



THE LAZARUS PROJECTS

by

John W. Cowart



**Cowart Communications
Jacksonville, Florida**

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AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is a work of fiction. With the exception of well-known historical figures, all characters are imaginary. I have attempted to portray the events narrated accurately. However, in the places where this story touches actual historical events, I urge each reader to consult the original documents personally.

----- John Cowart

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A LULU PRESS BOOK

**Dedicated
to
Those Who Have Not Seen**

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And he sendeth forth two of his disciples,
and saith unto them, Go ye into the city,
and there shall meet you a man bearing a
pitcher of water: follow him...

And his disciples went forth, and came
into the city, and found as he had said
unto them...

--- Mark: 14:13 - 16

And in the morning, as they passed by,
they saw the fig tree dried up from the
roots. And Peter calling to remembrance
saith unto him, "Master, behold, the fig
tree which thou cursedst is withered
away."

And Jesus answering saith unto them,
"Have faith in God."

--- Mark 11:20 - 22



Jesus Christ once caught 153 fish.

If the four Gospels can be believed, he also changed 120 gallons of water into wine for a party.

If the old accounts are true, he restored sight to ten blind men; cleansed 11 lepers; and -- in two separate incidents -- fed 9,000 hungry people.

He raised two dead children and one adult. He cured three lame people and restored speech to six mutes. He healed three paralytics, two men and one woman. He forgave a multitude of sins and cast out a whole legion of demons.

He cursed one single fig tree.

That lone tree played a small, but significant, part in the strange adventure undertaken by Miami businessman Eli Rosen, CEO of Wienstien Breweries, bottlers of Iron Mill Beer, a wholly owned subsidiary of Wienstien Enterprises.

Here's what happened:

Lazarus Wienstien's grandson died a horrible death.

The young man was wealthy. He did not have to work but he held a summer job with Miami's utility company, Florida Power and Light, so he could learn more about the practical side of his chosen field, industrial electronics.

During his summer break from M.I.T., Sammy Wienstien had proved himself to be a capable worker. He had a gift for fitting in with the less educated men. At least, they all spoke well of him after his death. After work, he had often joined them at the Fuse Box Bar across Hayes Street from the utility yard.

He exhibited a mechanical dexterity seldom found among theoretical engineers. Sweaty, filthy underground jobs never bothered him.

The day he died, Sammy was working with Pete Daily down a manhole at 7th and Webster. They repaired a three-phase pump in the underground lift station.

When they quit for lunch, Sammy started up the ladder first.

He was half way out of the manhole when a red 1993 Ford Fairlane driven by 48-year-old Lolly Mae Simpson of 1734 Webster drove through the orange cones, past the MEN WORKING signs and over the manhole.

She was Chatting on her cell phone with her friend, Emily, and swatting her grandson in the back seat and never even felt the bump.

The Lazarus Projects

Caught between the bumper of the Fairlane and the steel rim of the manhole, Sammy was pinched apart about four inches above his navel.

The upper portion of the body, hung up beneath the car, scraped along the pavement for six blocks until Mrs. Simpson parked in front of her home.

His legs, kicking spastically and trailing intestines, fell back down the manhole on top of Daily, who was just starting up the ladder. Daily fought and cursed the flailing legs until he saw what they were.

He fainted and fell back into the sludge at the bottom of the hole.

News of the accident reached Lazarus Wienstien at his Collins Avenue penthouse three hours after his own doctor told him that the tests confirmed that his insides were eaten up with cancer.

Seventy-four year old Wienstien was the last survivor of his family. With his multi-million dollar brewery fortune and his financial power rendered impotent by the stark reality of death -- both for his family name and for him personally -- Lazarus, for the first time since he turned forty, felt like a very old man.

Surrounded by luxury, he sat weak, frustrated, tearless and afraid.

His mind had built an empire from nothing, but now he could not think. Lazarus Wienstien was long accustomed to exploring

alternatives and weighing various courses of action to arrive at a conclusion. But faced with death he saw no alternatives.

Unless...

Damn it all, he thought, Surely a man with millions at his disposal can do something... There has got to be some alternative... Why should I have to die? What can I do? Spiritualism? No, they are all fakes... Or are they? There was some woman doctor on TV, she specialized in dying patients. She seemed to really know what she was talking about. Why the hell didn't I pay more attention to what she was saying? Science must be able to give me some alternative to death... I'm not too late... I'll have a little time to work something out. Get experts. Start research... I need to know all there is to know about death... No! Hell no, not about death, about life -- survival after death. I've got to continue. To keep going -- or to come back -- or something. There's got to be a way to beat this thing.

Lazarus picked up the white imitation French provincial phone from an end table, punched out a number, and said, "Eli, Sammy's been killed. Come right over. And Eli, give everything you're working on to an assistant. Let them clear your desk. I have an assignment that will require all your attention. We're going to do something about death."

Eli Rosen had followed his friend Lazarus right to the top.

The Lazarus Projects

Once, the two of them had worked together unloading freight cars of barley for a Pittsburgh brewery. Now, Lazarus owned a chain of breweries among his other holdings and Rosen acted as his CEO.

Eli, sixteen years younger than Lazarus, had steel gray hair and a trim physique which he maintained from his box car days. He lived on an \$1,800,000 Palm Valley estate and collected antique cars as a hobby. His talent for implementing the profit-making ideas of his friend -- in spite of construction delays, union problems, taxes and inflation -- made him invaluable to Wienstien Enterprises.

Eli could certainly have established his own business ventures with great success, but he didn't; he owed his life to Lazarus.

During the early days of the Vietnam War, Iron Mill Brewery landed a government contract to supply beer to military post exchanges. Iron Mill Beer came in a chubby green bottle with a red-orange blast furnace and the slogan, A COOL ONE WHEN YOU'RE HOT, on the label.

When Iron Mill had first started as a local brew for the consumption of thirsty steel workers, Lazarus Wienstien himself had been unloading freight cars.

But while working his way up to freight receiving manager, Lazarus quietly bought stock in the company.

As wartime needs catapulted production, the chubby green Iron Mill bottles came to litter the world from Pacific atolls and oriental rice paddies to Germany's Black Forest. The brewery went on a 24-hour schedule. In 1968, Lazarus hired Eli along with other under-age boys to make up for drafted manpower. By some fluke of the draft board, Lazarus was never called up even though he was eligible.

One stifling July night an accident happened which bound the two men in life-long friendship. It may explain Eli's loyalty to Lazarus.

The trains' hopper cars, bringing in loads of barley, hops and other raw materials, parked in long lines on the brewery's industrial siding. From there, they were shunted into a long, corrugated-tin shed which had both ends covered by black-out curtains.

Inside the hot shed, dust always hung thick in the air giving the arc lights murky orange halos. The men worked striped to the waist, and sweat turned the dust on their bodies to mud. Then, more sweat cut rivulets through the mud giving them the appearance of brown and white zebra-men.

To unload the grain, a crewman hooked a steel cable on to a freight car and the men wound the car into the shed by turning a large ratchet wheel with hickory handles. They stopped the car over a pit in the floor where a trigger snapped open the

The Lazarus Projects

trap doors in the bottom of the hopper car. Then the barley grain poured by gravity flow into the pit where a large auger moved it to storage bins.

This industrial auger was a two-foot wide metal tube three hundred feet long with a large-gauge center screw running the length of it. This screw, and others like it all over the brewery, was turned by a powerful diesel engine. As the screw turned, it pushed the grain to the other end of the tube from where the auger picked it up beneath the freight cars.

The auger constantly spilled a small residue of grain in the unloading pit, and in damp weather this mash soured and bred maggots.

As new men on the job, Eli and another boy had the chore of shoveling out the stinking pits and hauling away the squirming sludge in wheelbarrows.

On this particular night, Lazarus was working his third shift in a row. The two new boys were cleaning a pit while the rest of the crew took a break. Outside, a donkey engine maneuvered a new line of cars into position. The engineer misjudged his distance and nudged a loaded car into the receiving shed.

From his glass-enclosed office above the tracks, Lazarus saw the car roll forward, trip the trigger starting the auger, and, with a cloud of choking dust, begin to pump tons of grain onto the two boys in the pit. Yelling for the night foreman, he jumped down onto

the receiving floor. Dashing to the pit, he grabbed a sweaty hand projecting from the edge. He held on while noise, heat, orange light and brown dust surged around him. The weight of the grain pulled him half over the edge of the pit.

Finally he tugged the gasping spitting Eli out of the hole while under ground beneath them, the inexorable auger screw chopped the other boy into precise eight-inch chunks.

Later, the ambulance crew and accident investigators wrote up their reports and collected gory chunks in a rubber bag.

When things calmed down, Lazarus gave the rest of the crew the night off. But after they left, he and Eli opened valves and moved the bloody mash into mixing vats by themselves – with wartime shortages a whole carload of mash cost too much to waste.

Then the two of them went to an after-hours place for a beer.

By the time the war was over, Lazarus owned Iron Mill Brewery. He realized that many people prefer local beers to the national brands. But local breweries lack a broad financial base to compete with the big companies. So as his holdings grew, he kept the local names, but ran the various local breweries as a single chain using a mass-production system. Soon, he bought farms to produce his own raw materials, and farm machinery firms to till his crops. He owned

The Lazarus Projects

truck lines to transport the raw materials and to distribute the finished product. He expanded from beer into potato chips, pop corn, pretzels and salted nuts -- anything to make people thirsty for his beer. Before he found out about his grandson's death and his own cancer, he had acquired fabulous riches and property.

Now he would lose it all.

With Sammy dead (pinched in half and scraped along city streets), Lazarus had no other family member to be his heir.

Death takes all.

But Lazarus did not want to die, he intended to do something about death.

Just what does he think can he do? Eli thought as his chauffeur rushed him from his office to Lazarus' penthouse suite. *What can any of us do but accept it?*

The setting sun behind Eli as the limousine crossed the Julia Tuttle Causeway glowed a dusty hazy orange through the exhaust fumes of thousands of rush hour cars. The color of the sky reminded him of that night in the shed.

The simple funeral was over.

The two pieces of Samuel Eleazar Wienstien, reunited in a plain unadorned wooden coffin, were buried in the raw gaping earth.

The prayers -- *El Maley Rachamin* and the *Kaddish* -- had been prayed. Lazarus wore a partially mended rip in his coat, the *Kriyah*, an external scar of his internal, slow-healing grief.

The meal of recuperation, eaten in a near stupor, was over. The week of *Shivah* passed with friends calling on Lazarus and waiting silently for him as *Oner*, the Mourner, to speak first; to grieve for his dead; to summon memories of his grandson.

During this sad time Lazarus also remembered his wife, cancer -- his sons, long dead in Korea -- his daughter, a motorcycle accident with her boyfriend -- his daughter-in-law, Sammy's mother, dead in childbirth. Dead. Dead. Dead. All of them dead.

Now Sammy, the joy of his old age who would have been heir to his fortune, who would have carried on the family name -- Dead!

They say you live on in your children, Lazarus thought. *But not me. There are no more children. Death is the only reality. Now, me too -- Cancer. Tubes up my nose. My bladder. My veins. Then dead like the rest of them. What hope is there?.*

Once they were finally alone in Lazarus' condominium, he tried to explain his feelings, his pain, his plans to Eli:

"Someone must be actively doing something about death," he said. "I want you

The Lazarus Projects

to find out exactly what is being done. There must be some way to beat it."

"Lazarus, My Friend," Eli said patting his hand, trying to comfort. "You must accept this as God's will. You can't bring back the dead. You, yourself can't live forever. Death is inevitable. It is the Almighty's decree of man's mortality. It must be accepted."

"Nonsense! I've heard that stuff all my life but it can't be true. There must be some alternative... Look, what I want to do is find out what is being done about death and the life after -- if there is such a thing. What studies are being made? What experiments are going on? I want all the information. I want to know the truth, not mere theological speculation. I want concrete scientific fact. I ... I need to know and I can afford to find out."

Lazarus rubbed his hands together and continued, "I want to devote all my resources to investigating life after death. Approach the study with an entirely open mind. Look into every possibility -- no matter how remote it seems. Investigate any hopeful lead, but find out for sure where the truth lies. I've got to know."

Eli said, "I think you are mistaken to worry over these things. Relax. Let your doctors take care of you ... But... Ah Shit! I will do my best to do what you want. I'll leave the business affairs to our fine young men -- they think they can run things better

without us anyhow. We may have to step in before they run us into bankruptcy. But I'll try to find out what you need to know. You rest. I'll take care of everything. I'll do what I can."

Later that afternoon, Eli paced his office organizing his thoughts about what steps he would need to take to satisfy his friend's demands.

Eli's spacious office was carpeted in a thick wine red material and the walls were soft gray. Matching original lithographs of James Audubon's *Owls and Eagles* hung beside the broad mahogany desk.

Behind the desk, a floor-to-ceiling glass wall revealed Biscayne Bay, nineteen stories below. A busy executive could pause in his work and watch not-so-busy executives criss-cross the bay in their pleasure boats.

The red leather desktop held a single telephone, a blank yellow legal pad, a silver pen and a photograph of Eli's wife and grown children in a silver frame. Hidden in a walnut credenza to the left, it's screensaver flickering through partially open doors, was a computer system Bill Gates himself would envy. When the light struck just right, a visitor to Eli's office might notice a well-worn path, twenty feet long, running back and forth in front of the glass wall. Eli liked to pace while he thought.

As he considered how to go about the task Lazarus assigned him, he ranged back

The Lazarus Projects

and forth in front of the window unaware of the bay outside or the *Owls and Eagles* on the wall. Occasionally, he would stride over to the desk, jot down a few ideas on the legal pad – he had never really learned to use that computer and, although he'd never admit it, he was really a bit afraid of the thing. Ignoring most of its features, in reality, he treated it as a very expensive typewriter.

He'd jot ideas on the legal pad in bold script under the heading LAZARUS' PROJECTS, then resume pacing.

In two hours he had decided on some of the Lazarus projects. He picked up the phone and began dialing himself – no secretary for this endeavor.

He called his son first.

Benjamin Rosen, a source of both joy and embarrassment to his parents, was trim and handsome with thick black curls. Born late in their marriage, he resembled what his parents imagined would be the very image of a young King David.

During his sophomore year he was a finalist for the US gymnastic team to the Olympics and he held a brown belt in karate. He had been an honor roll student in computer science and business administration until he abruptly dropped out of college in the second semester of his junior year.

Eli felt ashamed about the reason for Ben's quitting college.

Before this happened, Eli often listened to his business contemporaries bemoan the fate of their children. He felt confident that his son would remain a model young man and never get mixed up in drugs or motorcycle gangs or any other facet of counterculture rebellion... However, Ben did get mixed up with a girl, Inez Freedman. On campus, this girl introduced Ben into a group of her friends who called themselves "The Jesus Jews". Ben quit school and traveled around to various churches and synagogues, playing his guitar and singing about what a sinner he used to be and how he was now converted.

This upset Eli.

Ben's mother was also frantic.

What's a parent to do?

If the truth be known, Eli, who observed the essential traditions but was not overly religious, was honestly more disturbed by the boy's dropping out of business administration than by this religious nonsense.... But they had raised their son as a man to be proud of, with their own religious and moral values. Now, he seemed to be turning from them and their lifestyle to make a fool of himself. Their Rabbi advised family counseling and patience with the boy, pointing out other crazy fads young people go through these days.

At one time, Eli and his wife considered hiring one of those special agencies which stage judicious kidnappings

and deprogram young people who are drawn into cults. But fortunately, Ben and *That Inez Girl* broke up, and the boy dropped out of some of the group's more objectionable activities and joined a Methodist church.

The men from the deprogramming agency were anxious to go ahead with their agenda. However, they warned the Rosens of a tremendous court battle with the Methodists, who would not admit to being a cult with their members subject to kidnapping and deprogramming.

The agency men were sure that Ben's case would establish a precedent which would result in a lot of new business for them. Eli sensed that their concern was for their business, not for his son, and decided to follow the Rabbi's advice and wait for Ben to come to his senses and outgrow this fad.

"If young people today had to go through what we went through right after the Depression..., " he told his wife.

So the Rosen household lived in a state of cautious truce.

In all too many tense late-night discussions, one of Ben's main arguments in trying to make his parents see the light was his belief that Jesus had risen from the tomb and had come in some spiritual way to inhabit the lives of his followers. Eli, of course, knew that if indeed there had ever really been such a person as Jesus, then he was dead and if the tomb was empty, it was

empty because the disciples must have moved the body.

Father and son argued long and often. Their arguments grew heated on this subject with Ben quoting obscure trivia from Scripture and Eli pointing to the history of Christian churches which were manifestly *not* inhabited by any kind of benevolent spirit -- especially not where Jews were concerned.

These discussions usually ended with Ben frustrated because of his parents' blindness, while Eli and Sarah despaired because of their son's craziness in throwing over a promising career to dabble in itinerant evangelism.

Therefore, indirectly, it was Ben's involvement with the Methodist cult that caused Eli to even consider the fifth project on his list. He could have written it off as not worth investigating – but he didn't.

"Common sense eliminates many of the myths and outright frauds connected with an afterlife," Eli scribbled on the yellow pad. "There are, however, several areas worth investigating."

His evaluation of his task for Lazarus was to sift the body of present information, to eliminate the un-provable, to organize and finance areas of research which appear to be getting somewhere, to initiate new areas of study, and to come up with answers about the possibility and nature of any life after death.

The Lazarus Projects

He filled page after page on the yellow pad with jotted ideas.

Some were to work better than he expected.

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The two men lounged on the Atlantic side of the high balcony. The sun setting in the west behind them gave a pink and orange reflected tinge to the upper edge of clouds out over the ocean. At the far horizon, darkness blended the gray lower portions of the clouds with the water, making sky and sea indistinguishable. A few late bathers were packing up their things, but for the most part the beach was deserted.

"Well, let's have it. What have you come up with so far?" Lazarus said, anchoring the edge of a fluttering napkin with his glass.

"This is complex; it's going to take a little while to explain, so bear with me," Eli said.

"Over the past two weeks, I have talked with Rabbis, ministers, physicists, Ph.Ds, mediums and all sorts of experts," he said. "The thrust of their thinking and work seems to be toward either physically prolonging life, or gracefully coming to terms with death, both for the dying man and his survivors."

The Lazarus Projects

"In fact, the survivors seem to get the most attention; most deathbed scenarios are engineered for their benefit.

"As to the question of survival after death, the answer is either no or yes.

"If the answer is no, then this life is all that there is.

"If the answer is yes, then there appear to be three possibilities:

"Either the individual personality goes on as himself; or the individual personality is essentially lost to be reborn as a different person - reincarnation; or the soul is the seed of some kind of altogether different kind of being which is unrelated to this whole scheme of things... The rabbinical teaching is that God can be trusted to do the wisest and best thing for us in death, as in life. Live your best, knowing that the Almighty can be relied on to take you through the unknowable..."

"Bullshit!" Lazarus said interrupting his friend. "Look, Eli, I know that God is God and all that. But I -- me, personally -- I'm dying. My father took years to die -- my sons were killed six thousand miles away without my even knowing about it till weeks afterward. Letters were still arriving from them even after I knew they were killed.

"Edith's cancer took her within months after we found out about it. And now Sammy... Damn it! It doesn't make sense. I don't care about the official attitude of the

scholars. They speculate on things till they die. You said yourself that most of the claptrap they come up with is engineered for the benefit of the survivors. Well, I'm in no mood to pass out gracefully with a minimum of inconvenience to the living.

"At first, I couldn't believe that I could be dying -- it seemed impossible. But now I'm mad. Someone before now ought to have studied or invented something or done something before to beat this thing. They haven't. But I will. So, aside from the metaphysics, what have you found out and what course of action do you recommend?"

Eli rose from his chair and began pacing the length of the balcony. "I think that if you are determined to pursue this matter we should initiate five specific projects in three general areas. Of course, as new data comes to light, we can expand into other promising fields. In view of the time factor for you, we should avoid new construction; I've already purchased some existing facilities but I can halt any project that you don't think will be profitable".

"OK, go ahead," Lazarus said.

"The first general area is primarily medical. There are three projects which I want you to consider even though they may sound rather far fetched." Eli paused watching the reflection of light on the wing of a drifting sea gull far below him.

"This first project is called cryogenics. At the time of your death, you can have the

The Lazarus Projects

blood drained from your veins. Then your arteries and lungs are saturated in glycerol to prevent cellular damage. You are placed in a capsule of liquid nitrogen at 320 degrees below zero and stored until sometime in the future when science hopefully discovers a way to revive you and cure your disease. The procedures for doing the freezing have already been worked out by a society in New York, but no telling if or when someone works out a way to thaw out the people fixed like this. You're gambling in the hope that future scientific advancement will outstrip the present and come up with an answer to death... I can arrange this for you with a few phone calls."

"Do it." said Lazarus staring at the ice in his drink. "What else?"

"In the same vein, there are banks where your sperm can be frozen and later used to artificially inseminate young women in need of such a service -- in a way you live on through your progeny... but I'm sure that young women can be found who are willing to bypass the use of a sperm bank, like King David and Abishag..."

"I know the story," Lazarus interrupted, "A beautiful young girl for a dying old man. First Kings, isn't it? But that's out for me. I've been sterile for years. Caught something from a young lady once right after the war... Might even have been V-J night..."

Eli smiled remembering his own celebration that night. He recalled vividly the

scene where, on a downtown street, he saw a girl leaning over the back of a bus stop bench with her skirt tossed up over her waist. She waved a US flag on a stick and gave a V signal to passing traffic as a fully dressed army reservist pumped frantically at her from behind...

"The second project we should begin is in the study of geriatrics," Eli said. "In Vilcambah, Ecuador, in Georgian, Russia, and in a few other places in the world, a good many of the peasants live to incredible old ages. Some of them live to over 150 years. cursory investigations have been made which indicate that altitude and diet have something to do with it. But no one knows exactly why these individuals live so long.

"It seems that the very cells of our bodies can reproduce themselves just so many times. Cells have been cultured from embryos and kept under ideal conditions but they only continue to multiply for about 50 generations no matter how well they were cared for. This is called the Hay-Flick Limit, after the tissue-culture expert who discovered the factor. Death seems to be built into our cell structure, but these Ecuadorian peasants seem to have overcome even the Hay-Flick Limit to some extent.

"Sometimes individual organs can be functionally preserved in a chemical culture. Japanese biologists have kept a cat's brain

The Lazarus Projects

functioning in a bell jar for 28 years. I doubt that you'd want them to try that with you, but it is open if you want to ...

Eli unfolded a computer printout from his breast pocket, glanced at it and continued, "Whatever else you decide, I propose that we fly some of these people with great longevity to a research center here and examine every facet of their life, including cellular structures, to see what enables them to beat the Hay-Flick Limit. We can see if that factor can be transferred to others. I have recruiters getting some of these people from Ecuador and Hunza, but there doesn't seem to be much hope of recruiting Georgians. I'm hiring the best researchers away from every university and lab in the world to see if perhaps some cellular extract can be derived from these people which would give you longevity."

By now, the ocean front was dark. Far out, the lights of a tanker beating its way south against the Gulf Stream twinkled across the water. Eli stopped pacing and sat down facing his friend.

"The third project I recommend is in the area of resuscitating people who have been declared clinically dead.

"This involves intensive interviews with terminally ill patients right up to the point of death, then, after their vital signs have stopped, using every possible effort to revive them and see what they experienced. Here we may be on shaky legal ground. So I

suggest that this investigation be kept as quiet as possible.

"Counseling interviews and resuscitation of the dying happens all the time at hospitals all over -- you know, a man's heart stops for a short time and he's revitalized by electric shock therapy -- but any information about how he felt to be clinically dead is gathered in a way that seems haphazard to me. Although some psychiatrists are looking into these things seriously, it seems to me that most regard this area as only a curiosity.

"From the results that have been tabulated, it seems that the person who dies on the table and is reclaimed seems fully aware of the moment of his death. He seems to float above the operating table watching the doctors and nurses at work on his body. He listens to their conversations with a peaceful detachment for a while. Then he becomes aware of his whole life before him. Apparently this is not a series of scenes like a movie, but the whole life spread out simultaneously like a vast diorama.

"It's not too clear what happens next, but apparently the person makes some kind of moral judgment about his own life, while some religious figure or some dead person that he has known asks him questions. This supposedly gives way to some fantastically beautiful place. When these people become aware of being resuscitated, they are

The Lazarus Projects

reluctant to leave their visions and will fight against coming back.

"Of course, other people have visions of being dropped screaming and kicking into Hell.

"It may be that the dying see what they expect to see. Or the visions may be caused by the drugs or anesthetics used on the dying. They may be hallucinating because of panic. Nobody knows. There are so many variables.

"So, I'd advise that we set up a hospice, that's an institution specially geared to handle terminal patients, where they can be the most comfortable, where everything is the very best. There, we can have a team of psychiatrists analyze them all the way through death and every possible resuscitation."

"Do it," Lazarus said.

"The next area that we should get into is more complex," Eli said.

"It involves various psychic phenomena which I feel we should investigate in our own laboratories under controlled conditions. In the Philippine Islands there are men who claim to perform psychic surgery and remove diseased tissue by reaching their hands into the patient without anesthesia or actually cutting the skin. All over, there are also mediums, spirit channelers and spiritualists of various kinds we can investigate. A good many mediums

and psychic surgeons have been exposed as fakes but, who knows, there may be one somewhere who's honest. Most of them use magicians' tricks and slight of hand to fleece the gullible. They produce some chicken guts out of their sleeves and claim to be wonderworkers. Or the mediums come up with a spirit message from a make-believe person the investigators have manufactured just for the test. Their miracle is to produce a message from a departed relative who never even existed.

"Even with all that sort of thing against them, I'm willing to do more research. I'm in the process of getting some of these people together to check them out.

"I don't expect much from spiritualism, but there may be some evidence found in a related area which is known as hypnotic regression. The idea with that is to hypnotize a subject in order to help him remember his past more clearly. Then to move him further back in memory until he is -- say five years old -- then take him back by stages to his birth, even to memories of being inside the womb. Then regress him even further to pick up memories of some past life he may have led. This process supposedly proves the theory of reincarnation but there are several indications that the subjects give out fantasies and amateur dramatics instead of valid information."

"I thought this stuff was pretty well proved," Lazarus said.

The Lazarus Projects

"Not at all.

"For instance, the subjects usually claim to have lived before as someone exotic -- an Egyptian queen, a great general, an Indian chief -- no one ever remembers being a garbage collector in a former life.

"Then also, subjects sometimes produce what they subconsciously think the hypnotist wants to hear. Even if the subject accurately reports what he remembers, it may not hint at a previous life but these memories may be genetically transmitted in the brain cells."

"You mean a kind of racial memory?"

"Yes. That's right. You remember what happened to one of your ancestors, not to yourself in some earlier life. These memories during hypnotically induced regression may even be the result of some kind of thought transference.

"It seems as though a lot of people have dabbled at this kind of inquiry, but I think we should get some top ranking psychiatrists together, give them the best possible facilities and have them do an intensive study of all these psychic phenomena. There is so much fraud and so many variable interpretations for the observable facts that they will have to sort out a whole can of worms before they can get anywhere. If they can clear up the mumbo-jumbo and outright fraud in any of these fields, they may be able to come up

with some concrete information. I think it's worth a try."

"So do I. Let's move inside. I'm getting chilly... You can tell me about the next project in the living room."

The tv was on in the living room tuned to an NBC news program. The anchorwoman reported that three Israeli soldiers had been tried and acquitted of the charge of murder in machine-gunning a band of Arabs during a rock-throwing spree in Gaza. The Palestinian community, incited by the verdict, responded by sending children onto highway overpasses to drop bricks onto passing cars. "Thus far, no children have been shot," she said.

"Will they ever stop?" Lazarus said clicking off the set.

A 26-foot long, white velvet sofa dominated the condominium's living room. It had been too large to bring up in the elevator so the moving company delivering it had to hire a helicopter to lower it onto the balcony. Lazarus stretched out on the sofa and kicked off his shoes. Facing the sofa were three wingback chairs done in needle point scenes depicting a virgin capturing a unicorn. Eli settled himself in one of these chairs.

"So far," he said, "We've decided to investigate cryonics, geriatrics, resuscitation and reincarnation. The next thing to look into is the possibility of resurrection. I'm indebted to Ben for my thinking along these lines..."

The Lazarus Projects

He grimaced at the thought of his son.

"Oh, I'm sorry about him," Lazarus said. "He's joined with the Moonies, hasn't he? That's a shame. All these cults... It's a shame."

"It's not the Moonies; it's that other one, the Methodists he's joined," Eli said. "I think he'll outgrow it and come to his senses. But in the meantime, things are difficult at home. I've asked him to work on these projects with me - he's doing the computer stuff, Googling, he calls it.

"Anyhow, about resurrection. The main thing here is that the subject would need to be truly dead, as opposed to just clinically dead -- not just a man whose vital signs have stopped for a few minutes before they revive him. Those people are only on the edge of death and can give their impressions, but they aren't altogether dead."

Lazarus said, "Some Indian fakirs have been buried for days and come out of it, haven't they?"

"Yes. That's a matter of controlled breathing. They aren't by any means dead. Harry Houdini was an expert at this kind of trick; he could reduce his oxygen intake and even his involuntary responses, like pulse and blood pressure, so that he could stretch out the amount of air in the crypts they buried him in for a long time. He had amazing control. Few other western magicians can perform that same trick.

"There have also been cases of catalepsy -- or maybe it's catatonia, I get them mixed up -- where the person has actually been buried alive by people who thought them dead. Remember the story of Romeo and Juliet; she looked dead because of some drug she took, but like all these others we've mentioned, it was only the appearance of death not true death."

Lazarus said, "If someone who had truly died could come back and if he wasn't a vegetable because of brain damage from being without oxygen for more than ten minutes --- That's supposed to be the limit, isn't it? -- Well, maybe he could tell us what to expect."

"There may possibly have been such a man. The Christians claim that Jesus is the only person to come back under his own steam from being truly dead," Eli said.

"That's impossible. Either he wasn't really dead or else his friends stole the body and lied about it."

"I think that too, but there's one way to find out for sure -- build a time machine and go back to see what really happened."

"We can't do that..."

"Yes we can. There's a strong possibility we can do just that. It would be expensive but it is possible. I don't think for a minute that he was a son of God or anything supernatural, but there may be something behind the legend."

The Lazarus Projects

"Of all the religious leaders the world has known, Jesus is the only one that anyone claims to have beat death. *Torah* tells us that Moses died and was buried in the land of Moab when he was one hundred twenty years old. Mohammed died in the year 632. and was buried in a glass coffin in Medina, Arabia. Moslem pilgrims see his body every day. Buddha is buried in Kapilvastu, India; according my researchers," he scanned the computer printout, "Yeah, here it is: a UPI report says archaeologists uncovered his bones on May 27, 1976. Confucius is dead. Lao Tzu is dead. Madam Blavatsky is dead; and you know about Sun Young Moon, Oral Roberts and all that crowd.

"Jesus is the only one anybody even claims beat out death. These others -- well, they're all dead.

"Personally, I think that Jesus is as dead as the rest of them. But he either rose or rotted; and since we're into this thing at all, I believe we should even investigate a thing as far-fetched as his resurrection if it might give us a lead. A time trip back to see if he made it would prove this whole thing one way or another -- and if he did come back, then the investigating team could give him a physical and interview him and find out how and if his feat can be duplicated. It's worth looking into."

Lazarus laughed. "If a time machine really can be built, it would be more worthwhile for you and me to go back forty

John W. Cowart

years and be young men again, wouldn't it?
Can such a machine really be constructed?"

"The technology is already available.
From what I hear, it's mostly a matter of
getting the money and the brains together."

Lazarus said, "Ok. Why not? Go ahead
and do that one too."

— III —

Holly Lock Institute, situated on the low-tax greenbelt strip off J.Turner Butler Boulevard near Florida's branch of the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, resembled an old Southern plantation -- with a private airstrip.

Because the estate was huge and Wienstien Enterprises already owned it, Eli chose the former tuberculosis sanatorium as one of his area headquarters. Offering lavish salaries, he hired a few support personnel -- the most greedy ones -- away from their jobs at the world-renowned medical facility across the road for two of the Lazarus Projects.

Acres of live-oak trees, smothered in drapes of Spanish Moss, surrounded the white-columned central building. Formal gardens with fountains, classic statues, herringbone patterned brick paths and shady grape arbors separated the main house from several single-story brick outbuildings.

In one of these outbuildings, designated by its white wooden scroll as Clinic C, the world's foremost authorities were engaged in establishing a fully equipped cryobiology research station where

they feverishly worked at freezing, thawing and attempting to revive human tissue as well as tissue from various primates.

Inside one room of Clinic C, a naked old man, strapped to the stainless steel table, struggled violently against the restraining straps.

While clenching and unclenching his fists, he screamed, "I won't do it again Mama! Honest! I'll never do it again!"

He broke down sobbing, "I promise... I promise..."

His rasping gasps for breath caused the chrome framed mirror above the sink in the corner to vibrate as he drew strength for another scream -- which never came. As he opened his mouth to yell, revealing several gaps where teeth were missing, he vomited, then lay rolling his head from side to side in the mess voicing anguished whimpers, "Mama...Mama...Mama".

Eli and Ben Rosen watched the dying wino.

Neither had ever seen anything like this before. They felt squeamish but tried to appear professionally removed from the scene like the physician standing beside the table.

"Dr. Cooper, why are his eyes glowing like that," asked Eli from behind his surgical mask.

The pastel-green shrouded figure of the doctor beside them replied, "We gave

The Lazarus Projects

this one an injection of fluoresceine. It reacts inside living cornea tissue and produces that green reflection. It doesn't react in dead tissue. We use it to pinpoint the moment of death so the cryonoid boys can take over. He's full of drugs for his physical pain, but the mental anguish... Cirrhosis of the liver causes him to... Oops, there he goes now."

The doctor pressed a button beside the door and in a few seconds three blue-coated interns rushed in wheeling cylinders of chemicals and began disconnecting the restraining straps and recording devices from the wino's body. One young man made a quick incision in the tramp's carotid artery and another in his jugular vein. A mechanical pump, began to circulate a mixture of Ringer's solution and glycerol into the carotid thus forcing blood to run out the opening in the jugular and dribble over the pool of vomit beneath the man's head. The blood ran down channels impressed in the top of the table to a drain at the foot.

While the body was being bled, another intern inserted a stainless steel pipe up the wino's bilious nose marked by broken veins. When the tube struck the solid bone at the floor of the brain, the intern gave it a sharp rap to pierce up into the brainpan. He began to pump glycerol into the cranial cavity under pressure. The third intern had already spread out a large aluminum foil blanket in preparation for wrapping the corpse for freezing.

"We may get this one preserved in time to prevent internal cell death. It must be done immediately," the doctor said looking over a computer printout that was emerging from a slot in the enamel topped stand beside the sink. "Ummm... This one lost 3.2 ounces..."

"Wait a minute," Eli said, "What do you mean by internal cell death?"

"Well, the cerebral cortex dies first. That's the portion of the brain for memory storage, where decisions are made, sensations registered, and voluntary actions initiated. Then the brain's medulla oblongate dies next - that's five to ten minutes after breathing stops. Then the gland and muscle cells die, and finally the skin and bone cells; they don't begin dying for several hours after cessation... He's dead, but some individual cells in his body are still living."

An intern volunteered, "When we freeze him, cellular activity stops and the cells lie dormant until we thaw them out. Then the cellular activity resumes."

"This man will be frozen for two weeks to test the cryonic equipment. Then we'll attempt to revive him," the doctor added gathering up the printout sheets. "Look at this." He pointed to a column of numbers which read:

96.7

96.7

96.3XXX

The Lazarus Projects

96.1

96.1

"What is it?" asked Ben.

"The triple XXX marks the moment of death and the figures record his weight every five seconds. They often show a weight loss at the moment of death; some people claim that it's caused by the soul leaving the body."

"Where does it go," Eli asked.

"Damn if I know," the doctor shrugged. "The whole scene has been taped on the VCR camera mounted over there. Sometimes our film blurs at termination, but I don't think that proves a thing."

By now, the body was wrapped and taped up like a silver mummy and wheeled out of the room. As the cart disappeared down the corridor, the doctor remarked, "I've just seen what alcohol can do to a man, but I sure could use a drink."

Leaving Clinic C, they crossed the lane heading toward the old mansion and the staff lounge which contained a well stocked bar. They heard a shout followed by commotion around the Geriatric clinic where a crowd of old people were getting off a bus. The old people were dressed in a variety of robes, ponchos, and turbans. And they were all cheering and shouting in a babble of different languages as they crowded around forms struggling on the ground. The blue of

an intern's smock was occasionally visible through the confusion.

"Looks like they're having trouble restraining a patient," Dr. Cooper shouted as he started toward the mob.

Just then, a long-eared black and white goat broke through the circle of people. It scampered bleating across the lawn with two bedraggled interns in hot pursuit. The mob of oldsters trotted along behind chattering and cackling and crowing in toothless delight. One intern made a flying leap at the goat, missed and tackled his buddy. Both stumbled headlong into a reflecting pool where they sat puffing among the lily pads while 30 ancient crones doubled up in laughter.

"What the hell is going on?" Dr. Cooper demanded from the edge of the pool.

"Sir," sputtered an intern, "Sir, it's one of those Hunzas..."

The other interrupted, "He's over 160 years old and we need him in the longevity lab, but he couldn't be persuaded to come to this country without his goats. He's got twelve of the damn things and we have to watch them."

"Then get out of there and watch 'em."

The interns glared at the old Hunza herder, who was scratching the placid goat's ears. One intern blurted, "Yes sir, but they didn't teach us about this over at Mayo."

The Lazarus Projects

As his headquarters for the study of various psychic phenomena surrounding death, Eli had chosen one of his own large ranches 30 miles west of Miami, on State Highway 94 off the Tamiami Trail. The ranch bordered on Everglades National Park and was the only dry hammock for miles.

During the early stages of the project, Eli flew out to the ranch several times a week.

When word got out about the money to be made in South Florida, spirit channelers, fakirs, swamis, gurus and mediums swamped the place. They were driving the psychiatrists crazy with their constant bickering and pettiness.

Eli found that one good thing about lumping them together in the isolated ranch was that they were fast to expose each other as frauds and to reveal to the psychiatrists the tricks which others used to obtain spiritualistic effects.

For instance, Madam Ruby, a dark lovely girl who claimed to be a gypsy, would go into a trance in a darkened room lit only by a few blue bulbs. When she made contact, she would strip off her clothes and dance nude in long, sensuous, gliding motions while she materialized various spirit manifestations such as a child's hand -- made of ice -- which melted as she danced.

Madam Ruby raged with indignation when a staff psychiatrist, directed by another seer, discovered thin rubber molds

John W. Cowart

in her room. These revealed that she manufactured various shaped ice-cubes and inserted them in her vagina to be removed and materialized during her dance.

After her exposure, Madam Ruby left the ranch and returned to New Orleans where she continued holding séances -- catering especially to bereaved widowers.

As Eli had predicted, the only facet of this program which showed promise was regression hypnosis.

For this study student volunteers were bused from Miami area campuses to the ranch daily. They were screened by staff. Their family and physical histories recorded. Then, they were hypnotized and regressed by easy steps to the moment of birth -- and before.

Staff videotaped each session.

Any facts about a supposedly previous life were reported to investigation teams all over the U.S. for verification.

Eli's staff chose to investigate only previous lives which occurred within the U.S. because, even with world-wide data banks available, verifiable records of births, lives, and deaths are more accessible here. Therefore, when a subject claimed to have been a Scottish highland chief of the 16th Century, no attempt was made to confirm his claim.

However, when a 24-year-old co-ed said under hypnosis that she had been a

The Lazarus Projects

girlfriend of John Dillenger's named Margo Festial, and that she had been murdered by him in January 1934, a field team went into action.

Using detailed information supplied by the co-ed, they discovered that there had indeed been a Margo Festial among Dillenger's girlfriends, and that she had disappeared in January of 1934. According to the co-ed, her body, stuffed doubled up in a steamer trunk, is buried behind a house at 1688 Euclid Circle in Chicago. Field investigators found that this address has since been the site of a slum clearance project and is now occupied by a McDonalds.

The co-ed returned to the ranch repeatedly.

At each session she gave a more and more detailed account of Chicago gang life in the thirties. However, complete screening uncovered the fact that Margo Festial had been the girl's aunt on her mother's side; so possibly the information exposed under hypnosis was the result of conversations overheard during the subject's childhood.

Although the intensive screening and double checks of information obtained during hypnotic regression were time consuming, the staff accomplished the amazing feat of interviewing over 1,500 subjects about possible reincarnation during the months the project was in force. Out of all the students regressed, only four told stories of former lives which upon

John W. Cowart

investigation proved to be even remotely feasible -- through extremely doubtful.

Dr. John Whalen, project director at the ranch, looked over the reams of reports piled on his desk. He picked up the latest statistical report and swung his desk chair around to face the window. In the distance, a herd of brahma cattle grazed while tall white birds walked around their hooves. In India these were sacred cows thought to embody some special soul in the step of reincarnation; in Florida, where they're imported because of their hardiness on a diet of marsh grass, they are just cows.

Dr. Whalen wanted very much to prove that reincarnation is the way people survive after death. Elsie, his wife of 31 years, had died suddenly at the breakfast table the previous year of an aneurysm.

They had had intercourse the night before.

The autopsy revealed that, aside from her fatal heart condition, Elsie also had AIDS. Dr. Whalen, who never suspected that she may have had sex with anyone but him and who had been faithful to her all those years, soured overnight and lived in terror about having his own blood tested.

He didn't take the test. He just brooded over it.

He felt betrayed and cheated. He was sure she had infected him.

The Lazarus Projects

He wanted revenge, wanted to see her suffer. Since he did not believe in Hell, he intensely hoped there was another life where the bitch would get what she had coming, where he would be vindicated, where he would not be afraid of the blood which flowed in his own veins.

He lay awake nights thinking about tainted blood... and cows.

His fantasy envisioned his bovine wife being reborn as a cow. Suited her. And he would come back as manager of a slaughter house. ..

With a cattle prod.

And this one cow, he'd keep in a pen and not slaughter. He'd let her watch what happened to the other cows everyday. And every day, he'd take the electric prod out to the pen...

Wishful thinking...

Nothing in the reports on his desk indicated anything of the sort of afterlife he hoped for.

He glared out the window at the grazing brahmas and muttered, "They're cows. Nothing but stupid bloody cows."

Then he shoved the most recent report back on the pile, opened his bottom desk drawer, took out a bottle, unscrewed the cap, took a long drink, replaced the cap, returned the bottle to the drawer, closed the drawer, opened the top middle drawer,

John W. Cowart

removed a pistol, placed it in his mouth, and pulled the trigger.

The noise scared the cows.

— IV —

A flint arrowhead and a handful of charcoal nested in the aluminum foil package. About three inches of disintegrating wooden arrow shaft, bound with withered, disintegrating leather cord, protruded from the base of the stone point.

Dr. Alphonso McIntosh carefully removed the charcoal with tongs, separating the pieces into two Pyrex trays. He put aside one tray for spectrum analysis. The other he placed in a vacuum chamber and sealed the door.

Ben Rosen watched the physicist lower the pressure in the chamber and click several toggle switches starting the sensitive instrument for radiocarbon dating.

Turning Dr. McIntosh said, "Thank you for waiting, young man; that has to cook for a while. Now, what can I do for you?"

"Well, Sir, first I'd like to congratulate you. Then I'd like you to listen to a proposal and see if you can fit it into your schedule before your trip to Stockholm. My father is Eli Rosen of Wienstien Enterprises. He sent me here to ask you to build a time machine for him."

John W. Cowart

Then, Ben explained Lazarus Project Five to the tall, white-haired physicist.

Alphonso Clarence McIntosh was born near Huntsville, Alabama, in 1943. He never knew his parents. His mother ran off when he was a baby leaving him with Aunt Nancy, a mountainous fat jolly lady who raised 16 children, both her own by natural birth and those she took in from many sources.

They lived in the hills above Huntsville in an unpainted wood-frame shack with a corrugated tin roof. Pecan trees surrounded the shack and one of Al's earliest memories was of picking up pecans and putting them in a bucket for Aunt Nancy to sell in town. Winters were spent huddled around a portable metal kerosene stove with a coiled wire handle. During summer rain storms, they all gathered on the front porch in rockers while the rain beat down so hard on the tin roof that it was impossible to talk. Dr. McIntosh still thought the most pleasant sound in the world was to hear a pecan drop on the tin roof, roll with a metallic clatter to the eaves, and drop to the ground with a pecan-sized thud.

