

Chapter 1

THE RIDDLE OF MORTALITY

Time is the only true constant. All things begin in time; as all things end in time. Time is an invisible string unraveling from what was to what will be, joined through a needle's eye of the fleeting now. We witness evidence of time through unchangeable events fading into a pattern comfortably called the past; and within these perceptible patterns, the logic of an imperceptible conclusion. Time exists before Einstein perceived it as a value of mathematical modeling to describe the relativity of the observable universe-- *but more on this later*. Time captures the imagination with possibilities, inspires the soul with eternal potential, and is the unalterable instrument of thermodynamic inevitability. And yet contained within this irresistible force: *the profound riddle of contradiction in being mortal*.

There is in all of us a face reflected from darkness. *What was before? What is now? What will be?* These are all questions that create the changing tapestry of our present being. The scientist and the layman look together into the immense expanse of a night sky: all intellect dwarfed by the magnitude of distant stars and galaxies that have twinkled little changed since the earliest scribbled records made by known civilization. I can remember clearly myself a child lying upon the hill behind our house as twilight descends into night, and thinking that I, too, am connected to the cold fiery enigma of these distant suns. In this moment I feel oneness with all creation, feel complicit to every man, woman, and child that has ever gazed into this wondrous constant reminder of fleeting mortality. And although I did not truly know the

Lord of my salvation then, I felt the embrace of a spirit greater than my imagination in present reflection.

The expanding universe has barely made a pulse since then; my awareness now vaster than ever I could have imagined. Through these eyes I have witnessed the several gifts of this present passage. Moments when I have embraced those most near, some still present, some vanished since a long time. And some with whom I have reasoned; and many that I have loved. I dare to imagine a myriad of souls passed along the way from then to the now. In the truest sense, I feel complicit to the dilemma of all living things, even the things that die daily for my fleshly survival. Even those multitudes of uncomely creatures that make the biological whole I call me. I do not speak as one enlightened or one who is religious, for these are natures with prescribed agenda. I speak only as a fellow sojourner given vision and a voice in season. If I were one without sin, then I would not need to speak at all. My prayer so simple now, summed up in these words taken from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans, Chapter 12, verses 1-3 (NKJV).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."

It takes a lifetime to unlearn the indoctrination of hate; to be cleansed of the capricious prescription of consensus. As with Paul, God has left a thorn in my flesh to keep me humble. For without the bearing of mortal presence, I should puff up and forget the mercy shown to me when I did not know the truest meaning of mercy. Perhaps, I am still here through continued remission just for this reason. I recently saw an exposition where people step and dance behind a large screen viewed by spectators, manifested as x-rayed skeletons: male or female, fat or thin, pretty or ugly, all faceless shadows without appearance. No gays, no straights, no religions, no pigment of skin, and no prestige--all

human, and all the same without the self-indulgent veneer of being. I thought this is how God sees us. From the inside out, not as we appear to ourselves and to others. How much more simple the world might be if we were all able to see how common we truly are beneath the prejudice of our perceptive conditioning. If all born blind, would there any longer be defined beauty or the face of ugliness? Would there still be murder for vanity's sake? Would there still be wars and the constant struggle for glittering riches? I think such a world as this unsustainable for the very reason of its utopia potential.

Even then, some would choose to remain blind, while others pretend to see. *No*-- I suppose that sin is not a factor of sight alone. Since the eye is the light of the body, then the question based more on perceptual indoctrination, than on physical evidence. Why are some men repentant, while others seek vengeance to the bitter end? There are those who embrace doctrines of belief to construct statues and conduct of behavior through vision of a better society. Some seek knowledge to the end of power; while others behold the mystery of presence with curious envy. There are those who build and those who destroy. But only a few that truly understand. And this comprehension not based on pure logic or product of academic learning alone.

