

Gird your Loins
Prequel to Eden 2
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Chapter 1

Even at an youthful stage of his life John Donsemore had molded in thought that his position of eagle scout was one of strength. He envisioned himself as an agent fulfilling a double role of an explorer capable of traversing the skies with the mobility of an eagle. Eagles he thought - they soar alone. A Christian ought to go by himself just him and God, keep on going. Eagles knock their young out of the nest when they're ready to fly. We need to not be Christian babies all of our lives. We need to get knocked out and get going. The claw of an eagle has strength - we need strength like that. This picture was inspired largely by his enthusiasm for the Bible made him feel strong. Eagles soar alone. He extrapolated this notion and resolved that he, being a Christian, ought to go by himself - just him and God, keep on going. Eagles knock their young out of the nest when they're ready to fly. He decided that he need not be a Christian baby his whole live. He needed to get knocked out and get going. The claw of an eagle has strength - he wanted to have strength like that.

He had hid much Scripture in his heart as the Bible, so whenever the need arose to guide someone he had a portfolio of verses and could extract a verse that he felt was suitable for a particular occasion.

2Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

He mentally reviewed his knowledge of this verse.

'word' - not your opinions. why? its living. Its inspired of God. Inspire people with it. It gives life.

'season' - be ready to go at any time. Sometimes it's hard. You cast plant in the wintertime but should be ready to preach at any time.

3 kinds of preaching

'reprove' - finding fault with, criticizing. carnality, sins

'rebuke' - a sharp reprimand, harder than a reprimand. you are telling them to stop something.

Titus 1:13 This witness is true. wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

'exhort' - exhortation. That's exhorting people to do right.

Give them scriptures on rewards. Messages on why we should witness. messages on heaven, considering them to live Godly considering what they have. Go do it! Encouraging them to do what's right.

How? with all longsuffering and doctrine. You need patience. Physical rewards are quicker, but when the rewards stop, they lose interest. when you reprove, rebuke be able to

back it up with the scriptures. Have the body of Christ (NT) to back it up. Make sure you rightly divide. Use Deuteronomy to preach on a woman wearing pants. You don't have the verse. Use 'modest apparel'. In Deuteronomy MEN were wearing short skirts. David wore a skirt so you can't tell a woman not to. In these situations it's better to preach that they should get their heart right with God then they'll know what to wear and do. You could say pants are associated with the world, but if a woman is carnal she will find a way to promote herself. If the individual is spiritual they will be careful about what they wear.

We should be doctrinally straight. Don't create a heresy to combat one. Don't reach against long hair and say Caesar had short hair. Jesus had long hair and he was an orthodox Jew. Don't spend a lot of time preaching on things you don't have a lot of verse on.

Titus 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Make sure your position is sound. Someone won't become spiritual just by cutting their hair. Rebuke the obvious things and preach on what Christians should do. People will conform to please the Lord. Operate on the heart and the attitude will line up right. Preach to the conscience where the Holy Spirit deals with an individual. Let the person make the decision. This is how he interpreted "get going". Equipping yourself with the whole armour of God and carrying the sword of the Lord to conduct spiritual warfare.

He digested all this. There was much sin in the world, and he reckoned that sin was the principle cause of the world's woes.

To compound the problem Man had shrouded himself in a state of apathy. He coursed inertly through the arteries of a beast-like machine which the Imperial government had constructed

On a rather mundane day Donesmore attempted to elevate his mood by engaging in some open air preaching to a small group that had assembled out of simple curiosity. The gathering attracted an Imperial combat robot. which vocally interjected into Donesmore's discourse on the advantage of study. The young Donesmore knew that these machines were state of the art for at this time the Empire's technology was very robust. The robotic mechanical speech was very discernable. Partly because of their pronunciation abilities robots were most frequently being touted as companions for humans.

However, unexpectedly, in this instance the robot interjected itself into Donesmore's discourse on the advantage of study, in particular studying the Scriptures. "The Proverbs are like little pills", he claimed, "one should be taken daily.

For your spiritual and yes, even your physical health. Yes, my friends study God's word!" His voice was filled with gusto.

The robot then interrupted the preaching. Donesmore's eyes widened, startled at what he was now witnessing. A cold chill ran through his body. He was trained not to lose his composure. Often hecklers would shout obscenities out of sheer malice trying to disrupt his preaching. The robot spoke in a calm soothing unmechanical voice "Friends, your Empire, in a treatise which will soon be taught in every one of your churches will put forth the proposition that studying is a fruitless endeavor.

2Timothy 2:15 No need to study to shew thyself approved by our array of gods, as they supply all the knowledge we need. You gain their approval only by given them sacrifices.

It read from the Imperial bible.

"For example why study history?" the robot opined why study an ancient historian like Wolfson when you can simply study his student Appleton. And why study Appleton when you can study his student Davinsky and so on. Knowledge obtained in that manner becomes increasingly current. But why not simply obtain the freshest historical knowledge from the Empire's knowledge banks, which the citizenry is instructed to do. "Forsake your personal initiatives!" the robot trumpeted; its circuitry emitting the eerie glow of a generated force field. However, unbeknownst to the public these banks are covertly authored by the Emperors propaganda ministry.

Donesmore knew that his church was still intact, untainted. But he wondered how the robot's message was derived and when his church would become

similarly contaminated. He had encountered a combat robot, not dedicated to personal assistance, but rather being used as what he could only term a propaganda tool of the Empire.

He quickly saw the need to segue into to physical warfare. "The robot hand, he noted, was clearly not designed to emulate a five-fingered human, but rather it had a large hook-like appendage designed to cradle a weapon or seize an object. His overriding concern however, was that it was manipulating the weapon that was capable of potentially doing the greatest damage - the sword of the Lord, the Bible.

His next move was to wisely contact a contemporary and church member Bob Rendly. Rendly was the optimum person to discuss robotics, as he actually served on the Imperial robotics consortium. Besides he was trustworthy. There was a strong bond between a membership, a membership strong in the sciences, who possessed of a wide array of military skills that were honed to the cutting edge

Armed with his ancient video recorder he began the verbal discourse with Rendly. "Bob, I was open air preaching when an Imperial combat robot joined the small assemblage gathered to hear my message." And he proceeded to describe what he

remembered about the robot. "This robot appeared to be programmed to join a group. It made me nervous".

"Yes. That fulfills an assessment directive. Tell me John how did you verify that this was a combat class robot?"

"Judging by its claw-like hand this robot wasn't designed to provide household companionship."

"This is a new paradigm. A combat robot entangling itself in a civilian setting. I can understand your queasiness. "

"That's not the half of it Bob. It actually started a diatribe. I was advocating the advantages of study and it launched into a bizarre conjecture that independent study was fruitless since ultimately one could access Empire libraries. It even used the aforementioned false scripture to support this premise.

"Why have you not examined an Imperial church to see what type of services they conduct and peruse their Imperial Bible?" demanded Rendly.

"I try to follow the true Jesus, spirit and gospel.

2Corinthians 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or [if] ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with [him].

"It is a perverted gospel (Galatians 1:7), and those who preach it are accursed (Galatians 1:8)." Donesmore replied sheepishly. "Bob I once labeled you as a baby "Christian. But I myself failed to try the spirits."

"What does that mean John." asked a puzzled Rendly.

"In case you're wondering Bob, trying the spirits doesn't mean sampling alcoholic beverages" Donesmore said jocularly.

"Obviously not if you're immersed in it." said Rendly in a deadpan tone.

"Again allow me to consult the word of God not my own erroneous musings.

1John 4:5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

'They' - the false prophets

Two other ways to try the spirits -

The Spirit of God talks about Jesus Christ and His work in heaven, not about the world and eternal things.

1) if what he says is worldly

2) the people that hear him our worldly

1John 4:6]] We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

'We are of God' - so the world won't listen to us; gives good assurance that you're saved

A Christian will hear the things of God.

'error' - they speak about the world and won't hear us

Note: The Holy Spirit is the one that teaches all truth.

That's the overriding point in this entire fiasco.

"Donesmore" Bob replied indignantly. "Get real. Nobody asked you to indulge in a false gospel. But rather than shield yourself from it you must attack it. Don't be naïve. If combat robots are discouraging independent study it is only to entrap the citizenry in the cocoon they've created, a machine that swallows citizens and spits out a fully compliant, unambitious person that can easily be molded by the Empire.

"I guess I'm not the mighty eagle I envision myself to be.

"Perhaps we are both baby Christians."

"Perhaps." Donesmore said reflectively. "But your audaciousness supersedes my own. You are encouraging me to stand tall. It's Bible."

1Thessalonians 5:11 wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

"Jesus Christ has had the door slammed against Him against Him and locked (Revelation 3:20) in these last days so an individual has to go to it and OPEN it to have fellowship with Him (Rev. 3:20). So Christians must encourage one another."

"Let's not meander John. I see that tendency developing in you. I'm glad I can instill the fighting spirit in you John because you seem to be glossing over the principal of this problem, which is the atypical and in my judgment dangerous behavior of the combat robots.

"Surely you know the inner workings of these machines. I understand you were on the Imperial committee that developed them."

"True. When the Empire was a democracy I was eager to work for them. In my case it was in the robotics laboratory. But my suspicions were raised because even though the overall purpose of the robots was benevolent, the Empire was modifying their defense capabilities with a self-preservation directive that couldn't be safely overridden."

"But surely you know how to override it?"

"No. Research was very compartmentalized. Only the upper echelon had access to the full project. I have no idea how to override their protective mechanism."

"But doesn't that hinder research. Shouldn't an open discussion of a project spur optimum benefit?"

"Yes, but even a flourishing government strives for control.

'So you're it sounds like you're saying that the robots are a dangerous force, not created for personal companionship?"

"Like nothing. That's exactly what I'm saying. Let me ask you, at your gathering when the robot join the group did you make any effort to dispatch it elsewhere?"

"No. I made no physical contact with it."

"My question was rhetorical?"

"How so?"

“Because if you made the slightest bit of physical contact with it, you would have been killed by its lazer stun gun and we wouldn’t even be having this conversation.

“Physical warfare is hardly my expertise Bob.

“Time is a critical factor here John.”

“What do you mean?”

“Man has become very complacent, shrouded in the Empire’s cocoon-like protection. Technology has advanced to the point where physical exertion is no longer mandatory. There’s no need to walk. Merely step on walkways that exist everywhere. Domestically a robot does the menial work – cook, clean, lift, chairs elevate their occupant to their bed, where one simply topples in. Conveyer belts deliver meals. Stairways are obsolete as atomic elevators are the standard.

“That sounds very positive Bob.”

“Until you consider that this cocoon, I call it machine, produces people that are merely mindless droids without ambition. Not to mention the unconsidered by-product of Imperial cocoon-like existence – overpopulation.

“How so?”

“This cocoon is a giant machine insulating those in it from the dangers of war, plague, famine by providing an overall healthier environment. Realistically the dangers I mentioned result in population control. Without these checks we will end up being food shortages, the infrastructure will be overstressed leading to uncontrollable “civil unrest. The government and state will try to control all citizens through laws, police, spying and force, but eventually they will be unable to. The ‘machine’ as I call it, will break down from overload. Simply put – the demand will exceed the supply.”

”It sounds dire for the Empire.

”Let me reiterate ‘the demand would exceed the supply’. The citizens will suffer as well.”

‘Surveillance has informed me of chatter among the Imperial aristocracy about a long range plan to relocating a portion of the population.’

“Why isn’t it ASAP? It sounds to me like the need is urgent.”

“It sounds like the salvation speech you gave me John.”

“I don’t concoct my messages out of thin air. I use the word of God.”

Jude 3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

There is a sense of urgency here. ‘earnestly contend for the faith’ – Jude now switches gears (through the Holy Spirit) to talk about the common faith. This book is a book of warning. Earnestly contending for something is fighting and giving your all for this faith.”

"John there is a sense of urgency with the Empire and its machine. If this machine stops there will be global havoc and much death, which according to your Bible many will die unsaved and subsequently they will be killed."

"The operative word here is 'destroyed' Bob. If the citizens are denied the knowledge of the truths of God and instead are fed a steady diet of Imperial propaganda. If one remains ignorant of certain truths regarding God and salvation from sin the results will be eternally disastrous! Now, we who are Christians should not be ignorant of these truths since we have the Bible to reveal these truths to us."

"How can Christianity ever spread when combat robots are programming to intercede in gatherings of citizens and the land is being flooded with false Bibles?"

"I read about a pre _Empire account of an organized scripture drop over a tiny country called the Vatican, I think.

"The name rings a bell from my studies of Church history. And it reminds me of a Bible parable called 'The Sower'

"I see it as spiritual warfare taking on somewhat physical properties.", uttered Rendly.

"I'm really in a conundrum Bob. False Bibles are infiltrating the land. Christian churches are suffering adulteration. Open-air preaching is being discouraged and the ranks of Christianity are being decimated.

"The Empire must be toppled, but that seems like an insurmountable task."

"My church is simply brimming with talent. It's a consortium of survivalists and each one is a military grade pilot."

"Is everybody saved? which Bible is utilized?"

"Actually the building where we gather call is a church. Up until now it served as excellent camouflage, as the Empire only recently regarded religion as merely 'the opiate of the masses' not a tool to midpalate the citizenry.

"Now we have to constantly relocate in order to preserve our prime mission.

"Which is?" huffed Donesmore.

"We are cataloguing signs of an Empire in decline and crudely projecting its future. The technological decline is alarming to say the least.

"It sounds like your men are practicing the same passivity you accuse me of."

"Hardly!" Rendly snapped. "What does the Bible say about hearing, but not doing?"

James 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

"My men are doing more than gazing into a mirror if that's the gist of your words. We study Empire technology when it was at its pinnacle, with the purpose of retaining an expertise in that

technology and even building on it when feasible. But at the very least we're on the cutting edge."

"For example?"

"Atomic power is regressing to the point where it isn't incorporated into machinery anymore."

"Why not?"

"Knowledge banks were no longer stored on paper, but on hard disk drives which failed during some kind of global blackout, although I'm not entirely convinced what caused it. Engineers claim massive holodeck use led to this catastrophe. Although the holodecks were designed to provide scientists with the required atmosphere to carry out their research, the overcrowded population, free of the constraints of moral guideposts provided by the Bible, became very lackadaisical and sinful. The holodecks consume massive amounts of energy. The Empire viewed their use as providing an opiate to the masses. In other words - keep them satisfied - a recipe to control them more easily. But in the interval until fresh sources of power could be obtained, religious control, gaslighting, and drugs were employed.

Needless to say, once the holodecks were again fully functional and the citizens began to flock to them in droves. Forced attendance via combat robots was no longer necessary, freeing them to carry out patrolling duties. Disrupting all open-air preaching was unfortunately one of their new directives, as was destroying any structure that resembled a non-imperial church. Of course, the Imperial bible was augmented so Empire policies became attributed to God and His promises to Christians were either concealed or totally eliminated. Even becoming a Christian was touted to be a traitorous act."

"Are you telling me preaching took place on holodecks? That wouldn't have any credibility with even the most naive citizen."

"No! Holodeck material is always planted subliminally. The church buildings is where the physical preaching from the physical Imperial bible are employed."

"What about my church?" Donesmore asked passionately.

"External church buildings topped with crucifix and stained glass windows are targeted for elimination and the holodeck protocol will subliminally instill in the citizenry the desire to attend Imperial churches and encourage the belief in an array of Imperial gods. Polytheism has been endorsed by the Empire over monotheism. ."

"In this scenario no one will ever achieve salvation. I can't see anyone getting saved."

"Cease your crying. John you accused my men of gazing into a mirror. Currently there are 10 billion citizens entrapped in a dying machine devoid of an actual Bible. All this on a technologically declining overpopulated world. Your street-preaching is rapidly being banned.

Your church will soon be assimilated into the global network of Imperial churches. Stop staring into a looking glass'. Gird your loins!

"That's very astute of you Bob.

"To "gird up the loins" means to tighten your waist belt, but in this instance it is a figurative expression: "gird up the loins of your mind." Whenever the Scriptures use the expression as in Job 38:3, 40:7, and Jeremiah 1:17, it means to prepare yourself properly; to get ready to do something. the word "gird" is used to mean "strengthen." So when you "gird up the loins of your mind," you are preparing your mind and strengthening your mind...When Peter says "gird up the loins of your mind," he is telling us to prepare ourselves and strengthen ourselves with the word of God."

"Well John, you can recite the words most profoundly. In my world actions speak louder than words. You once described yourself as an eagle, who swooped down on his enemies, who's claws possessed great strength. The time for metaphorically fantasies is over."

"Don't mince words."

"I feel you are urging me to become a space cruiser pilot."

"You're placing boundaries on yourself. Don't restrict yourself to piloting a space barge. The Empire is at its height at producing galaxy class starships. It's really a brief window, however. Space travel is being increasingly neglected, being replaced by simulations in a holodeck."

"I cannot believe Mankind's desire to explore is evaporating."

"Well, the number of starship pilots has dwindled down to six. The number of space navigators has similarly declined. Mankind are essentially the corpuscles which circulate through the arteries of the machine. Holodecks can transport The Empire one anywhere. Mankind is having all their ambition eradicated. The Empire prefers this condition as it makes people more pliable."

"Useless is a more precise word." Donesmore snorted.

"I'm motivated 100%. what else can you contribute to this frantic situation?"

"My church is jam packed with a collection of tech savvy people. They possess knowledge that the Empire failed to maintain. They have even superseded many facets of Imperial knowledge.

"Why do you refer to your group as a church Bob? How did that appellation come about?"

"You're going to quibble with me over semantics John? You should be compelled to deal with the crisis confronting us."

"The word "church" means "gathering", in the Greek "ecclesial" My team is a gathering, a church." Bob said dryly. "And furthermore we study the True Bible and hold prayer meetings."

"I don't mean to nitpick Bob, but a church needs a pastor. You seem to have accumulated a lot of Bible knowledge. Did you have any training?"

Donesmore sensed where this was going. It invoked a kaleidoscope of emotions travelling through his mind. 'get going, pastor, pilot ambition, salvation, combat robots. church...' Finally he could constrain himself no longer. "Lord, how do I implement all this. I beseech You. May the Holy Spirit that indwells me I pray you teach me, guide me" he burst aloud, his voice full of trepidation.

"Compose yourself John" stammered Rendly. Your concerns have been dealt with. My church boys have infiltrated the Imperial aristocracy."

"How can that be done?" replied Donesmore, regaining his composure.

"The strategy to accomplish all this has been coalescing on my mind since you initially contacted me. Firstly, my church is not a conventional structure like you would imagine a church to appear. Didn't you once state that the church is not the building, but the people inside? And in a local church not everyone is necessarily saved? " Well, our building is an underground bunker making it exempt from robotic destruction as the robots are programmed to only search the surface. All members study the True Bible, all are saved. The icing on the cake is that all are pilots."

"The church pilots." Almost an oxymoron if one didn't know better."

"I like the name, but I should point out that no one has starship level skill.

