their smooth, leathery wings allow them to soar in the air to the delight of the six-winged messengers. Israfel and El Michael stood over the very serpent that had been the vehicle for Eve’s temptations, and they whispered to each other. In silence, the Prince nodded to the Chief of the bright Order, and the latter reached up and tore the veil from his neck. All the other Seraphim followed suit. From that point forward, whenever the members of this Order were before the Throne, they used the uppermost pair of their wings to cover their faces in reverence.

The onlooking Host was often filled with sadness as we saw the pair discovering the terms of their life outside of the garden. The fruit trees were less common where they now lived, and the grains and certain plants were harder to consume. Angels instructed the man concerning how to prepare bread: gathering the wheat and crushing the ears, building a fire from the wood of trees which would now dry up occasionally, and baking the cakes upon the heat generated.

Everything now seemed a little tainted by the inclusion of sin in the world. There was much on the minds of the watching angels. What would become of mankind? If they were all to die like the sheep we saw killed to provide their covering, what was the purpose for this creation? Had the earth been forever plunged into sorrow because of Satan's presence there? Many angels began to understand why Lucifer had been banished from his former home. Seeing the gradual changes taking place on the physical plane due to sin, they understood that it would have been disastrous for the rebel to remain within the Holy Kingdom.

Even as the humans learned about the world below, El Michael was often in Union with the Throne; the great orb of light that had surrounded the Throneroom when Adam and Eve had transgressed was seen more than once filling all of Heaven with its glow. As many of us stood watching the two humans praying, trembling with fear at the thoughts of death that were never far from their mind, we saw the orb around the Throneroom fade, and the Prince left the Union and walked over to where we were standing, our diadems laid aside in sympathy with the humans.

Looking down at those whom we were observing, He said to us gently, "IaHshua." IaH saves. "The man is to die, as the sheep died, and to be consumed, as the trees were consumed, but their time will not end there." He closed off the scene of earth from our perceptions, and all of us gathered there focused on what He was saying.

"In Union, We have seen that there can be nothing done to prevent the consequences of Adam's sin. Yet, just as the sheep were slain for their sakes, so can another bear the eternal penalty of their fall. But who is there who can repair the broken Law? Who is able to restore justice, and yet show mercy?"

None of us knew, but then He told us, "Only the One who gave the law can truly pay its penalty. Only the One who established the Creation can redeem it from the sins caused by Lucifer's deception."

Za'afiel, who had been standing nearby, stood up forcefully and said, "Such a thing should not be! Why would you give yourself for something that you yourself have created? Elohim, I do not understand." He was echoing the thoughts of all of us, I am sure. How could His love for them be so deep? They were so young; they had experienced so little. What was it about them that would make them even able to comprehend, much less accept, the infinite pity which was being expressed by our Lord?

El Michael said to all of us, "No, you do not yet understand, my angels. But you will. Only by emptying myself can I be subject to the death that they have earned. When you see me in this way, you will begin to understand."

Perhaps Za'afiel was already beginning to understand, for he next said, "Let me do this. Let me be the one to suffer in their place." The statement of such unselfish love spoken by our Prince and repeated by the Cherub rippled through the Host, and my crown joined Za'afiel's at El Michael's feet. Soon others were also declaring their willingness

to undergo the trial of which He was speaking, and bowing low at the One who was before us.

Our Lord smiled and shook His head. “You cannot, my brothers. Only One equal with the Most High can pay the debt. Only an Elohim.” He placed a hand gently on Za’afiel’s shoulder and said directly to him, “Only me.”

El Michael raised a hand. The circle of diadems around Him vanished, and we felt them again around our foreheads. He opened up the void, and followed by all of us gathered there, He descended to earth to tell the weeping couple the good news.

“How could such things be?” Adam asked in wonder and revulsion. The Prince of angels said to him, “Do not become overwhelmed by the things we are discussing. IaH saves.” Michael had been speaking with the humans about the things to come. He had been warning them about the effects that a rebellious nature would have on the sinful race. Gradually, even their bodies would begin to display the effects of sin, but much more quickly – their minds, and their spirits would be tainted by the ingrained knowledge of rebellion.

We could perceive that Adam and Eve were becoming deeply agitated by the concepts to which they were being introduced, and although they could not see us standing nearby, we sorrowed with them. We saw their faces change with sadness, and we longed to comfort them. Our Lord was able to calm them, however, and continued to speak gently to His physical creations. “Tomorrow is a Rest,” He said, reminding them that the 7th day in the cycle was drawing near. “On that day the Host will again appear before you, and there will be joy even in the midst of your cares.” Upon hearing for the first time that the fellowship of the holy angels was not to be withheld from them at all times, their faces visibly brightened. We also were overcome with pleasure, for although we knew that when we had a message to bear to the couple we would be allowed to manifest to their senses, many of us had not considered the question of fellowship.

When the sun began to sink below the horizon in the west, El Michael turned to us and smiled, saying, “Let the Host appear.” Adam and Eve looked around in joy, an expression on their faces that we had longed to see return. They beheld us, and we looked around at each other and ourselves, most of us taking on physical appearances for the first time. Our wings were knit down over our bodies, the spiritual concepts representing speed now symbolizing a covering of righteousness, which results from our rapid obedience to the Throne’s decrees. The Ophanim yet retained two wings, and the Seraphim had four free when they were in physical form.

The day was passed in sweet conversation between the humans and the angels of Heaven. Little thought was given to the demons who must have assuredly been near to our gathering, watching in consternation and envy. The horrible incidents of the days past were mentioned only in the context of El Michael’s wonderful promise to bear the

consequences Himself, and everywhere this decision was praised by Adam, Eve and the Host alike.

The only part of the day marked by any true sorrow was when the evening drew near. El Michael again appeared before the couple with a sheep.

“The consequences of sin is death,” He said to them. “Forever will this be a reminder to you of the true nature of rebellion.” We expected our Lord to slay this animal as He had done with the previous pair, but instead He turned aside and held out His hand to a large rock that stood nearby. As we watched the stone shivered, and then it shook, cracks appearing along its smooth, unblemished surface. El Michael made a fist, and the object shattered, separating into several sharp shards.

“Take a piece of the broken rock,” the Chief Prince said, and Adam did as he was instructed. With the crude knife in hand, the human slowly approached the docile animal. Michael nodded, and Adam raised the blade over his head, preparing to strike the beast. He stood there for a time as the Host watched in silence. It seemed as if he would be unable to carry out the awful task, but then Eve drew near and placed her hand upon his back. In her eyes was no less sorrow, no less pain than his, but the woman was Adam’s companion, and her place was there, with him to strengthen him.

Adam closed his eyes, and then as the sun set he drove the sharp object downward, piercing the flesh, releasing the blood unto the earth that had been cursed for his sake. He and his wife shed tears... but as the light of the sacred day yet lingered on the horizon, the Host was able to comfort them in a visible way. The Archangel Uriel hovered above the pair, two of his wings around him as a robe, and the other two holding him aloft. At a whisper from El Michael, the Ophan spread his hands over the dead body and fire flashed forth from Heaven through him, consuming the sacrifice.

As I saw the flames rising to the sky, I remembered Raguel, who had been the Archangel of my Order, the Principalities. To him would have gone the honor of consuming the offerings of humans with holy fire. To him would have been given the ministry of presenting the flames before the Throne. But he had left his estate, and had perverted his knowledge of Heaven’s forces. When he had begun to understand what it was that he had lost, Raguel took the name “Arioch,” or “Fierce Lion,” as a pale reflection of the animal form that Uriel had assumed during the Heavenly war. For all his desire, however, he would not repent of his sin – he now could not, and the distinction that he had despised therefore passed on to the Throne angel named Uriel, “The Fire of El.”

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 6 - YELED (FRUIT/OFFSPRING)

It is written in the Scriptures that every tree will bring forth after its kind. An apple tree can bring forth only apples. A fig tree is powerless but to bring forth figs. In human beings it is much the same. On the day your first parents ate from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, partaking before they were ready to know of good and evil on such an intense level, they themselves became a different kind of “tree.”

Their tendencies were now different. Whereas before holiness had been easy, natural to them, now they knew what rebellion was. Now the flesh that they bore, no longer glowing with the purity of Heaven, was constantly leaning towards a return to the dark valley into which they had stumbled on the day they fell from grace.

Ever since that great and terrible day, all the sons of Adam have been born with that dark nature. And yet, the Shekinah also was changed that day. In some way that perhaps only Gabriel and El Michael understood, the Presence was reconnected to mankind in a fashion that it had not been before. Perhaps it was only that some connection remained despite their transgression, and that in itself was a miracle. Whichever it was, the grace of the Most High was poured out unto Adam and Eve and they, by relying on this and the promise given to them by the Elohim that they were not cast off, were able to overcome the propensities which they had gained.

Although mankind comes forth from the womb with a tendency towards unrighteousness, it is nevertheless innocent, and by learning about IaH and the Sacrifice which was to come, the damage done to the soul could be undone. The Host early saw a most striking example of this, that by a human’s choice he or she could either throw off the grace of Heaven, or throw off the curse of sin.

After Adam and his wife had lived for some time in the land east of Eden’s garden, it soon became apparent that there was something different about Eve. “She is with child,” Anael explained to me, when I asked him why the woman’s body was changing. The Host was able to perceive the inner alterations to the human’s chemicals long before Adam was aware of it. The Cherubim saw life. When Gabriel announced to the couple that the first of their offspring was soon to arrive, they received the news with great joy.

The Throne Itself had ordained this blessed event, and all of Heaven rejoiced with the pair. Eve soon felt the sensations of life growing within herself, and shared her

experiences with Adam, and the angels with whom she spoke on the Sabbaths, as best she could. On the week that he discovered his wife's condition, Adam offered up an extra sheep, pleading the blood of the Sacrifice to come over the destiny of his firstborn son.

Despite the harrowing nature of the sacrifices, the Host was beginning to understand the beauty of the symbol that had been given to Adam. Not only did the occasional shedding of blood remind the couple in a dramatic fashion that sin results in death, but it also pointed forward to the day when Another would truly and completely die in their places. Every time the blood stained the altar of stones that Adam erected before the eastern gate of the garden, the humans sighed with true remorse. Every time Uriel consumed the lifeless body with fire from Heaven, their hope for the future was rekindled. The news of Eve's pregnancy seemed to be a true sign of the favor that they still held in the eyes of the Elohim.

On the night he was born, all the Host gathered together to behold Cain, which meant "A possession," for Eve said, "I have gained this precious possession: a man from IaHWeH." El Michael also was there, in His visible form, watching over the family. As I looked at the child coming forth, covered in blood, I remembered the slain sheep; I remembered the pain of Eve's efforts in birthing him... I remembered the Elohim's promise to become one of these creations.

We delighted in the great work that had gone into the bodies of the humans, that they could produce such a marvel, that they could create life in a way that seemed strangely similar to the pattern after which they themselves were knit together from the earth's elements. We delighted in their ability to begin their existence so small and helpless, and then grow in body and mind until they could rival many of us for intellect and strength.

As the child grew, he was never out of the Host's sight. One Seraph in particular, Mataquiel, seemed to consider himself the young human's particular guardian and the many-winged angel would often appear to Cain and sing to him or speak with him.

As soon as he could understand, his father made clear to him the reality of their situation. "Your mother and I made a terrible mistake one day," he said. "Because of that, you, and all of us, will have a life that is less than it should have been. But we know that Elohim is forgiving, for He has promised that one day we will regain all that we have lost." Adam recounted the story of their expulsion from the garden. He told young Cain of the demons' plan to use them as a pawn in their spiritual warfare. He warned the boy about the unholy spirits, and with tears he would often speak of El Michael's promised redemption.

Cain's mind was as keen as that of his father, and he would often ask questions about the world around him. Often, the things he noticed were blessings that had remained from the original creation, for not all the changes that sin made to the earth were very marked. Sometimes, however, he would point out some quality of an animal or plant that was the direct result of his parents' transgression.

Upon reaching out for a flower, the child was surprised to feel a sharp pain in the skin of his hand, and to see a small trickle of blood thereafter. “You must be careful around those thorns, Cain.” Mataquiel had appeared behind the boy, and explained to him that some things were painful to the touch. “Why did IaH make them so sharp?” he asked his angelic companion.

“IaH did not make the thorns. He made the flowers, but on the day that your parents sinned, the entire earth was cursed.”

“I don’t understand,” the child said. His eyes searched the Seraph’s face for answers to a question that need never have been asked. “Why are there these bad things in the world?”

A ripple of sadness passed over Mataquiel at the question, but he replied, “Your father has already told you about sin... that it destroys things. Certain parts of the plants were also destroyed or changed on that day.” I had been nearby, invisible to Cain, but listening to the conversation, and I said to the Seraph, “I can see you long to explain more to him.”

“Yes,” the angel whispered back to me. “But I know he is not yet ready.” I understood. How could we explain to one so young... the very presence of sin in the universe was twisting the creation so that it no longer reflected the principles of Heaven, but instead those principles which were now most visible in Its greatest enemy, Lucifer. While the original creation had been harmonious, and gentle, and absolutely peaceful, already we were beginning to see shadows of things to come. Already the plants were starting to show characteristics that seemed familiar to the Host, who had felt Azazel’s sharp disposition within the Everlasting Kingdom. But these were only a foretaste of the havoc that would occur in the animal kingdom after the flood.

That is a matter for later, perhaps. There is plenty at this point on which to meditate.

It was not long before Eve conceived a second time. Again it was a male child, like Adam in physical form. This one she named Abel, whose name means “Breath.” Abel came forth from the womb gasping for air, eager for life as an independent being. Now there were four in the family of mankind, and again Adam offered up a sheep for the future of his newest child.

Abel also was full of questions from the day his mind grasped speech. His reaction to his parents’ tale was much the same as Cain’s had been. Information only resulted in more curiosity. My friend Tahariel took a particular interest in this son of Adam, and would often spend time in physical form with the boy, much as Mataquiel would often be in the company of Cain.

Ever since the ordinance of the Sacrifice was taught to Adam, the humans had a particular sympathy for sheep. They understood the gentle beasts were ordained to render them a sacred service, and so they always took particular care to ensure that their lives were as unmolested and peaceful as possible. As soon as he was old enough, Abel volunteered to relieve his father of watching over the sheep that lived near the humans' dwelling place.

Cain had already begun to assist in the working of the soil to provide food for his family, and the jobs at which the two worked were perfect complements to each other. Both youths grew in size and in intelligence. Soon, they truly began to resemble their father, and when the older of the two, Cain, desired a companion, he took to wife one of the pair's other children, a female like Eve. The first pair did give birth to several other humans as Cain and Abel grew up, but there was a special lesson for the universe to learn from their first and second sons.

When they were old enough, Adam taught the boys to offer their own sacrifices to IaH. Adam and Cain would slay a sheep for themselves and their families, and Abel would plead the blood of the One to whom the sacrifice pointed over his own life.

It was at this point that we began to notice a difference in the bearings of the two young men. While Cain delighted in the procedure, Abel was filled with the same sense of remorse that had marked his father's state of mind on the occasions. The earth had been cursed for man's sake, because of the decision of his parents, and Cain felt a sense of satisfaction in being able to exercise a degree of control over how the curse of death was carried out.

In spite of Mataquiel's efforts to explain the beautiful and loving spirit revealed by El Michael in cursing the ground with the consequences of transgression rather than pouring out the sentence fully on mankind, he had difficulty recognizing it. "Why must all suffer for the mistake of one?"

"Had that 'one,' suffered the immediate effects of his sin, Cain, how would you ever have even been born?" But Mataquiel's explanation did not bring the young human peace, and his countenance began to take on expressions of sadness, and at times a dull, unfocussed rage. The Host began to find it difficult to be around him, and even Mataquiel seemed burdened when making his visits to the human. Cain could not perceive most of us, except on special occasions, and so to a large degree he was unaware of the danger he was in as we were less frequently around to protect him from the demonic spirits which were never far away from the tiny community.

I do not know just how or when, but Lucifer's followers gradually gained access to the firstborn human's mind. Outside of our protection, he was as helpless as Eve had been on that terrible day, and it was not long before the invisible serpents began to whisper also into his ear.

As Cain returned home one evening, his father met him along the way. “The angel Zephon has appeared to me with a grave warning, my son.”

“What did he have to say?” the younger man asked, his now habitual frown darkening at the thought of having been the subject of an ill report by the Heavenly oracle.

“By the Elohim’s command he came to me, and revealed that you have been falling under the power of the very spirits which deceived your mother and I when we lived in the garden.”

“No spirit appeared to me,” he replied, remembering the form that Azazel had chosen to use when presenting himself to his mother. “Even the holy angels are seldom at my side, I am told.”

“You know that we are no longer able to see the Host unless they will it. Nevertheless, while they are unseen, they are not always unfelt. Come with me to the gates of Eden, and there we can speak to the Cherubim. Perhaps they can tell us what to do.”

Tahariel and Dumah were silent fellow travelers with the pair, as Cain unwillingly followed Adam to the eastern gate. As they approached the two burning swords held by Shomeriel and Mageniel flared even more brightly than usual, and Adam, turning to his son, said, “Wait for me here.”

The first human walked closer, and when he arrived at his usual spot, he fell to his knees and addressed the two standing by the entrance. “My lords, I wish to speak with you.”

A moment later, the dust near the swords swirled around and two bodies were knit together for the Cherubim. Shomeriel sheathed his kherev and reached forward to raise Adam to his feet but Mageniel remained in a guarded position, alert for the approach of anyone else.

“What shall we do for you, Adam?” the Cherub addressed him.

“My son is in constant danger from the demons,” he began. “Zephon has told me that they are near to him continually, and waste no opportunity to try to influence him when the members of the holy Host are not nearby.”

Shomeriel nodded thoughtfully, and said, “He has made it difficult for us to protect him. He takes such delight in the sacrifices, and... he reminds many of the loyal angels of the fallen one’s followers already.” The Cherub had said that as gently as he could, but Adam did not fail to understand the significance of what the mighty messenger was telling him.

“What can be done? How can he be spared from the demons’ deceptions? How can we help him to regain the protection of the Host?”

“Angels are never far from the presence of a sweet spirit. When you and your wife, with your sons and daughters sing, there we are gathered together. When you pray to the Elohim, and praise His name, we are nearby. When you offer the sacrifices, Uriel is not the only one who draws near. When Cain can once again delight in these things, and delight in them from a pure heart, our swords will always burn brightly to protect him. But he must choose to return to the right worship of IaH. He can have no protection outside of our company.”

Shomeriel’s eyes shifted upward, past the contemplative human, in response to a whisper from Dumah. Cain had already grown impatient with waiting for his father, and was returning to the field without a word.

As the sun set that night, Adam offered up a sacrifice for his son. As his family sat around the fire, he revealed to them the warning he had received from Zephon, and his conversations with Cain and Shomeriel. Cain and his wife were the only ones absent. From then on the two dwelt apart, and would only communicate with their family when bringing them the fruits of Cain’s labor, or for the times of sacrifices.

Abel in particular had tried to reason with his brother. He told him of the Cherub’s advice to Adam, he told him of his family’s love. He tried to warn Cain of the results of being outside of the angels’ protection. In spite of this, Cain hardened himself against the words of his brothers and sisters and would not return to their company. The only aspect of Cain’s life that had remained unchanged was that he always appeared for the humans’ sacrificial ceremonies.

But even this he did only for the death. His eyes would shine when the blood of the lambs poured out unto the earth. The cries of the creatures did nothing to move his heart towards a sorrow for sin. His mind was dark against the signs that pointed to El Michael’s promised sacrifice.

As one of the Twelve, I had not much time to spend in close observation of the humans’ progress. I delighted in hearing reports from my friends of their latest activities. The only thing that truly troubled us was the matter of Cain. Dumah also could not follow the events very closely, as he and I were working together to refine our knowledge of the earth’s forces. Already there were whispers in the Spiritual Kingdom of a great change that would come upon the physical world, although no one knew enough to even speculate as to what it might be. All that El Michael would say was that the Principalities, Powers and Dominions were to have much input when the time would at last come.

Ever since the battle in Eden’s garden, certain members of the Host had been learning the concept of “rain” from Za’afiel. To the Hashmallim, the Dominions, El Michael had given the instruction that they were to understand it fully, although we did not know just why at the time. Although rain was not a part of the natural system, there was much to

be understood from the process of extracting water from the air and then using heat to return it to the atmosphere. Because of this, my friend Tahariel was also kept occupied most of the time, and had Dumah (although a Virtue) not been working with me, I would not have seen either of them very much, except when we gathered together on earth for our Sabbaths.