The recorded ministry of Christ during his manifestation in time lasted for only three years. During those thousand or so days many were healed of infirmities, but not all. Many heard the sermons in wilderness places, but not all. Many were relieved of demons, fed by miracles, or received the words of enlightenment of a better way to live. Many were forgiven of sin, escaping the Leviticus judgment of prescribed execution; and some rose alive from the dead. But not all living in Jewry in those days ever met, or even knew that the Messiah had visited planet earth. Not even all those that heard his words understood the true meaning of this only begotten Son of God. Nevertheless, multitudes from every culture, from every religion, and from every generation inspired to spiritual revival after the resurrection. The natural man receives nothing, except by provision; but the souls of the living a benediction beyond measure through the quickening of the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 17, verses 12-19 (KJV), Jesus heals ten lepers, but only one returns to give him glory.

“And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.”

Let me make it clear before I begin that I have no special knowledge of the intricate pattern weaving the destiny of this world, nor insight into scriptural meaning not already divined by the tireless labor of other men through the course of many accumulated lifetimes. No idea presented here is new. Indeed, the book I embrace, as God’s living testament within the context of changing civilization, is beyond mortal interpretation. This book of collected text written through a span of centuries is but an abbreviation of generations touched by the Holy Spirit during process of thermodynamic progression. Words constructed of a living testament coinciding with progression of natural history to make evident the existence of an imperfect code corrupted by sin that we know as past and present. A code inscribed from beginning to end even before we are born. But in time divided by time a better code conceived of flesh and spirit to revive that which was lost from the beginning. This spirit, originating outside of diurnal time and space, subject to none of the laws defined through natural reason. This is a Holy thing manifested in the beginning as a corrective measure to rewrite the matrix of a new heaven and earth: a code perfected in the manifestation of the resurrected Christ from the elemental condition of prevailing entropy. This new code inspired through revolution; not the product of evolution.

As an individual, all I do know with any certainty is that the undeniable power of the Holy Spirit first indwelled my mortal being

nearly a half century ago. Never again will I perceive this world the same. I am a living testament of spirits in high places and the absolute power of God's Messiah, sent on a mission to save men's souls through humble submission. This miracle happened to me while I still served in the United States Marine Corps, less than a year after returning back from the Republic of Vietnam. Meritoriously promoted to Sergeant during my tour of duty I knew already where I belonged and could belong nowhere else. This clarity of being bitter recompense for successful achievement of a seemingly impossible mission: a position attained out of season. A position forced upon me that I had to diligently maintain by will of superhuman determination, both physical and psychological. Historically we were the first Marine Corps unit to redeploy stateside, taking every weapon, every tent pin, every nut and bolt with us. I will not go into details, only that under the circumstances the challenge almost insurmountable. I was still nineteen years old when promoted to Sergeant, with less than three years military service. I felt a sense of belonging in the Marine Corps. It had become my mother and my father, and the only future I could imagine. I became the man it expected of me, a man who knew the importance of order and self discipline. I cannot say that I loved the Corps, but it was as near to love as I knew at the time. But the spiritual toll far greater.

God had been calling me since a long time, only I could not hear the sound of his voice. But one Sunday afternoon I attend a choir in an Ocean Side Coffee house devoted to the needs of service men like myself. There were different groups sent by churches from districts of Southern California. The last group that sings produces a most beautiful chorus proclaiming the love of Jesus. I resist, but the music resonating more profound than I wished to acknowledge. After the recital, a lovely young lady obedient to the spirit comes and talks to me. After only a brief conversation, her clear blue eyes gaze deeply into my eyes.

"Here is the address of our church," she says, producing a piece of paper scribbled with an address. "It is located in the suburbs of Long Beach. I feel in the Spirit that the Lord calling you to join us."

Of course, I forget about this invitation, until another hangover Sunday morning, a piece of folded paper falls from my top locker shelf

to my feet. It is the address of that church. On this bright California morning I decide to take a long drive north to a place I have never been.

