

Chapter 10

A NIGHTMARE

Our ignorance of the law of Moses, as well as the tabernacle he built, was shamefully apparent. There are many references to commands and the law, yet little on what that law and those commands actually were. After my arrest and when I was able to begin studying again, I had a very strong desire to know what this Law was that Christ fulfilled. Luke 24:44–45 became a precious passage to me, as I began to see for the first time what the Biblical message really is.

Keith and Kathy Johnson were the last to move to Ohio. They responded quickly to so very much, but there was quite a powerful dynamic at work within the group by then. Keith was actually contacted by Jeff and invited to visit, even providing his airfare. Keith was at the farm only hours on the visit, yet the persuasive influence of Jeff and his use of chiasmus, along with our sure conviction, convinced Keith to move. Our convictions were surely an influence that affected him, yet his speedy acceptance of the things he was told at that time worked as a further confirmation within us as well. It was taken by us as first-hand evidence that people could be taught, and repent, and that perhaps there was yet hope against the coming destruction we all saw hanging over us. Keith was not merely sold on the issue of chiasmus as the pattern of God that day. He had been taught, through division, what Jeff had only recently taught us concerning the covenant. Keith's immediate embrace of such "strong meat" doctrine was amazing to me. Though sad and unfortunate, it's very clear to me now how the delusion was reciprocal between us, as we affected one another. As Keith returned home, leaving the influence present at the farm, the challenge was upon him to maintain the momentum of those convictions while in Missouri preparing to move.

My recollection of being confronted with the possibility of moving to Ohio was that each mile away from Kirtland seemed to be an awakening from a dream. By the time we returned to Missouri, I was drained of any feeling about the matter and could hold only to the memory of the conviction I felt while there. I assume that similar thoughts and confusion were associated with Keith's experience. Jeff became impatient for the Johnsons to complete their move to Ohio. Perhaps this was due to how freely he had shared his doctrine with Keith at his visit. It was a bit of a testing time for Jeff too, as he had given Keith much to deal with and now it was time to see if he would respond or reject it. It must have appeared to Jeff that the Johnsons were dragging their feet a little about moving, as they were trying to sell off livestock and other items in order to pay off debts from their Missouri farm. Jeff didn't care about

their debts and saw this as early signs of “rebellion.” He sent Greg and me (his two anointed ones) to Missouri on our first “gathering” mission. He equipped us with a few divisions to show them and instructions to expedite their arrival to Ohio. We were rehearsed so as not to waver in our presentation to Keith and Kathy. As with any interactions we found ourselves involved in at this point, we had explicit instruction what we were and were not to discuss. The covenant was an area we were to cover, somewhat more for Kathy’s benefit, since she had not come to Ohio on Keith’s first visit.

In that timeframe, Susie and I also made a trip back to Missouri. Jeff had taught some classes on being able to see the enemy a long way off (Jeremiah 5:15) and interpreted this to mean the necessity of a long-range rifle. After all, “the words of Christ will tell you all things.” And with that thought ever firmly implanted in our thinking, such instruction became the norm for us. An ATV and two horses were purchased. Susie comes from a family of very talented craftsmen and artists. One of her brothers made a fifty-caliber rifle before our move to Ohio. I’d only seen the gun briefly, but remembered it when Jeff began his quest to find one. In mentioning it to him, he instructed me to contact Susie’s brother for information about the gun and the possibility of buying it. Eventually, he and Jeff talked. With an agreement made, Jeff allowed Susie and me to get it. Jeff wanted me to go alone, yet realized how peculiar this would seem to Susie’s family. It was also clear that we could not go such a distance as that and not at least visit with her parents who lived on the way. Therefore, Jeff decided that Susie would go with me, but that we would not take our children. The explanation we were to give as to why we didn’t bring the kids was that we should take Greg’s car, a small two-passenger Honda for reasons of needing to save money on gas. Obviously, it was threatening to Jeff that we might take our children with us on the trip and perhaps not return. We hadn’t seen Susie’s family for at least eighteen months. Her mother was a very strong supporter of our purpose in Ohio, but it was clearly Susie’s father who kept them from moving at the time we did. Such a move on faith by RLDS members was not at all considered as abnormal, even before our move to Ohio. An essential aspect of Mormon doctrine entails the eventual necessity for all the saints to gather to Zion anyway. We simply believed that Zion would be built in Ohio rather than in Independence, Missouri.