Aunt Nancy's older children worked at various jobs in town and every Friday, each one of them brought money home to help support her and the "yard kids". Al was very proud when he graduated from being a yard kid into a working man at age 13.

Like most of his brothers, his job was pushing a wheelbarrow, but with a major

The Lazarus Projects

difference; whereas they moved sand or concrete on construction jobs, he hauled dirt out of Russel Cave, the site where archaeologists were uncovering the oldest remains of man on the North American continent. Al's job was to wheel the excavated dirt away and dump it in a sieve where the sieve operator would go through it looking for small artifacts -- beads and such. Then Al would shovel the dirt back into the barrow and would wheel it on down the hill to the dumping site. The boy's concentrated hard work and alert manner brought him to the attention of the field chief who made him sieve operator.

The only trouble Al had with his job was that he refused to work on Sunday even though it meant losing a day's pay. Aunt Nancy said Sunday was the Lord's Day and her children, grown and yard kids alike, scrubbed and in their best clothes, had to be in church. Boys in bow ties, girls in white dresses, and Aunt Nancy, big as a cloud in the white and black habit which marked her as a member of the Missionary Class, trooped down the hill to the Clapboard Creek Fire Baptized Baptist Church where they spent four hours singing, clapping, shouting and hearing the Word of the Lord.

Al enlisted in the Navy and spent the Vietnam War carrying shells below decks on a battleship in the Pacific. In the service, he completed his high school education and after the war went to college on the GI Bill. His talent in physics and his boyhood love for

old things combined to guide him into the highly specialized field of radiocarbon dating where he perfected a vacuum and isotope technique which made him a contender for a Nobel prize.

"A time machine to go to Jesus," he mused after Ben Rosen had pleaded his cause and left. "Aunt Nancy would have laughed at that. Lord, would she laugh. She always knew Him and never needed a machine to help... If it can be done, I'll try it."

The charcoal from the ancient hearth where the arrowhead had been found proved to be from 2,000 BC+ 70. Dr. McIntosh was pleased. He dictated a letter to the archaeologist in Samoa who had submitted the sample to him. Then he began to list the materials and equipment he would need, not just to measure time but to move through it.

The following week, Eli's limousine met Dr. McIntosh at Miami International Airport and, after a short stop at the Fontainebleau for him to freshen up, delivered him to Eli's office.

Eli explained in more detail why he wanted the time device and asked, "Is it feasible?"

"I believe so," Dr. McIntosh replied. "But, there will be certain limitations which may prove it impractical. As to your question about sending Mr. Wienstien back to the time of his youth, I doubt that would work out at all. He could go back; but a time machine would not make him younger, he'd

The Lazarus Projects

stay his own age. Also, if he went back, he would take his cancer with him and die in the past with less comfort than he would have today."

"I understand... What about the other side of it... sending a team to investigate Jesus?"

"Well... if the device I have in mind works, we can intrude on any past time but I do not, at present, see how we can move into the future... That might be accomplished, but right now, I think my device can only move back. Tell me, have you talked with Dr. Matchel at Cambridge?"

"I've contacted him," Eli said. "He doesn't think any movement through time in either direction is possible at all. How do you intend to do it?"

"Mr. Rosen, do you understand the idea behind Carbon 14 dating?"

"Review it for me."

"Well, simply put, cosmic rays collide with gases in the earth's atmosphere and generate neutrons. Some of these strike atoms of nitrogen, causing them to disintegrate into Carbon 14. All living things absorb small amounts of this radioactive carbon. Now, there is only one C-14 atom for every trillion regular carbon atoms. When a living thing dies, it ceases to absorb C-14 and the C-14 in its body begins to break down into stable C-13 at the rate of a 5,568 year half-life. By measuring the amount of C-

John W. Cowart

14 in a thing, we can determine, on the basis of this half-life, how old it is. Are you with me so far"?

"Yes, I follow that".

"Good. Now by using a very light-weight, easily fissionable isotope of U-235, called yellowcake, I believe that I can neutralize the amount of C-14 in a living body causing that body to revert back to a time when the C-14 inside it balances with the C-14 in the surrounding environment.

"It would work like a submarine.

"Imagine. *Now* is the surface of the water. Take away buoyancy, the sub sinks till it stabilizes. That is, it balances with the surrounding environment. Add buoyancy, it returns to the surface."

Rosen said, "Why wouldn't your technique work for the future then so we could go ahead to a time when there's a cure for cancer?"

"That would be like trying to lift the submarine out of the water and make it fly. Like the device I envision, a sub can only go down and back to the surface -- not above it. Of course, the device I envision may not work at all. Or, if it does work, it might kill anything inside. The only way to see if to build it and experiment."

"What will you need to build it?"

"The biggest drawback is getting enough yellowcake, U-235. It's separated out of U-238 and used mostly for nuclear

The Lazarus Projects

weapons. The government controls all of it. In its raw state, it's imported from Zaire."

"It's yours," Eli said. "We have friends on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I can get hold of as much as you will need."

"That's fine. I will also need two working labs -- one somewhere around this area and the other will have to be in a carefully surveyed area near Jerusalem."

"Jerusalem? Why Jerusalem?"

"The device will move through time but not distance. If we sent your team back from here, they would end up here -- only 2,000 years ago. So the actual launch site will have to be near Jerusalem at a place that was unoccupied by any structure at your projected arrival time. It would be dangerous for your team to be seen stepping out of nowhere. You will need to pick personnel to go with you who speak fluent Greek, Latin or Hebrew..."

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! What do you mean go with Me!" Eli stood up and began to pace before the window.

"Aren't you going to make the trip yourself?"

The suggestion stunned Eli.

"I hadn't even considered such a thing. I was going to send a team of experts, men who are qualified..." His voice trailed off and in that instant, he knew that if the journey were possible, he himself would take it.

John W. Cowart

"There's one more thing that we need more than anything else if we do this."

"What's that, Doctor?"

"Prayer, Mr. Rosen. Prayer and lots of it."

— V —

That January, there were brief, novel, snow flurries in Miami.

As the limousine inched along Collins Avenue, Eli glimpsed some children dancing in a park. They ran with their heads thrown back trying to catch snow flakes in their mouths. They ran, red-faced, excited, exuberant, full of wonder at the snow, full of life.

When the car swung into the circular drive in front of the condominium, Eli saw, huddled behind the glass doors, a gaggle of old women with coats draped over their shoulders covering flowered Bermuda shorts and halter tops -- wrinkled, sagging breasts, tanned skin, obscene pathetic travesties of youth. As he entered the private elevator to the penthouse he thought, "What the hell! They're trying to do the same thing we are. They just don't have the money to put into it."

Lazarus, looking gaunt and in pain, met him at the door and led him past the massive white sofa into the conference room where all the project directors -- except Dr. Balsdon of Geriatric Research -- were in

various attitudes of industry, snapping open briefcases, sorting reports and computer print-out sheets. At one end of the wide mahogany table stood a big screen, rear-projection TV screen; at the other end, Dr. McIntosh was feeding a DVD disc into the mouth of a Bell and Howell player.

There were places at the table for three times the number of men who were at this briefing. Lined up around the paneled walls of the room were high-backed leather armchairs where assistants usually sat during business conferences.

Lazarus handled the opening remarks deftly. He then turned to Dr. Cooper for the progress report on the Cryonics project. Essentially, there had been no significant progress; individual groups of cells from some organs could survive suspended animation. But at present, none of the patients who had been thawed out could be revived.

"Until science reaches some higher plateau in the future," Dr. Cooper concluded, "Death is still irreversible."

Dr. Bart Hann, who took over the Psychic Research Project after Dr. Whalen's suicide, began his remarks with a summary of his predecessor's accomplishments:

"His major contribution was in the fact that he eliminated so many dead ends, freeing the rest of us for more productive research," Dr. Hann said. "It is unfortunate that the intense pressure of our studies

The Lazarus Projects

drove him to suicide. The suicide rate among us psychiatrists is six times the rate for the general population. This is a well-known fact. It is an occupational hazard that Dr. Whalen fully understood and accepted. In a way, his untimely death may be considered as a martyrdom for science."

Eli's mind wandered away from the eulogy and he thought about the children outside in their first snow fall. He smothered a yawn and again focused his attention on Dr. Hann, who was saying, "...accomplishments; however, I think I have discovered the flaw in his procedures of hypnotic regression. The main difficulty was in his choice of young students as subjects. You see, most college students in our society have not come to terms with their own identities. They feel that they're nobodies. Therefore, they tend to manufacture lives of importance lived at some previous time. This is on such a deep level that when hypnosis virtually anesthetizes the conscious mind, these important personalities take over. The students experience delusions of memory caused by their intense desire to be 'Somebody'.

"I have found a way to avoid this factor in future experiments in regression.

"I've made arrangements to recruit future subjects from retirement communities instead of college campuses. These older people have well established identities in this present life, so their need to dissimulate

is less -- and our readings will be more accurate. Old people know that they will never be 'Somebody'; they are reconciled to being nobodies. I have hopes that over the next..." He droned on and on.

When he finally finished, another Project Director reported. Dr. Gerald G. Gould, a bald, overweight, sour man who was in charge of the Resuscitation Project, removed a laptop computer from his battered briefcase and placed it on the table before him.

"As you know," he said adjusting the laptop as he talked, "We are conducting in-depth interviews with terminal subjects right up to cessation. Then, we resort of heroic measures to resuscitate them after they are clinically dead but before brain death occurs. If there is more than a six minute interval between the two, the subject's cortex dies and the subject loses reasoning power. And even if he is aware of anything, he is unable to communicate and is useless to us.

"We have had a 28 per cent resuscitation rate overall, with male patients showing a slightly higher rate of viability than females. Since the subjects we work with are paupers and are in bad condition when they reach us, six days is the longest any of them has remained alive after initial resuscitation.

"The subject recorded in this file -- it was a 37-year-old male Caucasian -- shows the typical pattern of post-resuscitation

statements that we hear made. Although some people have a bad time of it, most seemed to enter a pleasant experience upon clinical death. Many have visions of ecstasy involving either some religious figure or some already dead loved one.

"The subject you will hear dying on this tape was one Hugo Williams, a nobody. He had been an insurance executive with Metropolitan Life. Went through a messy divorce. Lost his job. Spent his last days drunk. Before our facility got him from county hospice, the subject earned its living collecting beer cans to sell for recycled aluminum. It had a history of heart disease."

Turning his laptop so the people at the table could see the screen and punching a key to start the display, Dr. Gould said, "This is a recording of his last coding:"

Clinic D Patient # 00642
Transcript # 38743A Williams, H.L.
12/24/04

Gould: "Hit him again."

Gould: "Try more voltage -- up it to 450."

John W. Cowart

Intern: "The flesh is already charring."

Gould: "More voltage! Damn you!"

(Sizzling sound)

Patient: Sounds of gasping and retching.

Gould: "Plasma infusion to build up blood pressure."

Intern 2: "Yes, Sir."

(Clatter of glass instruments on a metal tray)

Gould: "DO YOU HEAR ME?....(to Intern:) Adrenaline."

Intern 2: "Yes, Sir."

Gould: "CAN YOU HEAR ME?"

Patient: "Make that bastard leave my feet alone."

Gould: "Good. You're back with us."

Patient: "He stuck a needle in my ankle."

(A pain response test made by Intern 2.)

Gould: "You felt that?"

(Pause of eight seconds).

Gould: "DID YOU FEEL THAT?"

Patient: "Shit no! I saw him. I saw everything you fuckers were doing to me... You burned me. He stuck that needle in my ankle... Mildred was there...

(Patient's ex-wife who died in 1984.)

Gould: "Where were you? What did you see?"

(Pause of six seconds... Slapping sound)

Gould: "WHERE WERE YOU? ...WHAT DID YOU SEE?"

The Lazarus Projects

Patient: "I didn't go anywhere, Doctor... I saw him stick that thing in my foot... It hurts. My foot hurts... I was right up there by that vent... I was just floating there in the corner... And I saw what you did. I saw what you did... then... a lot of light... a big grassy field and people -- thousands and thousands of people all cheering for me just like I'd just hit a home run or something. There was this..."

Intern 1: "He's arresting again!"

Gould: "Restart the... Good! DO YOU HEAR ME? WHERE ARE YOU?"

Patient: "You dogfuckers! ... (makes unintelligible noises)"

Intern 2: "Arrest... Flat EKG."

Gould: "That's it. Unplug him. I'm going over the Christmas party. Call me there if another one comes in today."

(sound of door closing)

Senior Intern: "You heard what the doctor said. Unplug him. I'm going to write up the report and sneak over to the party."

(sound of door closing)

Intern 2: "Sharon. Room 18."

(door sound)

Nurse: "Yes, Doctor."

Intern 2: "Remove the mechanical respirator and fix him for the morgue."

Nurse: "Yes, Doctor."

(door closing)

Nurse: "Shit!"

Dr. Gould clicked the display to a stop and said, "This is typical of the sessions we

are having. Subjects who go out on LSD, cocaine or morphine tend to have more exotic visions than this man but the common features include the sensation of..."

His discourse was interrupted by the appearance of Wienstien's maid who approached Eli and said, "Excuse me, Sir, I know you weren't to be disturbed but a Dr. Balsdon says it's urgent for you to come to the phone. He says there's been a death at the Geriatric Clinic..."

The girl looked startled as the men at the conference table broke out in hearty laughter.

When Eli returned to the conference room after the phone call, everyone eyed him expectantly. "Gentlemen," he said, "It's the damnedest thing you've ever heard. Dr. Balsdon keeps the Hunzas and the Ecuadorians separate because of language problems.

"Well, they won't stay apart. This morning, one Raphel U'daz, a 143-year-old Hunza, was just stabbed to death by Juan Vassco, a 123-year-old Ecuadorian -- they got in a fight over a woman. She's only 106."

"Damnation," someone exclaimed.

"Can we keep it out of the papers?" Lazarus asked. "If this thing gets out, it could jeopardize all the projects."

"It's ok," Eli assured him. "I've taken care of it. Vassco is flying back to Ecuador

The Lazarus Projects

tonight. And the other's death certificate will show he died of natural causes."

"What about the woman?"

"She stays. But from what Balsdon says, he'll have to put her in a chastity belt.

" Now... Dr. McIntosh, what do you have to show us?"

The physicist rose from his place at the table and walked to stand by the TV screen.

"You are already familiar with the theory behind Project Five," he said. "In a nutshell, by alterations and infusions of C-14 and U-235, we hope to change a person's C-14 makeup and cause it to seek a time level compatible with its infused balance.

"Originally, we had hoped to build a device able to return a person to the past -- to a time previous to his illness and thus rescue him. This is impossible because the disease is actually a part of the person. It goes with him.

"On the other hand, I had hoped to develop a technique for moving into the future to obtain cures which may yet be discovered. I don't know how to do this.

"Our third idea involving this device is to move back to the time when Christ rose from the dead and in Mr. Rosen's words, 'see if and how he did it'. Considering the results of our most recent experiments, this seems possible.

"We have constructed a time chamber prototype at Project Five headquarters in Boca Raton. Our first tests involved inanimate, carbon-infused objects which disappeared from the time chamber. We had no way of knowing where they traveled to -- but they did travel.

"Yesterday, we sent out our first living time traveler, a Rhesus monkey named Lady.

"Using a harness, we mounted a DVD video camera on Lady's left arm. The film -- is that what you call it -- was developed immediately on her recovery, and I'd like to screen it for you now."

Dr. McIntosh walked to the door of the conference room and turned off the lights. Returning to the table, he started the show.

"This first clip shows Lady being outfitted for her trip. The metallic belt she's wearing contains our infusion control and recovery elements."

The monkey perched on an enamel stool while Dr. McIntosh fastened a metal foil belt around her waist and buckled it in back. An assistant strapped a small camera in place on the left shoulder in a way the monkey could not get it off.

In the background was the time chamber, a cage-like metal room about the size of a Volkswagen bus with a round hatch thick as the door to a bank vault. To the left, computer terminals surrounded a control

The Lazarus Projects

panel covered with needle graphs and gauges. At the top of the panel, a row of digital clocks printed out numbers in flickering red, yellow and green.

"Now you'll see the film from Lady's view point."

The screen went white for a moment; then scenes from the monkey's camera showed the lab from the height of about three feet. There was a clear view of some chewing gum stuck under the edge of a lab desk and then a fast panorama of human, table and chair legs as the monkey scampered across the floor. The scene lurched to the ceiling as someone picked Lady up. Then there was a view of a stainless steel sink. The camera watched as a big white hand gripped the monkey's paw. Another white hand came into view holding a razor and the technician shaved the hair from Lady's wrist.

"We shaved her wrist so we can better observe if there is any physical change in her as she travels."

The screen jerked in more monkey-eye views of the lab as Lady was carried over and put in the time chamber.

"Watch carefully now."

Nothing but copper metal walls appeared at first; then the monkey turned, and the camera peered back through the open door of the chamber. Dr. McIntosh's black face loomed huge and grotesquely out

John W. Cowart

of focus on the screen. Over his shoulder on the wall of the lab, an office clock read 10:22. The door to the chamber swung shut; there was blackness for a few seconds followed by brilliant eye-searing sunlight reflecting off shining water.

The monkey was on a beach.

"Gentlemen, Florida two thousand years ago."

The camera revealed flashes of sky, sand and water as the monkey scuttered away from the ocean. Then the camera lens was slapped by leaves as the monkey lurched through dense undergrowth. The shaved hand of the Rhesus came into view for a time plucking at some wild grapes. Then the camera careened into the sky as something must have frightened Lady into running.

"She's in the edge of a mangrove swamp bordering the beach. Watch what she meets here."

Trailing vines, tangled branches, cypress knees and other jungle vegetation crossed the screen in jerky confusion as the monkey moved through the swamp. There was a glimpse of some large white bird fluttering off disturbed by the monkey's progress. Then the camera panned over the leaf-covered ground for a time and came to rest on a quiet, stagnant pond. Apparently the monkey stooped to drink from the pool; but suddenly the water erupted and flashing

The Lazarus Projects

teeth and a gaping mouth filled the screen snapping at the shaven paw.

"What in the hell was that?" Eli asked.

"I don't know for sure, but I think it was a gar fish."

The rest of the film was jungle scenes caught in spastic motion as the monkey fled in terror, blood streaming from her ripped paw.

"We retrieved Lady after she spent fifteen minutes in the past. Her paw was still bleeding when she returned to the present -- she's at the vet's now. Apparently, if you are injured in the past, you're not restored when you return to the present."

Eli asked, "Isn't there some way you could televise what was happening to her so that if you saw some danger you could retrieve her?"

"No. Her belt contained a global positioning transmitter to trace her movements. But there were no signals picked up from her in the present. There is no way to communicate with time travelers while they are in the past. The only ways to get information from the past are to either trust the historical documents or to go see for yourself."

— VI —

Jack, that man is staring at us."

"Just a dirty old man lusting after your soft young body. He has good taste in women."

"No. It's you that he's watching. I'm sure of it."

Dr. Jack Weymouth left his wife with the shopping cart and strolled over to the meat counter. He pretended to look over the array of chicken parts -- \$2.29 a pound, he noticed -- but he watched the mirror over the refrigerated case. The old man, with stooped shoulders, white hair, gnarled hands, nicotine stained teeth, emerged from the aisle Jack had just left and gazed at Jack. Then he began to intently study a stack of canned peaches at the end of the aisle with occasional side glances at Jack.

Judy brought the loaded cart up beside her husband. "See. It's your body he's after."

"Do I look like that kind of guy?"

"To him you must," she said grinning and thrusting a plastic wrapped pack of chicken legs into his hands.

The Lazarus Projects

"Maybe he's a security man from Walter Reed checking up on us."

"Looks kind of old to be security or a spy hoping to pick your brains on Army surgical techniques... Let's get some apples and see if he follows."

Jack and Judy Weymouth maneuvered their shopping cart through the crowded aisles of the supermarket, working their way over to the produce section.

It was a rainy Friday evening in Washington, D.C., and the store was packed with payday shoppers. Judy had picked up her husband at the entrance to Walter Reed Hospital after work, and her "few things for supper" had turned into a basket full of groceries.

The old man followed them over to the produce section.

He pushed his own fully laden basket up beside Jack and spoke, "Excuse me, Sir...", he paused. "I... I suppose you wonder why I've been staring at you."

The old man seemed very embarrassed and flustered.

"Well, I am wondering about it..."

"My son died six weeks ago, and you look exactly like him." The old man fought back tears. "I know you're not him, but you look just like him. When I first saw you, I just... Well, I... I... I'm sorry for bothering you."

"Oh! That's ok," Jack stammered. "I'm sorry about your son."

"Look," the old man said, "I know it's silly but could you indulge an old man's fancy?"

"I suppose so, what can I do," Jack said.

"When I get ready to leave the store, could you wave bye to me..." the man hesitated. "We never got to say goodbye," he said.

Jack looked at his wife, who gave an almost imperceptible shrug of her shoulders. Then he said, "Sure. I'll do that."

"Thank you. Thank you," said the white-haired old man vigorously shaking Jack's hand.

"Oh, Honey, wasn't that the saddest thing," Judy said after the man moved away from them into the crowd.

"Weird's the word for it. Let's finish up and get out of here."

They picked up the rest of their groceries and were unloading their cart on the checkout counter when Jack saw the old man standing with his bagged items over by the door waving to him. The old man called out in a voice that carried half way across the store, "Bye, Son. Goodbye."

Everyone looked around to see who the old man was calling to; but Jack gamely waved his hand and called "Bye Bye, Dad."

The Lazarus Projects

The old man beamed, gave a final wave and went out at the automatic opening of the glass doors.

During this exchange, the cashier, all the while, had kept drawing groceries across the scanner. Its mechanical computer generated voice chanted a litany of prices. The bag boy was double-bagging the groceries and putting the full bags back into the cart at the end of the counter. The cashier unrolled an enormous scroll of Green Stamps and said, "That'll be \$184.72."

"One-Eighty-four seventy-two!" said Jack recoiling, "How can that be \$184.72??"

The cashier looked surprised at his outburst and checked her ticket again. "Your bill was \$82.19 and the stuff your Father bought came to \$102.53 -- totaling \$184.72. Right?"

"My Father?"

"He came through the line just before you and said that he'd wait till you came up to pay."

"Yes. I understand now," said Jack digging in his wallet. "Judy..."

"I have some here," she replied opening her purse.

There was no sign of the "bereaved" old codger in the parking lot.

The couple looked at each other.

Judy broke out laughing.

"I've just been had in royal style! And you stand there laughing away \$102.53!" Jack protested. Then he started laughing too and together they ran through the rain to their car.

In front of their Connecticut Avenue apartment building, another car was in their designated tenants-only-all-others-towed-away parking space. So they carried their groceries through the drizzle from a block away. When they got to the front door, the other car had moved leaving the space vacant.

"We must be living right," Judy said juggling her bag to fish out her key. "Why don't you build a fire in the fireplace while I get supper started?"

They carried their groceries through the living room back to the kitchen and put the bags on the counter. Judy started to unpack the groceries and Jack reached around her and cupped a breast in each hand.

"Just what do you think you're doing?"

"Warming my hands on the nicest tits in Washington."

"Supper'll be late."

"Nice," he said nuzzling her ear. "Real nice."

"Flattery will get you everywhere," she said as she turned to eagerly return his kisses.

The Lazarus Projects

"Good... I like you."

He ran his hands down to the small of her back and began to tug gently at her jeans.

She gave an exasperated sigh, "It's so romantic here in the kitchen -- breakfast dishes and dripping frozen food really turn me on."

He slapped her rump playfully saying, "I'm not all that horny, but the opportunity was too good to pass up."

"I love you," they said simultaneously.

Jack went out to the living room and started the fire. He had just settled in his easy chair with his pipe and the evening paper when the door bell rang. A tall distinguished man with straight black hair, graying at the temples, stood at the door. He wore a well tailored suit and carried a lightweight beige raincoat over his arm.

"Dr. Weymouth?" he said.

"Yes. May I help you?"

"My name is Eli Rosen. I represent Wienstien Enterprises, and I would like to talk with you and your wife about taking a trip."

Jack hesitated. Not an insurance salesman nor a time-sharing come on -- too well dressed, he thought.

"General Bateman, gave me your name and home address," the man said.

John W. Cowart

More than slightly annoyed at the prospect of losing his quiet evening at home with Judy and apprehensive from having been cheated by the man in the supermarket, Jack ushered Eli into the living room, to a chair facing the fire.

"Mrs. Weymouth?" Eli inquired.

"Cooking. What can I do for you?"

"The project I wish to discuss with you calls for the talents of you both. Would you call her please? ...I'm sorry to disturb your dinner but I have a ten o'clock flight back to Miami. I want you both to return with me."

Judy came out of the kitchen drying her hands on a flowered apron and looking puzzled.

Rosen stood till she was seated. He returned to his chair, but got up again and began pacing before the fire as he explained Lazarus Project Five to them.

It was after 3 a.m. when Jack and Judy finally got settled in their Miami hotel room. They spent the flight down from Washington asking Rosen questions about the proposed time trip and about the status of the other Wienstien projects. He also explained more fully how they had been selected for the project.

Jack Weymouth grew up near Cheyenne, Wyoming, tending sheep and memorizing poetry in the vast grasslands. He went through medical school in Denver

The Lazarus Projects

and from there to a field hospital in Viet Nam where he decided on traumatology as a career. For a brief time he was in India on a medical mission for the US Famine Relief Service. It was in Piprahwa, a tiny village in northeast India near the Nepal border, that he started the riot which made for the only blight in his military service record. It also nearly cost him his life.

Jack was traveling by a slow moving train to join his medical unit in Lumbini. The trip was a nightmare of sweat, dust and appalling poverty. The three Americans on the train carried their own provisions in the form of combat rations; no food could be purchased in the famine area. Thousands starved daily while supplies from relief organizations waited in warehouses tied up in red tape by a corrupt bureaucracy.

The train stopped for some unannounced reason at the village of Piprahwa, and Jack got out to stretch his legs. He felt a tug at his trousers and looked down to see a naked little boy, maybe six years old, with distended belly and emaciated arms and legs. The child's ribs protruded through his taunt stretched skin and his eyes were large and moist and brown.

Jack pried the boy's hand loose from his pants' leg and went to his seat on the train to get some of his food. He returned to the dusty railroad platform where the child waited expectantly. Together they sat down

on a pile of railroad ties and Jack opened a can. The boy wanted to glup it down, but Jack fed him small amounts plucking it out of the can with his fingers.

Jack heard an angry shout and looked up to see a gaunt, bushy-haired, wild-eyed man running toward them waving his arms frantically. The man jabbered furiously. Jack made motions to show he did not understand. The man slapped the can out of the little boy's hand and began to drag him away. Jack shoved the man down and gave the food back to the little boy. The man drew a wicked-looking curved knife from the folds of his clothing. He began to scream as he advanced.

A crowd of men came running. Jack drew his .45 sidearm and leveled it right at the man's head while the child, sitting at Jack's feet, continued to placidly eat from the can. By now, there was a mob of men facing Jack from about 20 feet away. They shouted insults and shook sticks, but halted in the face of the unwavering .45.

The standoff continued for some time till an English speaking railway official came on the scene. He placated the crowd by assuring them that the can of combat rations contained only vegetable products and no meat (actually it was beef and noodles). The official reprimanded the child for begging and chased away the Hindu who had objected, and who incidentally turned out to be a total stranger to the little boy.

The Lazarus Projects

Eventually, Jack was allowed to leave aboard his train, but weeks later the incident was reported. Jack received an official reprimand because of his "irreverence for native religious practices". He was dismissed from the Famine Relief Service and reassigned to Aceh, Indonesia, where he met Judy. They were married in an Episcopal chapel in Washington after Jack was assigned to Walter Reed Army Hospital's traumatology department. Two years later, he became department head.

Judy Weymouth, nee Salate, came from Los Angeles. Her Aramaean parents were both killed in an automobile accident when she was seven. She lived with Uncle Herb and Aunt Trudy until she was fourteen, when she was taken away from them by the juvenile authorities and placed in a series of foster homes.

Uncle Herb and Aunt Trudy had owned a small Ventura photography studio where they made 16 mm films for mail order voyeurs.

When the child came to live with them, they discovered a gold mine. She was a beautiful little girl, and she was obedient, doing just as they told her.

They broke her in with simple things, taking pictures of her taking a bath. Before the girl was ten, she was featured in full scale hard-core pornography. When she was not on camera herself, she learned to operate the cameras and sound equipment

while Uncle Herb, Aunt Trudy and their friends performed.

During a lecture in a junior high school health class, Judy became aware that her experiences were radically different from those of her classmates. For months she struggled with the impossible idea that her aunt and uncle were somehow doing wrong. They gave her the only home and lifestyle she knew. The way that they lived had to be right. But, Uncle Herb had begun plans for a new film involving Judy and a German shepherd.

Judy was afraid of the dog.

She asked her teacher for advice.

Soon after Judy graduated from high school, she moved out of her current foster home and went to San Diego. There she got a job working for a photographer taking pictures of kids with Santa Claus.

In her free time, she did a pictorial essay on a day in the life of a retarded child. The piece won her national honors and a job with Woman's ACTION magazine, which led her, by way of an assignment in Iraq, to Aceh, and meeting Jack. On their moving to Washington, she found work just outside the District at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. There she developed techniques for photographing the surface of Mars from landing probes.

The Lazarus Projects

They lay cuddled together nude on the hotel's king-sized bed. Both were still damp from the shower. Jack ran his fingers through her long roan-colored hair.

"Sleepy?" he asked.

"Wide awake. Are you as excited as I am?"

"The thing that excites me is how Rosen could call the general and get me released from duty just like that. He must have some kind of special pull to bring off that sort of thing."

"My mind is just running away with plans about lenses and lighting and film speed... I mean, so many things could go wrong to effect the shots..."

"You'll handle it ok."

There was a long quiet pause and she said, "I'm scared."

"The trip?"

"No. That seems scientifically feasible... It's about Jesus; what if he's not like we picture him? What if he's a... a disappointment... I'd rather not know."

"Do you think he will be?"

"I'm not sure... Once in Iraq, out near Mosul, there was a chaplain... I was going in with some boys on their first patrol. I was planning a photo essay on first combat... Anyhow, this chaplain started us singing that Sunday School song for little kids, 'Jesus Loves Me, This I Know'. Well, here we are

going out to kill people, or maybe catch a roadside bomb ourselves, and singing *Jesus Loves Me*, and I thought, Hell! He can't love any of us, me especially. I'm too dirty inside and out. Then this chaplain reads a verse about Jesus came to save sinners not the righteous. And that was all. He didn't preach or pray or anything -- he just left. And we went on into the fighting. But I felt different... clean. I don't want to lose that."

Jack remained motionless and silent for a time then began rubbing her back. "Judy, I love you. To me, you're always clean and pure... Don't be afraid... Ever." He kissed her eyelids and moved his right hand to her breast. He softly brushed the nipple with just the tips of his fingers, drawing them over the nipple again and again.

Judy stirred, giving her hips a shuddering wiggle, rubbing her thighs up and down across each other. She began tugging on his shoulder pulling him on top of her...

Afterwards, they fell asleep on top of the covers, holding hands.

— VII —

At night, Tel El Hajeh, twelve miles due north of Jerusalem, froze.

At midday, the site sweltered.

The only drinking water at the dig was rain collected in a large galvanized tank on the flat roof of the headquarters building at the foot of the mound. Earlier in the season, the camp had been plagued by mosquitoes which bred in the water tank until an enterprising American student volunteer solved that problem by pouring used motor oil on the water.

Father Francis sipped some of the still-tainted water, swished it around in his mouth, and spat it on the ground where it beaded up in the dust. Smiling his thanks to the Arab waterbearer, he returned to his work at the bottom of a deep trench where the rim of a large jar protruded from the dirt. He loosened the dirt in the mouth of the jar with a small trowel. Using a whisk broom, he swept the dirt out of the way. A few inches above the jar, in the wall of the trench, a flat paving stone jutted out of the ancient soil. Carefully scrapping the soil away from both inside and outside the jar to maintain even

pressure, he freed the jar from its matrix and sat it upright. It was unbroken.

"Canaanite," he said to himself scooping the remaining top layers of sand out of the jar. Then using a fine camel's hair brush, he brushed the lower layers of sand away and uncovered the tiny bones of the baby he sadly expected to find in the bottom of the jar.

He knew that when ancient Canaanite builders constructed a wall, they dedicated it to the god Molech by putting a baby, perhaps one of the builder's own children, in a jar and burying the child alive in the foundation of the wall.

Father Francis recorded the find on the field chart and gave the jar to an assistant to take away to the washing station. He felt sick to his stomach; the oily water tasted strong in his mouth.

Tooting its horn, a battered dusty Jeep drew up to the edge of the dig; and a lay brother got out and trudged up the mound. Father Francis greeted him and waved for the waterbearer before asking him, "What news?"

"War again any day now," the brother panted, "But that's hardly news is it? A kibbutz on the West Bank was overrun last night, and Israel will probably retaliate tonight. Back and forth, back and forth, the same old thing."

"Scared?" Francis asked.

The Lazarus Projects

"Constantly," the brother replied, "Plastic bombs, land mines, mortar attacks... I hate to leave the house."

"Why did you?"

"Orders of the Bishop to fetch you back to Jerusalem... Must have something special for you."

Francis smiled in anticipation. He had requested permission to engage in a special work much more exciting than his present studies and he hoped this summons meant his request had been granted. "Let me get some things together and tell the director I'm leaving. I'll be ready to go in ten minutes."

During the hot drive south to Jerusalem, Francis reviewed his request to his superior.

Francis was born in Copenhagen, Denmark. He was an orphan and like hundreds of others, he was raised in a church-sponsored orphanage in the city. From as early as he could remember, he wanted to enter the priesthood. He entered as soon as he came of age. As a young priest, he excelled in Biblical studies, quickly learning Koine Greek and ancient Hebrew. He was selected as one of Papal representatives to work on the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Church of the Ascension. While there, he engaged in field work at several locations. And his discoveries in the area of New Testament studies had brought him

international renown in archaeological circles.

But as much as he gloried in his scholastic achievements, he remembered the orphanage and felt a nagging worm of guilt and doubt. He seldom heard confession or gave absolution. He seldom ministered to the sick or needy. He preached no Good News. He had no converts. He loved no one. He hid from loving or being loved among crumbling books, ancient jars, old bones.

He had requested his Bishop to allow him to discontinue his archaeological studies in order to work among the poor in a refugee camp. And as the Jeep bumped southward away from the ancient city mound, he felt relief, joy, and no regret.

Clutter filled the bishop's office.

The desktop was invisible under piles of correspondence and manila folders. To the left of the desk, a bank of file cabinets stood with three drawers partially open. And to the right, the floor-to-ceiling bookcases were stuffed with books both upright and lying on their sides.

The bishop gestured Francis to the chair beside the desk while he continued talking into the phone, holding it with one hand and leafing through a manila folder with the other. The bishop's collar was loose and the sleeves of his black shirt rolled up.

The Lazarus Projects

Hanging up the phone he exclaimed, "They expect me to run a tourist agency here. Arabs -- Israelis -- Some damn body blew up half the rooms at the Palas Hotel, and irate pilgrims want me to find 'em new accommodations. They even call here for bus schedules. Pilgrims are pests!"

He fumed a while longer mopping his face with a large handkerchief. "Come on down to the chapel," he said. "I want to pray off some of the frustrations of pilgrims before talking about anything spiritual."

They went down a narrow spiral stairway to the bishop's private chapel. The walls were bare except that above the altar hung an unusual wooden cross. The cross was grape wood with the bark still adhering. Two vines had grown across each other at right angles; and as the plant grew thicker, the living wood naturally fused together. The bishop had discovered this natural formation on his family farm. He had cut down the living vine to get the cross to hang in his chapel.

The two men knelt together in silent prayer for a few minutes. Then the bishop sighed, "Lord, give me wisdom." He crossed himself and turned from his kneeling position and sat with his back to the kneeling rail. Francis shifted so that he was sitting on the floor leaning back against the wall.

"First of all," the bishop said, "I am denying your request for reassignment to the refugee camps."

Francis swallowed his disappointment and stared at the flickering pattern of light cast on the wall beneath the cross by the two altar candles.

"We have been approached," the bishop said, "By a group of Americans, extremely wealthy Americans. They approached us through the Occidental School here in Jerusalem. They put out feelers to determine who was the best qualified expert on the city of Jerusalem during the time of Christ. It seems as though these Americans think they have developed some type of time machine and intend to actually go back to the time of Christ in order to interview him and investigate his miracles -- particularly the resurrection."

Father Francis leaped to his feet. "That's wonderful! That's wonderful," he exclaimed. "Are you sure it's possible? Why we can actually see him, touch him, talk to him. Can they really do that?"

"It does seem that it might be possible," the bishop said mildly. "And if so, it leaves us with several delicate problems. I imagine that you know as much as any man living about the physical structure of Jerusalem at the time. I have recommended you through the Occidental School to work with these Americans and to act as their guide."

"I'm honored."

"I'm sure that you realize that the Church has no fear of intense scientific

The Lazarus Projects

scrutiny; however, I also know that you understand that the men who wrote the Gospels were in their own words 'ignorant and unlearned men'. And, of course, they wrote of the things they observed from their own viewpoint. When modern investigators observe these same events, they may interpret them in a less favorable light which may upset the faith of simple believers in our own time."

Father Francis felt bewildered.

The bishop went on, "There are 321 churches, shrines and holy sites in this city. The location of some of these places was not determined until during the Crusades and although these may not be the exact, literal, historical sites, hundreds of years of veneration by the faithful have rendered these places sacred. For instance, if this time expedition were to reveal that the actual site of Calvary was not at the present location of the Church of the Crucifixion -- Why, the faith of some might be unsettled. We can not allow this to happen. In the face of historical accuracy, we want to pinpoint each authentic site. But -- and this is more important -- we must not allow historical nit-picking to interfere with the sincere belief of the faithful."

Francis said, "I'm not exactly sure what you are getting at..."

"Well, as you know," the bishop said, "Some of the miracles of Our Lord are open to varied interpretations. The resurrection

itself may have occurred in some spiritual sense. Many scholars believe that. And although devoted scholars may hold to either a literal or a figurative view of the resurrection, the average layman is not qualified to discern varied interpretations without having his basic faith seriously shaken. In fact..."

"I'm still not sure what you're getting at," Francis said again, "Either the facts recorded in the Gospels are true or they are not true."

"Quite right. Quite right," the bishop interjected. "The Holy Church affirms that these events are true. However, when investigated by modern scientific methods, they may not prove to be true in the same sense as previously thought."

Francis said, "But of all the hundreds of archaeological excavations conducted here in the Holy Land, nothing has ever been found to contradict the statements of Scripture. In fact, most discoveries incline me toward a fairly literal explanation... Precisely what is it you want me to do?"

The bishop shuffled his feet and placed a heavy hand on Francis' shoulder. "As you are sworn to obedience and to defend the faith," he said, "In this day when the Church is under attack from godless communism and materialism and a thousand other enemies, I require you to accompany this American expedition back through time. Consult with them. Give them every

The Lazarus Projects

assistance in their investigations. But you are to determine if the facts uncovered in these investigations are compatible with the teaching and traditions of the Church. If, in your opinion, the findings of the expedition would undermine rather than uplift the faith of believers -- Then I require you to take whatever steps necessary to insure that this expedition does not return to the present."

"You want me to murder people!"

"Not at all. Not at all. They would still live -- but in the past, not the present."

— VIII —

The Boca Raton base which Dr. McIntosh established for his time travel experiments was located just west of Highway A1A on a large marshy tract of land bordering the IntraCoastal Waterway. The Boca Raton time lab was in a huge windowless metal building originally intended as a NASA facility to be used for the satellite tracking of launches from Cape Kennedy a few miles to the north. Power pylons crossed the salt marsh and stretched west to the horizon. In the area immediately around the building, the ground was mostly crushed oyster shell mingled with runners of Bermuda and crabgrass. At the rear of the building, four accordion doors admitted tractor-trailer trucks inside for loading and unloading. At the front, the air-conditioned offices were partitioned off from the cavernous area in the heart of the building which contained the two divisions of the time lab.

Since there was no conference room as such in the facility, Dr. McIntosh set up the employees' lunch room for the meeting. The room provided two Formica topped tables pushed end to end and metal folding

The Lazarus Projects

chairs. A sandwich machine (hot or cold), a canned soup and coffee machine, a microwave, and a cold drink machine lined one wall.

When Dr. McIntosh and Eli entered the room pushing Lazarus, now confined to a wheelchair, Ben and Jack Weymouth were pounding on the side of the drink machine and Judy knelt in front of it with her arm stuck up the slot where the cans were supposed to roll out -- but did not. Father Francis stood to the side with an aluminum drink can in one hand and the ring of the tab top in the other. He was offering the drink to Judy.

Ben looked up at Dr. McIntosh.

"If this thing is typical of the machines you have around here, I'm not sure I want to travel in one," he said.

Dr. McIntosh laughed.

"A Cyclotron any physicist can build," he said. But only God can make a coke machine work. It hit me for fifty cents this morning."

Jack helped Judy to her feet and said to Francis, "How come it worked for you?"

Francis shrugged. "I pray a lot," he said moving out a chair so Lazarus' wheelchair could be situated at the head of the table.

Lazarus looked haggard.

The others found places at the table and looked expectantly at Eli.

"Of the other projects, " he said, "Two appear to be at a standstill. Both the Cryonics and the Resuscitation projects offer us intriguing hints but no definite answers yet. In the Geriatrics project, the Hunzas and Ecuadorians are having the time of their lives arguing the relative merits of goats against vicunas. The tests on these oldsters show no special genetic construction or any physical reason for their longevity. Their diets are simple and contain no miracle ingredients. The only common denominator seems to be their attitude toward life -- they enjoy every moment of it.

"There have been some interesting developments in the Regression Project in Jacksonville. Ben was there so I'll let him tell about it."

Ben fidgeted and ran his hands through his hair.

"You know, there's a couple of things I'd like to say, you know," he said. "It's like this. Since Dr. Hann started working with real old people, he found some evidence, you know, about some psychic phenomena. But this stuff doesn't have any thing to do with a life after death, you know."

He took a deep breath.

"One old lady he was regressing seemed to remember being a little boy in a previous life. But when she told about her

The Lazarus Projects

experiences, old Hann realized that she was recalling events from his childhood. How about that. Somehow there is thought transference so this woman was picking up memories out of his mind and playing them back to him. There's telepathy involved in her case but not reincarnation.

"There's this other man in the Psychic Project who definitely has the gift of teleportation. In the clinic he can move small objects by sheer mental power. This guy worked as a watchmaker until he retired 13 years ago. So possibly it's because of his ability to concentrate so intently that he manages to focus his mind in some special way to have power over material things. I saw him move a four-ounce lead pyramid, this fishing sinker, about eight inches in the air and hold it there thirty seconds. Before he came to the lab, he didn't know he could do things like that.

"There's one other thing I'd like to tell you about..." he hesitated and began to toy with a glass ashtray on the table in front of him. He looked down at the ashtray and not at the people he spoke to.

"See, we went over to Dr. Gould's clinic and Dr. Hann hypnotized a terminal patient... Her name was Thelma Deeks -- Miss. Thelma Deeks. She was way up in her eighties... She used to be a teacher at the school for deaf children in St. Augustine... When Dr. Hann regressed her, she didn't go back to childhood or to a former life of anything like

John W. Cowart

that... She sort of became a young girl again. Maybe 20 or 22.

"She didn't remember being young. I mean, she didn't just remember it; she seemed actually to become what she must have been when she was young. Her voice was a young woman's. Her whole manner changed. And it seemed to me that I was talking with a girl my age... and ... and we talked about playing tennis... She was still a shriveled up, dying, little old lady, but her voice was young and her eyes were young and I could see how beautiful she must have been sixty years ago... the way she held herself and moved her hands... somehow, inside, she still was that girl...

"Like I said, we talked about playing tennis and she told me about her new tennis costume, a long white dress -- can you believe that. A long white dress with a high collar and lace and long sleeves and a hat -- My god! a white hat to play tennis in.