It was while I was waiting for Tahariel to conclude a conversation with Za'afiel that Dumah approached me. I had finished my work for the time being, and was glad of the opportunity to converse with my friend. As it turned out, there were more important events that would take place that day.

“There is trouble on earth,” Dumah whispered to me. I asked him what was going on, and he replied, “Cain has defiled the sacrifice.” Before I could ask him how that was, Tahariel joined us and I repeated all that Dumah had told me so far. He had the same questions I did, and to these our silent companion only told us, “Come and see.”

The three of us descended unto the earth, and we saw a large group of angels standing in an open field not far from the humans' residence. Cain and Abel were talking, and the emotions of the elder brother seemed to be rising rapidly. I looked for Anael, to ask him what was happening, but failing to find him I turned to the nearest angel and inquired of him.

The Virtue Adriel said to me, “The brothers were to meet here in the evening and offer their sacrifice. Abel had sent to Cain a lamb for his use, and he had returned to his younger brother a basket of fruit to offer afterwards as a token of thanksgiving.” This was in accordance with the practice of Adam's sons, and I nodded, inviting him to continue.

“As Cain was approaching, the demon Imriel drew near and began to stir up his anger. He reminded him of the sin of his parents, and the young man saw the lamb he was leading as a burden: payment for a debt that he himself did not owe. We tried to approach, to drive off the fallen Ophan, but other demons appeared and held us off. We seemed to have no power over them; it was as if the very air around Cain was dark, and we could not do battle effectively on his behalf.”

I was again reminded of the day when Eve fell, that we had been unable to approach her, to stop Azazel or his victim. She had been on forbidden ground, and now, it seemed, so was Cain.

Adriel went on, “It was as if the lamb he was carrying sensed Imriel's presence, because it began to struggle and broke loose from Cain's control. With a statement of disgust, he ran after the beast, and when he caught it, he slew it with his shard of the broken rock.” My expression must have registered the surprise I felt, for Adriel expounded, saying, “Yes, this too is new... never before has a human slain an animal for any reason other than offering sacrifice. And the look on his face as he did it... if Lucifer's hatred could be represented on the features of a human, that was surely it.”

“What did he offer on his altar?” Tahariel asked, indicating the two piles of stones that lay beyond where the brothers stood conversing.

“When Cain arrived, he was still carrying his fruit offering. He left the body of the sheep in the field, slain at a time not appointed, and in a place not prescribed by IaH. Uriel could not consume it, and it lies there still. As Abel saw his brother approaching without the sacrifice, he asked him about it. Cain did not wish to reveal his hasty actions, and he said, ‘I have brought my sacrifice,’ showing him the basket of fruit.”

“Abel reminded him, ‘But you know there must be blood. There must be death to pay the wages of our father’s sin.’

‘Then let our father offer the lambs,’ Cain retorted. ‘These fruits that I have brought, this work of my own hands; let them be acceptable to IaH, for I have done nothing to deserve death.’”

“Abel tried to reason with his brother, attempting to explain the purpose of the sacrifice, and that they, and all their brothers and sisters, were under the curse of the earth that Adam’s transgression had released. But Cain asked, ‘Who are you to instruct me? Am I not the firstborn? Have I not heard of these things before you were even brought forth by our mother?’”

“Then Abel fell silent, seeing that Cain was intent on his purpose, and with a hesitant look on his face he turned to his own altar and began to prepare his sacrifice. Cain lay his fruit upon the rocks, and said, ‘Elohim, accept my offering.’ The Host, still attempting to overcome the demons which surrounded Cain, and now his brother also, noticed that Uriel hovered over the altar, but did not send fire to accept the fruit of the human’s labor.”

“In the meantime, Abel had slain his lamb; Uriel turned to this sacrifice, enveloping it in flames, and reducing it to ashes. As the smoke ascended to Heaven, piercing the dome of demonic energy that lay over the scene, the younger brother placed his share of the fruits also on the altar. These too were accepted, and Abel knelt to give thanks in words, as he had just done in deeds. When Cain saw that even Abel’s fruits were consumed, Imriel again drew near, and pricked his mind. The frowning human’s mood seemed to darken even more, and he turned to walk away.”

“‘You know I would have given you another sacrifice, brother,’ Abel called after Cain.

His words, however, only seemed to drive Cain deeper into his frenzy, and he shouted back, ‘What need have I for a sacrifice? By my own works I should be acceptable to the Elohim. Have I not done all He has required of us? Have I not worked the soil to provide food for my family, even for you?’”

“‘There must be blood, Cain,’ Abel said. ‘Only in that way can we honor El Michael’s promise.’

‘Blood...’ Cain said stopping for a moment, but then he continued to walk away. We saw Imriel whispering into the human’s mind over and over again, ‘There must be blood...’”

“At that moment El Michael appeared to Cain, who was already a distance away from Abel and the altars. The conflict between the angels and the demons ceased, and Imriel fled. ‘Why is your face showing anger?’ He asked Cain gently. ‘Why do you look so sad? If you had done well, would you not have been accepted? But if you don’t... sin is all around you, even at the door, and it desires to have you. You must overcome it, or it will overcome you.’”

“‘It is so, Lord,’ Cain said, bowing immediately to the ground. ‘I will go and ask my brother for another lamb.’ Cain’s worship had seemed somehow forced, and the Host watched on with many misgivings. El Michael stood silently for a moment, but then He said, ‘That which you will do, do it quickly.’ He vanished, dissipating His physical form, and then He immediately returned to Heaven and entered into Union with the Throne. As soon as He had gone, however, as soon as Cain turned back to Abel, Imriel returned and began to speak to him again. By the time he had returned to the field where his younger brother still knelt praying, his face was as it had been before, and the two stand there speaking even now.”

As my friends and I turned to behold the scene, we saw that the angels stood on one side, and the demons on the other, both observing. Even Imriel now stood apart, by Azazel and the others, to see the results of his influence. Cain knew that he was acting contrary to the will of the Elohim. We had no authority to come to his aid, for unless we are specifically commissioned by IaH we cannot interfere with free will. It seems as if the demons were assured of the success of whatever they had been planning, for they also only stood by and watched, eagerly listening as the brothers’ voices rose.

Again, Abel was trying to convince his brother to offer an acceptable sacrifice. “Did you not say to El Michael you would ask of me another lamb? You may have whichever you choose.”

“I have already slain my lamb,” Cain said, remembering his violence on the way to the field. “Let Uriel take the smoke of that one to the Throne.”

“But you did not sacrifice it at the appointed time, or the right place,” Abel replied. “Lay another lamb on the altar, and perhaps the Elohim will accept that one. Come, I will pray with you that your actions have not caused Yah’s disfavor on you.”

“I will offer no lamb but what I have already slain,” Cain said, a hard look in his eyes. “Let Yah take what I have provided.”

Cain turned to leave again, having changed his mind completely, but Abel took him by the shoulder and said, “Do not speak that way against the Most High.”

Cain shook him off, however, and before our horrified eyes, he said, “Does Yah desire blood? Then He shall have blood!” Raising his sharpened stone, the human struck his brother as he would have done to a sheep and, lifting him off the ground, he threw him aside. Abel had not even had enough time to react. He fell in the field and lay there unmoving, as had the lamb that his brother had slain earlier in the day.

The dome of spiritual darkness that had overshadowed them both seemed to vanish. Before any of us could manifest to the sinful mortal, who was leaving the field with little emotion showing on his face, El Michael appeared again, glowing brightly with the fire of the Shekinah. At His entrance, the demons withdrew, but did not depart fully, standing off and observing the fruit of their temptations.

El Michael turned to Cain and said, “Where is your brother?” Even on his carefully expressionless face, Cain’s dark temper was still perceptible to us, but rather than pure anger, his features now showed great fear. “I do not know,” he replied. “Am I his keeper?”

The loyal Host withdrew still further at these words, dripping with pride and hatred. Michael turned and saw Abel lying near Cain’s altar and, flaring with new brightness, He said, “What is this you have done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to me from the earth!” Cain, beholding the light pouring forth from the Prince of angels, fell on his face and did not say a word. “You are cursed from the earth, the same earth that opened up to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the soil, the land will no more bring forth fruit in response to your efforts. You will be unable to tend your own food. A causeless wanderer you must now be on the earth.”

Contemplating his sentence, Cain raised his head a little and said, “This punishment is greater than I can bear! Because you have driven me from the land that I tend, and out of your Presence, I must wander... and if any discover what I have done to Abel, will they not offer up my blood also to repay the sin? Do you not require blood?” El Michael closed His eyes at these words, and we wept. How Cain had misunderstood! How he had allowed Imriel’s deceptions to turn his heart away from the truth about the Elohim! No human could repay the debt of sin, no sacrifice of man’s life did our Lord delight in. Truly this first death was a great blow to us all, Michael included, and yet the murderer was accusing IaH of finding joy in the very practice he loved, and of which he had now become guilty.

“You can never more understand the sacrifice, Cain. You will never again be able to understand the love of Heaven. Nevertheless, I will have pity on you while you wander this world. Whosoever shall slay you, unto him shall the punishment be visited seven times.” El Michael leaned forward, and with a sad expression, placed a kiss upon the human’s forehead. When he stood up again there was a small red *Tau* above Cain’s eyes: a mark in red, as if with blood.

Cain fled from El Michael's face and, taking his wife, he left the area where the other humans lived. Great was the mourning when Gabriel appeared to Adam, Eve and their other children to reveal to them that dark day's events. The first pair wept the most bitterly, knowing that these were the fruits of their very first sin. They buried Abel under the very altar he had built in the field. As for the lamb that Cain had slain earlier, that lay in the field, and none buried it. Although the process would be much more rapid in the years ahead, a few days later members of the Host which passed by the tragic scene could detect traces of something else that was new. Cain's lamb had begun to decay.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 7 - TOL'DAH (GENERATIONS)

A new tumult stirred Heaven. Great was our distress already at witnessing the fall of the firstborn human, and to that was added the news that Lucifer again demanded an audience with the unfallen Host. Once again, El Michael permitted Azazel and a few of his demons to enter the Holy Kingdom, and as before Gabriel (who had recently returned from giving the sad news to the humans) shielded the sinful spirits from the destruction of the Shekinah's glory.

Dumah, Tahariel and I drew near to listen as Lucifer began to speak. "Do you continue to insist on the righteousness of the Throne's Laws, Michael? Even your humans, even those you claim are created in your 'image,' even these cannot maintain their obedience to your demands. You promise freedom, and give only rules. When, like me, those with the courage to question reject your ways, they are marked and cast away." Lucifer had been standing with his six wings folded around his body, and as he said this he unfurled them, revealing the scar that had remained across his chest since the duel with the One before him.

"But now that we have seen mankind unable to keep your principles, what then shall you do? Will you destroy all the earth, or will you concede that I am right? Let me return to my place in Heaven!"

"Your heart was set against me long before you left, Azazel. Just as you deceived and ensnared Adam and his wife, so also have you brought the curse of your sin unto Cain. Behold my servant Abel. He sleeps in the earth, but on the day that I complete my covenant, he will rise again, never more to die. Behold your servant Cain. He wanders the earth, but on the day that I restore my covenant, he will be cast into the flames of the Presence, never more to live."

"Look down, Michael," Lucifer snarled at Him. "Those who keep your word are in tears, and one is slain. Where is the promise of your favor? Even on earth, your angels could not stop the destruction of the man who was faithful to your commandments."

"My angels did as they were commanded," the Elohim replied. "The blood of Abel will be the voice of my promise for a time, and then I will replace it with one greater still. This, Lucifer, is the mave't, the death of which I warned you. Remember this day, and see that the wages of sin is death. See the righteous slain, and the wicked left alive in the

world which you have begun to create. Blessed are they who, in the ages to come, will suffer at the hands of those who choose your way.”

“I gain nothing from speaking with you,” Lucifer said. “You will see only that which you wish to see... this “promise.” And you reveal only what those who stand with you wish to hear. Because you are mighty, you have cast me to the earth, but there I will make war against all who wish to do your will. I will turn all the sons of Adam against you! I will yet prove my name before all the Host, and they will see the unrighteousness of your Law.”

As he spoke in this manner, a great tremor shook the Heavenly plane. I looked up and saw the orb of light that surrounded the Covering Cherub flickering. It sparkled, faded, and then shone faintly again. As this was taking place, the demons cried out as the scars of their wounds began to glow as if being reopened. Lucifer placed his hand across his injury, a dark look on his face, and then he said, “Your Kingdom will fall apart, Michael. I will see to it, beginning with the humans there below.” Turning abruptly, he opened a passageway to the void, and without another word he and his followers departed.

“Madness,” I whispered to Dumah beside me, but before he could reply we saw Gabriel settling wearily to the earth in front of us. “Are you well, Adonai?” I asked, but he could not seem to speak, kneeling silently on the ground.

El Michael approached us and, raising Gabriel to his feet, said, “It has gone far indeed. I will appoint you a helper to keep the Shekinah in check.” With that, the Prince summoned the Cherub Raziel and the three went into the Throneroom together.

“We should see to the humans now,” I said to my two friends, and we entered the void to seek out Adam and his family. We were among the first to be blessed with the opportunity to offer comfort.

The family of Adam mourned for the loss of the two oldest boys. We were often with them, bringing words of healing, and refreshing them with recollections of our own days of rebuilding after the war in Heaven. They were encouraged by the memories we related to them: reconstructing the temple, raising again the towers. With our words we revealed to them the beauty of the Heavenly Kingdom, restored after the expulsion of Lucifer and his followers.

We provided them with evidence that life, and joy, and love continue, even after so great a loss.

After some time Eve brought forth another son, and this one she called Seth (Compensation), “For Elohim has appointed to me another seed instead of Abel, who was killed by Cain.” As Adam contemplated the sacrifices of the lambs and spoke to El

Michael and the Host, he had begun to understand as never before the nature of sin. He saw the full measure of his guilt, and understood the awful pattern of consequences that had resulted in the violence between Cain and Abel. The first man grew in wisdom and understanding, and as he increased in grace this growth was reflected in the nature of his youngest son.

Although Seth reflected much of the growth that had taken place in the spirits of Adam and Eve, he was nevertheless a human, and under the shadow of Adam's curse. We knew he also would be given a choice – would he choose the path of Abel, or the path of Cain? Mataquiel, who had been deeply wounded by the firstborn human's rebellion, was comforted by the birth of this boy, and resolved to ensure that he had the benefit of knowing the difference between the natures of his two oldest brothers.

Although doomed to be a wanderer as long as his life was to last, Cain had not been idle in the years that followed the death of his brother. In a large plain east of the land in which his parents dwelt, the firstborn human erected a city named after his son Enoch. There he ruled for a time over his wife, and children, and their children in turn. His mind was not at peace, however, for Azazel, Imriel and others were constantly at his ear, tormenting him with guilt over what he had done.

Satan loved to hold Cain up to the perceptions of the unfallen Host, and declare his cause justified in the actions of Adam's offspring. The more mental and spiritual anguish the demons could squeeze out of the human, the greater joy they felt in their sinful security. "Behold the depths to which IaH's humans have sunk!" they boldly declared, diluting the fact that it had been their influence that had produced these bitter results.

Cain found his greatest peace in wandering alone; the movements of his feet served to still, for a time, the torment of his mind. The rhythm of his steps somehow soothed his fears of the judgment to come, much as the soft notes of a young shepherd's music would calm the nerves of a fallen king ages later. Leaving his self-appointed throne, Cain set out once again to wander, to seek the beautiful sights of the earth, and to banish from his mind the promise of the restoration of the garden his parents had first inhabited. His children, who had all grown to reflect his sinful character to some degree or another, were left to contend with each other as to who would rule in his place. Enoch, the eldest, eventually became dominant over the others.

Under the dominion of Cain and the demons that controlled him, lawlessness flourished. Every provision that IaH had made for His children, the fallen spirits ensured were corrupted, reversed or ignored. The seventh day of rest was no longer honored by the Cainites. Whereas the Elohim had given fruits and herbs for the humans' diet and animals for sacrifices, the slain animals of the city, no longer consumed by Uriel's fire, were consumed instead by the rebellious clan.

While IaH had commanded that man should subdue the earth and superintend its development, Cain's descendants developed weapons and tools for destroying the earth for sport, and one of their greatest joys was a wasteful form of hunting.

The Cainite Lamech, already guilty of all the shameful practices that I describe above, corrupted also the most sacred blessing that IaHWeh had given to the physical race. Instead of one wife, he acquired two. He was a mighty hunter, and even when he was old, would often spend days in the field near the city of Enoch. Some beasts he slew for food, and others he let lay in the forests and flatlands surrounding the community.

It came to pass that as he was hunting with one of his sons in a dense area of foliage, the two were separated. Seeing a sudden movement in the brush some distance away, Lamech drew his bow and loosed the arrow.

Up in Heaven, the attention of the holy Host was suddenly drawn to the area around the city of Enoch. Our eyes were not often turned in that direction, for we could scarcely bear to witness the great evils that polluted that place. Nevertheless, all of Heaven was moved when the blood of Lamech's son fell upon the earth. We looked on with sorrowful interest at what next occurred.

Lamech heard the cry of his boy, and hurried over to where he lay bleeding. At the same time, Cain had been approaching the city. His wanderings had brought him back to the dwelling place of his offspring, and he had wished to see how they fared. The firstborn human came upon the body first and, looking down, he remembered his great sin against his brother.

Cain looked up at Lamech's approach and said to him, "Why is it you have done this thing?" We watched as the nearby demons, who were never far from the citizens of Enoch, drew near, and they immediately began to stir up feelings of great guilt in both men. Drawing their spiritual swords, they slashed at the humans – Cain's old anger began to rise, and Lamech experienced a deep fear. He knew the curse that IaH had placed upon Cain for slaying his kinsman, and he felt himself guilty of the same crime although he had not killed his son knowingly.

Cain considered the evils into which his children had been drawn, and he knew in his spirit that his own actions had worsened the curse laid originally upon Adam. He began to understand how it was that he had been guilty of his father's sin, because he saw his own offspring suffering as a result of the evil that he had done. But this new knowledge did not lead him to repentance. Instead, the demons whispered, "See how they suffer for your crimes... how is it that IaH could deal this way with humans?" Cain accepted their accusations.

We watched as blind rage covered his eyes, and he rushed upon the speechless Lamech, intent on sating his guilt by shedding blood yet again. If we were powerless to protect faithful Abel, what could we have done to prevent this attack upon Cain's polygamous

descendant? The younger man fled; as he ran, he drew his bow again, and struck Cain in the chest with an arrow.

I am moving quickly past this part for it is unpleasant to my memory... but there are lessons to be learned even here, for as Cain fell to the ground and lay dying, he said, "So has the blood of Abel drawn mine down after it. I have shed man's blood. By a man, then, has my own blood been spilled."

Hastening back to his home, Lamech called his two wives and said, "Adah, Zillah, listen to me. I have slain our father Cain in the field, to my bruising; and also my own offspring to my wounding." They listened without saying a word, but Zillah began to weep in shock for the loss of her son. "The curse of Cain has passed on to me," he continued. "As I have been cursed sevenfold for the blood of Abel, so shall he who kills me be cursed seventy times sevenfold." As it had been written, a husband and wife are to be joined together, and not depart from each other, so Lamech's family reflected yet another undoing of one of the Elohim's decrees. Zillah would no longer dwell with Lamech after that event.

Seth grew to be a mighty human. He came often to the gates of Eden to offer his sacrifices, and would speak to the Cherubim there. From Adam he learned about sin. From Mataquiel he heard the awful tale of his brothers' fate. From Shomeriel and Mageniel he learned about the rebellion and fall of Lucifer. The demons could not even approach this young man, for we were always on hand to guard him with drawn and blazing swords. Although he was the youngest surviving son of Adam, he followed in his father's footsteps, and his siblings looked to him for leadership.

Heeding carefully the advice of the angels and his parents, Seth brought an age of relative peace to the human world. Beholding them multiplying and maintaining their communion with Heaven, we cherished the hope that humanity might yet receive the promised Sacrifice in peace at the appointed time. We forsook the company of Cain's descendants, for the darkness of sin lay like a thick blanket over the city where they dwelt, and we spent our time observing and discussing the family of Adam as exemplified by his third notable offspring.

Seth, when he in turn had a son named Enos, passed on all his knowledge to the child. Enos received much training from the loving Host that surrounded him, and Adam also had a large hand in his grandson's instruction. Although the generations were passing, even the first pair had not aged as people do in these days; they were around, and able to recount their time in Eden's garden for the education of many of their descendants' descendants. Enos, the recipient of almost two hundred and fifty years of human knowledge, began to emphasize the importance of prayer.