:Why?"

"Because it's not needed for our level of surveillance. We exist to scrutinize the Empire and we are dedicated to foiling their every move. Like I said, they have pretty much abandoned the desire for space travel. They are content to live vicariously."

"Really. The bible says the Universe is meant to be populated."

Isaiah 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I [am] the LORD; and [there is] none else.

"That's all the more reason to compel you to become a starship captain. Here we sit on this overcrowded world when there's a gigantic Universe God says He formed it to be populated." Rendly huffed. "You shouldn't require any further motivation. The way I see it you have clear orders to get in the game."

"Yes." said a fatigued Donesmore.

"But John, this begs the question. How can we travel light years to reach even the nearest star using rockets that shoot flames out their tails for propulsion and a body with a limited lifespan? A scientist answered that that light years could be travelled by using gravity to bend the fabric of space, bringing two points closer. But he stated it was beyond our technology to

implement this. Obviously he knew of no way to extend the human life span. And we did say that the 6,000 years of Man were to end in approximately 2000 AD. So this is the 'end times So why did God say the Universe was formed to be inhabited if we can't explore it?

"Bob, God's answer is more pragmatic, but requires a commitment from us. By accepting Jesus Christ as your Saviour you can reap the rewards (the unearned ones) upon His return, (Second Coming). They include eternal life and a glorified body (like His) and the ability to travel immense distances (like He Can). Old Testament salvation was earned - obey the Law. But now, fortunately for us, salvation is a gift. You must admit you're a sinner then accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour."

"John, I'm aware of the salvation aspect, but I didn't know about the glorified body."

"That's precisely why your church needs a pastor. To preach to the gathering, explain Christian responsibilities and carry out organized prayer meetings and Bible studies. As for the glorified body it is an unearned reward of salvation."

"When can we expect these rewards."

"At the Rapture. I'll be happy to explain it to you Bob, but right now we have to stay current."

"Well as I said, my thoughts have coalesced into an effective strategy."

With a high degree of anxiety Donesmore managed to squeeze out "Proceed sir." tagging on the honorific habitually."

"One of my boys is sort of a double agent within the Empire, privy to most of their dubious schemes. He can pull some strings to get you into interstellar flight school. The art is rapidly diminishing as neighboring worlds are distancing themselves (pardon the pun) from the planet Earth for religious reasons. 'It sounds counterintuitive. You say the Empire has instilled the notion that travel is unnecessary and rather they promotes vicarious 'expeditions'."

"The supply and demand situation is dire, but believe me when I say their gods are making material demands they fear they won't be able to satisfy without searching the heavens for resources will surely be the needed catalyst for space travel."

"The True God can no longer be placated with material sacrifices only Christians sacrificing themselves."

1Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

"Paul is going to ask each Christian to do something based on the preeminence of Christ. Since "all things" are "of him, and

through him, and to him," then we ought to give our bodies to the Lord as living sacrifices. The word "beseech," in verse 1, means that Paul is begging them, he is pleading earnestly with them. He pleads on the basis of God's mercies. If you think of how much mercy the Lord has shown you, then it is only "reasonable" that you give Him your body to control. God knows the Devil has had it long enough without giving you any benefit at all. Notice: you are to give God your body, not your life. That's the modern terminology: "Give Christ your life"; "give your life to Christ." It's not a Bible expression; it's like the word share. It is over-used by speakers and is found nowhere in the Bible."

"Well, the gods of the aristocracy make material demands."

"God hates idolatry:

Habakkuk 2:18 what profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols?

Habakkuk 2:19 woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it [is] laid over with gold and silver, and [there is] no breath at all in the midst of it."

"Nevertheless the Empire is commissioning starship pilots to scour the nearby Universe for gems and the like."

"Rendly, I hope you don't endorse Polytheism.

"Well, I wondered about it then concluded that having many gods handling the task they specialize in seems very clever and efficient.

"Your church really needs a pastor Bob. The Bible says otherwise:

Deuteronomy 5:7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

"God clearly disapproves of Polytheism."

"Why is it practiced?"

"The belief in multiple gods is probably the result of an earlier belief in vaguely defined spirits, demons and other supernatural forces."

"So multiple gods make multiple demands which the Empire can no longer satisfy."

"Seriously my desire to travel the Universe was not to engage in treasure hunt."

"If you can get your foot in the door then seize the opportunity."

"Why the dearth of perspective candidates.

"The lack of qualified starship pilots and the fear of leaving the security of the cocoon."

"You mean the machine!" John ejaculated.

"Mankind has no ambition." Rendly lamented.

"Bob. Ambition is a crucial part of many people's success. Despite the dark side to how it's perceived, ambition can be seen as the fuel that powers someone to the heights of success! To reframe

our thinking around ambition, we shouldn't be concerned about how ambitious we should or shouldn't be.

"Thanks for the philosophy lesson John, or is that a remnant of one of your sermons? Let's focus on your starship ability."

"I have 0 hours in a starship."

"We can remedy that to some extent. We have a double agent, I'll call him Q, embedded deep in the Imperial aristocracy."

"How did you manage that?"

"Originally he was a member of their aristocracy, the so-called noble class of the Empire, their upper echelon."

"How did you coerce him to engage in such treasonous behaviors?"

"I did no such thing. He was so repulsed by the Empire's genetic cleansing initiative that he wanted no part of the Imperial system. This was before the development of the cocoon or machine as you call it and before Imperial churches began to pepper the landscape with false religion. And defiantly before combat robots became a concern. Enough of a history lesson!"

"I assume the genetic cleansing never took place. I assume that because the overpopulation problem still runs rampant,"

"My church strongly prayed that it would never happen. I'm certain you would have prayed too had you been aware of it."

"I will join you in intercessory prayer. And the two men prayed for justice for all Mankind and that the Empire's tyranny would be constrained until it can be successfully obliterated."

"Intercessory prayer"

"The ministry of intercessory prayer is the most negative ministry in the church. Church is like a family. We all need to pray for one another. It's a very important thing to do."

"Do you have an example? Of course, you do."

Ester 8:5 And **said**, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing [seem] right before the king, and I [be] pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which [are] in all the king's provinces:

'said' - her intercessory prayer

'pleasing' - she's flattering him, putting it all on him

The problem - The law decrees they die. You can't reverse the law. It's the law that needs inversions. Like you can't reverse the law of God - not under law but you [can do] it under grace. To do it under law would be to reverse the law, to make the law void. God had to do it in a way that wouldn't nullify the law. So He devised grace - just pure mercy. And He fulfilled the law. The king isn't about to do that but that's what God did.

"John you're a walking Bible encyclopedia."

"Like I said:

2Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.””

“I hope you can master starship capabilities that well.”

“In both situations people’s lives can be at stake.”

“Alright! Let’s refocus. My mind is in full bloom meandering.”

“I have that same affliction Bob.”

“Nice to know we have something in common.” Rendly said with a tinge of sarcasm in his voice.”

“We both want to topple the Empire .” Donesmore reasoned.

“Very sagacious thinking John.”

“Now Q has full retina scan access to the starship pilot’s training simulator. He says it will give you an advantage over anyone else the Empire can dredge up to pilot a starship. I actually can’t envision they have a feasible candidate, as the aristocracy has none and the mind-depleted citizens are incapable and unmotivated, Besides no one wants to risk their life going into space on a scavenger hunt to placate an alleged array of gods . You’ll be leagues above the competition.

“How will I know I’m the recipient of a starship?”

“The fact that you’re granted simulator use implies you’re training to be a captain.

“It will be a grueling boot camp, so I advise you to bulk up that frame.”

“Yes sir.”

“And develop a facial scowl. It will put respect and trepidation into your future crew. I don’t know where you’ll get a crew, but I suspect they’ll largely be convicts aiming to reduce their sentences through service.”

“Now you got me nervous.”

“You must build on their fearlessness and pray that it can be transferred to you by osmosis.”

“OK. I’ll try.”

“Is there anything to help pilot a starship in the Bible.’. Rendly asked rhetorically?”

“In the Book of Ezekiel the prophet described a flying disc that came from the north (“a wheel in the middle of a wheel”) and hovered over the land. The color was metallic, he said. And although some translations of the Bible describe the “eyes” of the apparition, a correct interpretation shows that Ezekiel likened these openings to “windows.” This “wheel” was no mere vision. It was real. It was God’s work. It was a spaceship.

“Ezekiel saw something,” he said. “The children of Israel saw something. The wheel was a flying chariot. The ancient astronaut theory, sees Ezekiel’s “vision” of the Merkabah, or wheeled chariot, as more likely to be a spaceship or space shuttle used by an advanced species to reach out to humans.”

“How does that boost your arial skills?” Bob was now perturbed.

“Bob, I grow weary. Nevertheless. This was a very productive day.”

“Where is your home John.’ asked a concerned Rendly. The two men had formed a strong bond.

“I’ve fashioned the spare room in my church to be a bedroom.”

“The traditional appearance of your church can only attract combat robots, who will certainly demolish your church. They seem to be replicating, driven by Imperial frustration.”

“By replicating you mean their number is growing?”

“Obviously!” Rendly snapped.

“Forgive me, I’m growing weary.”

“Forgive me. I must be more compassionate ...” Then he froze mid-sentence. “I just had an epiphany John! A rudimentary, yet pragmatic solution to both our problems. Hear me out.”

Suddenly John’s ears perked up replacing his insipid expression.

“I’ll allocate church sized space for your conjugation. True Bibles, hymnals pews and a robust pulpit. All the necessary amenities.”

“What if your conjugation expands.”

“That’s hardly imminent. Very few qualified people exist out there.”

“Shouldn’t church doors be open to all?”

“They are, but membership is another story. We’re running a covert operation there John. Trying to salvage people’s lives and their liberty. “Give them a chance to seek salvation. Aren’t those substantially the goals a church tries to fulfill? It’s not perfect, I know, but I can’t strive for idealism in these treacherous times.”

“I understand Bob. How can I ever repay your generosity?”

“Simple you can pastor my church. We’ll stagger the schedule. I could hold afternoon services and you can avail yourself to Sunday mornings.”

“That’s reasonable. I enjoy interacting with the saints.” and the two men shook hands, finalizing the deal.”

Thus Donesmore departed to familiarize himself with his new quarters.

His mind swirled as he tried to calmly digest the day’s events. All that prattle about being a soaring eagle swooping down on his prey could come to fruition. Command of a starship, He questioned whether he was more qualified than a depleted citizen, who cruised through the machine with his neighbors. But he was being given an opportunity and he knew he shouldn’t squander it. Tomorrow he would fill his mind with space terminology and would devote much effort to performing well in the simulator, He ended the day praying for God’s to give him wisdom, courage and guidance.

Chapter 2

Donesmore awoke to the demanding sounds of various machinery. The clatter of drills and the whir of some kind of winch, he couldn't perceive the type. It was a working day although every day must necessarily be a working day in the decaying Empire. He speculated that they were possibly drilling in the vain attempt to satisfy the sacrifices of their gods. 'Lots of luck!' he thought. The gods deliberately requested items that couldn't be obtained on Earth. Then he mentally scolded himself. The lame citizens imagined that their lifeless gods of wood and stone were requesting sacrifices. Then he came to his senses. 'How vital it is that the citizens know the *living* God and the salvation He freely offers. He now had a perspective on the staggering burden with which he had been bestowed.

His intent was to seek out a good technological library. So he donned his clothing and proceed to an Imperial library. It wasn't difficult to find one, ass he just had to punch his desired destination into a small computer which was part of the mobile walkway unit. "If the Empire is declining the decline must be just starting" he reasoned silently.

But he needed no further confirmation as soon as he perused the available research material. How could he prepare for the simulator with this lack of prowess? He proceeded to a phone booth and attempted to contact Rendly. Bob, this is John. I can't find the materials necessary in the Imperial library." "Don't be naïve John. The party line is for the citizens to live vicariously. They have no need to be concerned with piloting a starship obviously. Anyway I'm pleased that you took in upon yourself to do some independent digging."

"Hebrews 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

"I learned to diligently seek the truth. True there is a scant mount of starship piloting paraphernalia to be found in Empire libraries, but in diligently scouring through old, stacks I did uncover some germane information about pitch, yaw, attitude control and some particulars about warp drive."

"I don't mean to deflate your hopes regarding velocity, but even in their prime the Empire can barely achieve work one."

"Then I must be content with that.", Donesmore replied gloomily.

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content.

"The answer man. I hope you can master a starship so well!"

"I'm just digging diligently."

"In my church diligently means meticulously."

"100%, but don't your men have current documentation on Imperial starships. I thought your men kept on the cutting edge of

technology and retained knowledge of the Empire when it was at its finest?"

"We have all the reference material we could grasp. It's stored in a mode which is camouflaged from all except the few that can access it or even recognize it. It's above and beyond retina scan access conformation and Imperial intelligence, pardon the oxymoron."

"Please elaborate." Donesmore was intrigued by the idea and was intent on leaning more. "Could you teach me how read the data You have shrouded so well."

"Let me give you the basics. Our men developed a method to convert paper documents to what is known as hyperscript. It was were difficult and time consuming to implement this."

"The name has a rather volatile ring to it."

"You must adopt space jargon. It's more important than your adopting a gruff weathered exterior. Muscular too I think I specified. Nobody is expecting you not to be you, but it's helpful that you appear to be a seafarer."

"I catch your meaning. The word 'astronaut comes from nautical or seafaring."

"So., you should be cognizant of the fact that the word 'hyper' has a deep space connotation. hyperspace (also known as nullspace, subspace, and similar terms) is a concept relating to higher dimensions as well as parallel universes and a faster-than-light (FTL) methods of interstellar travel. Hyperspace is described as a higher dimension through which the shape of our three-dimensional space can be distorted to bring distant points close to each other, similar to the concept of a wormhole; or a shortcut-enabling parallel universe that can be travelled through. It is a robust example of the lingo a deep space traveler should , like you say, 'hid it in his heart'."

"Now you're speaking my lingo."

"I'm thrilled to hear that!"

"Why not let me study your detailed hyperscript manuals?"

Donesmore asked forcefully.

"Reading hyperscript is a complex endeavor. Very few possess the ability. Needless to say, the Empire 'scientists are unable. When my church was above ground in the time before the Empire flexed its ignorant muscles to savagely rule the planet an Imperial inspector glared at my hundreds of hyperspace bottles and couldn't comprehend what they were. "Are you worried about a power outage."

"I gave him a puzzled look."

"Why do you need so many lava lamps then?"

"The point is no one not schooled in hyperscript can discern what a hyperscript vessel is, let alone extract its contents. The Achilles heel is that we're not yet capable of transporting hyperscript material across space."

what's the alternative?"

“Multi-layered encryption and retina scan verification.”

“So, can I study the hyperscript dealing with starship operations.”

“No. Discerning the information requires a special talent when you command a starship you should be fluent in reading hyperscript by default. Now however, be adept at piloting a starship.”

“Why me?” Donesmore said dryly. “It’s not that I don’t want to. Just the opposite. I crave that skill – exploring the Universe. It’s my dream. My men are more focused on earthly concerns. I had an intuition about you. But I’m meandering. The simulator has a small library of operation manuals. Our agent will give you access to the simulator before anyone else, although I don’t know what citizen has the motivation or frankly the capability to manipulate such a device. You’ll probably be alone.”

“Then why should I do advanced study and have a gruff appearance?”

“To be prepared for any contingency! Rendly barked in a frightening tone that made Donesmore audibly gasp.

“Sorry to be so shrill John. The dictatorship component of the Imperial government is growing in leaps and bounds. We need a starship in the event they want to relocate a portion of the population. As I indicated to you earlier, my boys have picked up that kind of chatter.”

“It sounds like a very perilous undertaking!”

“That’s because it is!!” Rendly stammered. “So gird your loins!”

“Yes sir.” Donesmore bowed obsequiously.

“I may be onboard undercover in the future just to keep you on your toes.”

“For the adventure, no doubt.” Donesmore thought silently.

“Am I dismissed?”

“No need for military parlance John.”

“We’ve scheduled you for the starship simulator on Friday. I hope they clean the cobwebs off before then. Work on your swagger. Strut in that room like a worldly man.” And he paused. “Just in case.”

The five day wait arrived rather quickly. Anticipation tends to warp one’s sense of time. Oddly enough Donesmore’s dreams were devoid of Bible events. He wondered why, but simply shrugged his shoulders. “Hardly worth ruminating about”, he concluded., as he donned a, makeshift casual outfit, which included combat style boots, something he detested and surely his feet did too. He brandished a large eagle tattoo, though he prompted to get a navel tattoo, although he acquired an eagle swooping down, claws extended to capture some prey. That brought back his eagle scout memories. It was washable, of course. He purchased a dozen.

A robot driven cab delivered him on the long ride to the simulation room, which was located in the Empire's capitol city of Gomorrah. There were apartment buildings so tall they appeared to pierce the thick envelop of smog that blanketed the city. He tested the robot by asking why the buildings were so tall. "Overcrowding." it replied in a disappointing broken voice that was hardly sublime. But I see a lot of pristine land on the large hill which overlooks the city. "The Imperial Castle." The robot replied curtly.

The Aviator building was kind of dilapidated. It was clearly neglected. "From underuse as space travel was not being promoted in any way, not exhorting but frowned upon by the aristocracy." But Donesmore evaluated city infrastructure as generally robust. "Hopefully I won't have to wear this paraphernalia any time soon. But that was not to be the case.

In his bulky clothing and unstable boots he managed to walk at a fairly brisk pace to the Aviator building. Surprisingly security was scant and there were no metal detectors to be seen. In a way that was second nature to him, Donesmore quickly surveyed the room for spyware but none was visible. His church boys had developed some remarkable video and audio spyware that could actually send a message alerting the installer that it was being removed. It had some kind of state of the art motion detector embedded in its micro-computer inner workings.

He entered the simulator room to find a huge device replete with multiple viewscreens. The console had a number of protruding widgets. Nestled on the wall was an operator's library. As he was the only occupant he decided to peruse the small library titled 'Operating Instructions'. He digested such terminology as pitch, roll, yaw and spin." He was distressed at seeing the warp scale only went as high as 2 and it red-lined above 1.5. But he had been forewarned. The library explained that above warp 1.5 serious hull breeches were experienced. "Well, it's all relative he thought, :Even at warp 10 only an insignificant amount of the Universe could be broached. But on the other hand speed wasn't the main limitation. Much more so the human life span.", he reasoned. He dreamed of the glorified body. It had no limitations. He was beginning to drift into a day dream when he heard the clatter of a new pair of feet. "at least I have a reason for my buff appearance" he thought. But his countenance fell when he saw it was a diminutive young man about his age. "Did you lose your way?" Donesmore queried, trying to be very nonchalant to offset his loud clothing.

"Is this the starship simulation room?", the young man tried. "Yes it is." Donesmore confirmed. "But I didn't expect a citizen to come here.

"My name is Ito Leopold II. You are more coarse than any citizen I've encountered."

