

THE JOURNEY

The following day, Daniel drives to Robert and Linda's deep in thought. Because of his conversation with Deanna he decided to try and not be quite so jaded and cynical in his assessment of their answers today.

Inside their living room, Robert and Linda sit together while Daniel sits opposite them. Opening his notebook Daniel suggests, "I think we should start with where you stayed in Cyprus?"

Robert responded, "For the first two nights that would be in Larnaca..."

The flight to Cyprus took almost three hours and, after only an hour in the air, Linda began to feel very strange. There were times when she literally felt she would explode from the sheer force of the energy running through her. Robert, sensing Linda's restlessness, took hold of her hand. Immediately, he felt a pulsating energy surge through his body. The sensation felt like standing next to a powerful electromagnet, in other words, a pulsating energy surge. Discussing the feeling with Linda, Robert learned that neither one of them knew what it meant. They did; however, both agree it had to do with the trip to Israel.

Arriving in Cyprus, it was two o'clock in the morning when the taxi dropped them at the hotel. Located on the Larnaca seafront, the hotel was clean and modern. The rooms were next to each other, and Robert took her case into the room, leaving Linda to explore her surroundings. The sparsely furnished room had twin beds, a dressing table, and one armchair. There was a small bathroom including a shower only. Linda thought longingly, if only there was a bath -- what a relaxing indulgence that would be.

She was planning to get into bed, when there was a soft knock on the door. Opening the door, she found Robert. He wanted to talk. He had experienced some weird feelings, while in transit, and wanted to share them with her. On the plane, he had sensed a great evil, which seemed to concentrate on Linda.

Robert, educated in electronics, often thought of life's experiences in related electronic principles. He envisioned Linda as receiving energy from an inexhaustible positive source. That meant there existed a chance of discharging or draining Linda, of energy, by contact with a negative or grounding source. Acting as Linda's protector and realizing God communicates through the heart to thought; Robert did not hesitate to explore these possibilities coursing through his mind.

Concentrating on what Robert had to say, Linda wondered what it all meant. A shiver ran down her spine, when she anxiously said, "Robert, I'm afraid of the feelings we're having. What does it all mean?" Extremely tired, she rested her head on the bed.

Watching her fighting to keep her eyes open, and realizing his words might wrongly instill fear, Robert moved closer to her. In brotherly comfort, he absent-mindedly ran his fingers gently through her hair. Before Linda succumbed to sleep, she sighed contentedly, the fear dissipating. Robert remained with her a few minutes after she fell asleep, then he retired to his room.

"What did you think of his explanation, Linda?" Daniel asks.

“Frankly, it made me wonder, what it all meant? Although I had gone to bed very late, I woke up at seven am. I did not realize it at first, but God had awakened me. He wanted me to go to Robert. Not wanting to, it occurred to me to defy God for the first time. Always very shy where men were concerned, the thought of going to a man’s bedroom, pardon the pun literally put ‘The fear of God’ in me...”

Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, Robert opened the door to Linda. When he asked her why she was there, she explained that she needed to talk to him. Choosing not to mention that God had sent her, Linda spoke of their trip. Robert returned to his bed and Linda lay on the adjacent bed. They had been chatting for an hour, when Robert noticed that she was shivering. He startled her when he said, “Why don’t you get into bed with me, and let me warm you up?” Seeing her reluctance, Robert soothed, “You’ll be perfectly safe. Come on, let me warm you.”

When Linda, hesitantly climbed into bed with him, Robert gathered her shivering body into his arms, and began briskly rubbing her back. After a while, Linda relaxed against him, resting her head comfortably on his shoulder. They fell asleep like that for several hours, both completely at peace with each other.

“Sounds as if you got over your shyness.” Daniel couldn’t keep the sarcasm from his voice. However, neither of them commented on his tone.

Looking off into the distance, as if recalling a pleasant memory, Linda explained, “That was the first time we discovered we were both completely at peace with each other.”

“Yes. It was the strangest thing and most wonderful gift. We still feel that way when we are in each others arms.” Agreed Robert

“What did you do when you awoke?”

Waking up, Linda left Robert’s room to take a shower and get dressed. After breakfast, they went to find a travel agent to arrange the trip to Israel. Deciding to stay in Larnaca, they informed the desk they would need the rooms for another night.

At the travel agency, Robert and Linda learned that for them to be in Jerusalem on the fourth of April, their cruise must include Egypt. Linda knew they needed to be at Golgotha at three o’clock, and asked the clerk if he could guarantee this. The clerk told them the itinerary. The ship left Limassol on the Sunday, third of April, and would dock early Monday morning in Haifa. A coach would then take them down to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. He added that there is a walking tour of the Old City of Jerusalem. The coach was due back at five-thirty, and the ship would sail for Egypt sometime after that. Arriving in Egypt Tuesday morning, they would tour the Pyramids and other sights of interest for the day. Leaving that same night, the ship would arrive back in Limassol Wednesday morning, at approximately eleven. This itinerary gave them plenty of time. They needed to get back to Larnaca for the early morning flight to Jeddah, Thursday, the seventh of April. After Robert had ensured that they would not have their passports stamped, they booked the cruise.

It was only Tuesday, the twenty-ninth of March, and the cruise was not leaving until April third. They had five days to kill in Cyprus. Robert expressed a wish to tour the island and told Linda that he intended to hire a car.

The next episode was one that Daniel was familiar with. Nonetheless, he wanted Linda to tell him in her own words, so he asked, “What did you do that evening?” He was a little surprised at her response to his request.

“Do you really need for me to tell you about that night? It was extremely painful, which is one of the reasons, we wrote the first book in the third person.”

Robert reaches out and squeezes her hand as if to say, “Its okay, I’m here.” Linda smiles at him.

“I realize that this is difficult, but it will really help me to understand one of the most perplexing events of your book.” Daniel cajoles...

UNBELIEVABLE REQUEST

That evening, back at the hotel, Linda told Robert she needed to pray. He arranged to meet her later in the bar across the street. Leaving her alone in her room, Robert stopped by his room for some last minute preening, then headed across the street. Maybe matters would get back to normal, Robert thought, as he sat at the bar to order a mug of local beer.

While Linda was praying, God totally astounded her with, “Before you go to Israel, you and Robert must become one.” Baffled, she questioned what this meant. God’s reply would test her faith to the utmost limit. God told her that she had to give herself to Robert that night. When God had told Linda that she had to give herself to Robert before, she naturally took that to mean in marriage. Now, God was telling her that she had to give herself to a man without the sanctity of marriage. How could she believe God was asking her to do this?