He went to Eden's gate to worship more often than Seth or Adam did, and spent much of his time communicating with Adriel, a Virtue and close friend of Mataquiel. We

rejoiced as we perceived the humans drawing closer and closer to Adam's pre-fall state. We saw them growing more and more noble in character, and consistently overcoming the tendencies that had become a part of their nature at the instigation of Satan. How unlike the Cainites they were! Every passion that the Cainites indulged, every temptation in which the sinful humans reveled, the sons of Seth considered and rejected as being unlike the plan that IaH had set before them. We began to call this righteous people, who dwelt in the high places of the earth, "sons of the Elohim."

The descendants of Cain were not easily dismissed, even from those eyes unwilling to behold them. The record of their lives became the demons' song against us; they would often contrast the irreverent joy of the humans that followed their ways with the quiet peace in which the sons of Seth dwelt. "Is this not better?" they would say to us. "See how they enjoy this earth that was given to them."

But the sons of Elohim knew that as beautiful as this world still was, because of the entrance of sin its days were numbered. They would come across small animals in the fields, lying dead for no apparent reason. They would see them decaying, and strain to understand what it meant.

Lasetiel the Virtue appeared to Cainan, Enos' young son, and saw him looking at a tiny mammal that was wasting away near a tree. "That is death, Cainan," he said.

Cainan replied, "I know about it. But why do their bodies break apart and smell so strongly?"

"That is part of the curse," the angel replied. "As El Michael said to your father Adam, you were formed from dust, and to the dust you will return. On the day sin entered the physical world, the life forms created by Elohim began to change. The plants grow differently than they did before, and even the plants too small for you to see changed also."

"Plants too small for me to see?" Cainan looked inquiringly at the messenger.

"Yes. They break down the things that die, animals or larger plants, and return them to the earth from which they were originally brought forth." El Michael had told us all that the changes would become more and more extreme as time continued, but Lasetiel did not wish to share this with the young human just yet.

Such conversations were typical with Cainan. This young man developed very quickly in all aspects: mental, spiritual and physical. He took over the work of his father in traveling with the flocks to find the greenest pastures, and loved the most open areas of the earth... the hillsides, the waterfalls, even the flat plains.

Like the rest of his kin, however, he avoided the valleys: the lower places. These seemed to be the particular delight of the Cainites, and when the city of Enoch became too crowded for even their liking, they began to spread out; in the days of Cainan their territory began to draw near to the hills and plains inhabited by the descendants of Seth. Cainan and the others, warned of their approach by messengers from Heaven, moved higher still, to the green, airy mountains.

Cainan was the youngest of his family to take a wife, and the youngest to beget a son. At seventy years of age, when he was still in the first flush of physical youth, Cainan and his wife had a child whom they called Mahalale'el, "The Praise of El," after the angelic pattern of naming. This name came from the same root as Lucifer's true first name, "Helel," which signifies "light," and indeed – Satan is reminded of the high position he lost whenever he hears a sincere worshipper of the Elohim proclaiming "Helel-u-IaH," "Praise/Light to IaH."

Mahalale'el walked with the angels, and learned of us many things that were never revealed to any that came before him. He would often ask about the Heavenly Kingdom, and it came to pass that on a certain day, after his mind had matured enough, the Cherubim granted him a vision of our wonderful home. Mahalale'el's eyes moved with wonder over the glorious structures, rebuilt to shine as brightly as they had before the tragic war that took place more than four centuries previous.

IaH knew that this experience would change the young man forever. Never again would he look upon even the still beautiful earth with the same eyes. He had seen the dwelling place of the Most High, and he became still more dedicated to his sacrifices, still more vocal in teaching others to expect with great joy the appearance of the Promise, and the restoration of the creation to the state for which it was intended. Even the changes to the earth to which we had grown accustomed, even these reminded Mahalale'el that this place was no longer mankind's intended home. He longed for rest from the gradual changes to nature, which seemed to affect him more than it did any of his fellow humans, more than they affected even us.

This human had a pure and upright heart, and his sorrow was ever before the other humans with whom he lived, urging them to greater heights of piety, and to avoid the Cainites that were steadily drawing nearer to the dwelling place of the sons of El.

Mahalale'el had a son even earlier in life than his father. The boy Jared was like his parents in character and sensitivity. As a child he listened to his father's retelling of his glimpse of the Heavenly realm. As a youth he dwelt among the angels, and Zephon took a particular interest in his spiritual development. With his oracular vision, the Cherub foresaw a great trial in the life of the young man whose father bore the name of an angel, whose eyes beheld Heaven with tears, and he wished to have Jared prepared for it well.

Although it had been almost five centuries since our war in Heaven had taken place, the peace between the angels and the demons had not increased. If anything, the situation grew worse. We were constantly guarding the humans' settlement from their sleepless adversaries, and even on the days of our weekly meeting, the days for which we longed when carrying out our assigned labors, many of us needed to be on hand. As the descendants of Cain held no reverence for the order of the Creation's week, so their demonic teachers also would, by approaching the worshipping humans, force us to work to keep our charges safe.

Nevertheless, the beauty of the Throne was poured out upon us, even here on earth, and we were strengthened to carry out this labor of love. Tahariel, Dumah and I would often work together on this weekly posting, and so we at least had the pleasure of each others' company. Although the Throne of IaH remained in Heaven, El Michael, in union with Him, would be here on earth with Adam and his children, and so was close to the rest of us whether we were worshipping with mankind or keeping watch for the approach of our former brethren.

For five hundred years we managed to hold them off. For five centuries we kept them away from Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalale'el and their relatives. For half a millennium we turned aside their plans... rendering them harmless, frustrated, and yet doomed to try – for what else could their restless minds do with all that time? I began to understand the mercy of death... for to live forever in such a state would be eternal torment. I wondered if the demons themselves were not by then longing for release.

But after five hundred years, the demons began to change their tactics. Our swords met theirs less frequently. This was a lesson the demons learned quickly, they could not overcome us by the strength of their spiritual weapons. Try as they might to surprise, outnumber or outfight us, the grace of the Most High always guided our paths, and we were always able to gain a resounding victory, often snatching it from what would otherwise have appeared to be certain defeat.

Our wounds were always restored, and it was as if we had never known combat – to judge from our appearance. Our spirits shone brightly in love, and joy, and the knowledge of IaHWeH. The wounds of the demons would heal after a time, but their spirits became more debased, their essences more cold and heavy, with the passage of time and the accumulation of losses.

If they could cause one human of Seth's line to fall, they reasoned, it would weaken all the others. If they could inspire sorrow, fear or anger in any of the sons of Elohim, they believed, they would eventually cause them all to fall away. No human had yet died, except for Abel and those directly slain by the Cainites (including Cain himself), and so the fallen ones felt that they had time enough to accomplish the gradual destruction of all the humans who would remain faithful... and they needed only one to begin.

Now, after six generations, in the time of Jared, the evil ones tried their final, desperate tactic. What they could not do, for they were spirit, they got their disciples in the flesh to

accomplish. Angels can oppose demons, but we cannot stop the free will choices of mankind without IaH's express command.

I do not wish to give you the impression that all of Cain's descendants were "evil" in the sense of malicious. It was more subtle than that. What they all had in common was that, like their father, they rejected the system of sacrifices that El Michael had set in place to lead them to the promised Savior. Because of their rejection of the sacrificial system, and their lack of protection by the holy Host, the demons had full authority to influence their spirits, and so they became like their father in that thing as well.

So it was that when Jared was yet a young man, the habitation of the Cainites came close enough to the dwelling place of the faithful humans for there to be interaction between the classes. Had the Sethites only known the terror this dilution was to unleash upon the beautiful earth, a catastrophe from which your world would never recover, they would have fled to the farthest countries, or perhaps even slain themselves to escape the guilt of it all.

The first thing that the Elohim did after He created the light was to separate it from the darkness. The universe was about to learn what would occur when those two opposites began once again to attract.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 8 - 'ERBUV (MIXING)

Zephon raised his eyes to behold the young man standing before him, and he said, “Jared, the time approaches. You yourself will rest before this great and terrible thing comes to pass, and you will await the restoration of the Creation in peace. Even so, you will see the beginnings of it, and your sorrow will be great.”

The son of Mahalale’el looked at the oracle’s glowing eyes, and the Host, invisible but looking on, admired the courage we saw there. He understood that difficult times were drawing near. He understood that he was to see the destruction of many whom he loved, but he knew the way of IaH, and because of this he could be content even in the anticipation of suffering. For many generations the descendants of Seth had been faithfully guarding the knowledge committed to them and they were having dominion, not only over the earth that was given to them, but the sinful nature of which they had become recipients in Adam’s transgression.

We beheld in Jared a still deeper understanding of sin, a still more ardent striving to do what IaH desired, and a love for His law. He reminded us all of Adam, and truly the first human loved him as if he had been brought forth from his own body. At five hundred years of age, the man from whom all humanity had come still looked very near to his appearance on the day he was knit together from the planet’s elements. His forehead was gently lined, and his eyes darkened by care, but his smile was as bright, and his words as wise and gentle as they had been on the sixth day.

To Adam would Gabriel and El Michael speak often, continuing to instruct him in what he should say to his offspring about the days ahead. From the beginning, Adam had been a good shepherd to his children, pointing them often to the results of his sin, showing them the things that were different about nature as a result of transgression, and speaking longingly of his time in Eden – before there were thorns on the flowers, before the leaves would dry up and fall to the earth.

In Heaven, the training that we had been undergoing was beginning to mesh together, and we began to see glimpses of what was ahead for us. Our knowledge of Creation’s forces was continuously increasing, and we began to understand that we would be involved in the most drastic changes to the earth since the Creation week itself. We knew they would be vast, and destructive, and we understood that they were a result of,

and would also be a reflection of, the sin that Lucifer had brought with him and developed on this world.

To Adam, to Zephon, and to the rest of us, Jared paid keen attention. He seemed to be eager to grasp his responsibility, and to carry it out according to the will of the Most High. He took to heart Adam's advice for remembering the meaning of the sacrifices, and overcoming the troublesome tendencies that attach themselves to sinful flesh. Like his fathers before him, Jared learned, and Jared overcame. By faith he looked forward to the appearance of the One who would pay the price to release them from their sin, and by faith he lived as if it had already taken place, speaking words of encouragement and love to his brothers and sisters.

As it had been with Seth, so it was with Jared; soon those many years older began to respect him, and the headship of the Sethites passed to him. His father, as had those before him who held this office, retired to the position of advisor and councilor. Of these, the greatest were Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan and Mahalale'el his father. With great sincerity and solemnity, Jared walked in the ways of those who had gone before. Adam and his descendants understood that the Messiah was to be born from among their line, and so it was that even while they were still alive, when a certain member of their family, whom El Michael chose to be their next patriarch, reached a certain age, he was given the opportunity to lead. In this way, his discernment was sharpened, and he learned to depend upon the Almighty directly for growth and skill.

It must be said that not all the youths of Seth's line understood the times in which they were living as well as did the young leader of the family. Even though we were able to keep the demons from influencing them directly, camped as we were continually around their dwelling place, the natural inclination of their sin nature was also a very real enemy. This we could not help them with. Just as Lucifer, who had never known sin, chose to rebel all the same, so it has been with mankind. Even those with the benefit of the best training, the most illustrious examples, even they are free to choose the way of Azazel, and the way of Cain.

As the children of Cain expanded their territory, even to the base of the high places upon which the faithful humans lived, interaction was no longer an impossibility between the two classes.

None of Adam's family through Seth had yet tasted the death that was the ultimate result of his transgression. All of them, from Seth on down, were to be tested in the same way their first father had been. Not for an arbitrary reason was yet another version of the Tree of Knowledge held out to them, but because Satan's accusations were against them all.

"How long will they pretend they can be faithful to IaH's laws?" he would rage at us, as we stood around the humans' camp. "Cease your futile vigilance, and let us claim all the sons of Adam, as we have done with half of his children already." Indeed, they had

claimed more than half of the Adamites, for Cain's progeny married freely and quickly, without a thought for the spiritual well being of their offspring. Seth's line was careful, understanding the value of each soul, and so entered into marriage striving to understand the great mystery of which they were partaking.

Always would they wait until they themselves were fully secure in their knowledge of the Father, and of their ability to overcome the sin nature before they brought a child into the world, that they would be faithful guardians of the offspring that IaH would give into their care. Many did not feel ready until they were beyond their first century. They understood that the children were not their own, but that they had the responsibility of raising them to be the future citizens of a restored creation.

The Cainites had no such reservations. Almost as soon as they were physically able, they plunged into the indulgence of their physical appetites without giving the necessary care to their spiritual obligations. Marriage between two humans is a blessing, and it always has been. Likewise, participating in the creation of a new life is a deep communion between mankind and the Throne; but the children of the first murderer had no connection with the One who had blessed the first marriage in Eden's garden, and had no knowledge of the Sacrifice upon whom they were to rely for a successful union. They produced offspring after their kind – careless, sensual, and lovers of pleasure rather than the Elohim. And they produced many.

Enoch the son of Cain still ruled over these sons of Adam from his throne in the city bearing his name. Unlike the pastoral care that the leaders of the Sethites exercised over their family, the responsibility being passed on from generation to generation, this dominion was one worthy of Satan himself. Enoch ruled his progeny as a power-drunk monarch. At his side stood Cerviel, the fallen chief of the Principalities, representing Lucifer in the spiritual realm while the son of Cain represented him in the physical. Azazel himself was busy with his councilors perfecting his plans, and Cerviel was more than happy to act as his regent in the meantime.

Those who openly went against the wishes of their ruler were forced by his faithful followers to submit, and those who escaped the earthly arm of man's law became targets for the demons themselves as they vented their rage upon any who gave them an excuse to do so. Most of the rebellion against his authority, however, was of a more subtle nature, and Enoch himself cared little for the individual lives of those over whom he had dominion. As long as his desires were fulfilled and his needs were met, his subjects could do as they pleased. "This," Lucifer taunted us from the shadows around the home of the faithful, "is the freedom I once offered you in the Heavenly Kingdom."

As the Cainites spread out over the world, Enoch's "kingship" became less and less significant. The wanderers chose leaders from among themselves, and they soon became random, chaotic groups of sub-organized drifters. The holy Host could not ignore them, painful as it was to place our eyes upon them, and we marveled at how far away from IaHWeH's ideal they had fallen. Gone was the nobility of character that Adam had possessed in his innocence, and had regained to a large degree through his faithfulness.

Gone was the calm, sensitive bearing of humanity, and the Cainites began to remind us more and more closely of the desolation we felt in Lucifer with every passing generation.

When some of the sons of Elohim looked down and saw the daughters born to these humans, they began to feel a strange desire for them. The Cainites, having developed every instinct contrary to the spirit of IaH, having indulged every opportunity to follow the leadings of their sin nature, were the perfect representation of everything the flesh of Seth's sons craved. They saw the sensuality they had withstood for so long flaunted openly before their eyes, and they began to wonder why they had bothered to fight what was natural to them for so many decades.

Forgetting the precious lessons passed down from Adam, forgetting the faithful warnings of Seth and Jared, they reasoned among themselves. "Why would IaH create in us desires if we cannot fulfill them?" they would ask. But how dim did their minds grow as they let their thoughts wander in the avenues of temptation! How their intellect was turned towards finding reasons to disregard the words of the righteous... How easily a human, even today, can forget the meaning of the Sacrifice, if they make the decision to do so.

When we heard them speaking among themselves in this way, our essences were grieved. We recalled the words of Lucifer, still echoing in our ears after five centuries. Lucifer also had asked this question, "Why all these laws, if our nature is holy?" But by then, his nature was no longer holy. In the same way, the natural inclinations of mankind were no longer righteous. IaH had not given them desires against which He expected them to fight. They had inherited these desires from the sin of Adam, and by the mercy of IaH they were given the grace to overcome, and to once again find joy in the victory He had provided: the victory He would one day fulfill.

As the members of Jared's clan began to draw closer to those in the valleys below, the invisible Host began to find it more difficult to protect them. We watched with apprehension as the demons were permitted to draw nearer. It was then that Zephon drew near to Jared and spoke the words I quoted before, warning him that difficult times were ahead, but that he himself would be spared from witnessing the final effects of what was taking place before him. But the oracle's words did not end there.

"The younger men of your family look with favor upon the descendants of Cain. You must warn them that great suffering awaits them upon that path. If they wish to remain safe from the madness of sin which plagues that branch of humanity, they must reject also the dark pleasure with which they are being tempted."

Jared and his councilors made a heroic attempt to turn their tempted kinsmen from the objects of their affection, but many were bent upon following their impulses rather than remaining faithful to their calling. Whenever one of us would materialize among them to speak with Jared or the others, those who knew their guilt would quickly move away, avoiding the brilliant light that shone around our temporary bodies.

To make matters still worse, the descendants of Cain were not a quiet bunch. Beginning with Lamech's son TubalCain, the irreverent humans began to make tools of metal which they used to noisy effect during their oft-assembled celebrations. Aside from useful instruments, there were also some designed with the express purpose of making noise. Patterning their construction after the mathematics behind the Seraphim's singing, the fallen angel Petahel produced for the sons of men cymbals and trumpets, horns and stringed instruments. These of themselves have been well used by the faithful down through the generations, but the sons of Cain, the first keepers of this knowledge, abused the gift as Petahel had determined they would. TubalCain, along with his half-brother Jubal, used these instruments to "enhance" the mood of their gatherings, and thus the unfallen Host and faithful sons of Adam were subjected to an inverted, perverse version of the sweet sounds of Heaven.

To those whose eyes were already directed downward, the pulsing, revelrous sounds of the Cainites were further intoxicating. Jared and those who maintained their course withdrew from the places where the discordant notes filled the air, but others drew closer instead. Their senses at once dulled and excited, the descendants of Seth began to venture down among their estranged cousins, and to our great dismay we found the demonic forces beyond our power to arrest, at least on behalf of those who turned away from the warnings of the earthly and heavenly messengers.

Once among the Cainites, those who descended from the high places were on unholy ground, and we were powerless to protect them. That same dark fog which had shrouded the spiritual atmosphere around Cain on the day he slew his brother and that kept us away from his children began to follow those who had partaken of their spirit. On holy ground, where the faithful sons of Adam dwelt, we had the upper hand, and over the areas where no humans were present the angels and demons could fight evenly; but even returning to their homes, those who were cherishing their temptations brought the essence of the unholy with them, and even in their dwelling places we could not prevent the demons' access to their minds.

So it was that the demons finally did cause some of the faithful to fall away. Despite the many warnings from Zephon, Gabriel, Raphael, and El Michael Himself, given in the loving voice of Jared and his family, the sons of Elohim began to leave their homes, and to dwell among the ungodly. Soon there was less than half of the original number of faithful humans. It was into this situation that Jared's son was born. As a testimony against those of his relatives who had forsaken the way of IaHWeH as delivered unto them by the angels, he called his name Enoch – "Dedicated."

For a time now, my story has revolved around the events taking place on earth, and that is how it should be – my testimony is for your benefit. But you must not be ignorant of what was also occurring in the Spiritual realm. Although I have provided you with some insight into the events occurring behind the scenes, now we must focus on some specific events of the Spiritual plane.

At the first intermarriage, Lucifer yet again petitioned for an audience before the Throne. El Michael's response this time was different, however, and he refused the offending angels admittance into the Holy Kingdom. This was somewhat confusing to me, as we now had Gabriel and Raziel as Covering Cherubim, and I perceived that we were more equipped than ever to deal with the demons' visit.

"It is not a matter of force, As'fael," Anael explained to me. "That we can is no indication that we should. You know how the course of the first two meetings went, for you were present at both of them. Azazel will hold up his latest perceived triumph, charge the Elohim with being unjust, and then declare war afresh. Have you not grown weary of his accusations? Have you not heard his taunts often enough as we kept watch over Seth's descendants even as they keep watch over the sheep of the earth?"

I readily acknowledged the wisdom in Anael's words, and in El Michael's decision to abstain from a third meeting. Nevertheless, Lucifer's agenda was not affected much by our Prince's decline. Gathering his demons together, he encouraged them by pointing to the fall of many of Seth's line into his pitfall, and declaring boldly, "Before long, we will have them all."