Back at the Johnson home, we found very little time to cover the areas Jeff had sent us to emphasize. They were so busy trying to get things in order for moving that we found only a brief time to talk.

Shortly after the Johnson’s arrival in Ohio they were informed of how Dennis and Tonya Patrick were slated to die. This was particularly difficult for them as they lived with the Patricks until the time we left for the wilderness. Divide and conquer is a common strategy for destruction, and this was the basic platform Jeff maintained as well. This principle was essential to all his dealings with us in that he best kept us controlled by keeping us separate. Most of the adult members of the group understood that the Avery family

were slated to die, yet I must emphasize again that it was impossible for anyone to “know” they would, and a sin even to suppose that anyone *could* know. Dennis and Tonya were taught that death was imminent, but were given little indication as to who would be the victims. They, along with Richard and Sharon, were told that the Averys would possibly die, yet nothing concerning the potential for their own deaths. The Averys made up five and the three Patricks, along with Richard and Sharon, made up the other five—the ten prophesied to be lost—and everyone else in the group was taught who those ten were to be.

This was beneficial to Jeff in that everyone was taught concerning the death which we all believed to be present in our future, yet had varying perceptions as to what that meant, and to whom it applied. The Averys were kept isolated from what was taught to the rest. They were limited as to how much class time they received yet the other five were isolated while attending all classes. After a while, Richard became concerned that he and Sharon might be slated to die. The first response was, of course, that he had sinned by supposing such a thing. But the interesting thing about it as I look at it now is how he did what he was trained to do. He “inquired” of Jeff (1 Samuel 9:9). Sharon had been given to Richard as his wife, just as Debbie had been given to Greg, and Shar had been given to Danny (prior to Shar leaving the group).

As the seer, Jeff “knew” who belonged to who in marriage (“flesh of my flesh: bone of my bone,” Genesis 2:23–24) and thereby only he could properly match us up. Otherwise, we would be living an adulterous marriage, which was the explanation he would use later for taking Keith’s wife, Kathy, away from him. Because Richard and Sharon were one, the judgment against them was one of unity. Even though Richard properly inquired about the matter, receiving a session for having done so, he obtained no direct answer about whether or not he was slated to die yet he and Sharon still remained at the farm. They would not know whether they would die until the night that the Averys were killed—even then, not until afterwards. But was that really the issue? Why didn’t they just leave? Who could ask, let alone understand? No one had been told outright that they would die, yet not only we were all willing to accept death if it were to occur, no one did anything to prevent it. After all, by understanding the position and power of the seer and to accept that Jeff was that seer, also meant to understand that there was no place to hide where the judgment of God would not find you. There were only two of us whose deaths had been ‘prophesied,’ myself and Greg. Yet even in that, no specific plans were outlined of which I was ever made aware.

* * *

PREPARATIONS NEEDED TO BE MADE in order to go to the wilderness. Jeff had divided passages indicating that we were to purchase an ATV and two horses. By this time, the Johnsons had arrived and were living in the Patrick’s home. Kathy, who was quite knowledgeable about horses, was assigned the task of

purchasing them. Jeff found the ATV that he wanted, but Richard and I were the ones who bought it. Actually, we only obtained it on credit in the way of a loan that we never made payments on. At this point we were the Israelites preparing to leave Egypt and this required us to “spoil” Egypt on our way out to the wilderness and our communion with God. “And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians” (Exodus 12:36). Passages such as Psalms 37:21, “the wicked borroweth, and payeth not again...” somehow failed to come to mind. We managed to obtain a generator on credit. Slowly, we began to compile all things that were considered essential, however, this was also a time for letting go of things that were considered not to be essential. We were to depart from the world, and by way of the seer, we had God’s prudent servant to prepare us in all things. Therefore, our departure would not be in “haste nor by flight,” but by way of God’s omniscient foresight and predestination toward us.

“And then shall a cry go forth, Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch not that which is unclean; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel shall be your rearward. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” (3 Nephi 9:79–81, also Isaiah 52:11–13)

However, despite our preparations and ‘god’ as our forward, we seemed continually to be in haste and in flight from this moment on.