Daniel thought to himself, “My sentiments precisely!”

Linda had only been intimate with her husband Tony. The Ten Commandments screamed at her, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Praying with all her heart, she begged God to tell her she had heard wrong. God simply said, “You belong to him and always have. Now, have faith, child, and know that I would never ask you to do something wrong.”

Linda continued to plead with God until, gently but firmly, He reminded her that He had ordained their union a long time ago, and that Robert was her Lord. She was an obedient servant, and finally stopped resisting when; God said, “Trust me.”

“Why do you think God would ask you to do such a thing?” Queries Daniel.

Interrupting, Robert offered, “Perhaps I should answer that. When God told Linda to give herself to me, neither of us was comfortable or understood the reasoning behind the command. Neither of us was aware of the inevitable course of actions that would have transpired without God’s involvement. With hindsight in remembering the shocking event, I realized that without God’s intervention, I would have traveled downtown and found someone else to fulfill my desires. It is important to state; I was a self-centered man at the time with months of unquenched sexual thirst. That kind of behavior would have driven Linda away from me and prevented our further association and travel to Israel. God is love, and that love is a state of being that cuts to the truth of purpose often not understood by us”

“That is very insightful of you. Okay, please continue, how did you get Robert to cooperate?”

Linda picking up the book says, “If you don’t mind I’ll continue reading what we wrote...”

With the heaviest of hearts, Linda showered and dressed in black trousers and sweater. When she checked her appearance in the mirror, she observed the turquoise eye pencil she had used did not hide the shadows in her eyes. Feeling like the “sacrificial lamb going to the slaughter,” she went to join Robert in the bar.

The bar was a small, friendly place with one bartender, who was also the owner. Robert, casually dressed in jeans and T-shirt, sat at the bar. When Linda came in, he motioned for her to sit next to him. Noticing how distant she was, he asked her, “Are you all right? You’re very quiet.”

Linda smiled and said that she was fine. Wondering how she would tell him what God had told her, she decided to just come right out with it. Robert was silent while she related what God had said. Flabbergasted, he could hardly believe her words. “You are a married woman,” he stated quite plainly. Although, Robert had planned on seeking female companionship, he had never considered Linda fulfilling that position. Studying her face, he tried to gauge her motives.

Trying desperately to justify herself, Linda continued, “Yes I am, but in name only. I ceased to be Tony’s wife on the night I was a channel for you. It is only circumstance that forces Tony and I to live together.” Pausing for a moment, she continued, “It’s not easy for me to give myself to a man who obviously does not love me. It is an anathema for me to have to act this way. Were it not for the fact that God told me that you are my Lord, and that it is His wish, I could never go through with it.”

“What were you thinking at the time, Robert?”

“My mind was busy trying to figure out her angle. She obviously had to set the scene for some devious act. I was thinking, ‘she was playing a very dangerous game, and two can play at that.’ Yet, looking at her, she seemed as reluctant as I was to engage in an affair. I knew how to be pleasant, yet appear off limits.” Taking the book from Linda, Robert continues...

Putting it out of his mind for the moment, he said, “I have asked the barman to recommend a good restaurant, and he told me about a place. Let’s finish our drinks and go for dinner.”

They found the restaurant easily and, to soften the tension between them, Robert ordered a bottle of wine. The meal was delicious, and they enjoyed each other’s company. After dinner, they returned to the bar and continued drinking. Robert drank heavily, aware that he was trying to blot out Linda’s words and prevent future events from taking place. It was very late before they left the bar and returned to the hotel.

They went to Robert’s room. Linda, not familiar with seduction as he was, desperately needed him to take the lead. Feeling physically sick she noticed, to her horror, that he was undressing. Rigid with fear and revulsion for what she had to do, she silently watched Robert get into bed. Lying in bed he looked over at her motionless form and casually suggested, “Why don’t you go to your room and get ready?”

Taking a quick peak at Linda, Daniel could see that she was very distraught as Robert related his actions. “This was obviously very difficult for you Linda.”

“You can say that again.”

Robert admitted, “I knew the words were careless, and made her feel like a prostitute. I did sense she was uneasy, but the drinks and my suspicions made it easy to act without compassion. The whole arrangement did not seem right. I figured that if God really had told her to give herself to me, then it would happen, or the charade would end...”

Linda leaves Robert’s room and returns to hers where she undresses. There is a look of trepidation on her face. Fifteen minutes later, she opens the door as Robert turns off his bedside lamp. She approaches his bed and sits on the edge. Robert throws back the covers to allow her in. She awkwardly kisses him passionately. He stops her by taking her face into his hands. “Easy dear. We have all night.” Pulling her into his arms, he takes the lead, kissing her and eventually climbing on top of her. Lying beneath him, Linda’s face shows anguish.

“I was glad for the darkness, because I felt so much like a prostitute that waves of nausea struck me.”

“Robert didn’t you realize how she felt.” Daniel was amazed that such an experienced man couldn’t see through the bravado. As if Robert had read his thoughts, he answered.

“Having a past that included intimacy with several-hundred women, facades did not easily fool me. Curiously though, I felt there was a deep truth surrounding Linda. Some part of me realized just how frightened and vulnerable she really was. I did not understand what God expected from me and so asking for guidance, I decided to act on my gut instinct. I know I seemed very cruel to Linda. It was not my nature to be so cold, but I had to know if I was dealing with the true wishes of God.”

“So you tried to be gentle with her?”

“Yes.”

“Did that help you Linda?”

“A little. But it was totally against my nature to be intimate with someone. During the act, to make myself feel clean, I begged Robert to tell me he loved me. To me, it would have helped, even if he had lied.”

“Did you, Robert?”

“Please say you love me.” Robert, whose face is buried in her neck, looks down at her. “You know Linda; I never could say that to anyone when I didn’t mean it. Many women have asked me to do that, but I won’t.

“You couldn’t tell her you loved her. You said it in the past. Why not then?”

“When I told Linda I loved her before it was as a friend. This was different.”

Still skeptical, Daniel says, “Okay, I understand. What happened after her plea was unanswered?”

Linda was crying, but although Robert was feeling horrible, he stuck to his principles, even if it was difficult. Linda gets out of bed and runs from the room. Moments later she is curled into a ball in the shower, sobbing.