Raziel had been well trained for his new office as guardian of the Shekinah. Unlike Gabriel, who had been allowed precious few days before the war in Heaven broke out, the former Chief of the Ophanim had received lengthy instruction by both El Michael and the current holder of that office. He had been given the opportunity to ease into its responsibility, and between them both I believe they could have held the force of the Shekinah in check had all the demons on earth been allowed within Heaven's gates.

On earth, Gabriel and Raziel were allowed to test the limits of their abilities. Whereas the rest of the Host were unable or unwilling to look upon the activities of the Cainites, and where we would turn away to avoid polluting our very essences with scenes of seemingly joyful sin, the two Shomerim were able to stand and behold them. These are the ones later spoken of in the human prophet's Book of Daniel as the Iyirim, the Watchers, Keepers and Holy Ones, and they were able to keep us informed of the plans of Enoch's clan much as Zephon did by means of his oracular visions.

Whenever the Watchers (or later Thrones and Archangels acting as Thrones) would come to earth, they would cast a globe of the Shekinah's light around themselves, and this would appear to the beholding prophets' eyes as the "wheels" in which the spirits of the angels were contained.

Of Zephon and the Watchers the angels who had formed strong attachments to the descendants of Seth would often enquire concerning their welfare. They wept when they beheld the humans whom they loved and once served teaching the Cainites more truths, which the sinful humans only used to further pervert the blessings of the Most High. They heard with sorrow the report that the children they fathered by the sensuous women of the earth were greater than either of their parents in iniquity and twisted genius. Under the watchful care of Cerviel and Enoch BenCain, they worshipped one

another's intellect, and competed with each other for mental achievements and worldly possessions. Even the homes of the wandering Cainites became visible representations of their temporal wealth, for all the earth was before them, and rather than exercising dominion over it in love and wisdom, they took what they desired from the land, and used it to their own glory. By the addition of the former sons of Elohim to their ranks, they rejected and abused still more knowledge from the Throne, and their darkness was made all the more dark.

While Cerviel was maintaining the sinful community, Azazel was ever working to secure more citizens for his dark kingdom. He urged his human agents closer and still closer to the faithful humans' dwelling places, and there they engaged in their loud and flashy celebrations. The minds of those who would remain steadfast were grieved by the intrusion into their peace, but many more allowed their eyes and ears to be drawn down, and so the kingdom of shadows grew.

Enoch, the son of Jared, was like his father, and his father's father, in that he received with a pure and earnest heart the faith delivered unto the sons of Adam through Seth. For sixty and five years he learned the ways of the Elohim, and communed with the holy Angels, most frequently with Za'afiel the Cherub. With ever increasing faith, Enoch saw the depths of sin into which his kinsmen were sinking, and he longed to open their eyes to their great danger. His cause was difficult, for other than those slain by man, no human had yet died. As it had been with the angels, so was it with early man – "You shall surely die," was subjected to the taunts of those who heard the young man speak. In spite of this, Enoch BenJared would rather hear his words mocked than be met with indifference.

Those who protested his words, he felt, at least had their consciences stirred to conflict by his reproofs, but those who listened, and then waved him away... these he wept for more ardently, for he knew their hearts were already hard. "Oh that they should be broken on your altar, oh my Lord," he mourned to El Michael when they spoke on one occasion.

Our essences were moved with compassion for this sensitive human. We saw in him ourselves, as we sought to warn our brethren against Lucifer's deceptions almost seven centuries ago. Adam, with the mind of an ancient, yet holding the body of a youth, would often take Enoch with himself and his wife for times of prayer in the mountains. Eve would hold his hand comfortingly as he looked out over the vast sea of humanity, and beheld that many... most of the children of Adam were fallen away from their high calling.

For sixty and five years he listened to the words of Adam, and the testimony of Za'afiel concerning the war which had shattered the ages of peace in the realms above. For all of his young life he was faithful to reprove the sins of those around him, and he felt a great stirring in his heart to reach out to those who had gone in the way of Cain, and to turn

them back to righteousness. Even as he grew, the land of the Cainites became soaked through with the sins of the multitudes. The cry of the planet grew louder in our ears. After the intermarriages, slayings increased among the denizens of Enoch BenCain's kingdom.

In an utter atrocity, a heinous perversion of the sacrifice that Cain had first rejected, his descendants began to offer up "sacrifices" of other men. "Seventy times seven," they would jeer, remembering the words of Lamech who had slain their ancestor. Their system of justice was anything but a reflection of the pure and holy laws of Heaven, and their enemies were delivered into their hands to have their blood shed for the appeasement and amusement of those who perceived themselves wronged. Once holy, once noble humans had been reduced to the status of animals, degraded to the office of sacrifice in a twisted version of the promise that El Michael had given to Adam and Eve.

In the sixty-fifth year of Enoch's life, El Michael summoned the Host to appear before the Throne. The Dominion Matmoniel announced the meeting open, and El Michael stood before us all. The Prince of angels nodded to the Cherub Puriel who stood at His right side, and the mighty angel opened up a window to the Void. We beheld the universe in its beauty, and we saw the physical world, a tiny spot in it all, and glorious in its blessings, shuddering as it was under the weight of the sins of Lucifer and his followers.

We saw demons and rebellious humans as a blemish on the Creation's face, and we saw the curse of Adam in full blossom in the children of his eldest son Cain. We recalled the death of Abel in his innocence, and the death of Cain in his pride. We saw the slaughter of man and beast under the leadership of Azazel and Cerviel. We saw Cain's son Enoch as a willing puppet to his demonic tutors, and we perceived that this state of sorrow was without remedy, beyond redemption. There was no turning back for those who had rejected the warning of men, angels and IaH Himself.

"What shall we do with the sons of men?" Elohim spoke. "Behold how they have turned their faces from truth, and worship only themselves. Behold how the demons have led my creation captive. And now, shall I not carry out my promise? The wages of sin is death. Shall I stay my hand from cleansing my world of its sickness?"

The Host stood in silence, understanding that this was necessary. We knew firsthand the desolation that sin produced, and just as we had bowed to IaHWeH's decision to cast Lucifer from Heaven, so now we knew that He would do what He must to restore peace and joy upon the earth. Was the age of terror we had been witnessing for the past seven centuries about to end? We would rejoice if it was so... even at so great a price.

With awe I worshipped my Creator, for He could not but have known that all these things would come to pass. He knew that mankind would fall away; He knew that Adam and Eve would slip away from faith, and He knew that He would one day suffer and die in their place. He knew it all, and yet His love for mankind was so great that He went

through with it all anyway. I think often of these things when I cast my crown at His feet. The principles of love are beyond even this Principality to fully grasp.

“There must be an end,” the Unified Elohim declared. “My faithful people must rest from their labors in this sinful world. In but a little time, there shall be an end made. My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is erring flesh. When I do what I shall do, there shall be an end. My angels, you have been laboring since this creation began to understand the forces of this world.”

“Soon,” He continued, “your hands shall be turned against this rebellious multitude, and the windows of Heaven shall be opened. The waters of the earth shall break forth, and my world will be washed clean. Go, and make this thing known to my servants.”

Puriel closed the opening in the substance of Heaven, and the scenes of earth’s violence faded from our perceptions. We knelt before the Most High, each angel feeling keenly the import of the words we had just heard. We mourned for the fate of those who had turned away; we felt the loss anew of our fallen brethren, and we arose, eager to give a stern warning to those who would be saved from the wrath to come.

The Holy angels gathered Adam, Seth and their descendants together, and we gave them our testimony. We told them of the flood that the Elohim had decreed, and we instructed them to warn their kinsmen to turn from their evil ways, and to return to the faith once given to the righteous. Adam and his family made a sacrifice before Eden’s eastern gate, where we had met with them, and the faithful few departed.

Za’afiel and Enoch lingered together long after the other humans had departed and we the Host had returned to our invisible forms. The angel and the human walked together: one a veteran of the Heavenly war, and the other called to carry on the battle on the earth. “You know that I am to have a child, Za’afiel,” Enoch said.

“I know it,” the Cherub replied. “Take not a thought to that... the flood is some time off. IaH will bear long with the sons of Cain, and to your son also will be given the opportunity to speak a warning to those who have turned away.”

“A son...” Enoch said. “And he will be faithful to warn mankind of the flood to come?”

The Archangel Gabriel appeared behind the two, and said, “He will.” The angel and the human turned to the Covering Cherub, and he continued. “Unto you, Enoch, and unto all the world, the child will be given as a sign. He will have many days on this earth, and as long as he lives the patience of the Most High will strive with men. He will be the guardian of this age, holding back the wrath of the Elohim. But the wrath will surely come. In the year that he leaves this earth, it shall come.”

When Enoch’s son was indeed born later that year, his father called his name Methuselah, “When he dies, it shall be brought.”

On the day that Enoch beheld his son, helpless in his arms, he began to understand even more deeply the responsibility he had to his fellow humans. He had been appointed by El Michael to be the successor to his father Jared in leading the faithful, and looking at the tiny infant he realized how helpless mankind was without the leadings of the Spirit sent by the Most High. Enoch began to understand, like none before him, the Holy Spirit, and though all men knew of the Father, and of El Michael, Enoch began to see the invitation to take part of Their divinity, to truly become like Them in nature and in character.

From that day forth the preacher started to share with his family the incredible insights he began to gain. He taught his son from the earliest age what the fruits of righteousness were, and to have full confidence in the protection of the angels, and in the coming Promise of the Savior. He continued to retreat to the mountains, sometimes with Adam and Eve, and sometimes by himself. Every time he looked down upon the cities of the Cainites, strange longings began to move within his soul.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 9 - LENANE (SHAKING)

Over a decade later, in the year 700, Enoch BenJared was steadfastly pursuing his calling. His love for IaHWeH's principles had not grown cold with the passage of time, but ever deeper, ever more fervent. At seventy-eight years of age, he was still very young by the reckoning of his kinsmen. In spite of this, he was as respected as Adam and Seth for his wisdom, obeyed as eagerly as Enos and Cainan for his fearless leadership, and as loved as Mahalale'el and Jared his father for his purity of character. All these things, he declared humbly, were but the fruits that his unwavering faith produced.

In those thirteen years, his desire to reach out one last time to those in the valleys below had only increased. He had shared his purpose with Jared his father, and with Adam, but they had seemed hesitant. "They have chosen their path, son," Jared said to him. "What more can be done?"

"Should I not try?" Enoch asked. "How many among the Cainites were born into that dark life, and have never heard the Promise of El Michael with their own ears, but only in the mocking tones of their kinsmen? How many of them only know those of us that have fallen away, descending from our mountain to their destruction? Do these not need also to hear of the salvation to come, and perhaps join us in our hope?"

"Such a thing is noble," Jared replied, "but do you not risk your own security if you go down to them as our kinsmen did?"

"My security is in IaHWeH," he said. "Those who went down and remained there had first their hearts turned away. Their actions merely followed their spirits. I am not of their spirit, nor can I be, for I walk with my Lord. My desire is only to bring them back with me."

His predecessors were still uncertain and so, not finding answers among even the faithful humans, Enoch took his petition before the Throne Itself. Bringing a sacrifice before the gate of Eden, the son of Jared slew it there and prayed that the blood of the lamb be accepted on behalf of himself and his fellow men. Uriel drew near and sent forth a torrent of flames to consume the offering. As the smoke rose to the morning sky the Archangel materialized before the altar and said, "What is it you seek, Enoch?"

“I wish to speak with El Michael,” he said, “for something troubles my mind.”

Uriel nodded and vanished. As the four-winged angel went to request our Prince’s presence on earth, the human turned to the flashing kherevs at the gate and greeted the Cherubim there. Mageniel raised his fiery blade in silent acknowledgment, but stood faithfully by his assigned place.

“You are not far from the garden, Enoch.” The seventh-generation human looked up and beheld El Michael standing before him.

Enoch smiled, for he knew the Lord was not speaking merely of physical location. “I thank you for your words, Master. You have always been true of speech, and matchless in wisdom. For this reason I have brought before you a certain matter, for my kinsmen have no answers which satisfy me, and it has been laid upon my heart for many a day.”

“I know your heart’s desire,” Michael responded. “I know the purity of your motive, and the great love that you feel for those in the valleys below. Be at peace, it is not your love that drives you forward, but it is my love, even the love from the Throne, that has brought you here today.”

“Then I must go among them?” Enoch asked, eager at the prospect, but at the same time hesitant now that his mission was being confirmed.

“You must walk with me,” the Prince said. “That is your calling, and has always been your way. Your walk will always be with me, but now I must go among them. We will go together, for I am with you now, and will be with you always, even until the time of the end.”

“Tell me why I have been feeling this, El Michael. Tell me why these things must be.”

“The day of my breaking forth approaches. I have borne long with man, and will bear longer still, but none shall perish in ignorance. Behold I put my words in your mouth, and I write my words on your heart. You will be my messenger, my angel, to go before me and prepare the way. By your words, and the words of your son, my covenant will be set before this people, and they who reject will slay themselves thereby. All who will heed your words, however, will be spared the wrath to come.”

“Am I worthy to bear such a testimony?” Enoch said in wonder, falling to his knees. El Michael bent down slightly, and kissed the human’s forehead.

“I am worthy. Come now and partake of my worth.”

Returning to his brethren, Enoch shared with them his encounter with the Elohim, and even the most hesitant of the faithful submitted to the plan set before them. The faithful

messenger went down among the revelers at the foot of the mountains, and began to share with them the truth about the Most High.

At first, it seemed as if the younger people were interested. Having never heard the message of salvation set before them in the past, they listened with great wonder. Many nodded in approval as the words of love and hope poured forth from Enoch's lips by the Shekinah's spirit. The holy Host looked down on this young man, very impressed by his clarity of speech, and the obvious affection he held for the things above.

Truly, not one of us could have been a more effective messenger of the Covenant. Not one of us could have spoken with more beauty or grace than that which Enoch allowed to pass through him to the thirsting ears of the Cainites. Some stood entranced, many wept. Great numbers considered the lives they had led up until that point, and understood that they were dissatisfied.

Azazel was enraged. "Shall he steal from me the souls of those for whom I have labored so hard?" The demons all around shared his fury, but none could approach unto the messenger, for wheresoever he walked, there was holy ground. Enoch had three dedicated guardians – Dumah, Tahariel and myself. His friend Za'afiel was never distant either, and although the Cherub had much to do in the realms above, he would return often to hear the human speak, adding a fourth member to our invisible company.

Even so, what Lucifer could not accomplish through his spiritual agents, he did again through his human disciples. Stirring up the older Cainites, the demons brought them forth to contend with the messenger. "Who are you to bring judgment on our ways?" they asked him. "All of this we have heard before. Trouble our young no longer."

As those who had been attentive to Enoch's words began to draw away, the teacher rebuked the elders, saying, "You faithless ones! See how you have chosen darkness instead of light, and rebellion over service! You not only refuse to accept the Promise of the Elohim, but you prevent others also from accepting." With great fervor, Enoch taught those who remained, and spoke warnings against those who drew others away. "Behold the Lord comes, His fury comes with a flood, and the end of it shall be death for those who do not heed my words."

"Leave that old fool alone," the elders counseled the younger sons of Cain. Although Enoch was relatively young at seventy-eight, all the sons of Adam held unto the appearance of youth until their very last days, and because of the authority with which the Sethite was speaking, they assumed he was far more aged than he truly was.

But the most bitter opposition by far to Enoch's love-inspired efforts came from his own former brethren, the fallen Sethites. "This man speaks falsehood," they boldly declared. Their own consciences had long since died of starvation, and these rebellious humans did more to turn the hearts of the Cainites away from salvation than did any of those who came directly from Cain's line. "Do not fall under the slavery which he preaches,"

said one. “We have only recently escaped the chains of IaHWeH, and are here among you all, and rejoicing in our freedom!”

To these, Enoch cried out, “That name pronounced by unworthy lips! Will not IaH visit for this abomination?” As he spoke, we saw the heavens open up, and El Michael poured out the majesty of Heaven unto the messenger. Those on earth did not see what we saw, but they beheld the face of Enoch as we had seen the features of Adam once illuminated. Although he spoke stern words, the human’s countenance was aflame with peace, and even as he uttered scathing rebukes, none could miss the spirit of power and love that motivated his words and altered his very appearance.

Many ran away, some simply fell back, and others fell to their knees or on their faces. Never had they seen such beauty – not in a man, and not in an angel. Their minds long-darkened by lives of self-seeking and sin, many of the Cainites felt Heaven’s majesty tugging at their hearts.

As Enoch continued his ministry over many days, most of the hearers began to avoid him. At his approach, they would wander off; some seemed on the brink of throwing things at him. A few, however, continued to draw near, to listen with eagerness at the words that he spoke. Often he would repeat the message of salvation, explaining the concept of sin, speaking of the fall of Azazel, describing the creation of Adam and so on. Each time, he would draw the hearers’ attention to the curse of sin under which they were living, and he invited them to join him in offering sacrifices, as IaH had provided a substitute, and would one day provide an ultimate Sacrifice for all time.

“Only believe,” he would often say; and as he spoke, the Shekinah would sparkle upon his skin, giving a supernatural power to his mission. In spite of this, those who had hardened their hearts would not believe him any more than those who came down from the mountain had given ear to the warning of the unfallen Host. To these Enoch would say, “You follow your father; no longer Seth, but the cursed serpent. Behold your children are the worst of the fallen humans. Under you, they have become guilty of transgression many times over, and are guilty not only of the Tree, but of the blood of Abel also.”

There was great rejoicing in the days after that, when some of the Cainites moved upwards, to dwell among the children of Seth. “How sweet it is,” Adam said, “that the sons of the brothers should be so reconciled!” The redeemed from among men began to learn the ways of the Sacrifice, and to fellowship with those who accepted them as co-heirs of the Promise. Men lifted up the name of IaH in praise, and blessed Him for the ministry He had given to Enoch.

It was less than a year, however, before El Michael again appeared to the teacher when he was alone upon his favorite mountain. Upon this place to which he, Adam and Eve would often retire for commune with Heaven, the Prince of Angels opened up a deeper plan.

“You must strike a blow to the heart of this people, Enoch. As it was in Heaven, so shall it be on earth. The end cannot come until all have felt the wounds of the kherev. All have heard of your testimony, but not all have heard your words for themselves. Every Cainite must know for himself that it is I who have sent you. But there are many who will not come to hear you speak. For this reason... you must go to them.”

“Where shall I go, Lord?” the human asked.

“You must go to the city which is called by your name. You must stand before the king who is called by your name. You have been chosen to bear my testimony before the throne of Satan himself upon this earth. I will send you therefore to be my sign, to the dark place where Enoch BenCain has made his home.”

“Lord,” Enoch began uncertainly.

“Do not be afraid, my messenger. Remember my promise to you... I am with you always, at every step. And I have made it so that you will never forget.” With that, El Michael drew his glorious, fiery sword, and passed it swiftly through the body of the human kneeling before Him. “Your eyes are opened, my angel.”

Enoch looked around in wonder. He looked right at Tahariel, and he saw him. The faithful human had seen the three of us many times before, when we had taken on physical forms, but now he saw us as we truly were; he had been given new and spiritual eyes. “These three will go with you, Enoch,” El Michael concluded.

The young man saw our Prince rise into Heaven, caught up again to the glory of the Throne, and he threw himself to the ground and wept, overwhelmed at the beauty of his vision. “I am unworthy, Oh Lord!” he cried out.

“By my grace, by your faith in me, Enoch,” came the answer from the clouds, “I am well pleased.”

Leaving his thirteen-year-old son in the care of his wife and kinsmen, Enoch set out on his quest. Although he traveled with no other humans, he was not alone. I was his companion, as were my two friends, and because of his improved vision, he was able to communicate with us as freely as if we had been flesh.

The road was long, and would have been perilous had it not been for our presence. Of all men, Enoch was the most hated by the angelic rebels, and they would have slain him had it not been for the Throne keeping him safe through us. The demonic forces had learned a long time ago not to judge the strength of an angelic band by our numbers. Though we were so few – three, and sometimes four with the infrequent appearance of Za’afiel – we were mighty, and all the forces of men and angels could not prevent us from carrying out what we were commanded to do.

The Cainites drew near, but they did not approach the radiant traveler. The demons drew close in every shadow, but did not draw their blades to make war with us. Enoch pressed on, traveling by day and resting at night under our care. In every new place he entered he would construct a small altar and sacrifice an animal that would always be found nearby. IaH Himself provided the sacrifices, delivering them by unseen agents into our path. Eastward he traveled, into the land of Nod, into the land upon which the three of us had not laid eyes for some time.

