

Hornswoggled in His Love

Captured with and by God's Love

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Forward

An historically fictional novel about a young man that was brought up with high moral standards, and not caught up in the goings-on of this world, at least to the point that his life is submerged in it.

I have tried to be as accurate as possible, using as many sources and references as could be had; most of the greater details are hidden in Scripture, and with an understanding of the region and human nature could conclude many of the finer detail.

This young man, like most any of us, at least those of us that seek a deeper relationship with our God, struggled through life with a feeling of emptiness, although happy in every other aspect, knew that something special was missing in his life.

Each step of the way brought him closer and closer to that fulfillment, but still seemed to stumble with each step taken. This

man, born Simeon, and later surnamed Peter, was not unlike those of us that search for a truer and far more developed life, as any who have reached it, will confess; and can only be attained thru the Christ of God. Can we see ourselves in these pages? I think we can.

This world, which is enmity to God, throws out a net to contain and capture as many as would follow its empty rules. The façade of the glamour it offers, with its so-called great morals, and the pie-in-the-sky attitudes, reveals itself to all those that are seeking God, and a relationship with Him, wanting more than this world can proposition. The people of the world are generally good, but few if any, are ever taught that there is a greater Life that lies beyond the veneer this world pretends to possess, and this story shows that for not only Peter, but any who want this new Life, not dictated nor owned by this world, can have it.

This story brings an understanding of the men of old, with their life that is very much like ours, to an empathetic awareness that these were just common folks, people like you and me, empty without Christ, and wanting more than just an acknowledgement of Him, wanted Life abundantly. Struggles, we'll always have, and this story shows many, but it will also show that these same struggles aren't there to bring us down, but to take us to an appreciation of a greater life than this world, and its circumstances, are offering.

These 'things that we call church' are counted among those that are letting us down. There should be a vast difference between the world and these entities called 'church', but there is not.

The Awakening

A young boy, about the age of thirteen is sound asleep when the squeaky voice of his brother wakes him. The responsibilities for these two boys are great, for at this age they are required to help their parents about the many chores that come with running a fishing business. Early, before the town, or mom and dad gets up they have what they call free time to do what they want, and both want to explore. Both are mature for their age, but both are young boys, and boys like to explore, and this day, which was made up between the two of them, was made to do just that, they were going to the sea shore. Just south of their home in Bethsaida, was the Sea of Galilee, and the things found on the beach after an overnight squall could be great, and that's where they were heading, to find what treasures were lying there as the gift of last

night's winds would leave stationed in their appointed territory. This was fun, and fun is the main stuff that the marrow of boys was made for, it was going to be a delightful two hours of enjoyment, as they planned to accumulate the resources of the sea, before both had to go home by the time dad awoke.

It didn't rain much in their part of the country this time of the year, the sky's normally blue for months at a time, A typical day was a lot of hard work, good meals, more hard work and maybe a few moments for themselves, but they lived a good life, and dad was well respected throughout the region. On the days dad would go to Temple, the work would go on, but maybe not as fervently as it would on those other days. Neither knew of any other way of life, so life was good, very little complaining ever went on, as their life, for a fact, was very good, especially with the adventures of the sea.

The sunrises were beautiful, the sunsets could take you to far away horizons with their shades of pinks, reds, oranges, blues, and all the many different shades of greys and whites, it was a good place to live. One day not too long before, early, the boys did the same earlier trick as aforementioned, exploring and found, some hundred yard down the coast, a washed up net. Wasn't hard to tell that the net was recently lost for the fish that were tangled in it were still alive.

Long before sun-up, waves calmly striking the shore in three second intervals, the half-moon far in the west with its' many sparkles lined up across the water like a silver road they could walk

on, there it was, a net churning in the water, just knee deep and theirs' for the taking.

Within an hour they had it on the shore, and lined up in neat columns of diverse fish, all sorted to species, and all theirs. This was the day that both were to become rich; that is until their father was shown the accomplishment. "No, the owner of the net had to be found, and the fish were to be distributed among the widows and the poor"; but dad was still proud. To make things better, their well-known dad spread the news about the boys throughout; they were famous. Well, they thought they were.

It was on the cool, quiet mornings, that the two brothers could be found, sometimes with their assorted friends, fumbling up or down the beach on the south side of Bethsaida. Not every day, but as often as they could sneak out. All this rambling about was okayed as long as chores were kept up, and respect given to the shore line and their folks. Never was a time that either felt bored.