With tears in her eyes, Linda whispers, “I felt raped in heart and spirit. I left his bed and crawled back to my room. After crying for hours in the shower, for the first time in my entire life, I was angry with God. Eventually, leaving the bathroom, I collapsed onto the bed and fell

into an exhausted sleep. When I awoke, part of me wanted to run away. I couldn't even pray, I felt so dirty. I got up and went into the shower again and scrubbed my skin till it hurt. During the past months, my love for Robert had grown stronger. When God had told me that we would marry, I had felt great joy. Early on I had related to Naomi that I felt our union would be beautiful, not really understanding what I was feeling for him. The nightmare I endured that night confused and bewildered me. What I had experienced with Robert was cold, sordid sex, and that deeply hurt me. That night, I learned that one-sided physical love is the emptiest feeling a person could ever experience."

Thank you Linda, I realize how difficult that must have been. "What happened the next time you saw each other? Were you embarrassed?"

When Robert came in search of Linda, he found her dressed and emotionally shattered. He knew that he had hurt her, and tried to make light of it.

"Last night was the worst of my entire life, and frankly I wanted to get as far away from you as possible," she said bitterly. Yet, she knew he felt bad about what happened and did not know what to do about it.

After a strained breakfast, Robert decided to travel down to Limassol. Arranging for a taxi to pick them up, they waited in silence together. It was a sunny day with a cool breeze, perfect weather for a two-and-a-half hour taxi ride. Settled in the vehicle, Robert reviewed the night before. He felt an overwhelming admiration for Linda's commitment to God's Will. Gazing out the taxi window, his thoughts drifted to ancient times, and the countryside that filled his eyes took familiar shape. As Paul's travels came to mind, he knew he had walked this land before. Things were happening, strange things. In a sincere feeling of warmth and kindness, Robert casually laid his arm along the back of the seat, so Linda could rest her head on it.

"How did you reconcile what happened Robert?" Daniel wanted Robert's feelings on the incident...

DIMITRI

Arriving in Limassol town center, they took another taxi to the hotel apartments where Linda had stayed the year before. They unpacked, and then went to a tavern she had often frequented. Strangely enough, ten years earlier, Robert had spent most of his time at the same tavern.

The manager, Dimitri, recognized Linda immediately and, pausing, he seemingly also remembered Robert. This amazed her; Dimitri must see, each year, a fair amount of tourists. For him to have remembered Linda was odd enough, but to remember Robert from ten years ago was little short of astounding. Not so astounded, Robert quickly surmised that Dimitri must think that he was Linda's husband. "I'm not, Tony," Robert offered.

"I know," Dimitri replied.

"I'm Robert. I used to come here years ago. Remember Doug? Has he been here lately?"

Moving closer, Dimitri elaborated further. "I knew you couldn't be her husband. I realized I recognized you from before." Hugging each other, Robert felt he had revisited a long lost friend.

They had lunch in the warm spring sunshine. Dimitri sat with them, enjoying a beer. He reminded Linda of Father Christmas, with his curly, thick white hair and his rotund stature. He

had a jolly nature, and he immediately made one feel welcome. That had been the main reason that Linda had chosen to dine there most nights. After lunch, they returned to the hotel.

The apartment was much larger than the one in Larnaca. There were two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, and bathroom. Once inside, Linda stifled a yawn. Seeing how tired she looked, not to mention that he was tired himself, Robert suggested they take a nap. Physically and emotionally drained, she readily agreed. Walking into the roadside bedroom, she lay on the right side twin bed and pulled the blanket over her. Shortly after, Robert entered the room and gently gathered her into his arms. Linda did not resist, as he was warm and comforting. They slept for several hours.

Waking to the dark, Robert asked, "Do you want to have a drink with me at Dimitri's?"

Stretching sleepily, Linda replied, "No thank you. I need to think, and I want to pray. You go ahead. Enjoy yourself, I'll be okay."

On his walk to the tavern, Robert thought about what he could say that would make matters clear. He portrayed himself as a man that did not care what other people thought of him. However, he did care what good people thought. He felt that Dimitri did not understand the situation. Being with Linda still made Robert feel uncomfortable, and he just knew everyone was thinking bad thoughts about him.

Entering the open-air part of the tavern, Robert was relieved to see Dimitri. It was not busy, so both took a seat at a table. "You know, Dimitri, it's really good to see you again," Robert stated. "I suppose you're wondering what I'm doing with Linda. Aren't you?"

"No, it's none of my business."

"Well, I'm not sure what it's all about myself. We both felt the need to travel to Jerusalem, and just ended up together. I have no intentions of getting married again, so I don't know what will happen. I'm not trying to take advantage of her."

"Sometimes you never know what might happen. Maybe you could be happy with her." Robert looks confused.

"No, it's not like that. I don't want to be with anyone."

People enter the tavern and Dimitri gets up from the table. Looking back at Robert, he says, "You never know."

Robert sits sipping a glass of beer thinking, "Linda is an attractive woman who deserves a good man. She is an honorable woman who had experienced a difficult situation the other night. I need to make it up to her for my suspicious behavior. I didn't have to marry her, but I could be nice to her. After all, God had initiated the intimacy, and I had been in Saudi for six months without a woman. Maybe this was the meaning of, "God's gift of love." Robert buys a rose from a woman selling roses. Robert gets up from the table and walks back to the apartment.

"Did you really think that was what God meant?" Daniel questions.

Robert emphatically states, "Of course not! But I really didn't understand what was happening either..."

In the apartment behind the tavern, Linda kneels silently praying. Suddenly she looks up. "If that's what you mean by Robert and me becoming one, it leaves an awful lot to be desired." Robert enters the apartment and presents Linda with the rose.

"Thank you. That was sweet of you. Did you get the chance to talk to Dimitri?"

"Yes."

Linda leaves him and goes into the bedroom. Linda is sitting up in bed reading a travel brochure. Robert enters and sits on the edge of the bed then leans forward and slides his hand under her hair. Pulling her towards him he tenderly kisses her. She responds by placing her arms around his neck and kissing him back. Pushing her backwards onto the pillows, the kiss grows more passionate. While still kissing her, Robert reaches out and turns the lamp off.

“So Linda you allowed Robert to make love to you.” Daniel had deliberately used the term so as not to offend her.

Bowing her head in embarrassment, Linda whispers, “Yes.”

Daniel had been surprised at Linda’s compliance. Quite honestly, he thought she would not have let Robert near her again. Puzzled he asked, “Why? He had hurt you so much. Why did you risk it again?”

Again hiding her embarrassment, Linda explains, “Earlier, I had finally found the strength to pray to God. I asked Him to help me understand what was happening. He told me that there was a very good reason why Robert and I had to become one. God is always patient and He gently told me that He understood how I felt but that He knew I would always be obedient to Him. He explained that although I didn’t understand the reasons for being intimate with Robert now, it would become clear after we visited Jerusalem. Finally He told me that He knew Robert had hurt me, but that I must trust Him.”