"And she told me about the court there at the school where she taught. It was grass with big water oaks shading it. And after the game we could sit at little round wrought-iron tables, white tables, to drink lemonade and watch other couples play... I made a date with her to play next Sunday, and she smiled and was so soft and so feminine and so... so... Hell! It sounds stupid to say it but she was so old-fashion-girlish that I'd give my right arm to date her ... I mean, it was like falling in love or something.

The Lazarus Projects

"And when Dr. Hann brought her back to the present, for a few minutes she didn't recognize me. Then her eyes lit up. She took my hand and said -- and her voice was an old lady's again -- She said, 'Don't forget our date, Mr. Rosen.' And then she died. Just like that."

For a moment the room was silent.

Judy Weymouth got up from beside her husband and walked around the table to where Ben sat. She leaned over and kissed him on the forehead saying, "Ben, that was beautiful. Thank you for sharing it with us."

Lazarus pushed his wheelchair a few inches back from the table. "Yes, Ben. Thanks. I appreciate what you are doing to further my projects. However, nothing any of these projects has turned up so far is of any help to me. My doctors are fumbling around with this and that, all my hair is falling out -- I don't even have any you-know-where -- but the cancer has not arrested. Project directors are spending fortunes, and I still don't know what to expect if I die.

"Now, Dr. McIntosh. Will I get results from you, or just more of these curios? There isn't much time. What are you going to do? How fast can I get some answers?" Lazarus grew more and more agitated as he spoke. His fevered eyes glared and his fists clenched as fear and anxiety were expressed as anger.

McIntosh said, "Mr. Wienstien, unless you learn to have God's peace in your own

soul, extended existence will be a torment for you.... There are inherent dangers known in time travel besides unknown factors and possible side effects on the human body which make it dangerous to press for any quicker schedule.

"As to project status, I propose to organize our time trip in five stages. Tomorrow morning, the first human will be transported back two thousand years for ten minutes.

"If that trip appears to be harmless, a second trip involving two principals will go back for an entire day. If these two return safely, the whole Project Five team will spend a week in the past. And, if that trip is successful, then we will transfer all the equipment to Israel and return to the time of Christ for a month. "

Francis suggested, "Instead of waiting till all the tests are complete here, can't you go ahead and ship duplicate equipment to Jerusalem to save time used in taking this plant apart and reassembling it there?"

"The cost would be enormous," Dr. McIntosh said.

"Damn the cost," Lazarus said.

Eli said, "Give me the list of what you need and I'll get the things to Jerusalem. Will you need the same amount of U-238? It'll be ticklish smuggling it out of this country and into Israel since that Iranian thing last week, I'll bet ."

The Lazarus Projects

"Save that until after the first two tests so I'll know if we can use less. But it would speed things up if our launch site over there were already set up. I'll take care of getting the yellowcake into Israel, myself; I'll have it shipped straight from Zaire."

Eli asked, "Brother Francis, can you locate a site for us? It needs to be a location near modern Jerusalem, very private, and have a good source of electric power. And it needs to have been an isolated spot in ancient times; we don't want anyone to see us arrive and stone us as witches."

Francis replied, "I already have a spot in mind. It's a copper smelter about three miles southeast of the city. I hear it's up for sale."

Rosen said, "Check it out and authorize an agent to purchase the property."

"What's the price limit?"

"For the right spot, there isn't one. Pay whatever they ask," Lazarus said. "Remember, I'm sick."

Jack spoke up, "Dr. McIntosh, there may be a hitch here that I wasn't aware of before. You mentioned side effects from our exposure to the radiation. We don't have children yet. What are the chances of chromosome damage?"

"The hell with chromosome damage!" Lazarus shouted. "You two are getting a half-million dollars apiece for this. You can adopt children."

"We intend to someday. But we also intend to have some of our own and if we have to miss the million ..."

"Mrs. Weymouth," Lazarus roared. "Are you going to let your husband back out of a million dollar deal. I can ruin him. I can..."

"You just wait a minute," Judy said. "Jack's the head of our household and..."

"You people are crazy!" Lazarus shouted. "Damn you! Don't you understand that I may be dying. I can ruin your whole future. Children aren't important. If I die..."

Eli laid his hand on his friend's arm. "It's ok. It's ok," he said. "There's no evidence of any genetic damage to the monkey. We may be getting upset over an issue that won't come up at all. Who's the best geneticist in the country? I'll get him here to check the amounts of radiation we'll be exposed to. If we have to change the make-up of the team, we can. In the meanwhile, let's run the tests so there won't be any delay."

"Who's making this first trip back tomorrow," Ben asked.

"I am," his father replied.

— IX —

The time chamber's hatch stood open.

Chrome and copper arranged in intricate coils gleamed in the fluorescent lighting of the lab. Massive lead shields separated the radiation source from the rest of the lab. White-coated attendants, like mystic priests, went through their ritualistic litanies of checklists doing homage to the glittering banks of gauges which flickered their own cabalistic numerology.

Jack gave Eli his final pre-trip physical while Ben and Francis helped Dr. McIntosh put the final touches on the instrument packet that was to accompany him into the past. Judy moved deftly about the room, everywhere at once, photographing the entire operation.

"Remember," Dr. McIntosh cautioned, "You will be in the past for ten minutes of both present time and past time. I've programmed the computer to return you automatically but if there's any glitch, I will use the manual override after 12 minutes. If we have to go to manual, it's a little complicated and the return sequence may take as long as 20 minutes, so don't worry if

John W. Cowart

you're there a touch longer that we've planned.

"From what we learned from Lady's trip, your going back should be fairly easy, but the return trip may be quite a jolt. Lady wandered about two miles from her point of arrival and returned to this location ok. You won't be there long enough to go far, but it might be safer for you to remain right where you land. If anything goes wrong, stay right there so that we can find you. And don't take off the control belt for any reason. You can't return without it".

Eli buckled on the metallic mesh belt, similar to the one Lady wore on her trip. There was nothing left to check. Nothing to do. All activity in the lab ceased. No one spoke. Eli turned away from them and entered the chamber closing the door behind him.

The observers saw the outer wheel of the locking mechanism turn slowly sealing the chamber. Dr. McIntosh stood behind his assistant watching her fingers dance through the intricate manipulations of buttons, switches and levers which activated the device withdrawing the C-14 from Eli's body and sinking him two thousand years into the past.

They waited ten minutes.

The computer took over the automatic return sequence.

The Lazarus Projects

The chamber hatch swung open and Eli staggered out holding his right hand over his eyes. His pants legs were wet to the knees and his shoes caked with sand. In his left hand, he carried a crab shell.

"Are you alright," Jack asked wrapping a cuff around Eli's arm to take his blood pressure.

"Fine. It was beautiful! Absolutely beautiful!" The financier was grinning. "It's like riding an elevator except that coming back there's a jerk and a blinding light. Is the crab ok? The coast line has changed since then. I landed knee deep in the ocean and I caught that crab right there. Did he make it back ok?"

They crowded to the steel table where the empty crab shell lay. "I picked it up alive just a minute ago. Now, it's been dead two thousand years. We can't bring living things back with us."

"Congratulations," Jack said shaking Eli's hand. "You're the world's first chrononaught -- or whatever you call it. Let's get your physical finished. So far, I can't detect any ill effects from your trip."

After the second trip, Ben and Francis also appeared to be in perfect health. There were no signs of radiation sickness, genetic or chromosome damage. They had spent their day in the past swimming and their one recommendation was that when the whole team went back for a week, they take a case of mosquito repellent.

The bedspread was of blue silk. Judy, naked, was on her knees with her shoulders pressed flat on the bed and her rump high in the air. Jack, also naked, lay sprawled beside her idly rubbing her back with his left hand. They had just had intercourse and Judy was in this position because her gynecologist had told her that it caused the semen to pool at the mouth of the cervix, an aid to possible conception.

"Think I'm pregnant yet?" The pillow muffled her voice.

"If you're not, it's certainly not from lack of trying, " he muttered sleepily. "You happy?"

"I certainly am." she said. "Do you think that this will really work? I'm anxious to have a little baby to cuddle. We can have lots of them."

"It's not as much fun as your romantic notion of it, but there are three things never full: fire, the grave and an empty womb," he quoted.

"It wasn't so empty a minute ago, you chauvinistic pig," she teased.

"Glad to oblige, M'am. Any time, you just feel free to call on me," he said.

Judy rolled down and snuggled her head on his shoulder. "Excited?" she asked.

"Not any more," he said taking her free hand and moving it to his limp penis.

The Lazarus Projects

"I didn't mean that way, Silly... the trip tomorrow."

"I don't know. It doesn't seem to be dangerous. Of course, it could be years before any side effects show up. But I think we should go. I feel right about this... Besides, with the money we're guaranteed we'll be able to open that clinic in India and this is the only way I can see that we'd ever have a chance to do it... Do you want to back out?"

"Not really. I told you that I'm willing to follow you anywhere... I like you."

"I like you too. And I feel right about this."

"The main thing that bothers me," Judy spoke thinking aloud, "is that Mr. Wienstien is such a grouch. Why should he have all these different things going for him? He's a nasty old man and even if it were possible, I don't think he should live forever."

"He won't live forever, Honey. No body does. He's in the second stage right now."

"Second stage?"

"Yes. At first, a person who learns that he's dying refuses to admit that it's possible. He says, 'Not me!' When it dawns on him that his own death is likely, he gets mad -- at God, at his doctors, at his own body which is letting him down, at everyone. Wienstien started all these projects as a way of refusing to believe that he could die. Now he's realizing that in spite of his money and

John W. Cowart

in spite of his projects, he's still a dying man. So he's angry. It's hurt -- fear -- anger -- that's manifesting itself at this stage."

"What's the next stage?"

"Bargaining. He'll probably try to make some kind of deal with God so he can live longer. He'll swear off something or build a hospital or a church or something of the sort... Say this is a hell of a conversation in this situation. How'd we get off on this? Why don't we ever talk about films and shutter speeds and all that stuff you work with? All our bedtime conversation is always about my work."

Judy propped up on one elbow smiling. "This is the way it works," she said. "I ask you questions. Your superior masculine mind spouts ego building answers -- the great doctor enlightening his admiring concubine -- then your blood rushes straight from your brain to your dick. You get hard and fuck me again... See," she concluded brightly.

"I see that you don't really care about my mind. You're manipulating me to get my body."

"Look," she said giving him a squeeze, "It works. Doesn't it?"

The morning of the final test dawned bright and hot. The stained glass windows of the ultra-modern Saint Seton's Church, on Highway A1A just north of the Boca Raton facility, shimmered in the new born sun as

The Lazarus Projects

Father Francis elevated the Host. He struggled to keep his mind on what he was doing; the reality was there but the feeling of worship escaped him.

Once it was customary for priests to accompany expeditions of exploration. He thought of Bernardo Buil, the Catalan friar who sailed with Columbus in charge of spiritual affairs. Today men seemed to think there is no spiritual side to exploration; although several have applied to go, no priest has been into space yet.

He frowned as he recalled that Buil had a lot of trouble on his expedition. Columbus had hanged several dissident sailors. The priest disapproved and placed the Admiral of the Ocean Seas under interdict, barring the explorer from the Sacraments as a punishment. Columbus retaliated by cutting off the priest's rations so that he had to live on the scant food smuggled to him by sympathizers in the crew.

"Lord, grant that we, on this expedition, can live and work together in a spirit of peace," he prayed. "And O Jesus, help things to work out... Help me to have the wisdom to know the right thing to do... Help me not to have to sabotage us in the past... I know your Gospels are true -- but I am afraid."

His prayers completed but unfinished, Father Francis drove from the church to the research center to join the rest of the team.

— X —

gear filled the time chamber.

The back wall was stacked from floor to ceiling with tents, medical kits, radiation equipment, sleeping bags, various kinds of cameras, food -- and mosquito repellent.

Eli, Ben, Jack, Judy, and Francis, dressed in rugged outdoor costumes and belted with the metallic bands controlling their C-14 infusions, clustered inside the door of the chamber. Jack gripped his wife's hand.

"Relax, Jack," Dr. McIntosh said, "It's just like an elevator ride."

"Sure it is. But why does the elevator operator work it from the outside instead of riding up and down with us passengers?"

"I don't have time for a camping trip. I have to try to fix that Coke machine while you all are gone," Dr. McIntosh said.

Francis spoke up, "You sure know how to inspire confidence."

"Shut up and pray," Eli said nudging him in the ribs.

The Lazarus Projects

The door to the time chamber swung shut. Ben spun the locking wheel. It was pitch black inside. Jack reached over and tweaked Judy's breast. She slapped his hand away.

Suddenly the floor shifted under them. The chamber seemed to rise rapidly. It was like an elevator, Judy thought, shooting to the top of a very tall building. It reached the top of its thrust and plunged to the bottom of its shaft spilling them and their gear onto a white sand beach.

Blinking their eyes at the sudden change in light, they stared about. Even the three men who had been there previously were struck with the wild beauty of the scene.

The first thing that struck their senses was the unbelievable purity and clarity of the air. Unpolluted by present-day fumes, smoke or emissions, each breath tasted of refreshing delight. The whole landscape looked brighter with even distant things showing sharp clear edges.

They stood on a wide uncluttered beach that stretched north in a gentle curve. Further south of the beach, palms and other vegetation grew right down to the water's edge where the land ended with a low shelf of sand.

Thousands of birds of every kind and color pattered on the beach picking up food. Some sailed gracefully through the crisp air

John W. Cowart

or fluttered squawking in the branches of nearby trees.

Oleander, painted daisies, hawthorn, magnolia, hibiscus -- every imaginable kind of flower -- grew in profusion.

Vines -- wild grapes, wisteria, trumpet vine, morning glory -- wove flowered webs in the trees along the shore.

The moving ocean water changed color with each wave -- silver, clear, green, azure, white. But with each changing color, the water retained a sparkling transparency so that even in the breakers, fish were visible flicking about their business. And among long fingers of coral, strands of red and green seaweed danced in rhythm with the waves.

The five people with their metal and plastic gear felt guilty of some horrid trespass. A silent, solemn awe gripped each of them. This place was so fresh and new and strange and beautiful that they became acutely aware of how alien to nature their whole lives had been up to this point.

They felt dirty -- no, not dirty -- unclean in the face of majesty.

The swirling birds ignored them.

"I never knew it before, but this is the place I've longed for all my life... No, this isn't it; but it's more like it than anywhere I've ever seen before," Jack said. "The sky's so deep and heavy that I want to duck my head and hide: only once before did I realize

The Lazarus Projects

what Holy meant... Think of it: we sold this out to build shopping centers, parking lots and subdivisions."

Francis said, "It makes Heaven more real to see what earth was really like before we raped her."

Jack examined each of them separately, running his blood tests and radiation checks in a daze at the wonder around him. He found intense radiation clinging to the initial landing site but not to them personally.

After a timeless time of watching the sky and birds and sea, the party silently loaded their gear and hiked north away from the mangrove swamp. They trudged through unblemished crunching sand.

About a mile away, a small creek trickled out of the bushes and spread across the sand in a shallow silver fan. On the other side of the estuary stretched a vast expanse of saw grass. Using machetes to clear away some of the undergrowth, they set up their base camp.

Judy tested her various micro-miniature digital cameras, checking to see if the transition had caused chemical changes in disc film emulsions.

She watched in surprise as two beaver scampered out of the stream and, paying no attention to the time travelers, proceeded to gnaw down a sweet-gum sapling at the edge

John W. Cowart

of the stream and haul it back into the slow running water.

The tide was changing. The sound of oysters popping open in the marsh filled the air.

Francis and Ben pitched the tents and arranged the camp while Eli set up their field kitchen. Then Eli examined the various black-box gadgets which recorded information which Dr. McIntosh wanted back home.

A subtle thought shocked Eli as he considered the financial feasibility of promoting a resort here where pressured executives could escape the ulcer-producing stress of modern society. "Never! Damn it. Never," he swore rebuking his own horrible thought. "My mind is conditioned to turning a profit on everything. If I don't watch myself, I could turn into a real monster and spoil all this."

The test week passed quickly as they ran a multitude of experiments designed to pinpoint the dating control systems. There were intense medical experiments and radiation checks. They gathered samples of air, water, soil and vegetation.

Judy took hundreds of photographs, testing films, apertures, speeds, color coordination and dozens of other features in order to get fine quality prints from the miniature cameras she used. She manufactured disguises for the tiny cameras so that she would be able to carry them back

The Lazarus Projects

to ancient Jerusalem to take her pictures without arousing attention or suspicion.

Francis gave the others an intensive course in ancient coins, customs, weights, measures, and languages that they would need in Jerusalem.

Each sample gathered, each photograph, each item of equipment they intended to bring back to modern times, had to be packed in special foam-rubber cases banded with the copper foil belts that regulated C-14 infusions. The cases were constructed of foam so that when they were all snatched back to the time lab, they wouldn't hurt the people in the chamber.

The Indians were naked.

But their bodies were covered with welts and scars cut in whorls, spirals and geometric patterns, decorating the people in savage tattoos. They came poling two dugouts down the stream and drew their boats up on the bank opposite the camp. The six women, two men and the few children took stone hatchets and woven palmetto baskets out of the dugouts.

As the time team watched apprehensively from their camp, the Indians rushed about, sloshing in the mud and shallow water of the tidal run. They used the stone hatchets to chop clumps of oysters out of their beds and filled their baskets with the harvest. Then they loaded their things back

John W. Cowart

into the dugouts and poled their way back up stream. They did not so much as glance at the time travelers except for one little boy who sat in the stern of the second dugout. He waved timidly at the time travelers but when they waved back, he averted his eyes and ignored them.

"So much for being mistaken for great white gods," Jack said.

"Maybe if you shaved..." Judy replied.

"You know, those people have the right idea," Francis said. "Why don't we try some fresh oysters too?"

The three of them rushed into the mud flats to gather oysters. They called to Ben and Eli, "Come on! Fresh oysters. We didn't think of them before."

Ben called back to the three who were wading back through the mud with arm loads of glistening, dripping shells, "Enjoy them while you can; they're not kosher."

Eli roared with laughter at the crestfallen hangdog look of the three Christians. He called, "Come on. Come on. Bring them in. You can cook them tonight for your supper. We don't mind having to eat with Goy, do we Ben. Of course, we'll keep kosher ourselves."

The oysters tasted succulent and delicious.

The Lazarus Projects

Jack and Judy, holding hands, strolled down the beach to watch the moon rising out of the ocean.

"I've got news for you," she said.

"Good or bad?"

"Depends on how you look at it... I started today."

"I'm sorry, Honey," he said. "Maybe next month."

When the Weymouths returned to camp, they found the others lounging around a crackling campfire sipping port out of tin cups, roughing it.

Around them the moonlight was filled with the night sounds of the marsh and forest. Against the background of a throbbing hum of insects and frogs, night birds sang out protesting various interruptions of their affairs. Out in the marsh, the husky grunting of a bull alligator, appealing to a reluctant female, provided a counter point to the occasional squeals of small hunting animals.

Millions of fireflies swarmed and settled and swarmed again -- a living meteor shower -- pursuing their phosphorescent lives while flickering through the dark woods.

"Sometime tomorrow we go back," Eli said, "And then the real purpose of this project begins. I want you all to remember that we are not to interfere with anything

John W. Cowart

that happens in Jerusalem. We'll be there strictly as observers. If Jesus really did die -- I mean rather than just black out; Jack, you'll be the one to determine that -- and if somehow, he did actually return to life: then we'll talk to him to discover how he managed it and if the trick can be duplicated."

"Dad, what will Uncle Lazarus do when he finds out? I mean, can't he just accept death ... Have faith?"

Francis volunteered, "Everyone comes to God at his own pace, Ben. And everyone of us does it differently."

Eli said, "I suppose Lazarus has as much faith as any of us. It's just that he's afraid of dying."

"I'm not afraid of dying," Ben said. "When I found Jesus he freed me from..."

"You're not afraid of dying because you're not dying yet," his father interrupted. "It's not immediately real to you. Even your Jesus was terrified of death."

Francis protested. "That's hardly true. He came to die for the sins of mankind."

"Be that as it may," Eli replied, "According to your *New Testament*, when he realized his own death was imminent, he sweated blood praying, 'Let this cup pass from me'. He didn't want to die any more than Lazarus does."

"You're right. I hadn't thought of it that way before," Francis said.

The Lazarus Projects

Judy took the bottle of port and replenished everyone's cups. The night sounds continued around them.

Eli said, "From the results of the four other projects, I'm inclined to expect that Jesus will turn out to die just like everyone else, in fear and pain and irrevocably."

Francis said, "If that's true, then we are of all men most miserable. Over the years, two heresies have continued. One, that Jesus was too divine to suffer pain and anguish like the rest of us; the other, that Jesus was too human for his pain and anguish to do the rest of us any good: that he was in the same boat we're in, sinking; or that he's in an airplane, out of reach, flying over the sea we're sinking in. Both views are equally false."

There was a pause in the conversation. Ben added more wood to the fire and a shower of sparks swirled upward joining a swarm of fireflies passing the camp.

Judy spoke up. "I believe in Jesus... I hardly ever go to church, but I believe in him... Not all the stuff that's been added on -- there so much that's cultural, that's confused with... er, that's mixed into Christianity... I mean, a guy in a loincloth with a bone through his nose can be more godly than a coat-and-tie churchgoer. It's what's in a person's heart, kind of."

"I thought you two went to church," Ben said.

John W. Cowart

"I do; she doesn't," Jack answered. "I was brought up going to church every Sunday and that feels right to me. Judy doesn't feel comfortable in a church so she stays home."

"When I was converted and opened my heart to..." Ben began.

"When you converted, it opened your mouth and more's the pity!" his father snapped and stalked away from the fire to his tent and bed.

Another Florida morning dawned bright and beautiful. While Judy was washing up, she noticed a flock of huge white birds making a fuss out in the tidal marsh. It was a mating dance. She ran for her cameras and then crept closer to the birds.

Meanwhile, as Jack was replacing the last of his medical kit for the return, Eli reluctantly approached him about an embarrassing problem.

"About ready," Eli asked.

"Just about. I think for the main trip I can eliminate half this stuff."

"Jack, there's something I need to discuss with you. It's rather personal and I hope you won't take offense."

Jack felt curious about the other man's hesitant manner. "What is it," he asked.

The Lazarus Projects

"As you know, I imagine, the sanitary facilities in ancient Jerusalem are not as private as they might be..."

Jack laughed. "Don't worry about Judy; in Iraq and Indonesia she managed to live around hundreds of soldiers and take care of herself."

"Judy isn't the problem. You are."

"Me?"

"You see, we'll be disguised as Jewish pilgrims from Spain going up for the Passover observance; and even though you, Francis and Judy will play the parts of servants, you'll still be Jewish."

"I don't understand."

"When we get back to Boca Raton this afternoon, I think you should make an appointment to be circumcised so that it will be healed before we get to ancient Jerusalem."

The thought shocked Jack.

Circumcision is an operation for baby boys -- not grown men. When a baby boy is a few days old, if the parents want him circumcised, the doctor cuts off the tiny flap of skin that naturally covers the end of the penis. This is done for all Jewish boys. It was the sign God gave Abraham to mark his descendants. Jack's Presbyterian parents had not thought it necessary.

Eli said. "It may not ever come up; but even the smallest matter could jeopardize

John W. Cowart

the safety of the whole group. Don't you agree?

Jack agreed. But as Eli walked away, he called, "Wienstien sure wants a hell of a lot for his money."

The birds Judy spied were Whooping Cranes congregated on an elevation in the marsh dancing to choose their partners. Some of the huge white birds extended their seven-foot wing span like dainty fans as they pranced and skipped in a circle. Other birds displayed their prowess by bounding in low, elegant, floating flights above the others. Still other birds circled about, bowing again and again in every direction.

Judy had never before seen such a spectacle. (These birds, exterminated for their plumage, are almost extinct in our day). So she watched in fascination. She carefully adjusted the miniature camera and concentrated on framing the pictures. Suddenly the ground shifted beneath her feet. The air around her erupted in blinding, searing light followed by blackness. She felt tumbled through the air. She grunted as someone landed heavily on top of her.

The door of the time chamber opened exposing the jumble of travelers and retrieved equipment.

Judy looked out into Dr. McIntosh's face.

The Lazarus Projects

Beyond him she saw the drabness of
the world she had been born into.

Judy wept.

They all did.

— XI —

The El Al Boeing 707 approached Ben Gurion Airport. Below, the Shalom Tower and the rooftops of Tel Aviv shimmered in the afternoon sun.

A Rolls Royce Wraith II awaited Eli and Ben.

But first, they were delayed by the cautious checks of Israeli customs. As he watched the customs officer go through his things, Eli wondered briefly about how Dr. McIntosh had brought almost 3,000 pounds of weapons-grade nuclear material into this security conscious nation. He dismissed the thought since he was accustomed to delegating responsibility and knew that McIntosh was reliable. The Jerusalem time lab was established as he had ordered on Father Francis' advice, at Ras esh Shiyah, a hill just east of Jerusalem proper and south of the Mount of Olives. The equipment and radioactive materials were already at the site, and Dr. McIntosh was already in the process of assembling another time chamber.

"Yes," Eli thought bitterly as he entered the Rolls, unconscious of its luxury

The Lazarus Projects

in his preoccupation, "Everything is going according to schedule except Lazarus."

Lazarus had gone down visibly in the two weeks following the last test trip. Now he was confined to a luxury suite in the hospice he had founded in Coral Gables. His mind was still alert, but the ravages of carcinoma transformed his body into a shriveled travesty of his former self. Lazarus looked like a photo Eli had seen at Yad Vashem of concentration camp survivors on the day of their liberation; every possible advance in the fields of radium treatment and chemotherapy failed to halt the relentless advance of the disease.

Lazarus Wienstien was irrevocably dying.

As soon as Eli had returned from Florida's past, Lazarus had commissioned him to initiate a sixth project: an orphanage in Hebron to house both Israeli and Arab children, victims of the constant war and violent peace of the Mid-East. This was to be the Wienstien Memorial International Peace Center. When Eli approached the various governments involved, the project was greeted with enthusiasm. Lazarus would provide the orphanage and perpetual funds to run it; the involved nations - gladly, it seemed -- provided orphans.

This was Eli's third negotiation trip since he returned from Florida's past. This particular trip was unnecessary to the orphanage, but it provided cover for his real

John W. Cowart

purpose in Jerusalem. The Weymouths would come as tourists the next day.

Once they reached the edge of Tel Aviv, it was an eighty minute drive to Jerusalem. Ben drove in silence. Eli settled himself and read *Jerusalem Post* in the erratic light in the moving car. From the newspaper's reports of car bombings, retaliations, rock throwing incidents, and strikes by Palestinian policemen, it was obvious that peace deteriorated daily. It appeared to Eli that the orphanage was going to need expansion even before construction started. He made a note to consult the architect again.

On his return to Jerusalem, Father Francis reported to the bishop as his duty demanded. He was anxious to examine the First Century costumes supplied by the Hollywood designer Eli had contracted. He wanted to be sure that the material used in the costumes would not attract attention to them as they mingled with the people of the past. He hoped his interview with the bishop would be short.

The monsignor who acted as the bishop's secretary ushered Francis into the bishop's cluttered office. Francis moved a ream of newspapers from the desk-side chair while the bishop listened intently to his ever-present phone and scribbled frantic notes on the back of an envelope.

The Lazarus Projects

He slammed down the phone and rushed from the office clutching the envelope. A few minutes later, he returned smiling at Francis. "Damn pilgrims," he said, "Can't even get away to the bathroom. They expect a beatific vision on an economy tour. Now..." He thumbed the intercom speaking to the monsignor, "You fight them for a while. We want a private talk." He turned to Francis, "Now, does this American machine work and is it a threat to us?"

Francis answered, "All the tests run in Florida were completely successful. This will be the greatest tool for historical research ever developed. It will absolutely confirm the truth of Gospel events."

The bishop pursed his lips. "To be sure; to be sure... but what if some things -- minor things, I'm sure -- should prove to be different from what we believe? Can you handle it?"

Francis considered and then spoke. "We have nothing to fear from truth."

"Ha!" The bishop exploded. "What's truth? These boatloads of peasants thronging the streets at Easter, pushing and shoving and elbowing each other out of the way so they can get close to something holy? Look, all this rigmarole is just the base of the pyramid supporting real men, real truth-seekers, at the top. I do not want it all torn down. Nothing must be allowed to happen which will upset the faith of these ignorant and unlearned men at the bottom

John W. Cowart

of the pyramid. Too much is resting on them. You scholars can speculate on the nature of truth; but if men like me don't protect the basic structure -- Why, who will feed you?"

Francis, shocked at this outburst, replied quietly, "The Holy Spirit protects his church."

"Yes. And he does it through men like me -- and you, of course. We are his human agents. All through history, priests have accompanied great ventures into unknown territory. They have gone to propagate and protect the Faith!" The bishop struck the desk with his fist. "The Philippines is the only Christian nation in Asia today because Father Valderrama went with Magellan on that first voyage around the world. And the two of them converted pagans by devout persuasion. So much time was spent in this devotion that other officers criticized Magellan for neglecting trade and profits."

The bishop continued, "A Mercedarian friar, Bartoloma de Olmedo, went to Mexico with Cortez and they stamped out human sacrifices and established true religion..."

Francis flinched as he recalled the atrocities committed in the name of faith by Cortez, but he said nothing. The bishop's tirade included some other exploration priest, but Francis missed it.

"... examples. Now you have the same kind of opportunity to protect the faith. The church has fed and trained and educated you for this moment. Yes, the Holy Spirit will

The Lazarus Projects

protect his Church; the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her. And You are God's instrument... Do you have any questions about this?"

"No. Sir."

"You may leave."

After Francis left the office, the bishop tilted back in his chair and gazed out his office window. In the distance he could see the Mosque of Omar, a splendid Moslem edifice built on the site of Solomon's Temple. It contains a stone reputed to be the one Isaac was tied to when Abraham planned to sacrifice him. The Prophet Mohammed had visions here. And one feature of the shrine is a mark on the stone reputed to be the footprint of an angel. Outside of Mecca, the Dome of the Rock, is regarded as the holiest spot in Islam.

The bishop thought about Francis for a few minutes and then shook his head. Speaking to himself he said, "He could have been God's instrument... Now it's up to me."

The bishop picked up the phone and dialed the number of an Arab acquaintance. "Kamel, I want to talk to you in private... Yes. It's urgent. Information has come to me that the Israelis have some fissionable material hidden near the Mosque of Omar."

The Intercontinental Hotel resembles a little piece of America built atop the Mount of Olives. It was picked as the team's living

John W. Cowart

quarters in Jerusalem because of its modern accommodations and because of its proximity to the time research site.

From the terrace overlooking the newly constructed swimming pool, Jack and Judy gazed down at the vast panorama spread below them. Down the slope of the Mount and crossing the road in the valley and continuing right up to the walls of the Dome of the Rock, straight across from them, lay a massive tangle of cemeteries. One Hebrew tradition says that the souls of people buried on the Mount of Olives will be the first into Heaven on Resurrection Day; so for centuries, Jews have arranged for their burial to be on the slopes of this mountain.

Beyond the cemeteries and the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem lay in two major divisions designated the Old City and the New City.

Old Jerusalem sprawled with its skyline pierced by the YMCA tower and the spires and minarets of dozens of churches and mosques. Even further west, New Jerusalem lies with its modern apartment buildings. And by leaning out from their balcony and looking to the right, the Weymouths could see the onion-domed Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene.

The sunset behind the city blazed in orange rays and pink fluffy clouds. Because of the current dispute over the occupied territories, no lights came on as darkness fell.

The Lazarus Projects

Because of the unrest a precautionary curfew and blackout was in effect.

The Weymouths went inside to the hotel dining room and feasted on a dish of pigeons stuffed with pine seeds and rice, followed by a peppery salad of tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, and olives with honey-sweet Baklava for desert.

"Still sore, Honey?" Judy asked over her steaming cup of coffee.

"No. So long as I don't move, I'm perfectly all right."

She grinned. "I read something this morning before I went out. I wanted to show you but you were still asleep. Ever read the story of Dinah?"

"I'll bite. Who is Dinah?"

"She was the daughter of Jacob."

"I thought he just had twelve sons."

"Twelve sons and one daughter. Dinah." Judy's eyes flashed with the coup she was anticipating. "You don't remember the story right at the end of Genesis?"

"Well, I've read Genesis, but I get bogged down in all the begats... Come on. What's your story? I can tell by that impish grin that you're on to something."

"Well, It's like this," Judy began, "Once, while Jacob and his sons were camping somewhere up north -- this was before Joseph was sent off to Egypt, but most of Jacob's sons were apparently grown men."

John W. Cowart

Anyhow, Jacob's only daughter, Dinah, went off to visit some of her girlfriends who were Canaanite. And while she was there, this Canaanite prince saw her and fell in love. It's not too clear whether he raped her or seduced her, but anyhow, afterward he wanted to marry her. During the negotiations over the bride price, Dinah's brothers agreed to the marriage on one condition -- that all the men in the Canaanite city where this prince lived were to be circumcised. The prince agreed to this, and he and all his men were circumcised. But three days later, when the Canaanites were too sore and sensitive to defend themselves, Dinah's brothers entered the city and slaughtered the lot of them..."

"My God! What a dirty trick."

"I thought you'd appreciate that bit of biblical knowledge," Judy said.

"What happened to Dinah?"

"I don't know; I'll read the next chapter tonight."

They left the dining room and went upstairs to their room.

"This elevator isn't kosher," Jack observed.

"How in the world can an elevator be kosher?"

"In kosher hotels, the elevators are rigged to stop on every floor from Friday night through Saturday for the Sabbath --

The Lazarus Projects

that way you don't have to do the work of pushing the button."

"They think of everything, don't they," Judy said. The she began laughing.

"What's so funny?

"I just had a vision of these dignified old graybeards huddled over a great pile of books in prayer shawls and those little caps and all the books are Otis Elevator manuals."

"Don't be sacrilegious."

"Well, it's better to be sacrilegious than not religious at all."

Three leaders of Beni Sakhr, the Brotherhood of the Sons of the Rock, huddled around a small table in a grimy cafe. The remnants of a meal of Felafel, a mash of fried chickpeas mixed with pickles, tomatoes, and sesame seeds stuffed into a a pocket of pita bread, littered the table. In the Arabic atmosphere, a radio incongruously blared out American rock and roll covering all but snatches of their conversation.

"...How soon?...security arrangements... retrieve the materials... plastic explo...No that won't... fix the bastards... The Whole Damn Place."

— XII —

The wall behind the desk flashed suddenly bright with a huge square of light with clipped corners.

A bit of focusing brought a colored map of Jerusalem into the square of light. The black silhouette of Francis' hand moved over the map pointing out various historical sites. He had prepared the acetate overlays on the history and geography of the Holy City for lectures to archaeology students years ago. He'd never gotten around to putting his lecture notes together as a PowerPoint display so he still used an ancient overhead projector. Now he was using these same overhead transparencies to brief the time team.

"Jerusalem was originally a city of people called Jebusites," he said. "This was conquered by King David about 1,000 B.C. He made it the Jewish capital. David's son, Solomon, built God's temple here and the kings of Judea ruled her until 586 B.C. when the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed the city.

"The city and a new Temple were rebuilt by Ezra and Nehemiah. But in

The Lazarus Projects

subsequent wars, which occurred during the Maccabean Period -- that is when the Romans took over between the Old and New Testaments -- the city and the Temple were largely destroyed.

"King Herod, essentially a Roman puppet ruler, made extensive repairs to the Temple and extended the city beyond its previous walls. This was the city of Jesus -- I'll come back to this later in my lecture.

"After the time of Christ, the Roman general Titus utterly destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

"Titus slaughtered the population, burned the wooden buildings, and knocked down all the stone walls with a few possible exceptions. He crucified 500 Jews in a single day. The Romans even had to rip the door frames from the buildings to get enough wood for crosses. Titus scattered the Jews all over the Empire and refused to allow them to inhabit what was left of Jerusalem.

"Some of the people leaving the city tried to sneak out gold coins by swallowing them. The Roman soldiers learned of this and ripped open 2,000 people in a single day hoping to find gold in their intestines.

"About sixty years later, the Roman Emperor Hadrian build a city called Aelia Capitalina over the ruins of ancient Jerusalem. He built a temple to Jupiter at the site of the former Jewish Temple. Almost all traces of Jerusalem as Jesus knew it were completely obliterated. This will give us

John W. Cowart

some difficulty in finding our way around, but three land marks still remain that we can use as reference points."

"Three?" Jack questioned. "There are churches and monuments all over the place; aren't any of them authentic?"

"You may have noticed," Francis said, "These places are usually referred to as the 'traditional' spot where such and such happened. The way many of these spots were located... Well, look at it this way; even if some of the eyewitnesses to the life of Christ went back after the destruction, there's some chance they may have recognized a location, but that's unlikely. Have you ever revisited some place you knew well in your childhood and tried to pinpoint some exact location in a general area? That's the kind of thing, a First Century person would be up against after the destruction of the city.

"But anyhow, when the Emperor Constantine and his mother, Helena, became Christians, the city had been pagan for over 300 years. Helena made a pilgrimage here, and apparently she had visions or feelings about various places. So she identified these places as sites of Christian significance -- and her son came along and built churches wherever she said.

"Then the Arabs destroyed the city again in 637 A.D. under Caliph Omar. He built mosques. The Crusaders took it back and they built churches. Then Saladin the

The Lazarus Projects

Arab destroyed it and rebuilt mosques. So back and forth the city went. So that now, the Jerusalem where Jesus walked is covered by at least 30 feet of rubble, and for the most part, all these historic places are located by spiritual guess-work at best. For example, there are four sites identified as Gethsemanes; we have two Calvarys and two tombs, and nine heads of John the Baptist located in this city."

"Will we be able to find our way around at all," Ben asked.

"Yes. There are still three places from the time of Jesus which we can positively locate on today's map -- possibly four if we include Bethsaida or even more if we count the Maccabean tombs outside the city."

Francis pointed to the map. "Here is the Western Wall, the Wailing Wall. This was not actually part of the Temple itself, but was a wall of the outermost enclosure surrounding Herod's Temple. For some reason it was not destroyed by Titus. There are several legends concerning why not, the most probable being that the Romans camped there.

"Down here, to the south, is Siloam Pool and Hezekiah's Tunnel with Gihon Spring at the other end. We have positive identification on these features. So, if for any reason, we get separated in the past, this is where we meet.

"Over here is that site of a building that was most likely Herod's palace. Most of

John W. Cowart

the stone work there today was built on Crusader ruins by Suleiman in 1540, but underneath all that is Herodian construction.

"This afternoon, we will walk around these places to get familiar with them. But remember, Siloam Pool is the most important because we can't be sure of being able to meet at either the Temple or the Palace; but I'm sure there was public access to this water supply during the time of Christ. If there is trouble, it may be wise not to be either at the Palace or in the Temple area, but we can meet at the Pool of Siloam."

Francis placed a new transparency on the overhead projector.

"As you can see from this map, the main source of water for Jerusalem is this spring, Gihon, here on the edge of the Kidron Valley. When Sennecherib of Assyria threatened to lay siege to Jerusalem, King Hezekiah had this tunnel dug to the spring outside the wall so the water could be collected here at Siloam Pool inside. This tunnel is almost 1,800 feet long and six feet high; we'll walk through it this afternoon."

Jack asked, "You keep talking about walking. Can't we drive to some of these places. Walking's not my strong point for a few days yet."

Francis answered, "When we're there in the past, we'll be on foot all the time unless you want to buy a camel or a donkey to ride."

The Lazarus Projects

Jack groaned and the others laughed.

Francis continued, "I want you all to be able to find these landmark places on foot easily. One of the things that happened at Siloam Pool is that Jesus cured the man born blind there by spitting in the dust and covering the man's eyes with the mud he made. Then he had the man wash off the mud in Siloam Pool to be cured."

"Why did Jesus use mud and spit?" Eli asked.

Francis replied, "I have no idea... Perhaps we can ask him."

That afternoon, they walked from the Wienstien Biblical Research Center, the name on the plaque outside the time lab, down the Kidron Valley to the Gihon Spring.

They passed many shops which were locked or boarded up because their Arab owners supported a general strike by the Palestinian community. Sullen groups of people loitered at street corners but the time travelers did not see any of the rock throwing/tear gas exchanges common in the area.

At Gihon Spring, Francis passed out flashlights.

"This is a common trip for the more hearty tourists to make in the city," he said. "But it's still slippery and you'll need the lights. Watch your step."

They waded into the icy water, plunged into the rock grotto and followed the

John W. Cowart

slow current into the jagged Jebusite tunnel. The water ran gently, waist deep at first, and then the walls and floor of the tunnel became smooth, still bearing scars from the iron chisel marks of Hezekiah's workmen. Francis pointed out the place where an ancient Hebrew inscription was found telling how two teams of workmen laboring from opposite ends of the tunnel had heard the sounds of each others' tools on the rock and dug through to meet deep under the limestone of Mount Ophel.

The party sloshed through the winding conduit. In places the rock roof dipped so low there was barely room for their heads between the water and the rock ceiling. Finally a hazy light spread over the passage ahead; and they emerged, splashing out into dazzling sun light shining on a still pool where some Arab women were washing clothes on huge flat stepping stones while naked children splashed around them.

As usual when they saw tourists emerge from the tunnel, the children ran over to the party hoping to glean a few coins.

The Pool of Siloam is in a deep pit about seventy feet square, and up one side of the pit, 29 stair steps are cut in the rock and a rickety wrought-iron banister protects the edge of the stairs.

They climbed to the top and were met by a man from the Center who brought some dry things for them. They dried off and went

The Lazarus Projects

to rest in the shade of some nearby Carob trees.

Their actions were intently observed by an Arab street vendor who wore strings of glittering watches up to his elbows. His Kaffiyeh headdress was pulled back like a scarf around his neck revealing a tight fitting knit cap. An unlit cigarette dangled from his lip.

This man in turn was observed by a lieutenant from the Israeli Defense League who had been following the Arab, a known agitator, for a number of weeks. The lieutenant made a mental note to check into this Arab's interest in this party of American tourists.

The interest of both observers suddenly quickened. The woman in the party was toying with a metal pendant in the shape of a small pine cone that she wore on a silver chain around her neck. A small silver cross dangled from the same chain. It dawned on both observers simultaneously that the woman was taking photographs.

The pine cone concealed a miniature camera.

With renewed intensity, the Arab followed the time travelers and the Israeli followed the Arab.

The party next climbed the high western ridge of the Old City to the site of Herod's Palace. Here massive blocks formed

John W. Cowart

the sloping of a squat square tower, *Phasael*, named after Herod's brother.

Francis explained how there had originally been three of these towers and that most of the stone work visible at the present time is the work of 14th Century Crusaders and later Moslem builders. The bottom fifteen layers of massive bossed stones are all that remain of what was once a lavish Oriental palace. Francis constantly urged the party to ignore later construction and to memorize permanent landscape features.

In some places, the ground level of Jerusalem has risen as much as eighty feet since the time of Christ. Hills have been leveled; valleys completely filled in. The Roman Hadrian actually leveled the city and ploughed over the ruins. The main reason any part of *Phasael* Tower and the Wailing Wall remain was that the Roman soldiers camped at these locations. Of the entire ancient city, hardly one stone remains standing on another.

They hiked out of the Aramaean Quarter through a maze of narrow crowded streets and down Chain Street to Kotel Hama'aravi, the Wailing Wall.

A huge oblong plaza lay before the wall. It was separated into two divisions by a green woven-plastic screen dividing the men's section from the women's.

Judy entered the women's section while the men obtained caps from a guard

The Lazarus Projects

standing on duty in a small glass booth. Nearby, Israeli paratroopers with unslung Uzis watched over the crowds.

In the men's section, one group of men joined in a long, winding snake-dance, joyously celebrating the Bar Mitzvah of a beaming son. Other men drew up prayer tables covered with wine-colored clothes with gold fringes. A Hasidic Jew with his hands uplifted swayed back and forth in rhythm with his chanted prayers.

On her side of the screen, Judy watched a feeble, wrinkled old woman stuff a folded prayer written on crinkled gray paper deep into a crevice split in a block of the soft cream-colored malaky limestone. Tears coursed down the old woman's face as she tore her clothes begging a seemingly reluctant God to help her in some crisis.