It was early on a Thursday morning, somewhere around two hours before the first gesture of the dawning of the sun, when a young man woke to meet the day. As usual, he just laid there on his pallet that was always positioned in the same corner of the room as it had been for several years now. Not a movement he made except the opening of his eyes and a small swipe at a fly that had landed on his forehead where an encounter with a rope with

the attached tackle had brought about a small cut with a trickle of left over blood from the day before. "It was another beautiful morning", he thought as the stars could be seen from the narrow window that was up and to the right of where he was laying.

The young man just lay there thinking. Quite often he did this as it was his most favorite part of the day. Thinking of the earlier escapades with his brother, not so many years ago, thinking about things that had happened in the last few days, but mostly thinking of the goals he had set for himself for the day that was gearing up to start. Lazy, he was not; work was something that his youth was very familiar with and he found his element in the sweat and toiling of each day. Working with his hands, and a disciplined mind is how he provided for his young family, and those that worked with him. As he watched the stars, the smell of smoke was carried into the room by the slight hint of a fog and a light breeze, he'd just lay there motionless as thoughts would run from his wife, to the days' objectives and back to her again. This was a good time in his life and he enjoyed the responsibility of providing for their new home and the men that worked with him.

This newly wed young man was from Bethsaida on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, where he grew up with his parents that had taught him the advantages of hard work and how to give a square deal to everyone that he'd meet. Yes, he grew up under the teachings of the forefathers of old, and although he did not frequent the Temple, except on occasion, he loved the Lord God and continued to build his life under the principles of God's love for his people. He now moved a few miles west to the villa, not a

small town, but not large in any stretch of the imagination, called Capernaum. It was there that he met his wife a few years earlier, and it was there that her parents also lived close to the Sea of Galilee. They both now made their home not far from where she was raised, close to the sea. Every day was spent enjoying the many amenities of such a gorgeous body of water, they loved it.

Still lying flat on his back pondering the day that was about to begin, still looking out the stone window, still smelling the freshness of the waters that were not too far from where he now lay beside his wife, the young man surveyed his mind of how this day could be prosperous and how he could catch enough to make

enough money to sustain him and the men that worked for him with the abbreviated necessities of life. The three men that worked with him depended on his leadership to provide for their families also, one was married, and the other two still helped supplement their own parents and siblings.

As he laid there quiet in thought, his wife beside him, she not knowing that he was awake, he began to rejoice in the expectations of the day to come and what would be accomplished. When suddenly he heard a voice from outside calling "Simeon", he knew who it was, for nobody but his brother called him by his true name, a name of old.

Slowly, ever-so-slowly, he raised himself up to walk through the threshold to greet his eager brother, not wanting to wake his wife. "Andrew, we have at least an hour before daybreak, what's the hurry?" The young man quietly spoke in a somewhat of a hoarse voice. Before Andrew could answer he spoke again; "are you as

excited as I am about the opportunities that lay before us, this is the day of the new moon, and you know what that means."

"I sure do", Andrew said with excitement in his voice, but still, he was speaking in a whisper, for he knew his brothers' new wife was probably still asleep, "remember last month and the month before, we did well on this same day of the month, and I didn't get much sleep last night thinking about it. Hey! Where are James and John?"

"Hold your voice down so as not to wake up everyone," Simeon spoke while his brothers' voice rose at the same rate of his excitement. "Brother, it's a bit too early for them, but they'll be here before the dawn cracks, they always are."

There was a light cover of fog that hung close to the ground and over the water, but it was thin, meaning easy to see through, only about three foot thick. The stars were bright as the night seemed to be going from dark to darker. Knowing it's the darkest just before the break of day, it meant it was only an hour or so before they and the other two would board their two large boats, maybe even call them very small ships, and begin their day of fishing. Fishing was their way of life. Five, six, and on rare occasions, seven days a week at least two of the four men would set sailing in hopes of bringing in food and an income for their families and several others in the country of Galilee. This was early autumn, the air still warm, and a hint of crispness hung about that would last 'til at least noon. This meant a great time fishing the waters, as fish sensed the same change and were on the move, which meant it was vastly easier to net the migrating creatures, and especially on

the new moon cycle. Anticipations were high for the days' journey because the last several weeks weren't all that good. High tide was about three hour after sun-rise, and even though it was minimal on the Sea of Galilee, it still added up to a great day of netting. Simon, whom his brother called Simeon, and John would navigate one boat, and Andrew and James the other. Even though they worked separately, they were usually within shouting distance of each other, but not always.

