# Chapter 1

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, my heart racing as if it were my own child I’d cast into the lake of fire, helpless to stop myself from sealing his fate. I put on my ephod and step out of the royal chambers without disturbing the Queen. In the washroom, I splash water on my face and gaze at my reflection. Dark circles, long absent, have started creeping back again, a sign of the restless nights haunting me these past months. It’s always the same dream—each time I’m left distracted, unable to focus on my duties during the day. My youngest child, Amiel, is always there, twisted into a half-man, half-robotic monstrosity.

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.

Stepping toward the inner court, I climbed the steps to see the grand altar, its ledges layered to hold the sacrifices. That day marked the first offering—a spotless lamb, honoring the greatest sacrifice known to mankind. As I cut the lamb’s throat, the image of the cross flashed before my eyes, and its blood poured into the vase below. In future days, flames would rise high from this altar, offerings to the God of Israel from people coming from all corners, embracing 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. 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 endeavors 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?”

My heart skipped a beat, though I hid it well. 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, my visit with Amiel having done little to quell anxieties caused by the persistent dream. Its early morning. Too late to fall back asleep. Too early to begin my work. I choose to relax on a recliner with a view of the temple and the majestic flame that covers all of Mount Zion. The early morning had not yet come so night still remained. The night clung to the temple's outline, and the majestic flame on Mount Zion flickered with an ethereal glow. Its amber light washed over the quiet halls, casting shadows that stretched long and solemn. The view provided the relaxation I needed and I eventually nod off into the sweet slumber of the weary.

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My much-needed rest is disturbed by Dipti. She stands over me with concern, her resolute stature matching her position as queen. Sunlight filters in, though partly veiled by the cloud that now blankets Mount Zion. I squint, adjusting to the soft, filtered light, and focus on her face.

She studies me intently, brows furrowed, “It’s not like you to sleep here,” she says, a gentle reprimand beneath her words. “Did you have that nightmare again?”

“Yes, but this time I went to Amiel’s room to ease my disturbed mind hoping that this dream, is nothing more than a dream, but it did the opposite. The boy has much ambition now. I don’t know where it came from.”

“Why don’t you speak with his mother before court begins. There’s a disturbance to the North you must attend to, you’ll need to refresh your faculties.”

“Of all my wives she is the most, how do you say? Unpredictable. You’re the one after all who selected her. Are you sure you made a wise choice?”

“Her beauty is legendary. I thought you would be pleased with her.”

“She has her charms. She comes from a strange country who’s been known for its rebellious nature. One year they refused to attend the feast and they were struck with a plague. She has scars on her body in places well covered. The Lord must have had mercy on her, but not on her parents. They died that day and she became queen of her country at a young age.”

“I figured your marriage with her would cement their country’s subservience, but maybe I was wrong,” Dipti’s voice trailed off as she pondered.

“No, they became subservient, but I sense they resent the God we serve for the deaths that came as a result of their disobedience. I fear that resentment has poisoned her mind. She may be pretending to love Adonai.”

"Then I strongly urge you to visit her quarters in the royal harem," she advised, her tone unwavering. "Our household must be kept in order, and any root of bitterness that takes hold must be cut away before it spreads." Her gaze was sharp, her authority as queen unmistakable. "If Amiel is indeed being negatively influenced, it is our duty to bring light to it before it festers. Sin grows in the shadows, not in the light," she added.

I placed two fingers underneath my throat activating my mentat that was synched with Dipti’s.

“Sense for any irregularities in her actions. We will convene with our counselors in evening and examine the footage of our interaction. If she is lying about anything we will find out. If she has poisoned Amiel in any way I will send them back to her native place.”

I began the long trek from the royal palace to the royal harem. The requirements I placed on my wives was quite rigorous. They were not expected as other wives of kings during other centuries to sit around idly enduring beauty regime after another in the hopes of impressing me. They were trained as elite warriors to act as my bodyguards during a crisis. At this time their training would’ve commenced.