“Didn’t all this pain make you wonder?” Insisted Daniel.

“Certainly. Faith doesn’t mean that you never doubt, but that you trust despite of those doubts. Anyway, things between Robert and I changed after that night. Maybe it was our becoming one that caused it. I don’t know. We spent the next day in Limassol sitting by the ocean talking for hours. Friday, the first of April, Robert expressed a wish to visit the Turkish side of Cyprus. To do this, we would have to drive to Nicosia, so he hired a car. He had heard of a beautiful little seaside-fishing village called Kyrenia and wanted to visit it...”

KYRENIA

They reached the border of Nicosia at twelve o’clock and soon discovered it is not difficult to visit the Turkish side. Once through the border, Robert arranged for a taxi to take them to Kyrenia. The journey through the beautiful countryside only took thirty minutes. Arriving in Kyrenia, Robert told the driver to come back for them at four o’clock, giving them enough time to get back across the border by five-thirty, when the border closed.

While they had lunch, Robert and Linda noticed a large castle perched on the hilltop. After lunch, they learned the building dated from more than a thousand years ago. As the castle was closed for lunch, they walked around the harbor, waiting for it to open.

Linda had been feeling strange all day, and attributed it to being Good Friday. She was always moved on the anniversary of our Lord’s crucifixion. Going into the castle, their exploring soon led them to a small Byzantine chapel. The air itself seemed old, and they had the eerie feeling that they had been there before. They continued exploring. The final thing they wanted to see was a ship from the Crusades. It was in a separate room, to be reached by a steep staircase. Suddenly feeling unwell, Linda knew that she could not climb the staircase at this time. Searching her face Robert noticed her discomfort, but at her insistence, he left her alone.

Looking at her watch, Linda saw that it was two o’clock. She thought there must be something very wrong with her; she felt so ill. When Robert returned, he took her outside on the

battlements to get some air. As Linda stood looking out over the sea, a piercing pain in her side doubled her over.

Confused Daniel insists, “What was happening? I’m sorry but why are you in pain?”

Linda explains, “As I stood looking out over the sea, I saw a vision of Jesus Christ on the cross. I felt as though I was literally there and caught my breath when the ripping pain increased...”

Robert, knowing there was something wrong, put his arms around her and held her close against him.

Resting her head on his shoulder, Linda heard God’s voice. “Let the pain go through you. Let yourself feel it, and don’t be afraid. It will soon pass.”

The pain had only lasted for fifteen minutes, but to Linda, it felt like hours. Finally the pain disappeared as quickly as it had come. Seeing she was more comfortable, Robert took her hand and led her back down to the harbor. They ordered a drink and sat watching the little boats, until it was time for them to meet the taxi driver.

“Did either of you know why it was happening?”

“At the time no. But we have since learned of the legend of Longinus,” replied Robert.

Daniel thought to himself, who the hell was Longinus? So he asked, “Who was Longinus?”

“Tradition has it that he was the Roman centurion who pierced Jesus’ side to ascertain whether or not he was dead. However, there is a legend that he was secretly one of Jesus’ followers and kills Jesus to end his suffering.”

“Really. What has this got to do with what happened in Kyrenia?” Persists Daniel.

“It had been while reading William Henry’s *Blue Apples* that the first inkling of understanding had occurred. It seems Henry doubts Jesus actually died on the cross. To support his suspicions he cites predominantly two pieces of evidence, the short time Jesus hung on the cross and the fact that corpses do not bleed. The latter evidence comes from the Gospel of John relating that Jesus was pierced in the side with a Roman spear and water and blood flowed out. Reading this, we had been reminded of the incident in Kyrenia. One thing that had puzzled us was the pain Linda experienced was in her right side, not her feet and hands. Why? If as the Bible says, Jesus were already dead, then he would have been impervious to pain. If the Christian legend that claims Longinus was a secret follower of Jesus were true we wondered if out of compassion, the soldier wanted to release Jesus from a slow and painful death. Was it not possible that the spear Longinus thrust into Jesus’ “right-side” was the wound that killed him? When we both asked God, He reminded us of the pain Linda felt on the battlements. Something else He reminded us of was the time of day it occurred, two o’clock. Cyprus is one hour behind Israel and therefore it would have been three o’clock in Jerusalem. Was it a coincidence that three o’clock is the universally accepted time for the “ninth hour,” the recorded time of Jesus’ death?

Coincidentally, as if to confirm our conclusions, after reading about Longinus we watched an episode of *Witchblade* the following evening. The episode was centered on the “Spear of Destiny,” Longinus’ spear. The producers had recreated the spear and as we looked at it we could understand the pain Linda had experienced on the battlements in Kyrenia. It had been an extremely large crude weapon. Had Longinus pierced the side of Jesus with it, we have no

doubt that it would have caused a horrible wound, as well as being very painful. Also had the point slipped between Jesus' ribs, it could well have pierced his lung or even the aorta, (the central artery to the heart.)”

When Robert fell silent, Daniel asks, “Even if Jesus was mercifully killed by Longinus' spear, why did Linda have to experience it 2000 years later?” He was beginning to wonder if he had inadvertently wandered into an episode of the *Twilight Zone*. Robert's explanation didn't serve to disabuse him of that conclusion.

“The answer is connected to time. I know this is a lot to handle. But when we had entered the Byzantine chapel we had felt that the air was old. In fact, we felt as if we had stepped back in time. The castle as stated was more than a thousand years old; consequently this had begun Linda's disconnection with linear time. It had been God's way of preparing her to act as a vessel, in Jerusalem.” Robert explained.

Still unclear of the events in Kyrenia, Daniel changed the subject. “When you crossed the border, did you go back to Limassol?”

The sun was setting when they arrived back in Limassol. Deciding to have dinner at Dimitri's tavern, they went to the hotel to shower and change. The tavern was not very busy that night, as it was a cool evening, so not many tourists were out. During the meal, Dimitri joined them. The previous night they had told him of their planned trip across the border. He had informed them that Kyrenia had been his hometown before the Turkish occupation. It was obvious to Robert and Linda, he was anxious to discuss their trip to his hometown. Drawing a map of the harbor, he showed them exactly where he had owned two properties there. They told him that they had not seen any sign of devastation. It still was a very beautiful place. That seemed to please Dimitri, and he explained what happened at the time of the Turkish occupation.