When they moved out of the Plaza, Francis said, "Remember, when we see this spot in the past, it won't be anything like this. Now, the Wall is the center of attraction and worship. It is the holiest spot in Judaism in the present age; but when the Temple was in use, I doubt that anyone paid much attention to this particular wall. As it stands today, the Wailing Wall is a memorial to loss -- or maybe it's better thought of as a memorial to persistence in the face of loss.

"Notice that only the lower courses, those massive blocks, are Herodian. The upper part is a later addition.

John W. Cowart

"According to legend, when the Temple was being reconstructed, the poorest beggars in the city were allotted this unpretentious wall to labor on. And when destruction came, angels stood on the wall linking their wings and singing 'This work of the poor shall never be destroyed.' That is why this least important wall in the Temple complex was spared."

By the time they returned to the research center, they were weary and it was dark.

— XIII —

Would you look at these! They turned out beautiful," Judy exclaimed.

Eli looked over the sheath of photographs she fanned out before him and saw himself slugging through the water in Hezekiah's Tunnel.

"When did you take that?" he said flipping through the other pictures taken that afternoon.

"Look at this little trinket I put together," she said.

The men gathered around her to examine the pine cone pendant she displayed. "It's a digital Mauseur CXL with infrared sensors for night photography. Isn't it neat!"

"That's quite a gadget. You put it together yourself?" Ben said.

"Well, I didn't manufacture it from scratch, but I'll bet the company would be surprised at some of my combinations and refinements. I've designed four other cameras to go with us -- two motion picture and two still. They're disguised as baskets. But I'm really proud of this one. I thought

John W. Cowart

sure one of you would notice me fooling with the pine cone and realize what it was."

"You have a right to be proud of that," Dr. McIntosh said. "That's fine workmanship."

"Why didn't you tell us you were taking pictures? This is defamation of character," Francis said pointing to a picture of himself just dipping into Gihon Spring. The others chuckled at the pained expression on his face as he stepped into the icy water.

Ben said, "I have a bit of craftsmanship to show off too. These just got in this afternoon while we were out touring."

He placed a heavy briefcase on the table and snapped it open to reveal plastic wrapped stacks of gold, silver and bronze coins. The others oled in wonder at the dazzling fortune in front of them.

"Are those real," Jack asked examining a golden shekel with the profile of Augustus Caesar stamped on one side and a temple of Mars on the other.

"Not exactly," Ben said. "In order for us to have spending money when we go back, we had these replicas of coins from the time of Christ struck for us; they're real gold and silver and in the exact proportions and weights as the ancient ones. The numismatists we consulted assure us that experts can't tell the difference. we'll be the wealthiest pilgrims to hit Jerusalem for that particular Passover.

The Lazarus Projects

"Why is Beni Sakhr interested in this batch of Americans," the Israeli commander demanded. "Was Kamel spying on them, or was he guarding them from us? Who the hell are these people anyway?"

The lieutenant waited for his commander to calm down. The intense pressure of the past few weeks of daily expecting war wasn't helping anyone's disposition. Plot after plot against Israel was being exposed and stamped out; or else turned back against the enemy. But in the shaky peaceful prelude to war, there was always the nagging worry about the one conspiracy, the bombing, the assassination, the commando raid which might remain secret from the commander's security organization. The threat of some undiscovered plot troubled the commander's sleep and aggravated his ulcers.

"Sir," the lieutenant answered, "Rosen and his son are here ironing out details for that orphanage his company is building in Hebron.

"The priest with them is Father Francis who has worked here since the eighties. He's the archaeologist who found those Canaanite things at Qalgilya. He's never been involved with anything subversive that we know about.

"The American couple is Dr. and Mrs. Jack Weymouth. He's chief traumatologist at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington.

John W. Cowart

And she's a professional photographer. She's worked at Goddard Space Flight Center designing ways to take pictures on the surface of other planets. Neither of these two are known to Security either."

The commander asked, "What's the link between these people. They don't seem to have anything in common do they? Why are they all together?"

"We've had to dig a bit, but we've found that about six weeks ago one of the companies Rosen is associated with, Wienstien Research Projects -- owned by Lazarus Wienstien who's made some heavy contributions to Zionism -- Rosen is his chief executive. Rosen's company, operating through several dummy companies, bought out an old copper foundry near Ras esh Shiyah on the Jericho Road. They brought in a crew of American workmen and refurbished the place entirely. It goes by the name of the Wienstien Biblical Research Center. The man they brought in to head it up is a black American, Dr. Alphonso McIntosh. He's up for a Nobel Prize in physics -- radiocarbon dating. All these people have been spending a lot of time at the center, but they're not excavating any site or doing any biblical research that we can tell. They use all American employees -- no Arabs, and they keep a tight security net around the place.

"The shipping records I've requisitioned show a large influx of physics

The Lazarus Projects

lab equipment, and this afternoon we intercepted a delivery to examine it. it was a case of ancient coins -- all of them in mint condition."

The commander interrupted, "You mean they're counterfeiting antique coins out there? That's stupid."

"No Sir, the coins were not artificially aged. They were brand new, mint condition -- fresh as the day they were struck. There's no possibility these could be passed as antiques. And there's one other thing. Look at this. It's their electric bill for the six weeks since they refurbished the center."

The commander gave a low whistle. "What in the hell are they doing out there?"

"Whatever it is, Beni Sakhr is as curious about it as we are."

"I want you to keep them all under close surveillance. This is a touchy situation. It could be that Wienstien is into some project for the government, sanctioned higher up, and they just haven't notified us yet. Or maybe the Arabs -- the girl's parents were Aramaean you say? You've done a good job on this so far. Let's check into it more. Get a man inside that center. Cover every move they make. I want daily reports on their movements."

Dr. Weymouth administered the last of their shots, "You've been inoculated for every disease, ancient or modern, that I can

John W. Cowart

think of. Three days and we'll be ready to go. I'm spending the rest of today at Hadassah Medical Center again if you need me." He spent most of his spare time in the emergency room there.

"Try to be back before six," Eli said. "I'm having a hairdresser flown in from Hollywood to give us all haircuts."

"Bit extravagant, isn't it?"

"Francis says it's necessary camouflage," Eli replied. "This hairdresser is going to fix us all up to look like pilgrims from Tarragona, Spain."

"Spain? Why Spain," Judy asked.

"Two reasons actually," Eli said. "First, it's as far away from here as you could get in ancient times, so we aren't likely to meet anyone from that area. Any peculiarities we show, we can pass off as Spanish customs. And besides that, Tarragona was a free city with a large Jewish population, so if we run into trouble, Francis has forged us citizenship papers. We'll be Roman citizens."

"But I don't even speak Spanish -- or even Latin," Judy said.

Francis replied, "Don't worry about that. Many Roman citizens didn't. We'll be ok as far as languages go. You have your Aramaic; it's going to be very different but there are enough similarities I think you can get along. I know Greek, Latin and Hebrew, Your husband knows Latin and Greek. Eli and Ben both know Hebrew. The ancient

The Lazarus Projects

pronunciation will be foreign to all of us, but hopefully, our mistakes will be passed off as Hispanic peculiarities."

Eli said, "You are going to love your new hair do."

His tone of voice gave Judy an uneasy feeling.

"Oh?" she said.

"Yes, the ladies of First Century Tarragona plastered their hair down with a mixture of honey and sheep dung."

"Sheep dung? You mean... You've got to be kidding! He is kidding, isn't he?"

Jack shrugged. "We all have to make some sacrifice. My circumcision..."

"You're kidding. He is kidding, isn't he, Francis?"

Francis tried to keep a straight face and his struggle set the other men howling. Finally he nodded. "Yes, he's kidding."

"Chauvinists," Judy said archly and then she too collapsed laughing.

In a dingy cafe on Khan es-Zeit, Kamel met with his two accomplices. The accordion blinds were drawn half way down cutting off the searing afternoon sun. The air was aromatic with odors of wax, hides, and spices from nearby vendor stalls. The men's intense conversation was punctuated by the clack of billiard balls from the back of the

John W. Cowart

cafe where several young idlers were absorbed in a game.

"He says it's best to wait. Soon there will be a major strike and we can move in while the bastards are busy elsewhere," Kamel said, contempt giving an acid quality to his voice.

His older companions agreed with his undertone. "Wait! Wait. They always want us to wait for some big thing to happen. Well, I'm tired of waiting; these damn Jews confiscated my property to build their apartment building. They'll confiscate the whole world -- with just remuneration!" he spat bitterly. "Always with just remuneration."

The other crusty man nodded agreement. "This time, we can't wait. They have some kind of atomic thing out there. They're looking for an excuse to destroy the Dome of the Rock, the Holiest spot in Islam, so they can rebuild their temple -- which God himself destroyed."

"Yes," Kamel said. "When the war comes, I'm sure the Mosque will be hit -- mistakenly of course. There will be diplomatic apologies and all that shit, but unless we stop them, the Jews will try to take the Rock. I say we act now. Immediately."

"A raid?" the younger Arab asked.

"No," Kamel said. "We want to stop the Jews from using this atomic device. But we also want to get it for our own use if we can."

The Lazarus Projects

I think the first step for us is to get a man into their facility... Biblical research! Bah!"

She stood at the window looking at the night-decked city and inhaling the sweet smell of jasmine when he came home.

"I'm healed."

"I'm delighted."

They went to bed.

That same evening, Eli, Ben and Dr. McIntosh dined at Hassan Afendi on Rashid. Their small private dining room was covered with silk draperies to give the appearance of being in a Bedouin tent. The floor was covered with two Arabaskun carpets and they sat on luxurious cushions around a low table. The three feasted on Shashlik -- skewered beef served with onions, tomatoes and peppers. After the meal, they relaxed sipping scalding-hot spiced tea.

Ben said, "Doc, have you given much thought to the effects of what we're doing? I mean, how will the world react to what we find?"

His father answered before Dr. McIntosh could, "I hope the world doesn't become aware of what we're doing for quite some time. All these projects are being kept secret, especially this one."

Dr. McIntosh stirred more sugar into his tea and said, "I doubt if we will change

John W. Cowart

the religions of the world, if that's what concerns you. Christians will discount any findings unfavorable to their viewpoint because the project is funded and organized by Jewish people. And the atheists of the world won't be convinced by any of our findings because it's mainly Christians who are going back. I imagine we will succeed in offending everyone and convincing no one."

"Do you think that our presence will possibly change what happens in the past?"

"No. What's happened has already happened. A time traveler may be involved, but he can't change what has already transpired."

"For instance," Eli said, "Someone could decide that the world would be a better place if Hitler had been strangled as a baby in his crib, but we know you couldn't go back and do that because we know he actually grew up and did what he did."

"That's right," the physicist agreed. "We can observe the past and to a certain extent take part in it, but we can't change it."

Ben asked, "Have you given any thought to possible criminal uses of your device?"

"Well," the doctor chuckled, "If a man could afford to build one of these things in the first place, he wouldn't need to go back to rob a bank and escape into the present. It's just too expensive."

The Lazarus Projects

A waiter appeared through the curtain and placed a dish of roasted almonds on their table. He replenished their pot of tea on the charcoal brazier in the corner and departed to conceal a voice-activated recorder behind the curtain. It had taken a while for the Israeli agents trailing the three men to obtain a recorder and to bribe the waiter into placing it.

Ben spoke, "Dad, over the past few weeks I've really been studying the Scriptures. There are dozens of prophecies Jesus fulfilled proving that he is the Messiah. What will you do if our findings show the same thing?"

"Look, Son, I've read that *New Testament* myself and although Jesus was a good man and a great ethical teacher, when you strip the myths away, he was nothing more."

Dr. McIntosh said, "I don't think Jesus was a great teacher at all."

Eli looked surprised. "I thought you were on his side."

"I am. But not because he was a great teacher. Would a great teacher go around saying things like, 'I am the light of the World. I am the bread of life, I am the son of God'? When a man makes a clear statement like any one of these, then you know that either he is deliberately lying, or he is mentally defective -- like the man who says, 'I am Napoleon' -- or he is telling the truth. When Jesus said 'I am the Son of God' then

John W. Cowart

he was telling the truth, or he was crazy, or he was a damn liar."

Eli said, "I don't know if he was lying or crazy, but he was just a man -- a great teacher -- but just a man."

"Then why are you making this pilgrimage?" Ben asked.

"I promised my friend," Eli said.

There were a few minutes of uneasy silence then Eli spoke to Ben, "Your grandfather was a great scholar. He knew the Scriptures from cover to cover. He never became a ... a convert to Christianity. Do you think he's in Hell now?"

"I don't know what to think," Ben said.

Dr. McIntosh said, "Think a minute. Look at it this way. Say a man inherits a general store from his father and on the counter of the store an old yardstick is nailed where the old man measured out cloth goods for years.

"The old man was totally honest, but he was unlearned -- couldn't read or write. The son notices that the yardstick had been broken off; it's three inches short. So he is tempted about whether to measure goods by that same yard stick or get a new one that's accurate. In the Day of Judgment, is God likely to condemn the old man who honestly used the short yard stick?"

"The Almighty is Just," Eli said. "Every man is judged on the light he knows and acts on."

The Lazarus Projects

One of Eli's assistants entered the dining room. "Excuse me, Sir," he said, "This call came to the hotel and I thought you ought to see it immediately." He held out a memo recording the phone call from Miami.

"Thank you. Wait outside for us please."

Eli scanned the message and then told the others. "Mr. Wienstien is in a bad way. The cancer is eating into his spine so now he's bed-ridden. He doesn't have much longer. If this pilgrimage is going to help him, we'd better speed things up."

Even as they returned to the hotel, the Israeli defense commander was playing the tape of their conversation. "Scriptures... pilgrimage... conversion... Messiah..."

He mused, "Perhaps they are engaged in Biblical research, but why that enormous electric bill?"

— XIV —

The time chamber at Ras esh Shiyah duplicated the one at Boca Raton -- except that it was raised on supports about six feet above the floor.

The glass in the windows around the lab was painted the same shade of pastel green as the walls. The floor was tiled like a brown and gray checker board. The black control panel gleamed with chrome circled glass gauges and pulsed with throbbing digital display windows. Relays, buttons and safety-covered toggle switches covered the board. The vinegar smell of ozone and copper hung in the air.

The only indication of the Mideastern setting surrounding the building was a wall clock, which bore both Hebrew and Arabic numerals on its face.

The time travelers sat on metal folding chairs in a semi-circle in the center of the lab. They were dressed in the tunics, robes, and heavy woolen mantles of traveling First Century pilgrims. Their food and equipment was packed into five convenient bundles for each of them to carry hiking.

The Lazarus Projects

Dr. McIntosh entered the lab and after an automatic, habitual survey of the control panel, he addressed the group:

"This is our final briefing before your transmission. There are a couple of things I want to cover with you first, then if you have any questions, I'll try to answer them.

"You will be transmitted to the First Century and should arrive approximately a week before Christ enters Jerusalem for Passion Week. I can't pinpoint your arrival date more exactly; our controls are not that refined yet. You will remain in the past for four weeks. This will give you ample time to observe the death and resurrection of the Lord and to interview him before his ascension.

"Under your robes, each of you is wearing a copper mesh belt which contains the C-14 reduction elements, as in Florida. Do not remove these belts for any reason. You cannot return without them. In the future, I hope to miniaturize these components so they can be implanted beneath a traveler's skin, but right now, we have neither the technology nor the time, so keep the belts on. If they are lost or stolen, you will be trapped in the past.

"As you know, the time device removes a C-14 ion from your bodies causing you to sink back to the time contemporary with the remaining amount of C-14. Jack, you and Judy will be pleased to know that I've just had word that Lady, the Rhesus monkey

John W. Cowart

who made the first time trip, produced a fine healthy baby yesterday. No sign of genetic irregularities.

"One thing you should expect is that on your arrival you will probably fall a short distance. Francis dug some test trenches out back of this building and from the pottery and such he found, he says the ground level was a few feet lower than it is now, but just in case it isn't, we've placed the chamber on stilts. So don't be alarmed at the slight drop; that's better than having you materialize underground, isn't it.

"Our tests in Florida showed that at your arrival site there is a significant radiation impact in the immediate area; however, it only affects things that belong in that time span, not intrusive elements -- that's you and your equipment.

"Your departure and recovery can only be controlled from this lab; as in Florida, you can have no control over your return in four weeks. So keep those belts on. Any Questions? Eli... Ben... Jack... Judy... Francis," he asked each in turn.

There were no questions.

Eli shifted his robes. He wore a dull yellow tunic with an embroidered collar and sandals laced high up his calves. A thick brown mantle was draped around his shoulders and clasped at the neck with a mother-of-pearl pin. He wore several thick gold rings on both hands marking him as a wealthy merchant.

The Lazarus Projects

"The major difference," he said, "Between this trip and the test excursions in Florida is that here we will be dealing with people. Hopefully, this area will be deserted at the time of our arrival; but if we have to explain our sudden appearance, let Francis do the talking. He's the guide and linguist."

"Think of a good one, Francis," Ben quipped.

Eli continued, "We are traveling as pilgrims from a Jewish settlement in Tarragona, Spain. I am a wine merchant; Ben is my son; you three are our free servants. We all hold Roman citizenship. In your packs you each have papers documenting that fact.

"Francis, your primary duty is to guide us around and make sure we don't run afoul of any local customs which might get us into trouble. You are to handle any translation problems we may run into and to assist me in any conversations I need to have with anyone.

"Jack, you are in charge of two areas -- our own health and the medical facts relating to Jesus' death.

"Judy, you are to keep a complete photographic journal of everything we encounter, especially the death and burial of Jesus. We want 24-hour a day photographic surveillance of that tomb for several days after the burial.

John W. Cowart

"Ben, you and I are the cooks, bottle washers, assistant photographers, interviewers and anything else needed."

Eli paused momentarily in his briefing. His face turned solemn.

"We are going to witness a man being tortured to death. I want each of you, who may be emotionally involved, to realize that we are witnessing historical fact. Jesus will die. You can not change that. You are not, under any circumstances, to attempt to interfere in any way whatsoever. We are observers only. Any questions."

There were none.

They picked up their bundles and entered the hatch of the time chamber.

Dr. McIntosh called out, "God bless you!" and sealed the door. The Hebrew and Arabic clock on the lab wall showed four a.m. He turned to the control panel and began the complicated procedure activating the time machine.

The Israeli agent radioed in his report about the pre-dawn meeting. He was pretending to be sleeping in his car down the road from the refitted factory at Ras esh Shiyah. "They are all assembled there now," he said. "Something's definitely going on. I think if we staged a raid we'd catch them red-handed."

The Lazarus Projects

"Not yet," the radio responded, "The captain may want to catch them coming out. Maintain surveillance."

The agent settled down again into an alert pretended sleep.

It was pitch black and oppressively hot inside the time chamber. Ben screwed the unaccustomed mantle around with a twist of his shoulders and then the floor lurched under him, he grabbed someone's hand in the darkness.

Again they felt the nauseating abrupt rising-elevator sensation of spurting up to the top of a sky scraper, then the giddy out-of-control elevator feeling as they plunged to the bottom of the shaft. They slammed down with a searing blaze of light and a chorus of irrepressible screams. Some rough hard surface scraped the skin off Ben's cheek. He felt sure he'd materialized underground or something. A wooly crackling material rubbed his face and clogged his breathing. His eyes still blind from the flash of light, he pawed the stuff away from his face in a near panic. Fuzzy dust filled the suddenly cold air and he could hear the struggling and muffled curses of the others.

"Stop! Stop threshing around," Eli commanded. "Everybody be still. Wait for your eyes to adjust to the light. We're in a god-damned bush. Anyone hurt?"

John W. Cowart

Ben felt greatly relieved and a trifle foolish to discover that he had been flailing away with karate chops at a large leafy branch. Over to his left, Francis laughed nervously. With a great deal of huffing, puffing, crackling and muttering of profanities, they disengaged themselves and moved away from the tree. Once freed, they sat down in the dew-moistened grass a few yards away. It was early morning a little after dawn.

"Look at that damn tree now," Jack said.

They had broken a lot of branches and shaken down a huge mound of leaves around the base of the tree and every leaf of the tree faintly glowed with the blue-green light of radiation.

"There's the old road, over there. Right where I said we'd find it," Francis said with a thrill of pleasure at recognizing it. "The city will be just over the crest of that hill. The main gates open at dawn so we can go on in. We'll need to go around to the east side if we want to appear to be arriving from Joppa. The first thing we want..."

He broke off abruptly and pointed to the road. An old man, leading a camel loaded with two huge pottery jars, stood staring at them. The man scampered off down the road screaming incoherently, leaving his camel standing there alone.

The time travelers looked at one another wondering what the man had been

The Lazarus Projects

yelling. Then Judy burst out laughing. "I know what he said," she giggled. "I didn't catch it at first; the accent was so strange. He was yelling, 'Angels! Angels! My God, they're angels!'"

They shouldered their packs and, skirting the perplexed camel, set off toward Jerusalem.

The time travelers did not know it, but at the crack of dawn -- about forty minutes before their arrival -- another group of travelers coming into Jerusalem for Passover had rested beneath that very same tree.

The leader of that band was hungry for some breakfast and searched the branches to find some figs.

"You're wasting your time," joked one of his companions, "It's not the season for figs yet."

The leader frowned and said, "For this tree, there will never be another fruitful season."

Then he turned and started down the road into the city.

His companions hopped up from the ground where they had been laying in groups of twos and threes and straggled down the road following him.

— XV —

The five friends hiked down the dusty road with excited strides. They were elated over their safe arrival. And, because of Judy's being able to understand the old man's Aramaic shouts, each of them felt relief from the nagging worry that languages would have changed so much that they would not be able to communicate with the people of the ancient city.

The air was crisp and cold and filled with the exotic scents of olive and lemon trees. It was full daylight now, and they began to meet other people headed into the city. The southern slope of the Mount of Olives was spotted with hundreds of striped-felt tents belonging to pilgrims who could not find accommodations inside the city.

As Passover grew closer, Jerusalem would more than triple its population, so the walls of the city would be surrounded with these tents.

Pilgrims, leaving the tents and carrying lambs and doves or urging young bulls toward the Temple for the morning sacrifice, were met by vendors who came out of the

The Lazarus Projects

city hoping to sell their wares ahead of competitors who remained inside the walls.

The time travelers thrilled to hear the lilting melodious phrases of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic used in rapid-fire conversation all around them. It was hard to comprehend whole sentences, but suddenly-recognized individual words or even whole phrases shocked and delighted their ears as they mingled with the crowd.

The road widened and was thronged by more and more people as it crossed the crest of a ridge.

Suddenly, Eli stopped dead in his tracks.

"My God! Look at it!" he exclaimed.

His abrupt halt caused a tall thin man following the party to bump into Ben's back.

The man looked startled and angry at first; but sudden comprehension broke through and he grinned happily saying, "Yes. Yes. The Holy City. The Mountain of His Holiness. Blessings on you travelers of the Diaspora."

The traffic of pedestrians, camels, donkeys and horses flowed around them as they stood in the middle of the road staring.

There before them lay Jerusalem.

Wisps of morning mist clinging to the floor of the Kidron Valley shrouded the ground causing the city to appear to be floating in air. The walls reflecting back the

John W. Cowart

morning sun were cream-colored limestone streaked with erratic trails of green where some bronze fixture in the wall had been washed by rain water.

Dominating the skyline, with the southeastern pinnacle soaring over 400 feet above the valley floor, was the Temple. The white translucent alabaster walls and golden superstructure gleamed as the newborn sun struck the Temple. And rising above those walls, a thick column of gray smoke marked the Altar with its morning holocaust.

To the north of the Temple, the serrated battlements and four squat towers of the gray rock walls of the Roman fortress, Antonia, broke the skyline like evil teeth. And beyond these imposing structures, the party caught glimpses of terraced gardens and marble palaces in the wealthy western section of the city.

The roofs of most of the ordinary buildings were flat, and these often had bright colored awnings, converting these roofs into sunporches. But because of the lack of large timbers to make ceiling beams, many houses had shallow domed roofs made of brown bricks. These domes gave the skyline a curious pebbled effect. The time travelers could also see some of the homes of the poor constructed of sticks woven together and plastered with sun dried mud.

As Francis viewed this magnificent spectacle, he felt a curious sense that something unidentifiable was missing. Then

The Lazarus Projects

it hit him. There were no churches in the city -- in the entire world for that matter. No mosques. No minarets. No steeples.

The stranger who had bumped into Ben stood by silently while they drank in this first view of Jerusalem. When he sensed that their first sense of awe was passing, he spoke. "I never tire of it. This is the joy of the whole earth. I envy your seeing it for the first time. In what land do you sojourn?"

Francis answered, "My master travels from a far country across the sea where he lives in the Diaspora."

The stranger nodded asking, "You worship the Lord?"

"We do," Francis replied.

"I, myself, am home from Perga," the man said.

As he talked, the stranger carefully scrutinized their dress and their baggage noting their air of prosperity and their unusual cleanliness. He was puzzled by the latter.

"I am staying," he continued, "At the house of a friend whose wife died recently. He rents accommodations to pilgrims during the great feasts. His lodgings are no more expensive than many, and such travelers as yourselves to whom expense is a trifle may find his dwelling of the same quality as your own home. You are welcome to come with me if you like."

John W. Cowart

"Is this guy a shill," Eli asked in English.

"Maybe," Francis replied, "But it might be just what we're looking for. He claims he's a guest there too so it can't hurt to check it out. From all those tents out there it looks as though we might have trouble renting a place to stay. Let's go with him."

Ben said, "I thought he said Jerusalem was his home?"

"Jerusalem is home to all the Diaspora no matter where they live or how seldom they get here," Francis said.

As they walked down the valley toward the northeastern gate, the stranger identified himself as Gershom Bar Naphtali, a dealer in dates, pomegranates and other Oriental fruits which he exported from Perga to Rome and other western cities. He cheerfully chatted about various local -- to Passover Jerusalem -- events and people. None of his allusions made any sense to the time travelers.

They passed through a massive gate guarded by four tough-looking Roman soldiers in polished leather armor and found themselves in a plaza behind the gate. A notice written in charcoal on a wooden signpost announced that due to the Praetor's benevolence at the Passover season, the major gates to the city would remain open later than usual at night for the convenience of pilgrims. The gates normally closed at sundown.

The Lazarus Projects

Seeing the sign reminded Eli of what bothered him as they approached the city; there were no signs. No billboards. No advertising. *Must be a real hindrance to business*, he thought. But even as he thought about it he heard a loud shout, "Honey! Fresh Honey!" A gnarled old man at the edge of the crowded plaza was waving a dipper of honey over his head and was shouting for the arriving travelers to refresh themselves as soon as they entered the city gate. *We can get an ad around the world in minutes, but he's limited to the range of his own voice*, Eli thought. "Bad for business," he muttered aloud.

Gershom led them into a narrow crowded street thronged with pilgrims, donkeys, vendors, priests, soldiers and squalling children. The street was so packed that occasionally they came to a complete standstill waiting for the way to clear.

The smell of charcoal rising from thousands of cooking and heating fires permeated the air. But other less pleasant odors confirmed Jack's suspicions about the things that squished underfoot in the crowded streets. "They ought to enforce emission control standards for those donkeys," he remarked to Judy.

As they came to a broad plaza formed by the intersection of several lanes, a blaring blast of a shofar -- a ram's horn trumpet -- shattered the air, drowning out the other street noises. An aesthetic-looking man

John W. Cowart

wearing phylacteries and a prayer shawl with wide borders stood in the center of the plaza blowing the horn. He lowered the shofar and began a loud chant in Hebrew.

"A Pharisee calling attention to his prayers," Francis explained.

On the far side of the plaza, they entered a wider street leading a winding course westward. The street on both sides was lined with shops all devoted to leather craft. Outside each shop, the street was piled with a variety of goods: camel saddles, sandals, light armor for soldiers, and all sizes of trunks and bags. They had to practically climb over the array of goods to get past the shops. And as they passed, the shop proprietors tried to stop them, clutching at their clothes and pressing merchandise on them. The rich aroma of leather filled the air.

The signs of injury and disease all around him appalled Jack. Blind and cripple and sick people thronged the streets going about their business as best they could. Since they knew no cure, they made a living to the best of their ability. They were hopelessly reconciled to having to live with their injuries.

The thing that struck Jack hardest was that so much of the affliction these people lived with was entirely unnecessary. There was a man with a crooked arm selling cantaloupes to passersby. Jack knew that the man had broken the arm in childhood and that it could have been healed with simple

The Lazarus Projects

cast therapy; but since it received no attention, the man was unnecessarily crippled for life.

There were many blind people selling or begging in the streets -- victims of ophthalmia, an inflammation of the conjunctiva or eyeball caused by flies laying their eggs in the corner of the eye. The eggs hatch out and inflamed the eye, destroying the tissue and sealing the eyes shut with pus. Seeing so many cases around him, Jack thought, *Maybe that's why Christ used spit when he healed some of these blind people; he was wiping the pus from their eyes. So much of this pain is unnecessary. Why even simple hospital treatment would cure so much of it. But I don't suppose there are any hospitals in the world until after the Christian religion takes hold. I don't know. I'll have to ask Francis.*

As they traveled further away from the gate they had entered and higher into the western section of the city, the crowds thinned and gradually they found themselves in a quieter residential district.

Now the street was lined by the plastered walls of houses, and in places, balconies protruded out over the road shutting out sunlight so that, at times, they seemed to be walking through a tunnel. Occasionally, they passed arched doorways with lattice-work gates, and they caught hurried glimpses of interior courtyard gardens in the centers of these homes.

John W. Cowart

Near where the street ran into a dead-end at the western city wall, Gershom entered one of these arched doorways. They followed him into a quiet garden. The team put down their packs on the flagstone pavement and waited while Gershom went for the owner.

"I think we hit the jackpot," Eli said. "Rent this place for us Francis."

The courtyard was bounded on the south, behind them, by a high masonry wall and the two-story house formed a great U joining that wall. One arm of the U obviously housed the kitchen, while the remainder made up the living quarters. The central garden held several low stone benches scattered randomly among the flower beds. At the far end of the courtyard was a bronze sundial mounted on a marble pedestal. All the interior walls of the courtyard were covered with climbing vines which sported bright red and yellow gourds.

Gershom returned followed by a sad shriveled-up little man who greeted them solemnly without enthusiasm. This gray personage summoned a slave who brought small bowls of spiced wine to the travelers. After serving them, their host directed them to sit on the benches in the garden. As they talked, the slave appeared with a basin and, starting with Eli, unlaced their sandals and washed the street filth from their feet. Francis cautioned the others to take the slave's services as a matter of course even

The Lazarus Projects

though they were ill at ease and were feeling slightly ridiculous at having an old man bathe their feet.

Gershom discreetly withdrew after the social amenities, while Francis and Eli discussed money with the owner -- who was also named Eli.

This man, with his family and three slaves, lived on the ground floor in one wing of the house and rented out the rest of the building.

He led them upstairs to a huge room with a long, covered balcony overlooking the courtyard.

Apparently, when the house was first build, this center portion was only a single story with a flat roof. At some later time, the owner added supporting columns at the corners and enclosed the whole rooftop forming this single large apartment. Folded up against the left wall stood several cloth-covered screens which could be extended to partition the room into several divisions. A long, narrow window covered with intricate lattice-work ran the entire length of the outside wall. There were several large wooden chests spaced evenly under this window and thick sleeping-pallets, rolled and tied, rested atop these chests.

The most outstanding feature of the place was a long, low table on the covered balcony. It was made of thick, polished wooden planks, and nested in the wood,

John W. Cowart

dividing the long table evenly into thirds, were deep bronze charcoal braziers.

Judy at once saw that the idea was for everyone to sit on thick cushions at the table while the food cooked in the braziers. And in cold weather, everyone tucked his feet under the table toward the warmth of the braziers.

Eli, the owner, intended to rent them only one section of this room, knowing full well that with the influx of Passover observers even hovels were let at good prices. He could not conceive that Eli, the time traveler, would not want to share his spacious facilities, but actually desired the whole place.

It was unheard of for so few people to take up so much room.

But when Francis produced the asking price in gold coin without argument, Eli, the owner, tried to maintain his dire countenance while his eyes gleamed in elation. He would not have cleared that much money even if he had 25 people crowded in the apartment as he had last year's feast.

When the deal was settled, a slave brought their heavy baggage up the stairs, and finally Eli, the owner, left them alone.

Immediately, Jack broke out disinfectant and set to work spraying the sleeping pallets while the others squared away their gear.

The Lazarus Projects

Judy had Ben lug one of the wooden chests into the corner, and using the cloth-covered partition screen, she set up her dark room. She had taken pictures of their hike through the streets.

Eli busied himself fastening a secure combination lock to the door frame.

Francis worked at the table drawing a map of the streets that they had traveled.

Soon they were established and ready to lock up and go out in the streets again.

— XVI —

Downstairs in the courtyard, Gershom lounged on one of the stone benches talking with several other guests. When Eli came down, these men rose to their feet. Their differential treatment indicated that news of his extravagance in leasing the whole upstairs was the theme of their gossip. Gershom introduced the other men as traders dealing in charcoal, linen, spices and various other commodities.

"Ah, like all pilgrims," Gershom said with a smile, "You are anxious to go to the Temple."

"Yes, I am," Eli said. "Come, go with us and show us the way. Being from a far country, the ways of the homeland are strange to us."

Outside on the street, Francis whispered to Eli who requested Gershom to show them Siloam Pool before going to the Temple. So they turned south and in a few minutes stood looking down into the pool.

The features which were actually cut into the rock were the same as they had seen in modern Jerusalem, but the surrounding area was unrecognizable. The

The Lazarus Projects

pool they now viewed was bordered by terraced gardens and shaded by tall sycamore trees.

It was a sort of public park; and the gardens were filled with old men gossiping in the shade and with gaggles of women filling their water jugs and chatting while their children skipped about playing tag.

Francis was amazed at the difference in what the pool actually looked like compared to what he had expected it to look like.

He had the uneasy feeling that he was in for many such surprises and that he would find many archaeological reconstructions he was familiar with would prove to be so much bunk.

Gershom was puzzled that they would chose to come to this place at all. Usually, slave girls brought water to the house, so masters seldom gave the water source a thought. But since the time travelers offered no explanation for wanting to see this place first, courtesy kept him from asking.

"Remember," Francis cautioned in English, "This is where we meet if we run into trouble and get separated."

From Siloam Pool, they walked back to the northeast and started across a long bridge built over a deep valley which was filled with houses and shops.

"I had no idea this valley was so big," Francis said, again speaking in English.

John W. Cowart

"Modern Jerusalem has hardly a trace of it. This valley is mostly filled in and a six-foot layer of ashes from the burning of the Temple makes one of the strata found here in modern times ... Yech! What's that?"

The nauseating odor hit the others at the same time, gagging every breath.

Soon they saw its source. Down in the valley beneath them ran a street filled with cheese shops. Behind each shop lay a corral filled with goats, cattle, camels, or whatever animals supplied the milk to make that shop's cheese. From where they stood on the bridge, they looked down into numerous mixing vats filled with sour milk swarming with flies. Even local people hurried across the bridge wrinkling their noses.

On the far side of the bridge, they walked along side the outer wall that surrounds the Temple precinct and actually passed the portion they recognized as the Wailing Wall. The people of ancient Jerusalem paid the Wailing Wall no more attention that modern people pay to the fence around Disneyland.

The main attraction was inside.

They passed through a massive triple-arched gate into the huge outer courtyard of the Temple. They were in the Court of the Gentiles.

All around them rows of columns soared in double tiers and they strained their necks craning upward to see the decorations

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of gold scroll work covering the walls. Massive cedar beams laced the tops of the columns together. High above, fleecy clouds in the turquoise sky seemed part of the design. A swift breeze was blowing from the Mount of Olives to the east, so smoke from the Altar filled the court with the pungent smell of burning meat.

Just inside the gate a young priest, standing on a raised dais, addressed the arriving pilgrims. He spoke in the rote, mechanical drone of bored tour-guides in any age. "This is the Sanctuary of God," he said. " No Gentiles beyond the central retaining wall. No women past the second court. Men keep your heads covered. For your convenience, if you do not have your own animal and wish to purchase a sacrifice, you may do so in the Royal Portico to the right. Use no heathen coins for Temple offerings. Restrooms are located at each corner of the Gentile Court."

He repeated this spiel in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, then started it all over again adding, "Please do not block the gate," as more arriving herds of pilgrims surged into the courtyards.

Flowing with a crowd of Egyptian Jews from Alexandria, the time travelers and Gershom wandered down the long royal colonnade.

"Stop," Judy said. "I want to get a picture of those lambs."

John W. Cowart

She pointed to an enclosure made by stretching ropes between some of the marble columns, fencing in a pen of bleating lambs.

A large group of what appeared to be school children, led by a long-suffering rabbi, milled around the lamb pen. Other roped-in areas held bullocks or goats. And right beside these enclosures, stacked in great piles, were wicker cages imprisoning thousands of white pigeons.

While Judy photographed the scene, Ben asked Gershom a question they had all been anticipating.

"Tell me," he asked, "Have you ever heard of a man called Jesus, a prophet from Nazareth?"

"Nazareth! Nazareth!" Gershom sputtered, "No prophet or anything else good comes from that hole! This Jesus fellow is just a good carpenter turned into another bad Messiah. Guys like him turn up every season." Thick contempt colored his voice. "Roman civilization is the best thing that's happened to us since Solomon and these zealots want to spoil it all."

"They say he works miracles," Francis ventured.

"I've never seen one," Gershom replied. "But if you want to see this rabble-rouser, look down there." He pointed through the center aisle of columns.

The Lazarus Projects

In a clear space at the end of the aisle stood a lone man glaring at the commercial scene before him. He was a thick, muscular man with biceps bulging under the sleeves of his ash colored robe. He stood with his feet planted wide apart, and his huge calloused hands pressed to his hips in a defiant stance. He had thick black shaggy hair and beard and his eyes gleamed in hot fury. He looked ill-tempered, angry.

"Doesn't look like much," remarked Eli who had been unconsciously expecting to see Sallman's painting of the 'Head of Christ' in the flesh. Disappointment surged in each member of the team. This man did not look divine, he looked dangerous.

"He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him," Ben quoted.

"What's that?" Eli asked.

"Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah," his son answered.

"Well, that's one he certainly fulfills," Eli said.

Jesus moved away from the column where he had been watching to the center of the aisle. His robe was belted with a long leather cord wound three times around his waist and knotted at the left side. Without taking his eyes off the spectacle of trade before him, he untied the knot and slowly, deliberately, unwound his belt.

John W. Cowart

On the left side of the aisle, where the time travelers stood, were the money changer's counters. The clink and clatter of coins filled the air. Roman coins stamped with the image of Caesar and the inscription, "Caesar is Lord" were being exchanged for Temple coins stamped with the picture of a lily. To offer heathen coins was sacrilege. The Temple shekel weighed almost 73 grams more than the Roman coin, so several Roman coins had to be exchanged for a single Temple shekel -- at an enormous profit to the Temple.

Jesus doubled his belt and grasped it in the center. Then he cracked it over his head like a bullwhip.

"STOP!" he commanded.

The concourse abruptly silenced at his command of authority.

He roared, "It is written that My house is a house of prayer! But you have turned it into a den of thieves!"

He stalked down the aisle cracking his whip right and left. Vendors, gathering up their robes to their waists and scuttled away like roaches on scrawny legs. When Jesus came to the animal corrals, he jerked the ropes penning in the beasts. When freed, the bulls and sheep ran for the exits following the people. Jesus grabbed the edge of an exchange table and dumped it end over end. Golden coins spilled, rolling and spinning in erratic frenzy on the floor.

The Lazarus Projects

The time travelers and Gershom pressed back against the wall to get out of the way. A number of the school children and Alexandrian pilgrims joined them in their nook between the columns. The children squealed in delight and the Egyptians trembled in fear as this mad man kicked over another money table.

Jesus snatched down the uppermost dove cage and cracked it open with the edge of his hand. Laughing children darted out and joined him in the fun of releasing the trapped birds. Soon the air above the Court of the Gentiles was filled with the swirling, spiraling flight of white doves.

In the aftermath, an indignant Temple official, trailed by a pair of apprehensive guards, rushed up to Jesus, pushing their way through the mob of children skipping around him. "Why have you done this?" the official sputtered. "What right... What authority... What sign can you give?"

Jesus whacked himself on the chest and exclaimed, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up!"

"What? What!," sputtered the priest, "Can't you shut those damn kids up! What did you say?"

The children had linked hands and were dancing and skipping around Jesus, cheering, "Hosanna! Hosanna! David's Son! David's Son! Our Savior! Our Savior! Praise to David's son! Praise to David's son!" The racket drew a huge crowd of spectators who

John W. Cowart

had run away when Jesus started the commotion.

"So the children embarrass you with their truth, do they?" Jesus laughed heartily. "Haven't you read the Scripture, 'Out of the mouths of babies at the tit comes perfect praise!'"

The whole crowd roared laughing at the priest's dilemma. The man stood there fuming with indignation, but he couldn't think of what to say. His face got red; his fists clenched; his eyes darted back and forth as he tried to think of a good comeback. While the dumfounded bureaucrat flustered, Jesus calmly retied his belt and then walked away with dozens of little kids trailing in his wake, plucking at his robe and giggling at the consternation of the grownups.

"Good heavens," Judy exclaimed, "I was so scared that I didn't get a single picture."

"Smuggled in Uranium!" The commander shouted pounding on his desk with his fist. "How the hell did they smuggle in uranium? Where the hell was Customs Security?"

"That's just it, Sir," said the young captain uneasily. "They didn't exactly smuggle it in. The U-235 was shipped from Zaire, where it was mined, in drums plainly stenciled as 'Yellow Cake' -- that's the

The Lazarus Projects

commercial name for this concentrate of uranium oxide. It came in perfectly legally labeled." He paused, dreading the next sentence. "The customs officers who cleared it for delivery thought the drums contained... cake mix."

The commander exploded.

Francis leaned on the banister of their balcony and watched the last rays of light reflecting off the distant Temple pinnacles in sunset splendor. Already the slopes of Olivet, barely visible beyond the Temple, were clothed in shadows. Behind him on the balcony, Ben was blowing into the bronze brazier, coaxing more heat out of the charcoal to cook their freeze-dried concentrated supper. They would eat concentrates till Jack determined which local foods were safe. *Certainly not fresh cheese*, Francis thought with a grimace. Judy worked in her dark room developing some pictures taken earlier. Jack napped on a pallet as the others worked. Downstairs in the courtyard, Eli and Gershom talked earnestly.

Francis eavesdropped.

"Disgraceful behavior," Gershom exclaimed. "Him and those snotty-nosed children could cause a riot. Now I ask you, would the Messiah behave like that? Of course not. Every spring, sure as the flowers bloom, we get a new crop of these messianic seditionists coming up out of the desert."

John W. Cowart

Somebody ought to put a stop to this Galilean agitator's desecrations."

"Why didn't you do something?" Eli asked. "I noticed you were the first one to the wall."

"You bet I was! Did you see those steps coming into the Court from the Fortress Antonia? Last year we had one of those Galilean rabble-rousers, Judas Gaulanita. He disowned Caesar's authority and refused to pay taxes. When he and his followers staged a demonstration in the Court, Pilate sent a cohort down from Antonia; and the soldiers chased over twenty men right into the sanctuary and massacred them. And that was a peaceful demonstration -- not a disgusting exhibition like this today. Those money changers and vendors are duly licensed by the Temple, and he has no right to interfere with honest business."

"You mostly trade with Rome," Eli observed.

"That's where the money is," Gershom said with a shrug.

Francis continued to listen as Gershom went on to extol Roman law, the new aqueduct that Pilate built to water Antonia and the Temple, and -- most of all -- Roman business.

Francis lost interest in their conversation and pondered his own reaction

The Lazarus Projects

to Jesus -- and he remembered the Bishop's assignment.

He's so different, he thought. I was really scared of him... Funny, all my life I've worshipped and prayed and longed to see Him; then face to face, he's the last person I want to see and I run like a rabbit. The bishop was worried about the unlearned getting their faith shaken... Realistically, I'm about as learned in the New Testament as I can get, and he scares me... He scares me... He's terrible... But those children, why weren't they afraid?... What's wrong with me?... Why should I be afraid of Jesus?... What am I going to do?... Nothing happened which conflicts with what I already knew from the Bible, but it's so different... I always thought I knew he was...

"Supper's ready," Ben called. "Give Jack a kick and let's eat. Dad, supper's ready -- Want to come on up? Tomorrow's another day."