When I arrived, many of the women were navigating an obstacle course that would be nearly impossible for most men. The forty-foot tower dominated the course, with ropes tied to bars surrounding its top. Priscilla, the chief trainer—fit and elder among them—stood at the tower’s peak, barking orders to those below. Most of the women were struggling as they climbed, but not Sejal, Amiel’s mother. Her toned arms pulled her swiftly upward, her movements as graceful as they were powerful. Her legs, though not in use, were beautifully strong, her thighs curved with muscle.

Sejal was a marvel—a true jewel of her people. Yet I wondered if her loyalty shone as brightly as her physical prowess. I realized at that moment I’d come unannounced. My wives might be embarrassed to be seen in their training clothes. My mind was so disturbed that I hadn’t taken this into account, but there is no point going back now and it would be impossible to hide my intentions for my other wives. I had to meet Sejal despite the political implications this might mean among them all. This also meant that I might have to refrain from showing my affections towards those whom I would genuinely be interested in spending the day with.

They lined up in formation after the training regime had concluded. Their beautiful skin glistened with sweat in the sun. The climate was not hot. It was never hot, nor was it ever cold, every day was always beautiful. I appeared from the shadows and took my place beside Priscilla. Priscilla’s face became flushed and embarrassed realizing she hadn’t had time to clean and prepare for my unexpected visit. I think the others shared her sentiment, smiles lining their faces, but more restrained since they had not been dismissed yet from training. I watched carefully Sejal’s reaction. Hers was reserved like a poker player with a royal flush but didn’t let on to the power of their hand. I was suddenly struck with a desire to be with her, which filled my heart unexpectedly.

Breaking the silence, I nod to the women and speak with a voice both gentle and commanding through my mentat, which is also synced with theirs. “I’m sorry to come unannounced. I felt compelled to thank you this morning for your dedication. You honor me with your strength. I want to encourage you to continue your training. Although we do not suffer, we do live in a world where there is the grave potential for suffering. The devil still prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Until the Lord comes, these will always be troubled times.”

The words rang true, but even I knew they were not my real reason for being here. I had no desire to fill their minds with anxiety about my dreams. The last thing I needed was seven hundred concerned women, all hoping to offer me some reassurance, to ease whatever burden they sensed I carried.

As they pondered my brief message, I watched their reactions, each one a reflection of her unique character. Some nodded with solemn resolve, embodying the strength I praised. Others looked to one another with faint smiles, as though they shared a private understanding about my unexpected appearance.

But Sejal’s expression held no warmth. Her face, composed and unyielding, betrayed only calm attentiveness, yet something in her gaze sent a chill through me. There was a hardness, a locked-away story behind her eyes, like a mask crafted solely for moments like this.

With my mind I directed my mentat to speak only with her.

“After everyone is dismissed, I will meet you in your quarters. Something is troubling me and I wish to speak with you.”

Her voice, calm and rigid, replied, “Yes, my lord I look forward to it, it has been sometime since we have been together. It will be my pleasure to fill my mind with more memories of you.”

I directed everyone else to be dismissed, and they quietly dispersed to attend to the day’s duties. I spoke with and greeted as many of my wives as possible. Being a husband to nearly a thousand women was no small task.

Eventually, I made my way to Sejal’s quarters. Her door wasn’t locked, so I entered. Each of my wives lived lavishly, with every comfort provided. A robotic cook hummed in Sejal’s kitchen, preparing the finest synthetic meat available—crafted to satisfy without the need for animal lives. This was a standard we upheld: to live without promoting death whenever possible. Only the Levites consumed the animals sacrificed in the temple; for the rest of us, avoiding the suffering of any living creature had become our quiet commitment.

The lighting in the room was as natural as possible making use of outside light shining through the glass ceiling which could display any natural scene possible. My mind wished to be in the mountains, her room was transported to the mountains even though mountains had ceased to exist as a result of the great quake. Her bedroom door was slightly ajar and I walked in as quietly as possible in order to catch her in her natural behavior. Water was running, filling her large bath tub. I peaked into her bathroom. She was prepared for me. I was overcome with the smell of lavender. She stood up from the bath. Her nude, fit body filling my eyes to the brim. Her long golden blond hair fell to her waist that slightly covered her large plump breasts. I put my mentat on rest mode.