As it was a cool evening, Dimitri decided to light a fire. Linda thought it was lovely, sitting opposite Robert in the firelight. Feeling greatly moved by the trip and engrossed in their thoughts, neither had noticed the restaurant filling with people. Looking up at the increased noise, Linda noticed a beautiful young woman sitting alone. Feeling compelled to speak to her; Linda politely asked Robert to excuse her and, without a further word of explanation, went over to the woman's table.

Introducing herself to the woman, Linda felt a great empathy between them. Sarah was a petite woman with startling blue eyes ringed with thick black lashes. The short dark hair gave her an impish look, which only added to her beauty. “Hi my name is Linda. Are you on vacation?”

“Hi I'm Sarah. Yes. I'm in Limassol because I'm taking a cruise to Israel on Sunday. Are you here on holiday too?”

“Yes. Robert and I are also taking a cruise to Israel on Sunday. That's quite a coincidence. Would you like to join us? I'm sure Robert would like to meet you.”

“Is he your husband?”

“No. We are traveling together.” Robert looks curious as Linda steers Sarah back to the table. He is visibly attracted to Sarah and after Linda introduces Robert to Sarah, the three sit down together chatting amiably. Dimitri comes over and accepts a glass of wine. Afterwards he gets up and places a hand on Linda's shoulder.

“In a few days, you will find your destiny.” Linda stares at him in amazement.

In Tacoma, Daniel studies both Robert and Linda's expressions. "So you still weren't fully committed to Linda?"

"No. I was still suspicious of her and saw us as traveling companions."

Daniel thought, "What was the matter with the man?" Keeping his opinions to himself, he merely remarked, "Even though you'd slept with her!"

"Yes. Sex with someone did not mean I was going to marry them. That is why God told Linda to give herself to me, to protect her."

"Protect her? How?"

"As I said, I knew that if Linda hadn't been available to me, I would have sought out the services of a prostitute."

Daniel looks visibly taken aback at Robert's candor. "So when did you commit to Linda?"

"Everything changed the morning we docked in Haifa..."

VISIONS

Boarding the ship, Robert and Linda were promptly stopped by security because their passports had Arabian stamps in them. Questioned and searched for an hour, both were grateful when the officer finally released them. Due to the delay, they barely had time to find their cabin and change for dinner. Because of the sheer volume of passengers, meals required two sittings. Luckily for Robert and Linda, they were assigned to second sitting.

Sarah, assigned the same meal sitting as Robert and Linda, joined them for dinner. During a sumptuous meal, Sarah explained why she felt the need to visit the Holy Lands. Delighted, Linda said, "I have had strong feelings to go there ever since Christmas." After dinner the three of them went upstairs to the ship's ballroom, where they spent a thoroughly enjoyable evening together. Unanimously, they decided that all needed an early night. Their schedule was to dock very early the next morning in Haifa, with coaches leaving at eight o'clock to take them to Jerusalem. Robert and Linda left Sarah at eleven o'clock and retired to their tiny cabin.

Robert took the top bunk, leaving the lower for Linda. Bunked beneath him, she found it impossible to sleep. The waves of energy that had been running through her ever since they had arrived in Cyprus were growing in intensity. She eventually fell asleep in the early hours.

"Why weren't you sleeping in the same bed?" Daniel inquires.

"Have you seen how small those bunks are?" Robert responds.

Daniel hadn't thought of that. "Was this the night you first heard God's voice Robert?"

"Yes."

"Could you tell me what you heard?"

"That night is as clear to me as if it happened yesterday. Hearing someone call my name awakened me. At first I thought it was Linda calling me, but I could hear her breathing and so I knew she was asleep..."

"Robert!" This time, the voice sounded loud and clear; it was not coming from outside.

"God, is that you?"

"Yes, Robert, it is," was the reply.

“Is it really you speaking to me?” Robert cried. “I’ve waited so long to hear your voice! Thank you Heavenly Father, for speaking to me.”

“You’re welcome, Robert, or would you like me to call you Paul?” God teased.

“Robert,” he answered. Then he questioned, “Do you speak to Linda? Has she told me the truth about everything?” “Yes Robert, I speak to her, and she has spoken the truth to you. Now, go down to your sister and become one,” God commanded. A tremendous surge of energy shot through his body, doubling him up from the sheer force of it. There was no mistaking the feeling for pain, or anything else. It was God’s confirmation.

Linda awoke to hear the ship docking in Haifa. Staring at the bunk above her head, she realized that the ship docking was not what woke her, the man above her did. Robert was tossing and turning in a great deal of distress. Her concern increased when he suddenly cried out. She asked, “What’s wrong?”

Robert replied, “I can’t talk, at the moment. Give me a little time, and I will tell you.” Apparently, the conversation was over. All Robert could think was, “Oh man, I finally have God speak to me, and now he tells me to become one with my sister. What is this ‘sister’ business? Things really never turn out like I want them.”

Daniel chose to leave that question for later...

Robert’s answer perplexed Linda. She lay quietly, listening to him. Then, she heard him climbing out of his bunk, before getting into hers. The bunk was very small, so the only way they could lie in bed together was in each other’s arms. Robert was trying to come to terms with what happened. Feeling the warmth of Linda’s arms, he smiled and said, “God just spoke to me and told me to go down to my sister.” He explained, “Everything you told me was the truth, and we will marry on June the fifteenth, just as God told you.”

Linda relates, “I was speechless, I could not believe it! It was a miracle! I had begun to think that I would have to go through the whole journey alone. Having battled with Robert for such a long time, I could not believe he was telling me he was going to marry me! Then Robert began to cry.”

“Why were you crying Robert?” Daniel’s masculinity was always uncomfortable, when a man demonstrated emotions.

“I guess it was some kind of release and perhaps I was feeling bad for the way I had treated Linda.”

“What happened next?”

“I had a vision...”

It was very dark in the cabin, yet Robert saw a pool of blue water with rocks, plants, and small prehistoric aquatic creatures swimming through gentle bubbles. Simultaneously, he felt unaware of his body and became part of the vision. He became aware of his body just in time to feel himself melt into Linda’s. He could no longer tell where his body stopped and hers began. The next thing he knew was the experience of knowing they were now the water vision. Robert never experienced more soothing, peaceful beauty.

“Linda, did you see the vision too?”

“No. I was trying to come to terms with God’s speaking to Robert. This changed everything. Now he would be able to ask God, himself. Although I had not experienced the vision with Robert, when he described it to me, I knew what it meant. So I said, ‘Now I know what God meant by his words, ‘we had to become one before we went to Jerusalem’”

“It was then that I had the vision of Paul coming into me.”