This was not only a departure from society, it was also a final blow to our individuality as well. Aside from the few allowable necessities assigned to us, we had nothing left to remind us of the life we once knew. Photo albums, school yearbooks, and things like my military records and discharge were all discarded. We had a full set of encyclopedias that were considered useless and had to be either sold or trashed. But this was only the beginning. Susie had a beautiful set of china that was hand painted and gold trimmed. She had antique tables that had been in her family since her grandmother’s wedding two generations before, along with furniture that her father made for us as a wedding gift. I had a handmade rocking chair adorned with carved designs and brass and copper inlay that I brought home from Pakistan while in the navy. I had a number of souvenirs from those days of family separation while traveling in the navy, along with either coins or currency from each country I had visited. The list could go on and on. We had to separate ourselves from all the mementos that reminded us of where we’d been and what we’d done in life—who we were. Susie’s college degree, my various diplomas of naval training, much was lost; yet the two items lost which now cause the most pain as I look back were our wedding rings. Jeff and Alice, of course, were to hang on to theirs because, as our “mediators” to the world, they would have to interact at times with the world. It would be best that they kept their rings so they would

look as they should in the dealings. All we had, we gave for a dream. But the dream slowly and steadily became a nightmare from which none would escape unharmed: and some would not escape alive.

* * *

THE AVERYS HAD BEEN SEVERELY WARNED MANY TIMES about what lay in their future. Jeff taught several classes where he pointed out the failures of the wicked, then correlated them to their own failures. He would state what happened to the wicked, then state what presently hung over their heads. They understood that they were being labeled and they understood that they were under threat, yet they did nothing in order to avoid it, such as staying away, or going to authorities. But, where would they go? Whose authority could they turn to for protection? These are valid questions. Dennis Avery would often inquire about matters in his home life. Effort was being made to repent, yet by Jeff's judgment they were not successful—and never would be. In our democratic society, where each person is expected to have enough information for a decision on personal matters, this may seem impossible to comprehend. But I'm acutely certain that if we don't understand these dynamics better, that we'll see "death" continue.

With a mission to perform, around the end of March or early April 1989, I quit my job at CEI. We had been called and chosen to restore Zion, the New Jerusalem. Many failures accrued between us. Millions had suffered and died because of the sinfulness and procrastination of which we were now being accused. Vivid, tangible examples were provided to illustrate our failure—the continually failing rabbitry, dying kittens, the puppy who hung itself on its leash and the deer struck by a car landing on the front lawn of the farm. Death surrounded us in every way as if to remind us of the death and suffering we had caused to millions by our sin and procrastination. The rabbitry was to provide an income for me the day I left the world's work force and began working full time at the farm. However, it never grew into anything; the rabbits continually died and the money I provided to Jeff for them was steadily spent elsewhere. But this no longer mattered. We now had to go before the Lord. I quit my only source of income, without looking back. It was time to go into the wilderness, as all our forefathers had done.

We stayed in our apartment until April 15th, then moved to the farm. What had been the utility room of the farmhouse became the Luff's new residence, our belongings by this time reduced to a mattress on the floor, our "scriptural" books, my assigned weapons, and whatever clothes we had left as appropriate for wilderness living. Fine apparel was interpreted to be sin, and identified as anything nice we had. Such would not stand up well in the nomadic lifestyle. Due to the late night hours we kept at the farm in class, and in time spent doing chores and preparations, it seemed as if we had been living there for quite some time. In actuality, Susie and I had moved there only a day or two before the deaths of the Averys.

The Avery family likewise completely emptied their house about two days prior to the night they were killed. Each family was given an area in the main room of the barn, where their belongings were gone through and organized to ensure nothing excessive was taken. I had ribbons and medals from my military service that Jeff suggested I bring along for future use, yet later humiliation over them would cause me to throw them away. Jeff and Alice had done likewise; either selling or throwing away nearly all they had. The antiques they had bought for the farmhouse (with our money) had been sold as we liquidated all our assets into cash. Credit cards were overdrawn, loans were defaulted. “Egypt” was spoiled.

The nightmare began to take form as Jeff gave instructions to some of us to dig a pit in the barn. With several scenarios of death outlined by Jeff, violence as a whole, had become paramount to the doctrine he taught. As it was narrowed down to members of his own “household,” vivid imagery was again provided for the very purposes it met. This stimulus would elicit different responses in each person, ranging from fear to repugnance, or any mixture thereof. Then, of course, there was love and mercy, in that such acts were eventually identified and perceived to be acts of love and mercy toward the soul. For anyone to know what would transpire was not really possible, but I know of no one who participated in the digging of the pit that failed to understand its purpose. Even so, as Richard helped in the preparations, he understood that it could very literally be him who would fall therein. “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein; and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him” (Proverbs 26:27). However, passages like Psalms 94 were much more picturesquely dominant within our thinking.