How bleak was the landscape! The land was scorched by the sin of its inhabitants. The plants that grew in the unfriendly soil were unlovely, and adapted to do little but survive the harsh environment. In the space of only a few hundred years, IaH's resilient life forms had managed to grow accustomed to even this place... a testimony to His enduring nature.

Traveling further, Enoch stopped and leaned on his staff, looking ahead. We perceived before us a small animal trapped in a thorny shrub, struggling for life. Each small movement of its limbs brought it pain, and every attempt it made to free itself resulted in a new wound in its skin. Drawing near, Enoch bent some of the stems away, allowing the captive to escape, but giving himself several small cuts in the process.

"How long, Oh Lord," he prayed, "will this be allowed to continue?" We had few words of comfort for the human. The Host had been affected by the dreadful changes in nature as much as he, and we constantly marveled at how unlike the original Creation this planet was becoming.

Finally we approached the plain upon which the city of Enoch was built, and we beheld it standing out against the sky like a bleak giant. The sun setting behind us colored the heavens with a dull red, but the stones of the towers seemed even darker than they should have, as if rejecting even the light of the day. Enoch BenJared looked upon his destination and sorrow filled his face. He could see as well as we the dome of thick darkness that hung over the settlement, and we knew that we would only be allowed to enter by the pure grace of the One Most High.

Tahariel said, "Surely, this is the most evil place on earth." Dumah and I nodded, sharing the sentiment.

"Every principle of Heaven has been perverted in this city," I said, knowing that Cerviel ruled under the shadows ahead. I remembered his great fervor in attempting to silence Lucifer seven hundred years before, and I remembered how the tempter had used the Chief Principality's own passion against him, transforming him from a servant of righteousness into a zealot for sin.

"You can feel him there, can't you, As'fael?" Enoch asked me, referring to the angel about whom I was thinking.

“Yes,” I replied. “He will not let us enter and leave without crossing our path.”

As we approached the limits of the city and prepared to enter, the two Watchers appeared, bringing great blessings. Gabriel and Raziel laid their hands upon us, and said, “May the glory of IaH be your protection. May the fire of the Shekinah be your shield.” To Enoch Gabriel added, “The corruption of the city will not pollute you, and you will leave this place without even the smell of sin upon your clothing.”

Even though the night was already upon us, the streets and alleyways of the city of Enoch were dark with a supernatural darkness. The three of us drew our light close against our beings and shed it upon our human companion. As it had been on the journey to this place, so it was here – the Cainites looked with a mixture of wonder and disdain at the missionary, but did not approach. On streets we had already passed, we heard the words of ridicule and self-sufficiency. On the streets ahead of us, we heard the rumors being passed from man to man of the traveler’s approach.

Although signs of violence were not uncommon in the large city, Enoch pressed on fearlessly, trusting in our ability to protect him even as we trusted the Throne’s ability to give us the power to accomplish all that He willed.

Finally, we drew near to the largest building of the settlement, the palace of Enoch BenCain, and in silence we approached the gate. Iron bars blocked the progress of the human who was with us, and we waited with him to see what would happen next.

“Leave this place, Enoch, son of Seth!” came a cry from within the gates. “Why have you come to trouble us with your speeches? Return to your own people, and leave us in peace!”

“There can be no peace between us,” Enoch replied. “IaHWeH is a God of peace, but to what agreement may light and darkness come? If the two dwell together, will not one overcome the other? But I say to you, these walls and these bars will not protect you from the judgment to come! Only the blood of the sacrifice can shield you from the wrath of the Most High.”

“These walls and these bars,” came the jeering response, “will protect us well enough from you, who have come to steal our joy!”

Enoch looked at us and said, “Tahariel, As’fael, I pray you... open the gates.”

With a startled cry the watchmen beheld the gates being opened without their consent. Invisible to their eyes, we loosed the locks and raised the barrier. The one who had stood upon the tower speaking with us ran toward the central building as Enoch entered the palace of his namesake.

The courtyard was the darkest area we had yet witnessed on the planet. Before the great flood, even the darkest point of night was not as inky as that with which you are now familiar. Even at midnight, the atmosphere would be a deep, beautiful blue, a dramatic and aesthetic setting for the moon and peaceful stars. In this place, however, the night resembled that of these latter days.

Those who had been so proud, those who had shouted the most arrogant words against the cause of Heaven, these fled before the face of its messenger. As the son of Jared stepped within those walls, the revelry that was taking place in the outer court ceased and the participants disbanded. They had known Enoch was coming, but they were not prepared to withstand the reality of his presence before them. Beholding his face, illuminated with the glory of the Eternal Kingdom, they felt how powerless their words of mockery had been in the moments before, and they scurried away into the shadows.

As we had done at the gates, we did also at the doors of the palace. Tahariel and I went before, entering the building and opening it from within. Into the main hall we went, past the torches placed at regular intervals to alleviate the perpetual darkness of this building with few windows. As we walked we encountered several areas that the other two members of the Host and myself knew had recently been washed clean of human blood. Finally we came to a large staircase, and it led downward.

We descended in silence until we came to the floor below, where hushed whispers ceased completely as those below caught sight of the one we had been escorting. My fellow angels and I gazed upon the scene before us, horrified, and we could see that the abominable throneroom had no less of an effect on the human who had traveled with us.

In this darkened dungeon stood a huge throne with two tall, thin torches on either side. Before the torches were two large stone tables. Their purpose was unmistakable: they were for human sacrifice. My senses sharpening, I perceived that even the torches were using the fat of the slain for fuel, and my essence recoiled from this great affront to the ways of the Most High. Of the other things we witnessed in that room I will not speak.

Upon the throne sat one almost as old as Adam himself, but very, very different in outward appearance. Adam and Seth appeared innocent in their great age, eternally young, and aglow with the blessings of Heaven. Enoch BenCain looked old, and indeed he was – the abhorrent practices and diet of the Cainites had considerably shortened their life spans, and among his subjects king Enoch was by far the exception. Nevertheless, the telltale markings of a life lived out of harmony with IaH's gracious provisions were evident in his face and in his body. His eyes seemed to glow with an unearthly light, reflecting the flickering flames of the torches by his throne.

During Lucifer's rebellion in Heaven, it occurred several times that the angels were given new words. As new concepts came into being, the Throne expanded our vocabulary to include the novel concepts. To Enoch BenJared now was given a new word, and he applied it to the one seated before him. "Kashaph," he whispered under his breath. The word meant "sorcerer," and as I heard it, I knew its meaning. My mind

flashed back to the war between the angels, and I was reminded of the way that the Archangel Raguel, along with the Powers and other Principalities, had twisted the natural forces of Creation to accomplish their own selfish aims. Kashaph... it was a suitable term, and one soon incorporated into the name of the fallen angel who is called "Kaspiel" in this record.

The son of Cain spoke first. "Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mahalale'el, son of Cainan, son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of IaH. I have heard a great many things about you. You have been active among the members of my great kingdom, seeking to draw them back to the mountains. What is it you seek in this place?"

We smiled at the human reassuringly, knowing that for this reason he had been born. Taking a deep breath, Enoch seemed to remember also, and then he opened his mouth and spoke slowly and clearly. "In the beginning, Elohim created the Heavens and the earth. He made all things that are seen, and all that are invisible. He created this planet for our use, and then he created our father Adam and made for him a companion. Our parents sinned against our Creator, and brought upon themselves a great curse, but Elohim, in great mercy, provided us with a Promise, that He would one day come and bear the penalty of our sin Himself; and to that time we look forward in faith. Until that day, we offer up the blood of sacrifices to remind us of our great debt, and that Another will one day come to pay it."

To our amazement, laughter started up among those who were lounging along the walls and near the throne. The monarch, however, did not laugh. Instead he silenced the mirth with a searching gaze at those who had broken the silence. "I see it upon your face," he said, turning back to the traveler, "that you know them... that you have seen the Host with your own eyes. I see the intentions of your heart, Enoch, son of Jared. But do you believe that we have been living this long in ignorance?"

Enoch said nothing, but listened with a sorrowing heart as the enthroned speaker continued, "My father did not leave me without a witness to the events which took place in the beginning. It is not because we do not know of your Lord that we reject Him. We reject Him... because He is unjust."

Tahariel, Dumah and I looked at each other, knowing only too well with whom such words originated. Enoch BenCain, repeating an argument that was seven hundred years old, went on. "I know of IaH, that He made this world, and that He dangled freedom before our parents as if they were playthings. He threw them into a garden with a test He knew they would fail, and when they did as He had foreseen, He held it against not only them, but their children, and their children's children, of whom I am one."

"When my father Cain questioned His justice, he was cast off from the blessings of the land, and left to wander in this miserable place. By our wits, we have managed to survive, to grow food in other lands, and have it transported here. With the help of those whom IaH had first cast off, we have learned the secret things of His creation, and so we

will have the pleasure of this world, until He finally grows weary of His failed experiment and returns us all to dust.”

Enoch BenCain moved his hand towards our human companion in a gesture of dismissal and disgust. “The great miracle, child, is not that He has given you a false promise of someday coming to take this curse unto Himself. The great miracle is that Adam, whom He first wronged, has been able to forgive HIM!”

“Did your father tell you why he departed from the presence of the Elohim?” Enoch asked, “Did he tell you that he slew his own brother, even as you have continued to do to this day upon those slabs of stone?”

“Abel was a slave as Adam was,” the king retorted. “As Adam is. My father did his brother a service by releasing him early from this broken world.” As he spoke, the four of us glanced up, for Cerviel had appeared behind him, and was advancing toward us.

“You have ventured upon unholy ground, As’fael,” he addressed me. “Your human friend will not be allowed to leave this place, even if IaH allows you and your two companions to escape.” Enoch stared at the demon in wonder, momentarily forgetting the sorcerer before him. His attention was even further diverted by the appearance of the former Archangels Raguel and Sarakiel behind Enoch BenCain’s throne.

“As I suspected,” the dark ruler smiled, “you can see them. Are they beautiful, son of Seth? Will your death be brought by one who is fair like the sun, or has IaH cursed them with a foul appearance for their denial of His jealous leadership?” Before our fellow traveler could speak, the three fallen angels rushed at him with their swords drawn. Perhaps they believed that in this place our Lord’s influence would be weakened. Perhaps they believed that if they could land a single blow they would destroy the ministry of Heaven’s messenger. We would not allow their assumption to be tested.

We met them blade for blade, surrounding Enoch defensively, who made a heroic effort to focus on the object of his mission. “They are fighting, son of Cain. Your masters are contending with the servants of my Lord. And outside of this darkened city, the Host of Heaven is keeping the legions of destruction at bay.”

“Do not stand before me with such self-righteousness, Sethite. Behold,” he said with an angry laugh, “are we not fulfilling your Lord’s commands more rapidly than you who live on a mountain? Are we not multiplying? Are we not filling the earth? We are many; your people are few, and with numbered days.”

“You fill the earth with violence and blood,” Enoch responded, a whirlwind of combat raging around him. But through it all, the human had learned well the lessons of trust, contentment and serenity. He was calm. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he declared, “I give you a testimony to the strength of my Master.” The son of Jared raised his hands to the sky, and with a mighty tremor an earthquake shook the entire city. Another crack followed, and a portion of the roof crumbled inward. Onlookers

scrambled away from the falling debris as a brilliant light shone through the resulting gap, even from the midnight sky.

Glancing up briefly, we saw Gabriel and Raziel standing above the building, shining down the beams of the Shekinah's glory upon those in the Throneroom. The force of the Almighty had destroyed the upper sections of the palace completely, and had broken through even to the dark dungeon beneath. Through this rent in the roof descended the Cherub Za'afiel, his sword drawn and his eyes blazing.

At the destruction of his palace, Enoch BenCain's calm exterior broke, and he shook with rage. He could not see the angels, but he could see clearly enough the rays of glory. "I summon the forces of Azazel!" he cried, rising to his feet. As he said this, the Cherub Azrael and the Principality Tutresiel joined Cerviel, Sarakiel and Raguel in their attack on Dumah, Tahariel and myself.

As the two demons joined their companions, Cerviel turned his attention to the holy Cherub that had just joined us. "You," he said to Za'afiel, hatred obvious in his voice. These two had been enemies ever since the former chief of the Principalities had fallen away. Twice they had dueled in the realms above, and twice Cerviel had fallen to the other's fiery blade.

"Leave the humans to their own affairs, Cerviel, and join me in the sky," the holy angel challenged. Wasting no time, the fallen Principality accepted, and the two surged upwards through the hole in the roof, their swords meeting as they rose. Outnumbered four to three, we battled with skill and energy granted to us from above. Azrael I had fought before, and he and I joined in combat on this occasion as well. Dumah and Tahariel held their own against the two former Archangels and the fierce Principality.

As we fought, Enoch BenJared continued to plead with his namesake, "Turn, turn from your pride and live!" The latter clapped his hands over his ears, all semblance of dignity gone, and he muttered repeatedly, "Madness, all of it..."

"Your father has bound you to darkness, my brother," the messenger was saying. "Leave your dark throne, and come and worship at the feet of Him who made all things." Those who had attended the evil king cowered against the walls, not seeing or understanding the great conflict taking place before them, but witnessing the supernatural light shining down from the roof, illuminating the Sethite, and perceiving in their spirits that something most significant was taking place in their presence.

"No!" Enoch the son of Cain cried out finally. "I will bear your reproach no longer! Leave my presence, and leave me to my kingdom, you troubler of my soul."

"You have seen the strength of the Throne with your own eyes, Enoch son of Cain," the traveler said. "No longer may you claim ignorance for the depravity of your life. You have walked in the ways of your father, and will come to a like end. Again I extend the

rope of mercy to you, repent of all you have done, and return to the faith which you forsook in your father, and have continued to reject in your own life.”

“Depart from me, for I would have none of that which you offer.” Enoch BenCain stood defiantly by his throne, settled into his deception – and in an instant, with a single decision, he had thrown off the influence of the Spirit tugging at his soul. He no longer felt the pangs of conscience as he had only moments before, when his hands were over his ears to shut out the convicting words. He no longer felt an inner conflict – he had made up his mind.

At that moment we, and the son of Jared with us, heard a beastly roar from above. Cerviel plummeted through the hole in the roof, cast down upon the beams of light streaming through into the dungeon. He lay on the ground between the two Enochs, a glowing cut in his side. Our companion said sadly, “As you wish.”

Heaven’s messenger turned away from the doomed monarch and made his way toward the staircase again. None moved to stop him. Seeing their companion defeated, Azrael quickly vanished, while Tutresiel sheathed his sparkling blade and withdrew into the shadows. “Arioch, Nisroch,” came a familiar voice from the darkness, addressing Raguel and Sarakiel by their new names. “Return to your duties.” The two fallen Archangels spread their wings and soared up through the now dark break in the roof while Lucifer slowly brought himself into view.

Enoch had never seen the prince of the demons before, but he only glanced backwards at him briefly, and then continued making his way back to the surface. We knew that the sensitive human was far more concerned with the rejection of his message than with confronting the arch demon. Enoch had walked with El Michael, and knew what true majesty was. He was not impressed by the appearance of the rebellious Cherub.

My two companions and I had our blades out and ready should Azazel decide to attack us. Instead, he said only, “Take your creature and go. My kingdom has nothing to do with the kingdom of Heaven.”

We could see the impotent rage boiling just below the surface, but whatever else Satan may be, he is not foolish. He knew he would never prevail against us, not in a direct conflict, but we knew that his heart was far from submission, and that his pride would never let him admit defeat. This incident would only incite him to more fervent attempts to destroy the faith of Seth’s remaining children.

But that was not the only thing Enoch BenJared’s mission to Cain’s city had accomplished. He had destroyed the self-assured position of the monarch. He had stolen his armor, and never more would the son of Cain be the ruler he had been. The palace was never rebuilt, and the former king left the settlement to wander the earth as his father had done.

The visit we had paid to the throne of Satan on earth left lasting effects on the Cainites. Some plunged further into rebellion, sealing their own fate. Others let the words and appearance of the messenger have a lasting impression on their minds, and some eventually made the journey to the mountains of the faithful, to live out their days awaiting the Promise of which the humble preacher had spoken. All were cut by the kherv of Enoch BenJared's words, and all were forced to choose whom they would serve – IaH or Azazel, life or death.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

CHAPTER 10 - LEEVKHOSH (CHURNING)

Enoch, the son of Jared, set out to return to his mountain home, to his wife, and to his son Methuselah. As the Watchers had predicted, the experience did not adversely affect his mind in spite of the awful scenes he had witnessed in the city of the rebels. As he passed again through the gates we had opened for him, he said, “The city is left desolate. Never more shall the grace of Heaven shine upon this unholy place.” So it will be with every heart that continuously rejects the voice of mercy; after a time, the voice of warning will no longer beat against the stony walls, and judgment is not far ahead.

If anything, the journey only increased Enoch’s resolve to draw closer to IaHWeH. After returning to his home, he spent his time continually in prayer, always in conversation with the angels he could now freely see. To Methuselah, and the other children he fathered, Enoch imparted all the sacred truths he had learned, and these also became faithful messengers to the other Sethites, and to those who gathered at the base of the mountains to hear them speak.

When Methuselah was grown, he married and brought forth a son he named Lamech, “powerful.” He was so named, because his father and grandfather pronounced their blessings upon him, that he should be a mighty one upon the earth. This he indeed was, for Lamech took to the office of messenger more rapidly than had any who came before him. From the first days in which he spoke, Lamech learned, and then communicated, the promises of Heaven to his fellow men. Tahariel and I, close companions of his grandfather, took special interest in Lamech’s development.

To Enoch, and thereby to Methuselah, we gave advice and words of wisdom concerning the young man’s education. Adam also was pleased with Lamech’s rapid development... but Adam was not to have as great an influence on this human’s life as he had for those who had come before.

When Lamech was only fifty six years old, Adam, Eve and Enoch retired to their favorite prayer mountain one final time. Even in his great age, Adam did not resemble those who are elderly among the humans now. No heavy wrinkles creased his face, and although his walking was more difficult, no spinal degeneration bowed his back. Nevertheless, the first man knew the rhythm of his own body, and he knew the time of El Michael’s words to him were about to be fulfilled.

“I go now to the dust, Enoch, son of Jared. The words of El Michael are sure, and as truly as He will one day lift the curse from our race, so also will His first promise come to pass. In the day I ate of that fruit, I died. In the day I broke the sacred trust He placed upon my wife and I, I earned this condition, and gave it also unto all my children.”

Eve drew near, and held his hand tenderly. “My guilt is as yours, husband,” she said. “Soon I also will join you in the earth, but there will we rest; there will we await our Savior.” Adam smiled, and said to Enoch, “IaHWeH has told me of your mission, my son. Not only here on earth, but after also... You will be a sign to all men of the salvation we await. You will not see the wrath to come upon this place, except from far away, and you will precede me in arriving at Heaven’s gate. Remember me there, until we meet again in glory.”

The three spoke a while longer, and then Adam closed his eyes one last time. His was the first death not to come forth from violence, and the Host was gathered there to see our friend enter his long sleep. We feel for Adam as we do for one another when we are called to tasks in distant locations. We would miss speaking with IaH’s first human, but we know we will spend eternity with him when the Creation is finally restored.

For fifty-seven more years, Enoch walked upon the earth. His voice was ever heard in exhorting his brethren to righteousness. Where correction was needed, he gave correction. Where comfort and encouragement were called for, Heaven’s messenger was there. He spent much time alone, however, although he began to speak more often with Mahalale’el his grandfather. He would retire often to the mountain to spend time in communion with the Host or with El Michael Himself.

Adam’s death saddened him greatly, and although he knew the promises of the future life, he sought earnestly an assurance of the resurrection. “Adam my father is dust,” he said to El Michael. “Cain and Abel are returned also to the earth together. Those that have been slain by the Cainites, they have given up their spirits and sleep in the ground beneath. I speak often to others of your Sacrifice, Oh Lord. I tell them of your plan, to redeem us from this cycle of death. But how heavy is my soul! I beheld Adam’s eyes close in sleep, and I can dream of no further waking.”

“Be comforted, Enoch, son of IaH. In the days ahead, much will come to pass.” Michael placed a hand upon the human’s shoulder, and the Host gathered nearby saw his eyes lose their focus. “In the days ahead, I will bring a flood upon this place, and wash it clean.” We knew that Enoch was seeing the events unfold, even as El Michael described them. The Prince continued, “This will be the beginning of the sorrows. Not all men will remain true to their faith, even after my wrath is revealed from Heaven. They will walk after their own desires, disregarding my provisions, and in the day that I come among men, they will not perceive me.”