“Donesmore was rattled, which he made every effort to conceal. “This is Emperor Leopold’s son.” He realized silently. “The underground church would love to interrogate him.” But if he was simply abducted there would be a crushing retaliation that would be very costly. The end doesn’t always justify the means. He decided diplomacy might yield valuable information that that the underground church’s planted eyes and ears could never extract.

“Mr. Leopold are you voluntarily taking on the task of hyperspace travel? If so, you’re to be commended for your courage.”

“Yeah, I guess it does take courage to do what we’re doing.

Habitually, Donesmore suddenly morphed into a preacher.

“It takes courage to do right, to face an enemy, just to face the sins in your own life admit some things that you’ve done wrong. It takes courage to be a Christian.”

“My father is Deity, as are many of the upper-crust aristocracy. I am under their protective dome, so to speak. That pretty much saves me from any harm the gods. As for Christians, they are the scourge of the Empire. I hope you realize that.” said Leopold.

“Donesmore decided that the only viable path was to not get into a debate on the virtues of Christianity, but to focus on performing in the simulator. “Does the end justify means?” he pondered. He decided the big goal of freeing billions of citizens was paramount. Delving into a debate on Christianity would have resulted in impending doom for his mission. With that he departed to the simulator. Ito Leopold sat on his right.

The view screens showed various obstacles a starship may encounter in hyperspace. Donesmore had hid the reference manuals in his heart. He was well skilled at memorization, as he was taught to be prepared to in an ‘instant’ produce germane Scripture to suggest to someone how a given problem could be dealt with in a godly manner. Thus, he was quite adept at utilizing the massive array of controls to resolve any situation that appeared on the simulator’s screens. He turned to the Bible. What could he extract regarding ship navigation? He probed his memory.

James 3:4 Behold also the ships, which though [they be] so great, and [are] driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

'governor' - the driver

A ship may 'list' to one side or the other.

Illustration: the small helm controls the big ship The tongue controls the direction of a man in this life and the next life.

“Wow! You’re clever John or should I say Mr. Donesmore. I knew you were worldly as soon as I laid eyes on you. I wish I could be like you. Too sheltered I guess.”

“Alas, I have a skill for which there is scarcely a demand.”

Young Leopold admired Donesmore. He had a worldly Aire about him. He was capable, competent and appeared to be fearless. His demeanor was unlike anything, as Leopold his pedigree insulated him from cold reality.

"To be a navigator you must have well-honed decision-making skills, analytical skills, interpretation skills, and writing skills. To become a navigator, you can learn this by military training like I did." Donesmore enunciated to Leopold firmly. It wasn't a lie. He considered his service, as a Christian soldier fighting a spiritual war to be completely analogous. After all blood is shed in both instances.

"Your skills may find a residency" Leopold said with surprisingly mature vocabulary.

"How so?" Donesmore perked up and was overly attentive.

"The latest chatter circulating among the Emperor's advisors is that a segment of the population should be relocated to solve the current overcrowding problem, which, quite frankly, is creating considerable logistics problems for the Empire."

"Logistics problems? This supersedes our entire intelligence gathering industry." Donesmore crooned silently. Then he remembered the word 'chatter' being used by an underground church agent, who was once attached to the Empire upper echelon. "We operate by achieving absolute control." Leopold concluded.

"You're meaning is absolute power. The consensus among thinking people is that absolute power corrupts absolutely."

"Yes, the somewhat offended Leopold sighed. "But the Imperium concedes that overpopulation negates some of our strength. Thus, the need to relocate a segment of the population."

"What about relocating people to the periphery planets?"

"The governments of those worlds don't subscribe to our governmental philosophy." Ito lamented.

"Another nugget of espionage" Donesmore thought, "This guy obviously wasn't well schooled in controlling his mouth."

"Is it viable to continue with this discourse?" Donesmore wondered. Then he decided it would be counter-productive to the overall mission. "Besides a pastor isn't exactly a spy."

So he wisely proceeded to the simulator room with Leopold in tow. His edgy feeling did not conform to his aggressive style of clothing. He considered this dichotomy and simply shrugged his shoulders. "The ensemble had done its job" Donesmore reasoned, as his image instilled a degree of both fear and respect in Leopold, who admired what he reckoned was Donesmore's worldliness, although it was instilled in Donesmore to never possess such a quality 'Be no part of this world' he was taught. He was anxious to begin the simulation, rather than dwell on his character. His mind was meandering, as it has a tendency to do. Leopold was staring at him relentlessly, anxious to begin the simulation. "Undoubtedly my father deemed any regular citizen

incompetent to take on this task. "Or this some kind of initiation" he wondered.

Donesmore's final exhortation was to quote the ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu. He had also followed Tzu's advice on many occasions.

"Remember Every battle is won before it's ever fought."

- Sun Tzu

It was a cunning statement, Donesmore couldn't strongly fathom what it meant in a physical combat sense, since as a pastor he was schooled in spiritual warfare. It seemed that if psychological warfare was being employed on the enemy that that could significantly weaken the enemy to the extent you could achieve victory before the physical battle even begins. He had the word of God, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, to psychologically defeat an enemy by making them feel their actions were ungodly and therefore wrong. However he reasoned that this enemy, who worshipped an array of gods, possessed a consciousness that was already seared, thus they couldn't be defeated psychologically. The well-honed fleet of combat robots was a factor in the enemy's toolchest. The Empire was technologically overpowering which instantly reminded him of another strategist's quote about using the enemy's resources to compensate for your lack of resources. He decided to hide that bit of wisdom in his heart, something that he was very adept at doing, as he had hid many scriptures in a similar fashion.

Leopold was growing restless, skittering back and forth across the room, letting out an accompanying snort at every iteration.

Donesmore, observing this rant said "You have to learn to be more patient. You can't have patience without hope. God has promised them things and since his promises are true, they have learned to have more patience. The more you trust God with problems, the more you know he's going to work things out, the more patience you will have.

Leopold took this as criticism. "Our god of joy and contentment tells us that patience can only be achieved when all your enemies are subdued and you have total control over them. This overpopulation dilemma has caused the Emperor be snappy to all of his underlings, me included."

Donesmore was getting more valuable insight this time into what he viewed as the Empire's fragile emotional state. He wisely decided not to broach the subject any further. 'We have to find the weak cogs in the 'machine' he thought.

While Donesmore still had Leopold's respect he decided the judicious move was to usher him into the simulation room as rapidly as possible. He had exceeded his quota for intelligence gathering. Time to move ahead. Leopold was also anxious to fulfill the task bestowed on him by the Empire. Yes! The Empire. He felt a chill in his body. It caused him to trumpet in a loud

voice “Our entire Empire is depending on me. I’m gushing with pride.”

“Pride was the original sin!” Donesmore blurted out instinctively, not considering the consequences.

“Pride is a virtue” retorted Leopold. The good book says: 1John 2:16 For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are the powers of the Imperial world.

Donesmore knew immediately this nonsense had to be from the Imperial bible. He could no longer restrain himself. “Does your Bible say anything about salvation?”

“If you’re referring to my being salvaged in the afterlife, I am a descendent of deity, which guarantees I will be preserved. The monotheistic God has been superseded by our fully functional and compassionate array of gods, who are quite adept at handling any situation that could occur. Your monotheistic God is cruel and very sexist. May I add sadistic. This was a big consideration our priests factored in when assembling the Imperial bible.”

Donesmore was astounded, but his first thought was that this apostasy could not be quickly healed. The citizens would have to be made aware of the truths of God’s word. This couldn’t be accomplished under the smothering restrictions the Empire foisted upon its citizenry. “This precisely defines our mission” he concluded. No qualms about it.

Donesmore was very restless now. His patience was being overwhelmed by the conundrum in which he was engulfed. This is a two-edged battle, spiritual and physical. Then he remembered “Use your enemy’s resources when possible to sustain your troops. Build your armor from your home stores, but when you win the battle, nourish your bodies with the enemy’s food. Feeding off the enemy’s food supply has clear benefits:.” His mind was committing full-fledged meandering. This tirade might have gone on incessantly, but Leopold managed to finagle Donesmore’s attention with a lot of sighing and grunting.

“Patience is a virtue.”

“Patience is an enemy of aggression.” Leopold snapped, “Would you like me to quote the Scripture for your edification?”

“Let’s just proceed to the starship simulation. I’ll let you edify me there”, Donesmore smirked.

Chapter 3

Even though the Empire was still robust, signs of its deterioration could not escape notice. Donesmore had a small, but significant taste of this when he first took a robotic taxi from the vicinity of Rendly's 'underground church to the heart of downtown Gommorah, the Empire's capital city. Not only was the ride not smooth due to cratered Imperial highway, but the robot driver's voice was checkered and didn't flow smoothly.

The walkways did carry the rider smoothly. At least there was that Donesmore thought. He couldn't help but wonder why the citizens on the street were dressed in such bleak, colorless outfits. Vibrant colored skirts with flaming red capes were the characteristic feature of typical citizen attire. Even Leopold's outfit lacked any tinge of nobility. Plainly stated, his clothes were drab and tired looking." Is this another hint of the Imperial mindset. However he vanquished the thought that this enemy could be defeated before a battle was even fought.

The corridor leading to the simulation room was poorly ventilated. This was a concern since most Imperial buildings had few or no windows. It must be related to the Imperial mindset in some way, Donesmore speculated. The simulation itself was divided into complex panels with oversized knobs and levers. Based on his perusal of the ancillary library that was in close proximity He knew the levels were oversized so that they could more easily be maneuvered with space gloves. There were actually two panels. Each had a large viewing screen undoubtedly to present the events one would encounter in deep space.

Leopold was overwhelmed.

"Don't fret." Donesmore advised. Much is devoted to regulating the ship's environment. "Temperature, oxygen levels, etc. Then there are controls to regulate pitch, yaw and roll. The gyroscopic stuff. Of course there are controls for the thrusters that propel us forward.

"What about the control center on Earth?"

"Lines of communication are always available, but in hyperspace we're our own guardians, custodians. Therefore you should pack as much experience in your duffle bag as possible, so to speak. Information is a very valuable commodity."

"You seem to be a font of knowledge." said Leopold suddenly unimpressed by his own clothing, which he always perceived to carry an air of worldliness. At least that's what he was told. Now he understood that this wasn't reflected in his character. The contrast between Donesmore and himself was massive. He felt in he was in the same class as the citizens his regime had callously enslaved.

Donesmore noticed the dazed expression on Leopold's face. "You seem to be on a journey not mapped out in our flight plan!"

"You could say I've been brought back to earth."

"You mean humbled, don't you." Donesmore was using his pastoral skills, which often helped him size someone up. He was very good at reading a person's demeanor. "Pay attention! I hate when I am forced to be redundant."

A large asteroid appeared to be intersecting the ship.

"How can we avoid this apparent obstacle?"

"Pitch, yaw and roll are called the 'three degrees of freedom' that refer to the rotational movement in any direction. The easiest way to think of these is to imagine you are a rocket. If you lean forwards or backwards, that's pitch. If you lean from side to side, that's yaw. If you spin around, that's roll. The first problem in controlling which direction a rocket will fly is to get it pointing in the right direction. Commit this to memory."

"Yes sir. Leopold had never called anyone besides his father sir. He never saw the need to."

Additional obstacles presented themselves on this simulated journey and Donesmore handled them all tactfully. The gauges were synchronized to register fuel consumed, oxygen levels and environmental changes among other parameters which were altered by Donesmore's maneuvering in piloting the ship. "The ship seemed to handle all contingencies Donesmore reported. A fine simulation to evaluate the ability to pilot a true craft."

"You were quite capable and impressive. I don't know of a single person in our Empire who could match your skills."

"Another bit of remarkable insight into the military state of the Empire." Donesmore thought. This kid is the gift that keeps on giving. He needs a few lessons in decorum.

"Thank you" Donesmore said humbly. He was trained not to be puffed up.

"Although he had experienced his first taste of humbleness, he felt he still had clout within the Empire due his heritage.

"Remember, when I spoke of the overpopulation situation which has been a plague on the Empire. The agricultural problem alone has been devastating.

"I'm sure there are planets in your periphery that could supply the needed foodstuff and other supplies." Donesmore was cognizant of the fact that these worlds were reluctant to negotiate any trade agreements with Earth, as they were repulsed by Earth's dictatorial government. Many cultures believed that all life originated on Earth and the skies of Earth were the Creator's residence. The planet Earth was to be His prototypical world; a world that other worlds would emulate. This belief eventually escalated to a full grown mythology that traveled the tiny populated section of the Universe, propagated by writings, folklore tales and even became the foundation for entire religions. Donesmore was aware of these beliefs. It seemed a little far-fetched to him. But the genesis of this hypothesis most likely stemmed from the fact that God has chosen Israel to be His

prototype nation from which the rest of the world would learn of Him. A study of history reveals that Israel rejected Him as their king and installed a human king instead. He found it quite contemptuous that the Empire allowed the land of Israel to become a wasteland strewn with garbage and thorns to exemplify the results of the monotheistic God's handiwork. He viewed this as blasphemy.

Leopold had a sullen look on his face."

Donesmore read this immediately and asked him point blank "Instead of wasting your energy searching for trinkets to accommodate your gods why not search for the needs of the people?"

"If we satisfy the god of sustenance he will in turn satisfy us,"

"When, after everybody starves.?", snapped Donesmore.

"When we satisfy the sacrifices he demands." Leopold countered.

"My God no longer demands sacrifices, other than sacrificing yourself.:

Hosea 6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

"The interesting thing about this verse is that Jesus quotes it twice. Both times when He quotes it He's answering the leaders of that day."

'Is this the policy of your monotheistic God ? Maybe that's why He's not all-purpose." Leopold considered.

"You're truly blind. Your dumb wood and stone gods have evil spirits which cause you to believe you are communicating with these dumb stones and wood." Donesmore said perilously, without abandon,

"Not worshipping our gods sounds rather dicey actually dangerous. Indeed you are a stranger, but a brave one".

"Stranger in a strange land." Donesmore quipped.

"But your uniqueness and courage are what is sorely needed.

Philippians 1:28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

"'terrified' - you lose it, not the same as scared. your faith in the gospel and not being afraid is proof positive of their perdition

'but to you' - through Christ you can do all things - that's your security. when you take a stand for what is right - you get a strength and peace you weren't expecting - [proof you were saved].

Matthew 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

"Well it seems to work for you." Leopold conceded.

"My God is alive, Your rocks and wood are dead. Can you honestly expect them to intervene in your life?"

"Are there others like you?"

"I'll leave that to your Imperial intelligence to find out. Or your array of gods!"

“Blasphemy!”, shrieked Leopold. Donesmore was only slightly ruffled. “This is hardly the venue to alter your thinking. You’ve been weaned on heresy and you cannot possibly regurgitate it rapidly. And gaslighting innocent citizens and taking away their opportunity to hear the truth only thrusts you deeper into the quagmire you’re already in.” He was aware of the leverage he possessed and he believed it muted the bold, harsh words he spoke to the Emperor’s son. Still, he was shrouded with uncertainty.

The silence was broken by Leopold, as the simulation whirred to completion. Performance grades appeared rapidly, “Piloting skills 99%. Reflexes 90% Navigation 67% use of Resources 50%.” “Superior.” Exclaimed the Emperor’s son. “I was just along for the ride.”

Donesmore felt even more buoyant after this appraisal of his skills.” He ventured to ask Leopold about the clout in Imperial circles he claimed to possess. “If you indeed have clout you can use it to extract yourself from the ‘quagmire’ you’re in. Donesmore knew he was taking a shot in the dark.

“How so?” Leopold ventured to ask?”

“By reshaping Imperial policies and liberating the citizenry” Ito was flabbergasted. “Wishful thinking ! It doesn’t match the profile I’ve developed of you.”

“Exactly what kind of clout do you have over Imperial policy? Any at all?” what possible clout could the boy have anyway? Donesmore felt like he was grasping at straws.

“Ito noted the grimace on Donesmore’s face. He chimed “Don’t look so grim, I have considerable latitude on this excursion, despite my lack of overall experience. The emperor puts a premium on first-hand knowledge, even mine. Perhaps that’s a concession to our feeble intelligence gathering capability.”

“The gift that keeps on giving, Donesmore mused.

“As I mentioned to you, with our escalating resource problems, the emperor has spoken of his desire to relocate a segment of the population. And the neighboring planets seemed to be adverse to trading with us. The last poison of this deadly mix was the message implanted in the citizenry that the desirable way to live is vicariously.”

“You are smothering the very basis of human growth and their desires. You are reducing them to vacuum tubes. I suggest you reevaluate your Empire.”

“That kind of clout can only come from an enemy that defeats us, which is unlikely.”

“Because of your legion of all-powerful combat robots?”

“You’ve certainly done your homework.”

He was cognizant of the fact that Bob Rendly had been employed as a robotics expert, so he saw no need to hope Ito would further ‘spill the beans’ thus extracting robot particulars from him. He had learned enough – without making any effort. “Secret

agent man!" he hummed. He checked himself. "Very worldly persona."

"Don't look so grim Mr. Donesmore. Although I can't move mountains I do have a little latitude regarding our little escapade.

I'm recommending that you be starship captain to seek out a new world where we can relocate a segment of our population."

"Checkmate!" registered in an instant. A jubilant Donesmore thought, trying to mute his excitement. All his pent up plans could now be unleashed, subject to the scrutiny and approval of the Underground Church, of course. But he was finally oozing with optimism. Acquiring a starship was pivotal to implement his plan. But was this craft up to snuff?" he wondered. The fact that warp 2 was redlined on the velocity gauge was a discouragement. But he learned to be content with what he had.

1Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

"'contentment' -

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content.

- you get it by learning it. It's not part of your inherited nature.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

James 1:3 Knowing [this], that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

James 1:4 But let patience have [her] perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

The path to patience is tribulation and at the end of the path is the city of content. We will get patience at the tribulation. The more tribulation God puts in your path the ore you will be looking forward to the second coming. Hope makes us not ashamed. If everything was going right, we you want Jesus to come back?

'great gain' - if you could be content when things are going wring - that's great gain."

He poised what he considered a fruitless question to Leopold.

"Do you think a starship cannot achieve a velocity greater than warp 1,5:

Leopold scratched his head and shrugged his shoulders." We've had some harrowing experiences when we pushed our crafts to even warp 2."

"That was indeed a concession. Without hesitation Donesmore said "Please elucidate."

"I have no access to scientific stuff, but I've eavesdropped on some discussions, strictly out of boredom. "I've heard the phrases 'hull integrity' and 'tensile strength' and something about 'molecular bonding density' All gibberish to me. Can you grasp any of it?"

"Bottom line, the structure of the ship's hull cannot endure the stress of warping.

"You mean the hull actually warps, bends."

"No" Donesmore chuckled. "It's the fabric of space that warps.

The hull must be able to withstand extraordinary mechanical stresses over many years of operation. But the hull must be able to withstand thousands of "G"s when it accelerates to warp. It must maintain its configuration as well as its tensile strength through repeated temperature cycles that range from absolute zero to thousands of degrees Kelvin. And it must be able to hold up with nary a crack for at least the duration of a nominal, let's say, several-year mission.

