His eyes are devilish, peering at me from behind all that tech. He’s part man, part machine—cables and motors blend with human flesh, whirring and rotating with each blink, each subtle turn of his head. His mouth opens with a mechanical hum as the processors within him prepare for speech. I hear his voice, but it doesn’t register. My focus slips past him, over the precipice, into the endless sea of fire below—a place that holds the devil and his angels.

Figures engulfed in liquid flame rise and fall within the inferno, reaching out as if pleading for escape, their cries twisting through the flames, desperate yet resigned. The unbearable smell hits me hard; in this new, heightened spiritual body, my sense of smell is far more acute. Sulfur sears the air as it gnaws through their flesh. I want to cover my nose, to turn my gaze away from their agony, but I can’t.

I look down at my own hand. It’s flesh, yet it’s something beyond. I know what I must do, but I hesitate. The man before me—the one we now know as the Anti-Christ—is my child, born of my eighth wife in the royal harem. He’s still my boy and when I look at him, I don’t see the monstrosity he has become. I see a child look up at me with a twinkle in his eye asking me a question with inquisitiveness. A Father’s love for his son holds me back, but a man’s love for his God compels me forward.

The innocent eyes of a child are an illusion. That child died long ago. His eyes continue to gaze at me, their wickedness continues to haunt me. I wish to speak to him, to say something to him, but there is nothing more to say. He has played his part as I have played mine. I gain immeasurable strength in my thighs, rear back with these unnatural legs of mine, and I kick. I watch him fly back of the cliff, his devilish eyes still glaring at me, his faces still expressionless as he falls back resigned to his fate. I watch him fall until the flames lick him up and swallow him whole until he is devoured.

I wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat. I put on my ephod and step out of the royal chambers without disturbing the Queen. In the royal washroom I splash water on to my face and look sullenly at myself through the mirror. My dark circles having been absent for hundreds of years have started coming back again. This dream has been haunting me for months now. It’s the same every time. I can’t remember the last time I had a restless nights, but now I feel distracted from my duties during the day. My youngest born child, Amiel, is the one who appears every time in the dream.

Ruling the nations has been a joy till now. I know my time is coming, how quick it has come. It is been more than 400 years since the war of Gog and Magog. The world was left in rubble and I was there to pick up the pieces. I reinstated Benjamin Netanyahu as regent over the nation of Israel. I returned to my home country and began rebuilding. It was a hard task. The great earthquake split America into four parts. Each part needed to be stitched back together, so with delicate hands and a burdened heart I dedicated myself to the task. Hands were needed and there were few left, but after 15 years the task was done. During this time, I issued a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

When I returned to Jerusalem, a grand parade filled the wide streets of the city. Survivors from every nation lined the broad avenues, eager to catch a glimpse of the prince—the one spoken of in the Torah—riding triumphantly on a great white steed toward the temple, whose glory now surpassed that of all temples before it. Jerusalem stood elevated, a city on a hill, with stone foundations and advanced technology as its backbone, and the King of Hosts as its cornerstone. Robots and drones kept the city running smoothly, replacing the old buildings that had been levelled by the great quake. No longer an ancient city, Jerusalem now shone with unmatched innovation and light.

As I approached the temple, sunlight gleamed off its towering structure, and a hushed reverence fell over the crowd. Its golden exterior glowed like a beacon, radiant. Its outer courts stretched wide, with massive gates carved with palm trees and cherubim standing tall at the eastern entrance. The white stone walls were smooth and solid.

I entered through the eastern gate, stepping into the outer court. Priests moved with careful precision around me, preparing their offerings, their hands steady and their expressions focused. The rich smell of incense filled the air, mingling with the voices of the Levites as they sang praises. Their songs echoed through the sacred space, resonating off the stone walls and filling the court with a powerful sense of peace and holiness.

Moving toward the inner court, I climbed the steps to see the grand altar. It gleamed in the light, with ledges layered to hold the sacrifices. This was the first and during future days of worship, flames would rise high from it, offerings to the God of Israel from people who had come from all over, recognizing the God of Abraham as their own.