“They will hear my words, and they will reject them, just as they have rejected my words today through you. The servant is no better than his Master, but this Master will

fare no better than His servant. As a Lamb, I will offer myself for their Sacrifice, and on the day that I rise to life, I will bring forth many who are awaiting me in the earth.”

“In the last days, I will again appear unto men. This time, I will bring salvation to all who have received my Promise. In those days, all will rise to life who have the Seed of IaHWeH within them, and death shall be no more. I will cleanse the earth again, this time with fire, and sin shall no more return, for into that fire will I cast him with whom sin originated. There, in those purifying flames, will Azazel and his followers meet their final end.”

El Michael ceased to speak, and removed his hand from Enoch’s shoulder. The human, overwhelmed with the visions he had just witnessed, wept aloud. “I cannot bear the weight of it, my Father.”

“The weight is mine to bear, and soon you also will rest from your labors. Your life has been a testimony to my promises, Enoch, son of Jared. Its earthly end shall be no less.”

On the day that Enoch was to be taken to Heaven, he gathered all the members of his family and those who had joined them on the mountains from the valleys of Cain below, and with them descended once more to the rebels who dwelt nearby.

“Hear O mankind,” he said, “and listen to my words. From the transgression of our father Adam, we have dwelt under the curse of death. In him, we have all earned destruction; and now as you have been told, the first of us has returned to the earth. But IaHWeH desires that all who await His Salvation shall be comforted, and by His grace, I am appointed to bring you one final testimony. On the day of His appearing in glory, all of you whose faith is in the Most High shall be saved from death, even as I.”

As he said those words, the four Archangels: Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel and Camael descended from Heaven, their bodies shining with the Shekinah’s glory, and their beings so bright that even the eyes of men perceived them. They appeared as a whirlwind of flames, spiraling down to earth to receive their human friend. From the day Enoch had seen the salvation that the promised Messiah would bring, he had taught more forcefully, more earnestly, and with more searching love than in any of his previous years. Those who had loved Enoch before felt their love deepen even more when they saw the streams of Heaven’s wisdom shining from his face, and pouring out of his mouth. Those who had hated him despised the humble messenger still more, for his words cut them deeply, opening up glowing wounds in their spirits.

But now the time of Enoch’s earthly service was over, and in a twinkling, he was changed and made fit for service in the Heavens above. As the human raised his hands to the sky, his flesh was aflame; he was transformed, and he shone like one of us. The four angels which stand in the presence of the Throne swirled around him, as my two friends and I had once done in battle with demons – but this time, only purity

surrounded the preacher... and he was raised up and received into the Spiritual Kingdom. There with us he has dwelt in joy and peace ever since.

The Sethites and converts who loved the son of Jared sought him back in their mountain homes, but he was not found there. The Cainites who mocked, even in the face of that great vision, sought him in the valleys below. “We have seen such tricks before,” they boldly declared, and looked about for the secret place in which the “magician” was hiding. The Cainites who feared sought Enoch in many other places, for they reasoned that if this display of Heaven’s power was what it seemed to be, then all the words of the preacher were true, and their souls were indeed in peril if they did not turn away from their evil lives. In the days following, more converts were added to the faithful upon the holy mountains, for Enoch was not found anywhere on earth.

On the day that Enoch vanished from among men, Seth said in his spirit, “I have seen the salvation of the Lord, even with my own eyes.” What Mahalale’el had beheld in his sight, the Heavenly realm, Enoch was the first to fully experience. The faithful humans were much comforted by Enoch’s translation, and spoke of it often. “How beautiful he was,” they would say, and cheer each other with the thought that soon their loving family would be united for all time.

Events took place quickly for a time after this. For fifty-five more years, Seth cherished the vision of Enoch’s reward in his mind, and meditated on it often, receiving insights from the Most High and sharing them with his family. He and Lamech, who was the new patriarch of the clan, would spend much time in council. They would leave those meetings full of the joy and knowledge of Heaven, eager to share them with all their family.

In peace, Seth passed also into his grave; his face was joyful, and his soul expectant of the glory to come. In the dark warmth of the earth, he also awaits the great day when the Lord shall return. A mere fourteen years later, Lamech’s firstborn son opened his eyes. Just as Enoch’s transfer to Heaven with glory was to be a comfort for those who had been troubled by Adam’s death, so now this child was given as a comfort to those who had witnessed the final days of Seth’s life. “His name shall be Noah,” his father said (which means “comfort”) because, “This one shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which IaHWeH has cursed in Adam.”

The Cherub Za’afiel, who had once watched over Enoch, now watched over Noah. As he grew, his father Lamech and his grandfather Methuselah told the young man of Adam, of Eden, of Enoch. They taught him of sin, of Cain and Abel, and they revealed to him the prophecies of the flood to come. Noah’s mind, as quick as any who had come from Seth and continued in faith, held these concepts dear. With the revelations he himself received, he also began to teach these truths to others, including the Cainites who dwelt in the valleys below.

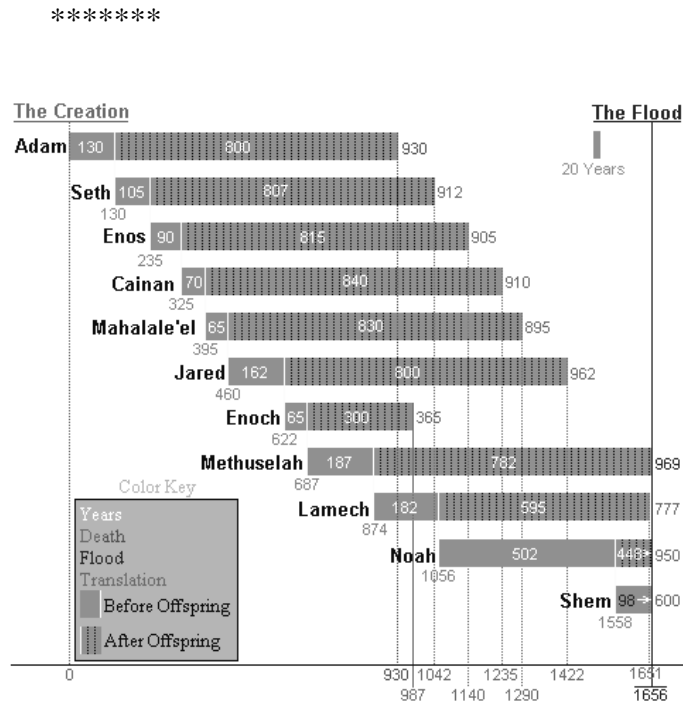
Many who saw him at work declared him to be a “second Enoch,” for the same beauty, the same strength and purity of speech which had attended the first messenger to the Cainites was seen manifest in Noah’s labors. So absorbed in his efforts did he become that Noah decided he would not marry. His ministry would often take him away from his mountainous home, and to the surprise of his kindred he would often dwell among the Cainites, accepting their invitations to fellowship.

Although Noah avoided the gatherings and rowdy celebrations which only seemed to increase in their intensity with the passage of time, the preacher would associate with a family, or an individual, who was earnestly seeking the truth despite the shadows in which they were living. So it was that many accepted the faith delivered to Adam and Seth by the human’s faithful efforts.

Azazel and his demons were furious. “He steals souls from out of our mouths! How is it that he is not corrupted by the works of my followers?”

“Wherever he walks is holy ground,” Sammael responded. “His eyes behold the evil, but his soul is not polluted. His ears hear the curses with which we afflict him by the mouths of the Cainites, but he returns a blessing for a curse, a smile for a sneer, and for hatred, he gives only love.”

For nearly five centuries, Noah had grown in grace, and had found great favor in the eyes of Heaven. During the time of his ministry, Enos and Cainan went to their rest. Mahalale’el soon followed. He who had beheld Heaven with his own eyes, who had longed to experience the joys he had seen in the Spiritual Kingdom, was the first of the righteous (other than Abel) not to live over nine centuries. He died at eight hundred and ninety-five years of age, his sensitive soul wearied by the growing evil that polluted the earth. When his time came, he was ready to go.



Finally, faithful Jared also slept with his fathers. He was the oldest to have died up until that time, but even he was not to resist the curse indefinitely. At his death, one thousand, four hundred and twenty-two years after the Creation, the earth’s state was a lamentable one indeed. The Cainite king Enoch had died long before, but his dominion was broken

up into warring regions, and the earth had no rest. “Seventy times seventy!” they would cry, as they slew each other in their feverish violence, mocking their Heavenly Creator, and casting off all that once elevated them from the level of mere beasts – and indeed, even the beasts of those days had more respect for their fellow creatures.

But Noah only grew more resolved to spread the message of hope as his ancestors returned to the earth one by one. When he was almost five centuries at his Father’s business, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him as he was in prayer. “Greetings to you, Noah, who are highly regarded in the Kingdom above.”

“Blessings to you, Adonai Gabriel,” the human responded, recognizing the Cherub that he had seen many times before.

“By the decree of the Elohim, I have been sent to you with a message.” When Noah prompted him for the words he had brought, Gabriel said, “You have labored many years for the Kingdom of Heaven. You have been among the Cainites, and have drawn many of them to the true faith. Although the poor creatures’ lives have been shortened by their previous sins and the sins of their fathers, many sleep in the earth near the mountains of the faithful, and will be raised to life in the last days.”

The Archangel said, “But as for you, Noah, the time has come for you to take a wife. The days of the flood are not long off, and you have been chosen to continue the race of mankind after the faithless and wicked are washed away.”

Noah thought on these words, and he said, “I will do as my Lord has commanded.” Gabriel vanished, and Noah offered up a sacrifice of thanksgiving for the message that he had received.

Returning to the mountains, Noah dwelt among his kinsmen and took a wife for himself. Shortly thereafter, El Michael appeared to Noah, and repeated to him the words that had been decided in a council centuries before: “Noah, son of Lamech, draw near and listen to my words. The time of my judgment is soon to come. I will destroy mankind that I created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast; the animals of the earth and the fowls of the air; for it has been a great sorrow to me that I have made them.”

Noah nodded mutely. His spirit burned within him at the import of the words, and his mind passed over the faces of those he had known, those who had rejected him and refused his message of comfort and salvation. He felt a keen sorrow for the inhabitants of the earth. “Even so,” El Michael continued, “you yourself shall be saved, and all who cling to you in the day of destruction. Everywhere my eye turns, there is violence and hatred. It is a weary sight, and the earth itself longs to be clean. But for you and your family...”

El Michael began to explain to Noah what he would need to know for the construction of an Ark, a gigantic vessel that would be designed to survive the waters of the flood. Three levels tall it would stand, for Noah and his family, and for the air-breathing animals that would also be spared the wrath of the Most High.

Noah wasted no time in getting to work. Moving with his wife down into a plain near his family's settlements, he began to build in ready view of the Cainites around him. Azazel and his demons looked on, unable to venture near due to the continuous presence of holy angels. The Sethites, which were always gathered around, kept the humans at bay. Although the numbers of the faithful had begun to drop sharply, due to both apostasy and death, the few who remained were inspired by Heaven to assist in the construction of the vessel. Some joined in the gathering and shaping of the hard wood, and others ensured that the labor was uninterrupted by outsiders.

Very soon after he had begun construction, Noah had three sons: Japheth, Shem and Ham. As soon as they were able, the boys joined their hands to the work. Their physical labor conditioned their bodies, even as their communion with the faithful family conditioned their spirits. As they labored with their father day after day, he would fill their time with stories of their ancestors. With eagerness they listened to him, and the fellowship they shared as a family made the hours pass quickly and the work seem light.

When they were old enough, the three boys also took wives. Japheth and Shem chose women from the line of Seth, who were committed to the faith delivered to their ancestors. Ham, however, who had always manifested a tiny streak of unrest, chose instead the daughter of one of the converted Cainites, against the council of his father. This in itself was not unpraiseworthy, but the particular woman he chose sadly retained some traits of her parents' previous unbelief.

For more than a hundred years Noah and his family worked on the Ark. For over a century, they labored away with the solid wood, bringing forth the object El Michael had described. Gabriel and Raziel were ever present, overseeing the work, and as for my two friends, and myself we constantly stood guard against the interruptions by demons, and looked on with great interest as the vessel began to take shape.

A short time before the ship was completed, Lamech gathered Noah and his grandchildren to himself. "Son," he said. "I have watched you working for six hundred years in the service of Heaven. Every day of your life, you have brought me comfort, and great joy. Your own brothers and sisters hold you in the highest esteem, and even in these days, when we are all to be gathered to the earth, we rejoice in the faithful example you have set before us."

Noah looked a little confused. He had understood by El Michael's words that his family, meaning all the faithful, would survive the flood with him. Besides that, he was the firstborn of Lamech's children – all of his brothers and sisters were younger than he! "Understand my words," Lamech continued. "The flood to come is a sign of the wrath of IaHWeH, and just as Enoch was saved off of the face of the earth, so are you to be

preserved from the waters. But as for me, and those others who remain faithful, we will be spared the destruction to come. Our eyes will not witness the fury of our Father, but we will sleep, and we will meet with you in the days after the Promise is fulfilled.”

Beginning that day with Lamech, and in rapid succession, the Sethites began to peacefully pass away. They went to their rest rejoicing, their eyes already beholding the day of the Lord’s glory. “Sleep comes early for me, my son,” Lamech had said to Noah. “It is according to the words of the Elohim, for we are all dust, and to dust we willingly return.” It was also at the time of Lamech’s death that many fell away. Understanding that few would be spared the time of the flood, those who were in any way discontent in their lives, or those who had less than absolute faith in the reality of the resurrection, began to experience great doubts.

Some of these accepted the loving instruction of Methuselah and Noah, and their fears were calmed. Repenting of their periodic unbelief, they also rested in the peace of death. Still others continued to cherish their doubts, and soon joined the jeering masses that ridiculed the construction work going on before them.

In the year of the flood only Noah’s direct family was left among the faithful, along with his grandfather Methuselah. Day after day, as the Ark neared completion and the spirits of men grew more uncertain, the laborers had to withstand the verbal blows of the Cainites. “You are a fool, Noah. Since the beginning of creation, things have gone on as they always have. The rivers have not risen past their boundaries, and no ‘water has come down from the sky,’ as you continue to insist will happen. Return to your mountains, and bury your dead.”

Nevertheless the work continued, and Noah’s only response was the steady rhythm of blows upon the wood of the Ark.

In Heaven, the bustle was unprecedented. The Throne issued orders right and left to the holy Host. The Principalities and Powers were arranged as if for battle, while the other Orders entered into councils with their Chiefs.

On the tenth day of the second month of the one thousand, six hundred and fifty-sixth year since the Creation, Methuselah died according to the prophecy given to Enoch his father at his birth. “When he dies, it shall be brought.” On the day of his death, he gathered together Noah, his wife, and Shem, Ham and Japheth with their wives. “It is upon us,” he said. “The day of wrath is here, after all these years. The sun rose this morning as it has every day for the past millennium and a half. The ungodly will feel no change. But this is the day it begins, my son. Be of good courage, for IaHWeH goes with you. But now you must leave me to my rest. The final warning is yours alone to give.”

Noah and his family began to kiss Methuselah sorrowfully, but he rebuked them. “Why do you weep, as if we have not a hope? The greater sorrow is yours, my children.

Behold... even now my eyes see the glory of the Lord.” With that, the old man closed his eyes in sleep.

For the first time in about a century, the plain upon which the Ark rested was silent. Passers-by stopped their journeys and gathered around, drawn by curiosity to the completed project. The giant wooden box stood upon the dry land, looking at once out of place and yet strangely appointed. The Host looked down approvingly; Noah had done all according to the directions delivered unto him.

The last of the pre-flood patriarchs came down from the mountain with his family after burying Methuselah, and he raised his hands to the crowd that had gathered before him. “The day is at hand!” he declared. “The wrath of the Throne will be revealed against the unrighteous, and this is the final day for repentance, for mercy...” Some shrank under these strong words, while others took the opportunity to merely shout more loudly in protest. “IaHWeH has promised that all who cling to me on this last day will be spared the wrath to come. Is there none among you willing to turn from your wickedness and live?”

A few looked uncertainly about, but the ridicule of the majority was too much for them to withstand. Even those who would have stepped forward held their peace, and their place among the impenitent. His eyes searching the crowd for a single friendly face, a single accepting smile, Noah’s heart was filled with sorrow. As he ceased to speak, the murmuring of the crowds and their impious joking grew in volume. The demons present joined their influence to the onlookers, and as Noah and his family stood silently, insults and curses began to be hurled at them, too quickly to be understood.

In spite of the noise, Noah suddenly heard very calmly and clearly the voice of El Michael speaking from within the wooden vessel. “Come, you and all your house, into the Ark; for I have been witness to your righteousness before me in this generation.”

Suddenly, the awful babble stopped. All at once, the crowd parted, and to the amazement of all the humans, animals began to gather unto the holy family. Two by two they came: a male and a female of each kind, and seven of some. Invisible to all, the Malakim and the Hashmallim (the Virtues and the Dominions) led the beasts peacefully to their safety within the divine vessel. Even as the creatures of the earth filed in to fill their appointed places, the Seraphim and Cherubim soared over the horizon, bringing with them a great flock of birds. As with the flightless creations, there was a pair of each kind, and seven of some. The humans saw nothing but the birds and animals themselves, drawn irresistibly to the security of the Ark.

Where man was rebellious, and unbelieving, the animals were obedient. By sin and repeated transgression, the Cainites and the children they produced by the fallen offspring of Seth had reduced themselves to a spiritual state below that of the animals, for they could not even feel the angelic inducements to enter the Ark that was guiding the lower forms of life.

All was silent until the last of the beasts had found its place within the wooden walls. All was silent a good while after that, while Noah and his family knelt before the open door and prayed. When his prayer was concluded, the four Archangels stood near the Ark, one on each side, and El Michael appeared before the assembly, glowing brightly with the fire of the Union. The Cainites fell back in fear, not perceiving the four Archangels, or Raziel floating above the Ark in the shining orb of the Shekinah; but they could not miss the bright light that surrounded the Prince of angels.

“Go, Noah, and enter into the safety I have provided for you.” With one last longing glance over the assembled humans, Noah turned and entered the Ark with his wife, his three sons, and their wives. Before the perceptions of the assembled Host the four Archangels lifted the door of the vessel and swung it shut. El Michael hovered before the door, and with His right hand He sealed it. Those on the outside saw only the light floating before the shut door, and they wondered.

The Archangels returned to Heaven, and Raziel ascended with them. El Michael stood by the structure a moment longer, looking over the sons of Cain. His glow faded, and He became invisible to them, but He walked forward among them as if searching... looking for a single soul that could be spared. “How can I give you up to the waters?” He said to unhearing ears. “How I can I see you all perish?” He asked uncaring hearts. But though the Elohim, the Prince of angels, was among them they knew it not.

For seven days nothing happened. Noah and his family waited patiently in the vessel, and those who stood around camped by the Ark, knowing in their spirits that they were not supposed to leave that place. For seven days the faith of Noah was tried. But each time he looked up at the sky, and saw the sun rise as it had every day of his life, he remembered the voice of El Michael calling him into the ship and he reassured his family that all was as it should be.

For the Cainites, as soon as the shock of seeing the animals gathered together, and the inexplicable glow that sealed the Ark’s entrance shut had faded, they were back to their old ways. They turned to their leaders for answers, and the demon-driven charlatans had answers to give. “Is it not like IaHWeH?” they asked boldly. “Would He not try to scare us into submission to His will?” Still others said, “It is a trick, of course. We have seen its like during the days of Enoch BenCain, and even among their own people. Why, we once saw one of them vanish away!”

Still others, some sons of fallen Sethites, declared, “We worship the true IaHWeH whom our fathers served! Had any such flood as Noah spoke of been determined, would not our oracles and the symbols we received from Him have warned us first?” But their idols had been silent, and their human sacrifices had gained them no insight, only a deeper fascination with evil.

For seven days the earth was still, and then El Michael stood up in Heaven, and He said, "It is finished."

On this eighth day, the holy Host sprang into action. The Principalities and Powers quickly took their assigned places. The Cherubim and Seraphim covered the air with their presence, and the Dominions and Virtues stood ready by the Throne of the Most High. The Throne angels themselves gathered around El Michael, who was in Union with the Father, and with this entourage He descended to earth.

To His right side and His left side were Gabriel and Raziel, the Covering Cherubim aglow with the fire of the Presence. The Elohim was bringing the glory of IaHWeH to the earth, and the Shekinah needed to be buffered, lest the entire earth be consumed by the brilliance of the Creator's light.