This was one of those rare moments that Simon and Andrew could sit on the sand and just talk about things that brothers talk about. They were best of friends, and had, thus far, shared their whole lives together, well most of it. Often their conversations were reflections of growing up together not too many miles west of where they now sat.

They'd reminisced about their parents and growing up on such a beautiful body of water, and the good times they had in and on the Sea of Galilee. Both Andrew and Simon were young, but had the maturity of older men thanks to the way their loving parents had raised them.

"Have you heard about", Andrew said to his brother, "that man some hundred miles south that's making quite a stir?"

"No, hadn't heard a thing, and what kind of stir is he creating?"

"Down on the river Jordan," Andrew continued, "he's telling people of the coming of the Messiah. And a lot of folks are listening to him. What are your thoughts about that?"

For the last couple of decades, and probably a lot longer, there had been much thought and conversation about a messiah coming into the land and turning things upside down, especially to the Romans that occupied their precious and Holy land. Simon had heard these conversations often, but still didn't have a strong opinion about it either way. He was a Jew, and that was a fact, but he didn't spend much time in or around the Temple, thought it was more politics than Godliness, and so did what was required of him and not much else. Simon fished with his father Jonan all his life, and so did Andrew, learning the trade and evidently learning it well. His dad spent much time in the Temple and with the things concerning it. And since they fished together for so many years, that is, until Simon was introduced to that pretty girl in the next village over, Simon heard and learned much from his dad. I guess because of his youth, most of what he was taught didn't stick, that is except the fishing stuff. He heard much of the hope of an upcoming Messiah, and God truly knows that Israel needed help, especially from the yoke that the Romans had placed on them. Several had recently prophesied, even one of the older gentlemen a couple of years back said that God had told him that he wouldn't die until he had met the Christ. Well, that man died about twenty

something years back, and not much had changed since then. Simon didn't dismiss the Idea of the coming Messiah, but he didn't dwell on it, but then again, he did think on the subject every now and again, more than he was willing to confess.

Thinking to himself, he answered his brother Andrew saying; "Right now I don't have time to think about what some man in the Jordan River is doing, I've got fishing on my mind. Talking about

fishing; here comes Zebedee's boys, let's get things ship-shape and head out."

Looking up and to the left, Andrew saw the two brothers coming and shouted out in their direction, that's because they had walked down closer to the shore, "it's about time you two got here, we're burning daylight."

Turning to look at each other, with a smirk on their face, they said in unison: "The sun ain't up yet"

"Good morning James and John, how's it going?"

James spoke first. "You know what today is?" And then John injected; "The new moon with a mid-day high tide."

"Yeah, we know, we've been talking about it. Are you guys excited as much as we are?" Andrew responded.

Both shook their head yes, but before either could say anything, Simon motioned with his hand as if to say come-on, and then spoke. "And a beautiful day it is, let's get both boats rigged and ready."

Just as the eastern sky had a faint gleam of the breaking of the day, both boats had been readied. "It's time, let's get going," Simon said in a soft voice. "Today's the day. I can feel it in my bones."

It was mornings like this that the two older brothers loved the most. This same scenario had happened in their lives many times

over, an anticipated moment that happens several times a year where all the factors come together at the same time, making conditions perfect. Heart rates up and energy soaring, they were ready. "Today is the day, and now is the time", spoke James as he waded knee deep, pushing the boat, and jumping in.

As they paired up, aligning their two boats together, and began rowing, both boats right next to each other, James hollered out: "Have you guys heard about that man down next to Jerusalem,

stirring up all that noise about the Messiah coming, and that stuff about baptizing?" Simon, and Andrew both just shrugged their shoulders, but no one spoke a word. They just kept rowing.

After about fifteen minutes of hard rowing, Simon and John were getting into position, and Andrew and James had a little farther to go. And then James quietly spoke. "That man down there in Jerusalem, the one called the Baptist is making a ho-do around that part of our country. Heck, it seems that that's all everyone up in our parts are talking about." Andrew didn't say a word, but you could tell he was thinking, he laid his oar down as James continued to ready the equipment, grabbing the first buoy, and motioned to James to stop rowing.

Since Andrew and Simon were brothers, it didn't take a long look at them to tell they were. Andrew was a little taller, and his beard was a little less dense, Simon's crook in the middle of his nose was a little more pronounced, both of a slim build, it was obvious they were from the same stock, both had their mothers' eyes.