As I approached the inner sanctuary, the air grew thick with the weight of God’s presence, each step bringing me closer to the Holy of Holies. Even after all these years of walking with the Lord, I felt unworthy to stand in this place, humbled before the heart of the temple where His radiance dwelled. This temple, set apart from the taint of the world, was not just a place of worship but the very axis of divine communion and peace. Its purity extended beyond these walls, drawing people from every nation, each pilgrim longing to glimpse the glory of the Lord of Hosts.

In those days, I had been entrusted with the sacred duty to judge among the nations, a justice that flowed with wisdom only He could give. Wars had ceased in His name; His peace reigned unchallenged. The nations’ weapons lay reshaped, transformed into plows and pruning hooks, and the ground that once bore the weight of conflict now flourished with life. All human endeavor turned toward the land, sowing seeds not of strife but of abundance. Destruction had given way to creation, violence to plenty. This was the kingdom God had promised, a realm of unending peace that unfolded like a harvest under His gaze.

But those days have slipped into memory. Now, as I pass through the royal wash chambers, my reflection catches the lines of concern sharp in the dim hall lights. Amiel is likely asleep; the night guards stand at their posts, and I greet each in turn as I make my way to his chamber. They greet me back, but I see the unease in their eyes, their brows knit with worry. These men, who have stood watch over me for centuries, know my ways better than I’d wish. They know when I rest, when I rise, and tonight, they see something on my face they had long forgotten: the shadow of suffering.

These are days of trouble indeed.

I reach his room. The lighting senses my presence and softens, revealing my son beneath the sheets, his small frame rising and falling in rhythm with his breath, as fragile and calm as any twelve-year-old should be. I sit quietly at the edge of his bed, careful not to disturb him, though I know he’s been trained to wake at the slightest shift.

“Hello, Father,” he murmurs, voice steady. “Why so late? Have you come to test me?”

I feel the tug of his words—a mixture of curiosity and something sharper. “You’ve passed with flying colors.”

“I sensed you before you entered the door,” he says, as though he had been expecting me.

I fall silent, trying to understand the thoughts drifting beneath his calm demeanor, seeking the guidance of God’s voice to perceive if there’s anything more here, anything beyond the innocence of my child.

“Have I been too hard on you, son?” I ask finally, each word uncertain. “Do you… resent me in any way?”

“No, Father. I enjoy our training.” He speaks with conviction, yet his tone holds knowledge beyond his years. “I know we live in a peace unlike any before, and I have never known suffering, as you’ve described it. It must be a terrible thing, to disobey His presence.”

“Yes, it is a horrible thing to disobey the living God. You see the might and glory that comes out of his temple. I stand before that every day. He could destroy me with the blink of an eye as he did the world four hundred years ago. We must fear him son, but we must also love him. He gives us life and breath and everything else.”

“You have told us many times father.”

“I have, you must be tired of hearing it from these four hundred- and fifty-year-old lips.”

My weary heart finds a measure of peace, reassured by his words. I think to leave him in his rest, but just as I shift, his voice cuts through the quiet.

“Father.”

I pause, feeling a sudden chill. “What is it, my son?”

He hesitates, then speaks with a mixture of earnestness and something deeper, something I can’t quite place. “Would it be wrong to… to want the temple for myself? You’re getting old, after all. You can’t do this forever.” He looks up at me with an intense gaze. “Can I do your work, Father?”

The innocence in his voice, woven with ambition, tugs at my heart and unsettles me in equal measure. I search his face, seeking the boy I know, yet sensing an edge to his question that chills me to my core.

In that moment, a surge of conflicting thoughts and feelings rises within me. Amiel is right—I am aging, and it’s true that he may one day assume a role in leading the people. But the temple… it isn’t something to be claimed or earned, it is pure grace and we receive it. I look into his eyes, seeing a spark of eagerness, an aspiration that feels out of place, and I wonder if I’ve misread him or if there is a flicker of something more.

“Perhaps… one day,” I say slowly, choosing my words with care. “But for now, your duty is to learn, to serve, and to understand that the temple is not mine to give. It belongs to Yeshua alone. He chooses those who serve before him as I was chosen long ago before the creation of the world.”

Amiel nods, his expression thoughtful, yet an unmistakable glimmer remains in his eyes, like a spark waiting to catch. I watch him settle back, but the words linger in the room, wrapping around me like a shadow as I rise to leave.

For the first time, I sense what the future may hold.