As the demons beheld the angelic Hosts descending unto the earth, they were filled with fear and fled to the place where Azazel was rallying his most powerful minions. "Calm yourselves," he hissed at them. "There shall not one of you be harmed this day."

Taking Arioch, Nisroch, Abaddon and Sammael, the arch demon flew up to where El Michael stood surrounded by the Throne angels and flanked on either side by Gabriel and Raziel. "Prince of angels, have you come at last to destroy us?" Despite the deceptive words to his own followers, Satan's own fear was apparent to all.

"My judgment upon you, Azazel, was pronounced in ages past. The sentence which you have earned is yet to come, but this day my wrath is revealed against those whom you have slain." El Michael looked down upon the earth, and there was violence and revelry everywhere – even at the very entrance to his Ark, and before the Cherubim guardians of Eden's garden. "Behold your kingdom, Lucifer. Behold the price of freedom without love."

"Yes," Azazel retorted. "This is freedom indeed. Each is free to seek his own pleasure, his own will. For three thousand years you kept us chained to you, Elohim. But I, and these with me, broke away – and for this you threaten us with death. Bring it, then, for it is better than the torment of your continual displeasure, for truly you are stronger than we." So spoke the tempter in bitter words, and with hatred for which there is no remedy. How blind were his eyes! Forever after the demons would see love as nothing but slavery, and every trace of grace bled slowly from their essences as they beheld what was about to come.

"Your time is not yet come, Lucifer," El Michael said. "Za'afiel! Let it begin."

As the summoned Cherub rose up from the earth and into the sky, Azazel suddenly shouted, "Prevent him!"

As he said this, a dark cloud of demons rose up into the air, and in a rare display of unity, they converged on the place where the holy angel was situated. At a nod from El Michael, the canopy of Seraphim and Cherubim collapsed, and they dove down to assist the angel who had been chosen to bring forth the flood. From my place with the other Principalities, I saw the demons drive Za'afiel back downwards, but the Cherub Puriel soared up above him, cutting through his enemies to clear his path.

Receiving a whisper from El Michael, Anael turned to us and said, "We are to assist them." We joined the battle to find the Powers and Virtues were winging their way toward us also. The Throne angels which had surrounded our Prince also swept down to lend their support.

In desperation, the demons fought to keep Za'afiel out of the sky. They did not know exactly what he was planning to do, but they knew that if Heaven was for it, they must prevent it at all costs. The three Archangels, except for Gabriel who stood at the right hand of El Michael, went after the most powerful of the demons, and in a flash of light they transformed into their now easily recognizable animal forms. Uriel as a lion, Camael as an eagle, and Raphael as a bull moved from one end of the struggling cloud of spirits to the other, sending demons falling toward the earth with every attack.

Even as the humans by the door of the Ark laughed and rejoiced, their demonic masters were being battered in the third major conflict of the spiritual forces. Not since the day when we drove them out of Eden had the demons withstood us with such desperate force. The Ophanim Gedael and Nahamiel thrust themselves into the thickest part of the battle, cutting through the demons and standing at the side of Za'afiel, the main object of the fury.

The fallen Principality Cerviel in particular was attempting to get a clear swipe at the Cherub he hated the most. He succeeded in striking Gedael to the ground, and was contending with Nahamiel, when the oracle Zephon appeared before him and attempted to drive him off. The two seemed equally matched, and so Za'afiel was able to free himself for another attempt at an ascent.

This was not to last, however, as Azrael, perhaps the most fierce warrior of the demons, barred his way. Dispatching Melejael, the Ophan I had been fighting, I hastened to do battle with this enemy whom I had encountered numerous times before. I managed to hold Azrael at bay for a time, but soon other demons perceived that he would be the most effective at keeping Za'afiel low, and so they rushed in to help him. The Principality Remiel came to my aid, however, and kept any newcomers from being a distraction.

By the grace of IaH I was able to overcome the evil Cherub, and I sent him spinning to the earth with a wing too badly damaged to hold him aloft. Looking down, however, I saw something that demanded my immediate attention. As Za'afiel was engaged with Cerviel, who had somehow managed to shake Zephon off, the demon Sh'fiel swept silently up behind him and drew his sword.

I did not have time to shout a warning, but as quickly as I could I hurled my kherev toward the betrayer. Sh'fiel had been Za'afiel's most trusted friend in the days before the war in Heaven, but the once gentle angel had fallen fully under the control of Lucifer, and in the more than 1500 years that he had been subject to the arch demon's influence, he had learned well the ways of sin.

My spinning blade passed between the two, missing the fallen Cherub. Nevertheless, Za'afiel swung around, realizing he was caught between Cerviel and his former friend. Puriel and Zephon were suddenly at his side, however, the latter having managed to escape his previous battle with Cerviel unharmed.

At this point, the fallen angels began to use their twisted knowledge as they have in every battle before and since. Sparkling flames filled the air, and blasts of force knocked the holy Host from one side to another as the demons started bringing their magical powers to bear. At this point, the humans below us noticed that something unusual was taking place, and many that were before the Ark fled to their homes. They could not behold the contending angels directly, but just as the worshippers in the palace of Enoch had felt in their spirits the battle taking place in their presence, so the import of the unnatural display in the air above the Cainites was not lost to them.

As my blade reappeared in my hand, I moved closer to the battle to see if I could be of help. "As'fael," came a growl from behind me. Spinning around in mid-air, I caught sight of Tarfiel, formerly my close companion. Tarfiel had become a demon of very few words, it seemed, for he was attacking me before I could properly register his presence.

He and I fought for some time, but as we moved lower down in the air, I saw to my side that Cerviel had again broken through the ranks of angels protecting Za'afiel, and was pressing him hard. I desired to go and help, but I was being kept busy deflecting the constant blows of the fallen Virtue. Two fallen Powers made my departure seem even less likely – Zaphkiel and the angel now calling himself Kaspriel moved in to surround me. Seeing that I had no hope of deflecting blows from all sides, I folded my wings about me and descended rapidly.

As the three turned downward to pursue me, they were attacked from above by my two friends Dumah and Tahariel, and Anael who was leading them. Grasping the opportunity, I darted towards Za'afiel to cut him free once again from Cerviel's attentions. Before I could reach him, another demon stood in my way and I was forced to deal with my current distraction.

While I did so, however, Zephon had returned, and once again moved toward the fallen Principality. I pressed my opponent closer and succeeded in shifting another duel away from close proximity to Za'afiel, Zephon and Cerviel. As Cerviel continued his assault, however, the Cherubic oracle left a hole in his defense.

Quick to capitalize on the error, the fallen Principality swung his sword in an arc, striking Zephon's blade away. With a terrible smile, he struck at the angel, piercing him deeply. The holy angel recoiled from the blow, and fell to the surface below.

At that moment, I remembered the words that this very oracle had said to me over a thousand years before. His advice had already helped me once, during the battle in Eden... perhaps it would again. On that day, so long ago, he had said to me, "... when the time comes, you must draw your sword quickly... and you must cut quickly. Do not hesitate, but do not fear, for this war already belongs to IaHVeH."

With a rapid movement, using a speed that could only have been granted me from Above, I swung my kherev in a tight arc, slicing through the body of my demonic opponent, and then, without even pausing, I spun in a full circle, bringing my arm back and hurling the burning blade at Cerviel before he could even turn from watching Zephon fall.

The sparkling sword caught him full in the back, and the force of it knocked him away. Due to this, and the defeat of my own opponent, and also owing to the fact that I had managed to push off yet another duel with my presence, I had succeeded in opening up Za'afiel's entire right side! Azazel himself, seeing the breach, rushed in, to be joined by Petahel, the powerful demonic Seraph. Puriel, however, who had fallen in the battle, had apparently been healed by Raphael – and he surged forward, knocking Petahel back and driving Lucifer upwards.

Za'afiel moved like lightning; he flared his wings and sped through the hole we had opened up for him in the cloud of fighting angels, escaping the region of conflict. Up, up, up we saw him go... every sword fell still, every eye turned towards the ascending Cherub. Everything seemed frozen in place, frozen in time, as he escaped the demons' line of defense and dwindled in our sight to a tiny glowing speck.

Far above El Michael and the Covering Cherubim, Za'afiel turned fully toward us, and uttered a loud cry.

All at once, the earth gave a tremendous shudder, as if it was shaking itself free of the sin that had polluted it for so long. The heavens themselves seemed to shatter at the voice of the Cherub, and water began to pour from the sky. Thick clouds gathered together, and these streamed forth torrents of rain, as they had in Eden, splattering everything in sight with thick, heavy drops.

The humans on the earth below fell into a panic. Never before had they seen anything like this, and on that great day of judgment there was no longer any question about the warnings that the righteous had been giving to them faithfully for hundreds and hundreds of years.

The demons withdrew quickly, knowing that their purpose was defeated, and those who had fallen to the earth awakened to the sound of thunder and rain. The earth continued to

tremble, and soon great seams began to open up in the ground. From these spouted great jets of scalding water, throwing rocks and trees into the air. Under the ruins of the city of Enoch, a large fissure opened up and swallowed the buildings whole. As they collapsed, water poured over them, and then spouted out to cover the ground.

In the bodies of water, great rifts in the crust beneath sent tremendous waves surging toward the land, and one of these swept away all who had been assembled before the Ark. In the swirling water, the great ship lifted off of the surface of the earth.

Within the vessel, Noah and his family had been listening intently to the commotion going on outside. Looking outside, they beheld the darkening sky, and the large drops of water that were falling around them. Just as Noah was wondering how long it would take for even this strange outpouring to fill the entire earth, the great wave lifted the ship. Looking out, Noah could now see no land, only dark, churning water.

The patriarch fell on his face, and prayed. He was quickly joined by his family, and the eight souls besought IaHWeH to preserve them in the face of the fury that was taking place outside. A terrible knocking was heard on the sides of the Ark. Rocks and trees were being flung against it by the force of the waters as the tidal wave swept the boat along. Aside from this, several humans swirled near and clung to the sides, beating the wood with their fists for entrance into the safety of the vessel.

Across the land, humans and animals were fleeing from the destruction. In desperation, some had clambered up even the hills and mountains upon which the faithful humans had once lived. As the waters began to rise still further, they made for loftier and loftier peaks, but these too were soon buried under the swirling flood, their human refugees perishing.

Every false altar was broken down; every scene of wickedness was buried under the waves. The proud voice of rejoicing ceased, and everywhere that there were still men could be heard terror and shouts of contention. Even in their great fear, the violence of the Cainites had not deserted them; they fought with themselves and the beasts of the earth for the highest places on the mountains, for the most secure positions.

The purpose of the deluge was to destroy, however, and in the moment that Za'afiel's cry had shattered the heavens, indeed in the moment the Ark's door had swung shut, all hope for the unrepentant was lost. The only safety on earth was in a tiny wooden vessel, inhabited by a mere eight.

Some humans, who made it to the very tallest mountains, were able to survive for more than a few days. Many, however, seeing that their cause was hopeless, flung themselves willingly into the waters. Others clung to their places in fear, seeing the water rise day after day, and the rain continuing to fall. The fountains under the earth and under the sea continued to pour out their fury, and the water rose higher and still higher.

The water became more, not less violent, as its level rose. Holy angels were sent to preserve the integrity of the Ark's structure. The Powers Andiriron and Shabbatiel took hold of the walls, and held the vessel straight. Other angels: Lasetiel, Matmoniel, Remiel, Asael and many others worked together to keep the gigantic structure from being damaged by the waves. Noah and his family had done wondrously well in constructing the Ark to El Michael's specifications, but even this could not survive the great wrath of the Most High. The efforts of the ministers of Heaven as they joined their hands to the humans' workmanship – and all this blessed by Heaven – this alone was able to go through the testing of the waves.

As the beautiful garden in Eden was swept from the earth's surface, Shomeriel and Mageniel, the two Cherubic guardians, left their now useless posts and contributed to the protection of the Ark.

El Michael looked upon the destruction; He did not smile, but as one we felt the relief of the planet, releasing the fury that had been pent up for a thousand years and a half. Those within the floating structure were constantly in prayer, asking the Elohim to remember them and preserve them from the fury all around.

Eventually the storm calmed. After forty days the rain ceased, yet the jets that spouted from the earth caused the water to rise for some time thereafter. The Host looked down upon the earth. The demons looked out over the watery surface, and they saw the results of the evil they had brought upon the planet. The wages of sin is death, and never before (and never yet since) had it been seen on such a massive scale. Azazel turned from the scene in disgust, his spirit darkening still further. Though his efforts had resulted in the mass extinction of almost an entire world, still he would not bow to the wisdom of the Throne.

As the world had been brought forth from water an age ago, so now it returned to water. But there was something different this time. Upon the liquid surface floated a tiny wooden box, and contained within it was a new seed... the hope for all life in future generations.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WAR

AFTERMATH - EYASHEV (SETTLING)

After many days El Michael again stood over the waters of the earth, and He said, “It is enough. Let the waters cease from the surface.” At His command, the Hashmallim descended as a wind, and sank into the surface, beneath the depths of the flood.

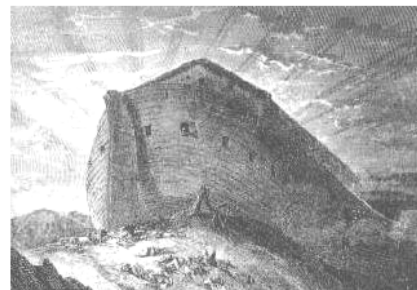
The water level began to drop immediately, and to settle back into the earth. The vast caverns that had once lay below the surface were shattered, however, and when the crust finally did return to a stable state they were collapsed inward, and the oceans were therefore much larger than they had been before the great catastrophe.

The swirling dirt in the black waters continued to settle, and countless multitudes of trees, beasts, birds, fish, and even a few humans, were forever locked into the resulting layers. The Ark continued to drift with the waves, keeping safe its precious cargo, but when the level of the floodwaters had gone down sufficiently the ship ran aground in the mountainous region of Ararat.

“Noah,” Za’afiel called to the sleeping patriarch. “Awaken.” The human opened his eyes, and saw his Cherubic friend manifest in physical form before him.

Noah stood up, and immediately fell sideways, unused to stable footing. “Is it over, Za’afiel?” he asked in wonder, moving toward the Ark’s window.

“Yes,” the angel replied. “The waters have begun to go down, and soon you and your family will be able to leave.”



Noah looked out over the landscape, and then he closed the window again. “I will wait until I can see more of the world,” he said. “Until then, I have seen enough water.”

More than two months later the humans again opened the window, and this time they could see the tops of the mountains around them. The family rejoiced, for they felt their time of departure was soon to come. Forty days after that, when a good amount of dry ground could be seen, Noah once more opened the window. This time he left it open, and sent forth a raven to see if it would return.

The raven did not come back, but Noah was undecided as to whether or not this meant the water had gone down yet, or if the bird was simply flying around and landing in unseen places until it had. Deciding to repeat the process, he chose this time a dove and sent it out to see if it would find land.

The dove returned, finding the Ark to be the only suitable place to find rest. Seven days later Noah tried again. This time, when the dove again made its appearance, it was carrying with it the leaf of an olive tree. The family rejoiced once again, for plants were beginning to grow on the earth. Indeed, every plant bearing seed had begun to sprout and to take root in the soil. Two Trees, however, would never be seen again upon the sin-scarred world. The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, these had never received in themselves the command to bring forth after their kind, and no seed of them was set adrift in the flood to renew their existence in the post-deluge earth.

One, however, had been spared. The Tree of Life, the eternal symbol of IaHWeH's glory and strength, had been taken to the Heavenly Kingdom, and was there established by the dwelling place of Enoch who lives beside it still. The Tree of Knowledge, however, the symbol of Satan's rebellion and sorrow, was buried by the waters... never more to be seen.

Seven days later Noah sent the dove out one last time. It did not return. "Let us wait a while longer," Noah said to his eager family. "Let us be sure the land is dry, and that there will be enough food for all the animals." They agreed, in spite of their desire to see the land once again.

On the day that the earth was dry, and regenerated enough for man and the animals, El Michael appeared to the family in the Ark. "You have been patient, Noah," He said. "But now the time has come for your departure. Leave the Ark, with your wife, your sons, and their wives. Bring with you all that have been spared from the flood, the birds and the beasts, that they may multiply, and that the earth may once again be full."

And so Noah and his family came down from the mountains of Ararat, taking with them all the kinds of animals that had been created in that first great work. The humans rejoiced to see the dry land once again, but they could tell that some things were very different. They could feel it in their skin, by the heat of the sun; they could feel it in the color of the light, in the breath of their lungs. They could feel it in the atmosphere. The animals also began to change after the flood, and as the vitality of the earth began to slowly bleed off after that first great disaster, the beasts began to reflect more and more the damage that Lucifer had done to the physical world.

The earth had been wiped clean by the mercy of the Elohim, and so the lifespan of the planet was extended, but He did not wholly remove the continuing consequences of the curse of sin. Forever would there be reminders of the penalty for transgression. When some animals turned wholly from their diet of herbs to seek each other for food, the

humans remembered the violence of brother against brother that led to the wrath of IaHWeH.

When the rains fell upon the earth, they knew that this was because of mankind's sin. Even so, in the rain clouds Elohim set His sign, a symbol and a seal of His covenant with Noah, that never again would a flood overtake the dry land of all the earth.

There were many adaptations both the humans and the animals would have to make to survive this new, changed earth – and Noah was soon to learn of them. The first thing he did after descending from the ark was to build an altar, and to offer one of the sheep as a sacrifice. Noah had not forgotten the faith delivered unto his fathers, and he would not allow his sons to forget either.

As Uriel consumed the sacrifice, El Michael again appeared to the patriarch and He said unto him, “As I have commanded the animals, so also I say to you now: be fruitful, and multiply on the face of the earth. Fill this world with humans, that they may have dominion over all that I have made for them.”

“But now the earth is changed, and some things must alter with it. The animals will become more fierce, and behold, I will give them a fear of you, that they will not often trouble your offspring with their violence. To you also have I delivered the animals – as they will be prey for each other, so shall they be prey for you. The earth is yet weak in its supply of plant life, and the balance will be kept in this way for the time being. The beasts therefore shall also be meat for you, even as the plants have always been – yet you must not digest their blood, for that is the life, and is sacred unto me.”

El Michael continued, “Let the violence of the animal world be your reminder that blood is not a light thing to shed. Because of sin there is death, and if any man slay another, he shall become guilty of that blood which he sheds. Indeed, he who spills the blood of another man, by man shall his also be required. But as for you, Noah, you and your family continue in faith before me. Restore mankind before me, that I may make a covenant of peace with them.” These and many other words did the Elohim deliver unto Noah, and they made a covenant together on that day with the rainbow as the sign thereof.

And so it was that mankind began again to multiply on the face of the earth, the Host having as much interest in this new age as we had in the former. Noah continued in faith, walking in obedience to all that had been delivered unto him by the Prince of angels. His children also walked in his way, but for Ham, the walk seemed at times to be difficult.

Upon him and his wife the holy angels looked with some concern, for they seldom seemed at peace; they did not have the same spirit as that shown by his father and his brothers or their families. Well did we remember the words of El Michael concerning the flood... it was truly to be only the “beginning of sorrows.” Looking upon Ham

BenNoah, cherishing the seeds of rebellion within himself, we knew the long war between El Michael and Lucifer was not yet over.

So now you have heard my report, human. Now you have seen the record of your origin through the eyes of an angel. You have heard of the Promise delivered unto your first parents, which in the course of time was duly fulfilled. There is more to come... oh, much more, but if you will think on these words which I have given unto you thus far, if you will seek the face of your Savior within them, then you will begin to see the story of even the Messiah's cross in a new light.

Perhaps we shall speak again before you are called to join the Host in glory, or perhaps the continuing words of this record will be delivered to you by another. Whichever the case may be, may the glory of the Most High ever guide your steps, and may you be found, in the end, to be an Enoch, dedicated, a Noah, comforting to others, and a faithful Adam, a true and noble son of Man.

A PREVIEW OF BOOK 3:
THE SHINARIC WAR

THE SHINARIC WAR

OVERTURE

Fear not.

I am Zadkiel, chief of the Ophanim. I have come forth to continue the record of the Question, that your understanding may be full. These are the last times for the history of your world as it stands now, and it has been promised – it has been sworn before all the Universe – that from this most perverse generation must come the most righteous. From these most dark and evil times will shine forth a light to blind the sinful, and to pierce the shadows who once fell from the Empyrean Kingdom.