“The Lord knoweth the thought of man, that they are vanity. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.” (Psalm 94:11–13)

We had moved to “the Ohio” and gone through much chastisement, now it was time to execute the Law.

Along with having few belongings left, the Averys also had no car. Arrangements had been made for them to stay at a motel for the remaining few days before our departure. Dennis Patrick also quit his job, perhaps Greg and Richard had quit theirs. The 17th of April came with no particular emphasis. We had no awareness that it would be a unique day in Jeff’s agenda. I had driven the Averys from their apartment to their room in a motel, then I returned to the farm. At some later point, Richard brought the Averys to the farm where we were to eat and then have class. Because the furniture had been sold in preparation for a wilderness experience, the farmhouse was bare and we sat wherever feasible in order to eat. The meal that night was no different from countless others, prepared by one of “Jeff’s children,” as we were called. The setting was to be one of supper and then class. Class in the eve-

ning hours after the small children were laid down to sleep was a customary part of the lifestyle by that time.

During the previous few days Jeff had told me and others that the number lost would be reduced from 10 to 5 and I “hoped” (which was the closest form of prayer we had) for the number to be reduced again. There we were, twenty-nine people in all, sitting in an empty farmhouse with plans to leave the world for the wilderness. Our “rebellion” had caused many to die, so now it was time to follow god’s will. In doing so, we might save souls in the long run—such extreme captivity and depravity of thought. I was asked once by a prison guard at Lucasville (Southern Ohio Correctional Facility: Ohio’s maximum security prison), what it was like to be under mind control. Without hesitation, I responded by saying that it was a greater form of captivity than being in prison.

Jeff summoned Damon and other male followers, Danny, Greg, Richard and me into the downstairs bedroom and upon entering the room himself, closed the door. He was armed with a .45 caliber handgun. His possession of the gun did not seem that abnormal. Paramount in my consciousness was what he was saying. To his followers, words that Jeff spoke were taken as instruction directly from God himself. To do anything but embrace those words would have been, to Jeff, direct denial of God’s will. Looking at each of us he said, “Are you in or are you out?” The response that was given by each was that we were “in.” He was armed, but that was not the deciding factor to me. Aspects of coercion and duress saturated my own life. We were to be unwavering in our convictions and completely altruistic about our own will. God’s will was the only will we knew and it was revealed to us piece-by-piece, line-by-line, through god’s chosen seer. The full revelation of his plan was still not conveyed to us, though someone’s death appeared to be imminent. I am not attempting to be deceptive as I write this, but only very mindful to convey the extremely convoluted state of affairs around us, though a great many circumstances and observations should have been clearly obvious of that night’s eventual outcome. He handed me a stun gun that had been purchased previously by Greg, and told me to follow him to the barn.

Once in the barn, Jeff instructed me what he wanted done and told me to explain it to the others. I was his spokesman; his mediator for what he wanted done that night. He told me what he wanted and how we were to do it. Use of the stun gun, taping the hands and feet, each detail was to be relayed from him to me, then to the others. The stun gun was to paralyze each of the Averys and it was also intended to make them numb so they would not feel pain. No one was to experience pain or fear. This was to be an act of “mercy”—an act of “extinction.” However, the effort greatly failed in that respect.

After the others were instructed as to what was expected, Jeff told me to get Dennis. I was to bring him out to the barn on the premise of assisting with sorting through the remainder of his belongings. There were two main areas to the ground level of the barn. One had a concrete floor and the other was dirt. The room with the dirt floor was where the hole had been dug. There were

three windows and a large double opening door in this room, all of which had been padded with chair cushions and mattresses to silence the sound of the gun. A chainsaw was also run outside the barn by Greg, for the purpose of overriding the sound of the gunshots. The room looked hideous, completely closed in and dark with the exception of the single incandescent bulb that hung on the wall over the hole which had been dug in the corner of the room. A junk car, a washer and dryer, and other various furnishings were present, half buried amidst the trash that covered nearly the entire room several feet deep. A single passage had been cut through, leading from the interior entrance up over the heap of trash and dirt, and to the pit. This was the only entrance between this room and the area with the concrete floor. The mere sight of the room was both terrifying and sickening. Yet, as a manifestation of death and hell, it was to be expected, and we were the executioners of Judgment. The odors of the room also added to its repulsiveness. Among the distinguishable odors of the barn were the truckload of hay purchased for livestock we never obtained (another incomplete project), the smell of books that had been discarded, old clothing, and containers of perfume and talcum powder. Before the night's duties would be finished, the smell of gunpowder and blood would be introduced to these aromas to create a sickening odor which would linger in my nostrils for a long time afterward.