“Can you describe it?”

Still amazed at the early morning events, Robert saw what seemed like a movie start to play. As he stared at what used to be darkness, he could see the vision of a barren hill with graves in the distance. Suddenly, he was on all fours above a central grave, looking down into the dirt. The wind began to blow the dirt away, slowly at first. Quickly, the wind mounted force, blowing away more dirt. A skeleton’s outline emerged from the shallow grave beneath him. In a moment the whole figure lay exposed, and he experienced the smell of familiar soil.

There was a pause in action, then the motion was reversed and dirt started to cover the skeletal figure, until only the head lay exposed. He found himself poised, eyeball-to-eye-socket, as muscle and flesh formed on the skull, again, slowly at first, and then faster than before. In a flash, the figure was whole, and stood at the far end of the now open grave. Robert, on his back in bed, looked down toward his feet. The “movie” was still playing, and each stood positioned on opposite ends of the rectangular hole. Off to the left, another grave repeated the exact process as just described, with Robert being transported to that site, then returning to the original site.

This process continued four more times, moving in a clockwise horseshoe-pattern around the original grave, each time, increasing in speed, until the whole process became a swirling blur. For just a moment, action stopped, and Robert could see the first body across the grave from him, with five other sites in similar fashion around his position. With swirling force, the wind howled to the backdrop of the moonlit scene, and each body lined up behind the first. These bodies, one at a time, merged into the one across the grave from Robert.

The figure seemed to move out of the picture and position itself in the cabin, at the foot of the bed. God informed Robert that Paul must physically come into him. The figure now attached at Robert’s feet, perpendicular to his reclining body, folded down into him. A familiar smell of earth and a tightness of the chest made him cough.

“Wow! That was some vision.”

“Yes. I haven’t had visions like that since I was dropping acid in California back in 69.”

Daniel sits up straight. “I was in California in 69, just before my number came up in the lottery.” Reminded that this was coincidence number three, Daniel thought, “Maybe there may be something to this thing called fate, with people crossing paths with each other time and again.”

Robert continued, “Yeah that was some time. We all were waiting for The Age of Aquarius and thought we were going to change the world then, didn’t we?” Without waiting for an answer, Robert adds, “The funny thing is that over the last twelve years, we’ve discovered that in order to change the world, we first need to change ourselves.”

Curious, Daniel inquires, “How?”

“By changing the way we think; the true meaning of the word repent. That is why Jesus consistently said the kingdom of god is within us.” Robert explained

Something was stirring deep inside Daniel. Robert’s words made him distinctly uncomfortable. They were creating an itch he couldn’t scratch. Daniel coughs to clear his throat

and changing the subject, says, "I thought you told me, you heard God's voice when Linda was a channel for you?"

"I did, but it was through Linda and wasn't as crystal clear or as booming as it was that morning."

"So what happened in Jerusalem?"

"We went to Bethlehem first."

"Before you get to that. I seem to remember you healing Robert, Linda?"

"Yes. Robert had been battling a cold for a few days, but I could clearly see and hear it had developed into a bad chest cold, possibly Bronchitis. Robert took me by surprise when he said, 'God has told me to ask you to heal me.' I immediately prayed, and asked God to confirm his words. God told me that it was 'imperative' that I did."

"How did you heal him?"

"I allowed myself to be used. I placed my hand on Robert's chest and prayed to God, and the words, 'Father, if it is your Will, let Robert be healed' came forth."

"What did you think Robert? Did you feel anything?"

"I knew that healing depended on the faith of each. Linda's faith was never in question and, after all that had taken place that morning; my faith was at its strongest point ever. I felt her pulling the congestion from my lungs and the tightness of chest left me and my breathing became easier. Suddenly, my nose clogged and my head pounded. When she moved her hand to my head, I felt the nasal pressure clear. The pounding was also gone, but the congestion seemed to have moved back into my lungs. We discussed what might be happening and, after about ten more minutes and several switches between head and chest, everything remained clear."

Daniel said, "So you left for your tour..."

It was time to get ready, and Linda got up, leaving Robert in the bottom bunk to think about his morning. They decided to fast, but went to the dining room anyway. After Sarah's breakfast, all three of them went in search of their coach. On the tour bus, Linda and Sarah sit together at the front of the bus, while Robert sits alone at the rear.

"Why weren't you sitting together?"

"When we got on the coach, only three seats remained unoccupied. Unfortunately, none of them were together, so we were separated."

"At first all three of us were separated. Sarah sat in front of me in the middle of the bus and Robert sat in the last row. The tour guide was a pleasant Israeli woman who gave a running commentary about the country on the drive to Bethlehem. When she started speaking over the microphone, Sarah said that she could not understand what she was saying. Consequently both Sarah and I joined the guide at the front of the coach. She described the tour planned for that day..."

When Linda heard her say, "You will walk in the footsteps of Christ," she nearly fell off her chair. It was the strangest of feelings. God had told her months before that she would walk in the footsteps of Christ and here was this stranger telling her the same thing.

Sarah was experiencing very powerful emotions, herself, and was discussing the World religions with Linda. Sarah was a Buddhist and had a very open mind. Linda said, "I have always thought it such a shame. Millions of people believe in the same God, yet refuse to be tolerant of each other."

As Linda said the words, a tremendous emotion went through her. She heard God say, "Today is the unification of the religions."

"What were you feeling Robert?"

"As I was seated in the last row of the bus, I was unaware of Linda's feelings. Although I was experiencing the magic of the day as it was unfolding. We arrived in Bethlehem, shortly after and the coach parked at a store just down the hill and across the street from the site where Jesus was born. All three of us went into the store. Sarah surprised us by buying a rosary. Linda also purchased two rosaries, because Evelyn and Marie had asked her to bring them back for them. Sarah further amazed us by saying she wanted her rosary blessed. This obviously was why the coach had stopped at the store first: to enable people to purchase rosaries and crosses before having them blessed at the church. This they did by placing them on the star marking the spot where Jesus was said to have been born..."

BETHLEHEM

Where once stood a lowly stable, now the Church of the Nativity stands. Built over the remains of the accepted site, the huge church completely encloses the stable. When Robert and Linda's group stooped through the tiny door leading into the main area, they discovered hundreds of people already in the church. In the center of the church, there were stairs leading down to the tiny preserved stable, where the Silver Star marks the place where Jesus was believed by many to have been born. It was there that tourists would place their crosses and rosaries for blessing. However, many people also wanted the blessing of a priest, too. This was the case with Sarah, who joined a line to see a priest. Consequently Robert and Linda found themselves separated from their group. Robert and Linda stand silently waiting for Sarah to rejoin them.