It wasn't but minutes, maybe even seconds before the sun broke the horizon, and Andrew and James had the first net out, with its' buoy, and were now stretching the woven mass due south. As the net unfurled, they were making sure that there were no tangles, for the net had to be near perfect for all to go well. "Easy goes it." Andrew spoke, but I think it was mostly to himself, as they neared the end of the two hundred foot long tapestry of woven hemp. Looking to his right, he could see Simon and John doing the same, probably about two hundred feet to their west; and maybe about that same distance closer to the shore.

As for that set, they were both finished, but had to row some thousand yards farther south and do the same to the second set of nets. The waters weren't very deep, and had a turquoise gleam to it, if it weren't for the ripples from the two boats; the water would have a look of polished crystal.

Since they were now finished with the sets, Andrew and James rowed a little towards the west and both just laid back against the boat, one on the stern and the other against the bow. They didn't have to drop anchor, for there wasn't even a whisper of wind, and both could see that Simon and John had done the same. Andrew was the first to speak. "What did you hear about that man they call the Baptist?"

Stretching his arms above his head and in a low keyed tenor James said; "I don't know a lot to tell ya, but he is stirring up a ruckus. They claim droves of peoples' lives are changing, he's asking folks to clean up their lives and make ready for the Messiah."

This struck a chord deep inside of Andrew, for he too wanted something more substantial in his life, so he pondered on the thought of such a change. His life consisted of fishing and little else, for he too wanted substance in his being. So the chord struck was more than just a fleeting thought.

Now Simon and John were having a similar conversation, but Simon would rather talk about fishing. He'd always fished with his dad Jonah since about age six, and it was deep in his blood. It's only been a few years since him and his brother moved out of their dads' house in Bethsaida and took up the business on their own in Capernaum. Andrew liked fishing, but it was in the marrow of Simons' bones, this was his life, and he looked forward to everyday that he could be on the waters of Galilee.

Although most of the gentiles in and around town spoke Greek, Simon and Andrew were schooled in Arabic, but were also versed in the other two languages of the region, and were raised in the ways of their forefathers. Their father had taught them, with intent, of the old ways, and each listened with anticipation when he spoke, but at this time in their lives, it just didn't stick. I guess, being young, and most likely adventurous, they liked spending their days under the sun and on the water, and dad's teachings weren't that closely adhered too. This was their life, and all the men liked it. As they waited, Simon cast a net out repeatedly to pass the time and maybe catch a few extra fish. This would often work, and the times when he was the only one fishing, he'd spend all day casting the net, and many times with decent results.

Some four or five hours later, Simon shouted across the water and told Andrew to start pulling the nets in, and then move a little more south and do it again. At the end of the day, making two sets, both boats rowed back to Capernaum with a pretty good haul, but not as much as Simon had thought it would be twelve hours earlier. But still it was a-good-days catch, and well worth the tiredness that his bones felt.

As they pulled the boats upon the shore, and assessing the days catch, Simon said to the others; "Tomorrow is the second best day we'll have in the next couple of months, that is, with the signs right, so we'll do it again in the morning." Taking the fish to market was not the easy part, but it certainly was the rewarding side of fishing. It was a better catch than normal, but still didn't meet the expectations that all had that morning of the same day. Exhausted, after selling their fish in the market, they all headed toward their homes, Simon to his new wife.

The sun was inching over the western horizon, which was the back side of Simons' home; the sky was red which meant another beautiful day tomorrow. Greeting his wife, Simon was tired, but

the kind of tired that makes one feel good. It was his time to relax, reflect, and spend time with his loved one. A dedicated man he was, to his business, but mostly to his wife, whom he loved very much. Many times they would just sit there between the two posts near the front door, and just talk, or maybe not even say a word, but always enjoying the cool of the afternoon and each other.

They were watching a heron trying to steal a rather large fish that washed upon the shore line that three seagulls were trying to tear apart, a scene that had happened many times before, but none-the-less it was always interesting to see who would win the battle. The sun had dropped out of sight and the daylight was waning, but still very easy to see across the vastness of the waters. The clouds in the distance were pink, as the sun still bathes them with its last rays. This day Simon and his wife just talked, talked about this-and-that. It was a good day for all.