I have since learned how powerful conscience can be in reviving memory involving the senses. I have also learned how the grace of God, through our Savior Jesus Christ, can free us from the captivity of such sensations and trauma. As I walked with Dennis out to the barn, my mind replayed the instructions Jeff had given. When we entered the main area of the barn, I pulled the stun gun from my pocket and touched it to Dennis in the area where I was told it would be most effective, then turned it on. He jumped away and started to ask what I had done, but by this time the others were already holding him. While trying to fight as they taped his hands and feet, he cursed us and told us this "wasn't necessary." I recall how hearing those words seemed to reconfirm the conviction I already had concerning Jeff's judgment. "Surely this was a man of sin, that he would deem the instruction of god's seer as being 'unnecessary.' " It was not a malicious thought on my part, but more like an amazement that he could respond contrary to the will of god. Perhaps it would be like a prison guard, while shacking down a prisoner's cell, to wonder how the inmate could be so audacious as to complain at the throwing about of personal items. Judgment had been made, orders given, and we had a job to do.

To me, Dennis was stating that we didn't have to do that; he and his family would simply stay behind as we left for the wilderness and the mountain. Yet sometimes I've wondered if he was willing to die and that I simply didn't need to keep painfully applying that stun gun. I strongly doubt that that was the case, yet such willingness to die by Jeff's dictates had already been accepted by other members of the group, myself included. I caused Dennis a great deal of pain as I applied that stun gun over and over, foolishly hoping to paralyze him and make him numb. The only effect it had was to cause more

pain. His mouth was covered, but his eyes were not. It had been explained that Dennis was to be able to see Jeff. I did not carry him into the other room, as I would the remaining four. Shots were fired while Greg ran a chainsaw outside. Then it was over.

Jeff called us all into the room where the hole was. There lay Dennis. There was such an eeriness about what was happening, yet I could not allow myself to “de-light” in it. The surge of adrenaline seemed to balance out the remorse and stress. This was the work of death and there would be more of it in our future in the establishment of “righteousness.” Jeff realized that he needed Dennis’ keys to dispose of the Avery’s bags from the motel room where they were staying. Jeff told Damon to climb into the pit and search Dennis for them, but Damon could not move. Seeing his hesitation, Jeff told me to do it and I did. I had never been that close to death before, aside from an open casket at a funeral. This was far different, and the keys were not found. Jeff went into the house and asked for them from Cheryl, who handed them over to Jeff with no questions. He then returned to the barn to see how each of us was holding up. Damon was very upset, so Jeff sent him out of the barn for a while.

I had to focus my thoughts on what we were to do and how. I recall holding back tears of my own as I told Jeff that the stun gun didn’t work and that it only caused pain. I also recall how cautiously I stated this, not wanting to be guilty of the sin of “supposing of myself” especially at such an essential time of following god’s command. I remember telling Richard, who’d endured many sessions with Jeff, “There’s no turning back now.” Previously identified as doubt, I saw that doubt was not an issue with us that night. Jeff now told me to go with him, and we walked around the barn and lawn area of the farm. I suppose he did this to ensure nothing had alarmed nearby neighbors. I also see it now as another of Jeff’s attempts to provide the necessary imagery to introduce suspicions of secrecy within others of the group. Each night, leading up to this one, Jeff had told me to follow him out to the barn to check on the rabbits. I’m certain it created the suspicion in others that Jeff was planning things that only I, or whoever else he would invite, were privy to. However, much like this walk around the farm, little was ever discussed that was secret and usually we were silent with nothing being said at all. It did, however, create curiosity within the minds of the others, which had an effective purpose aside from it being a way to “try” us. The best way to know the thoughts of others is to be the source and inspiration of their thinking. Jeff mastered this principle, as our thoughts became solely a reflection of what he had given us to think.