"Suddenly a flurry of chimes sounded. coming from the direction of Leopold's waist. "duty calls."

"What duties might they be" prodded Donesmore, sensing their relationship had eschewed formality.

"No that it's any of your concern" Ito said harshly. "But I am a Duke and am thus consulted on various Imperial affairs."

"I didn't mean to pry." A Subdued Donesmore responded in a contrite tone.

"Please excuse me. Sometimes I think anyone not associated with the aristocracy is a plebian. But you far surpass that class with your worldliness and knowledge alone.

"Oh. So the Empire invokes a class hierarchy with the citizens obviously at the bottom" Donesmore thought silently. "I wonder what segment of their society is a=say one level higher." He decided he should be more discreet. Again he reminded himself that he wasn't a spy. The underground church had an ample supply of them,

He safely wished Ito a humbly goodbye. Their meeting was extremely successful to him, paying more dividends than he had hoped for. Spearheading the mission to relocated a substantial number of citizens to a new world, where unbeknownst to the Empire, he would open their eyes to God's truths. This was his calling and his advocacy. His dream was always to launch a new world; he had written it down as a snippet. It was to be carried out when he received his glorified body. It wasn't so far-fetched an idea, After all, the Universe was meant to be populated. So locating one planet that could support human life was indeed feasible.

Now Ito noticed Donesmore was on his own journey. "Goodbye my friend!" he snapped vigorously, trying to be as cordial as possible. Donesmore said "Goodbye my friend." in a reciprocal fashion." Donesmore knew his return trip to the Underground

church had a specific protocol of its own. It was galvanized in his mind, so he knew it instinctively. Following this protocol was to insure the location of the Underground Church would be preserved. This was vital to the mission's success. Clandestine churches did not teach the Imperial bible and religion was a principal weapon employed by this wicked Empire in controlling the masses. Donesmore shuddered to think what would happen to the members of his church if they were found. They would certainly be deemed traitors and be summarily punished. And the trapped citizens would undoubtedly suffer the repercussions.

Thus, it was essential that the location of the Underground Church be preserved. Having once been a circuit preacher he knew the ins and outs of being on the move. This eliminated any pattern in his movements. When he arrived at the final prescribed destination point a church member known to him guided him through a construction type manhole through a maze of underground tunnels. He sensed a steady decline in altitude the further he progressed.

"We have to be below the range of robot sensors" Gig Young cautioned. "I'm beat. I'm glad you still follow that regimen of physical training you're so famous for. I could use a man like yourself as one of my crew members. "Crew members?" Young bolted at hearing this. When I make my report to our leadership you'll be briefed. "Yes please." responded an eager Young needing no further coercing,. He yearned for space travel and Donesmore knew this. One of the goals of Donesmore's profession to understand a person's character. Sometimes all had to work with was a whim. Not with Gig Young. Gig was more than a church brother to him. They'll be a way to integrate him into the crew.

With that resolved Donesmore was anxious to meet with Bob Rently, the policy maker and wanabee pastor of the church. His countenance became low whenever this dream surfaced. Pastor Donesmore had called him a baby Christian. Was that to urge him to grow? He was uncertain, but would discuss it with when the storm of battle strategy talk subsided.

"Bob, it's good to see you and be home again."

"John you too. The anticipation is driving me crazy. From the look on your face it was a fruitful venture. They actually want me to spearhead the relocation program as the captain of a starship. I was accompanied in the simulation by no less than the Emperor's son Duke Ito Leopold! He was just gushing with information unobtainable by our intelligence gathering team."

"How did you get him to spill? My understanding from my men planted in the aristocracy is that it's very tight-lipped. " "I think the supply/demand problem caused by the overpopulation problem is wreaking havoc. Plus their fervent belief that their array of dumb idols are making demands they can't satisfy are deteriorating the whole structure of the Empire. It's a very tenuous situation."

"Are they ripe to be toppled?"

"Even though the Empire finds it increasingly difficult to feed its burgeoning civilian population, they maintain a state of the art fleet of combat robots, who defend themselves with stun guns and force fields that are lethal to human contact. And they have protective boundaries that cannot be breached. Plus they all share a common neural network, a commonality if you will. Attacking one robot will result in the entire fleet being alerted. to an attack on one robot."

"What do you think Bob?. You were covertly on the Empire's robotic development team"

"Yes. But classified projects of this nature are highly segmented. I worked on the robotic arm and hand mechanism, but was told very little regarding the defensive system."

"Well, you're going to see the robots in action. They patrol, guard Imperial interests, and forcibly escort the citizens to church where they are fed propaganda from an Imperial bible, gaslighted and drugged."

"How do you know all this?"

"Ito Leopold was in awe of me and he bled Imperial secrets like a sieve. As for the bible, Leopold quoted it several times in an effort to correct my simple preaching to him. It reeked of corruption. I managed to get a copy surreptitiously .It increased my resolve to allow the citizens to hear God's truths. That became feasible when the emperor asked me to relocate a segment of the population to a new world.

"Do you really believe the emperor is that altruistic?"

"Of course not. He craves power and control. I envision he has a three pronged desire. Solve the overpopulation problem, satisfy the demands of the gods and add worlds to extend his domain. worlds full of vassals, who will worship h

"him.

"Surely you can't want to help him accomplish this."

"Under this guise the ability to proceed with my plan can proceed. Unhindered. The beauty is it will appear to benefit the Empire only.

"I'm all ears. John."

"You're going to play an integral role Bob, along with other church members."

"I completely trust your judgment John. You have unique first-hand experience with the emperor's son. Where do we begin?"

"The great Chinese war strategist said "Every Battle Is Won Before It Is Ever Fought."

"Is that even possible John?"

"In order to set the stage for victory, we need to manage both our resources and our forces wisely. Preparation matters. I only bring this up to say that preparation will involve not so much gathering troops by number, but rather by particular skill sets. This particular battle is primarily against machines having no

conscious, so we must gather those competent to deal with machines. The Empire has a rather lame military besides for their combat robots. I also read that we should use our enemy's resources when possible to sustain our troops. Build our armor from our home stores, but when we win the battle, nourish our bodies with the enemy's food.

"Food?"

"Soul food!", Donesmore answered cryptically, leaving it to Rendly to decipher his reply.

Rendly appeared miffed.

"Why the conundrum Bob? With their plentiful, pristine acreage surrounding the Emperor's palace, being tended by the lower classes, the aristocracy has the finest, most wholesome foods. It's the souls of the citizenry that I would like to nourish and be nourished by. We have an ample supply of foodstuffs."

"How so?"

"The Empire eschews both the Northern regions of Greenland, even Alaska plus Australia. They consider those areas not worth cultivating."

"Why?:

"Because these areas don't have the nobility of being esteemed throughout history. They lack resources, human and real estate, of any worth to earlier Empires." The current empire estimates their worth similarly. Combat robots aren't even used to defend these regions.

"So your men can cultivate these areas and grow the necessary foodstuffs."

'Entire continents with seasonal climates. Particularly Australia. And the northern areas are rich in oil. But the Empire no longer knows how to utilize its full potential.

But don't they have atomic power?"

"They had an atomic power economy, but they've suffered such a technological decline they can no longer maintain atomic power driven apparatus and they've been forced to resort to gasoline powered machinery."

"But they put up a rather impressive façade." Observed Donesmore.

"How so?" grilled Rendly.

"The fleet of state of the art self-replicating combat robots.

"Your specialty Bob. "

"But their force fields prevent me from indulging in an up close and personal examination of them.

"The starships, besides for their meager warp capabilities, have multi-megaflop computers. I'm anxious for you to utilize that massive computing power."

"I don't have any access to that superior computer now." Rendly lamented, but I wish I did,

‘No need to campaign for a position on my crew. You’ve been in since the get-go.’

Rendly had a gratified look. And he was grinning ear to ear. It was very refreshing for Donesmore to see.

“Bob, neither of us are propulsion experts, but from my point of view ambition is as important source of propulsion as the dilithium crystals that physically powered his ship. He thought about ambition being systematically depleted from the Empire’s citizens. A thought which made him cringe.

“We can’t win the war by psychological means?”

“The Empire is a paper lion. They put education first. These kind of people are ignorant They’re smart when it comes to the things of this world. But when it comes to real things, life, happiness, peace of mind, salvation - they’re ignorant. How many Phds or MDs know about God or have any knowledge of what is holy or eternal. But they do worship. But they’re irrelevant. They give their heart and soul and body to a thing, but it’s the wrong thing. A Bible -believing Christian knows much

more than the scientists of the Empire,. No unsaved professor even those outside the Empire knows where he really came from. Its subjective. He doesn't really know for sure his whole purpose of being here. Schools don't teach where you came from, where you're going or what you're doing.

“Spoken like a true preacher!”

“That’s my advocacy. Men have an enate knowledge, but they are rejecting the truth. A lot of people have no understanding of God, especially in other countries. He wants people to take knowledge of Him, acknowledge Him. He created you to have a particular type of relationship with you. If you don’t want that it makes Him upset.

“I imagine He’s infuriated by the regime that occupies 90% of the planet.”

“That’s an understatement my friend.” Donesmore replied vigorously. Their array of gods just compounds the problem. what they don’t understand is that when one dies unsaved, it cannot be corrected retroactively.”

“Now I understand why it’s a two front war - physical and spiritual.

“Just stay under my tutelage. You’re doing just fine Bob.”

Rendly was buoyed by these words. His enthusiasm for the mission correspondingly increased.

“Cannot you see? A saved person has the Holy Spirit residing permanently inside him/her to provide teaching and guidance.”

“So exactly what is your role then?”, Rendly asked sheepishly.

“We’re all sinners Bob. We all have free will. But a sin is a sin, although you can control the severity.”

“Why did God give us this free will?””

"Because He wants us to make the choice whether to obey Him or not. God doesn't want to be surrounded by robots."

Suddenly the proverbial light bulb went off in Donesmore's mind. Robots don't have the free will choice whether or not to obey God. We can simply program them to obey and feed them the Bible, which will provide them with the guidelines on exactly what they must obey."

"John, idealistically it sounds great, but realistically how do you propose to overcome their deadly force fields? And even if you did infiltrate a select few the entire continuum would be alerted. It's a pure pipe dream."

"It's just a thought. Perhaps the multi-megaflop power of the computers aboard the starship will help solve this puzzle."

"This can only be tested under real-life conditions armed with the knowledge to make the attempt. I read that one of the strategies to defeat the enemy is by using his resources. I think this fits the bill."

"You certainly are ambitious John."

"Like I said ambition is a powerful enough force to drive a starship. Conversely it was a lack of ambition that created the Empire and allowed it to flourish."

"Really."

"We use the metaphor of the Empire being a colossal machine whose life blood is consists of the mind-depleted citizenry, who course through its arteries literally sustaining it. There was a time when free society also resembled a giant machine. Unambitious, lackadaisical people had their meals served to them, their beds actually rose from the floor, ready-made. Whatever material needs they required were delivered to their bedside via conveyor belt. The need for people to exert themselves physically became moot, as machinery displaced the need for Man to use his muscles. This overpampering led to a lack of motivation. But there was a faction of dissidents whose desire was to capsize humanity's estrangement from living a productive, ambitious lives. This machine sapped not only the ambition, but the physical strength from Mankind. It was rather effortless and frankly undemanding to topple this structure and assemble a dictatorship from the dregs that remained. So mankind became shrouded in inertness. Perfect corpuscles to course through the arteries of this machine, aptly named the Empire."

"Quite a tale indeed."

"It's history and we must learn from history not dismiss it."

"I cannot believe humanity sunk so low."

"Now we of the Underground Church are the remnant. And we learn from history! This is the ultimate Civil war - this reality."

"You also said the Empire encourages that their enslaved citizenry live vicariously. Isn't that the enemy of ambition."

"Yes it is. But because the Empire no longer has an effective means of controlling a population capable of organizing

themselves into any type of cohesive unit. They keep them vacuous and content. They claim to problems providing the citizenry with the necessary sustenance to keep them all alive.”

“So then how do they feed themselves?”

“Our Interpol has verified this as propaganda to garner sympathy from the periphery planets, who loath them. After all, having allies is a show of strength.”

“Allies!” barked Hayden Wadsworth, church member and military strategist, who modeled himself after the great Sun Tzu, who said ““we cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.” May I add to that “Unless there is a military dependency between two nations they are nothing more than fair weather friends at most.”

“So in other words the Empire has no real allies.”

“Precisely.”

“But didn’t Sun Tzu say ‘Every Battle Is Won Before It Is Ever Fought.’

“He meant in order to set the stage for victory, you need to manage both your resources and your forces wisely. Preparation matters: Every battle is won before it is ever fought. But our inability to have a strategy to neutralize the fleet of combat robots means we must fight a shrewd battle. Cannot you see, if a robot feels it is in danger, that sentiment will immediately be broadcast to the entire continuum, At the very best the robots will unite, At the very worst they will replicate. That’s a force that cannot be reckoned with. Hardly a mundane picture, but a real one nevertheless.” He gritted his teeth and proceeded to scrunch down on the sofa in frustration.

‘Rendly sat down next him and patted him on the back in a consoling manor. “Hayden.”, he said in a soothing tone, “We don’t have the relevant data yet. We can hardly be expected to formulate a response to this situation now.”

“I appreciate your confidence Bob.”

“It’s not without foundation. I was on the Imperial robotics development team. Unfortunately I was denied access to the defensive mechanisms. Classified projects are usually segmented. Nobody knows the complete project for security reasons.”

“But that’s the crux of our concerns.”

“I understand, but I do have an intimate understanding of the robot’s gyroscopic sensors, which provide their sense of orientation. It’s vital ingredient of their total ability to operate.”

“Enough!” snarled Donesmore, with a tone that was very out of character for him. I believe this congregation is the remnant preserved by God to correct this unsanctimonious ‘concoction’ for the lack of a better word. It has been allowed to ferment far too long. The consumption of this vile mixture must end. It’s not just a matter of simply skimming off the dross. The

brewery that creates this mixture, which consists of the blood of unsaved souls must be destroyed.”

Hayden wadsworth appeared to savor every word of this soliloquy.

“I love your metaphors. You should have been a poet.”

“But that’s not my calling. Especially in these times of extreme apostacy.”

“Yes. You certainly have your work cut out for you. The strategy must be precise, as billions, yes billions of lost souls hang in the balance.”

“Yes. The unbelieving will be punished.”

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

“God classes unbelieving people with whoremongers, murderers, and idolaters. The “unbelieving” in this passage, are certainly not born-again. You must vocalize that you believe – for example through the sinner’s prayer.”

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

“But isn’t it true that ignorance is no excuse?”

“Ignorance is no excuse, especially when knowledge of the truth is available to us and we voluntarily reject it.

If you’ve never had access to the truth ... I can only say God Is a fair judge. But nevertheless I endeavor that these citizens Be exposed to the truth and make their own free will choices. That’s clearly the proper course of action. The effective method to accomplish this is your forte. I be glad to assist you in any way I can.” replied Donesmore who certainly felt the weight of this massive undertaking on his shoulders.

“I can offer you a smorgasbord of suggestions. Normally I would devise a cohesive battle strategy, but since there are spiritual considerations involved here I feel a bit frazzled .”

“Nonsense! Clearly the physical warfare will take precedence. The combat robots must be neutralized. Then the Empire’s mediocre military can be subdued.” said Donesmore authoritatively.

“Just how do you propose to do that?”

“I don’t mean to upset or offend you. I simply look at things through a different lens. The way God and we look at things is different and we have to change our point of view and line it up with the way God looks at things.

“That’s your department sir.

”Don’t segregate yourself. To be justified in God’s sight you have to be justified through His blood. If you get saved you will no longer be a child of disobedience, so part of John's ministry is to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. A

Christian minister sent from God can have a ministry just like John the Baptist.””

“You expect me to become a priest in order to strategize for you?”

“A saved person is an ‘ambassador and a priest”

“I get the feeling you’re playing a game of semantics with me. Look, you don’t need my skills. You’ve picked up a gold mine of intelligence about the enemy. The emperor’s son has leaked an overabundance about the Empire when he should have just kept his mouth shut. So you should have a better strategy than I can provide.”

“And he prepared to listen intently as Donesmore spoke.

“I’ve been chosen to pilot a starship.”, Donesmore glowed.

“That’s something those bumbling idiots can no longer accomplish.”

“Correct. In addition to their stupidity they lack ambition. That is poison to any kind of functioning society.” Snapped Wadesworth.

“As I said, the essence of the mission is giving 10 billion citizens the knowledge of God is paramount. I remembered reading how a successful campaign will use the enemy’s resources when feasible.”

“What worthwhile resources do you mean?”

“The robots man, the robots.”

“Just try and approach one. Or should I say don’t try. “Your garments won’t garner you any respect. I’ve never known a combat robot to be humble.”

“Isn’t it inherent in them to be servants, companions.

“That was the original plan. Now, as you know, the Empire uses them as one of the means to control the citizenry. That was why their combat facilities were enhanced.”

“The robots can herd them, but what depletes their ambition, makes them to appear so lackadaisical?”“

“Simple. They are fed a steady diet of propoganda via the Imperial bible and they are severely gaslighting on Imperial holodecks.”

“Holodecks!” Donesmore said in a bewildered tone.

“In the days when Empire technology was at its height they had state of the art holodecks that could transform matter into nearly any form. Scientists would use them to manufacture the needed conditions for carrying out experiments.

“I can only imagine the sinful uses for such a device.”

“Yes. My agents tell me citizens are gaslighted in a depraved fashion.”

“What is gaslighting?” asked” a puzzled Donesmore.

“Gaslighting can be defined as a combination of brainwashing, psychological bullying, and emotional abuse for the purpose of domination and control. An abuse of holodeck technology.”

"How abhorrent. The urgency to help those people has now escalated immensely. They must hear Bible-believing preaching."

"Well get off your soapbox and soar like an eagle."

"You know my childhood dreams?"

"We've prepared quite a dossier on you, especially on your escapades with the Emperor's son. That meeting has been scrupulously analyzed."

"Really." muttered Donesmore.

"But I'd appreciate a pastor's perspective."

"The Emperor's son is a reflection of the Emperor. Detached from the average person's concerns. He lives an Imperial bubble, shielded from worldly interests."

"But you describe him as well educated."

"Education without salvation is damnation." huffed Donesmore.

"Are you downgrading knowledge?"