Robert looking unimpressed confesses, "Not exactly what I was expecting."

Linda replies, "No. It isn't exactly a stable is it?" Robert shakes his head. After the priest's blessing, the three of them, pushed along by the throng of people, negotiated the very steep, stone staircase into a small candle-lit room. At the bottom is a recreation of a stable.

Standing at the bottom of the stairs, Linda did not feel the stir of emotions that she expected. Loving Jesus all her life, she thought that being in the place He was born would move her beyond words. Perplexed at her detachment, she moved forward with Sarah to place the Rosaries on the star for their blessing. The Silver Star is situated on the floor, inside a type of brick fireplace, necessitating that a person go down on all fours.

Linda and Sarah standup and rejoin Robert looking at the various sacred icons. While there, a little man walked over to the brick structure, threw himself into the opening on the floor over the star, and prayed. The tourists cough loudly and make rude comments.

Linda relays, "To me, the man looked so frail, my heart went out to him. I felt ashamed of the people who were coughing and making noises to try to hurry his departure. It was obvious he was having a deeply spiritual experience, and most of the people just wanted to take a picture of the star. Eventually, the man struggled out of the small arched opening on his knees, paused to catch his breath, and then rose to his feet. Robert and I had been watching him closely..."

Linda slowly walked over to him. Placing her hand gently on his shoulder and smiling warmly at him, she said, "Be blessed." No one was more surprised at her actions than Linda herself, but the man looked at her, smiled back, and kissed her hand.

"Why did you do that Linda?"

"At the time I had no idea. It was like all the other times, I was obeying a compelling I couldn't resist. Turning on his heels the man goes upstairs. The three of us follow. On the main floor, he comes over."

"What did he say?"

"He was Italian and could hardly speak any English," explained Robert. "This was not a problem, as words were not necessary. As if acting on a divine cue, I moved toward the man, and we embraced each other warmly. Sarah followed suit, as if a great understanding transcending all communication was embracing the four of us. A few minutes later, saying goodbye to the man, we had to run to catch up with our group..."

JERUSALEM

The first sight of the City of Jerusalem was like a step back in time. Built on hills, its dwellings of white stone sparkle in the sunlight, making it a truly beautiful sight. The coach pulled up outside the walls of old Jerusalem, as you cannot drive through the old city.

Once inside, the high walls create a maze. To avoid separation, the guide headed the group, carrying a red flower on a long pole. She also enlisted a cheerful Englishman to bring up the rear, and ensure that everyone in the group was in front of him. They began the tour in the so-called Christian Quarter. This part of the tour included a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, to see the five stages of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

"Like the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is a large building that accommodates tourists. We walked through the church in a daze. The guide gave a running commentary about the church and its history. Unfortunately, all I could think of was that it was now one o'clock and, in two hours, we would be at Golgotha; consequently, the guide's words went in one ear and out the other."

Leaving the church, they went through the Moslem Quarter, finally ending in the Jewish Quarter. In the Jewish Quarter, the group stopped at the site of the Wailing Wall, where Robert, Linda, and Sarah prayed. To leave the city, the group had to pass through security gates. It was a grim reminder, to all three, of the unrest that exists in the city.

Walking down the hill toward the coach, Linda noticed that it was two-thirty. God's instructions had been clear; "You are to be at Golgotha at three o'clock." When she reached the coach, something stopped her from getting on.

Turning to Robert, she said, "Robert, ask the guide when we are going to Golgotha."

Her answer was quite a shock to them. "Why, we have just come from there. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is built over Golgotha."

Robert listened to the guide in amazement. Linda, dazed, said, "I have to get back to the church."

Stepping up on the bus to buy time, Robert asked the guide, "Can you recommend a way we might go to the church and get back to the ship? We have to be at Golgotha at three o'clock."

Surprisingly, she probed, "Do you have an appointment with someone?"

"Yes," he truthfully replied.

"Well, I don't know what to say. Maybe you can call this person and arrange a meeting at another place," she offered.

"No, that's not possible," Robert quickly stated.

"I'm sorry. I have nothing to recommend to you," she said apologetically. She went on to explain they were expected back in Haifa by five-thirty. The ship would sail at six o'clock, sharp.

Robert, ever practical, was running all the possibilities through his mind. He knew, at a minimum, it was a two-and-a-half hour drive back to Haifa. The guide broke into his thoughts, saying, "I cannot be responsible for you if you leave the coach. If the ship sails without you, then you will be in Israel illegally."

"Thank you for your help," Robert sincerely responded. "You have done everything to try to discourage us from leaving the tour. I release you of any further responsibility for us." He knew what missing the ship meant -- a stamp placed in their passports. With Israeli stamps in their passports, they would never get back into Saudi. This would mean the loss of his job.

Knowing it was the most difficult decision he had ever made in his life, Robert stepped off the coach. He believed it was a test of his faith, and an extreme test it was. The voice of God earlier that morning gave him the strength he needed to make the right choice. Linda, not even considering the possibility of not going back to the church, asked Sarah if she wanted to go with them.

Sarah replied, "This is your mission. I'm not part of it."

Robert confesses, "Watching the coach drive away was probably one of the hardest things I've had to do. I was well aware that I could be watching my future drive away too. But I could not let Linda go alone, and I knew with absolute certainty that she would have gone with or without me."

Pausing to take a sip of water, Robert relates, "Racing back up the hill, we looked for a taxi to take us back to the church. Finding a free one at the top of the hill, we told the driver where we wanted to go. Unfortunately, the driver did not speak very good English. However, he had a friend who did, and the driver's friend said that he would lead us back to the church. It was a short ride. Thinking ahead, I arranged for the driver to also take us to Haifa. That meant he would be waiting for us when we returned from the church, since getting there required a walk."

Linda added, "As our Palestinian guide led us back to the church, we passed through a maze of alleyways. I thought that they seemed so old; it was as if no one had walked down them in years."

Sighing at his memories, Robert acknowledged, "Although I trusted God, I suspected man. Because of this, I had to dispel the thoughts of vulnerability plaguing my mind. One thing for sure, if not led, we would never have found our way in or out of the maze..."

Arriving at the church with just five minutes to spare, Linda stopped. Tired and confused, she tried to make sense of the strange scene. In her vision, she had been kneeling at a cross in a green field. Now, here she was in a massive church. Leaving their guide at the church door, Robert led her upstairs to the first stage of the crucifixion. There was an altar in front of a huge mural on the wall. It depicted Jesus being nailed to the cross, with Mary Magdalene laying prostrate at his feet and his mother standing over him.