Running a business was not the easiest of jobs, but Simon was created to do it, and do it he did. He was responsible for his brother and his two longtime friends, and his job was taken seriously, but there were certain privileges and notoriety that came with the job, and that pleased him. No, to be well known was not one of his objectives, but the reputation of dependability was important in selling his catch.

As the next year passed, each day and night were about the same as before with the exception that Andrew went south to check on the so-many rumors that he continued hearing about the Baptist. So Simon temporarily replaced him with another longtime friend, and also had to replace John and James, for they too had to go back and work with their father Zebedee, who was recuperating from a sickness that wasn't serious, but kept him off his feet for a while. Simon knew that they were to only work temporarily with him, as their father also was a fisherman, but had this problem he had to work out. It wasn't hard finding good men to fish with, for

Simon was well favored in town with most of the folks. And since Bethsaida was only a few miles to the east, he, and his father, were already well known, before Simon was to be married, in Capernaum. Problem solved, Simon kept riding the tide and waves as each day dissolved into another. He was truly a fisherman.

Andrew was intrigued in the first few days of sitting on the banks on the Jordan River, and watched and listened with intent as the Baptist preached and taught of the preparation of the soon coming of the Messiah. There was a following that watched and traveled with this man called John, and it seemed each day that

Andrew sat on the bank, he would inch a little closer than he was the day before. Something had pricked in his heart, and he knew what was being said was true, and the whole country needed this Savior to rescue them from the tyranny of the Romans. Occasionally in the evenings, Andrew would talk with the Baptist, as he usually walked right past him on the way back to town. And then would ask a series of questions each time, for he always gathered thoughts as he listened to John speak while half way across that river. He knew of the help that Israel needed from the upcoming messiah, but he himself also wanted help from Him, and like his older brother, there was a hankering in the pit of his bowels.

Now John, the one called the Baptist, was noticed to be a peculiar fellow, with his strange clothes and his unorthodox

speech, but Andrew liked him, and was certainly interested in all John had the say, so they talked often. John was not schooled in the normal sense, but had a vast knowledge of the scriptures and the things of God, so Andrew listened and studied the man and the words coming from his mouth. A week or so later, this still continuing, John asked Andrew why he wasn't standing in the water with him. Andrew, looking down with a little bit of embarrassment said; "that's a place for your disciples, I'm just a fisherman from up north."

"Actually", the Baptist said trying to look him straight in the eye, "I probably spend more time teaching you than I do most of my other disciples. Come with me tomorrow and let's see what happens."

It had been raining with high winds in Capernaum the last several days and fishing was not to be had. So Simon caught up on his other many chores, not to mention the town gossip, and had already heard that brother Andrew had gotten involved with the man called John the Baptist, down near Jerusalem. His father Jonas, that many called Jonah, told him about that bit of information, and Simon didn't know, at that point, whether to be happy for him, or concerned for his welfare.

Simon was a simple man, common in every way, at least from the appearances from the outside. I guess that was because he

didn't talk a lot, especially to those he didn't know well, but on the inside, thoughts, ideas, dreams and plans were going on in his brain from before sun up 'til the time he fell off to sleep. Simple would be the wrong word to accuse Simon of, for he was a man of deep thought, but few knew it. He wanted something different in

his life, but really had no idea of what it was; something to give meaning to his existence. Fishing was good, and the business was thriving, and he was instrumental in having a hand in several other peoples' lives and their prosperity, but still something was missing. Being married to his new wife was special and he loved being with her, but there were still places in his heart that were unfulfilled. Even though he didn't spend much time in the Temple, nor practiced that religion, except when he thought he had too, he loved the Lord, and knew that all good things came from Him. It was the Lord God that he looked too, and in this situation of his life, he again looked toward Him, but as yet the answer hadn't come, so he and his crew continued fishing. Simon even had a couple of dreams that he thought were from the lord, but when he'd wake up, could only remember pieces of them. Twice, while fishing, he thought he'd seen someone walking across the water toward him, and once, while appearing into the waters, he thought he had seen himself walking, walking as if he was a blind man.

The days were getting a little cooler, but that just made things better, and relaxing while he worked was easier, and at times Simon frequently had many thoughts, in the midst of these less troubling times, that went beyond himself. The what-if's ran rampant in his mind; what if this happened, what if that, what would happen if he became hurt and couldn't support his family

and the others. Worrying really wasn't part of his behavior, and saying he was concerned would slightly overstate it, at least from the outward appearance, but there was a nagging in his soul of something better in life, but couldn't pursue it, for he surly didn't know which way go, so Simon waited. Although he was known to have impatience, and quick decisions was something he was good at, or maybe not, he still didn't have a direction to otherwise go; except he knew to fish. Fishing, he understood all the ins and outs, and he knew how to love those that were close to him, but the complex manner of the inner thoughts, he was at a loss.