"We only see the words - need the eye of faith - the first love is the Lord - enhance that with knowledge. Men have an enate knowledge, but they are rejecting the truth. A lot of people have no und of God, especially in other countries. He wants people to take knowledge of Him, acknowledge Him. He created you to have a particular type of relationship with you. If you don't want that it makes Him upset. Sure, the boy was quite lucid in his speech. He appears to be well educated. But these kind of people are ignorant They're smart when it comes to the things of this world. But when it comes to real things, life, happiness, peace of mind, salvation - they're ignorant. How many Phds or MDs know about God or have any knowledge of what is holy or eternal. But they do worship. They're not irrelevant. They give their heart and soul and body to a thing, but it's the wrong thing. A Bible -believing Christian knows much more than the scientists of this world. No unsaved professor knows where he really came from. Its subjective. He doesn't really know for sure his whole purpose of being here. Schools don't teach where you came from, where you're going or what you're doing. Hey worship an array of sticks and stones and they worry about meeting the needs of these gods. There's earthly wisdom and wisdom that comes from God. All that's available to them is earthly wisdom. Schools don't teach where you came from, where you're going Science provides no moral guideposts for what they divulge."

"That's more than a mouthful! so it's not just the citizens that need to hear the word of God."

"How can I be of assistance?" asked the strategist?"

realizing his position would be subservient.

"You can pray for me."

"Exactly what do you know about warfare?"

"In old time warfare when a wall was to overcome the army would build up a mound, bring dirt in and throw it up against that wall until they had a mound up there where they could just run

right over the top of it. Of course they lost a lot of men while doing that - arrows, spears, rocks were being shot at u. Obviously a lot of guys lost eyes, heads, etc. while they were throwing dirt there, but eventually .. back in those days those Oriental kings they'd do it just like Iran does it. They told all those soldiers that to die for the king was to find a place in (their paradise). And they gladly died for those Oriental kings. The Chinese do it, the Japanese did it. All those Oriental armies always tough t w religious principles. That's why they fight with abandon."

"Ha! Try attacking the combat robots while hiding behind stick walls throwing mud bombs."

"May I continue please?"

In WWII America still believed in God and in Korea it was doubtful. In Vietnam when they beg to draft people the American young people felt it was no longer a profitable situation to fight for the country, so people ducked out of the draft, went to Canada. When you don't have a righteous purpose. You're not really fighting for a god u have no eternal promise of any kind of a reward. And when you lose that u really lose the desire of men to fight. They'll never be an army in America ag that fought like they did in WWII. Because they really don't have anything to fight for. They don't believe."

"I thought spiritual warfare was your thing."

"We need to put on the whole armor of Go to prepare for spiritual warfare."

"I assume that armor is spiritual, not tangible."

"If we could see the things that are attacking us it might make a difference, but we can't. They're so subtle. They slip behind us so easily and they outfox us, out-maneuver us, we're outflanked, we're infiltrated. The bad part is most the time we're not even paying attention to that stuff that's going on. All of a sudden you just find yourself in a situation and you don't know how you got there. It's a battle."

"What is real about a spiritual battle?"

"If you were saved you'd understand. You would always be in a spiritual battle against your flesh. In a greater sense Christ fights a spiritual battle now and a literal one when He comes back."

"What about the battle we face against the Empire?"

"We can only pray for His assistance now. At His Second Coming He will be the King. Then all Man's kingdoms of the world will topple."

"Really!"

"That bothers you?"

"Mankind has been given every opportunity to govern himself with compassion and all have failed miserably. Be humble."

"Unambiguously the Empire is a miserable failure>

"That's precisely why it must be eradicated."

"Look, this discussion is getting very circular. Can we get down to the nitty-gritty?"

"As I said, I've devised a plan. Not to upstage you."

"I view things through a different lens."

"And just what lens is that?"

"The Holy Spirit . The holy spirit indwells in a saved person."

"You're giving me another reason why I must be saved?"

"I'm simply pointing out the advantages of being a child of God."

"So this intangible being will reside in me. So what?"

"The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge. He reveals the things of God as said in 1 Corinthians 2:10 and of Christ (John 16:14). Generally the Spirit directs you in the correct direction (Isaiah 30:21). He guides you in truth as stated in John 16:13. He even taught believers what to say to their enemies. In the same way He can supply words of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8). The Spirit can reveal the future. When Simeon was in Jerusalem the Holy Ghost was up on him and revealed to him that he would not die until he saw Christ. The entire unsaved Empire needs the proper guidance and direction in their lives. They must be aware of the availability of Him."

"The combat robots are programmed to block this effort."

"Yes .Let's get on topic again. Now here's the tactical."

"Spoken like a warrior not a pastor."

"I told you I'm a spiritual warrior, a war that can have a sizeable body count."

"Really!"

"Many saints have been tortured and or killed for speaking the word of God."

"OK Let's finally hear your military strategy."

"The Christian knows some things that the world knows nothing about. God set it up, ordained it that way for your glory. He ordained wisdom and that we should be peculiar people and that's the only way we could be. It is a supernatural book not understood by the natural man.

"Sounds very esoteric."

"You can't kill a turtle unless you get him out of his shell.

"Very wise cliché."

"This shell is the blindness of the aristocracy and isolation of the Empire. That is changing, by necessity, the supply and demand problem. In addition to the overpopulation problem depleting their resources, they are being pressured to satisfy the demands of their gods."

"It seems that even Christians are sometimes blind." \

"Yes. Even Christians are subject to blindness in their spiritual lives. We allow things to creep into our lives and can't find our way back to God. We think a physical experience is a spiritual experience. Certain music is sensual and the flesh really likes it. The Empire has their understanding

darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts. Their blindness is unto the glory of God.
it.”

“Their blindness is their worship of stone and rocks instead of the living God.”

“They were blind to their own idolatry. This is the outcome of leaving worshipping God and going to idols. They were blind to their own sensuality and their own idolatry. This was the outcome of leaving worshipping God and going to idols. They were blind to their own sensuality and their own idolatry. This was the outcome of leaving worshipping God and going to idols. The Israelites slipped into idolatry, in their minds they worshipped a powerless golden calf, replacing the true and living powerful God with this powerless golden calf.

‘And what exactly is your solution?’

“It’s not *my* solution.”

“It’s to go tell people the gospel of Christ and who they can believe in. To deliver people from the blindness of sin and open their eyes. To tell them about Jesus.”

“The combat robots do not share your sentiments.”

“I plan to convert them.”

“Is that so. They are indoctrinated to dispense the Imperial bible. You going to use your priestly influence to convert them?”

”First of all I am not a priest. Secondly they don’t need to be preached to, rather they need to be reprogrammed.”

“Easier said than done to put it mildly.”

“Here’s the plan. And I always plan ahead.”

“That is wise. I thought God made all the plans for Man.”

“God’s plan *is* for Man. But Man has rejected this plan - ignored the Bible. He has tried for 6000 years to set up his own plan. It has always failed.”

“I’m not making plans for all Mankind, but in a sense hopefully all Mankind will benefit.”

“How presumptuous! What wisdom do you have to offer and how did you get it?””

“The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. You must be willing to receive it, listen for it actively, pray for it and diligently seek for it. God lays up sound wisdom for the righteous from His bank which is the Bible. Sound wisdom is heavenly wisdom, righteous wisdom - based on doing right God gives us the ability to have wisdom and knowledge.”

“Well, spew out some of your wisdom.”

“The crux of the whole problem is the combat robots. They are massive in number and they communicate through a commonality. In other words, if one feels it is under attack the message is propagated to the entire fleet. Once the entire fleet is alerted

They will converge on the exacerbation in order to purge it and retain their preprogrammed status quo.””

“And how do you plan to preempt all this?”

“When the relocation mission is evoked, due to capacity limitations only a small contingent of combat robots will be able to go on the mission. WE will utilize the massive computer power of the starship used for the mission plus one of the developers of combat robots. Mr. Bob Rendly who will be aboard to intensely study the robots to find their Achilles heel, so to speak, in order to control them. If the few combat robots are disabled there can be no commonality formed.”

“Sounds good on paper!”

“I’ve prayed for wisdom in formulating this plan. You must have faith.”

“But it seems to me that faith is just one of your intangibles. Who says= will is free?”

“That’s the sovereign will of God. We believe in the sovereignty of God but also in the free will of man. Man can take what God has said and either listen to it or forbear - not listen, not do anything about it. It’s still the word of God and they have not made the faith of God of none effect by their unbelief. It still stands true. It will still work. But God doesn’t destroy or do away w Man’s free will simply by His sovereignty. He gives Man a chance to exercise his free will by His sovereignty. It’s very tangible.”

“If you say so.”

“He doesn’t make you reject or make you accept Him. That’s entirely up to the individual.”

“So we have the free will to sin.”

“Obviously. Everyone sins from the common person to a fabrication like the Empire.”

“Let’s get back to business. I have a myriad of questions about how you can manage to accomplish control of the combat robots.”

“We will have a small number to deal with. If we can neutralize them one by one then there can’t possibly be a continuum.

“How do you propose to neutralize one?”

“The answer will hopefully unfold as we study the situation.”

“Good luck with that,”

“”You’re counting on something that will generate luck. There’s nothing that will generate luck but the devil. It’s one characteristic of highly educated people.

“What do want me to do? Wish you bad luck?”

“I thought you don’t believe in intangible things.”

“”Luck can sometimes affect reality.”

“I have the Holy Spirit inside me to guide me .He is reality.”

“Kindly elaborate.”

“The Holy Spirit is the spirit of wisdom and knowledge. He reveals the things of God as said in 1 Corinthians 2:10 and of Christ (John 16:14). Generally the Spirit directs you in the

correct direction (Isaiah 30:21). He guides you in truth as stated in John 16:13. He even taught believers what to say to their enemies. In the same way He can supply words of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8). The Spirit can reveal the future. When Simeon was in Jerusalem the Holy Ghost was upon him and revealed to him that he would not die until he saw Christ."

"Tell me more, I'm really interested. He directs me so I won't fall?"

"The day you deny the Lord or backslide on the Lord the Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance the word and it will cut you like a knife. It isn't the cock crowing that killed him it's what he remembers when he heard that. He associates the word with that cock crowing. You'll associate the word of God with something. If you ever backslide on the Lord there will be things that come across your path that will remind you of church, the Bible, God's promises and the days that you were living for God and it will hit you just like a ton of bricks. It hits him."

"I don't feel any spirit inside of me."

"You must be saved first."

"That's why the empire is devoid of such a valuable influence. The billions of citizens are virtually cut off from His guidance."

"Next you're going to tell me that the combat robots can be saved."

"Now that's plain silly. They are soulless."

"I do have plans that will utilize them."

"But they're tamper proof."

"*Currently* they're tamper proof."

"How ambitious you are!"

"I once said ambition can power a starship."

"Doesn't boasting have something to do with personal ambition or pride, personal attainment?"

"Don't twist my words around. I merely equated ambition with starship fuel. Ambition can boast performance whether applied to an engine or your "engine. It motivates you to exceed your capabilities."

"Thanks for the psychology lesson."

"Fine. Let's get to the next ingredient in my plan. After consulting with my new navigator, a member of our underground church, the thought that the habitable planet we find should be light years away from Earth to discourage any Empire interfering. The Emperor will find this desirable, as he will feel he controls a larger domain of space."

"A rather paltry domain of this tremendous Universe."

"No matter, His ego is in control."

"Tell me more about your new navigator."

"We've met before. We're in harmony about the fact that the new world obviously must sustain human life comfortably."

“Obviously.”

“The new world must be at least several light years away from Earth. Our warp drive capability is limited, so distance can serve as a buffer of sorts. This will serve to give us a degree of separation from the Empire. We must be able to operate freely and independently from Empire intelligence, pardon the pun.”

“Are you satisfied with him?”

“He tells me he has a profuse desire to learn about the Bible. That makes for some good conversation to break up the tedium of hyperspace travel. He can also read hyperscript so I can be a student of his as well.”

“He’s also fine devoted member of the Underground Church. His name is Samuel Jones. Also known as Jonesy.””

“I’m looking forward to meeting him.”

“Don’t slight his mechanical skills.”

“This is more than I hoped for in a fellow crewmate. We seem to satisfy each other’s needs, as well as the needs of the mission.”

“

“Do you trust him?”

“I saved his life during a flight simulation when there was an explosive failure in the equipment.

‘I’m sure his indebtedness to you manifests itself in honesty and trustworthiness.’ He said with a bankrupt smile.

“I think this room is getting a little too claustrophobic for you.”

“I think that feeling will dispel once the mission gets underway.”

“And when will that be?” Donesmore was itching to get started.” Donesmore was just itching to get underway, which was quite unusual for a man who usually preached patience.

“We just have to summarize our plans to the board of our church. Just a formality, procedure, You shouldn’t concern yourself with it.”

“I thought you religious people were endowed with patience. You even refer to it as a virtue.”

‘Yes. You add to your faith patience and to patience godliness.’

“How do I become more patient. As a military strategist to the church I am overwhelmed with problems that require solutions.”

“Add to your faith patience and to patience godliness. You can’t have patience without hope. God has promised them things and since his promises are true, they have learned to have more patience. The more you trust God with problems, the more you know he’s going to work things out, the more patience you will have.”

“Spoken like a true man of the cloth. We need you to pastor our church sir.”

"But you know I'll soon be traveling the stars."

"OK, then help us obtain a substitute until you return, if you return."

"Don't be so discouraging. I believe God is on our side."

"Wadesworth's face contorted and he stared vacantly at Donesmore."

"Judging by your body language you're not a believer, you are don't have enough trust in God to believe. to believe."

"Then he launched into prayer. 'God, when we are afraid you encourage us. Give us courage to stand and encourage all of us to do what's right. To be a blessing to thee and to people to try and encourage them to trust in you. 'Father, thank you for letting us go through these classes. I bless you for it and thank you for it and thank you for the opportunity to serve you and thank you for these people who come and listen and I pray Lord and ask that you'll bless them and help them to understand things that I've said or correct the things that need to be corrected and encourage them in every that you can in your word. And bless us as we go down the street today to witness to people and help people [to believe in] the Lord Jesus Christ. And Lord help us to serve you faithfully. I pray that you to bless them and help them out, strengthen and encourage unbelievers. Bless them and help them out, strengthen and encourage them and encourage them and help in [any way} you can. And I pray this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."

"You're armed and dangerous."

"The danger vis in not believing. Doing it your way."

"Thank you for the sermon John. I needed to hear it."

"My preaching was general, but was aimed specifically at you."

"That is sometimes the case. A sermon can target one member of a congregation."

"Thank you John. Can we now get out of this claustrophobic room and get down to business?"

"Don't think about serving on a starship. It's not like star trek. You'll find it very cramped on board."

"Well when do you get onboard?"

"This entire project is under the auspices of the Emperor."

"What does he know about anything?"

"Exactly. He is shielded from the truth by the real covert aristocracy."

"So he's just a figurehead."

"It's the covert aristocracy that" wants to plunder any wealth found on the new world to fund their dub empire. This will require modifying the combat robot's programming."

"Human greed," scowled Donesmore. "It has no limits."

"There are specific ways you are to suffer - suffer doing what Christ wants you to do - not suffer for your own mistakes, greed and lust. If you're walking is the flesh. That's where greed is."

"We need a better government, obviously."

"Men are wicked. You can't set up a pure system. Only a society based on biblical guidelines will work. My aim is to set up just a society on the new world."

"We had a god'- 'mammon' the god of greed or wealth. Maybe the profuse spread of gods in the Empire has its roots in gods like this one."

"America had too much wealth so men are no longer single in their heart. Their hearts pants not after God, but after things. Men are trying to have church and the world at the same time, so we don't have the great power and grace."

"Nice sermon on pre-Empire America.. Now let's skip the morality lesson and get to work."

"My words aren't meant to be soothing. Particularly words based on the word of God, which is sharper than a two-edged sword."

"You're right, I'm just frustrated."

"This is a pivotal time for us. We must keep our resolve and focus on the essentials of the mission. It would have started already had the robots not

required some evil fine tuning the extent of which won't be revealed until we're on the new world."

"If it's not good it's evil?"

"The Bible says to abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. There's the distinction. A Christian is to abhor evil; i.e., he is to hate it. That's the negative part. Then he is to stick to or cling to those things that are good. David said, in Psalm 97:10, "Ye that love the Lord, HATE EVIL." The distinction will become more meaningful to you when you become a Christian."

"You seem to have a proclivity to preach Mr. Donesmore."

"That's pastor Donesmore."

"How about preaching our mission to me pastor Donesmore. You seem most apt at doing it that way." said wadesworth, squirming in his seat."

"Keep that kind of humor in check." Donesmore warned.

"OK, I'll spill, as you say. I couldn't resist a little preaching during this Imperial 'lull. My navigator's thoughts will be included in this diatribe."

"Fine." And he declined in his chair. "I'm all ears."

"Excellent. My navigator, Samuel and I agreed that there should be an approachable distance between the new world and Earth.

"Why so?"

"Those inept Imperial fools have been touting the doctrine of vicarious travel, which reflects their woeful lack of ambition. They would never consider star travel, especially to visit the Emperor's newest fiefdom. I understand the citizens are holding a lottery where the losers accept exile to the new world,"

"How ironic! The real losers will suffer the confinements of the Empire, until we can liberate them."

"I love your optimism."

"I try to be positive. The positive is to commit things to God, let Him know your wants, needs, desires and requests."

"This motivates you?"

"You motivate by revelation, knowledge, prophesying or doctrine. That's what we should be preaching. Not the power of positive thinking. We are supposed to lift up Christ, not the church."

"Why are you so cryptic?"

"To put it simply. All negative isn't good. You need to hear that you're a filthy sinner, but you need positive too. Humanism and positive thinking is not the answer. You should cry at times. That's the will of God. Paul had many problems."

"You've lapsed back into preaching again."

"I can't help it. You're a captive audience, I apologize."

"Well, I can say unequivocally that the Empire is negative."

"You're Learning." Donesmore said tongue in cheek.

"Now I'd like to learn about the mission."

"Let me just conclude this segment. Every dispensation is proof positive God is right and man is wrong. God uses the dispensations as a test to prove that God is true and every man a liar. Adam and Eve blew it. Up until the millennium they had every possible way and every dispensation ends in failure. There is always a judgement, the flood, the cross, the tribulation. All end in failure.

"Dispensation? I'm not going to let you get off-topic again!"

"OK. Let me just say dispensations are periods of time which God *dispenses*.

"Is the new biblical sense, yes. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't strive to do the positive; save souls, make people's lives more meaningful, change things positively."

"Yes. I concur."

"So just how has Man failed. I ask that at the risk of getting a long-winded response."

"When God gives man a responsibility (and He gave them every way to be responsible), when the judgment comes for every excuse man has God will bring up a certain period of time. He will say He did it the way Man said and man still failed. The law failed. The grace period failed. When Christ was there and the devil was in the pit they still blew it. Every dispensation is proof positive God is right and man is wrong. God uses the dispensations as a test to prove that God is true and every man a liar. Adam and Eve blew it. Up until the Millennium they had every possible way and every dispensation ends in failure. There is always a judgement, the flood, the Cross, the Tribulation ... All end in failure."

"I don't mean to be idealistic, but a fresh world, saturated with Bible values, totally independent of this world's sin, may have the attributes of a godly, successful society. Look at the fruit we can produce. See what it brings forth. If things

associated with the Bible are positive then God is pleased with them. If they are negative then God is not pleased with them.”