— XVII —

Early the next morning, the time travelers walked to the Temple again. They joined an even larger crowd of worshippers dressed in every imaginable costume. Nubians, Cretians, Romans, Persians, and Jewish proselytes from dozens of other nations mingled with the local population gathered for the morning sacrifices.

"Look at that," Jack pointed to the area of the Royal Portico Jesus had disrupted yesterday.

Now the area was roped off with a thick velvet cord looking for all the world like the ropes used in a movie theater to guide the crowds. A sign hung from the barrier stating in several languages, TEMPORARILY CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS.

Eli said, "I want to go on into the Court of Israel to watch the sacrifices."

Jack replied, "Look, I know I've been circumcised... but I just don't feel right about going in there. I'll stay out here with Judy."

"All of you can come in as far as the Court of the Women. Judy, let me borrow

The Lazarus Projects

your pendant to get pictures inside. Ben and I will go on in."

"Dad," Ben said. "I'm... I'm... I don't feel right about it either..."

"Shit," Eli snapped. "Jesus himself was-- is -- a Jew. You think it contaminated him to worship here? Do you? Do you?" He turned his back on his son and stalked away.

Francis put his hand on Ben's shoulder saying, "Sometimes Our Lord divides a man from his own family. That's a heavy cross, but keep on loving him. He's a good man."

Eli walked through the Court of the Women and up a few stairs into the Court of Israel, an area open only to Jewish males.

At the far end of the enclosure was a semicircular stairway up to a large open platform where only priests were permitted. Covering a huge doorway at the end of this platform hung a thick embroidered curtain concealing the inner portions of the sanctuary from all but the higher priests. Eli knew from the Bible that this veil covered the Holy Place where the Menorah, the seven-branched oil lamp, burned. The room beyond that was the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered and that only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Standing immediately to the right of the embroidered veil-covered doorway, Eli saw a strangely incongruous structure.

There, in a major place of honor, surrounded by the Temple's walls of

John W. Cowart

translucent alabaster and shimmering marble, stood a pile of big rocks -- common ordinary desert rocks. It was God's altar, made as He commanded in Deuteronomy of plain uncut rocks.

The Twentieth-Century Jew bowed his head and worshiped.

After a time, Eli looked carefully around him and cautiously took several photographs. Then he dug in his robes and took out a pathfinder compass. Moving from one side of the Court of Israel to the other, he took several bearings. He thought, "When modern Israel kicks out the Arabs and rebuilds the Temple, we will want to pinpoint the location of the Altar and the Holy of Holies."

A blast of the Shofar opened the morning rituals. Because of the crowd, at first Eli couldn't see much of what was going on, but soon a pattern developed. The men in the concourse lined up in several lines according to the offering they brought.

Eli watched the men who were presenting rams:

The worshipper led the animal to the stairway where a priest took it. The priest jerked the animal's head back and slit its throat with a flint knife in one quick motion. Another priest caught the spurting blood and sprinkled some on the worshiper's head. A third priest took the ram by the hind legs and slit it wide open, pouring the viscera onto a tray held by another priest who

The Lazarus Projects

carried these entrails away. A portion of the meat was burned on the Altar; the rest set aside to be used as food for priests and their families. At this point in the ceremony, the priest, holding the bronze bowl full of blood, approached the Altar where he splashed the blood over the stones. The stones were so hot from the Altar fire that the blood beaded up in sizzling droplets which scattered over the rock like a drop of water on a hot frying pan. The blood lost its liquid content in a hiss of steam, then reached its flashpoint and burst into flame.

The whole ceremony was like a precision dance; each priest performed his function without a wasted motion. They moved as gracefully as a military drill team. Priests skinning the animals and those laying logs on the massive fire moved in and out among the others as efficiently as a machine.

Initially, Eli felt a wave of disgust at the blood and death, but as he discerned the pattern in the ritual, he felt strongly drawn to it.

Seeing the blood of an offering turn into sizzling steam and rise in the air mingled with the prayer of the man making the offering is more sensible than sitting bored, listening to some rabbi give an insipid lecture on being nice, saving whales or writing my congressman about foreign policy.

This is real.

John W. Cowart

These men aren't just talking to themselves when they pray. You can see it in the steaming blood -- These prayers are going somewhere, he thought.

Two young local men, brothers from the look of them, stood near the end of the line with a long-eared ram between them. Eli went over and said, "Friends, I come from a far country and greatly desire to make an offering. But I have no sacrifice and can buy none since the vendors are closed today". He reached into his purse and brought out four gold shekels -- enough to buy a whole flock. The brothers looked at each other; then the elder reached out and took only one of the coins from Eli's open palm. "God's peace to you, Stranger," he bowed and turned the ram over to Eli.

Eli knotted the shaggy fur in his fingers as the ram rubbed against his leg -- unaware and unconcerned about its destiny.

They approached the steps.

The priest lifted the ram.

Eli felt the sprinkle of warm blood over his face and his soul jumped within him and soared in ecstasy.

Holy joy, relief, reverence, fright -- all frolicked in his heart in fluctuating patterns.

He cried.

He laughed.

He danced before the Lord.

The Lazarus Projects

"O God! O God!" he cried, "I'm the first Jew to feel like this in two thousand years. Praise Your Name!"

What am I doing, he thought. I'm the next thing to an atheist. I'm a 20th Century executive, and here I am practically wallowing in blood. And I love it. I love it! Blessed be Your Name, O King of the Universe!

The first thing Eli noticed when he returned from the Sacred Precincts to the Court of the Gentiles was a crowd of people gathered in an arcade to his left. Since all the time travelers were considerably taller than the rest of the people of the time, he could easily pick out his group at the edge of the crowd. As he wormed his way through the people, he heard a voice of a man telling the end of a story.

"... so the sharecroppers murdered the landlord's son and threw his body over the hedge. What do you think the landlord will do when he returns?"

A Temple official answered, "He will destroy those scoundrels and confiscate the property and lease it to tenants who will honor their contract."

"You're right!" Jesus said. "Remember reading in the Scripture that the stone the builders rejected became the head cornerstone?"

John W. Cowart

There was a stir of astonishment through the crowd as the people realized what Jesus was saying. Eli took advantage of the stir to push his way to Jack's side.

"Everything OK?"

Jack nodded and they turned their attention back to Jesus.

The crowd parted admitting several distinguished looking men dressed in dark robes with wide fringes and prominent phylacteries.

"Who are they," Judy asked Francis in English.

"An official delegation of Pharisees," he replied. "They're a strict sect. They remind me of the extreme fundamentalists of our day. They believe in a literal interpretation of the historical portions of Scripture, but they find ways to get around the moral demands... You know. They have a pray-in-schools-and-keep-the-niggers-in-their-place kind of religion."

The leader of this delegation approached Jesus with a flourish of his hands and a flowery greeting. "Rabbi, Honored Teacher, everyone knows of your honesty and that you teach truth without regard to mere human opinion or favoritism." The Pharisee glanced around to see that he had everyone's attention and continued, "What we want to know is whether or not it's right to pay tribute to the Roman government?"

Shock electrified the crowd.

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Even to ask such a question in public bordered on sedition. Every Jew hated the degradation and humiliation forced on them by this head tax. It was a constant reminder that they were a conquered occupied territory subject to this foreign empire. Yet to refuse to pay the tax could carry a death penalty. It was an emotionally loaded question. No matter how Jesus answered, his reply was sure to alienate half the crowd. They watched intently to see if he could wiggle out of this dilemma and were amazed to see Jesus break into a broad grin.

"What a clever question," he exclaimed. "You're trying hard to trap me."

The Pharisees nudged one another in satisfaction.

"Here," Jesus said, "Let me borrow a coin."

Several Pharisees dug frantically for their money bags, each one anxious to play a part in exposing Jesus. The leader glared at the others who immediately stopped their searching as he, himself, produced a glint of gold from his own purse and handed it to Jesus.

Jesus flipped the coin high in the air and deftly caught it, holding it up between thumb and forefinger for all to see.

The Pharisee's heart must have dropped. He had inadvertently handed Jesus a Roman coin, and as a Pharisee, he had vowed not to even touch this money with its

John W. Cowart

idolatrous picture and slogan -- "Caesar is God".

"Whose picture and whose name is on the coin?" Jesus asked.

Everyone in the crowd knew the answer. There had been riots when the Romans first introduced these coins into Judea.

Almost inaudibly the Pharisee mumbled, "Caesar's."

"Well then," Jesus declared, "Give it back to Caesar if it belongs to him! But be sure to give God everything that belongs to Him!"

Jesus flipped the shekel back to the Pharisee who fumbled it a moment then caught it and tucked it back in his purse. Then without another word the delegation turned their backs on Jesus and shoved their way out of the smiling, delighted crowd.

The time travelers noticed that no one dared to laugh out loud because the question of the tax was too serious and the Pharisee party too powerful. But all through the throng a sudden fit of spontaneous coughing and clearing of throats erupted. This had scarcely died down when another official-looking body of men parted the crowd to approach Jesus.

These men from their dress and bearing were obviously aristocrats. They wore light blue robes and sported ornate

The Lazarus Projects

golden pins and finger rings. An aura of wealth and authority accompanied them.

"Who are they?" Judy asked Francis as she moved to the side a little more in order to get a better camera angle.

"I think they're Sadducees. Before the current High Priests came into power, their party held the office. They've adopted many Hellenistic attitudes and lost power when the Romans took over. I suppose their modern-day counterparts would be very liberal thinkers like Unitarian-Universalists. They don't believe any of the 'mythical' portions of Scripture -- no angels, no demons, no life after death, things like that. They are well-educated materialists seeking the good life right here and now."

After a brief greeting, the head of the Sadducees, a fat little man with piggy eyes, began to lay out a complicated question for Jesus to answer:

"As you know, Rabbi," he said, "The Law of Moses requires that if a man marries but then dies before children are born, then that man's brother must marry the widow, and children from that union inherit the dead brother's property."

Jesus nodded agreement. He was familiar with that law.

The Sadducee rubbed his hands together and continued enthusiastically, "Well, once there were seven brothers. The first one married a girl but died before they

John W. Cowart

had children. So the second brother married her. But he too died. Then the third brother married the same woman and he died. Then the fourth and the fifth and every one of the seven brothers eventually married this woman and every one of them died.

"Finally, she died also."

All over the crowd, men were shaking their heads in appreciation of the puzzle this Sadducee was putting together. Furrowed foreheads and intense eyes showed that minds were racing to figure out the question they were anticipating. Jack nudged Eli, "Once I taught a sophomore class in college -- that's the kind of question they'd ask."

The fat little man continued, "Well. If the people come back to life on the Resurrection Day as you say they do -- then which brother owns the woman since they all seven once had her? Whose property will she be then?"

Piggy eyes beamed with satisfaction. The man was really pleased with his question.

The smirk disappeared from his face when Jesus snapped back his answer.

"You are ignorant!" He snapped. "You are ignorant of the Scripture. You are ignorant of God's power. Whose property? There is no such marriage in Heaven where people live eternally like angels!

"Haven't you read in the Scripture where God spoke to Moses from the burning

The Lazarus Projects

bush? God said, 'I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I am the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead but the God of living men and the Patriarchs are living in his presence!"

The by-standers were astonished. They had never before heard the question of the resurrection approached like this. Everyone began talking to his neighbor, and the hum of conversation filled the court until a thin voice cried repeatedly above the tumult, "Rabbi! Rabbi!" It was a bent old man dressed in the dark robes of a Pharisee who called out.

He hobbled quickly forward leaning heavily on a thick staff. "Rabbi, tell me, of all the Law, which is the most important for me to observe?"

Jesus courteously stood up at the white-haired old man's approach. Then lifting his hands, Jesus began to quote the Scripture, and after his first few words, the whole congregation joined him in the words from Deuteronomy, "Hear O Israel! The Lord Our God is One Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might." Then Jesus added, "This is the first and greatest of the Commandments and the second is like it, 'You are to love your fellowman just as you love your own self.'"

The old man slumped at the feet of Jesus and began to cry.

He appeared to be weeping for joy.

— XVIII —

"Where is Rosen?" demanded the Israeli commander.

Dr. McIntosh ran his black gnarled hand over his kinky white hair and then answered honestly, "He and the others are in the ancient city of Jerusalem."

"Look, Dr. McIntosh, I know they can't be in the Old City. For the past week they've been followed by my security agents. We know they came here early yesterday morning and they haven't left this building. What do you say to that?"

"They left here at 4 a.m. yesterday to go to old Jerusalem. Your agent just didn't see them leave."

The commander made a sign to his adjutant who left the center's reception room. In a moment he returned followed by six armed soldiers. The commander removed a document from his coat pocket. "I have here a permit authorizing me to search these premises for any indication of subversive activities."

Dr. McIntosh said, "You gentlemen are welcome to see everything here, but I must ask you not to touch any thing in the lab. I'll

The Lazarus Projects

be glad to show you everything there, but delicate experiments are underway. They must not be disturbed."

Trailed by the soldiers, the physicist and the commander entered the time lab. Immediately the commander focused his attention on the time chamber with its attendant control panels.

"What's that thing?" he demanded.

Eli and the other time travelers followed Jesus out into the center of the Court of the Gentiles. High above them on the wall of the sanctuary some workmen stood on a scaffolding. They were fitting a huge golden grape leaf into place on a vine of gold that held golden grape clusters over ten feet long. The golden vine covered the entire front of the sanctuary.

The crowd's attention was divided between Jesus' talk and the workmen hurrying to finish this part of the decoration before the Passover observance.

"These religious men go around pretending to be holier than Moses," Jesus was saying. "But their holiness is an act they put on so other people can admire them. They fear that no one will notice their piety unless they blow trumpets to call attention to their prayers and even dress to show off their religious image. They tithe even a tenth of the mint leave they use to spice their food, but they cheat widows out of their

John W. Cowart

husband's property by perfectly 'legal' means. They make a public display of their charity, but they do this at the expense of honoring and supporting their own parents.

"Don't you be fakes like them! Keep the whole Law, especially the parts about honesty, justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Clean the cup inside as well as out.

"You Hypocrites! Your ancestors murdered the prophets, and you build memorial gardens over the graves. You put up a monument to your ancestors' wickedness.

"You yourselves are like graves: outside, flowers, trimmed grass and a white stone; but underneath the surface, there is only putrefaction, bones and rotting meat.

"I send you wise men, prophets, Scripture writers, and your ancestors tortured them to death. Now you, you bunch of snakes, you will become guilty of the blood of all Righteousness. Now! In this generation.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you are the city that kills the prophets. And all the men God sends you, you ignore or stone. Often I long to gather you to my breast as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wing, but you want no part of it..."

"Well... What is it," The commander asked as he watched the copper coils

The Lazarus Projects

covering the chamber throb with pulses of energy.

"It's a device to diffuse the amount of carbon 14 in an object. Please don't touch it; you could get a nasty shock."

The commander peered through the observation port. The chamber was obviously empty. "You date archaeological artifacts with carbon 14 measurements, don't you," he said. "In fact, according to your dossier, you're the best in the world. What exactly are you doing this for?"

The physicist replied, "This is a project backed by Mr. Lazarus Wienstien. He is dying of cancer and before his death he wants to confirm some things mentioned in the Bible. So he inaugurated this Biblical Research Center."

"Wienstien's never been a particularly religious man before, has he?"

"In his final extremity, every man seeks his God," the physicist quoted.

"I understand that but..."

One of the soldiers approached reporting, "They are not in the building, Sir."

"Very well. Where are they?"

"I told you they're in old Jerusalem. I don't know exactly where, but they won't be back here for six weeks. If you want to check with Mr. Wienstien's office about our research..."

John W. Cowart

"That won't be necessary. However, since you are using radioactive materials here, I'm placing this center under military guard."

The time travelers followed Jesus and the crowd out of the Temple. As they went through the Western Gate, one of his followers urged Jesus to join one of the tours of the buildings which the Temple officials sponsored.

He declined saying, "All these buildings will be destroyed. There won't even be one stone left atop another."

The crowd surged through the narrow streets; they left the city moving like a parade, and headed east to the slopes of Olivet. There, the tent city on the mountainside had doubled in size since the time travelers first saw it Monday morning. They walked right by the withered fig tree where they had first landed in the past. The felt tents billowed like great wings in the evening breeze. The smell of fish frying in olive oil permeated the air.

Jesus made his way to a large stone olive press and settled down with his elbow resting on the edge of the oil vat and with one foot braced on the thick wooden spindle of the press mechanism. Crowds of pilgrims from the tents joined those who followed him from the Temple and by the time the time travelers squeezed their way up close, Jesus was in the middle of a story.

The Lazarus Projects

"... Take the money away from him and give it to the slave who made the best use of it. And throw this worthless fellow out in the darkness where he will wail and gnash his teeth."

"Look! Look at that!" Francis pointed.

"What is it?" Ben asked alarmed at his friend's reaction to something which he himself had not noticed.

"There beside the oil press. Look what that man's doing".

Eli joined them looking at the drab, nondescript little man sitting at the feet of Jesus. The man held an iron pen in his right hand, and he was furiously taking notes on Jesus' remarks, writing rapidly on sheets of thin board covered with wax. He scratched the letters into the wax.

"Who is he, Francis?"

"I don't know. One of the disciples. I haven't identified any of them for sure yet... This is terrific. We always thought that the sayings of Jesus had to be passed on by oral tradition for years before they were written down, But there's a scribe taking notes on the spot. He may be St. Matthew or St. Mark. This is the most exciting thing that we've discovered yet. Did any of you notice if he was in the Temple?"

"Listen carefully," Jesus said, "When I, the Messiah, come in my glory with all my legions of angels, I will gather all the peoples of the earth before my throne."

John W. Cowart

"I will separate all of you into two groups just like a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats, a flock on either hand.

"Then I, as King, will say to the people on my right, 'Come, Beloved Ones of my Father. Come to the kingdom I have prepared for you. Because when I was hungry, you shared your food with me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was a stranger, you made me a guest in your own home. When I was sick, you took care of me. When I was naked, you shared your clothes'.

"Then these good people will be surprised and ask in amazement, 'When did we do anything like that for you?' And I will reply, 'When you did these things for even the least person -- he is my brother -- you did it for me personally'.

"But to those accursed ones on my left I will say, 'Go away! You are cursed to Hell's fire because I was hungry and you refused me food. I was thirsty and you would not give me even water to drink. I was a stranger and your door remained shut to me. I was sick; I was naked; I was in prison; and you did not want to get involved!'

"And these cursed ones will claim, 'We never saw you! We didn't recognize that it was you!' But I will answer, 'The least person is my brother. When you reject him, you reject me.'

The Lazarus Projects

"The righteous shall then enter the Kingdom of Life; those others shall go away into everlasting fire."

As though to punctuate his last statement, the evening sun dropped behind a western cloudbank igniting the sky with orange, red, pink and white flaming reflections. In the distance, a trumpet sounded, warning those still outside the city walls that the main gates would close soon. So the time travelers began to move out with the crowd starting for the city. They didn't feel ready to try to find their way back in the dark.

The last thing they heard him say as they departed was, "In two days the Passover celebration starts. Then I'm going to be betrayed and handed over to the Gentiles. They will beat me and spit on me and crucify me. But I will rise from death."

When the time travelers returned to their lodgings, Gershom and Eli, the owner, welcomed them in the courtyard. They obviously wanted to talk with Eli so he remained in the court while the others went upstairs to prepare supper.

A slave washed Eli's feet and served the three men spiced wine. By now it was dark, and as they went through the amenities preceding serious talk, the slave lit several lamps and placed them on brackets to light up the courtyard.

Finally, Eli, the owner, broached the real subject of their talk. "My Guest," he

John W. Cowart

said, "I have a dear friend who has an estate west of the city. Like you, he is a dealer in fine wines. The Egyptian crown owns groves of Palma Caryota, fine date palms , near Jericho. We call these trees hang-over trees because of the strong date wine they produce. My friend, Simon, is the manager of these groves; and although his work is extremely profitable, he is interested in exploring further commercial possibilities. Perhaps if you and he were to meet..."

Eli Rosen said, "I am here as a pilgrim -- not seeking business. However, I would be happy to meet your friend at some other time. It could be mutually profitable...."

"Excellent. Excellent," said the owner rubbing his hands together. "Tomorrow evening he is giving a banquet for his many friends. You will accompany us to meet him."

Eli realized he was being roped into something. He had no desire to discuss the wine trade with a man knowledgeable in it from a First Century viewpoint. He tried to back-paddle insisting that he didn't wish to impose on Simon's hospitality, but the two traders insisted saying, "Why over a hundred guests will be at Simon's banquet, and he has room for many more. He is famous for his parties."

Then Gershom, thinking that he knew the key to Eli's reluctance, said, "Of course, a party at the home of a Pharisee may not be to your fancy. After Passover I can get us invited to the feast that Herod offers every

The Lazarus Projects

year. At his palace there will be every amusement a man can desire, wine to excess, dancing girls, or, if your taste is inclined, soft young boys."

So they urged and cajoled until Eli relented and agreed to accompany them to the date wine producer's estate in Bethany for the party.

After supper upstairs, Ben drew his father out onto the balcony and said, "Dad, I'm sorry about this morning. I was wrong."

"I understand, Son... I was wrong too. I think my real trouble was that I was afraid to go in there by myself."

"Ah come on! You're not afraid of anything. I've never seen you up against anything you couldn't handle. Remember that strike at the Newark brewery? Those guys were looking for somebody to kill and you walked right into the pickets and talked to them like you were at a garden party."

"The reason you didn't know how scared I was to go in there that day was that my underwear goes to the laundry."

They both laughed and Ben said, "I was scared for you, Dad. And you can't believe how proud... Tomorrow, if you want, I'll go in the Temple with you."

"Yes. I want that. This morning, in there, I offered a sacrifice. It was like nothing that's ever happened to me before. When the blood vaporizes on the rocks of the Altar,

John W. Cowart

it was like fire-distilled prayer. You actually see it ascend.

"Ben, when we get back, I'm going to immigrate to Israel. I've always thought that America is the real promised land. But... but I'm sure there will be another war with the Arabs. Israel will win again, and this next time we'll take over the Temple site. We'll rip down the mosque and with the measurements and pictures that we're getting right now, the Temple can be rebuilt, just like it is now.

"The sacrifices can start again.

"I know from what I experienced this morning that this is the greatest thing that can happen to a man. I've never been especially religious; it's all been sermons and suppers and appeals for money. But something's changing inside me. Maybe I'm just getting old; maybe, with all this contact with death, I'm feeling my own mortality. Deals and takeovers and conglomerates don't count for as much when you're thinking about death.

"Maybe, I'm going to get religion and I think that with a real tangible visual Temple rebuilt, the Jewish people can be the greatest nation on earth. There's real contact with the Eternal in sacrifice. And we will have both the plans and the money to see it done."

"I know we're well off," Ben said, "But we don't have that kind of money, do we?"

The Lazarus Projects

"Before we left Miami, your Uncle Lazarus told me that if he does die -- he's not as confident about these projects as he was at first -- in the event of his death, the billions from Wienstien Enterprises will come to me. So whatever the outcome of this expedition, I feel my life is changing," Eli said.

— XIX —

Wednesday afternoon, having spent the morning once more in the Temple, the Weymouths planned to remain at the house while Eli, Ben and Francis got ready for the party.

The party goers wore their very finest robes.

Eli's cloak actually had a border of silver threads woven into the material in a geometric pattern. And although Ben and Francis were not as elegant, they also exuded an air of prosperity. Even after three days without a proper bath, the time travelers were still the cleanest people in New Testament Jerusalem.

Gershom arranged for litters to transport his friends out to Bethany. The two Elis rode in one litter; Gershom and Ben in another; and Francis by himself. Each sedan chair was borne on the shoulders of husky young slaves who trotted briskly through the street traffic in a balanced tread so smooth that the litter was not jostled at all but moved level and swayed evenly. An overseer trotted along side the small caravan, giving the slaves lazy flicks with his whip, not

because they needed it, but to give himself something to do.

The attitude of the free people toward the slaves amazed Francis. The free paid no more attention to the slaves than a modern man would pay to a telephone -- an instrument of service to be ignored when not in use. And, although Francis saw no overt cruelty, a sick or injured slave in the street elicited no more concern than a fisherman might feel for a fish gasping its life out in a bucket.

Once they cleared the city gate, a fifteen-minute trot brought them to the village of Bethany: mostly drab little huts of waddle and mud construction. Soon they entered the walled garden of Simon's estate. The sedan chairs were lowered to the ground, and the guests disembarked. A slave, a butler apparently, ushered them into the garden and left them to mingle with guests already there while he went out to greet still others arriving, some on foot, some by horseback, still others in ornate sedan chairs.

A fragrant grove of lemon trees shaded the acres of garden. Tall oleander bushes, full of pink and white flowers, splashed color over long, winding mosaic walks. At the end of the garden farthest from the house, a fountain spilled water into a deep pool which overflowed into six wider pools in a series of cascading water falls flowing toward the house. The bricks of the

John W. Cowart

garden wall formed a geometric latticework revealing more lemon trees outside the wall.

The richly dressed guests stood about chattering or arguing in small groups, sipping spiced wine from shallow bowls.

All the guests were men.

"I thought cocktail parties were a modern phenomenon," said Eli in English.

"Doesn't look like it," Francis replied. "All we need is a blaring stereo to make it complete."

As though taking a cue from his words, a group of slave musicians appeared on a small terrace beside the house and began to play a lively arrangement on all sorts of odd instruments. Francis recognized a lute, but all the other instruments were completely strange to the archaeologist.

Opening from the mansion directly onto the terrace was a large dining hall lined with white columns. Indigo blue curtains, draped between the columns, divided the area behind into small compartments leaving the main hall open. This hall was arranged in a series of broad steps or terraces working up to the table of honor on the highest level. Grouped around each table were long, low, cushioned settees with a single quilted armrest.

Eli the owner and Gershom came over leading a waddling, fat, beaming bundle of colored silk who was Simon, the manager of

the Egyptian date groves, a Pharisee, host of this affair.

On being introduced, Eli the time traveler automatically reached out to shake hands, and Simon's confusion caught him up short before he realized that our modern greeting would be meaningless here. Quickly recovering his poise, he changed the handshake motion into a hug and kissed his host.

Simon's eye quickly took in the wealthy appearance of the foreign pilgrims and he welcomed them profusely. After enquiring as to their health, the well being of their loved ones, and the state of their flocks, he said, "I welcome you to my home, I wish you to enjoy the finest of all I own. And it is my sincere desire that after Passover that we may negotiate for the profit of our respective trades. My Friend, Eli, has told me of your success in Hispania. But tonight is to be enjoyed. Drink! Feast! Soon the days of unleavened bread and bitter herbs will be on us and we must fortify ourselves".

"It's a kind of Mardi Gras," Ben said in English.

"Ben, look at his hands," Francis said. Three fingers were missing from each of Simon's hands and although the scars were now healed over, obviously at one time this man was diseased with leprosy.

Noticing their gaze, Simon proclaimed expansively, "Yes. in my childhood, I was afflicted. But the Almighty chose to elevate

John W. Cowart

me now above my fellows. Now I am master of this house and chief over the holdings of Egypt in this land. My name is known from Thebes to Rome. I took advantage of my opportunities, young men, and in spite of my difficulty, I've made myself a place in this world."

Simon continued his discourse of self-exaltation as he led them into the banquet hall and seated them at a table just one step down from his own. As soon as the host seated himself, the guests, until then still clustered at the entrance, charged into the room. Pushing, shoving, elbowing -- all trying to gain seats on an upper level.

Simon laughed at the spectacle as the more agile gained upper places, and the others sullenly drifted down to the lower tables. Immediately, slaves began bringing in trays of steaming curried vegetables.

"Boys," Eli said in English, "Look at the far end of the hall."

They looked and at the lowest table reclining on a settee was Jesus and several of his disciples. He was dressed in the same gray robe that they had seen him wear all week. He was apparently joking with the slave serving his table, but he was too far away for the time travelers to hear what the slave and the disciples were laughing about.

Platters of roast lamb in a thick gravy appeared on the table, followed by chicken breasts and long stalks of celery fried in olive oil and served over a bed of scorched rice.

Everyone ate with his fingers from a central bowl at each table. They sopped up gravy with flat round buns of brown bread.

Simon leaned over from the head table and offered Eli a particularly succulent morsel of chicken and said, "I have a story to tell you --- Once a young man of the tribe of Naphtali was on a journey that took him to Caesarea to the palace of the Roman judge. The young man was being cheated out of his father's estate by the collectors and he had to ask the Romans for justice.

"This clever Roman prided himself on his justice and decided to put the Jewish youth to a test. The Roman pretended to be sympathetic to his problem and invited the young man to dine with him and his family.

"Now the judge lived with his wife, his two daughters, and two strong sons who were soldiers.

"When they reclined to feast, the judge said, 'If you can divide the meat fairly between us; then I will divide the property to you fairly. If you cannot, then you will serve my sons as their slave.' Then the Roman placed five whole roast chickens on the table".

Simon beamed in amusement as his guests tried to figure out how to evenly divide five roast chickens equally among seven people. He slapped his thigh in delight and continued his story.

John W. Cowart

"The Jewish boy took the platter of chickens and served one to the judge and his wife, one to the two daughters, and one to the two sons. The other two chickens he ate himself. At the end of the meal, the judge said, 'Well, Jew, you have failed'.

"'No, Sir,' said the boy, 'You, your wife and one chicken makes three. Your two daughters and one chicken makes three. Your two sons and one chicken makes three. And myself and two chickens makes three. All is even. Give me my inheritance as you promised!'"

As soon as the others left for the banquet, Jack and Judy hurried upstairs.

"Alone at last," he said hugging her. "Lord, it's been weeks."

"It's only been a few days," she said unfastening her gown. "It just seems longer. Keep on the belt? No. We'll live dangerously".

She stripped off her robes and dropped naked to their pallet. The afternoon sun seeping through the latticework of the western window threw diamond-shaped designs of light across her smooth body as she stretched. She shifted her pillow so the light wouldn't be in her eyes and watched her husband undress.

Easing down beside her, he propped up on his elbow and moved his right hand in lazy patterns over her, tracing first the

design of shadow and then the patterns of light. "I'm very glad that you're my wife," he said. "You are very precious to me. I love you very much".

"I love you too... Do you suppose the others will be all right? I hope they remember about what to eat".

"You have nice tits."

"It would be terrible if anything happened to them and they got sick or something."

"And a soft juicy clit. Look when I move my finger like this."

She was too sensitive and rubbed her thighs together. "Not yet," she whispered kissing him firmly.

He moved his hand back up to her breast and traced the lattice-work's shadows from nipple to nipple.

"You're all ready and I'm not," she said nibbling his ear. "Suppose you go ahead. Since it's been a while, you'll be quick anyhow. Then after a while, you can do it for me."

"I'm in no hurry, Lady. This afternoon I have nothing planned but loving you."

"I hear your lips, but I feel your dick. You're all set. Here, let me move this pillow down under my hips to lift it up to you. There. Now after you screw me and relax, I'll get on top and have my time."

John W. Cowart

"You convinced me," he said mounting her. "But remember... Mmmm, that feels good -- you married an old man; I may not be able to get it up a second time real soon."

His actions gave the lie to his words and it was almost dark when the weight of her relaxed body on top of him woke him up. Playfully slapping her rump he said, "Wake up wench. You're cutting off my circulation. My arm's gone to sleep".

She rolled off him and stretched out with a contented yawn, saying, "That was nice. How about scratching my back?" She rolled on to her stomach and he scratched her shoulders working his way down to the small of her back.

"That's far enough, Thank you, Sir. I'm hungry. Do you feel like cooking more of that dehydrated stuff or do you think it's safe to get something from a street vendor?"

"I'd like to order a pizza; too bad they haven't been invented yet. As far as the vendors go, so long as it's cooked and fairly free of flies, we can chance it. Besides I feel like a walk. An afternoon in bed is alright, but I want some exercise."

"I would have thought," she said dressing, "That you would have had plenty of exercise this afternoon. You're insatiable."

"The Israeli bastards have put a guard of paratroopers around the place. We can't get a man inside. It will have to be a

commando raid... No! No mortars. We want to get the uranium out intact... Yes Sir -- a few days should give us plenty of time."

The Arab replaced the phone on the hook and moved through the crowd in the hotel lobby and vanished into the busy street.

The banquet was drawing to a close.

The last dish on the table was a dessert of dates, raisins and almonds mixed in a honey glaze -- sticky but sweet. The guests lounged back on the couches, now more talking and joking than eating. Outside on the terrace, the musicians kept up their throbbing rhythm on the strange instruments.

Eli noticed that several young women appeared from behind the indigo hangings and mingled with the guests, stopping at each table, flirting and occasionally dropping to a couch beside the reclining man to chat. At first he thought nothing of it, but somehow these girls looked different from the other women of the time. Then he realized that these were the first women he had seen in the past who were not wearing veils or head-coverings of any kind. These girls all wore their hair loose. Still the significance of their attire and hair style did not dawn on him.

There was one redhead in particular who stood out from the other girls. Her hair

John W. Cowart

in rich roan tresses reached all the way down to her waist and she wore a gauze-thin clinging robe with a floral design. She strolled with swaying hips among the guests. Many men appeared to know her and called out greetings.

Simon, ever the gracious host, noticed Eli's interest and leaned over whispering, "You want her? I have only the best party girls for my friends."

Then the significance of the uncovered hair struck Eli. These girls were all whores brought into entertain the guests. And as he realized that, several men got up and accompanied girls behind the blue curtains. Other girls mounted a small platform to the side of the hall and began a slithering sensuous dance.

"Public relations tactics to gain a business contract haven't changed much over the years, have they," Ben remarked.

The slender red-haired girl had stopped to exchange a few remarks with the men at Jesus' table and then she disappeared behind the curtain.

She seemed upset about something.

"Look at that," Gershom sneered. "Our resident messiah's still eating. He's a glutton -- not at all like that desert prophet, John. That man fasted like an Essene; this one stuffs himself at other people's feasts. And he drinks!"

"You'll notice the company he keeps too," another man observed.

"They say he works miracles," Francis put in.

"Sure he does. Sure he does," said a man at the next table. "That fellow with the scrawny neck across the table from him is Lazarus. He supposedly brought him back from the dead. I think it was all a fraud. That Lazarus doesn't even look sick. I don't think he ever was".

Others at the table agreed. But one of the girls standing near the head table said, "He does work miracles. He has power."

A guest answered her, "I heard a priest say his power comes from Beelzebub, the Lord of the Flies.

Another guest chuckled, "And we all know what draws flies."

Simon said, "A few years back we had a really interesting messiah, Bagoas; he was..."

"Jesus is the Messiah," the girl spoke up.

"Certainly, Dear," Simon said patting her hand. "This Bagoas was a eunuch in the royal court. A eunuch. Imagine that! Before they executed him and his boyfriend -- a beautiful child named Carus -- this fool claimed he was going to be the father of the messiah. Imagine a man with no balls -- a father! He based his claim on Isaiah where it says, 'The eunuch must not say I am nothing

John W. Cowart

but a barren tree.' These messiahs can make the Scripture prove anything."

The guests laughed at the host's remarks and Francis noticed that the slave serving the table looked like he wanted to say something but remained silent. So Francis spoke up saying, "Tell me, how many of you Pharisees were executed with the eunuch Bagoas as his supporters?"

The chuckling stopped abruptly.

"Fifteen," muttered Simon and Francis offered a silent prayer of thanks for old Professor Malone at seminary who insisted that Francis memorize such bits of historical trivia.

The reminder about Pharisees having supported a false messiah caused a lull in the conversation at the upper tables. And in the comparative quiet, the men heard a sound strangely incongruous to the gaiety of the banquet.

Somewhere a woman was crying.

Sobbing her heart out.

The men looked about, feeling a surge of masculine protectiveness at the sound of a woman in great distress. Simon struggled his fat bulk up from his reclining couch and stood listening intently, like a chubby bird-dog on point.

The blue curtains at the foot of the hall parted, and the red-haired whore entered and stood there with tears streaming down her face cutting white channels through her

heavy makeup. Her shoulders were drooped and her head down in a portrait of despair and dejection.

She threw herself at the foot of Jesus' couch, untied his sandals, and began to bathe his feet with her tears. He continued to eat the date and honey mixture.

The girl, still crying, stood up and broke open an exquisite alabaster flask. Soon the rich tangy aroma of spikenard filled the room. And she lavishly poured the ointment on Jesus' hair rubbing it in with her fingers. Then she returned to the foot of the couch and anointed his feet -- tears mingling with the spiced oil. Using her own lovely hair, she patted his feet dry.

He watched her with the expression of a sphinx.

He looked like a rock would look if a rock could love.

"What's that rose-colored stuff she's putting on him," Eli whispered to Francis.

"It's spikenard. It's a liquid spice oil. The women here in ancient times used it to oil their bodies on their wedding night. It's a symbol of purity and virginity."

"Looks slippery."

"It is."

"Must be like trying to catch a greased pig."

"They enjoy it."

"What's a whore like her doing with it?"

John W. Cowart

"I imagine it's from her trousseau. That's all her hope she's pouring out there."

"Which one is that guy -- the handsome blond fellow?"

"When I first saw him, I thought that must be Peter; he's so distinguished looking. But his actions identify him. That's Judas."

The man they were discussing had leaped up and shoved the girl away when he noticed what she was doing. "Stop that. Stop that at once," he demanded.

"Leave her alone!" snapped Jesus. "She has done what she could..."

"Look," the disciple reasoned, "She could have sold that ointment for a good price; we could have bought food for the poor."

"The poor? The poor," mused Jesus. "If you're concerned for the poor, you can always care for them. They are always with you. But I am not."

He motioned for the girl to return to her place at the foot of his couch. He continued speaking, "She has done what she could. She has done a beautiful thing for me. She is anointing my body, anticipating my burial."

"And listen to this. Listen carefully -- Everywhere in the whole world. Everywhere and in every age that my story is told, then this thing she has done will also be told. That's her memorial."

Judas snapped his head back and forth in a gesture of contempt and indignation. Then he gathered the folds of his robe in his fist and stormed out of the hall.

Simon turned to Eli and said, "Some prophet! A real holy man would know what kind of girl that is. That other fellow, Judas, their treasurer, he's the only one of that whole crew with any sense at all."

"Simon!" a deep voice rang out, "I have something to say to you."

Simon whipped around, startled at the sound of his name called above the hubbub of the party. At the end of the hall, Jesus now stood facing him. "Why, you're welcome to speak, Rabbi," he said.

"Once two men owed money to a business man," Jesus said. "One of them owed him a lot; the other owed him only a small amount. Neither of them could repay him, but instead of sending them to debtor's prison, the businessman wrote off both debts. Which of the two men would love him the most?"

"Why the one who owed most I suppose," Simon answered.

"You're absolutely right," Jesus said. "The one forgiven most loves most. Look at this woman and consider this. You gave me no kiss of welcome when I arrived as your guest; she is still lavishing kisses on my feet. She anointed my head. She washed my feet

John W. Cowart

with her tears and dried them with her hair. You didn't offer to wash me..."

Eli thought, "The important people all arrived by sedan chair. Simon only caters to the right people."

"Listen to this," Jesus said. "I forgive her all her sins because..."

The men at the banquet bristled with indignation. The stirring and muttering drowned out Jesus' next words.

"Outrageous!"

"Who does he think he is."

"No man can forgive sin, only God can."

"Blasphemous! Someone ought to put a stop to this. I think..."

"Did you hear what he said?"

"Only God can forgive sin; if he claims to forgive, then he's claiming to be..."

"Listen," Jesus demanded. "I forgive her all her sins -- and there are a multitude of them -- I forgive her much because she has loved me much. But a man who is forgiven little..."

The party broke up into small heated arguments. By the time the guests spilled out into the garden, Jesus, the woman, and the disciples had vanished.

— XX —

Thursday morning Eli woke up with a splitting headache.

Damn, he thought. No wonder they call those date trees 'Hangover Palms'. I only had a little bit of that date wine, but it's potent stuff. He washed his face in a basin and looked out the window. It was a gray wet drizzling day. The room was cold. The chill of the previous night remained. *What I wouldn't give for a cup of coffee right now,* he thought.

After breakfast, the time travelers lounged around the table planning their day.

"I want to caution you," Eli said. "That everything we witness over the next couple of days occurred 2,000 years ago. In reality, all the people around us have been dead for centuries. I remind you of this in case your sympathies tempt you to attempt to interfere with any of the events we will see.

"Tonight, Jesus Christ will be arrested and tried. Tomorrow morning, he will be tortured to death. This is history. Under no circumstances are you to interfere.

John W. Cowart

"There is another thing I want to caution you about... If -- notice that I emphasize IF -- nothing happens on Sunday morning, I don't want you to be too upset.

"From what we have seen of Jesus, he is undoubtedly a great man and even without anything supernatural about him, the world will always honor him as a great moral teacher. But for your own emotional equilibrium, don't be too disappointed when we discover that he does not rise from the grave."

Judy broke in smiling, "What are we supposed to feel if he does?"

"I don't know, but remember that in the time we've observed him, he has not accomplished one single miracle. Everything that we've seen could have been done by any natural leader."

Francis said, "Eli, according to the Gospels, the only miracles he did during Passion Week was to curse a fig tree and heal the ear of one of the men hurt during his arrest -- no, I'm wrong. On the day of the triumphal entry, he healed some lame and blind people in the Temple -- that was Sunday, the day before we arrived."

"Well, he may possibly have cursed that fig tree, we didn't personally observe that; but we're the ones who killed it -- 'withered it from the roots' as your Scripture says -- no miracle there."

The Lazarus Projects

"Sure. Sure," Jack observed. "Every day people pop out of the future and stomp down fruit trees -- nothing miraculous about that."

"At any rate," Eli said, "The only miracle that counts is his walking out of that tomb under his own steam. That's what we're getting paid to find out, and here's how we'll go about finding out. Francis, go over the places we need to locate today."

Francis unfolded a relief map of the city on the table. Red ink already marked several locations. Using a splinter of fire kindling for a pointer, he said, "From the Gospel accounts we know that Jesus will be at six different locations tomorrow. Late tonight, he will be arrested in Gethsemane, and he will be tried before the Jewish court at the homes of Annas and Caiaphas, the High Priests. After that, he appears at the Praetorium, that's Pilate's Judgement Seat. He will be sent to Herod's Palace -- we know where that is. Then he will be crucified at Golgotha and buried nearby.

"Most of these places will be fairly easy to locate. It will simply be a matter of asking directions. Today, we want to pinpoint each location, look it over good and pick out the best vantage points so that we can be close. Today, we're spying out the land so we'll know where the front row seats are ahead of the crowd."

Judy said, "We already know where one of those places is..."

John W. Cowart

"Oh?"

"Yes," she continued, "Gethsemane."

"The Garden of Prayer," Ben asked, "How do we know where that is?"

"Remember Tuesday when we followed him onto the Mount of Olives? When he prophesied about the sheep and the goats, he was at the olive press. Well, Gethsemane in the Aramaic word for olive press. And he acted right at home there, familiar with the place, that is."

Ben laughed. "I keep picturing a scene from a stained glass window; and in reality, the Garden of Prayer is an abandoned oil factory." He stopped, suddenly serious, then added, "The thing that makes the place special is not its being a beautiful garden but the fact that he prays there."

Jack said, "I can see how we'll locate all these other places beforehand, but how will we find the tomb?"

Eli answered, "We know it was near the public execution ground so we'll go there, find the nearest cemetery, and talk to the custodian about buying a new tomb. Once we find out which one fits the description in your Testament -- the tomb which belongs to Joseph of Arimathaea. Then we'll figure out how to keep it under 24-hour surveillance from the time they put the body in until Tuesday morning."

"Tuesday," Francis said, "Why Tuesday?"

The Lazarus Projects

"Because if he's not out of there by then, we'll know he's not coming out... Judy, do you have plenty of film to cover that amount of time?"

"Yes I do, but I think we'll only need half of it."

"I admire your confidence."

"The camera I've adapted for this has variable infra-red lenses. We used the same kind to get pictures of the surface of Mars. I also have a couple of pairs of binoculars with these same lenses; we can observe the tomb night and day."

"Good... The other major problem is to know for sure that he's dead -- not merely unconscious -- before they bury him. Jack, can you be sure of that?"