Count yourself blessed indeed to be called, and chosen, to stand with this group – for you, unto whom this record is given, will stand in the company of the Lamb if you will but hold fast to the end. It has been written in your History that the adversary is as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, yet it will be sung of you in the age to come:

*”Out of the Eater came something to eat;
And out of the Strong one came something sweet.”*

Azazel’s name means “Strong one of El,” and so it has been that this planet has been tainted over the centuries by his dark designs and the evil genius of unsanctified human intellect that he inspires. You have come to know how and why he fell, and the destruction he once brought down upon your world, but throughout all this there has remained for a time, yes, even for angels, the *Question*.

Some of your human writers have referred to it as the “great controversy.” For us it was simply “The Question.” It needed no qualifier, it was not a “great,” or “mysterious” question... because for us it was the only one. For many of us, it was the only thing that remained unsettled within us after Lucifer was cast down from on high. The Twelve, including myself, and the Archangels were sealed, and we were given to understand before the conflict even came to full bloom, yet for many the answer was not given in full measure until four millennia later, upon the bloodstained Cross of Calvary. Until all

know the answer to the Question, until every righteous spirit, every human and every demon knows the answer, the Creation will groan because of sin.

The Question is: “Why?” Why was sin allowed to continue, that dread disease that invaded our harmony? Why was Lucifer not destroyed when he was struck to the earth by El Michael, his true form revealed by the light of the Kherev? Why was he allowed to tempt mankind, given so much “rope” as you say? The answer will come for all on the day when every knee shall bow to Prince Immanuel, but for the children of the light, the answer has always been available, and to receive it is freedom forever.

The angels have this Answer, but it cannot be so simply told. It must, by its very nature, be shown. And if you will come with me now, back to the foundations of this current age, the eyes of your faith will see for themselves.

* * * * *

At that time, the Ark had been sealed for eight days, and nothing had yet taken place. The mockers who had rejected the message that began in the days of Enoch had returned to their revelry. They had recovered from the unusual sight of animals and birds being gathered by unseen hands into the vessel of safety. Although the day had begun like every other for these lost souls, it would end unlike any day that had ever been.

The Seraphim and Cherubim covered the sky like a net, invisible to mortal eyes while the Principalities, Powers and my Thrones stood by in readiness. Seeing us descending, Lucifer and his four most trusted demons drew near, fearing that their promised end was coming to pass. Yet the Question must be answered for the prince of demons also, before he meets his end. He must see the answer for himself. At the command of El Michael, Za’afiel the Cherub rose up into the air to initiate the judgment of the wicked earth.

Not understanding, but not waiting to see the plan of Heaven unfold, Azazel barked orders to his followers, who soared up to oppose the unrolling of the scroll.

As the unholy host drew near, the Seraphim and Cherubim began a counter attack, and the rest of us followed in order. I, as chief of the Ophanim, and one of the many who received a new post during the reshuffling of government that the rebellion had caused, drew my sword to signal our joining the battle. As my kherev flared to life my voice rose in command, and I led my Thrones into the fray.

Angels had not seen battle like this for more than a thousand years. With the exception a few isolated conflicts, the true warfare had taken place in the form of influence. Satan understood that the earth had been given to him by Adam’s transgression, and although he had a large degree of authority over its development, our job as the guardians of freedom was to ensure that mankind was not fully shut off from divine grace. Though all men had inherited the depraved nature of Adam, they were nevertheless continuously bathed by the rays of Heaven. IaH sends this spiritual sunshine to both the good and the

evil, and His rain He scatters on the just and on the unjust alike; this undeserved gift, moral responsibility, was shed upon them by virtue of the promised Sacrifice.

On this day, however, spiritual weapons met in combat. There were confused souls on the earth, confused spirits in the air. The demons fought us with a ferocity born of anger, hatred, and an irrepressible sadness. It has been wondered by humans who have known something of our activities, “Why do they fight, knowing they are reserved for judgment?” Yet like unsanctified men who go mad with grief, destroying property and peace in their rages, so these former, tragic members of the Heavenly court fight – not against us, but against the fear and crushing certainty of oblivion that is never far from their minds.

One of the most bitter of these spirits is the fallen Power Typhon, who now goes by the blasphemous name “Sammael.” He was among those who was with Lucifer in the brief meeting with Michael before the fighting broke out. He had been with Lucifer from the beginning. Some have suggested that between himself and Turel, a fallen Cherub, they ensured the fall of the Archangel who, for a brief period, had seemed repentant. Yet once Azazel had made his choice, and sealed it by committing violence against the holy angels, he set in course a chain of events that resulted in my looking into the blazing eyes of my former colleague, and seeing therein only desolation.

I remember his words to me that day, as we hovered over the roof of the Ark, unseen by the hapless humans below, and unheard by the praying family within the wooden walls. “I will strip you of all four of your wings, Zadkiel.” I made no reply, except to give a brief sigh, and to feel once again the burning zeal that had fueled my activity when we cast the evil angels out of Eden.

Sammael and I were engaged in combat from the beginning of the conflict until very near the end. Though many angels fell to others, and new opponents were faced by the fallen and unfallen alike, our duel was the most consistent, for we were evenly matched. There were times when we were separated by the violence around us, yet we seemed to find each other on every such occasion.

The longest of these incidents, which was also the last time we were separated, took place when Puriel, one of my closest allies, soared past in pursuit of another creature. As he saw occasion, he threw his sparkling blade in our direction causing Sammael to retreat momentarily. I was unable to press this advantage, for the two Powers Kaspiel and Zaphkiel appeared to bar my way. This pair had been the scourge of the holy Host since their rebellion in Heaven. The chief of the Ko’achim and his next in command were among the most adept at manipulating Creation’s forces, and they almost matched the fallen Archangels in their ability to summon the natural elements to aid them in battle.

Kaspriel and Zaphkiel faced me, faint sparks passing between them, and then suddenly a surge of energy rippled through the air toward me as a large bolt of lightning. Of course, in the days before the flood there had been no rain, and the current water table was not in place. There were no storm clouds, and so this bright flash of light and its resulting

thunderclap was the first indication to the humans below that something was amiss. The rolling thunder, like the voice of IaH Himself, announced for the mortals that the days of probation had come to a dramatic end.

My response time was only just enough to get me out of the way of the distracting attack. Had I been hit, I would have been stunned long enough by the blending of spiritual and material forces to allow a well-timed blade to find its mark. As if this attack had been a floodgate breaking, the other demons began to use their perverted gifts against the Host. When a second blast of electricity was aimed my way by the twin Powers I did not evade it, but directed it through myself downward to the earth. The holy angels have known from the very first conflict with our anathemized brethren that we are not to use our knowledge of the Creation's forces for purposes of warfare.

The physical universe was created for physical beings, and to them was given dominion over all such elements. The demons, since the fall of Adam, have claimed the right to make use of them, however they had been using the spiritual counterparts of these weapons in like perverse manner long before Azazel summoned Eve nearer to the Tree of Knowledge.

The redirected bolt split one of the majestic trees of the antediluvian world, sending the humans who had been standing nearby running in terror. I did not have much time to consider their flight, however, as Kaspiel decided on a more direct approach. "You will not so easily dodge this," he said, bringing his burning blade up and thrusting it toward me with a mighty flap of his wings. I turned sideways to give him less of a target, and folded my wings in as tightly as I could. As a result I slipped downward, beneath his range, where I then opened my four feathered limbs to their fullest degree, instantly checking my descent.

Before Kaspiel could turn around, I was at his back with my sword ready. Zaphkiel was not idle during this time, but had been watching for an opportunity to attack. This he now did, even as I rose to Kaspiel's height. I was pinned between them, and I noted with a grimace that sparks were beginning to arc between the angels on either side of me. I knew they would either try to pass another bolt between themselves, and consequently through me, or they would make a shell of the charged particles, trapping me long enough for any passing demon to finish me off.

I threw my blade at Zaphkiel, judging him to be the slower of the two, however he easily deflected the spinning disk. I knew that by the time it reappeared in my hand, for all the good it would do me even then, whatever attack the Powers were preparing would have already been unleashed.

At just that moment, the Archangel Uriel in his lion aspect flashed past and raked at the arm of one of my opponents with his paw. The demon turned toward the retreating Arch-Throne, delaying his attack. Kaspiel, who saw his ally breaking off their assault, hissed in anger and dove in at me. I turned aside and met his kherv with my own, which had just returned to my possession. Beating back the fallen Power, I drove him off to seek a

weaker foe, and in the distance I saw Zaphkiel being pursued by Uriel, who had resumed his original, angelic shape.

Looking around, I began to send whispered communications to my Ophanim with the intention of unifying us, thus making a wall of protection around Za'afiel who was currently being assisted by the oracle Zephon. Puriel and Remiel, the latter being a Principality with whom I also spend much time, sped toward me just in time to alert me to an attack from below and behind, and after dealing with this the three of us made our way closer to Za'afiel and Zephon, fighting off those who were barring our progress.

As we drew near, I left the others to aid the two Cherubim, for I had noticed something even higher in the air, and moved upward to briefly contend with Leviathan himself.

The “Archangel ruin'd,” as your poets have called him, had made short work of an enormous number of angels, and with twelve shining wings wreathing his powerful form, and two blazing swords pulsing with dark energy, he was consistently cutting down every opponent who stood between himself and Za'afiel below. I knew that if he got much closer to the heart of the battle things would be desperate indeed and El Michael, along with the two Watchers Gabriel and Raziel, was occupied standing high above the Ark, preventing either direct attacks upon it by the fallen angels, or the glory of the Shekinah – which had been brought to earth that day – from consuming all the world.

Even as I approached him, I saw Lucifer launching an attack I had never seen before. Whirling his wings around him, and drawing himself into a ball, he spun in a way that is difficult to describe using the analogy of physical bodies I am utilizing. It was as if he spun in every direction at once, rotating himself on every possible axis, and sending off a shower of tiny wing fragments to strike those above, below and all around him.

The Virtue in front of me was struck in the chest, and the feather, like a tiny dart, vanished to reveal a small but deep wound. The light in the angel's glowing eyes faded as he fell from the air, a tendril of sparkling energy marking his descent. He was not the only one to be so affected by the attack, and Satan had cleared for himself a large patch of sky, smiling as he prepared to personally prevent the commissioned angel from summoning the Flood.

With time enough only to react, I flapped all four of my wings and then opened them to catch the air. This resulted in a sudden rise followed by an abrupt stop in mid air – face to face with Azazel. “Zadkiel,” he said to me, “Are you not afraid to fall also?”

The concept of fear was hardly a new one to angels. We had all felt it at the first breach in Heaven, and we were constantly beholding it in the humans afflicted by the doctrine of Lucifer, and later the doctrine of Cain. For ourselves, however, fear was swallowed up in love and duty – especially so for me that day, when I looked into the eyes of the one with whom fear had originated.

“I have not been infected by your condition for many a year,” I replied. “You once tried to make me afraid, but by IaH’s grace I escaped.” You have not been told much of my own experience with Lucifer during the war in Heaven, and that is a tale for another day, but for now it is enough to know that I was familiar with the fallen angels’ tactics. When flattery and persuasion fail, they will turn to threats – using doubts to inspire fear, and offering safety from such imagined evils by an acceptance of their true, current evil.

When Lucifer and I had fought in Heaven he had defeated me, although my sword partner Raziel was able to get the best of him for a time. But the memory brought me no anxiety; I had a job to do, and here I was. “I will not let you prevent Za’afiel,” I said, flying nearer still. I expected the Archangel to smile with his customary self-assuredness, but he only nodded as if in deep thought, and then advanced with his kherevs slashing in my direction.

With my solitary blade, I was outnumbered even in single combat. Lucifer’s speed also made the fact that I had four wings something of a disadvantage. I spent much of the time making sure that none of my limbs were in easy striking range of my opponent’s weapons, and with the sky around us still clear from the arch demon’s unique attack and other members of the Host occupied with other enemies, I was essentially on my own. Love and duty had once conquered my fears, and these two virtues now sustained me against the tempter. Aside from his arms, each of which wielded blades blazing with dark fire, his twelve wings continued to be vital concerns, and from his mouth issued flames similar in nature to the blasts of fire employed by the fallen Principalities and Powers.

In every battle with which Lucifer was associated, we saw some new trick, some new perversion of Heaven’s gifts to the fallen Cherub. Where once sweet songs had issued forth from that golden throat, there now came forth threats, insults, and fiery destruction. I longed to be doing battle with Sammael once more, who had been my steady companion in combat before this lengthy interlude. In an unfortunate irony I saw that Sammael had indeed spotted me, and having finished with his most recent opponent, he was rising through the air to give his master support.

By that time the globe of space that Azazel cleared had shrunk by the natural course of battling angels moving about, and so as we fought we had to keep an eye on what was going on around us. I knocked aside Lucifer’s left blade and swung back around to meet his right, when I felt a sting in my upper left wing from Sammael’s kherev. It was not a serious wound, but it was severe enough that I would no longer be able to effectively dodge the assaults of even my initial opponent, much less the combined efforts of both apostate Archangels.

Fortunately, it appeared as if Sammael’s joining us had been a design of Lucifer, for when the fallen Power approached, he and his master exchanged a brief look and my former foe dove downward to continue his advance on Za’afiel.

Sammael and I circled each other. Both of us had been in several battles since our last meeting, and he had taken some damage. I was relatively unhurt except for the slash he

had placed in my wing. Flying nearer, Sammael began a series of swift attacks, each of which I deflected or avoided. A second flurry came my way, and again I was able to keep myself from being injured. After the third set of attacks, which also met with no success, Typhon drew back and regarded me carefully.

I knew he was considering the fact that I had attempted no counter attack. And even when he left a gap in his defenses, I had not pressed my advantage. When he paused between assaults, I had merely awaited the next opportunity to defend myself. I had come to realize only a short time before that Sammael and I were on just about the same level of skill. If we continued going as we had been, neither of us would be able to truly help our comrades, except that each of us was keeping a powerful warrior in check.

“Have you grown tired of fighting me?” Sammael taunted. “It is not so interesting, if you do not fight back.” The truth is, I had been paying more attention to the injuries Sammael had sustained in the battles he had fought before this, our latest meeting. Under ordinary circumstances we were perfectly matched – but with small, glowing wounds on both his arms, and a glittering scrape on his right side, it was obvious that the Archangelic Power was compensating for a slight loss of mobility, and coping with a fair amount of spiritual pain.

I did not respond, which further infuriated my enemy, and he charged in again with another rapid combination of swings and thrusts. With his last attack, I knocked his sword upward, and as his arm rose I saw him wince. The slash on his side widened, and he pulled back with a snarl.

My opponent moved in again, and this time as he completed his fifth set of attacks, I knocked his sword out to the side and proceeded to unleash upon him an innovation of my own. Shifting suddenly closer, I hit Sammael with each of my four wings in rapid sequence, turning my body in order to maintain my stability and to bring each appendage to bear. One, two, three, four, five; each of my hits connected with his form, the last of these being a blow from my free left hand to his injured right side.

The stunned Power raised his sword in defense long after he had been hit, and as I purposely pulled back to put some distance between us, he shook off the immediate effects and drew his blade back to mount another offensive. When he did so, the weight of his injuries caused him to delay for just an instant, but it was an instant that did not go unnoticed.

I saw my opportunity and quickly threw my blade at him. As the kherev whirled through the air it glowed brighter, and as it sped along it assumed the appearance of a glowing disc of energy. Sammael parried the weapon easily, and thinking he had finally tempted me to make a mistake, he moved in closer to dispatch me. I had been anticipating this, however, and I pushed forward with my wings, reaching up to grab his descending arm. Weakened by both the injury to his side and my recent attack, Sammael was helpless in my grip. Continuing to hold his sword arm tightly with my left hand, I reached out with

my right into open air. With a hiss my kherev returned to me, shooting out like a ray of fire from my palm.

I closed my eyes to avoid seeing the expression in Typhon's face as I cut into him with my burning blade. I heard him grunt, and I felt him loosen his grip on his weapon and begin to fall away. I continued to hold him aloft for just an instant, with my eyes still closed, but then I let him go and heard the faint crackling of his open wound fading further still... as he plunged toward the earth.

"Ah, Sovereign," I lamented, "How long must this warfare continue?"

We had been witnesses to Lucifer's great rebellion in Heaven. We had seen a third of our mighty brothers fall to the sophistry of the adversary. We had met our darkened counterparts on the field of battle above the Heavenly plane. We had seen them cast to earth in shame as the true spirit of the rebel was revealed. Further, we had seen Satan corrupt the crown jewel of creation, mankind made in the image of IaH. Eve, and then Adam, Cain and then his son Enoch; all of these had fallen prey to the terrible consequences of that one great rebellion.

For a millennium and a half, we had watched the progress of mankind. We had seen two classes of humans arise – the noble sons of Seth, and the corrupt progeny of Cain. Tempted by the promise of worldly pleasures, the Sethites had failed to maintain their separation from the corrupting influences of evil men and women, and their hope of Heaven was compromised. One by one the shadows spread over the earth, until there was but one family left alive that was faithful to the principles of Heaven.

The hope of humanity was now preserved in a tiny wooden box below me, only a few feet from where the crumpled body of Typhon lay motionless. As I raised my eyes from the sad scene, I saw a new enemy before me. Revachiel, a fallen Principality, was regarding me with cold eyes.

"I have been meaning to try something," he said mysteriously, and then without another word he drew back his arm and threw his kherev my way.

I prepared myself for the whirling disc, calculating the timing of my block. Before my astonished eyes, however, the glowing shape elongated in mid air, reforming itself as a long, thin, glowing cylinder tipped with a wicked-looking point.

The speed of the weapon was also greatly increased by its change in size, and before I had an opportunity to time my deflection it was upon me. By the grace of IaH I instinctively moved my head to the side. The javelin whistled past, only to bury itself in the form of another holy angel behind me. The unexpected victim was as surprised as I at the turn of events, yet he did not have much time to consider the matter; unconsciousness quickly overtook him as the evil spear vanished.

Revachiel gave a satisfied smile, and drew back his arm to receive his returning kherev. This new power that the demons had discovered would be put to effective use later in our history against both angels and humans. They are the “*fiery darts of the wicked*” to which your Scriptures refer.

Fortunately, this particular battle allowed the reprobate Ikari no opportunity to continue his experiments. As his kherev rematerialized in his hand in the form of a sword, a recently– freed Za’afiel’s cry split the air, cutting through the noise of war. Instantly, every blade was lowered, and every conflict was forgotten as the earth gave a mighty shudder... and the cataclysm began.

The holy Principalities, Powers and Dominions scattered around the globe to preserve the planet against the violence of the disruption. The rest of us, demonic and holy alike, watched the terrified reactions of the humans below. As the land collapsed in on itself, or exploded upwards in huge jets of boiling water, mortal bodies were flung back and forth as if they weighed nothing at all. Scores of people who were near the Ark rushed toward it, only to be met with a surge of black water that swept them helplessly away.

The expensive adornments, the elaborate clothing, the complicated and ingenious devices that had been designed by the brilliant minds of the humans – none of these things were valued more than a rock, or a tree, or anything that afforded a handhold. Anything that was not being whipped along by the storm surge was a welcome refuge, but the purpose of the judgment was to destroy, and no temporary shelter could preserve what the Almighty had ordained for dissolution.

Within the Ark, Noah’s family offered anxious prayers. The main window of the vessel was shut as soon as the water had lifted it off the ground, and so the humans within could not see the watery death to which their fellow men were going.

For forty days, water poured down upon the earth, and water roared up from the depths of the planet as if there would never be an end. Even after this initial deluge, the level continued to rise for some time, and soon there was nothing left alive outside the ark that once had the breath of life. When the waters had calmed, leaving the earth completely covered, the Host withdrew to Heaven, leaving the demons to the reward of their labor. For many days the angels had held their peace and their places, witnesses according to the Presence of the Most High. But now there was nothing more to see.

Shomeriel and Mageniel, the two Cherubim who had once guarded the Tree of Life, were appointed guardianship of the Ark, to ensure that the demons could not trouble them directly during their journey. Much happened within the vessel, however, that was based upon their more subtle influences. As it stood, the demons looked out over the uniformly wet landscape, and they sulked.

Lucifer's glowing eyes hovered above the waters, beholding the desolation he had instigated. It was not long, however, before he shook off all passing remnants of guilt, and even sadness for his own sure future. The fallen Archangel turned his attention to the human beings within the safety of the divinely designed vessel, and his brilliant, evil mind began to plan. As he had promised El Michael long before the flood, the War was not over yet.