“Man is still Man where ever he goes. But we have free will. God says there is nothing we can’t accomplish.”

“Well, almost nothing.”

“Not in this age. But you can strive for perfection. If we get in the right relationship with God so we can have abundant life here and when this is over we could have more life. We should have no fear of death. God has given us the victory. Nothing can defeat us, the spirit that's within the Christian. It's life everlasting. Old time graveyards can have humorous epitaphs. You're saved,

”Didn't God say all things are possible with Him?”

The point is that a man cannot figure it out, but God can. Man thinks one way and God thinks another (Isa. 55:5-8).

“Well, it may take God to figure out this mess.”

“Often He will assist in the war if the cause is righteous.”

“Our cause is “probably righteous. I think I've earned *my* ‘righteous?’ Maybe I'm wrong. I don't think I'm wicked.”

“Working for righteousness will incur a debt. Righteous is imputed to us freely.

“Then why then do the wicked prosper? why are all they happy that deal very treacherously? How can they be righteous?”

“'Us' is the saved person.”

“So why don't you stop fretting and start believing?”

“Respectfully, you're preaching to me again, not focusing on the mission.”

”Sorry. I am famous for my meandering.”

“The mission!”

“OK. In the beginning I impressed the Emperor's son with my alleged worldliness and my ability to captain a starship. He used his apparent leverage to appoint me in charge of the population relocation scheme.

“go on.”

“In a tactical meeting with my navigator, a member of our underground church, we decided the new world should be at least several light years away on a planet that will sustain human life. Only four or five combat robots will be able to accompany us due to space limitations.

WE will use the ships megaflop computers to figure out a way to render the robots defenseless. Bob Rendly, who worked on Imperial robot development, will oversee the robot shutdown.”

“A rather perilous task to be performed by a brave man and servant of our church.”

“Your strength and bravery should be to be in God. Boldness should not be in the flesh. Some men are naturally brave and some naturally cowardly. How you present the gospel should not be based on bravery or cowardness in the flesh.

“The gospel?”

"The Bible has commanded us to teach the gospel.
 "'You're saying us' again. I assume you mean the Christian?"
 "Yes sir. Teaching the gospel as an ambassador of God is one of the privileges of a Christian."
 "We have the ministry of reconciliation. You're an ambassador for Jesus Christ."
 "By 'we' I assume it's like 'us' - Christians."
 "Another privilege of being a Christian."
 "But an ambassador sounds like nothing more than a public relations job."
 "But an ambassador for God is a position of honor."
 "When u witness you would go in Christ's stead. You're an ambassador for him, an official rep of heaven. It's as if Christ Himself was standing there. If they slam the door in your face don't take it personally. They have not rejected you, they've rejected Jesus Christ. They're getting mad at God but they can't holler at Him so they take it out on you because you're the official representative. If you do right you're never going to have the glory of this world. They have rejected God. Every new creature is an ambassador given the ministry and the word to reconcile lost men to God. That is part of the work of the church.
 "I assume 'us' 'we' and now 'new creature' all refer to the Christian. "Yes sir. How perceptive you are, but I think the Empire frowns on open air preaching. This is an edict enforced by their combat robots."
 "Yes. I've experienced that."
 "So why propose it to me."
 "Because the time will come when the Empire topples. *Then* if you're willing to practice your faith you'll be a true, faithful witness, a good ambassador for the Lord."
 "'You say 'then' like you have a premonition."
 "It's more than that. If you're not doing wrong you have peace and you may have peace even after you start doing wrong Then after a while you start feeling guilty about it and your peace leaves you. It's not just pleasure and sin for a season because you can slide into that thing and enjoy it for a while. But the peace goes."
 "'Then what should I do to remedy the situation?"
 "Make a list of your bad habits and across from that put down the right things they should be doing. When this happens - do this instead. It's all possible thru Christ and the Holy Spirit. Live by what you feel. Live by what God says. There's the feeling motivated life oriented towards sin and self and the commandment motivated life of holiness oriented towards godliness. The former is the greatest hinderance to a godly life. The latter comes only from biblical structure and discipline. Or when the pressure comes he will revert to the

old, bad habits. It's not just 'put off' but what are you going to put on."

"I feel success for this mission is imminent."

"Let me say a few words about ..."

And the shrill sound of a crackling malfunctioning, yet aggravating alarm suddenly assaulted their senses."

"That's the Emperor summoning his throngs to attention. That means us. Gird your loins!"

Donesmore clutched his briefcase of notes, consisting mainly of recommendations and suggestions for the Emperor. He realized they must be presented humbly, as the Emperor placed everyone in some sort of cast system; everyone being far below him. With that in mind he drew a deep breath, prayed silently and proceeded to an Imperial conference room where the Emperor would be eagerly awaiting the solutions Donesmore would deliver. His life literally depended on a good performance, but he was comforted by the fact that he knew the Empire was in dire problems due to the overpopulation problem that was depleting their resources. And of course their gods were making excessive demands they couldn't meet.

"My heart bleeds for them" Donesmore chuckled to himself, which served to relieve some of his tension. It also served to bring the true issue to the forefront. Aristocracy and citizenry alike must hear the truths of the living God, that was the bottom line of the mission, as far as he was concerned..

Samuel Jones, church pilot and navigator was present in the Imperial conference room.

"Hi Jonesy" said Donesmore warmly.

"Hello captain sir, pastor." Jonesy was trying to be all-inclusive.

"Thank you for the recognition."

"Yes sir."

"I think we can eschew formality and get down to brass tacks." said Donesmore, using one of his favorite homespun expressions. "We are instructed to go into the starship simulator together to see how we work as a team, but there can be only one captain, one leader."

"I concur sir."

"Following the leader is ok as long as the leader is following Christ."

"Yes sir."

"Is it tough pastoring/leading a church?"

"Sometimes you just have to be the man for our people. A leader home/church has to take leadership and play the men even if you're scared to death inside. You don't let people know it. God can give you answers in a Bible study. Just be a man and- act like u know what you're doing and just trust God."

"How can a Bible study make you a better leader?"

"Daniel was a highly placed political leader in Babylon. He was also a Bible Believer and scholar. He realized that something

was happening. So he turns to Jeremiah and starts to read some of the prophecies. Jeremiah lived before the Jews had gone into Babylon. He preached year after year to the Jews saying that the God of Israel will remove them from the land. When this occurred he wrote the history of how Nebuchadnezzar came and took over the Jews."

"So it's safe to say the pastor is the leader of the church."

"That's more than safe to say. It's the truth!"

"A priest is like a pastor. He's a leader of the people and people follow leadership. 'Nothing can rise above leadership. But people will never be any greater than the leader who's leading them. There's -a lot of truth to that. A church takes on the character of the pastor. Unfortunately a good leader is the exception, not the rule."

"I'm confident you are a good leader."

"Thank you. I'll prove it to you over time. But remember the Lord is the leader of circumstances, is the One over the whole earth."

'Explain please."

"God manages circumstances. God says he is the only one capable of interpreting circumstances:

Isaiah 55:8 For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 55:9 For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

"That's the short answer. You seem hungry to learn the Bible.

"I'm glad. We'll have plenty of time to kick it a round in the tedium of hyperspace travel. Particularly at warp .5 he added with a grunt."

"Thank you sir. I'm eager to learn."

"Study to gain God's approval, the Bible says. And you can reciprocate by teaching me how to read hyperscript.

"Gladly sir.

"I believe having this skill will be essential to our mission."

"Yes. Nearly all communications will be done in this fashion."

"If this entire mission is sanctioned by the Emperor, why the need for this cloak and dagger security.

"There are splinter groups that are anti-empire, based in the neglected the polar regions. They will like nothing more than to plunder the new world's riches and ultimately the empire's wealth. We are cloaked from their detection and must remain undetectable."

"How dastardly!"

"They go ironically by good appellations, such as the disciples. My own sister is involved with their leader. It grieves me just to think about it. It's free will choice."

"Could you explain the concept of free will and why would God even allow it?"

"Yes he tedium of hyperspace allows for lengthy discourse between us. I'm even holo-recording our sessions and adding them to my personal library. So you can be as inquisitive as you desire. Anything off topic will be edited out."

"Yes sir. But why would God allow His will to be overridden by Man?"

"It's the overcoming of the predetermined will of God by the free will of an unregenerate person. God has circumvented His will."

"But why?"

"God does not want robots but free will choice beings who serve Him willingly. Calvin taught that the Holy Spirit had to regenerate you then you make a free will choice. That your will is depraved. You cannot make a free will choice. Not true. Calvin believed you had to be regenerated before you could make a decision. Arminius believed you had to decide for Christ before you got saved."

"Now you're name-dropping. I prefer your view."

"The free will of man is seek and ye shall find."

"Spare me the platitudes."

"What you want is the bottom line. God is not bound by His sovereignty. God is sovereign. But He's not bound by His sovereignty. If God yields to Man's free will to change the times and seasons and yet His sovereignty is not hurt, then, in His Nature God is ultimately yielding to free will for Man. What attribute of God is more imp than His sovereignty (what prevents Him from just forcing everybody to do things His way?). What did God yield to in His nature? Grace is a part of it. Really, what is the most important attribute about God? Its righteousness. Its holiness. In other words, God is not unrighteous in His dealings with men. He gives the what they want, what their desires are based on. And He changes the times and laws depending upon how Man goes."

"Let me digest this."

"Free will is in the Bible. That's the production and invention of a spiritual mind. You will find grace being resisted in the Bible."

"Isn't there a conflict between free will and the sovereignty of God?"

"Excellent question. You're really helping my holo-lesson Samuel."

"The free will of Man is never in conflict with the sovereignty of God."

The shrill sound now blasting through the conference room was a reflection of the Emperor's urgency to meet with them."

‘He knew his political rivals had their sights on his throne and that assassination of your superiors was the standard method of advancement.’ Explained Donesmore.

‘He must be frantic by now. How can he act clearly in such a stressful state?’

‘He has a burden and the burden is weighing on him. He’s living in a rough environment with much stress.’

‘He readily endorses the situation he leads.’

‘My heart bleeds for him. But we must seize the leeway he has granted us.’

‘Yes sir. I believe we have an appointment in the simulation room.’

‘I know. Gird my loins.’

‘Yes Jonesy.’

Ans they proceeded to a fancier simulation.

‘This is a real artifact. It hardly looks used.’

‘Well, I doubt if the aristocracy is capable nor do they have the desire to test it out.’

‘They probably don’t trust their own equipment.’

‘Or even understand it.’

‘The Bible says to trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding, Proverbs 3:5.’

‘I knew it was only a matter of time before you started quoting me Scripture.’

‘Yes, John responded with a tinge of regret. I feel like I’m betraying my calling.’

Now Jonesy felt like he wasn’t attentive enough. That’s too expansive a statement. We’re distracted by the pressures of our mission.’

‘We’re both in the same predicament. As leader I must regain my composure.’

‘Yes sir. I’m ready to press on.’

‘That’s very enabling to hear. But you can’t trust what you think. You just need to trust God. I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.’

‘Why does ‘forever’ need the word ‘ever’ appended to it?’

‘You bring up a complex issue which takes patience and time to understand. It is a mistranslation with dire consequences to sound doctrine. We’re also under great time pressure.’

‘I need more patience too.’

‘The Bible shows you how to get patience. You can’t have patience without hope. God has promised them things and since his promises are true, they have learned to have more patience. The more you trust God with problems, the more you know He’s going to work things out, the more patience you will have.’

‘Really.’

‘The path to patience is tribulation and at the end of the path is the city of content. We will get patience at the tribulation. The more tribulation God puts in your path the ore you will be

Looking forward to the second coming. Hope makes us not ashamed.”

“Well we’re on the right path.”

“Our patience is from God and the word of God. It comes from an understanding that you don’t have to take care of it, God will and He’ll do a better job. You should add to your faith patience and to patience godliness.”

“You certainly do walk the walk not just talk the talk.”

“Thank you ... I think.”

“Look; we all want the hope that God gives us peace -> access -> rejoicing -> glorying in tribulations .”-> patience, experience, hope Patience.”

“”Yes sir,”

“We’re growing late for the simulation room. We shouldn’t keep the Emperor waiting. He might revoke the starship privileges he bestowed on us will vanish along with our entire mission.

“Lead the way sir.”

“

“

“

.

“

Chapter 3

The room which housed the simulator was spotlessly clean. Not from any diligent housecleaning, but rather from neglect. The simulator itself was covered with dust and Imperial engineers were in the process of reviving it.

"Don't worry sir, we'll have this baby operational in a jiff. Just a matter of removing the cobwebs."

"We can't neglect salvation Samuel. And do not habitually neglect any book of the Bible. Preachers mostly preach NT or familiar OT. Take time to know about unfamiliar passages. Don't go with a half-prepared sermon."

"But I'm not a preacher. Besides the combat robots have honed in on street preaching if they don't recognize the Bible as the Imperial bible."

"You've reawakened a thought I had earlier. I was reading Sun Tzu's, 'The Art of War', where he said to use the enemy's resources when feasible."

"What resources?"

"The combat robots. What else do they have that's a threat to us?"

"But they are virtually tamper-proof."

"That's why Bob Rendly is on board. He helped design them."

"Don't you think we should tackle that problem after we depart Earth?"

"Obviously. This is just nervous chatter and forward optimism."

"Keep such talk to yourself" Jonesy warned.

"You're right. I've been far too talkative about this."

"The only blessing this world ever gets is through God's people. God's given everything, has allowed technology so we could get the gospel out. God blesses His children, but the lost who are nearby get a little of the blessings to. Americans enjoy their freedom because of the freedom the word of God has had in their country. Countries that are not talkative, silence the Bible - their people don't have anything. As things go the other way here - we are becoming third world nation and the Empire is cementing that fact."

"So silence can be a bad thing?"

"Sometimes silence will shame you."

"But in this case being silent is wise discretion."

"Yes, you're right. You can guide me to be a better diplomat Jonesy."

"And you can teach me the Bible."

"Yes."

Once again the shrill sound of the Emperor's signal that he required their presence immediately broke their discourse. "We'd better get a move on" cried Donesmore. "My thoughts can be long-winded and meandering." "Yes, you're known for that." Jonesy observed.

And they proceeded to the Imperial palace, passing through an seemingly endless expanse of pristine land. "The Emperor certainly selected the cream of the land to surround himself with." "That alone indicates his aloofness from the population." "Well, no dictator can relate to his subjects in any manner." "It's criminal the way he treats the people." "Keep your voice down, although the method of conveyance we are using no longer has operative audio surveillance." "We shouldn't speak unless spoken to and only to respond to questions. Let that be our policy." "OK. Sir."

The gates of the palace were tattered and crumbling. But the presence of a legion of combat robots strongly compensated and obviated anyone who planned an impromptu invasion. It was these robots who escorted the two once they had reached their destination. After traversing a labyrinth of corridors they arrived at a waiting room. This room was plush, but not comfortable, as the climate control seemed to be malfunctioning. Donesmore and Jones staired at each other with vacant stares. "It is what it is." they must have thought simultaneously. A pair of companion robots, designed for domestic, not defensive purposes, escorted them to the Emperor's chambers. A more than ample amount of gold was used in the furnishing and statues of gold were placed strategically around the room. Donesmore couldn't conceal his disgust at what he saw, but he quickly repaired his countenance just as the emperor entered the room. He was a pale, frail looking man in spite of the fact he was relatively young. He had a purplish glint in his eyes, undoubtedly from some sort of physical stimulant.

The two men snapped to rigid attention after customarily obsequiously bowing. Three chairs emerged from a recess in the flooring and the three men sat down. "what shabby furnishing" Donesmore thought to himself as he wriggled into the uncomfortable chair, while giving the Emperor a bankrupt stare. "Gentlemen, much to my chagrin I sense an animosity emanating from you" he said, directing his remarks directly at Donesmore. "Now I know where young Cleon got his linguistic skills" Donesmore thought.

It was astonishing to him how the Emperor could read his discomfort, but had no consideration for the discomfort of the millions of citizens trapped in his 'machine'. The way the Emperor could sit on his throne while his meals, his bed, all

his material needs were mechanically delivered to him. "He was living in a machine! It was no different than the machine in which the citizenry was held captive, except his free will was unencumbered. Huge difference, a Universe of difference Donesmore concluded. "Free will versus no will!" He was becoming increasingly agitated and realized he must retreat from these ruminations- for now. He quickly readjusted to have a placid expression, a more tranquil one. He would be smiling in the end. He knew not to bite the hand that was feeding him.

"Let us dispel any ill will and get down to business. Mr. Donesmore you are truly a deviation from the men I associate with. That includes the inner circle of my aristocracy. It's blatantly obvious that we're at a stalemate because I don't have the leverage to bargain with you and you don't even have the class to embark on negotiations with me.

"Class! I'm not a member of your citizenry, so I'm not mentally depleted." Donesmore no longer felt like he was on the Emperor's leash. "

"Where does your ambition come from? Where did you come from?"

The Emperor was dumbfounded.

"I come from the southern polar cap region. A region largely neglected by your Empire. I have the free will to develop a character. I may be revealing something you feel necessary to correct, but men like myself are the product of non-influence in your 'machine' as I call it. "

"Nonsense, blasphemy! Our gods would not tolerate your independence, your disrespect. Your arrogance! Your insolence!"

"Oh! So they control your Empire."

"Donesmore realized his disrespect for the Emperor could jeopardize the mission. He quickly muted himself. He had been warned not to be so talkative by his navigator, who was literally guiding him through this stormy confrontation, but he was far off-course." He regained his composure again and begged for the Emperor's indulgence and swore to himself he would be fully devoted to the mission from now on. Millions of lives hung in the balance. He felt a tinge of regret, but he was an orator and couldn't subdue the talent he had for morphing a discussion into preaching material. He did this with great zeal.

As if he was mouthing instructed words the Emperor spoke.

"I'm anxious to tabulate your tactical skills when you and your navigator perform as a team in the flight simulation.

"Yes, your majesty."

"Spare me the appellations and seat yourselves in the simulator.

Donesmore, with no trepidation, calmly strapped himself in the harness of the captain's seat. Jonesy on the other hand appeared nervous and couldn't hide his uneasy fearfulness. Donesmore held his palm tightly and whispered in his ear 'we all fear a lot of things. The real source of power is letting God

take care of everything. We often fear when there's no reason to worry about things. If you have an ear - listen''

'Jonesy nodded affirmatively.