"Just a second, I'll show you," Jack said leaving the table to rummage in his pack. He emerged with an instrument that looked for all the world like a timing light used to tune automobile engines. It looked like a pistol-grip flashlight; but where the lens would normally be, this device had a solid metal cap. At the back, above the handle, a ribbon of computer tape emerged from a slot.

"What is it?" Eli asked.

"It's an Encephalic Concussion Impacting Device, an ECID gun, for short. The CIA developed the prototype of this thing to use as an assassination weapon. It was supposed to use high intensity sonic waves aimed at the head of the victim to

John W. Cowart

produce concussion, amnesia or stroke. It didn't work for that job; the peak impact force is not strong enough to damage a human brain, but the sonic wave is reflected back to the device -- a kind of echo.

"Remember a few months back in Fallujah when one of our soldiers shot that wounded Iraqi in the pile of enemies and it ran on every TV station?

"Well, right after that the army issued one of these to every medic in the field. Now, medics can use one of these to identify a living person in a whole pile of bodies. That way when there's an enemy with bombs strapped to his chest hiding with the dead waiting for our guys to get close enough, we can spot him right off...

"Also, in the field, medics can pull our guys, wounded men, out of a pile of the dead for immediate treatment. This thing is saving lives on the battlefield every day.

"The CIA boys -- since they found out they couldn't kill people with it -- they turned it over to us at Walter Reed to cure people with it. Watch this."

He pointed the gun at Ben's head and squeezed the trigger. Immediately, the paper ribbon at the tail of the ECID gun began to chatter out softly. "Don't feel a thing, do you?"

Ben nodded no.

"Now look at the tape."

The Lazarus Projects

It contained numerous minuscule perforations.

"The echo from this soft blast-wave records your own brain waves.

"There are five indicators of death," he said ticking them off with his fingers: "Cessation of respiration, heart beat, and circulation - that's why dead bodies don't bleed. There's no reaction to pain, and a complete loss of brain function.

"In the case of a patient whose other vital signs may be kept going by machine, brain death is the primary legal indication of death.

"With Jesus we can visually confirm the cessation of all the other signs. And with this devise, we can be sure whether or not he registers a flat ECG reading. If there are perforations on the tape, then in spite of appearances, he still has a spark of life. If there are no perforations, then there are no brain waves. He's dead.

"In the past, doctors had to rely on pupillary responses to determine the presence or absence of brain function when no electroencephalograph machine was available."

"Pupillary response?" Francis asked.

"Yes, the enlargement or dilation of the pupils of the eyes is an involuntary response to light. It depends on brain function. If the brain is not functioning, then

John W. Cowart

the pupils do not respond -- change size -- when the light striking them changes."

Francis said, "Then the Romans could have used this kind of test to determine that he was indeed dead? I mean, they could have used all five criteria you mentioned to declare him dead?"

"Of course the Romans knew nothing about brain waves... But, the fact that the pupils of dead men don't respond to light changes has always been known. That's one of the reasons men have always closed the eyes of the dead. I don't know if this was one of the ways the Centurion used to determine that Jesus was dead, but it's possible. Anyhow this ECID gun will tell us for sure about Christ's brain waves."

Eli asked, "How close do you have to be to use it?"

"It works on narrow beam focus within 15 feet. Beyond that, the beam spreads out and is inaccurate. It could pick up reflections from several different people then."

Eli said, "It looks like we have everything covered. Jack, I want you and Judy to find out exactly where the Praetorium is. Ben, you and Francis locate the homes of the two priests. I'm going to get Gershom and go shopping for a cemetery plot. If possible, I want to examine the tomb beforehand. Let's all plan to meet back here about ... O, let's say, three O'clock."

— XXI —

If Gershom felt curious as to why Eli wanted to go to a cemetery near Golgotha, he gave no indication of it. In that day as in this, it was not too unusual for pilgrims from other lands to make arrangements for having their bodies buried in Jerusalem.

Gershom seemed to have grown accustomed to the strange customs of Eli. Or perhaps, he figured that wealth has a right to its own eccentricities. At any rate, he walked with Eli through the southwestern gate of the city to the public execution grounds.

The road which passed Golgotha was the main road coming up from Alexandria, Egypt, and was jammed with pilgrims streaming into the city.

Jews from all over the Roman world sailed along the principal trade routes to the great port of Alexandria and then made their way overland in vast caravans to Jerusalem for Passover.

To the south of the road, swarming with clouds of flies and vermin and covered with low-hanging thick pungent smoke was the Valley of Gehenna, the garbage dump of

Jerusalem. To the north of the road, rising in deep terraces all the way back to the city wall lay a huge cemetery with every sort of crypt and mausoleum imaginable.

The execution site itself was not a skull shaped hill as Eli expected from the two modern sites identified as Calvary. Both of these lay to the north of the city.

But the place Gershom pointed out as Golgotha was a broad flat platform of stone built squarely in the center of this main road so that traffic had to split into two streams to get past the place. In order for a public execution to carry the most weight as a deterrent for others, the Romans situated the execution ground in the place where the most people would be sure to see it.

"Are you sure this is Golgotha, the place of the skull?" Eli asked.

"Yes," Gershom assured him.

"Is it named that because it is the execution site?"

"Many people think that, but it's not true," Gershom replied. "Actually, years ago this stretch of property along the road was once owned by a family named Golgalta, skull. The place takes its name from them -- strangely appropriate though. Is this all you wanted to see? We're too early for an execution. If you want to wait, we can."

"You mean there'll be an execution here? later today?"

The Lazarus Projects

"There're crucifixions here almost everyday. Especially around Passover. All you wealthy pilgrims on the roads attract a lot of bandits. So the Romans man the watchtowers along the roads with extra troops. It's all a cycle; more pilgrims bring in more thieves which bring in more troops who crucify the thieves, so the safer roads encourage still more pilgrims. It's all very good for business."

"Doesn't seeing other thieves die act as a deterrent?"

"The Praetor claims it does. But I think most people view it as an amusement. Isn't that how it works out in your homeland?"

Thinking of the American propensity for violent tv shows, Eli agreed.

The drizzle stopped, and although the sky was still overcast, Eli was hot in his woolen cloak. The two men walked a short distance down the road and stopped to sit on a low stone fence bordering the cemetery. On the terraced slope below them, a newly arrived group of pilgrims were pitching a black goat-hair tent.

"I want to make some inquiries about this cemetery," Eli said. "Where would we find the manager?"

Gershom led him through a maze of tombs to the manager's quarters. Actually, the office had at one time been a mausoleum itself, but long ago it had been refurbished as a combination home and

office for the gardener in charge of the cemetery.

The gardener was a one-eyed man with a horrible scar disfiguring the side of his face. He was about thirty years old. His left hand was crooked and stiff. He was dressed in tattered rags which were the remains of some sort of military uniform.

The thing that struck Eli even more than the man's battered appearance was his smell. He reeked of the heavy, cloying stink of myrrh and other embalming spices.

The former soldier welcomed them with a snaggle-toothed smile, genuinely glad to see prosperously dressed customers.

He was sure such men would be interested in buying a new tomb instead of just renting a used one for a few years until the deceased had decayed and the bones would be raked out to make room for a new body. Only the poor rented tombs; the rich bought new ones. From the rings on Eli's hands, the caretaker knew that he was wealthy.

After exchanging the long greetings required by courtesy, Eli said to the caretaker, "I am interested in a tomb I've heard about. I think it may be in your memorial garden here. It belongs to a noble of Arimathaea named Joseph."

"O yes Sir. Yes Sir," the gardener beamed. "One of our finest models. It's cut out of the rock right into the hillside. Solid

The Lazarus Projects

walls. Not one of these cheap brick things whitewashed to look like stone. But real solid. The price is very reasonable considering that in there your departed loved one will ..."

Eli interrupted the man's sales pitch,. "Can we see Joseph's tomb?"

The caretaker hobbled up the hill toward a stand of sycamore trees. In the shade of the trees a broad flat facing was cut into the hillside and a low doorway was carved in the white limestone. To one side, resting in a deep groove and wedged in place by a block of wood was the large round flat stone used to seal the entrance. Small grooves scored the edge of this stone. Eli thought of a two-ton dime.

Stooping down, Eli peered into the quiet darkness. Fine powdered rock from the stone cutting crunched beneath his feet. At the rear of the ante-chamber a low stone shelf was cut into the wall for the body to lie on -- "The body won't get wet in case groundwater seeps in," the caretaker discreetly pointed out.

Eli searched his feelings to see if he felt anything "holy" about this place. He felt nothing. It was just a hole in the ground. he felt a vague disappointment.

Emerging from the sepulcher, he looked through the trees and down the hill at the pilgrims hammering in tent stakes at their camp outside the fence. From the entrance of the tomb to the pilgrims' tent

was about 100 yards and the line of sight was unobstructed.

Eli paid the gardener a generous backsheash, and, refusing the man's offer to show him really lavish tombs 'guaranteed to be the first opened by the Holy angels on Judgement Day', he went down to the pilgrims' camp.

As he stepped down the terraces, he could still hear the caretaker calling out something about perpetual care and special rates for family plots.

Perpetual care, Shit!, thought Eli. In a few years war will come and the Romans will tear down the city and even plough up the graves. In the end, death won't even allow us the dignity of laying still in a quiet spot. Rottenness, worms, putrefaction and scattered bones is all the future holds for any of us. When you die, you die forever. And they sprinkle cow shit on your grave to make flowers grow.

This train of thought caused him to recall how when one of the Wienstien subsidiaries was constructing a new shopping mall in Jacksonville, a bulldozer uncovered a mass burial. When company lawyers investigated, they discovered the land had been used to bury hundreds of victims of a Yellow Fever epidemic in 1888. After due deliberation and without calling attention to their action, they went ahead and bulldozed the mass grave and paved over the area with asphalt; after all, for the

The Lazarus Projects

living parking is more important than people long dead.

After a long, involved, boisterous haggle with the tent dwellers, Eli purchased the black, goat-hair tent -- as is, ready pitched on the site -- for an exorbitant sum that would finance the old Bedouin who owned the tent for a dozen pilgrimages. The man's wife packed up their personal belongings, complaining loudly that this sharp western trader had taken advantage of her poor unsophisticated husband and bought their home from over their heads.

Gershom, who was thoroughly puzzled by the transaction, quoted the old proverb, "It is nothing. It is nothing, complaineth the trader; but on his way home, he boasteth over his bargain."

Once the Bedouin family moved out, Eli returned to his apartment leaving Gershom to guard the newly purchased tent. Since it was only eleven o'clock, Eli was surprised to find the others already at the apartment.

Finding the other places had been merely a matter of asking.

It turned out that both the two High Priests lived in separate wings of the same house, a place called "The Residence", a lavish mansion, big as a hotel, built on the same general plan as the house where the time travelers stayed.

Locating the Praetorium turned out to be a little more difficult because, as Jack and Judy discovered, the word "Praetorium" simply designated anyplace the Praetor, Pontius Pilate, happened to pronounce a judgement.

On further investigation, they found that Pilate had entered the city the previous week and, with his Second Italian Cohort, had requisitioned Hippicus Bastion as his headquarters. This tower, although it formed part of the defenses for Herod's Palace, was sufficiently large to garrison the six hundred soldiers and sufficiently luxurious for the comfort of the Roman Praetor who maintained his capital at Caesarea to the north and kept no permanent residence in Jerusalem. According to city gossip, Herod was furious at Pilate for usurping quarters in the royal palace but the king was powerless in the face of the Roman's authority.

"Well all this explains something that's always puzzled me a little," Jack said. "From the time he was arrested till he was crucified, Jesus was interrogated at least five different times. I wondered how he would get to all these different places in such a short time. It just didn't seem reasonable. But seeing all these spots are so close together solves that problem for me."

"It might solve a doubt for you," Francis said, "But it's going to create havoc back home. Do you realize that not one of the sites venerated in modern times is

The Lazarus Projects

authentic according to our observations? Of course, I'm relieved that the Protestant shrine at Gordon's Calvary is as far off as our traditional one; but I'm afraid a lot of simple Christians are going to be very upset."

"Wait a minute," Judy exclaimed, "You're the one who told us how the city has been completely leveled and ploughed over by the Emperor Hadrian. Remember, the only reason the Western Wall and the Phasael Tower ruins remain is that the Roman army camped at those spots and didn't plow them under. Besides, all the tour guides, even the priests, always tell people that 'this is the alleged spot' where such and such took place. No one is going to be that upset over our findings."

"Well, I think..." Francis began.

"No, wait a minute, let me finish," Judy said. "Eli said that he didn't feel anything holy about Joseph's tomb. Well, he shouldn't have. Holiness is a person not a place. Without Jesus nothing is holy, with him everything is."

"I hate to interrupt this amateur theologian's conference," Eli said, "But what other work do we have to get done before tonight? Nothing? Everything's ready? Good! Then I suggest we all get a nap. It's going to be a long night. After dark, we'll go out to Gethsemane to witness the arrest and follow him from there."

"I wish there was some way that we could see the Last Supper," Francis said.

"There's no way I can figure out how," Eli said. "It was held at some private house here in the city. Even the disciples didn't know where it would be till they got there. We'll pick him up in the garden. And Jack, you'll be able to confirm whether or not there's any miraculous healing of the servant's chopped off ear."

— XXII —

They all lay down for a while, but no one slept.

Each person struggled minute by minute with alternating hopes and doubts and fears.

Finally Judy sat up and said, "Eli, we're going to go crazy just waiting around here. Let's do something -- anything."

"I was thinking the same thing myself. I'll tell you what; there's a factor in our mission we haven't considered yet. Let's walk out to Bethany and have a talk with Lazarus, the guy Jesus supposedly brought back from the dead. If that was a put up job, it may give us some clue as to what to expect with Jesus. The rest of us saw him, Lazarus, from a distance the other night, but Jack should be able to tell if he's been sick recently."

The others left carrying bundles of equipment to drop off at the tent on their way, but Francis remained, saying that he would fix some packets of food to carry with them during the long night ahead.

John W. Cowart

Actually, he wanted to be alone with his thoughts to arrive at some conclusion as to what action he should take in the light of his bishop's instructions.

As he made sandwiches and prepared the other food, Francis worried over the bishop's words. Snatches of the conversation careened through his mind as he worked:

IF IN YOUR OPINION... The pyramid of simple believers supports the real truth-seekers... THE FINDINGS OF THE INVESTIGATORS... protect the basic structure... WOULD SERVE TO UNDERMINE... the Spirit protects the church through human agents... RATHER THAN TO UPLIFT... vows of obedience... YOU ARE TO TAKE... varied interpretations... WHATEVER STEPS NECESSARY... the layman is not qualified to discern... TO INSURE... true but not true in the same sense... THAT THE EXPEDITION DOES NOT RETURN.

To stop their return all he would have to do would be to destroy the control belts.

The priest tried to pray but his prayers were ashes. Where did his duty lie? He was not sure.

He lowered his head to the table weeping and fell into a troubled sleep. He dreamed that he was at the entrance to an expensive restaurant. His shoes were scuffed and his clothes rumpled and threadbare. It was a few minutes before closing time and the maitre d' frowned when the late arriving customer appeared. Francis

The Lazarus Projects

hesitated. He knew he had just enough money in his pocket to pay for the meal, but not enough to tip the waiter. So he stood there. Hungry. Listening to the other dinners inside the door. Watching the impatient scowling waiter. He could not decide whether to go in and feast -- or to go away.

And the restaurant was closing.

He woke.

"Phooy on the bishop!" he said. "He can do what he wants. I'm on the side of the angels this time."

It was mid-afternoon. Sweat dripped off his nose and his body felt clammy, sticking to his clothes even though the air was beginning to get chilly. He could smell himself.

"I going to take a bath," he said.

Figuring that the others wouldn't be back for a while yet, he picked up a bronze ewer and went up to the cistern on the roof of the house to get some water to wash. However, when he dipped up the jug full of water, he said, "Pig piss!" using an old Danish expression from his boyhood, "No wonder they only wash their feet!"

The stagnant water was full of green slime and thousands of wiggling, crawling, squirming, swimming things. Francis emptied the ewer back into the roof-top cistern. Then recalling the clean running waters of Siloam Pool a short walk away, he

John W. Cowart

went downstairs and out in the street swinging the ewer by its handle.

The pool was packed with people gossiping, washing clothes and drawing water. Children darted in and out among their elders in screaming games of tag. Francis thought that the crowd was unusually thick, but he realized that this was the Day of Preparation and that women were probably getting in extra supplies before the holidays.

He plunged into the mass of women and squirmed his way to the water to fill his pitcher.

Full, the jug was surprisingly heavy and he struggled to carry it without sloshing water all over himself.

He noticed the women filling their pitchers deftly swing them up to balance on their heads as they weaved in and out through the jostling press of people. Francis knew he could never balance a water jug -- full or empty -- on his head, but he heaved the thing up on his right shoulder and battled his staggering way back through the crowd.

This simple action attracted attention.

Some children stopped their tag game to point at him and snickered. Several men pointed and made obscene remarks. "Sissy" was the politest thing they said.

"Some anthropologist I am," Francis thought. "I know that carrying water is a job

The Lazarus Projects

only for women in this culture. These men are getting hostile. Maybe I should drop the jug and run. Phooy on 'em; I'm going to get my bath."

In a few minutes he thought he might regret that rash decision. Two burly, rough-dressed peasants were following him. They were wearing hairy, sleeveless jackets over their robes and the shorter of the two, a teenager, carried a heavy leather satchel slung over his shoulder. Both carried thick wood staves with polished knobs on the tops. They were watching Francis intently and, to him, they looked dangerous.

I wonder where their motorcycles are parked, he thought insanely as he hurried to the gate of the courtyard. The two men followed him all the way home.

Flight hadn't worked so once inside the gate, Francis put the jug down and whirled around to face them ready to fight.

"Just what do you two want," he challenged.

"You the owner of this house," the larger husky man asked.

"No. He's away just now."

"We're supposed to set up a supper here."

A vague, horrifying suspicion crept into Francis' mind. The man with the water jug! In Luke 22:10, he remembered, Christ told the disciples to follow a man to his house for supper -- they were to recognize the right

John W. Cowart

man because he would be carrying a water jug.

"Your names," he stammered, "What are your names?"

The big, bearish man shrugged, "Me, I'm Cephas. He's John."

Francis dropped to his knees and began kissing their hands in awe. "Saint Peter! Saint John!" he cried over and over again.

The two disciples, who had no idea that they were saints, looked at each other in dismay -- a man who went around carrying water pitchers like a woman and kissing hands???

They both took a step backwards out to get of his reach.

After they had left the house, the other time travelers followed the city wall south and went through the southwest gate. They came up behind a rubbish cart pulled by oxen on its way to Gehenna. It was overflowing with rotting vegetables, dead animals picked up off the streets, and all sorts of unspeakable filth. It was making slow progress against the heavy tide of inbound pilgrims. They were glad to get past it.

As they approached their new tent, they saw Gershom standing under the front awning in a heated discussion with a young woman -- who wore no head covering. When

The Lazarus Projects

he saw them coming, he handed the girl something and she left with a coy smile at Ben and a flourish of her hips.

Eli, who had given Gershom a generous "token of friendship" that morning, wondered how much of the silver remained.

Leaving their equipment in the tent and promising to bring some supper to Gershom on their return, they went back through the southwest gate and across the city, passing the Wailing Wall of the Temple precinct, and out the northeastern gate. This side trip to the tent had taken about an hour and a half.

They stopped at Olivet to rest a while and then went up the slope to look at the olive press, Gethsemane, for the last time they would see it in daylight. Then they hiked on out to Bethany about two miles away.

Lazarus, the former dead man Jesus had raised, was nowhere to be found.

Since it was getting late, they gave up looking for him and started back for the city.

However, they ran into a bottleneck in the form of a tax collector and his henchmen.

At a place where the road ran through a narrow gorge, this enterprising publican set up a collection station where all the people headed to Jerusalem on this highway could be screened to see if their taxes were paid up to date.

John W. Cowart

The Roman government did not collect taxes at a local level, but, for a fixed price, leased out the right to collect payment to local collectors called publicans. These publicans set up collection stations in likely places and -- with the backing of mercenary soldiers -- extracted tax payments high enough to cover their own expenses for the lease rights and as much profit as they cared to charge the taxed people for their services.

This publican on the road from Bethany had arrived on the scene late, having been chased away from a more profitable spot near the camel market by another publican with a higher lease and more mercenaries. So this one was anxious to make the best of his present location. He had his clerks insist on checking all the incoming pilgrims for receipts.

Of course, many people did not carry their tax receipts with them and could not pass the collection station without paying, even if they had already paid in Jericho where most of these people were coming from. Therefore, there was constant bickering and haggling at this collection station. As a result, of all this, the time travelers found themselves waiting in one of the three long lines to pay a tax before they could continue their hike back to the city.

Like petty bureaucrats of any age, the clerks in charge of this business ignored the long lines of weary, waiting people while

The Lazarus Projects

they fussed over administrative details and gossiped among themselves.

Eli's feet hurt from all the running around of that afternoon. As the line inched slowly forward he said, "I don't know if Jesus died to save men from their sins, but I wish somebody would save us from damnable nit-picking bureaucrats."

"I'll bet there won't be any bureaucrats in heaven," Jack said. "But, in Hell, all the window clerks and all the receptionists who keep talking on the phone while you're standing at the desk, and all the secretaries who keep on typing without even acknowledging your existence -- all these people will have to stand in a line stretching three times around the circumference of Hell..."

"And they'll all have to go to the bathroom and nobody will save their place in line," Judy added.

"And when they get up to the window," Ben said, "The admission clerk will say, 'Sorry, but you forgot to fill out item 26c. Take this form back, fill it out COMPLETELY, and get back in line'"

They all chuckled at his imitation as he pinched his nostrils together and quoted the dreadful words he had once heard spoken one registration day at college.

"They're going to be treated just like they treated people on earth -- They never

John W. Cowart

will be able to get into Hell!" Eli said as his friends choked and laughed.

But the fun ended when they noticed a commotion at the head of the line.

It was time for one clerk's supper, and the people in his line struggled to find places in the remaining two lines.

When they finally paid the tax and got past the collection station, it was dark. Ben bought food from a vendor and they hurried across the city to take Gershom the supper they had promised him.

Since it was so late and they were tired, they decided to eat at the tent themselves before returning home to pick up Francis.

— XXIII —

Following his initial shock, Francis had led the two disciples -- who did not know they were saints -- up the stairway to the guest chamber the time travelers had rented. The two men started arranging extra couches at the table and, in general, took over like they owned the place. John opened his leather satchel and began unpacking various food stuffs to prepare for the Passover supper while Peter built up the fire in the charcoal brazier to cook the lamb.

Other than asking Francis where the dishes were kept, they refused his help.

He wanted to talk with them, but he couldn't think of anything intelligent to say. "Funny," he thought, "When I've prayed to saints, I did all kinds of talking, but now, face to face, there's nothing I want to ask them."

Yet, he felt strangely contented.

After a while, Francis went downstairs again and brought up the full water jug. Seeing that the disciples were intent on preparing the supper, he decided to run meet the other time travelers and bring them back to the apartment. He rushed through the darkening streets calling out for

John W. Cowart

the others in English. The streets were growing less crowded; most of the people were already gathering in their own homes for the evening meal.

Francis jogged out the city gate and paused to scan the slopes of Olivet for some sign of the others. Then he trotted down the road cursing his cumbersome robes. He stopped at the crest of the hill from which they had first seen ancient Jerusalem. The others were nowhere in sight.

Panting from the unaccustomed exertion of the uphill run, he sat down on a boulder to catch his breath. The rising moon cast a soft greenish-white glow over the dark city. Occasionally Francis saw a glimmer of firelight as oil lamps shone through windows of distant houses.

Except for a few who hurried through the streets on some last-minute errand, their way lit by torches, most people were at home.

The city grew still and dark and silent.

"We can't attack tonight," the Arab leader insisted. His disgruntled followers, who were leaders of numerous small bands of terrorists, sneered at his words.

Sensing their displeasure and impatience, he explained further, "Soon. Very soon, a coordinated massive attack will commence. The nation of Israel will be totally obliterated this time. The high

The Lazarus Projects

command wants no small-scale actions which will alert the enemy defenses. The peace talks are only a blind to keep them at ease. You must keep your forces under control for just a little longer."

One of the younger men contemptuously spat on the floor.

"I'm sick of waiting," he said.

The sound of laughing voices filled the courtyard.

Francis looked up to the balcony of the apartment as he entered the gate. He could see the flickering light of the oil lamps casting erratic patterns on the ceiling of the upper room.

Shadows of laughing, feasting men.

There was a soft small sound in the background of the supper talk: the sound of trickling water, then the scrape as a basin slid over the stone floor, then the trickle of water again.

Stunned, Francis sank to a garden seat and listened. The sound of water. Happy talk. A loud belch. Laughter.

"God is washing their feet and they aren't even aware of it," he whispered.

Upstairs, a fuss broke out. An ugly voice snapped, "I AM THE GREATEST!" And the babble of indignant counterclaims drowned out the sound of the cleansing water.

John W. Cowart

Then Francis heard the voice he had known all his life say, "You do well to call me Lord and Master; for so I am."

The other whining voices grew shamefully silent.

"If I, your Master and Lord, wash your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I'm giving you this example because a servant isn't any better than his master. And if my servants would do as I do, they would be happy."

Francis rocked back and forth on the bench with his face in his hands. He was happy. He was terrified. He was ashamed. He was peaceful. He was afraid. He was joyous.

The door to the upper room slammed, and an angry figure stomped down the stairs and out into the night. Francis didn't even notice the man; he was too busy wiping his tears with the sleeve of his robe. And he didn't know why he was crying.

Above, the voice spoke quietly, powerfully, urgently, "In my Father's house there are many mansions. If that were not true, I would have told you. I'm going there to prepare a place for you. And since this is so, you can be sure that I will come again and receive you to myself so that you can be with me... I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

The Lazarus Projects

A hoarse rasping voice interrupted him asking, "Lord, why don't you show us the Father? That would be enough for us."

"Philip, when you see me, you see the Father."

"It's all true," Francis wept in the courtyard, "It's all true. I knew it. I knew it... Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief."

The moonlight caused the sundial at the end of the garden to cast a shadow like a unicorn on the plaster wall. High in the air over the house, bats swooped back and forth catching insects on the wing, fulfilling the purpose for which God created them. And still the words of Jesus rolled through the darkness.

"Because I live, you too shall live... Love one another as I have loved you... You did not chose me but I chose you..."

Something was wrong.

Francis felt it.

He stopped crying; all his tears were cried out.

Something felt very wrong.

He swirled around, half expecting to see some gigantic monster reaching for his back. Something was wrong -- terribly wrong.

Francis felt there was Something dreadful hovering above him in the darkness. But he was afraid to look up, afraid he might see It...

John W. Cowart

The Presence.

The overwhelming Presence.

"I've got to escape... I can't stand it... I've got to get away," he said. His chest constricted. Skin prickled on his neck and shoulders. He fought an insane desire to crawl under the bench to hide. He could stand the tension no longer. He broke and ran blindly for the street too terrified to scream.

And behind him in the night a terrible voice said, "This is my blood, poured out because of you."

Like a rabbit that has been cowering under a tuft of grass hearing the tread of the Hunter come closer and closer until it can cringe no longer, so Francis careened through the deep shadows of the city half expecting at any moment to hear the shotgun blast and feel the ripping pain of the slug.

He tripped over a beggar huddled sleeping by the curb. Sprawling in the street, he scratched and flailed at the startled wretch till the man fled, leaving Francis gasping in the gutter. He lay there a while regaining his breath and rationality.

"The tent," he breathed, "The others will be at the tent. I should have realized!" He scrambled to his feet, got his bearings and started running south.

The meadow beside the cemetery was now a tent city spreading in concentric half-

The Lazarus Projects

circles out from the walls of Jerusalem. Since Francis didn't know which tent belonged to Eli, he wandered down the center of the road calling out for his friends in English. At last, hearing Ben call out a response, he made his way to the others stumbling over tent pegs and guy ropes invisible in the darkness.

"What the hell happened to you," Ben asked.

"I saw Jesus."

"Dad, got any more of that date wine left?"

Francis took the flask gratefully stammering, "I've looked all over for you... I... I couldn't find you."

"We were delayed on our walk," Jack told him. "Lazarus wasn't at Bethany."

"Lazarus doesn't matter now; Jesus is here."

He told them about his experience.

"I didn't remember about the man with the water pitcher -- it's all in the Gospels -- till they came in the courtyard. How could Jesus have known about our apartment? It was a miracle!"

"Hardly," Eli replied. "He's probably noticed us in the Temple listening to him teach. And since we obviously have money, his disciples may have been spying on us so they would know we were out and the apartment was available."

John W. Cowart

"Miracles sure come hard to you," Jack said.

"The only miracle I'm interested in is seeing the tomb open and a dead man walk out," Eli snapped.

He took the flask back from Francis and corked it saying, "If that doesn't happen -- if he doesn't walk out of that tomb -- then it doesn't matter what tricks he performs or how he knew Francis would let them use our upper room. He's got to rise from the dead for me to believe that anything's miraculous about him."

"Once," Francis said calmly, "He told a story about a rich man and a beggar. And in it he said that if a man will not believe the Scriptures, then he wouldn't believe even if someone returns from the grave. Er... Incidentally, the beggar in that story is also named Lazarus."

Now that he had settled down, Francis felt peaceful, as though nothing would ever upset him again.

But, of course, that didn't last.

— XXIV —

When the time travelers returned to the apartment, the room was empty and the supper dishes were washed and stacked neatly at the end of the table.

"Quick, let's hurry. They'll be at Gethsemane," Francis said.

Judy rushed over to the wooden chest containing her equipment and got out the night vision lenses. Jack took the ECID gun and other medical supplies he thought useful. Francis gathered up the food packets he had prepared for their long night vigil. The party hurried through the sleeping city toward Gethsemane.

As they approached the city gate near the Mount of Olives, they heard outside the far-off sound of men yelling and the harsh clanging of metal against metal. "A sword fight!" Francis exclaimed. "Hurry!"

Once out of the city, they saw a swarm of lights all over the slopes of the mountainside -- smoldering torches, lanterns and oil lamps bobbing up and down in the hands of running men.

"My God, there're hundreds of them!"

John W. Cowart

The darkness filled with the sound of men running, tripping, scrambling, bumping into each other and cursing.

"Jack, I'm scared."

"It's ok, Honey; I'm right here with you." He squeezed her hand. "I love you."

"GET HIM! GET HIM! THAT ONE'S GETTING AWAY!" someone screamed in the confusion.

The dark form of a man dashed past them down the hill with his robes billowing out behind him.

"We'd better get over to the left more," Eli warned. And just after they moved, a pack of yelling men, waving clubs, swooped down the hill in pursuit of the fleeing disciple.

The time travelers, trying to keep out of the confusion, paused in the cover of a large gnarled olive tree. Francis saw another man charging down the slope. "Look Out!" he shouted. But he was too late; the racing man crashed into Eli, bowling him over.

"Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me," the man pleaded. "Let me go! Let me go," he squealed.

"Calm down. Calm down; it's alright. Nobody's going to hurt you. We're friends," Eli said assuring the panicking young man.

The youth's eyes looked wild in the moonlight and his peachfuzz beard glistened with sweat.

The Lazarus Projects

"Calm down and tell us what's going on," Eli said. The tone of his command had a soothing effect on the boy.

"I don't know," said the boy shaking his head to clear it. "I had supper with some friends and we came out here afterwards like we usually do. And... and... and I guess I kind of dozed off. The next thing I knew a mob of police attacked us. Our master was talking to them. He said something about twelve legions of angels and about swords and clubs and a robber in the Temple. I was just waking up. I don't understand it. Jesus never robbed the Temple. I don't know... They grabbed me but I got away."

Apparently the memory of his near capture spooked the youth again because he jerked his arm out of Eli's grip and disappeared running into the darkness.

Torches were dispersing all over the mountainside now; but Ben pointed out that apparently the main body of troops was moving in through the city gate. The time travelers followed.

"We missed the arrest," grumbled Eli. "Nothing there to confirm any miracle about Jesus healing that cut-off ear."

"But we did see one thing that's told about in the Gospel of Mark," Judy said.

"Oh, what," Eli said.

"That boy you caught. Didn't any of you notice anything unusual about him? He

John W. Cowart

was naked, stark naked except for his sandals!"

"Hey, you're right," Eli said. "In the tussle, I did notice, but what with getting knocked down I wasn't paying too much attention. But I do recall reading about a naked disciple at the arrest. I'll be darned. How about that."

The time travelers rushed after the mob of shouting men and soon caught up and mingled with the stragglers. The crowd swelled as people, wakened by the mob passing their houses, joined to see what the commotion was about. It was a curiously dressed mixture of people: some in their night clothes, some in military garb, priests in vestments, beggars in rags, merchants in sumptuous robes. All of them shouting and questioning one another.

The building which the mob poured into looked like a sprawling hotel six stories high. It was build in the form of a hollow square and contained hundreds of apartments.

Since there were thousands of priests and Levites who lived all over Israel most of the year and who only came into the city for their tour of duty in the Temple, this massive "parsonage" was built as a place for them to live while on duty. In this building also lived the hundreds of choir members and musicians who supplied the music for the Temple's worship services. But, most importantly, one wing of the building was

The Lazarus Projects

devoted exclusively to the palatial apartments housing the High Priest. All the men who had previously served in the office of High Priest also maintained luxury apartments in this Temple-financed establishment known simply as The Residence.

The time travelers pressed their way through the throng milling about the gate and into the central courtyard of the Residence. This courtyard was actually a broad stone plaza bordered on all four sides by wide porches lined with date palms set in huge stone tubs. At the end of the plaza, opposite the entrance, a flight of steps led up to a low balcony covered with an awning; and at the rear of this balcony stood three massive bronze double doors.

The pressure of people entering behind them squeezed the party over to the right side of the plaza where they took refuge on the porch. They couldn't see a thing but people milling around asking one another what the excitement was all about.

Judy said, "Give me a boost," indicating the edge of a stone tub containing several trees. Jack and Francis laced their hands together, and using them for a step, Judy scrambled up and sat on the planter above the crowd. She immediately began taking pictures of the scene.

The men climbed up to join her.

They were just getting oriented when the center pair of doors at the end of the

John W. Cowart

plaza crashed open. Trailing a retinue of fawning underlings, a bustling little man with a shiny bald head stalked out screaming in rage, "Did you get them? Did you get them all?"

A tall scrawny soldier dressed in armor too short for him -- his tunic looked like a mini-skirt exposing hairy bony knees -- marched up the stairs to the balcony. Jesus walked calmly beside the soldier. His hands were bound behind his back with strips of raw leather. He looked tired.

"Where are the others," the little man demanded. "Did they escape? You there, where are your followers? Name them. Step down a step." The bald man said this last because Jesus was a full head taller than he.

Now, their faces were level and the fat little man pressed his nose right against Jesus' and shouted questions about his disciples and his teaching. The soldier stood there trying very hard to look important though he had nothing to do.

"Is that guy the High Priest," Jack asked Francis?

"No. He's Annas. He was High Priest back about fifteen years ago, but since he retired, five of his sons have held the title. Now his son-in-law, Caiaphas, is in office."

"Acts like a real bastard," Jack said, "A regular little Napoleon."

"His name means 'Merciful' -- talk about a misnomer."

The Lazarus Projects

Annas bounced around on the top step firing question after question at Jesus, never waiting for a reply. "Why are your disciples rebelling against the government? Why are you undermining true religion? You don't have any authority, do you? None of your wonder works are verifiable, are they? You do admit to false teachings, don't you?"

Finally, out of breath, Annas paused, and Jesus said, "I taught nothing in secret. If you want to know what I teach, ask anyone who's heard me. Everyday, in the temple, I..."

The soldier sprang into action.

He slapped Jesus so hard it bloodied his nose and sent him staggering backwards down the steps. The soldier rushed down and grabbing him by the beard, tugged him back up the stairs. "I'll teach you to answer," the soldier screamed, "Now! Answer the High Priest."

With his hands tied, Jesus could not wipe his face, so blood streamed from his nose and down his beard. Yet his voice carried the words distinctly. "Do you know of anything I've ever said that is false?" He paused. "If the things I say are true... Then why did you hit me?"

"You shut up. And you, keep out of this," sneered Annas to Jesus and the soldier. "True or false. Blah! That's not the issue. Take him in. Take him on in to Caiaphas. Don't keep the Council waiting."

John W. Cowart

The attendants hustled Jesus inside and the bronze doors slammed.

Apparently the show was over. People wandered back to their homes in batches of threes and fours until the plaza was emptied except for a few clusters of men here and there lounging around waiting for something else to happen.

The night was chilly so some of them built a bonfire in one corner of the plaza. The night dragged on and on. The bronze doors remained shut.

When the plaza had mostly cleared, the time travelers climbed down from their perch and stretched their legs. They strolled about in the shadows hoping to remain inconspicuous. But since few other people remained, they needn't have worried. Finally, they sat down in a stairway and ate the sandwiches Francis had brought. "God, I wish I had a cup of coffee," Eli said. "We ought to have slept this afternoon."

Judy said, "I'm going to curl up on this step and catch a nap. Wake me if anything happens". In a few minutes she was asleep.

Gradually as the night grew longer and colder, all the people remaining in the plaza gravitated over to the fire. And the time travelers moved to the outskirts of this group where they could still keep an eye on Judy. Every once in a while a servant would call some man away from the fire and escort him inside. Occasionally, men from inside would come out to join the group at the fire.

The Lazarus Projects

By listening to the conversations, the time travelers caught some idea of how the trial was progressing.

Just after they joined the men at the fire, a gnarled old man in the dress of a *fellahin*, a farmer, came out a side door and complained to the waiting men, "Damn 'em! They wouldn't believe me. I gave 'em a solid charge and they wouldn't believe me."

One man asked, "What was the trouble, Old Timer?"

"Them priests, they came around asking for someone with a charge against him, else I wouldn't be here."

"What charge do you have?"

"He goes around destroying property."

"Destroying property?"

"Yes. He drown-ed my flock -- 2,000 head they was."

"How'd he do that?"

"Demons! That's how he done it. Demons! My flock was grazing peaceful on the side of this here hill, and him and this fellow that I know was full of demons got together and put the demons in my flock and they all run off a cliff and drown-ed in the sea. I think he ought to pay, or the priest ought to pay, or somebody ought to pay for my herd."

The farmer was obviously agitated and the men around the fire nodded their heads in sympathy at his distress. "Consorting with

John W. Cowart

demons is a serious enough charge," one man said, "Why wouldn't they pay you?"

"They said I didn't qualify," the farmer grumbled.

"Why not?"

"My flock," the farmer lowered his voice. "My flock... they was pigs."

"Pigs! You mean swine? You tried to get the Sanhedrin to reimburse you for pigs?"

"They was to sell to Gentiles," the old man protested.

"A flock of pigs! Who the hell ever heard of a flock of pigs! You old bastard -- you're lucky they didn't put you up on trial. In fact a swine herder in the High Priest's house -- It's a good thing they have more important things to attend to. A flock of pigs indeed!"

The old farmer chuckled, pleased with his deceit. "I almost had 'em, Boys. If it hadn't been for one little slip of the tongue, they would have paid!"

"Get out of here before you defile us all."

The old farmer hobbled off into the night leaving the other witnesses waiting their turn to appear at the trial of Jesus.

Two of the men were engaged in a heated argument with a third who from his speech appeared to be a lawyer of some kind. The time travelers eavesdropped

The Lazarus Projects

enough to realize that the first two apparently owned a cemetery in Bethany. They wanted to charge Jesus with desecrating a man's grave. The lawyer wanted them to testify that Jesus conspired with the man's sisters to murder their brother by burying him alive. The morticians were primarily interested in getting the money they lost in grave rental fees, so they pressed for a charge of desecrating the grave.

On the other side of the fire, some others argued. "I heard him say he'd tear down the Temple in only three days. He's a liar -- it took 46 years to build, so what I figure he plans to do is set it on fire. That's a charge they'll listen to."

"No, no, Stupid," another man said. "What he said was that Caesar could build a temple like this in less than a week if we'd all pay our taxes."

The witnesses at the fire argued and haggled and lied and dredged up all the bile and bitterness and pettiness of humanity and blamed it all on Jesus. They accused him of every sort of perversion and malignancy. All the filth they manufactured in their own minds, they attributed to him.

Eli's calves ached from all the hiking of the day and the standing of that night. The spectacle of grown men plotting petty meanness and boasting dirtier and dirtier lies to tell about Jesus and his relationships with women and men made him sick to his

John W. Cowart

stomach. *I don't think Jesus is the son of God*, he thought, *But, this trial is a travesty; even he deserves better.*

Finally, when one of the attendants came out to call another man in to testify, Eli beckoned the attendant over and, showing him a gold coin, asked if he and his friends might go inside to observe the trial firsthand. The man palmed the coin and agreed to let them sit in the gallery.

Jack felt it best to remain outside with Judy while she slept, so Ben took one of her miniature cameras and the party split up, with Eli, Ben and Francis going into the trial and the Weymouths remaining in the plaza.

Jack settled down on the wide stone stairway across from his wife.

Soon, he too dozed off --
but not for long.

— XXV —

Judy woke up needing desperately to go the bathroom.

It was almost dawn and she noticed a few servant girls stirring over near the kitchen wing of the Residence. She left Jack asleep and went over to ask a girl for directions.

By the time she found her way back to the plaza, the sky was a pearly gray. Jack was still asleep. *I wonder where the others are*, she thought as she walked over to the fire. She searched the faces of the men around the fire but did not see her friends.

A few of the men did look vaguely familiar. *I must have seen some of them around the Temple*, she thought, *I wonder if anything's happened yet*.

She warmed her hands at the fire and seeing one of the familiar-looking ones watching her, she asked, "Is there any news from inside yet?"

The man shook his head.

She said, "Tell me, haven't I seen you before? Were you in the Temple with Jesus?"

John W. Cowart

"Shit No! You goddamned bitch," he snarled. "I'm sick of all you people asking. If I even know that fellow, may God damn me to Hell!"

Startled by this outburst, Judy stepped back, bumping into a servant carrying an armload of wood for the fire. The firewood dropped with a clatter to the pavement and Judy stooped to help the servant get it up and put it on the fire.

When Judy looked around, the man she had questioned was gone, dawn was breaking, and a rooster was welcoming in a beautiful new day.

The auditorium which the bribed attendant had led them into was built in the form of a high-ceiling amphitheater. The walls were white-washed plaster with bronze hooks for holding oil lamps set at intervals. Also decorating the walls were harps, lyres, and various other instruments hanging on wooden pegs. At the front, there was a low stage with a wooden bleacher-like structure which identified the room as the place where the Temple choir practiced and perhaps gave concerts.

Eli, Ben and Francis took seats in a gallery at the rear where several soldiers, attendants and assorted other people sprawled over the seats catching naps and waiting for the interrogation to end. The lamps were running low on oil so they flickered and sputtered and smoldered so

The Lazarus Projects

that a greasy layer of smoke hung just below the rafters.

As Eli looked over the men of the Council, his first impression was that he was in an old folk's home. This council of the Sanhedrin, the Elders, the Jewish Supreme Court, was comprised of old men. Eli thought, *In a modern corporation all these men would be well over the mandatory retirement age...but, come to think of it, I'm not so far away from that myself.* All around him he saw thin white hair, wrinkled faces, puckered mouths with toothless gums, dull eyes and quivering hands -- frail, feeble old men. Many of them nodded as age, tiredness and boredom at the long legal proceedings lulled them to sleep.

At the right of the stage area, the High Priest, Caiaphas, sat at a low table flanked by scribes who wrote notes of the proceedings on thick papyrus scrolls. Caiaphas was a heavyset man with a full rich blond beard and a hooked nose. He wore stately robes decorated with fine embroidery work of red and yellow flowers. The robes were so sumptuous that at first Eli mistook them for vestments to be worn in the Temple, but he remembered that the Temple vestments were kept locked in Antonia Fortress by the Romans who only allowed the High Priest to wear them on feast days.

Francis whispered to Eli, "That's Caiaphas, the High Priest. His official title is

John W. Cowart

Ab Beth Din; it means Father in the House of Justice.