Nosing slowly through a maze of residential streets, I am unable to find this fabled place of worship. Then I hear singing beyond a grove of Weeping Willows, the same music I heard those many weeks earlier. Following the sound, I discover an abandoned school auditorium with a congregation of people inside. Upon entering I am immediately jolted by a force never felt before. There is no sense of religion here, but a presence as real as any previous experience. I have known Buddhist spirits, feeling their charisma in the dark shadow of Marble Mountain, a hollowed shrine jutting out of that ancient terrain of twisted jungle. Felt them near as they dance in the suffocating night air. But this presence nothing like that; rather it is as the magnitude of the morning sun consuming the illumination of a light bulb left on through the night.

Arriving only at the finish of this group's service, I silently bow my head and partition: "if this is God, please give me proof." Being a proud young man, I quickly seek the exit and would have been gone had that pretty young lady not intercepted me.

"I saw you come in," she says softly. "I am glad that you finally found your way here."

We talk. I meet her parents and am subsequently invited to their home for coffee and something to eat. The girl's name is Karen, a name written in heaven, a name that I will never forget. Karen convinces me to go on an afternoon horseback ride with her. I had little experience, so we end walking the horses instead. During this afternoon stroll, Karen speaks to my empty soul.

"Look at the sky, how blue. My God and your God made this for you and for me."

I look into the sky and it changes instantly into an infinite blue. Again she speaks.

"Look at the fields of grass covering the land, how green. My God and your God made this for you and for me."

I look at the grass and it changes emerald green, a living tapestry flowing into the distance.

She performs this magic for the trees and the birds, and all manner of creatures above and below. Things, I perhaps once saw as a child, but had faded since so many years into the grey of tainted experience. By the end of this stroll, I am emotionally speechless. We return to her family's home for an evening meal. Since the next day an official holiday of Washington's Birthday, I accept to stay overnight in the comfort of an extra room. I spend much of the next day in the backyard, contemplating the meaning of sky, the delicate design of things that grow, and the unsearchable pattern of lumbering insects riding invisible air currents.

Toward late afternoon we depart in separate cars to the home of some of their friends to share in a potluck dinner. From here I will jump on the Freeway and return to my Camp Pendleton base. In the course of a conversation with two young men about my age, a disagreement arises concerning the conduct of soldiers and the moral purpose of the Vietnam War. I instantly snap forward as a Sergeant prepared to consume these civilians, who dare to question my conduct in a war I did not personally choose to engage. A war of corporate greed that has taken so many of my generation and shattered the integrity of two nations--but at this time I am a young Marine Corps Sergeant--my conscience clear!

"A lot of men came back less than whole, or not at all just so you can sit here and question their conduct. So don't think you know anything about the war in Vietnam!"

I immediately see terror in their eyes. I have become a wild animal in a peaceful fold, and no longer know how to be anything else. It is time for me to return to the only true home I have in this world. As I edge toward the door, Karen enquires if I might come back again. In my heart I know already I never will. As I reach the threshold of escape, a veteran from another generation and another war intercepts me.

"Son, I would like to ask you a question before you go," he says intently.

"What would that be?"

"Do you know Jesus Christ the Savior of your immortal soul?"

After a moment of reflection, I answer factually that I do not know this Christ; nor do I believe in the presence of a God.

“I try not to be a hypocrite,” I say sincerely. “I do believe that you people here in this room believe something, but I do not know what it is or how to believe it.”

This man then begins to tell me of his experience as an American Bomber pilot during World War II. He had flown many successful missions, but shot down on the last run over Dresden.

He and his injured copilot survive the crash. As they stumble through the burning city, he sees body parts of men, women, and children strewn like the heads, torsos, and limbs of broken dolls. For the first time, he realizes the destruction his bombs dropped upon the diver’s places of mankind. He convinces himself that it had been necessary, but the carnage real all the same. He returns to his home, becomes a successful business mogul, but never can he escape that place in his mind. Then one morning decades later, he is invited by a friend to a Christian Businessmen’s Breakfast, where he receives forgiveness in Christ and is *born again*.