“Please join me my lord.”

I happily obliged.

# Chapter 2

As Gavriel entered the training hall, the sharp echo of his boots on the hardwood floor shattered the silence, drawing the attention of Amiel and his older half-brother, Uriel. Though born of different mothers, the two brothers shared a fierce loyalty, bound by blood and duty. They straightened as they noticed Gavriel’s approach.

Amiel, the youngest, approached these sessions with a fervor that even Uriel couldn’t match. To him, combat was more than skill—it was the path to his deepest ambitions. This burning drive surged through him, resonating with the nanobots in his armor. When he trained, they mirrored the intensity of his spirit, shifting with the same relentless energy that coursed through his soul. Each movement he made seemed to stir the armor to life, the nanobots pulsing and flowing in sync with his determination, as though they too shared his unyielding desire.

Since the Great War’s end centuries ago, warfare had transformed. While other nations abandoned the ways of weaponry, Prince Levi had continued their development in secret, aware that his foe would one day rise again. His scientists had pioneered a method of fusing soul and machine, breathing life into armor that blurred the line between the physical and spiritual realms. With the restoration of the temple, heaven and earth seemed to be merging, granting warriors glimpses into the supernatural. The soul was no longer speculative—it was a living force, a tool, and a weapon.

Gavriel surveyed the two warriors before him, his gaze lingering on the soft glint of their armor. Each suit shimmered with a silvery network of nanobots, thrumming in sync with the warriors’ breaths. Amiel’s armor, especially, responded to his spirit with uncanny precision. It could shield against the deadliest projectiles, sensing true danger and reacting in an instant, neutralizing the projectile mid-air. But Gavriel knew that this level of soul-binding was not without cost: the more often the armor blocked high-velocity attacks, the more it drained the spirit within. To constantly ward off projectiles weighed heavily on a warrior’s soul, eroding his strength with each impact deflected.

Therefore; both of the young warriors trained to conserve their soul’s power, relying on their physical strength in melee. When the need arose to call upon their soul’s full strength, they could do so with a fresh spirit, fortified through hours spent in prayer and deep reflection. This discipline ensured that their soul would be ready—its power undiminished by the rigors of lesser threats.

Gavriel squared off, facing Amiel directly. In an instant, a staff materialized in his hand, forming as if from thin air. With a sudden shift in stance, he swung it low, aiming at Amiel’s legs. Amiel reacted instantly, leaping over the staff’s arc.

As he landed, Gavriel sprang back, firing several darts from a device on his wrist. But each dart vanished as the nanobots hovering around Amiel’s body neutralized them, their programmed instincts responding to each threat.

“Very good, Amiel. I see you’ve been paying attention—impressive. Now, both of you will square off against each other. What’s our main rule for sparring?”

They both shouted in unison, trying to deepen their voices despite puberty working against them, “Love one another!”

“And what does love do?” Gavriel continued.

“Love builds up and doesn’t harm.”

“Exactly. Love builds up and looks out for our brothers, to strengthen them, not tear them down. That’s why we’ve been free of injury all these years. Let’s keep it that way today.”

Amiel and Uriel stepped forward, facing each other. Metallic swords appeared in their hands. These swords had become unique during Prince Levi's time. They were made of a synthetic alloy that was stronger than the toughest Damascus steel. If the user wanted, they could channel energy from their soul into the sword, producing immense heat that could melt even the strongest metal. Both bowed and begin to enter their unique fighting stances.

Amiel planted his feet in a wide, grounded stance, lowering his center of gravity. His sword angled downward in front, gripped firmly with both hands. He stood like an anchor—unmovable, resolute, as if he were prepared to withstand any strike. His gaze was fierce, almost feral, focused on Uriel with a burning intensity that felt strangely unfamiliar, almost unnatural. Uriel shifted uncomfortably, the glint in Amiel’s eyes making his skin prickle. They had sparred countless times since childhood, but he had never seen this look in his brother’s eyes before. It was a look filled with something he a never seen before, a fire that seemed almost… ungodly. It was as if for a moment the light in Amiel’s eyes had turned black.