It wasn't a dream

After a year or so Andrew returned back to Capernaum and took off where he had left before going to Jerusalem and learning under the leadership of the Baptist. It was in the cool of a late afternoon, looking up, Simon saw a man walking toward him on the beach. Thinking little of it for this was a common occurrence, but in a few minutes looking again, saw that it was Andrew. After their genuine and affectionate greetings, both sat under the clear cooling sky, a

time that the birds gathered close to the shore to stock up on food for the night ahead, they talked.

At first the brothers caught up on the day to day occurrences, and then slowly worked their conversation to more important issues. Now Andrew had a lot to say, and Simon was certainly willing to listen. Simon was only running one boat now because this was the time of the year that fishing fell off, but the larger of the fish frequented these northern waters, making it still profitable, even though the count was down. Both men leaned on the side of the beached boat and talked, they talked about how the fishing has been and they talked about what went on in Jerusalem. Andrew was astonished with the happenings in and around the river Jordan and felt his life, at least his soul, had been rejuvenated, the reunion was great and it wasn't hard to tell that both enjoyed each other's company, but as the sun was now almost completely set, the two walked toward Simon home, and would, that night, spend the entire evening together.

The next morning Andrew was to travel east to see their parents and catch them up on the happenings of down south, and the changes that were going on within him. He left with excitement, and thought their parents also were looking forward to his return.

It wasn't but a few days that Andrew and Simon were back together fishing, leastwise when they could, they couldn't fish as much, the numbers were down, but the size and weight of each fish had substantially improved. A living, they provided, but not much more than that, but fishing is what they knew, and fishing is what they did.

The two could easily keep up with the work, and still they had plenty of time to spend sharing the many experiences that Andrew had down south. He had an excitement in his voice, and pep in his walk, Andrew was glad to be home, and not once did he ever regret going to Jerusalem and meeting and listening to the man called the Baptist. Although the rumors of the Messiah were all over the countryside, Andrew heard the prophet explain in detail the words that God had given him, and now the younger brother wanted to share them. At times, while expounding on the events prophesied, a small group would gather to listen to Andrew speak, but probably not with the same authority that was carried in the man standing in the river Jordan.

Now Simon would be what I'd call a skeptic, that is a man wanting to learn, but then again wasn't going to follow just anybody's ideas of a prophet, yet he wouldn't write him off either. He would set to heart the things that his younger brother told, yet he wasn't willing to jump over barrels; that is, jump to conclusions, so he stashed the sayings away to be pondered later.

It was now getting to be close to noon, but this was one of those days that they could afford to use in a different direction, so as both sort of tinkered with getting the boat ship-shape, they talked;

well, really Andrew did most of the talking. A large gathering of seagulls had congregated on the shore some hundred meters up the coast, and about twice that many were making circles above them. Both men stopped just to watch them. They were eating something, what, no one knew, but it was enjoyable to watch the hierarchy of the birds take their turn as some would glide in as

others would sail away. It was unrecognizable at that distance, but the catch of the day could not be accredited, but to so many, it was a feast. The day was nice, warm but not too hot, just one of those days to get caught up with the chores that were left undone for the last few days, and reacquaint themselves, and also to hear the groundbreaking news from younger brother Andrew. Both cherished days like this.

Andrew had much to say, and Simon was just as eager to hear. Something was stirring intrigue inside of him, and wondered if the Baptist, as told by his brother, was right in that the Messiah was to come and rescue their land. Even though Simon had a wonderful life, being married recently helped to fulfill his seen life; outwardly, things couldn't go better, but on the inside, something was still missing. Emptiness filled the depths of his soul, and he knew the desolation of the man within, for surely his man within had a purpose, but was now emptied with a void. Business was good; his wife was great, lots of friends, but hollowness was felt in the pit of his stomach, especially when things got quiet. So he worked, and work he was good at; successful, he was in every way, except when no one was around but himself. He would often ponder in the afternoons of what he called lazy days, a rainy or wind struck day, he could only do so much, so he meditated on the things of life. Somehow through all his thinking, he'd end up in the same place he had started, a despondency of the richer things of living. He had a wonderful wife, and their relationship was great, but what I'm talking about is that deep lonesomeness that cannot be filled with the stuff seen in this world, a yearning. Simon was not antsy, nor was he looking for adventure, he just knew something was

missing, creating this void. With all the stories being told around the country and Andrews' first-hand knowledge, slowly a picture was being formed within him, and the wandering of his mind took him many places.