“Just as God knew me, he knows you as well. It is not his desire that any should perish in sin. If you choose to pray with me now, and nothing happens, then you will depart this place and never see us again, nor we you. California is a very big place, the world beyond even greater. But if you find salvation to your soul in this moment, then you risk gaining the greatest gift of eternity.”

“If your God will reveal to me that he is God, then I will serve this God all the days of my life.”

These words seem to flow from the deepest part of my being, not rational, but more sincere than any I have ever spoken. I then submit to pray with this man. I sit in a chair, place my hands upon my thighs, and close my eyes. After a moment, I feel foolish, as my pride of self reasserts itself.

“I am a Marine Corps Sergeant!” I think to myself. “Here I am in a room of civilians, sitting like a child. To whom am I supposed to pray--to this man--to the ceiling?”

I determine to leave this place never to return. I will go back to my Marine Corps--the place I know--the only place where I truly feel at home!

This is the strange thing that happens next. I can feel my hands on my thighs, but I have lost all motor control to move them. My eyes are closed, but they will not open. I did not feel drugged; nor did I have any motive force. I suddenly begin to panic, thinking that maybe I have unsuspectingly fallen into the hands of a cult that mean to do me harm!

Then I am somewhere else. Somewhere I have always been and would always remain. It is the realm of a great outer darkness. Inhabiting this darkness a host of parasitical creatures, some attached to the corpse of my being, others waiting their turn to feed. It is not a terrifying place; nor is there any hope here. It is a place forever abandoned, inhabited by a host of indiscernible shadows. Suddenly the shearing of a flaming cross splits the darkness with the pure visage of a man upon it. Then a voice that speaks clearly.

“Place your eyes upon me.”

In this moment I feel fearful and ashamed. As I begin to turn away from this blinding presence, I am aware of those parasitical creatures tightening the coils of their bondage. I stand at the fulcrum of a monumental decision. There is an almost pleasant familiarity to this place of outer darkness, like the pleasantness of a womb I have always known. Whereas, this burning apparition an altogether unknown quantum. Yet, I know in my soul the darkness to be *death everlasting*; this man on a burning cross *life everlasting*. I turn and look into his unwavering eyes and shout:

“Yes Lord!”

A shard of that cross shoots up into the void, circles down, and pierces through me, consuming my emptied soul in blinding light. From a distance I witness a physical body floating in limbo, stretched into infinity. Then I am aware of my spiritually revived soul refilling the corpse of that being like warm milk to overflowing. I am physically lying prostrate on the floor, where the man of sin has collapsed through spiritual aggression. Instantly I leap up from the grave of that former self, reborn alive, and begin praising God in the spirit. For the first time, I know my father in heaven. Know without any doubt the saving grace of his son sent to die on a cross for my sins, and know the abiding

presence of the Holy Spirit. I leave this place a new person, delivered from the power of demonic influence.

The drive back to my base remains vague in my mind, as I am altogether elated in the spirit. That night I hesitate to sleep, fearing by morning it might all be gone, like so many other fleeting joys in life. But the next morning, it is still with me. I go out to my company of men and testify of the great gift of salvation provided by the God that has made the pleasant blades of grass and the inextricable blue of the sky. They surely think me mad. And by the standards of this world I was mad, and am mad still to this day. The next several days I begin to read a New Testament Bible given to me by my new brethren. It is not like reading a text, but as a confirming testament contained in the good news of salvation, bearing witness to my revived soul of life's greatest measure. Yes--I know this Jesus of the four Gospels! Know also his apostles, and the meaning of their many written letters. It has been scores of years since I last saw Karen and her family. We all attended church service for awhile, but in time scattered into the world through the leading of the Holy Spirit. I praise the Lord that one day I will be reunited with all my brothers and sisters.