In the corner, behind the priest's table, Jesus stood, still bound. He rocked slightly back and forth on his heels as though his feet hurt. His hair was disheveled. He still wore the same gray robe that Eli had first seen on him; but at some time during the evening, the left sleeve had been ripped at the shoulder seam and the tattered sleeve hung down behind him like a comic tail. The muscles of his left arm glistened with sweat in the lamplight. Eli thought, *If he worked as a carpenter, he was the kind who builds houses -- a construction worker, not a cabinetmaker. He looks like, more than anything else in the world, he'd like to lie down and get some sleep.*

The witnesses against Jesus came in on the left side of the stage and made their accusations while standing, facing Caiaphas. They told long involved stories about Jesus using witchcraft, being immoral, getting rich off the poor, and on and on and on. Ben whispered to his father, "That old farmer with his flock of pigs made more sense than any of these guys."

Eli agreed.

The auditorium grew stuffy and hot. The council members kept getting up and walking in and out. Many either dozed off or fell to chatting with their neighbors. No one paid the slightest attention to the witnesses. The Elders were bored with the whole

The Lazarus Projects

monotonous affair and kept grumbling about being kept up all night.

Caiaphas sensed he was losing supporters through sheer tedium, so he rose to his feet and called out in a voice loud enough to wake the dozers, "We've heard the accusations. What defense do you offer, Nazarene?"

Jesus stopped rocking on his heels and looked intently at Caiaphas, but he said nothing.

"Now listen carefully," Caiaphas said. "I put you under oath to the Ever-living God -- tell us plainly -- are you the Messiah, the Son of God?"

Jesus said, "I AM. And you will see me seated at the right hand of the Almighty. And you will see me come in the clouds of Heaven's Glory."

Ripping his tunic, Caiaphas shrieked like a man touched with a hot coal, "Blasphemy! Blasphemy!"

The cry echoed back from the old men of the Council. "You heard it yourselves," Caiaphas yelled above the uproar. "The only verdict you can reach is death. That's your verdict, isn't it?"

And they shouted back:

"Guilty!"

"Guilty."

"Death for blasphemy."

"He must die!"

John W. Cowart

"Death."

The auditorium filled with the uproar. Some of the guards began punching Jesus and spitting in his face. An enterprising young scribe, seeing how it was with his elders and wanting to call attention to himself, took a large leather bag -- the kind used to keep court record scrolls in when they were not in use -- and pulled the bag down over Jesus' head and tugged the draw strings tight around his throat. The guards shoved Jesus back and forth and he staggered around with the bag over his head.

The three time travelers watched aghast as the old men of the court surged forward -- some of them actually hobbling up on canes -- to attack the young carpenter. These feeble old crones slapped and pawed at him with impotent, fragile arms. But their very impotence drove them into more of a seething rage and they scratched him and poked at him with their walking sticks and shouted, "Prophecy, Prophet! Prophecy now, damn you!".

— XXVI —

"Wake up, Honey," she said gently shaking his arm; then she knelt down and kissed him.

"Mornin', Sweetheart. What's happened," he said stretching.

"Nothing yet. It's daylight and still no word from inside. Where are the others?"

"Eli bribed his way into the council chamber. I imagine they're in there. These rock stairs make hard sleeping."

"You'll find their luxurious bathroom facilities over there through that arch.!"

"Good. Be back in a second."

While Jack was gone, Eli, Ben and Francis came out to join Judy. "If that man is God's son," Eli said, "God doesn't know he's going to die today -- just look at it." He pointed out the arch of the main gateway to the sun rising over the crest of a far mountain. The sky was a splendor of silver with gold and orange tinged clouds. Warmth slowly returned to the earth chasing away even the memory of the night's coldness. It was a beautiful morning.

John W. Cowart

As Jack joined them, Eli said, "They'll be bringing him out soon to take him to Pilate. Let's start over to Hippicus to get there ahead of the crowd." So the time travelers set out through the streets of Jerusalem toward Herod's Palace where Pilate had requisitioned room for his headquarters.

Even at this early hour, people jammed the streets. Stalls lining the way were open for business and the proprietors were busy piling their merchandise outside on the walks in front of their shops. Pharisees blocked traffic to say their prayers. A little girl herded a gaggle of geese which honked and snipped at ankles as they waddled down the crowded street.

At Pilate's headquarters the soldiers had already answered roll call and had their breakfast. A detail of scowling Syrian mercenaries were occupied sweeping manure from the paved parade ground in front of the tower. They used long push-brooms made of reeds bound together with cotton cord.

A long, column-lined porch formed a raised arcade, a reviewing stand, along the front of the parade ground. In front of this porch, there was a line of thick stone blocks with metal rings where officers could tie their horses.

At once, Judy set to work surveying the place and locating a position to get photographs of Christ before Pilate. The

The Lazarus Projects

porch seemed to be the logical focal point. The best place to see and hear appeared to be a low stone fence at the end of the parade ground and directly opposite the reviewing stand. The five clambered up on the fence and waited.

The guards noticed them and one soldier started to walk over but, just then, he heard the mob surging through the streets bringing Jesus. Soon the parade ground filled with shouting people: priests, elders, police, soldiers, pilgrims and a host of others who had joined the procession through the streets. At first, in the turmoil Ben could not see Jesus for the rioting mob.

"O God! What's that?" Judy had finally caught sight of Jesus. They had lugged him through the streets with the bag still over his head.

One of the sentries rushed inside to inform the governor about the mob's arrival and soon Pontius Pilate, Praetor of Judea, marched out into the arcade. He wore a white toga, and a wreath of laurel leaves symbolizing Roman victory crowned him. He was a handsome, distinguished-looking man with black hair graying at the temples. He had an air of command and authority. At once Eli recognized a competent administrator as only one man of an equal station can recognize another.

In front of Pilate marched a giant of a young man carrying a bundle of wooden rods

John W. Cowart

and, among them, an ax with the blade projecting.

"Say, there's one of those things on the back of an old dime," Ben said.

"It's a *fascies*, the badge of Pilate's authority," Francis explained. "It shows he has the power to either beat or kill those he judges."

Pilate raised his hands, silencing the mob and demanded, "What's this all about; what's the charge against this man?"

"He's a criminal," Caiaphas replied, "That's why we captured him for you."

"You captured him; you judge him," Pilate said turning as if to leave.

"But he ought to die and we are not allowed capital punishment," Caiaphas shouted. "We found this fellow guilty of: one, perverting the nation; two, encouraging common people not to pay Caesar's tax; and three, setting himself up as king!" Caiaphas ticked the charges off on his fingers as he named them.

Pilate turned to the bag-shrouded figure of Jesus and asked, "Are you the king of these contemptible Jews."

"Certainly," the muffled voice said, "I am."

"I can't find any fault with that," Pilate said with a laugh as again he turned to leave.

The Lazarus Projects

"But he's an agitator," Caiaphas protested, "He's stirring things up from here to Galilee."

"Is he a Galilean? Then let Herod deal with him. He has jurisdiction."

The sentries took the bag off Jesus' head and marched him inside to see Herod. Pilate remained on the porch conferring with his officers for a while then went inside. The mob milled around and the time travelers waited on the wall.

"Look up there on the battlements," Ben said pointing. They looked up and saw archers casually sauntering into position along the serrated battlements of the tower.

"That Pilate doesn't miss a trick, does he," Eli said. "He's some administrator. Got a contingency plan for everything. He has it all under control without appearing to even pay attention to what's going on."

"One of his contemporaries, an Egyptian Jew named Philo, charges him with 'Corruptibility, violence, robberies, ill-treatment of the people, grievances, continuous executions without even the form of a trial, endless and intolerable cruelties,'" Francis quoted. "He'll spend another three years in office -- ten years altogether -- before he's impeached and recalled by his supervisor, Vitellus, Legate of Syria."

"That's fascinating," Eli yawned. "What's happening with Jesus now? When will he be out again?"

John W. Cowart

"It will be a while before we'll be able to see him from here again. All the action's going on inside. According to Saint Luke, Herod treats him like some kind of magician. He wants him to perform some trick or miracle. Jesus won't even answer, so Herod mocks him and returns him to Pilate in a royal robe. Once he's back to this wing of the palace, Pilate will talk with him several times -- 'What is truth?'... 'My kingdom is not of this world' -- the conversations Saint John records. We won't be able to see any of that unless there's some way for us to get inside. I imagine that it will be an hour or two before anything else happens out here where we can see."

"But," Eli objected, "Since we can't see any of these things, how do we know what really happened? I don't see any of the disciples around to witness what's going on. How did Luke find out what's going on inside the palace? Or at the Sanhedrin last night for that matter?"

"For one thing," Francis said, "In a few weeks' time, many of these people you see here will become Christians. They'll be converted. Even two of Annas' sons, Theophilus and Matthias, who both once filled the office of high Priest -- both of them will become Christians. I suspect that people like them told the Gospel Writers what happened at scenes they witnessed."

Judy said, "There's another possibility; perhaps Jesus told them after he rose."

The Lazarus Projects

"I imagine," Eli said, "That a man who comes back from the grave -- if he does -- would have more important things to talk about. Don't forget, what we're here for is to see if Jesus does return and, if so, how does he does it. We're here to assist Mr. Wienstien. That's our job. It's been so long since we've seen him; I'm worried that all this is taking too long. He may be in bad shape by now."

In the Coral Gables hospice that morning, Lazarus Wienstien was in very bad shape. The pain woke him again about 4:30 a.m. And, although he paid five doctors to care for him, and they had no other patients -- yet, when he rang for a doctor, there was no immediate response. He rang again and again. The lack of response made him furious. In a fit of screaming rage, he ripped out his catheter and his I-V tubes and tried to get up.

When the doctor on duty finally did come back from the coffee lounge, he found Lazarus rolling from side to side in a stinking pool of filth in the bed moaning, "Damn! Damn! Damn. Damn. Damn, damn, damn..."

— XXVII —

vendors, following the unerring instinct of their breed for making money, appeared in the milling crowd on the parade ground.

Jack bought some cucumbers for their breakfast from an old woman who carried a basket of them balanced on her head.

At the left side of the parade ground, near the porch, a troop of soldiers was getting ready to go somewhere -- Syrian mercenaries starting a patrol to keep the roads safe for caravans and pilgrims. The officer in charge of the band was a kind-looking young man who stood out in sharp contrast to the rough, burly rogues he commanded.

"Look at those soldiers," Eli said. "See that officer? He gives me an idea. Francis, what rank is he?"

"He's a *tribuni militum*. They're usually the sons of wealthy noblemen and they just serve the legion for a short time before they enter politics. He's not likely to be anyone important..."

"What's the one on the porch?"

The Lazarus Projects

"He's a *quaestor*, a sort of quartermaster, he..."

"Good. All of you wait here. I'm going to get us inside the fort."

Eli jumped off the wall and worked his way through the crowd over to where the young officer stood.

The other time travelers watched from the wall.

"What's he doing?"

"I can't tell. If it's bribery, he should try the what-you-call-him, the senior officer."

"I hope he doesn't call attention to us. This mob could get nasty; in fact, we know they will before long."

"Don't worry about Dad. He knows what he's doing... but this expedition is getting him down. He's really showing his age."

After talking with the young officer for a few minutes, Eli came back toward the others. He moved slowly like an old, old man.

"What did you do?" Jack asked.

"Wait a minute, you'll see. Don't look surprised and be ready to..." Eli stopped mid-sentence; Pilate was on the porch again.

Pilate addressed the crowd. "Both King Herod and I have examined the prisoner and find him innocent."

A snarl ran through the mob.

John W. Cowart

"I intend," Pilate continued, "To teach him a lesson he won't forget -- then release him."

The mob hissed and booed. Two representatives from the Temple officials went inside the fort with Pilate to argue for a death sentence.

The mob buzzed in a nasty mood. The young tribune went over the Quaestor, apparently asking if he and his troops should remain in the area. The Quaestor decided they should go ahead with their patrol, so the young officer formed up his men to march out.

Just as they started to march, Eli suddenly stood up on the wall, waved his hands, and yelled out in a booming voice, "Good-bye, Son. Good-bye!"

The startled young officer, embarrassed before his men, grinned and waved back, gamely calling, "Good-bye, Father." Then he marched away with his road patrol.

Immediately, Eli led the time travelers across the square to the Quaestor. He said, "General, my son, the Tribune, said that we could wait inside while he leads his troops into battle and returns victorious."

They could see the wheels spinning in the Quaestor's head as he evaluated the civilian -- *General?... his troops into battle?... a lousy road patrol? You can never tell about civilians or about these ten-day wonders; his*

The Lazarus Projects

father might really be somebody important????

The Quaestor shrugged his shoulders and showed Eli and his party inside the fortress courtyard to a wooden bench in the shade of a barracks wall.

As the Quaestor left them to return to his post, Jack said in English, "Eli, my friend, you are a dirty dog."

"Thank you. Thank you, I figured that if a Twentieth-Century doctor would fall for that trick; then what chance would a First-Century soldier boy have? Listen! What's that?"

Noise from outside swelled up in volume as the mob yelled, "Bar Abbas! Bar Abbas! We want Bar Abbas!"

"Pilate gave them their choice. Now he's having trouble controlling them," Ben said.

"I think the flogging comes next," Jack said. "This will be ugly."

"Remember," Eli warned, "This is history. We can do nothing to stop what's already happened. Keep your emotions in check."

Even as Eli spoke, the interior courtyard was filling with soldiers lining up in military formation. Pilate, Caiaphas, and several representatives of the Sanhedrin came out to observe.

John W. Cowart

Judy took their pictures saying, "It looks like they're not worried about being defiled by entering a Gentile's house anymore. They're selling hard."

The priest was still arguing violently, fussing and gesturing wildly. Pilate appeared to ignore him.

Two muscular soldiers stripped to the waist ushered Jesus out. They began to take off his clothes. He unfastened the pin at the collar of his robe himself. They stripped him naked.

Stretching his hands above his head, they tied him to a post.

Each soldier picked up a whip.

"Something doesn't look right about those whips," Judy said.

"They're called *flagellum*," Francis whispered. "They're made of leather from the penis sheaths of bulls. Each whip has several lashes and the lashes have bronze studs embedded in the leather to weight the ends."

The two soldiers took station on either side of Jesus and, at Pilate's signal, began beating him.

At the first strike there was a scream.

Judy was never sure if it had been Jesus or herself who screamed. But after that first blow, the only sounds were the slap of leather on flesh, the grunts of the soldiers as

The Lazarus Projects

they swung the whips, and, later, the soft splatter of blood striking the pavement.

Even after that was over and Jesus hung limp by his hands, a gory mess with his knees buckled under him, the priests were still haggling with Pilate. Finally, Pilate sent an attendant to bring him a basin of water out to the arcade in front. He was going to wash his hands of the matter. He ordered the troops to stand easy and returned inside.

Jesus was left tied to the whipping post to wait while Pilate made his final decision.

"I think I'm going to be sick," Francis said. He ran behind some nearby bushes.

"You OK, Honey?"

"No. But don't talk about it. I got the damn pictures. Listen to them out there. It sounds like a football game; you'd think they'd made a touchdown."

Someone in the mob outside was yelling in a voice that echoed around the stone walls, "No king but Caesar." He yelled it over and over again.

In less than ten minutes Pilate appeared again and curtly ordered, "Prepare him for execution."

Then he went back inside to finish his breakfast.

One soldier dipped up a pail full of water from a horse-trough and splashed it in Jesus' face. Another man, not a soldier apparently -- at least he wasn't in uniform --

John W. Cowart

approached Jesus with a pair of shears and a bronze straight-razor. He proceeded to snip off Jesus' hair and beard and to shave him bald marking him as a condemned criminal ready for execution.

The barber did a sloppy job and left bristles and patches of longer hair in odd places.

Idle soldiers gathered around teasing Jesus, mocking him, taunting him.

They untied him from the post and one of them draped the royal purple robe that Herod sent over his shoulders. Another man plaited a crown of thorny branches -- an imitation of the laurel victory wreath Pilate wore -- and pressed it firmly down on his shaven head.

This was such a funny spectacle that one man laughingly said, "All the king needs is a scepter and I have just the one for him." From behind his back, he produced one of the reed brooms used to sweep manure and he forced it on Jesus to hold. Jesus dropped it to the pavement so the jolly fellow picked it up and whacked him on the head showering him with dry flakes.

The others roared in approval.

"We salute you, O King of the Jews," one cried.

"I've got a salute for him," said a Negro officer; he curtsied before Jesus and then spit in his face. The others saw the sport of that and soon Jesus was surrounded

The Lazarus Projects

by soldiers who curtsied like coy debutantes and then spat in his face or punched him.

"God, that's disgusting," Eli said. "Let's get out of here."

The mob in the parade ground had doubled while they had been inside.

Their original vantage point on the stone fence was covered with yelling people. Anyhow, the press was so great that they couldn't get across to the wall. They had to stay on the steps leading down from the arcade.

Pilate was nervously trying to make himself heard above the tumult but the mob was now chanting in unison: "Kill him! Kill Him! Nail him to a cross!"

Many clapped their hands or stomped their feet in time to the low chant. "Kill Him! Kill him. Nail him to a cross.

"Kill him; kill him. Nail him to a cross. Kill him; kill..."

Pilate shouted something about setting him free, but his words were lost in the chanting. So Pilate gave a sign and four trumpeters gave a blast of the ruffles and flourishes kind, and guards emerged from the doorway leading Jesus.

"Look at that man!" Pilate shrieked. "Look at your king!"

Jesus came forth wearing nothing but the royal purple robe draped over his shoulders and the crown of thorns. One of

John W. Cowart

the guards brought out the reed broom scepter and gave it to him. Then they put him up on the elevation, *gabbatha*, the stone platform where cavalymen usually tied their horses. Pilate sent an attendant inside and that man returned with an ornately carved throne-like chair. They hoisted that up for Jesus to sit in.

And he sat there naked. Alone. Silent. Looking down at the people.

At the entrance of Jesus, the chant rose to a frenzied pace. Again the image of a football crowd crossed Judy's mind. At the foot of the stone platform, there was actually one old Pharisee who faced the crowd leading the chant -- for all the world like a senile cheerleader. At his urging, the people roared and roared, ever building in speed and volume:

"Kill Him! Kill him! Nail him to a cross! Kill him. Kill him. Nail him to a cross. Kill Him; kill him. Nail him to a Cross. Kill Him; Kill Him; Nail Him To A Cross! KILL HIM! KILL HIM! NAIL HIM TO A CROSS! KILL HIM! KILL HIM: NAIL HIM TO A CROSS! KILLHIM,KILI'IM, NAIL'IM TO A CROSS! KILL'IM KILL'IM! NAIL'IM TO A CROSS! KILL'IM! KILL'IM! NAIL'IMTOACROSS!

"Oh my God," Judy screamed covering her eyes with her hands. She had looked down to see that, caught up in the wild frenzy and rhythm of the chant, her own hands were clapping too and her mouth saying the awful words. And by her

The Lazarus Projects

side her husband and her friends were chanting too.

Another trumpet blast signaled the removal of Jesus back into the fort. The crowd's chanting stopped abruptly when the door clanged shut. The sudden silence was more terrible than the preceding noise. The time travelers shoved to the outskirts of the crowd; they wanted to be ready to leave for Golgotha as soon as the execution squad left.

"I'd give anything for a smoke right now," Jack said. "I couldn't believe that."

"The thing that got to me was his face," Eli said. "He just sat there on that rock throne looking at us. I saw pain in his face -- he was in shock from the beating, I imagine -- but there was something else... Not indifference. He wasn't angry. It may have just been a stupor, but he was actively doing something. I've never seen an expression like that on a face before."

"I have," Ben said.

Eli turned in surprise to his son. "What?"

"When I was a little kid, you and Mom took me and Sis and Joseph to the Bahamas. Remember? One day you were laying on the beach reading a magazine and we came up with our pails and shovels and buried you in the sand. Then we filled the pails with seawater and poured it over your head and laughed and laughed. We got your magazine

John W. Cowart

wet. That's where I saw that expression before, Dad. Jesus looked just like you...."

Two thousand years ago, Eli Rosen hugged his son.

A clatter of armor as soldiers stirred in the courtyard told them that the execution squad was getting ready to bring the prisoner out.

"We'd better leave now if we're going to beat the crowd," Francis said.

— XXVIII —

AS the time travelers walked through the street leading away from the Praetorium, they passed a column of fully armed troops standing at ease. "Reinforcements in case the mob at the tower gets out of hand," Francis said. "I always thought the mob forced Pilate's hand, but they couldn't force him to do anything. One word from him and these soldiers and those archers on the tower could wipe out the whole crowd in no time."

"Surly brutes, aren't they," Jack said. "Look at those spears."

"They're called *pilum*. We find a lot of them when we excavate battle sites."

The pikes they were discussing were harpoon-like weapons with a four foot long wooden shaft; attached to that was an iron extension with a wide barbed blade at the point. The blade was about three inches wide across the barbs.

Apart from the column of soldiers, life in the street went on as it always did. A shoemaker leading a donkey loaded with sandals came up to the time travelers and tried to sell them a new pair. A woman with

no head covering struck up a conversation with a passing Levite. They passed a pottery shop where a muscular young man spun a potter's wheel. A flock of running children darted past in a screaming game of chase. They came to a public park where women were spreading out their washing to dry in the sun.

"Are you sure this is the shortest route?" Francis asked. "The tourist agencies in our time aren't going to be happy to find that the Via Dolorosa is over a mile from the real route to Calvary." *The bishop won't be happy either*, he thought.

Eli said, "Jack, I want you and Judy to wait here and catch some pictures of the procession. We'll go ahead and meet you at Golgotha. Look for us over by that hedge beside the cemetery."

Jack and Judy sat down on the rim of a small well surrounded by women washing their clothes. "Honey," she said, "When we get out of this, I want to go to another gynecologist. I want to have a baby and get a little cottage with a white picket fence and a rose garden. I don't ever want to see another war, any more violence, any more pain or cruelty. When I think of Lent and Easter, I want to think of fried fish dinners and white lilies, and little girls showing off new shoes, not that filthy spectacle we saw at the fort. After what we saw back there, I don't ever want to even go out of the house

The Lazarus Projects

again. I want to have our baby and never see any more sickness and hurt."

"What about India? The orphans we're going to adopt? The hospital?"

"No. Not any more. I don't want any of that now; I couldn't stand to be around sick children. There's so much pain and sickness and hate... I'm afraid... Back there, back there we were clapping and chanting with the rest of them. Both of us."

"I know. Back there, the whole world was screaming for his death. This is why he's dying -- because the world is full of people like the two of us, people who believe in God and will yet scream for his death. It's sin inside us. And like he said, healthy people don't need a doctor; sinless people wouldn't need a Savior. But sick, hurt, sinful people do. People like us need him. We need him desperately."

Jack paused and plucked a little yellow flower that grew in a crevice between two stones; he put the flower in the hair showing at the front of her mantle. Then he mused, "I'm not worried about the clapping and chanting; it just shows us what we really are. But after all this is over, we will never be able to withdraw like we feel like doing now. Yes I want our own little cottage with my pipe and a warm fire as much as you do. But we'll either have to serve him or forget him. I can't guess how it will affect the others, but if he doesn't rise, you and I will have lost everything we live for. And if he does, then

John W. Cowart

we'll be able to cope with anything -- sickness, cruelty, pain, pettiness, persecution -- anything."

"Do you really think he will come to life again?"

"Yes... No... I don't know. I feel sure he will; but I'm afraid he won't. And if he doesn't..."

"I feel the same way. I think he will, but I'm scared to really find out. It's funny, you know, could it be that the resurrection is something easier to accept by faith than to know about firsthand? Could it all be just a fairy tale? And if it is, do we really want to know that? If he doesn't rise, the consequences are unthinkable."

Jack stood up. "I think I hear them coming now. Lord, help us be brave."

Judy said, "I want to stand on the rim of this well so I can get shots over the heads of the crowd. Stand close and hold my legs; I don't want to fall in."

The execution squad came around the corner. Three shaven-headed prisoners, each flanked by four guards, led the procession. Each criminal wore a signboard around his neck on a leather thong. Each of the chalk signs stated the man's name, hometown, and crime in Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

The first man's sign read:

SAMUEL BAR JARED
JERICHO
EMBEZZLER

The Lazarus Projects

The second's:

CALEB BAR TUBAL
ASHDOD
PETTY THIEF

Jesus' sign read:

JESUS
NAZARETH
JEWISH KING

A Temple priest, who appeared to be either saying a prayer or quoting a Psalm to them, followed the condemned men. After him came a number of other priests including Caiaphas. The ancient members of the Sanhedrin hobbled along following also. Then came a howling pack of people, some of them still chanting, others throwing stones or clumps of dried street manure at the prisoners.

The women in the park scuttered to gather up their laundry fearing it would get trampled. Some of them began to weep and wail at the fate of these bedraggled looking victims. The procession halted while a guard ran forward to clear some vegetable vendor's cart out of the way and during the pause, Judy noticed the cross.

"Look! Look at the cross," she urged her husband, "It's so small."

In fact the cross was so slender that when they first saw it, they didn't realize what it was. The cross was made of boards just slightly thicker than two by fours; the

John W. Cowart

arms were about five feet across and the upright part was only about seven feet long.

Conditioned by centuries of Christian art, the Weymouths expected to see a cross of massive heavy timbers; but this thing looked flimsy, hardly sturdy enough to kill a man. It couldn't have weighed much; the other two criminals had no trouble carrying theirs. But because of his weakened condition from the flogging, Jesus walked in front of a Negro man who carried his cross for him. The Black, Simon, a Cyrenian with two grown sons, was a white-haired old man. The old Negro had no trouble carrying the cross, but one of the soldiers kept prodding him with the butt end of his *pilum* just out of meanness.

One of the wailing washer-women took a damp cloth and wiped the faces of each of the prisoners and Simon. When she returned to the well to rinse her cloth again, Jesus spoke to all the washer women.

"Daughters of Jerusalem," he called, "Weep not for me but for yourselves and your children." A guard nudged him to get him moving again but he stood firm and continued, "There will come a day when to be barren will be called blessed; when empty wombs and milkless breasts will be called fortunate; when people will scream for mountains to hide them and the hills to cover them. Because if they do what you see to the green tree, what shall they do to the dry?"

The Lazarus Projects

"Move on! Move on!" shouted the Centurion of the guard, and the procession continued through the streets picking up more people as it passed.

"He was looking right at me when he said that," Judy cried, "Right at me."

Her husband tried to comfort her as they followed the mob to Calvary.

— XXIX —

Here," Eli said handing Francis some money. "Take this over to our tent and pay off Gershom. We can keep an eye on things from here on. Tell him I've made a vow to a friend to stay in the tent till after the Holy Days. We'll be back to the house in the middle of next week. And, oh yes, see if that brain gun thing of Jack's is at the tent. Bring it back if it is; we'll need that down here."

After Francis left, Eli and Been sat down in the shade of a sycamore tree to wait for the Weymouths. Ben stretched and said, "I'm tired out. What time is it anyway?"

"Not quite nine," his father said.

"It's going to be a long day."

"Not as long for us as for him," Eli said pointing. The execution squad with their prisoners and the mob surged out of the city gate. The soldiers forced the crowd to stand back out of the way in a big circle while they stripped the prisoners naked.

"There's Jack and Judy now," Ben said. He waved to get their attention and they rushed over.

The Lazarus Projects

"Hold this for me please," Judy said thrusting a small basket into Ben's hand. "I have to put in fresh film disc." When she reloaded the camera she said, "How about boosting me so I can get on that branch; any place else around here and I'd only get the backs of people's heads."

Francis rushed up to join them as they helped her up. Then the time travelers settled down to watch the men being tortured to death.

The soldiers were involved in some preliminary arrangements. The Centurion gave each cross a final check as it lay flat on the ground. Then he read a proclamation in Latin stating the charges against each man.

Two guards grabbed each prisoner from behind and a third tried to make them drink from a flask made out of a cow horn.

None of the victims drank any.

"I don't understand," Francis said. "That's wine mingled with myrrh; it's supposed to be a mild pain killer. It's an act of mercy."

"That's what you read in theology books maybe," Jack said, "But if you ever tasted any myrrh, you'd know that's not true. Myrrh is a purgative; a bit taken internally will cause extreme diarrhea and vomiting. Their 'act of mercy' is just another nasty bit of torture to add to the victims' troubles on the cross".

John W. Cowart

The two guards holding Jesus began to drag him backwards to where the cross lay flat on the pavement. Then one of the men hit him behind the knees tripping him backwards. They threw him down on his back atop the cross. A third man carefully positioned a square-cut nail with a large flat head in the center of Jesus' hand right at the base of the thumb so the nail could not be ripped out between the fingers. Then the executioner took a heavy mallet and hammered the nail home. The efficient team moved to his other arm and repeated the operation.

The two thieves, when they saw what was happening to Jesus, squealed in terror and struggled to escape while the guards laughed at their panic.

Once both hands were secure, the executioners moved to his feet. They circled in a wide arc expecting him to try to kick at them, but Jesus, though his face contorted in agony, remained motionless. They bent his knees up and using two longer spikes nailed a foot on each side of the upright or *stipes* of the cross.

They left him laying there while they nailed down the other two men.

The two thieves kicked and screamed curses at the guards and struggled uselessly to escape.

Once all three men were nailed onto their crosses, the Centurion took each man's

The Lazarus Projects

titulus, the sign stating his name and crime, and tacked it to the top of each cross.

He checked to see all the nails were secure, then gave the order for his men to set up the crosses.

At intervals in the pavement were deep narrow holes to act as sockets to stand the crosses in. Two soldiers, one at each arm of the cross, lifted it up and dropped it down in the socket.

The cross hit bottom with a dull thud.

Jesus Christ was crucified.

The time travelers, the mob, and even the soldiers not directly involved remained intensely silent during the nailing, but once the first cross was standing, the spell broke and everyone began talking.

"Wow!" Ben sighed.

Eli, who had not realized he was holding his breath, said, "Jesus! That was something!"

"It's horrible, but I got the pictures," Judy said. "Hand up that other camera, the one in the red leather pouch."

"There's something I don't understand," Eli said passing up the basket. "I can see that crucifixion is painful, but, Jack, what actually will kill him, he's only wounded in his hands and feet?"

"Shock will contribute to it but mainly he's going to suffocate," Jack said. "Those nails in his hands pierced the trunk of the

John W. Cowart

median nerve in Destot's Space just above the traverse carpal ligament. The median nerve is part of the same nerve system you hurt when you hit your funny bone.

"Anyhow, after hanging from his hands for awhile, the muscles in his chest will start contracting and severely cramping. Tetany will progress to the inspiratory muscles so that he can breath in, but he won't be able to breath the air out. He'll be able to inhale but not to exhale.

"The only way he can exhale is to push up on those spikes through his feet.

"Then, when the pain of his weight on those spikes causes his legs to cramp, he'll drop back down so his weight will be on his hands again. The chest cramps will resume and the whole cycle starts over. He will wiggle up and down, like a worm on a hook, until his legs give out and he can't push up any more. Then tetany of the inspiratory muscles takes over and he suffocates. He'll die of asphyxia."

"How long does he have before all this starts?"

"It already has. Look."

On the cross, Jesus had been in a sagging position with his head hung down. As they watched, he stiffened and straightened out his bent knees. He pushed upright gasping for breath. They could actually see the muscles in his calves knot

The Lazarus Projects

up in cramps, and he collapsed again sagging.

His movements were excruciatingly slow.

His contortions caused the cross to tilt in its loose socket. It jolted back and forth in erratic time to his struggles.

Soon, the two thieves began to push up to breathe, only to fall back again.

Their crosses also wiggled in the sockets.

The three crosses would lean in a slow arch forward or backward or from side to side, then stop with an abrupt jerk only to start back in the opposite direction after a pause. They were like giant, grotesque metronomes, each one keeping its own deadly time.

The execution squad, confident that everything was going to schedule and bored by what to them was a routine assignment, squatted down in the shade thrown by the center cross to throw dice. They were close enough to easily reach out and touch the feet of Jesus, but they were more interested in their game.

Since the execution ground was right in the middle of the highway, people on their way in or out of the city stopped to gawk -- or, if their business was important, they pulled on by, scarcely giving the writhing men a glance.

John W. Cowart

One family hurried by and a small boy stopped in front of Jesus staring and sucking his thumb. When he realized that his parents had kept on walking, he ran to catch up.

A caravan of camels loaded with spices from Alexandria approached along the road. The superstitious drivers made a sign against an evil eye in case the dying men should put a curse on them. And after the caravan passed, the curious pungent smell of spices and camels lingered in the air.

"Damn it! It's just not right. They ought to let the man die in peace," Eli exclaimed. "Someone ought to put a stop to that."

But he, like the contemporaries of Jesus, did nothing to stop the next atrocity.

A large number of Temple officials drew up close to the cross and began to tease Jesus. Since the cross held his head only about six feet above the ground, they could easily reach him so they poked him in the ribs to attract his attention and shouted in his face:

"If you are really the King of Israel, come down from the cross. You can't reign from up there," chuckled one fat priest.

"Come on down!" taunted a scribe, "If we see, we'll believe." The scribe tickled him in the armpit and sneered, "He 'saved' others; too bad he can't save himself."

Three women passed by carrying jars balanced on their heads, apparently on their way home from shopping in the city bazaar.

The Lazarus Projects

They stopped and snickered at his nakedness. One woman, tall, shapely and beautiful, said to him in a sticky-sweet voice, "Honey, if you're the son of God, come down from Heaven, then why can't you come down from off that little ol' cross."

She laughed and spun away.

A lady in a sedan chair, being carried by four slaves, ordered her men to stop and help her out. She was old and wrinkled, her face caked with thick makeup. She wore tiny bells sewn in the seams of her clothes and she had jewels all over her. She approached the cross and squinted at the face of Jesus. "Yes," she cackled, "You're the one. You were going to tear down the Temple. You were going to rebuild it in three days. Save yourself, Carpenter! Master builder! Save yourself."

The two thieves on either side cursed him also.

Even a tattered panhandler, who made his living begging from pilgrims entering the city, mocked Jesus. "You're the King of Israel. You're the Son of God. You're the Savior," the beggar screamed, "Well, if you're such a big shot why don't you do something?"

So Jesus did something.

He forgave them.

Pushing up on the nails pinning his feet to the cross in order to get breath to say the words, he prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

John W. Cowart

Then his legs cramped and he drooped back down to continue strangling.

"Ben, can you do me a favor," Judy asked. "In the tent, in the wicker basket with the floral design on top, I have some infra-red filters. They're in a little blue box. Could you get them for me? The light's changing."

Ben hurried off to get them.

"It's the eclipse of the sun," Francis said quoting Matthew's Gospel, "'Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.' It's starting now. God is showing grief at the death of his Son."

"Nonsense," snapped Eli. "If that man is God's son, God wouldn't let him suffer like that. If God is supposed to have created the universe by speaking it into existence, then he surely has the power to save his son, if he had one."

"You're right in one sense," Francis said. "It did not cost God anything to create man from the dust; but to save man from sin costs him this."

Above them Judy said, "You two argue theology later. Right now, how about helping me down from this branch; my legs are getting cramped."

After she was down, Ben returned with the filters and she suggested, "Now that the mob's clearing out some, let's go down closer."

The Lazarus Projects

"You four go on, " Eli said. "I can see all I want to see from here."

"I think I'll stay too," Ben said.

So three went nearer to the execution ground but before they got near the cross, a wild scream startled them.

— XXX —

The screaming woman raced toward the center cross.

She was a plump, gray-haired matron who shoved soldiers and bystanders right and left as she ran wailing.

A thin lanky boy, barely out of his teens, followed desperately, trying to restrain her as he muttered embarrassed apologies to the soldiers for her behavior.

He gripped both her hands to keep her from clawing her hair and tried to comfort her.

She wanted no part of it.

She slapped his hands away and rejected his embrace. She stood rocking back and forth at the foot of the cross clutching at her son, keening and wailing and beating her breasts.

"Woman!" came the sharp voice of command. "Look! There is your son."

She stopped screaming and turned to the boy.

"Look, your mother," Jesus said to his disciple.

The Lazarus Projects

The youth put his arm over the woman's shoulder and led her to the side to sit down. They both sat there sobbing quietly and holding one another.

"Well, that incident destroys one theory about the resurrection," Eli said to Ben.

"How's that?"

"Moslems claim that in the confusion of the arrest, they got the wrong man, that Jesus was never crucified but someone else was. They think Judas was a likely candidate. But at any rate, according to that theory, Jesus could appear after the crucifixion because he was never crucified in the first place. But we've just seen his own mother make a positive identification. We know they crucified the right man."

"Well, this incident is in one of the Gospels, I forget just which one."

"I must have missed it when I read it over."

"I think Francis has a pocket Testament with him, do you want me to go get it?"

"No. But I'll tell you what I would like," Eli said. "There's a vendor over there selling apples. How about buying us a couple. I'm hungry."

"That's kind of irreverent isn't it? Eating at the crucifixion, I mean."

John W. Cowart

"Well, if he really is the bread of life, I'm sure he won't object."

Ben bought the apples.

Judy needed to fix another filter to the lens. The sun was half-covered by the shadow of the moon. The sky grew a deep, royal blue. Creeping darkness brought silence with it and for some reason they found themselves talking in hushed whispers. Birds began roosting in the sycamore tree. The only noticeable sound was the rasping labored breathing of the dying men.

The rhythm of the swaying crosses was considerably slower than it had been. The victims were having more trouble pulling themselves upright. By laying flat on the ground, Judy got a picture of Jesus silhouetted against the half-eclipsed sun.

One of the thieves began a profane tirade against God and man in general, and against Jesus in particular. He raged against him every time he pushed up to get a breath. The only thing that stopped his cursing was the weakness of his legs as life ebbed out of him. The continuous cramping and pulling and cramping and collapsing struggle to breathe distorted his speech.

"YOU'RE NOT" ... down... up again...
"THE SON OF GOD, YOU CAN'T"... cramp ...
collapse ... "HELP ANYBODY"... down...
pause... up again... "FAKE! DIRTY FAKE!"...

The Lazarus Projects

down... up... slip... down again... panting up... "IF YOU ARE CHRIST, SAVE US. BUT YOU CAN'T, DAMN YOU!" Those last words came all in a rush of breath.

"SHUT UP," moaned the other thief, the embezzler, twisting down... pushing up... "WE GOT CAUGHT"... down... twisting... down... down... down... finally slowly up... "HE DID NOTH..." sagging... catching... up... gasping... "NOTHING... HE IS NOT"... rock... jolt... sway... up... "JESUS!"... down... up... "JESUS, LORD, REMEMBER ME!"

"LISTEN CAREFULLY, Jesus said straining up on the foot nails.... dropping down... coughing... retching... pushing up, "TODAY"... down... bump... sway... up... "YOU WILL BE"... down... up slowly up... pain... "WITH ME... IN PARA..." down... cramps... hurt... pain... push up... "IN PARADISE!"... down.

Pain. Pain. Pain.

Caiaphas left the group of men he was chatting with and poked at Jesus gingerly as though he didn't want to get his hand dirty.

"Paradise!" he spat, "You said you were God's son. Well, not even God wants you! Look, Heaven hides it's face. Look at the darkness."

The moon covered the face of the sun. The sun stopped shining. The sky turned black. The sun changed into a black circle with an angry red fringe.

John W. Cowart

Jesus cried, "Eloi! Eloi! Lama sabachthani? My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?"

A man nearby misunderstood and yelled, "Hey, wait a minute! He's calling up the prophet Elias. Let's see what happens. Maybe Elias will come rescue him."

Jesus moaned, "I'm thirsty." So the man tried to give him some of the sour wine on a sponge.

Jesus pushed up on the nails in his feet and shouted, "It is finished! Father, into your hands I give my spirit."

Then he dropped down.

He did not push up again.

He had been on the cross for six hours.

Immediately there was an earth tremor. The crosses staggered back and forth in their sockets.

The Centurion in charge of the execution squad trembled in panic and screamed, "He was God's son! He really was! We've killed an innocent man!"

There was the awful sound of rock grinding on rock as the earth's crust shifted. The shock tumbled the five time travelers down the slope of the hill in a jumble of arms and legs and fluttering robes.

"Coincidence! Coincidence!" Eli shouted as he fell.

The earth stopped shaking.

The Lazarus Projects

The sun started shining.

Birds began flying and twittering back and forth.

People got up, brushing off their clothes. Everything came back to normal except that now only two crosses jolted back and forth in their sockets.

The third cross leaned tilted to one side at a crazy angle.

Judy looked at it again and again through her viewfinder. "An optical illusion," she thought. "Funny, but it looks as though the cross is up straight and the rest of the world is cock-eyed."

"It's a damn shame whiskey hasn't been invented yet," said Eli. "I could use a stiff one about now."

"I'd settle for a Pepsi," Francis said.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon. The two thieves continued to writhe on their crosses, but now they only struggled feebly.

The corpse of Jesus sagged motionless and limp. His mouth gaped open. The veins in the skin of his shaven head looked like a purple map of tragedy. The color of his body was graduated from the greenish-gray of his face to the blackish-purple of his feet.

The blood of Jesus, no longer pumped by his heart, was gravitating to his lowest extremities.

A Roman horseman rode out from the city gate. He was a different young Tribuni

John W. Cowart

Militum from the one Eli had tricked. This one moved with the arrogant manner of a spoiled brat. He obviously regarded the soldiers of the execution detail with contempt, and bystanders with outright scorn. This whole affair was beneath his dignity. He handed the Centurion a rolled message and waited to see if there was to be a reply.

The Centurion read the message and turned to one of his crew saying, "Governor wants 'em dead. Use the crucifragium."

The soldier designated rummaged around in his equipment and brought out an iron bat. Hefting it in his hand, he held it up for the thieves to see. They frantically squirmed in a last burst of energy as he dangled it before their eyes. Then swinging it like a baseball player hitting a low pitch, he whacked his each of his victims across one shin and then across the other. He could have done the job was a single blow to both of a man's legs, but what would be the fun in that? So he smashed their legs one at a time. With their legs broken, the thieves could not push up to breath. They soon suffocated.

"What about that one," the haughty tribune snipped.

"Dead," grunted the soldier.

"Dead, SIR! Don't you mean trooper."

The Lazarus Projects

"YESSIR!" shouted the soldier with a salute to the officer and a wink to his buddies.

The tribune dismounted and picked up a pilum from the soldier's equipment. Hefting the pike, he swaggered over to the cross. With the undercutting thrust of a farmer pitching hay, he skewered Jesus in the side. The spear went up through the diaphragm and the iron barbs were buried in the flesh.

The young man, pleased with his mutilation of the corpse, jerked back on the shaft to pull it out.

But he was inexperienced and the barbs hung up on something deep in the wound. Frustrated, the boy tugged and sawed and twisted the lance.

It stayed firm.

"Sir!" said the soldier and grasped the shaft. With one smooth downward slice, he removed the spear and presented it to the officer.

"Don't hand that bloody thing to me. Clean it," the tribune commanded. He gathered his dignity about him, remounted his horse, and galloped back to the city.

"Fucking pig! Clean it!" the soldier grumbled. "Why don't he use his own damn pike!"

The long jagged rip in the corpse's side dripped blood and water.

John W. Cowart

"Do you think he could live through that?" Eli asked.

"He was dead before he stuck him," Jack answered. "Respiration ceased. Circulation ceased. No response to pain when the spear hit him. He was already dead."

"But he's bleeding. Dead bodies don't bleed."

"From the angle of the spear thrust, I'd say it ruptured the right auricle of the heart. That chamber contains liquid blood even several days following death. The 'water' flowing out is pericardial serum. It's just gravity flow. No blood pressure. No circulation."

"This explains something I've wondered about," Ben said. "After the resurrection, Jesus invites doubting Thomas to thrust his hand into the wound in his side... I... I wondered how that could be. I thought of it as a small puncture wound, not a rip like that."

"Seeing that helps me with a problem too," Jack said. "I'd wondered why -- if he were already dead -- they stuck him with a spear, I thought they might be checking to make sure, but now I see -- he was mutilated out of sheer damn meanness."

"While you people are discussing your doubts, I have one of my own," Eli said. "There's a chance -- remote, but a chance -- that he's just unconscious and that the

The Lazarus Projects

coolness of the tomb will wake him up. Jack, I want you to check his brain waves; where's your ECID gun?"

Jack dug in his robe and produced the Encephalic Concussion Impacting Device. "I don't believe it's necessary. Look at the pupils of his eyes. No indication of brain function there, but it won't hurt to check."

Jack walked with Eli to within a few feet of the cross. He kept the ECID gun folded in the sleeve of his robe, out of sight of the guard. Right next to the cross, he aimed the ECID and triggered the scanner. The record tape reeled off its spindle smooth and blank.