A few months later John the Baptist was still drawing people by the droves to the banks of the Jordan River. Some say he was inflicting havoc, others thought him to definitely be a prophet, it depended on whether you were a noble or a common man as to which way you were swayed. But certainly his words were powerful, and many climbed in that river with him. His claim was

to prepare a way, a path for the Messiah that He would be welcomed and would walk through. A people readied for the arrival of the soon to be revealed Christ. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His path straight." People listened, lives were changing, an awakening was happening throughout all of Judea, but as of yet, he had not met the Messiah. The Baptist himself claimed that it was God that created his life for this purpose, and was following the Spirit in every way, and would know the Messiah when that time came.

Yes, people were coming from all regions, and the Baptist made quit-a-stir, most were everyday people and were moved to hear

this man that certainly was preparing the way of something, for he held nothing back.

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees coming, he said to them, 'Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bare fruits worthy of repentance, (change your way of thinking), and do not think to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father. For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones... I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, (to change the way you think), but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and Fire." These words were powerful and many took them to heart, but few, if any, completely understood a single one, but they were still hid in the hearts of many of those that were listening. John didn't care what you thought about him, he was raised for a mission, he knew his part, and he spoke with zeal.

It was not many days later that he met and baptized the Christ of God.

In the early days of Jesus' ministry he began to journey north, some month or so after crossing back west from the wilderness on

the other side of Jordan, teaching along the way. Soon He found himself in Capernaum, and walking along the shore, sky cloudy, wind blowing, but a good day to travel, he saw two fishermen with their father Jonah, casting a net into the waters of Galilee. As he came closer he said to the younger men; "follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately Simon and Andrew looked at their dad, who shrugged his shoulders and then leaving their nets to follow him, asked as he looked upon His being with intrigue; "What shall we do Lord?" And he said; "change the world."

Simon had sensed an inner voice that spoke to him from the marrow of his bones, and for some odd reason he knew it was the right thing to follow this man, and he assumed Andrew felt the same. They talked for several hours. Jesus and the brothers, under the shade of the trees that grew within sight of the waters of Galilee; and later that evening, as Simon was taking Jesus to his meet his wife, a stir was heard. It was then, as they approached his home, with the sun over their left shoulders, that his wife came running out to meet him, and in an excited shrill voice, she commenced to telling them about her sick mother.

Now Simon was a hardworking man, he learned this by the labor of fishing with his dad Jonah ever since he could hold an oar at a very young age. Working, and working hard and long, was not one of Simons' problems, but the gnawing from the inside was. Since maybe the age of thirteen he had this gnawing from the inside that there was more to his life than just catching fish, which he dearly

loved. He felt something that continued to grow within him, a prickling, that was neither good nor bad, but was unrelenting and nearly constant, a feeling of knowing something that he just didn't quite know. He'd talked with his wife about this several times and he thought that she understood, at least as much as possible. Simon normally really didn't fret over what was going on inside him, but the inner voice, which was a quiet voice, was the steadiness of his life, the part that kept him uniform and grounded to the earth, and knew this time it was to be adhered too. The older of Jonah's sons was a reactor, for he seldom just responded to a situation, he would just plow into a problem and sort it out later, patching together the pieces as he went. This yearning within him would help as a reminder to keep his feet on the ground, which seldom happened, but it helped. Being raised loving the Lord God was established in him from his youth up, and he loved the stories of old, especially the accounts of King David. It was kind of like loving the Lord but not knowing how to love Him.

So when Jesus came up the shore of Galilee and said follow me, Simon knew, that leaving with this man of authority was what he was supposed to do, and he went with no hesitation.

After hearing of her mothers' sickness, Jesus and the young men went straight towards the center of town, and meeting James and John, all followed Him. But first stopped by the synagogue, as that was the direction Jesus led them. It was there that he healed a man of an unclean spirit. It was there that the four were amazed and questioned amongst themselves; "What is this? What new

doctrine is this? He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." And immediately they left the synagogue and went to Simons' mother-in-laws' home, where his wife was already by her

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