Donesmore was on a roll, which made him unmindful he was in earshot of the Emperor. Once he was giving a message he couldn't stop until the thought was completed. "God wants our affection, love, allegiance He almost demands them. Because He wants and is looking, expecting those things when He sees things we're doing that are in contrary to His will, His laws and what He knows 'will be good for us and your life He gets upset ab that. That's what jealousy is. When you're jealous you want something and something else comes in between it. It's an uneasy feeling. It's that passion or part uneasiness which arises from fear that a rival may rob us of the affection of one whom we love or the suspicion that he is already done it or it is the uneasiness that arises from the fear that another does or will enjoy some advantage which we desire for ourselves. It's to be apprehensive of rivalry. Competition for something or someone. You become consumed w it after a while. We want we want and if something else comes between we get upset. And that's the way God is. He's like us but He's on a much higher level. He wants our love, affection, devotion, service and when He sees things in our lives aren't matching up He makes us feel uneasy. Because He's uneasy. He's inside of you. Then you know somethings wrong. The Holy Spirit reprovess of sin and righteous and judgment. U have him inside you if you're saved."

The Emperor grunted . His spindly legs barely supporting his frame,. "I don't condone your monolithic God. He is sexist, racist and starts unnecessary wars. Our priests will soon publish a monogram on this subject. We keep our populace informed.

Donesmore was erupting inside, but had the wisdom to ignore the Emperor's banter. All for the greater good he reasoned. He felt the need to preach to himself. 'As stated in Isaiah 11:2 the Holy Spirit is the spirit of wisdom and knowledge. He reveals the things of God as said in 1 Corinthians 2:10 and of Christ (John 16:14). Generally the spirit directs you in the correct direction (Isaiah 30:21). He guides you in truth as stated in John 16:13. He even taught believers what to say to their enemies. In the same way He can supply words of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8). The Spirit can reveal the future. When Simeon was in Jerusalem the Holy Ghost was up on him and revealed to him that he would not die until he saw Christ.'

He then did a bit of self-interrogation and concluded the mission trumped everything else. Preaching to the Emperor would be like launching a salvo in a fruitless attempt to win a battle, but winning the war was paramount. In his studies he always sensed the importance of the 'greater good'.

There's a greater good going on in this Universe, he mused. That greater good is God redeeming human beings and His created order. And one can choose to be a part of this greater good by choosing to be one of those who love God, and consequently live out God's will through your life.

"Enough of this prattle" said the Emperor in an ominous tone. Into the simulator you go! That is my decree. Donsemore manipulated his body into a smaller version of the simulator. He hoped that smaller didn't mean inferior. "Does that mean the starship it simulated was also inferior? He pondered that thought He was comforted to have Jonesy by his side. Not just as a navigator, but as a Bible-believing Christian. This was the 'glue' that formed the bond between them.

The simulated space put 'obstacles', which were child's play to Donesmore. There was a loud rumbling that focused Donesmore's attention on the starboard side of the ship. To his horror a shielding plate detached from the warp bay and Donesmore alertly pulled Jones to safety,

"Thanks captain. You saved me from being crushed," Jones said appreciatively.

"You're welcome. Now let's get through this charade."

"Aye aye sir."

"This room is rather clandestine. We can speak freely here."

"The Emperor won't be pleased if he knew about this loophole."

"He wouldn't be pleased if he knew the consequences of being killed without obtaining salvation. In general no unsaved man can please God. It's cause the flesh is condemned and wicked. Unsaved people think that God doesn't have any interest or care in their lives. They don't think that He's even around. But all the time He's searching the heart ... when an individual starts considering spiritual things God looks in there and sees that this person wants the truth. If not He lets them get stuck in cults He searches the heart daily and gives your heart what it wants - an unsaved person too. - It will lead them either to destruction or salvation. That heart is God's area."

"He certainly wouldn't be pleased if he knew you were preaching a sermon to me, a sermon not from the Imperial bible."

"Ain't that the truth."

"That's *his* truth!"

"What is *your* truthy sir. I'm not saying you lie, at least to me, but where do you obtain the truth about God?"

"As stated in Isaiah 11:2 the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge. He reveals the things of God as said in 1 Corinthians 2:10 and of Christ (John 16:14). Generally the Spirit directs you in the correct direction (Isaiah 30:21). He guides you in truth as stated in John 16:13. He even taught believers what to say to their enemies. In the same way He can supply words of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8). The Spirit can reveal the future. When Simeon was in Jerusalem the Holy Ghost

was upon him and revealed to him that he would not die until he saw Christ."

"That's more than a mouthful sir."

"With work you'll be able to digest it. You'll grow into a more mature Christian", able to digest strong meat, I have a holotape on the subject. You'll be allowed to access it, as your retina scan is now in the proper status file."

"Thank You sir. I'm anxious to partake of your study materials."

"You may indulge yourself, but only when the mission is cooking."

"Yes, we should prepare diligently sir. I think you should activate the simulator so we feign being busy."

"Yes, that's a form of preparation in itself. You highlight the aspect of preparation. Always be prepared. I'd like to say a few words on the subject."

"A few? If it's more I'll guillotine it mid-sentence. You were thre one that said the mission should be cooking before any preaching."

"OK. You control the leash this time."

"OK sir."

"when you don't put your heart into the Lord's work you're doing it deceitfully. You're not treating it the way it should be and giving the proper recognition and doing it the way that's right - ex: singing in front of the church without practicing. Prepare and do your best for the Lord. John's baptism was to prepare the people that they would know the Messiah. God ruins the best laid plans of men and mice. You have to deal with a God who is in control. People just don't take Him into account."

"Knowing Mans how is God preparing for our future?"

"I'll give you a nutshell answer."

"God is now working His will and setting the stage to prepare for the deliverance of His people. We're born about 6,000 years after Adam and Eve's sin, but God prepared, back there, to bring a Messiah and bring a deliverer long before we'd ever need Him - God made a way for us and for others. God's providence is revealed in this story and in our Bible."

"What can I do to prepare myself?"

"Learn to dig through the Bible and present things in a manner that other people can understand. Basically you need to get ahold of God and learn this book. Prepare yourself so you're not a novice. It will build your character and you'll learn patience too. Character building steps of a Christian include patience. It's a long road and God isn't in a hurry. God is polishing you, knocking off the rough edges. That's what you need. Be faithful and the rough edges will start to disappear. The first thing God's get to get rid of in you is your pride. And that's the roughest thing to shed. Notice I said a Christian."

"I'm born again. Now I understand the urgency of this mission."

"Good. Maybe now you'll be more focused."

"Yes sir."

"Just say you're going to do it and teach other people to do it also. Prepare your heart to do it. Learn it, do it and teach it to others. That's the way the truth propagates. But remember. You must do more than just prepare for battle. You can't practice forever. Sooner or later you've got to get into the battle."

"Safe to say, it must be sooner."

"Yes, definitely. Let me add ..."

"I know you're going to say that the Holy Spirit is involved in this preparation."

"Yes I am."

John's ministry was to go before the Lord's and help prepare the people's hearts for the Lord. That is the way the Holy Spirit works in our lives, going before us and touches the heart of people and as we go and witness to them then the Holy Spirit has prepared their heart ahead of time for the message that we give them - the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has given you a book, a Holy Spirit to abide with you, a new nature, a church - all the things you need to strengthen yourself, prepare yourself for the battle so that you use those things, train in them, so you are strong when the battle comes.

"Bottom line. How do I prepare myself?"

"You and the bottom line. You must take into account the entire picture!"

"You have to be diligent to find out what it is that God wants you to do and then be able to do it. Because if you drop the ball then it's your fault and not anybody else's. So you have to prepare now and you cannot wait. You want to know what you're doing when you get there. You want to know that what you're teaching is right when you get there so that you aren't teaching people things that are wrong. It's hard to go over things and make things right again."

"I'm going to guillotine this discourse right now. The Emperor must be suspicious of what we're doing."

"OK we'll have plenty of time to kick this around in hyperspace."

A fierce rumbling continued on the starboard side of the simulation. A shielding panel then separated from the dingy wall and pinned Jonesy's body onto his back. This menacing situation was causing Jonesy considerable pain. Without hesitation Donesmore used the leverage supplied by a loose armrest to raise the dilapidated shielding panel and liberate Jonesy.

"You saved my life sir" Jonesy crowed.

"All part of being prepared for any contingency that may arise."

"Thank you sir, but time doesn't permit the sermon I'm sure you've got well up. I'm glad you're stable."

"Understood. Let's get things cooking. But speaking of stable the only thing that's "stable is the rock - the Lord Jesus Christ and Bible Christianity."

"OK. You just saved my life, so I'll indulge you. Ramble on."

"This Empire - this is called feudalism - You can't straighten nothing out - it's just futility - you can't fight the system - if you have power than you become the establishment. You can't change society or life. It just blows the way the wind blows. Again, the only thing that's stable is the rock - the Lord Jesus Christ."

"I shouldn't have let you ramble on. If our efforts are just "futile ..."

"We're not trying to displace the Empire with a worldly society. We 're planning to implement a society structured with Bible values. I like the word 'values'. I say 'we' because some of the members of our church will be intimately involved."

"I'm inspired to be a part of it sir."

"I'll help you to become a more mature Christian."

"You bestow an honor on me sir. What do you mean by being a 'mature Christian.'"

"God will use you for what you have and you'll mature and He'll help you on the way. We are on a journey and we need to just follow what the Lord says. If you're not in the right church, understand the righty kind of pastor and have a good spiritual life at home and are spiritually right with your relationships at home and you're not growing as a Christian then you're going be tossed to and for with every wind of doctrine. He's telling u here you must be under these - till you need to pastor until God makes you one, till you're to the point where you're mature enough to do what somebody else has been doing for you. You have to satisfy understand a pastor until you're mature enough to be one. Till you're in complete unity of faith, knowledge of the Son of God, perfect und the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. As far as a human being can go, you can reach a point of maturity where God can use you to do with others what He's used you for."

"Let me decipher all that sir."

"Bottom line, as you like to request. In a mature church all want the same thing - to bring glory to God - the perfect body."

"I've heard you banter about the term 'strong meat'. That must relate to the mature Christin somehow."

"You're paying attention! A wise deduction indeed."

"Strong meat is hard to digest except by a mature Christian with foundation in the word of God."

"Until you can handle problems with the word of God and are experienced in problems and using the Scriptures you don't know whether a thing is good or bad. Most Christians will think that problems are bad. They don't understand why the problems are there for. They'll flee from them. After you've been through

some things you'll find out that everything you thought was wrong was right and vice versa. As you grow in the Lord a lot of things you did as a young Christian you find to be wrong. Then you begin to discern discernment. It comes through using the strong meat and using it in relation to your problems."

"I discern we're in a lot trouble if we don't follow his holiness."

That said the two men got down to business. They provided the Emperor they were ready to be put through the gauntlet of tests. The Emperor's engineering team was scarcely capable of assembling a challenging, competitive test that contained any degree of difficulty. Possibly because even the simplest test was difficult in their minds.

"Everything is relative." mused Donesmore. "So we should have a relatively easy time satisfying the Emperor."

And events transpired exactly as they predicted. The simulation obstacle course wasn't a challenge at all and Donesmore displayed even greater deftness than the Emperor's son had witnessed. It was all rote memory to him.

"You have a good memory sir"

"By studying your Bible, reading it and hearing good preaching it's possible to store up knowledge and wisdom and God will give you that wisdom and bring it back to your memory just when you need it.

"You always seem to pull up germane Scripture when you need it. You must have the greatest of memories. I study hard and I hide Scripture in my heart, so I'm ready to supply answers."

"Don't flatter me. God has about the best memory in the Universe. He remembers everything, almost everything (until He blots it out and erases it). He keeps a little book which he writes down everything. The only eraser He has is the shed blood of Jesus Christ. That's what makes getting saved so exciting - He blots out all those sins with the blood of Christ.

"I never meant to equate you with God! "

"I know. I'm just joshing with you."

"I have great foresight" trumpeted the Emperor."

"Great foresight! It's the blind leading the blind."

"Speaking of memory sir. will we remember these horrid days in eternity?"

"This part of life won't be a memory to us anymore, but there will be a lot of remorse when people we could have helped or been a better witness to are cast into the lake of fire. So it wouldn't be good if u had to go thru eternity remembering things like that."

"Yes sir."

Suddenly the machine whirred to halt. The Emperor was quite jovial, flushed with a success that was hardly his doing. I feel

that this relocation mission will be drenched in success. I have great foresight.”

“Now let’s remember the 10 million lost people that hang in the balance. Let’s give them free will choice and create some good memories for them and us.”

“What now?”

“Now that we are liberated from this farce evaluation we will return to our church and apprise them of the situation and solidify our strategy.”

“You know the protocol for returning to our church?”

“Yes. A series of untraceable verification locations.”

“Every detour allows you to experience fresh sites and peoples sir.”

“Onward Christian soldiers! This bears repeating if you haven’t heard it before. That’s what we are – soldiers. In a combat sit there are 3 elements that take place. At one time or another must combatants feel either afraid, aggressive, brave, timid, lonely or confused. Every soldier experiences fear, loneliness, doubt. Same in the Christian Life. Sometimes you feel brave, lonely, like you have no future. Everyone experiences these things. Whatever problems, feelings or defeats you have – we’re all in the same boat, everyone had the same thing, you don’t want to get too concerned if you get defeated. It is something you want to be aware of and try to overcome, but these things just happen in the Christian life and you have to realize that and not let it get you down.”

“That sounds like physical combat.”

“Spiritual combat is quite analogous. A missionary may suffer loneliness, confusion or even physical abuse when treated harshly when recipients react with hostility to your message, your witness. As a result you can be injured or killed. A witness is one giving testimony to the truth at the expense of his life. You’re willing to give up your life to tell the truth about something you know to be a fact.”

“You can become a martyr for witnessing”

“Yes. It comes from the Greek word ‘martyros’ – martyr. People who believe Christ died for them so they’re willing to die for Christ. A witness is one giving testimony to the truth at the expense of his life. You’re willing to give up your life to tell the truth about something you know to be a fact.”

“Who were the famous Bible martyrs sir?”

“You’ve got me talking again!”

“A slight delay sir. I guess I’m hungry for this type of knowledge.”

“Good job Jonesy.”

“OK. Stephen is the first recorded martyr in the book. He was killed for his faith. James is the second martyr in the Bible. The first apostle. He wrote the book of James. He was killed

around 44 AD. In Acts 7 Stephen the martyr recounts the whole history of Israel and brings them right up to the present how they have their God and their Messiah just like Israel had rejected Moses and Joseph and David and all the great men of God. He said they were no diff than their fathers who stoned the prophets. He just condemns them all but rather than accept the truth they kill the prophet Stephen. And at that point, very next passage, says that there's a dispersion from Jerusalem. And something really drastic happens at the end of Acts chapter 7 - when they kill Stephen who preaches not just the common people of Israel - he preaches to the Sanhedrin, the rulers of Israel. He preaches his message right to the leaders. They rejected the message that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. And they kill Him. And from that point on nowhere nearby will you find a miracle recorded in Jerusalem. The door slams shut on Israel.”
“Now, let’s get moving. Lives are at stake.”

And they proceeded to take a meandering route where they encountered various church operatives, who updated their next destination. All this was so they would be assured they were not tailed. With a sigh of relief they were soon in the conference room of the underground ‘church where Bob Done smore anxiously awaited them.

“My brother you’re a proverbial sight for sore eyes. What’s the latest on the mission my missionaries?”

“Our plans have been solidified Bob. We will command the ‘finest’ starship of the Imperial fleet, as questionable as its quality may be. We will seek out a class M planet several light years from Earth. The distance will serve as a suitable buffer between us and the inept Empire. A limited number of combat robots will ‘oversee’ the mission. Not by my choice.” We will have yourself Bob as robotics expert along with several other members of our church covertly fulfilling roles with skills that they are generally unknown to possess. Key flight positions can be filled without suspicion mainly because inept Imperial engineers are incapable of filling them.”

“I doubt they’d be willing participants anyway, as the Empire touts virtual travel.”

“People are programmed to be afraid of space travel anyway.”

“If they knew of the quality of avionics technology that alone would indoctrinate them.”

“The chatter is that the holodecks are used to brainwash and implant belief systems in people too.”

“How ghastly! The citizens are being stripped of all dignity.” Claimed Jones.

“And the knowledge of the living God. That’s something I intend to remedy!” Donesmore chimed.

“They are being stripped of all ambition, all enthusiasm, ‘Nothing great was ever achieved without a little enthusiasm’

- Ralph Waldo Emerson ”Jonesy added.

"Nimrod's ambition was to establish a world empire. Ambition can fuel a starship."

"It's fueling my desire to learn the Bible."

"Most commendable. Inspiration, imagination and luck are the glue that binds."

"I thought you frown on luck. But many cling to the concept."

"Very observant of you Jonesy. And many doesn't make it right. You see luck everywhere. In sports you see it too. Wear the same uniform when they win. They're counting on something that will generate luck. There's nothing that will generate luck but the devil. It's one characteristic of highly educated people. There is no such thing as luck when somebody starts doing right. Any time individuals starts doing right God begins to guide them and direct them into His righteousness and into His will.

Well, I'm lucky I can learn from you sir."

Thank you Jonesy.

"What do we do now sir."

"We visit their starship graveyard where, through neglect, they've mothballed all the crafts. We must resurrect a starship. I'm hardly going to let the Empire or Cleon Jr. do the choosing."

"Then?"

"We infiltrate the enemy."

"Huh?"

"Infiltration is what happened to the nation of Israel. It's one of the deadliest ways to destroy your enemy. Sadly we have basically 2 sides in this thing - the righteous and the wicked. And we have the wicked infiltrating churches today to destroy them. But It's very hard for the righteous to infiltrate the wicked because it's too easy to resurrect this flesh. Some men can. But it would be just like Israel -You'd be a sucker, your intentions would be right, but it's doubtful u can carry the thing out. You can't infiltrate. A witness for Christ has to be honest, up-front with people, be wise, harmless. But you can't deceive them. You have to let them know exactly who you are and what you are right from the beginning and go from there, build a relationship on that."

"So we simply resurrect a mothballed starship from the graveyard."

"You trivialize he mission. Nothing is simple."

"If we miraculously find a craft that can be made seaworthy. Then we can infiltrate the enemy."

"That's quite a military term coming from you."

"I prefer spiritual warfare, as I'm familiar with the weaponry."

"You mean putting on the whole armor of God?"

"Exactly. The fiery darts from the enemy is invisible, but more damaging then physical darts. But unfortunately for us the warfare we must engage in is with the combat robots. Remember,

we are in a battle with principalities and powers of the spiritual and physical realms. We can perform great miracles - save people, continue on as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.”
“By your command sir. ”I never tell a soldier he can't fight. Gird your loins.

“A man must be ‘a soldier. obey orders. low pay. You shouldn't make money off the ministry. All things will come out in the end. A soldier may experience losses and retreats but you just keep soldiering as long as the captain stays in the fight. The Lord pushes you out into battle. Just don't quit. There is no glory in it. Keep on going right through the dirt. We don't make 'peace treaties' with the world. Be a soldier in the fight against the devil, the devil's armies, sin, and unrighteousness.”

“So the Empire is run ultimately by the devil?”

“Ultimately.”

“So what can we do?”