Walking over to the altar, Linda knelt to pray. Completely different to her vision, she still somehow knew that it was where God wanted her to be. Kneeling there, a need to make a declaration aloud overcame her. She declared passionately, "Father I submit to thee, take me to do thy Will."

Robert had knelt down by Linda's side to pray with her. He wanted to experience the moment with all due reverence, but his practical side kept him aware of time.

Confused as to why she was kneeling in front of the first stage for so long, he tried to move her. Standing, he held her shoulders and tried to raise her, saying, "Shouldn't you be at the next stage, praying?" The second stage was the actual crucifixion.

"Why weren't you at the actual crucifixion, Linda?" Daniel inquires.

"An incredible energy held me rooted to the spot. It started in my fingers and was now spreading through my entire body. As the strength of the energy increased, I found it very difficult to breathe..."

Appointed to take care of Linda, Robert noticed her breathing was rapid and deep. Still on her knees, he gently but firmly pushed her down until she was sitting on her heels. Struggling with thoughts that nothing was happening as it should, and suspecting she might hyperventilate, he got to his knees beside her. Suddenly, it was as if something pulled Linda forward onto the marble floor, with her arms thrust straight out from her body.

Reacting immediately, Robert was able only to lessen the force of the blow, as her head struck the hard surface. While she lay face down, in the form of a cross, he tenderly lifted her head with his right hand and took her outstretched left hand in his. A small group of people passed by, and some took pictures. Throughout the ordeal, Robert's thoughts focused on Linda and the fact the cool stone floor would aid in her recovery.

Although Daniel vaguely remembered this episode in the book, he had been unable to understand it. Hoping Linda would make it clearer, he asks, "What was happening to you Linda? Why did you fall forward?"

"In closing my eyes, I had seen Jesus Christ standing in front of me, his hands outstretched toward me. Then, I felt a very strong pulling sensation concentrate in my chest. So powerful was the force that it pulled me forward headlong onto the floor. I had no chance to protect myself, as I hit the marble tiles. Though I was totally conscious the entire time, I was unable to speak or move. I was aware that Robert was holding me. Then I felt this deep sadness. To me, it literally felt like I had the sorrow of the World within me. I started sobbing, my body convulsing with emotion. After a while, a beautiful feeling of perfect love replaced the deep feeling of sadness. While I had been lying on the floor, I had seen flashes of light from the corner of my eye. When I sat up, I realized the lights were flashbulbs going off, as people took photographs. The entire incident did not last more than ten minutes, but to us, it had seemed like a lifetime."

"What were you seeing Robert?"

"Nothing."

"That must have made you wonder." Daniel thought to himself, "It certainly would me."

"At the time I did, but we have learned what was happening, was on a different plane."

"I will need you to explain that, but first I'd like you to finish the story of that day."

“Okay. Once Linda had stopped crying, I gently helped her to her knees; however, I was unsuccessful when I tried to get her on to her feet.”

“Why was that?”

Linda expounds, “While I was trying to understand all that had happened to me, I saw someone kneeling in front of the cross...”

There were only a few people left in the church, as Linda knelt there, trying to understand all that had happened to her. Looking over to her left, to her astonishment, kneeling at the next station was the little Italian man she had touched in Bethlehem.

Still on her knees, the energy left Linda’s chest and concentrated in her hands again. Robert was looking anxiously at the clock. It was now ten past three. The church bells rang out and, again, he attempted to raise Linda to her feet. Looking up into his concerned face, she said, “Bring the man over to me.” Following the direction of her glance, much to his surprise, Robert recognized the man. He seemed quite comfortable to be led back to Linda.

Unsure of what she was doing or why, Linda waited for the man to join her. When he knelt by her side, she placed one hand on the top of his head. Taking hold of her other hand, the man held it to his chest. To any onlooker, it would appear that both of them knew exactly what they were doing. This, however, was not so. Linda, moved by forces more powerful than she, recited Psalm Twenty- Three.

To Robert, the few people left in the church did not seem at all perturbed by what they witnessed. Watching the minutes tick by, Robert did not interfere with what Linda was doing. Yet, after five more precious minutes passed, he could no longer control his impatience. Gently pulling the man to his feet, he embraced him again. Then, the man simply turned and went to kneel in front of the cross again.

When Linda fell silent, Robert states, “Then I literally yanked Linda to her feet and supported her with my arm. It was now well after three, and I did not want to miss the boat. Because of the taxi driver’s poor English, I decided to ask our Palestinian guide to accompany us to Haifa.”

Linda interjected, “Even though I knew something momentous had happened, I was not really clear on the details.”

Looking discomfited, Robert confesses, “In the taxi, I had forgot that God had spoken to me and was a little annoyed that what Linda had told me in the vision had not come true. Linda was completely at peace and being exhausted had fallen asleep on my lap. I could not understand how she could be so calm. It was now half past three, and the ship was final boarding at half past five. As I gazed down at Linda’s serene face, I recognized her lack of concern. It was then that I prayed for God to strengthen my faith. Afterwards, I finally relaxed and accepted that God had taken hold of our lives. As we pulled up at a set of traffic lights, the Palestinian guide recognized the driver of the coach alongside us. The other coach driver just happened to be taking passengers back to the same ship. After our guide explained the situation to the other driver, he told the taxi driver to follow him in to the port. He would explain to the authorities that we were passengers on the same ship, and that we had missed our coach. At the entrance to the port, our Palestinian guide was refused entry and was forced to get out of the taxi.”

“Why was he refused entry?”

“Because he was a Palestinian,” Robert states matter-of-factly. “The Israeli’s authorities treat all Palestinians as potential terrorists, whether they deserve it or not. Unfortunately, this leads to tremendous tension and mistrust on both sides.”

“We find it very interesting that God had a Moslem Palestinian help us, by guiding us back to The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, don’t you?”

Linda’s question was rhetorical, so Daniel didn’t answer. She explains, “There is no way we would have been able to find our way back in time if he didn’t. Maybe God was saying that every religion is involved in Jesus’ return?”

Daniel grew pensive. He was thinking, “Linda had certainly given me something to think about.”

Robert continued, “When our guide was forced out of the taxi, we thanked him for his help and bid him farewell, then our driver followed the coach into the port. Reaching the dock where the ship was, we saw our original coach unloading its passengers. Spotting our tour guide, we ran to catch her.”

*“Did you make your appointment?” the guide asked
Linda smiled and replied, “Yes.”*