However, this moment in time I must attend to a more temporal demand of logical discourse. I pray for the objective wisdom to openly examine the constructed pillars of worldly perception, which I believe to be influenced by a mind with an agenda older than genesis. I forewarn the reader that everything I have to say predicated on this undeniable personal spiritual event that has changed the directive of my life. A supernatural quantum originating from beyond the sensory definition of the world we think so evident. This is not a message to the religious, to the Clergy, or the Theologian. Nor is it intended to guide the sheep of the Lord through another way other than their spiritual calling. Christ has already fulfilled those convictions in good measure.

I write this to the mind of an unbelieving world, as a challenge to challenge the basic foundation of academic interpretation.

In every legal or moral dispute, there are two sides to an argument. Each presents a judicious debate based on the facts. It is up to the jury to interpret those facts and deliver a verdict derived solely from the

evidence. Because jurisprudence is a prevailing logic applied to prescribed institutional prejudices and beliefs, no position can represent an absolute standard of universal truth. All observed phenomenon is subject to interpretation and should remain free of bias. Through indulgence of distraction mankind has chosen complacency over engagement by eagerly allowing institutional positions to quantify human existence based on construction of incomplete models of extrapolation to define context, and meaning within that context. The prevailing consensus is to allocate responsibility of choice and determination to other entities more qualified of reason and moral directive. This is a perilous lack of engagement, considering that one's immortal soul is in the balance. And, yes, there are those higher up--*but they are no gods; nor are they men!*

Modern science embodies the presence of trusted source in the minds of most. Successful in both applied and theoretical interpretation, science by simplest measure begins with the observation of the elemental building blocks that exist naturally. The dictionary definition of science is the systematic recording and experimentation to ascribe measure to existential conditions of constructed reality. Science is sometimes able to make predictions based on the accumulated history of observed patterns, thus giving birth to mechanical invention termed *technology*. It is by these technologies that man has excelled beyond environmental restraints, enhancing the way we live, the way we travel, and even the way we communicate. The utopia goal of technology is to compress time and space by meddling with complex machinery defining mortal existence. As appealing as this might appear on the surface, it ultimately assures a path leading toward mass destruction.

Through litany of many perceived accomplishments, science has little changed the position of man within context of the inhabited world, or provided more comprehension to the far distant universe, so clearly seen through time-lapsed photography. Science has yet to devise better principles of human equality by eradicating wars, curing pestilences, and feeding the masses of starving populations. Through measures of intervention science strives to save a few in the namesake of the many, while ensuring the extermination of the many for the sake of a few.

Who might have predicted that un-harnessing the power of fossil fuels in the late 19th and early 20th century would jeopardize the entire ecosystem of planet earth by the middle of the 21 century? What mind can rationalize that by attempting to save everyone at any cost creates unsustainable population growth threatening future survival as a species? These questions raise an even more important quandary of reason: *Has science become an intellectual bridge redefining morality; and does it embody a supreme philosophical agreement elevated above all other challenge?*

When science proclaims itself to be a priesthood of infallible supposition and its accepted deductions based upon unquestionable precepts, it becomes a religion, open to scrutiny. And when any institution of examination becomes guided by zealous embrace, it also becomes the fertile ground for many deceiving spirits with a singular objective of collective deception.

I intend to present ideas of a terrestrial past and of a future extraordinary in interpretation, referencing both natural, as well as supernatural possibilities. It is not to say that this extrapolation of events exclusive to all other interpretations; nor is it meant to imply absolute conclusion when magnified under the lens escalating probability. Ultimately, it comes down to interpretation of the data and understanding the limited cipher of a predictable code corrupted by design within context of an invisible hyper reality. As science and technology continue to evolve through better optics of more precise observation, it approaches a frontier of meaning that only confirms what the Bible has been saying for more than five millennium: *God is a spirit and all things spiritually designed.* So begins this Search of the Perfect Code Discovered.