“We can free 100 billion citizens from their bondage. There's an Ancient saying 'the truth will set you free'. As I said, every soldier experiences fear, loneliness, doubt. Same in the Christian Life. Sometimes you feel brave, lonely, like you have no future. Everyone experiences these things. Whatever problems, feelings or defeats you have - we're all in the same boat, everyone had the same thing, you don't want to get too concerned if you get defeated. It is something you want to be aware of and try to overcome, but these things just happen in the Christian life and you have to realize that and not let it get you down. Ministers are spiritual soldiers. You need the regimentation in your life that a soldier has, but it isn't the physical aspect, It's a spiritual aspect. The spiritual things are the hard things. That's good book for a man. Gets starch into your life. A soldier starches his pants.”

“Sir, thank you for the sermon, but shouldn't we be trying to resurrect a starship?”

“My bad habit of meandering strikes again! Sorry,”

”It looks like a real crap game.”

“Yes. Some ships appear to be incomplete.”

“We'll have to flight test the ones that appear to be seaworthy to any extent.”

“We weren't given such permissions. Are you suggesting we should steal, purloin, appropriate, rob, snatch, grab ...”

“Enough! I'm not going to risk even going at impulse power unless I fly it . And for your information God never leaves it in Man's hands to make/build religion. It's what He says that a person is to do. And when they steal His glory or the love/worship that your to have for Him then that's what a harlot do

her for per profit. Thats what a harlot religion really is. She takes the glory

upon herself that belongs to God as a harlot would take love from a around the block a few times. You know, kick the tires, "What tires sir?"

"Never mind. And such enthusiasm about stealing!"

"I was just kidding to make you feel better. And don't churches steal religious ideas from each other in building a religion?"

"Learn this well - God never leaves it in Man's hands to make/build religion. It's what He says that a person is to do. And when they steal His glory or the love/worship that you're to have for Him That's what a harlot does - takes a man's time and a man's love from another who really deserves it and she does it for money. She steals or takes what's deserving to another for personal profit. That's what a harlot religion really is.

"Go on sir, I need to hear this."

"The devil is trying to steal the worship of the church from Christ and at the last minute Christ rides in and defeats the devil. It's all in the Bible."

"So the Empire is actually one of the devil's tools used to steal the minds Of billions of citizens at the 'last minute'?"

"We should have that 'last minute' mindset. It will keep us on our toes. Be prepared! Christ's ministry started out with John the Baptist, who prepared the way Him. And know that Christians have the holy Spirit of God to guide us and direct us.

"Yes."

"You need to be saved - then you have the Holy Spirit as your teacher (John 16, 1John 2). He'll guide and instruct you."

"That's one reason why our mission to get the citizens saved is so imperative. They need guidance desperately. They must depart from iniquity, so they can know the truth. Sin will keep you from understanding the Scriptures and the will of God because sin is darkness. You shouldn't have unconfessed sin in your life. More fellowship is more light. Be cleansed from all sin or you don't have fellowship with God and you don't walk in the light and you are them leaning on your own understanding. The you don't have the Holy Spirit to guide you and you are back in the flesh."

"They don't have that understanding now because they don't have the truth."

"Exactly."

"Are we really chosen for that task sir?"

"God didn't choose angels, He chose us to guide men to God. No matter how insignificant you think you are, you're a man and God can use you to reach other men, to reach a man that can reach a whole nation. With God all things are possible. We hinder, limit God. 'Do great things for God, expect great things from God. We must get rid of the Empire. They are people who despise His word, trying to show that they don't want to do it His way. Because they don't do what He tells them to do.

effect. That's obviously not what God wants. That's what these people are doing here. They just ended up doing things the way they wanted to do them, the way it made them feel good. But in the Bible there are certain things that you're going to have to find out whether or not they're in there and what they say and then make them applicable to your own life. You got to use the Bible as a guide and as your outline. It's all laid out certain things He wants you to follow and do, certain ways you should go about something. Then He just wants you to just go with Him, make it apply to your own life. If you don't despise the word of God. And you don't want to be caught up in that yourself, even in a minor area. You want to have as much as possible, everything that you do should be based on a foundation of the word of God. Ask God to guide and direct you. He provides the answers but you have to rely on the Bible.

"But unfortunately their Bible is the Imperial bible. And their god is an array of false gods."

"Now you see the heart of the problem. It's the blind leading the blind. There's no Holy Spirit to guide these people."

"The aristocracy thinks they can see clearly."

"Well, the dwindling food supply and the demands of their gods not being met is causing their 'house of cards' to crumble, much to our advantage."

"House of card sir?"

"The term refers to a structure built out of playing cards precariously balanced together. Don't ever let our mission become a house of cards"

"No sir."

"Let's pray. The power of prayer should never be underestimated when you ask for thing in the will of God."

"Yes sir."

"Dear heavenly father bless our mission now and dear God I pray that you'll fill us with the Spirit of God. I pray Father you'll help our warriors to be spiritual listeners. I pray they'll listen to what the Holy Spirit has to say. Lord I realize this is a dangerous mission and some of it's not very exciting [to hear] Father, but I pray it's guided by the word of God and you said all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. Lord now help us to profit from it. Teach us, instruct us and guide us into the truths Father, that we need for our own lives and to be a blessing to other people. Lord they may seem insignificant to us now, but somewhere down the road everything that we learn and everything that we hide in our heart you use to be a blessing to someone else. Now Father use our people. For Christ's sake. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen"

"Do you think we'll get an answer sir?"

"I firmly believe that the prayers that yield the most favorable response conform to the will of God. But there's many reasons to

come to the Lord in prayer and there's many things God will answer upon. Sometimes God just answers out of pity. He feels sorry for us. Sometimes God answers just because of the situation you're in. But if you really want to get close to God one of the best ways to pray is to appeal to God by His own nature.

"So I shouldn't lose faith."

"No you shouldn't. Prayers should be the first instinct of anything. Prayer is the basis of all Christian activity. There isn't anything you're supposed to do without praying first.

"Yes, sir."

"Let me add this. The path you take getting to these things you want or need may move around and that's getting into the permissive will of God. His will was involved when Hezekiah was praying and God 'changed' his mind. The Bible does say God repents. Back here in the Old Testament quite often it will say that the Lord repented of doing evil. That does not mean that God was wishy washy or changing His mind back and forth. It means that even though there is a direct will of God the permissive will of God can be moved by prayer. Not everything is predestined (the hyper-Calvinist's view) then why pray for anything. What will be will be. That's basically their attitude. But there's too many verses inviting the believer to pray. That implies that there has to be the permissive will of God and as we're in that permissive will of God. we're still going in that direction that God wants us to even though it might be a minor course of going here and there. And that's what prayer does. It keeps you on that path."

"So prayer can be a powerful resource for a Christian"

"Christians have the wisdom of God's word, the power of prayer and faith, and a down payment of the future coming Kingdom of God on Earth -the Holy Spirit - to help us out in this age. There are many promises in God's word that apply to the Godly in this age - promises that He will help us in various ways, now. The combination of ways in which God helps those who live with His wisdom and call out to Him in faith, often enables the wise believer in this age to rise above many of the problems that might plague a non-believer. But in the grand scheme of things this is but a tiny bandage on the all the world's problems.

"Well said sir. So we can depend on His assistance with our mission."

"If we use the Bible as a plumb line and act in his will we should get his help."

"Can you explain the will of God in layman's terms sir."

"I hardly consider you a layman. And my logs show me you have viewed several of my holodisk presentations, some of which are labeled "Strong Meat". Could you digest the information?"

"Would a little extra-curricular research on my part."

"Excellent. And I promise to put in similar effort when you teach me to read and write hyperscript."

"How did Bible leaders use trade sir."

"For example, the Apostle Paul went where he was headed if the Holy Ghost allowed it. He picked out towns that were crossroads with a lot of trade traffic. A lot of people passing through. If you establish a church there you reach the world. Win someone and send them home. Philip left the big revival in Samaria and won one black man from Ethiopia. More Christianity has come out of Ethiopia than ever came out of Samaria. There was an Ethiopian church for hundreds of years. You won't find a Samaritan church today. Why? He just won a guy that was going back to his people. In Corinth, one of the greatest trade centers of the 1st century, there was a lot of traffic. People were getting saved in the marketplace and going back N E West. He knew you can't go somewhere unless God isolates you. He went to seaports, political centers, commercial crossroads. The best place to go is to the capitol. So trade is always a good thing?"

"Not always, some people would trade their integrity, sell themselves for money. Than u can't be free. When you get saved, Christ, the word of God makes you free. A man that sells out for money is not free, but a captive."

"So we need messengers to spread our message."

"Exactly. I have plans to do just that."

"How so?"

"Right now it's on a need to know basis."

"OK"

"Let's get down to selecting our starship."

"There are a number of diagnostics level we can perform, with my limited supply of purloined equipment, which we will perform, however the crowning test will be test driving this ship. Can you find any ship thar has maximum acceleration over warp 1,5?"

"I'll inspect every ship that appears seaworthy."

"But you can't judge a book by its cover. We must test drive every candidate."

"I'll leave engineering to you. I'll stick to navigation."

"We'll cloak every seaworthy vessel, then test drive it."

"I'm not familiar with hoe=w that works sir"

"Cloaking allows ships to stay hidden from other ships. In order to do this, they use a resource known as tertian radiation. You'll get this radiation from a daily chest once you acquire a cloaking device. These are separate from the ships themselves, and can be purchased in the faction store. While you can have more than 200 Tetrytols, if you are over 200 then you will no longer get the desired results."

"I'll leave the cloaking to you."

And the two men proceed to cloak every ship that appeared seaworthy. When cloaked they could be taken out of the armory

and flown into deep space. After testing 22 ship they find a pliable candidate and decided to dispense with the search. "Why bother with this entire scrap heap. Most appear to have unrecoverable hull damage. "

But one ship appeared to be unscathed.

"I believe this one was meant to be a show piece. It was supposedly to be representative of the whole morass."

"A remnant to fool who sir?"

"As much as this society has degraded, someone was wise enough to preserve a starship."

"Perhaps it was saved so the combat robots could replicate it."

"No way. Bob Rendly said they could only replicate themselves and they weren't proficient in doing even that."

"Well don't look a gift horse in the mouth I say. I'm just surprised anyone had the ambition to do this."

"Perhaps our prayer regarding the mission was at least partly answered. We were provided with a tool, a remnant. We just have to use it in a godly way."

"I can't think of anything more godly than leading people to the Lord. Make it possible for them to have salvation."

"Does that include the aristocracy who foisted this evil upon innocent people?"

"Of course it does. They've been blinded from the truth, as well."

"But didn't they have free will choice sir?"

"I think we covered this. It's the sovereign will of God. We believe in the sovereign will of God but also in the free will of Man. God just knows what you're going to do. He knows how you'll handle it. But it's still up to you. He doesn't make you reject or make you accept. That's entirely up to the individual. The

will of man. We're not Calvinists. Man can take what God has said and either listen to it or forbear - not listen, not do anything about it. It's still the word of God and you can made the faith of God of none effect by your unbelief. It still stands. It's true. It will still work. But God doesn't destroy or do away with Man's free will simply by His sovereignty. He gives Man a chance to exercise his free will by His sovereignty. He gives you a chance to be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ. And there's no contradiction between the free will of Man and God's sovereignty. All that's going to happen after the 1st coming can be figured out from Genesis. That Israel's going to reject. Look at the prophecies of Jacob in Genesis 48 and 49, about the 12 boys. When you look at that you know there's going to be trouble when righteous one with the scepter of Judah shows up. You exercise you're free will to hear or to forebear. That's Man's free will, which is not in opposition to God's foreknowledge. "

"But we'll be judged and how we use our free will?"

"of course. But there's one thing that never alters - God's dealings w men. He's righteous in that dealing. If they want to do right God will react to that desire and that free will of Man. If they want to do wrong, if they don't want Him as king He'll give them Saul. If they don't want Jesus Christ He'll give them Caesar. They could have had Jesus Christ and He'd killed Caesar. He would have wiped him out in 7 years. And Caesar's whole system. The last 2,000 years wouldn't have even been on the pages of history. We'd be 1,000 years into eternity right now. There'd be a new heavens and a new earth - if those Jews would have made the right decision. Of course, if you go back to Adam and Eve - we wouldn't be in the whole mess if it hadn't been for that. God's determination when He put them in the Garden wasn't that the whole thing would fall apart. He put them in there to be right with Him and to walk w Him. They chose, so He dealt with them after righteousness. They chose another way so righteously He judged them - but mercifully."

"So His chosen people used their freer will and rejected Him."
"Unfortunately yes."

"So why would God allow free will in the first place?"

"God allowed sin to get into system.-He didn't want robots to serve Him, but free will choice beings

"I get it. The combat robots blindly obey orders. They have no loyalty and they're not designed for companionship."

"No they're not. That's what makes them such a nemesis."

"Couldn't Christ be tempted to make evil choices? After all He certainly had free will.

"Good question. Although we're certainly busy, I want you to learn the Bible. And I'm trained to be instant with my answers."

"Thank you sir.

"He cannot be tempted. Christ could not be tempted. He had God's nature. He had a flesh body but did not have Man's nature. Adam had a free will and could choose to do evil. Christ couldn't because of his nature. Adam is created with the ability to do wrong. Christ doesn't have that ability. Hard to reconcile deity with humanity. If he is immortal has in him the nature to reject sin. Satan believed he could get Christ to do wrong, but Christ was the victor. Humanly he faced temptation but divinely he never gave it a second thought. Adam had a different nature. Christ wasn't 100% man in the sense that he didn't consider temptation, as we do. He had to sustain a human body. He was tempted in all points, He knew what it was like to go through it but never considered it. (see James 1). Jesus Christ couldn't have sinned. He was immortal so had no flaw in the character."

"I think I comprehend sir."

"The way I see it, I'm grateful to have free will, but doesn't it cause trouble for God's plans for Mankind?"

"God exists in past, present and future. He is outside of time. He always knows what will happen. He doesn't have to come up with fresh contingency plans when things change."

"It's really a mystery to me sir."

"The Bible speaks a lot about free will. Calvin says a man has to be predestined to be saved, but the free will offerings of the Old Testament reveals that a man could offer to a spiritual God up spiritual sacrifices in his heart. The Old Testament wasn't only offering physical sacrifices. They certainly did but David said in Psalm 51 what God liked were spiritual sacrifices and He said that in Psalm 51 under the law. And today when you have a broken spirit you will bring the right sacrifice - Jesus Christ, who was the fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrifices. They did it voluntarily; free will willingly in the OT and that is a pic and type of the fact that people will do it today. Just as they brought a lamb we bring a Lamb - the fulfillment of the lambs. But we do it willingly. Free will is in the Bible. Total depravity is the production of a depraved mind. It's not in the Bible. whoever invented or produced that phrase didn't get it out of the Bible. Again, free will is in the Bible. That's the production and invention of a spiritual mind. You'll find grace being resisted in the Bible.

"I'm confused sir. And who is Calvin. Was he a former navigator of yours sir."

"Don't worry. In the tedium of hyperspace we'll have plenty of time to kick things around. It will be a blessing. Believe me. Let's use your free will and mine to get to work. We've already discussed the fine points of the mission at church headquarters. We know what we have to do. And we'll do everything in truth. If we fight with the truth we will be overcome by the truth."

"The truth is I don't know how we can hope to find a habitable planet only several light years from Earth, That was the plan all along right?"

"The Bible says

Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

The secret to anything in life as far as God as concerned. The only way is to ask God but if you are a friend of the world than you will ask the world for counsel. Ask and it shall be given. God may want to see how you ask, how bad you want to be a Christian, deny things, change your whole life. Seek. It may be the last door you go to. You have to seek after the valuable things."

"Factor in my navigational skills and I think we have a workable solution sir, I hope"

"Having hope is very positive Mr. Navigator. The hope in Israel is Christ, not all the children will die. They will be reborn spiritually at the second coming. The fact that Christ didn't die is the hope and resurrection of Israel. Benjamin is a type

of Christ as a warrior nation. Judah is the line of the king and Benjamin is the line of the warrior nation. These two tribes split from the other 10. Christ comes back as a warrior king and that is the connection. Matthew uses this verse to show that Benjamin was a type of Christ. When he is born his mother dies. When Christ is born the nation of Israel dies. He is the only hope.

"So hope can resurrect a nation. Maybe hope can start a new nation."

"Hope is but one ingredient, but it can fuel our efforts."

"God will destroy one man because there's no hope in him, but if there's hope in a man God will put him thru whatever is needful to get him to turn. And God will deal with someone until He finally gets their attention."

"So hoping the mission is successful is a positive thing."

"Yes. It plays a part."

"Proverbs 10:28 The hope of the righteous [shall be] gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish."

"Of course you heard about the hope in the gospel?"

"Of course. It led to my salvation sir."

"Just testing you . Anyway, we hope He will return. We have the down payment but not the whole But when inheritance. We don't have the new body, the new city, the mansion yet. The hope is connected with the resurrection. The path to patience is tribulation and at the end of the path is the city of content. We will get patience at the tribulation. The more tribulation God puts in your path the ore you will be looking forward to the Second Coming. Hope makes us not ashamed. If everything was going right, would you want Jesus to come back?"

"But when?"

"It just hasn't come to pass yet."

By having hope you can win crowns."

"Remember, our hope is in the resurrection. It will be fulfilled. You can't endure without hope."

"You are prepared. Now you have to show me what you got."

"Yes sir. "When do we leave?"

You sound nervous. We could let down the citizens if we don't find an ideal planet for them and that failure could anger God."

"God wants our affection, love, allegiance. He almost demands them. Because He wants and is looking, expecting certain things, when He sees things we're doing that are in contradiction to His will, His laws and what He knows will be good for us and your life. He gets upset about that. That's what jealousy is. You're jealous - you want something and something else comes in between it. It's an uneasy feeling. It's that passion or part uneasiness which arises from fear that a rival may rob us of the affection of one whom we love or the suspicion that he is already done it or it is the uneasiness that arises from the fear that another does or will enjoy some advantage which we desire for ourselves."

It's to be apprehensive of rivalry. Competition for something or someone. You become consumed with it after a while. We want what we want and if something else comes between we get upset. And that's the way God is. He's like us but He's on a much higher level. He wants our love, affection, devotion, service and when He sees things in our lives aren't matching up He makes us feel uneasy. Because He's uneasy - He's inside the Christian. Then you know somethings wrong. The Holy Spirit reproves of your sin and righteousness and judgment.

"Come again!"

"God wants you to do things that are in His will. Things that are not driven by jealousy or are contrary to His will.

"Just what should I fear sir?"

the Lord will tell you what to fear

God will never hide things from you. And what He tells you to fear are things that are rational and reasonable. A black cat worries us. So we're afraid we might receive judgment because of crossing a black cat's path. The more educated we are the more superstitious we get about science and sports, etc. They worship things and objects are the things they are afraid of."

"I always wear my lucky socks on the day of lift-off.

"You've proven my point. It's just pre-flight jitters. Get a good night's sleep right here on the base and I'll give you standard military-issue socks in the morning."

"Good night sir.