For the first time in his life, Uriel felt the sensation of danger prickling his nerves—a primal instinct buried within humanity for centuries. He hesitated, instincts screaming at him to be cautious. But he dismissed the feeling, pushing the thoughts of danger out of his mind. Maybe it was only nerves, a fleeting fancy. After all, he’d never known suffering or truly understood the threat danger carried. Confident again, he stepped forward, sliding into his stance.

Uriel adopted a light, agile stance, positioning one foot forward and the other angled back for balance. His sword hovered at chest level, gripped firmly in one hand, while his other hand floated near the blade, fingers splayed as if channeling an unseen force. Built for agility, his stance let him weave and dodge, waiting for the perfect moment to spot and exploit any weakness. Though he could unleash a powerful soul-infused strike, he held back—this was training with his brother, not a ruthless fight. Still, he had proven himself against hundreds of training bots in a single month, but sparring with Amiel was different.

Uriel began a slow, measured dance around Amiel, who stood like a stone pillar, steady and unreadable. Separated by two years, both boys were strong and agile, untouched by the malnourishment or ailments common in the previous world. They were nearly identical in height, and Amiel’s muscles flexed with a quiet readiness, holding tension that showed he was prepared for anything. This wasn’t their first spar; they knew each other’s strengths and flaws. Uriel usually won with his agility and experience.

But today felt different. Amiel had been practicing in secret, refining a new stance beyond Uriel’s watchful eyes, and now he was ready to put it to the test. He would wait, patient as stone, letting Uriel make the first move. The plan was simple: absorb Uriel’s momentum, then counter in one fluid motion. As Uriel’s strike came in, Amiel would shift his weight smoothly, his back leg sliding forward while his sword arced high above his head.

In his mind, he envisioned the movement, each shift of his muscles precise, every angle calculated. He could almost feel the clash of their blades and hear the metallic ring that would follow. A surge of anticipation rose within him, and he tightened his grip, his knuckles white around the hilt. This wasn’t just training. To Amiel, it was a test of his new power, of the control he’d painstakingly built over countless hours alone.

With a steady breath, Uriel advanced, raising his blade in a quick, sweeping arc aimed for Amiel’s shoulder—a controlled strike, yet one with enough force to stagger if it connected. This was the moment Amiel had been waiting for. In a flash, Amiel’s stance shifted. His back foot surged forward, his body twisting as his sword came down from above, intercepting Uriel’s strike with a force that sent a shock up both their arms. The clang of steel rang through the air, vibrating between them, and for a split second, Uriel could feel the raw power in Amiel’s movement. This wasn’t the brother he’d sparred with countless times before.

Uriel staggered back, momentarily thrown off balance by the unexpected force of Amiel’s counter. But before he could fully recover, Amiel surged forward, abandoning the defensive stance he usually relied upon. This was a new Amiel, aggressive and relentless. Uriel’s heart raced as the familiar sparring pattern crumbled, replaced by this newfound ferocity in his brother.

As Amiel pressed forward, that unsettling sense of danger crept back. He could no longer ignore it. The dark gleam in Amiel’s eyes had returned. Each swing of Amiel's blade was calculated but ruthless, leaving Uriel barely enough time to deflect or dodge. Uriel was in a panic something he had never experienced before. He decided that it was time to end the sparring session and call it quits for today.

“That’s enough for today Amiel. I’m done.”

Gavriel was distracted at the moment. He was attentive at times but sometimes his duties were divided as he was also head of the royal guard. Amiel’s expression didn’t change. He appeared possessed by something dark and unknown pushed by an unstoppable force. Amiel’s intensity increased. He had obtained a dart shocker, hidden underneath the cuff of his training jacket. The device sensed the momentum in Amiel’s hand. A dart shot fourth whistling through the air. Uriel was caught off guard once again.