"There are no brain waves... Jesus Christ is 100 per cent altogether dead," Jack said.

"The question is...," said Eli, "Will he stay this way?"

— XXXI —

The arrogant young tribune, the same one who had gored the body of Jesus, galloped to the execution site again.

This time he said, "Some damn old Jew wants the Nazarene's corpse. The Governor wants a death certificate in writing. Hurry. He's waiting for your reply."

The Centurion took a stylus in hand, gripping it like a knife, and painfully, with great care, spelled out his answer certifying that Jesus was indeed dead.

"Look at him," Eli said. "To him killing men comes easier than writing a letter."

Once the Centurion finished the note, the tribune snatched it from his hand and galloped back to Pilate's headquarters.

At the Centurion's orders, his men lifted the crosses, with the dead men attached, out of the sockets and toppled them flat on the pavement.

Then one of the crew took an instrument like a crowbar with a short foot behind the claws, and with this he pried the nails out, being careful not to bend them. He put the nails in a leather pouch for future

The Lazarus Projects

use. Once the nails were out, he shoved the cadaver clear of the cross with his foot and using the back of the crowbar as a hammer, he knocked off the wooden signs. Another man piled the crosses one atop the other in a neat stack.

Rigor mortis had already stiffened the three cadavers so they lay on the pavement with eyes open, mouths agape, arms and legs at impossible, obscene, angles. The soldiers ignored them for the time being.

As Francis watched the casual routine activity of the soldiers, an idea occurred to him -- an idea that would more than set things right with the bishop and more than make up for any tension over bogus holy sites. The obvious simplicity of it shocked him.

Boldly he walked over to the Centurion and said, "I want to buy that cross, the one in the middle of the stack. How much do you want for it?"

The Centurion, who was busy wiping the writing off the wooden signs, said curtly, "Not for sale."

But he gave Francis an odd look.

Why in the world would anybody want to buy a cross?

"But I can pay anything you ask. I must have it," Francis pleaded.

"You're crazy, Jew-boy," the soldier scolded. "If you want a cross of your own,

John W. Cowart

you'd better be damn careful or you're likely to get one."

"But I want that one, the True Cross. What are you going to do with it?"

"Look, you crazy bastard, that cross is not for sale. It's government property. If they catch me selling government property, I could end up on one of those. Now get out of here!"

"But what will you do with it?"

"It goes back to the store room, and we use it again next week, and we keep on using it till there's not one of you fuckers left! Now get the hell out of here!"

"Can I at least get a splinter from it?"

"Get OUT!," the soldier roared. Francis fled leaving him grumbling, "Damn crazy Jew. Why the hell would anybody want a cross? There's some kinky people in this world."

He went back to cleaning the lettering off the signs.

Other soldiers carted the bodies of the two thieves across the road and tossed them on the garbage heap. If anyone wanted to bury them, he could retrieve them from there; if not...

One of the soldiers grumbled, "Today in Paradise -- Shit!"

Because of Pilate's instructions, they left the cadaver of Jesus sprawled on the pavement. Mary and John, the teenager with

The Lazarus Projects

her, and some women gathered mourning around the body. With a great deal of difficulty, they straightened the stiff limbs into a relatively acceptable position.

The soldiers stopped a pilgrim riding in a mule-drawn cart with his family. They evicted the family and loaded the crosses, their equipment, and the clothing of the dead men into the back of the cart to drive it back to Hippicus.

Before they finished loading, two white-bearded old men approached leading a donkey with two large sacks strapped on its back. The old men gave the Centurion the authorization letter from Pilate and the corpse of Jesus was theirs.

The soldiers rode to the barracks in the back of the mule cart while the owner's family walked along behind.

Ben was so weary that he did not particularly care what was happening. he noticed his father gazing at the cadaver like an ashen-faced stoic. *Dad looks like he thinks it's a time bomb with only seconds left on the timer*, he thought.

The two old men, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus, were consoling the mourning women.

Ben's attention wandered to the sacks strapped on the donkey. The Greek label on one of the sacks read: *One Hundred Litras*. Ben tried to recall the lesson Francis taught them at the camp in Florida. *A hundred*

John W. Cowart

litras... a hundred litras. Let's see, one litra equals twelve ounces. That's one thousand two hundred ounces at sixteen ounces per pound. That's... that's about 76 pounds... Trivia. The most important event in history, and I'm bogged down in trivia.

The sun was rapidly sinking over the western hills. There were fewer travelers on the road now. The Sabbath would begin at sundown. The two old men, with the help of the women and John, pulled the two sacks from the donkey's back and unpacked. One sack contained yards and yards of white linen cloth. The heavier bag, the one marked 100 Litras, contained granulated spices -- a mixture of myrrh and aloes.

Quickly the friends of Jesus set to work. First, the old men said a prayer as they sprinkled handfuls of spice on the naked corpse. Then they helped John maneuver the body so the women could wind it in long strips of linen.

They forced his mouth shut and closed his eyes.

They took off his crown of thorns.

John unraveled it and flung the bloody tendrils out in Gehenna.

They wrapped his head with a special length of cloth that appeared to be silk. Each bandage that they wrapped around him, they sprinkled liberally with the spice mixture. They worked until the spices were

The Lazarus Projects

used up. Then they added one final layer of wrappings.

Heaving together, they loaded the heavy mummy onto the donkey and strapped it down. They led the donkey up the hill and through the hedge into the cemetery then on up to the sycamore grove where the new sepulcher gaped open. Waiting.

"I want to film the rest of this with the telescopic lenses on the camera in front," Judy said leaving for the tent. The four men hiked up the hill to observe the funeral from closer at hand.

The mourners carried the spice-laden mummy into the tomb and laid it on the low stone shelf.

In case of ground water seepage, Eli remembered.

The mourners gathered in a semicircle outside the tomb. And Eli was startled to hear Nicodemus intone a prayer almost exactly like the Kaddish, the ancient Jewish prayer for the dead which Eli was only too familiar with.

After the prayer, the mourners struggled to roll the great cap stone into place.

They couldn't budge it. It was too heavy.

Eli stepped forward, spoke with courtesy to Joseph, and offered their help.

John W. Cowart

Together, the time travelers and the mourners rolled the stone down the groove cut in the rock.

It grated into place.

The men all withdrew their separate ways leaving the women sitting and weeping beside the grave.

Jesus Christ was crucified, dead, and buried.

— XXXII —

When they arrived at the tent, they found that Judy was already starting supper. She chased them out from underfoot while she finished the preparations, so they sat outside and watched the sunset usher in the beginning of the Sabbath. Clouds with an orange and pink tinge hovered on the western horizon.

Silhouetted against the glory of the sunset, black vultures circled majestically soaring in the thermal updrafts over Gehenna.

"Supper will be ready in a bit," Judy said joining them. "I miss frozen foods; these concentrated rations take too long to fix."

"We'll have to keep the tomb under surveillance tonight," Eli said. "According to Matthew's Gospel, the Roman guards won't start guarding the tomb until tomorrow morning, so if the disciples are going to steal the body, tonight's the best time for it. If that's what happens -- and I suspect it will be -- then I want us to spend the next few weeks making a detailed survey of the Temple: maps, blueprints, everything. I'll

John W. Cowart

want all the information we can get on the Temple because..."

"Wait a minute," Jack interrupted, "Before we start on something else, what makes you so sure the disciples will steal the body? Except for John, they were all too scared to even show up here today. Yet, within six weeks these same men will start dying as martyrs because they claim that Christ is risen.

"One day they are cowering; the next, they are willing to die saying he arose -- something must have happened to make for that change in them.

"We saw that one disciple in the garden -- a man so scared he ran off leaving his pants -- now that's scared! Yet this same man will have his head chopped off still swearing that Jesus rose from the dead. We know he was a coward in the garden, would this same man die for a lie?

"To avoid being tortured to death, all any one of them would have to admit was that they stole the body; but all but one of the Apostles were executed still proclaiming the resurrection."

"The point that stands out to me," Eli said, "Is that we have not seen one single miracle. We have seen dramatic events -- historical events -- but not one single miracle. Nothing we have witnessed is contrary to natural law. There is nothing supernatural here.

The Lazarus Projects

"I'm not saying Jesus might not have healed people and all that before we arrived, but I haven't seen him do anything miraculous or at least anything that does not have a natural explanation. And because in my own experience, everything follows its natural order, I think Jesus will stay dead like men have always done; and if the body disappears at all, it will be because someone moved it. Nature doesn't break its own law."

Francis said, "I'd like to comment on that. As I think you know, I'm an orphan. I never knew my parents. I was raised in Saint Joseph's Orphanage in Copenhagen. The orphanage was very poor, and every day of my life till I was 14, I had oatmeal and cinnamon toast for breakfast. They hadn't even heard of nutrition in that place. Oatmeal and toast -- oatmeal and toast -- Christmas and holidays, it didn't matter -- oatmeal and toast.

"Well, not long after I turned 14, we came down to breakfast one morning and there were platters piled high with pastries. We couldn't believe it.

"What happened was that Prince Jon visited the orphanage that day. But the following day, it was oatmeal and toast again for ever after.

"Before and after the Prince was on the spot, oatmeal for breakfast seemed to be -- in my experience -- an eternal law. But when the King's son is present, things do not follow their accustomed schedule. And in

John W. Cowart

one of his letters, Saint Paul says that Jesus is 'proclaimed to be the son of God by the resurrection from the dead.'"

Getting up, Eli said, "I expect that before the night's over that will be proved wrong. In some way I hope it won't be, but I suspect it will."

"If you guys will come on in and eat," Judy said, "I'll show you how the surveillance equipment works after supper."

They went inside and their supper on the night of the crucifixion was a tired, tense meal of dehydrated hash.

The men cleaned up the supper dishes, brought in water and firewood while Judy prepared for her presentation and soon all the time travelers gathered again in front of the tent.

"Our surveillance system involves two features," Judy said. "I checked them both out while you were at the grave this afternoon. First, we will actually keep watch using these special binoculars." She held up the heavy instruments for them to see. They looked as if they were made for a man with three eyes. "There is a pair of these for each of us. NASA developed these for use on the dark side of the moon. This extra cylinder on top absorbs and concentrates all available light and focuses it through the viewing lenses. Even in what appears to be pitch black to the naked eyes, you will be able to see clearly through these. Since Jack and I caught naps last night during the trial, we'll

The Lazarus Projects

take the first watch. Then Ben and Francis, then Eli and Jack. We want two observers watching the grave constantly.

"These cameras are our second system. I have them focused so that if anything moves within the viewing range, they will automatically activate. They work with a photo-electric cell we developed at Goddard Space Flight Center. It's rather like the devise they use in grocery stores to open the door for you. Any movement registers on the light beam and breaks a circuit and sets the cameras rolling."

Francis asked, "But this isn't a grocery store; it's a hundred yards up to the tomb. Will it work at that distance?"

Judy smiled. "I developed this same system to photograph the surface of Mars. It worked there; it'll work here. The difference there was that I set the sensors to detect the presence of carbon molecules instead of just motion; we were trying to see if carbon-based life exists there."

Jack and Judy kept the first watch while the others slept and dreamed the dreams of men who had just watched three of their fellow men being tortured to death.

The moon stood still over the quiet sleeping city of Jerusalem making it look like an enchanted place from a fairy tale. From their vantage point, they could see a Roman signal-fire burning on one of the towers of

John W. Cowart

Antonia Fortress far across the city. Other than the signal-fire and the moon there was no other light. A slight steady breeze blew out of the southern desert causing the leaves of the sycamore grove around the tomb to flutter gently.

The Weymouths sat together on a boulder near the tent constantly scanning the graveyard through the infra-red binoculars.

"You know, there's something that bothers me about all this," Judy said. "In one way, everything we've seen corresponds to what we read in the Gospels; but I keep being disappointed. Jesus looks nothing like I expected. The cross did the job, but it looked flimsy and... well, unstable. The crucifixion was not beautiful or noble or inspirational; it was brutal, nasty and ugly. And the way the people looked and acted... I mean, the Gospels give just a bare outline of the facts and they're correct as far as they go; but when I read them, I got a different mental picture from the things we've actually observed."

"I understand," her husband said. "I think part of the problem is that over the years, the facts have been sentimentalized. We hear sermons about 'gentle, loving Jesus who gave himself for us on the tree' and the words don't convey meaning to us. We see Hollywood movies where Jesus looks like a movie star because it's a movie star playing the part. We admire a great painting of the

The Lazarus Projects

Crucifixion made by some European painter thirteen hundred years removed from the scene and we expect Jerusalem to look like a medieval Dutch city complete with tulips and windmills."

"But it looks like the Gospel writers would have given us a clearer idea of things."

"They probably did, but we're too insensitive to get the picture. Remember when we were in Indonesia - What was the name of that place? You know, where we had that trouble with the hospital's electrical system? Anyhow, when the lights went off, an electrician from Corps of Engineers came in with an electrical diagram of the building. It showed where all the wires ran and the location of all the outlets and switches and all that -- and the diagram was 100 per cent accurate -- but you could study it forever without being able to tell where the windows, doors or any of the furniture was located. His diagram just shows the conduits and outlets for power. The Gospels are like that: they show the power lines, but you can only guess where the sink is located until you actually come here. As far as the power in the story of Christ is concerned, it doesn't matter what the method of execution was or what size the cross is or even his own physical appearance. He could have been a four-foot midget, and the power would still be there.

John W. Cowart

"Another thing," he continued, "is that the words they used didn't have to be explained to their original readers. When Mark says 'they crucified him', his first readers would picture what we've witnessed today. Just as if I were to tell you 'they electrocuted a prisoner' -- you would naturally picture death row, the last meal, the electric chair, a striped uniform -- all the things you bring to mind out of your own background from when you did that piece on Raiford."

"That was not my favorite assignment," Judy said standing up and stretching. She was beautiful with the moonlight in her hair.

"I love you," he said.

"I love you too... But, listen, do you think the Gospels originally included any extra information that's been lost over the years? After all, they were written by hand and then copied by hand for century after century."

"Let me ask you something," Jack said. "Which camera is best: one churned out by an assembly machine or one of your hand-crafted Maurers?"

"The Maurer."

"Ok. Now, when Eli buys another car for his collection, which does he buy: something off a Japanese assembly line or a hand-crafted Rolls Royce?"

"He buys the Rolls."

The Lazarus Projects

"Right. No matter what item you want, jewelry, cars, cameras, paintings -- an original oil or a printed reproduction -- everything we talk about, we praise the thing that's been made with hand-crafted individual attention. But when we think about Bibles, the very thing considered a valuable asset in anything else suddenly becomes a liability. We think that since its been copied by hand, the Bible must not be as good as if a machine had churned it out. That's crazy. I think the critics have been handing us a line. Diamonds are always cut by hand; they're too valuable for anything less.

"Not only that but..."

She cut off his words with a quick hand to his lips.

"Hush," she whispered, "There's something moving around near the tomb. The camera has activated."

— XXXIII —

The night was silent except for the soft whir of camcorders.

The Weymouths peered intently through their binoculars in the direction of Christ's grave, but they could see nothing. Not a motion. Not a sound -- except for the whir of the cameras.

"I don't see a thing. Do you," she said.

"No. But I might as well wake Eli. It's all over now." Jack's voice sounded dull. Flat. Lifeless.

Judy turned her gaze from the tomb to look at her husband in amazement. His shoulders stooped. The binoculars dangled from the cord around his neck. His eyes brimmed with tears and his lips quivered.

"Honey! What's wrong?" she cried in alarm. "Are you alright?"

"It's the disciples, isn't it?" he said. "They are going to steal the body just like Eli said. It was all a fairy tale; a lie. A damn stupid lie."

"We don't know what's out there, Jack. I don't see anything. I don't know what set off the cameras... Honey, snap out of it."

The Lazarus Projects

Don't look at me like that. It will be alright. No matter what happens. Don't go to pieces. It's ok. Go wake Eli."

Jack stumbled toward the tent like a man condemned.

"Have faith," Judy called out lamely at his slumped back.

"Eli! Eli! Wake up!"

There was someone shaking his shoulder but he resisted. He wanted to sleep.

"Eli! Wake up!"

Eli rubbed sleep from his eyes and yawned saying, "Lord, what a short night. My turn for sentry duty already, Jack?"

Then he noticed Jack's look of grief and dejection. "Jack! What's wrong? Has something happened to Judy? Quick, get Ben."

"Someone's at the tomb," Jack muttered.

"Oh God! I'm sorry. God, but I'm sorry," said Eli in bitter disappointment. He was amazed at himself because a wave of heartsick grief swept over him at Jack's announcement.

"Is it the disciples?" he asked.

"I don't know. We couldn't see. I didn't look... I couldn't."

"I'll come."

John W. Cowart

Eli jumped up and followed Jack to where Judy stood scanning the hillside through her glasses. "Let me look," he said. He lifted the binoculars to his eyes and swept the area.

There was nothing to see.

The stone stood solid in its groove. The sycamore leaves fluttered in the breeze. Nothing else moved.

The cameras stopped whirring.

"Judy, go check that film and see what caused the cameras to activate. Hurry!" Eli ordered. "Jack, I want you to... Do you want to go with her?"

"It doesn't matter," Jack said listlessly.

The sound of Judy getting out her equipment to process the film woke Ben and Francis. She told them what had happened and they rushed out to see.

They too saw nothing.

Judy removed the disc and fed it into a battery-operated viewer. The four men watched the small screen apprehensively over her shoulder.

First, they saw the moonlit tomb; then they saw a fox scamper out of the bushes beside the grave and pounce on a mouse. Just down the slope from the tomb entrance, the fox caught the mouse in its mouth and gave it a violent shake. Then the fox lay down on its belly in the sand clutching the mouse in its forepaws and eating it.

The Lazarus Projects

"Son of a Bitch!" whooped Francis. Then he grabbed Ben and the two danced a jig.

"Thank God," breathed Judy as Eli pounded her on the back in congratulations. He was beaming. "Scared the shit out of me," he said.

"What are you so happy about? You've been saying all along that he's not going to rise," Francis said.

"Maybe so," Eli said hugging him, "but, hell, it's got to end better than... I mean... I don't know what I mean."

Of the group, only Jack remained subdued and downcast; his eyes looked haunted.

After they all calmed down, Ben and Francis took the watch. The others lay down to sleep.

Eli laid wide awake staring up in the darkness. His own feelings puzzled him. *Why was I so happy to see it was not the disciples? Why did I feel so heartsick when I thought there was such a simple explanation for the resurrection? Why was I so damn glad to see that fox?*

Jack also lay awake staring at the dark. *I didn't even look, he thought. What a crock of faith I have; just the sound of the camera destroyed my belief. I didn't even bother to look; I was convinced the disciples were robbing the grave without seeing a thing. There I was, big daddy, reassuring the little*

John W. Cowart

wife about her doubts with my superior faith and logic and just a little sound triggered my denial. At least Peter had somebody ask him threatening questions. Not me... Just a little fox exposes me. I had faith in my logic, my theology system, my view of things. I don't seem to have any faith in Christ himself.

As Jack reached this troubled conclusion, a strange thing happened. He suddenly recalled a story about Jesus that he hadn't thought about for years. It was the story of how one man came to Jesus and told him, "Lord, I will follow you through anything." And Jesus said, "Foxes have dens. Birds have nests. But I have nowhere to lay my head. Follow me anyhow!"

Jack slept peacefully.

There were no further incidents -- that night.

— XXIV —

The last watch team of the night, Eli and Jack, let the others sleep late into the morning and woke them with a hot breakfast. Afterwards, they all sat out in front of the tent basking in the warm sunshine. There was hardly any traffic from the city -- a few Romans and Edomites. It was the Sabbath; the Jews were worshipping and resting.

"The soldiers ought to be arriving soon," Francis said. "Caiaphas and company are probably at Pilate's getting permission for a military guard right now."

"Won't they be breaking the Sabbath to go to Pilate's today?" Judy asked.

"Yes... Funny, they fussed at Jesus all the time for healing people and giving abundant life on this day. But they think negotiating a contract to guard the dead is alright."

Eli yawned and said, "Jack and I need to get naps soon, but there are a few things I want to go over with you first. Our findings on this expedition have eliminated a number of theories about the resurrection.

John W. Cowart

"There is a theory that Jesus never existed as a real man, but that the story of Jesus is a nice bit of mythology. But, since there are four independent historical documents to the contrary, we discounted this theory in the first place and made this expedition. We have confirmed the fact that Jesus is indeed a historic personage.

"There is the Moslem idea that the wrong man was crucified so the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus involved a man who was never dead. But his own mother identified him on the cross.

"There is also a modern theory --that I was inclined to believe until yesterday -- that Jesus did not die on the cross but that he was knocked out and in a coma and that the spices and cold of the tomb brought him out of it. Again, we saw for ourselves that as the documents affirm, 'he gave up the ghost'. There's no possibility he was just in a coma; even the Gospels show that he met four out of the five modern criteria used to determine death.

"This leaves us with three other possibilities. Someone stole the body. The disciples are the prime candidates. We know the priests didn't steal it or in their arguments with the Christians, all they would have to do to shut the apostles up would be to produce the corpse. The Roman pagans had the same argument with the Christians and they didn't have the body either.

The Lazarus Projects

"The disciples are not likely to be so bold as to sneak past a military guard, that remains to be seen. We'll know for sure tonight."

Francis spoke up, "Don't forget that these disciples, who were too scared to show up yesterday -- every one of them will be murdered because they say 'He is risen' and not one of them denies it. Would they stand up under torture to uphold a lie if they had stolen the body?"

"Dad, Look!" Ben said, "The guard detail is coming out the city gate now."

The *Decuria*, a squad of ten men and an officer, marched briskly in a double column followed by four *calones*, slaves to perform menial camp work. The slaves were loaded down with huge burdens of blankets, rations, and cooking utensils for the soldiers. The officer, a *Decurion*, rode a beautiful, frisky, gray mare, and his red cloak puffed out behind him as the mare pranced. The foot soldiers wore coats of mail and helmets made of bronze and leather. Each soldier carried a heavy shield on his left arm and a short two-edged broadsword strapped to his side. Each soldier also carried a pilum over his shoulder. Because the soldiers coated their helmets and shields with a light layer of oil and stepped as one man in formation, the moving column gave the appearance of a huge shiny-backed beetle pressing firmly along the road.

John W. Cowart

The *Decurion* shouted out an order. The patrol turned abruptly off the main road past Golgotha and marched into the cemetery. The officer halted the men in the shade of the sycamore grove and ordered a slave to build a fire while he personally inspected the tomb. After his inspection, he posted two men as guards on either side of the path leading to the grave. The remainder of the squad set up a bivouac camp in the sycamore grove.

While his men set up camp, the officer appeared to be giving detailed instructions to the slave at the fire.

"What's he doing, cooking lunch?" Jack asked.

The slave now had the fire blazing and he suspended a large pot over it. Then he unpacked what looked like big bars of black soap and cut them up in the pot. Soon an oily cloud of pungent black smoke drifted down the slope to the time travelers' tent.

"Tar," Ben said as he sniffed the smoke, "He's melting tar or asphalt."

When the mixture was bubbling hot, the slave, with the help of one of his fellows, carried the heavy steaming pot up to the tomb. The officer supervised as the two slaves smeared the sticky tar around the edges of the white limestone cover. They used a small mop made of rags tied to a stick handle and they coated every crevice around the edge of the stone with a thick layer of tar in a foot-wide swath.

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When they finished the job to the officer's satisfaction, the black ring of tar sealing the white limestone tomb looked like a huge eye watching over Jerusalem. A smear of tar near the center of the stone looked like the pupil and a puddle of tar that ran down some slight crevice to the side looked for all the world like a tear.

"Those guys look mean," Ben said.

"Tough as nails," his father agreed. "I wonder if they may be the ones who break into the tomb?"

"Why in the world would they do that?" Francis asked.

"Well, you know -- King of the Jews and all that. Maybe they think that since it's supposed to be a king buried there, there's treasure buried with him."

Judy laughed at the idea. "We --, Jack and I -- saw the treasure from Tutankahmen's tomb when it was on display in Washington. It would be worth breaking into a tomb to get. But yesterday, soldiers from this same cohort stationed at Pilate's headquarters gambled for the only property Jesus owned -- his clothes. I think you're fishing, Eli. The fact of the matter is you're just speculating."

"But somebody must have robbed the grave," he said.

"If it was the work of grave robbers, then why did Peter and John find all the wrappings from the body folded up in a neat

John W. Cowart

pile? Bandits would have just dumped the linen out of the way."

"How the hell would I know," Eli said. "Neat burglars, I suppose."

The other three men laughed. Francis slapped his back and said, "That sounds as reasonable as a flock of pigs."

Eli laughed with the others at that comparison.

But Judy didn't understand: she'd been asleep when that happened. So Eli related the story with gusto and the tension between them eased considerably.

They talked and joked and planned into the afternoon. Eli told them about his experience in the Temple and how he wanted to rebuild it in modern Jerusalem.

"I once heard some preacher on the radio say that there would have to be a Temple on the spot before Christ returns," Ben said.

"I think that's true, I'm not sure," Francis said. "But there is already a temple to God on the spot -- the Dome of the Rock, the Moslem temple is there."

But when the next war comes," Eli said, "I imagine Israel will kick the Arabs out altogether and we can build a temple like that one."

He pointed to the golden pinnacles rising above the city.

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Eli did not know it, but the "next war" in modern Jerusalem had already started at six o'clock that morning.

— XXXV —

The tv set perched like a vulture on a chrome limb, a bracket near the ceiling of the hospital room, so the patient could watch it from his bed.

Something was wrong with the color adjustment so the face of Dan Rather looked as blotched and green as the face of Lazarus Wienstien who listened to the bulletin.

"... heavy fighting along the Syrian border. The tiny nation of Israel has mobilized all her reserves and at this moment is thrusting armored columns deep into Lebanon. In a predawn aerial attack, Egyptian bombers destroyed Israeli installations in the Negev and raided Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem. Both warring factions have accused the other of starting hostilities before a special council of the United Nations. CBS News will keep you posted as bulletins arrive from our on-the-spot correspondents..."

"I hope Eli and Ben are alright," Lazarus breathed. "God, I hope they're ok..."

The increased volume that accompanies commercials interrupted his prayer..."DO YOU SUFFER FROM PAINFUL

The Lazarus Projects

ITCH AND HEMORRHOIDS..." Click! Lazarus switched off the set with his remote control buttons muttering, "I do! I do. I damn sure do!"

"Another theory that may yet prove to be true -- and the more I think about it, the more likely this seems, " Eli said stirring the soup he was cooking for their lunch, "Is that it is a spiritual resurrection the Gospels refer to -- though he was murdered by the Romans, his spirit lives on the hearts of good men everywhere -- that sort of thing."

"Oh, come off it, Dad," Ben said. "That's a cop out. Jesus either rose or he rotted. We've all heard you say it a dozen times. You can't have it both ways. The Gospel of John -- he was the guy here at the grave yesterday -- his gospel says that Mary Magdalene and the disciples met Jesus after he rose from the grave. He walked with them; he cooked them a breakfast. He went fishing with them and they caught 153 fish. There's nothing 'spiritual' about it."

"And there's this too," Judy said, "Dr. McIntosh told me this -- if John affirmed he was an actual on-the-spot witness of these things and he put it in writing; then he was either a damn liar, or absolutely insane, or he was telling the truth. It's got to be one of those three, and he didn't look like a nut to me."

John W. Cowart

"Hey, don't back me in a corner. We'll know one way or the other -- risen or rotten -- tomorrow," Eli said.

While the others slept that afternoon, Ben and Jack watched the tomb. They noticed how the Roman soldiers went about their duties. The sentries kept staggered, two-hour shifts. The first pair stood guard and at the end of one hour, a relief took over for the man on the left path. Then, two hours from the start, the man on the right hand path was relieved. That way, there was always a fresh man on duty.

The soldiers not on watch amused themselves in various ways: some napped, some started a dice game; and three of them gathered around a fourth who read aloud from a scroll -- a ribald story about a courtesan in Athens.

It was hot in the tent and Eli had trouble taking a nap.

He was too excited and an insect buzzing around near the top of the center pole bothered him.

He raised up on an elbow and watched the bug.

Only a wasp, he thought, No, it's a dirt-dobber just like the ones in Florida.

The insect had built a hollow clay cylinder and attached it to the tent pole high

The Lazarus Projects

up where it would stay warm and dry. At one end of the clay mound was a perfectly round hole about as big around as a pencil. The dirt-dobber was stuffing a small roach into that hole. Again and again she buzzed off to catch smaller bugs, sting them insensible, and stuff them in the mud-walled chamber. When she was satisfied with the number of bugs in the chamber, she backed up to the hole and deposited her eggs. Then she flew off to get more mud to make a stopper for the hole.

From having seen dirt-dobbers around one of his farms in Florida, Eli knew that the bugs she had placed in the chamber were still alive. Her sting paralyzed them, but they would live sealed in the mud nest for weeks in a state of suspended animation. At the end of the incubation period, the dirt-dobber eggs hatched and the larva ate the insects their mother had trapped and placed with them weeks before -- fresh, still living meat.

Maybe, Eli thought, When we get back, we will have time to start another project -- see if we can distill dirt-dobber venom and use it to place humans in suspended animation. No odder than these other projects we've tried. Might keep a man alive but arrest his disease and life processes until he can be cured. Those cyronics people want to do that with dead bodies; maybe, with a serum like that bug has, we could do it with live people. I'll talk to Lazarus about it.

John W. Cowart

He pulled his pillow over his head to shut out the buzzing and went to sleep

By then, it was too late to talk with Lazarus about anything.

The intern on duty -- the doctors were at a staff conference --monitored the machine carefully. There were no readings. "There's too much riding on this to make a mistake -- better make sure," he said.

He double checked all the wires and gages and tapes again. He timed the whole procedure carefully. No pulse. No respiration. No circulation. No response to stimuli. No brain waves.

Still the intern was not satisfied. He went through the whole procedure a third time and then called in a colleague who confirmed his findings.

"Aren't we supposed to call somebody about this one? Seems to me like they brought him in from some hospice facility this morning with special instructions."

"Oh, yeah. He's the rich guy. We're supposed to call..." He consulted a clipboard. "Here it is. Clinic C, Cryonics, Holly Lock Institute. He's gonna be frozen. We'll call 'em after lunch."

"But the specific instructions are for them to be notified immediately -- something to do with that kind of embalming that has to be done in a hurry before he cools -- if that makes any sense."

The Lazarus Projects

"We'll call 'em after lunch. Who wants to wait around for them to show up; I'm starving."

"But this guy paid a fortune for special treatment."

"Hell. He ain't gonna demand a refund. Let's eat. We can call them later."

The two young men went to lunch leaving Lazarus Wienstien dead and alone in his private suite.

Ben served supper, but they were all too excited to eat.

Jack said, "I haven't felt this nervous since the night before we got married."

Judy said, "It feels like when I was a little girl on Christmas Eve. Tomorrow will be wonderful I'd know, but will Santa bring me switches or all my heart's desire. I wouldn't know what to expect -- alternating hope and fear but an undercurrent of joy just because it was Christmas."

"I know what you mean," Eli said. "Not about Christmas of course, although our family did put up a tree -- don't tell the rabbi -- but I know the feeling of expectation and fear. Back in '72 when Lazarus and I applied for our first big loan, the one that meant we could expand or go bankrupt, the bank president kept us waiting in a reception room while the loan committee decided whether to accept or reject us. I have that same kind of feeling now."

John W. Cowart

Francis said, "I'm thinking of the night before I took my final vows; I turned atheist at least eight times before morning."

They laughed and looked at Ben waiting for him to express his feelings.

He remained silent for a bit then said tersely, "When I finally worked up the nerve to ask her to marry me, she refused."

"When did you..." Eli started to ask then changed his words to, "I didn't know, Son. I'm sorry." He thought a moment about how to break off the intensely personal nature of this conversation, then he said, "Francis, if Jesus possibly does rise tomorrow, what exactly can we expect?"

"At dawn," Francis said, "Mary Magdalene and the other women will come up here to the cemetery to add more spices to the grave. I think Mary will arrive just after the others, I'm not sure. There will be an earthquake when an angel appears like a flash of lightening to roll back the stone to show them the empty tomb. His appearance is so bright, like lightning, it stuns the guard detail. He will send the women back to tell the disciples. Mary Magdalene will go to Peter's house to get him and John. The other women will go tell the other disciples. The disciples won't believe them.

"Peter and John will run here with Mary.

"John outruns Peter and will get here first. But he won't enter the tomb. When

The Lazarus Projects

Peter puffs up, he will go on inside and find the grave clothes sorted and folded. The two men will go back to their residence leaving Mary here. The two disciples don't understand what's going on; they were not expecting him to rise.

"Mary must not expect it either because she'll stand right up there by the tomb crying. Two angels will speak to her, and from what I can tell from the account in John's Gospel, she just about ignores them.

"Jesus will come up to her and speak but she's so intent on finding the body that she thinks it's the gardener talking."

Eli asked, "But the caretaker is a fellow who's all scarred and disfigured; how could she mistake Jesus for him?"

"Who else but the caretaker is likely to be about the cemetery at dawn? She's going to be too upset to notice who's passing by. She thinks the grave has been robbed and she's intent on finding the body. She doesn't expect to see Jesus alive. But he will call her by name, and she will hug him until he sends her to notify the disciples."

"The Scriptures don't say how he will spend the rest of the morning, but tomorrow afternoon he will walk to Emmaus with two of his friends. And tomorrow night he will come back to Jerusalem to meet the disciples.

"I think the best time for us to talk with him is on the road to Emmaus. The road runs

John W. Cowart

past Phasaël Tower and we can probably catch up with him before he meets his friends."

Jack said, "I think the best policy about the physical you want me to give him and about the questions you have, Eli, is for us to tell him who we are and where and when we've come from. We should respectfully ask his cooperation."

"This is crazy!" Eli shouted. "You people really think that tomorrow afternoon we'll be talking to that man? He's dead. He's going to stay dead. When you die, you die forever. 'Respectfully request his cooperation! Hell. If he walks out of that grave tomorrow after I saw what put him there, you're damn right I'll be respectful! But he's dead and the dead stay dead."

"Methinks thou protesteth overmuch," Jack quoted.

Eli looked chagrined. "Hey, I'm sorry; I didn't mean to yell at you. This thing has got me on edge," he said. "I'll get off my soapbox right now and we'll see how things work out in the morning."

"We love you," Judy said.

"I know. I know. Sure you do. Who wants to help me with the dishes, it's my turn?

They all pitched in.

— XXXVI —

Dr. McIntosh paid scant attention to the demands of the Israeli commander. He kept his eyes focused on the flickering digital display panel and gauges before him.

"... But you don't understand. I'm ordering you to shut this thing down so we can remove the radioactive materials out into the desert. We can't have this stuff in Jerusalem with a war going on."

"I will not shut it down. This project is more important than your war."

"Damn it! I'll shoot your ugly black head off and shut it down myself."

"Commander, I tell you again, if these switches are not thrown in the proper sequence, you risk an atomic explosion. Do you want to be the man to destroy Jerusalem?"

"But if the Arabs find out about the nuclear material they're sure to attack this place."

"Then I suggest you defend us. The project goes to completion whatever else happens. The lives of Mr. Rosen and the

John W. Cowart

others depend on this being terminated in the proper sequence."

Francis and Eli had the second watch that night. The moon was not up yet, but high above them Orion and his belt of blazing stars marched across the night.

Eli lowered his binoculars and said, "You know, I don't think I ever really saw the stars before we came back in time. No exhaust fumes or city lights glaring to detract from their brilliance."

Francis cleared his throat nervously and then spoke. At first, his voice sounded timid but grew bolder.

"Mr. Rosen. There's something I want to talk with you about..." He hesitated and then began again, "I should have said something before now but ... Well, the Apostles are not the only one to be afraid to speak up for him ... What I want to say is this: you know that the Gospel is either true or false. If it's false, then forget it. But if it is true, then you must make a deliberate moral choice -- an act of will. You must either say 'I'm wrong. I will stop fighting him. I will follow Jesus. Or, you must deliberately say 'No, I will not give in. I will not follow him even though I know he is truth.'"

Eli protested. "It's not like that at all. You're just putting it that way because you're a priest."

The Lazarus Projects

"The way I make my living is not the issue," Francis said. "If a man tells you two and two are four, you don't say, 'you're just saying that because you're a mathematician'.

"You must decide whether what the man says is true or false. If the Gospel is true, then it's true whether a priest or a tv preacher or a garbage man tells it. The issue is a moral decision: I will follow Jesus -- I will not follow Jesus. You will, won't you?"

"Did Ben put you up to this?"

"No. The last thing the Lord said after he rose and before he went back to where he came from was that his men were to go all over the world and make disciples of all men. That's one of the reasons I'm asking you....The other reason is that you're my friend. I love you."

"You think I'll go to Hell if I don't change my ways and follow Christ?"

"Is there any reason you shouldn't?"

"No. I've done my share of sinning."

"I will follow... or I will not."

"I want to think about it more."

"You've been thinking about it since this whole thing started haven't you?."

"Yes I have," Eli said. He hesitated. He watched the silent intent blaze of Orion move in solemn splendor across the night. "If -- mind you, I say if -- I wanted to follow Jesus, how would a person go about it?"

John W. Cowart

"Simply tell Jesus you've been wrong, been a sinner. That you quit resisting him and that you will follow him from now on. That's all there is to it. He does the rest. You just tell him those three things."

"You want me to pray to a dead man?"

"Is he just a dead man, or is he the Son of God, the Prince of Life? Will you trust him to be your Lord?"

In the night outside the tomb Eli Rosen pondered the question in his heart and made a reluctant decision.

In the distance a fresh Roman guard relieved his fellow soldier on the left hand path to the tomb. The relieved guard went to his blanket roll in the sycamore grove. The new man stood tall and straight, his polished armor reflecting starlight.

Eli and Francis scanned the tomb through their binoculars. Both the Roman sentries yawned at the same time.

"Dr. McIntosh, you have got to evacuate this place. The Arabs definitely know the uranium is here."

"No. Not yet. I will not. We've got to have a little more time here."

"Look. I've just so many troops. This fight is not just with rock-throwing Palestinians. They've got mortars and grenade launchers and God only knows what else right here in the city. We're fighting

The Lazarus Projects

village to village and street to street in Gaza and the Golan Heights. This stuff can't remain in the city. I'm placing you under arrest and calling in our own team of experts to shut this machine down and move it."

"They can't do it safely. I built it and I'm the only one who can stop it."

"This is crazy. You won't even tell me what the damn thing does."

"Mr. Rosen will explain it when he comes back," Dr. McIntosh insisted.

Judy snuggled close to him in the darkness.

"You asleep?"

"Wide awake."

"Excited?"

"Yes. This is going to be the most wonderful thing that's ever happened to us."

"Yes. I'm sure of it; this will be the most important day of our lives."

They kissed.

Dawn.

The sky was the color of an oyster shell.

The five time travelers focused their binoculars on the tomb.

"Look, coming out the city gate. Six women. They're on their way here."

John W. Cowart

The first flight of Soviet-made Katyusha rockets arched in from the East Bank. Israeli defenses knocked out three of the rockets. One hit and exploded west of the compound. Dust billowed through the lab. Dr. McIntosh rushed to the control console and snapped a switch.

"My God! Look at the tar!"

The tar circle sealing the stone began melting and running in a puddle on the ground.

The Roman sentries did not notice.

The next flight of rockets sent a thousand slivers of glass splattering all over the lab as all the windows, the clock face, the beakers and bottles of chemicals danced through the air. *Somebody kicked a hornet's nest*, Dr. McIntosh thought as he continued the return sequence.

He noticed, behind him, that the commander and two Israeli soldiers lay bleeding on the floor. He did not see his own bleeding cuts. He worked through the return sequence with urgent speed.

The earth began to tremble.

The stone rocked in its groove.

There was a burst of light brighter than the sun.

The Lazarus Projects

The Romans, who were up preparing their breakfast, were stunned and blinded by the intense light. They fell down like dead men.

There was a grinding sound of stone moving on stone.

"The return sequence! It's pulling us back!" someone shouted.

"Let me go! Let me go!" someone else yelled.

A woman screamed.

"Why seek ye the Living One among the dead?" a calm voice asked.

An explosion from the third flight of rockets caused the time lab's roof to collapse and set the debris on fire.

Flames licked at the time chamber fusing copper coils.

Ben threw the hatch open and scrambled out gagging on smoke at his first breath. Eli climbed out pulling Francis after him. Sparks lighted in Judy's hair. "Good Lord, What's happened here," she cried beating them out.

Jack saw a bleeding man on the floor. He tossed his head to clear the confusion of being snatched from one time to another and crawled to the wounded man's aid. There was little he could do.

The clatter of Uzis, the concussion of explosions and the shrill wail of sirens added

John W. Cowart

to the travelers' confusion as they stumbled through burning debris.

"Jack. Ben. Help me. It's Dr. McIntosh under this beam and he's hurt bad," Francis yelled.

They lifted the beam while Eli pulled the old man out. They carried him outside to a clear space where the parking lot had been and lay him on the pavement.

Jack looked at his wounds and applied pressure to the most profuse wound to staunch the bleeding.

Francis knelt holding his hand.

What are appropriate last rites for a Fire-Baptized Hardshell Baptist? he wondered beginning to recite a universal creed of Christians, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth..."

The old man gasped for breath in a fit of coughing.

"And in Jesus Christ his only son Our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell; the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into..."

Ben ran down to the street looking for a policeman or a medic or an ambulance. Armed men from both sides of the conflict shot at him. There were too many wounded.

The Lazarus Projects

Too much confusion. Too much fighting. No help to be found that day.

"Looks like there's a war going on, we've got to help him ourselves," he yelled to the others.

Jack and Eli rigged a makeshift stretcher by pulling off a dead man's coat and pants and running two poles from the debris through the sleeves and legs.

Ben, Francis, Eli and Judy carried the rig while Jack trotted along side stanching the blood and directing them to Hadassah Medical Center where he had spent so many hours studying before the trip back in time.

As they left, the Wienstien Biblical Research Center burned behind them.

The staff physicians on duty in the Hadassah emergency room recognized Jack and immediately drafted him to work. One of them took over on Dr. McIntosh as Jack dealt with burned patients from an office complex which had taken a direct hit.

In the confusion as attack casualties from both sides poured into the emergency room, no one noticed the odd garb of the time travelers.

Jack worked with doctors in the traumatology unit for 19 hours. It was after midnight before they could all gather in Dr. McIntosh's room -- a private one pirated by Eli's insistence.

John W. Cowart

The old man was groggy from medication and shock but he insisted that he was up to the short debriefing.

The night was quiet outside as the city of Jerusalem recovered -- as throughout history it always had -- with people hurt and homeless, with anger simmering, with blood and turmoil, with nothing settled, with talk of who was right and who was wrong, with talk of more fighting yet to come.

Eli cried as he read the telegram about Lazarus to his friends.

"I did my best for him," he said over and over. "I did my best."

Taking a deep breath, he composed himself and visibly gained control.

"I think it best," he told them, "That we not publicize what we've been through and what we've seen. Since it looks like Judy's camera's and pictures were all burned when the lab was destroyed, we have no supporting evidence.

"As I've examined the facts -- and Francis, you'll agree on this -- we have not personally seen one single thing that's not already public knowledge through the Gospel accounts. It's all right there for people to read. I just wish we'd been able to remain to see if those last chapters are... Well, you know what I mean."

"Yes, Eli, we know exactly," Judy said rising to hug his neck.

The Lazarus Projects

"There's one last thing I'd like to do before we go to bed," Eli said. He explained and they all readily agreed.

Standing around Dr. McIntosh's bed, the six friends joined in a prayer for the peace of Lazarus Wienstien.

Eight days after this, if you happen to believe John's Gospel, the disciples were afraid, hiding in a house near Siloam Pool. The doors were locked and barred. Thomas, the disciple who doubted the resurrection, was with them.

Jesus came in and, standing before them all, called Thomas over.

As they watched, Jesus held out his hands, palms open. The nail holes, wallowed out large from his exertions on the cross, were plainly visible. Jesus unpinned his tunic and dropped it from one shoulder. The wound in his side gaped open large enough to thrust a hand inside,

Thomas dropped to his knees sobbing, "My Lord and My God!"

Jesus said, "Thomas, you have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have never seen me -- yet believe."

-- END --