It was now time to bring Cheryl to the barn. Jeff did not identify them as “people” on this night. He had instructed me in all things, telling me the sequence in which he wanted each person brought to the barn. This instruction having been given, he would only say, “Bring out the next one.” There was no difficulty in getting any of the Avery family members to follow me; a command from Jeff was all that was needed. Cheryl walked with me across the

lawn area and into the barn. I did not use the stun gun, yet somehow, she seemed to understand what was happening as the others in the barn moved toward her with the tape. She stood paralyzed and trembling as they wrapped duct tape around her ankles and wrists. It sounds so pitifully ridiculous now, but I was concerned that she might fall down and hurt herself as they taped her ankles, so I put my hand on her shoulder to steady her. She was trembling, very frightened. As gently as I could, I told her, “Just let it go.” And she did. Many versions of this have erupted throughout the media coverage and judicial process, but I carefully and tearfully record here things exactly as they happened. Richard and I picked her up, carried her into the other room, and placed her in the hole. Turning and walking away, we heard the shots fired. At a later date, I repented to Jeff about this, thinking that I shouldn’t have been bothered by not wanting to see it. I’m thankful now that I have so little visual memory about what happened that night. My eyes never focused on the bodies within the hole, yet my memory of searching Dennis for the keys is quite vivid.

Another walk around the farm was made, and Jeff said again. “Bring out the next one.” Trina was the oldest of the Avery children; the one I was to bring. Even the sequence of this act was incredibly evil. Unless we identify ourselves with Cain (Genesis 4:7), we should feel a responsibility for our fellow man. The death of Dennis was a violation of that responsibility. Once Dennis had been killed, we became responsible for a widow among us: Not only accountable for the *way* in which she became a widow, but by our failure toward her in her own death. Thus, when Cheryl was killed, we became responsible for three “orphans.” Yet we failed them too, from the oldest to the youngest. The sequence of these deaths reveals who the author of its planning really was. Trina had no idea what was happening. We had told her it was a game and she had no fear. In carrying her to the hole, the light fixture fell and the bulb broke. I knelt down next to her until it was repaired, to keep her calm and to prevent her from discovering where she was. This clearly sounds ridiculous, and it was. I’m not attempting to sugarcoat the horrible tale. I want to portray, in some clear fashion, the contradictions between the actions that were taken, and the intentions which motivated them. This was not a crime of hatred, yet intense evil was very present. We were not angry nor hateful toward the Averys, in fact, we mourned the loss of them. This was an act of “justice.” Judgment had been made and we were not to question it. In the same way an executioner pulls the switch to the electric chair, his heart may tug and he may shed a tear at the loss of another human being, but justice has been served and judgment rendered. This was Jericho and we were not to waver from the task we had been commanded to perform. I heard the shot, and Trina say, “Ouch!” and start to cry, then Jeff shot again. Somehow, I felt that that sound of pain would live long in my memory—and it does.

One more walk around the farm, then once again, “Bring out the next one.” Jeff was never present in the entry room to the barn. He stayed in the back room, next to the hole. I brought young Becky in, and like Trina, she was

at ease and happy, thinking it was a game we were playing. At first, she was able to see the horses as I had told her she would, then she stood still while the others taped her. During my trial, it would be pointed out how I failed to remember little Becky's name when making the videotaped confession to the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). It's unfortunate that such scrutiny did not also reveal that I failed to remember Danny Kraft's name, as well, whom I had just spent many months with in our day-by-day endurance of the "wilderness experience."

The last to be brought out was little Karen. If memory serves me, Karen was 7, Becky was 13 and Trina was 15. As we stepped out the back door of the farmhouse and across the yard, I reached down and picked Karen up from behind, bringing her over my head and onto my shoulders. She shrieked in laughter, then giggled. For some reason, I just wanted her to laugh. It would most likely be the last time for her to experience joy so I treated her as I would my own child. This, too, would later become twisted. The jury might have thought it more in character for me to have dragged her along kicking and screaming, but nothing about our actions that night were in "character" of what would be any form of normal or rational behavior. Perhaps in my own very pitiful way I'm simply asking that I not be hated for wanting to hear a little girl laugh one last time: There are so many other reasons to hate me I hope not to be hated for that. Karen never knew what happened to her. Once she had been taped (which was not done to bind them, but as commanded for god's purpose), I picked her up again, as I had many times done with my own children, and placed her on my shoulders. It all happened in a playful way and she was not afraid. I'm a fool, that's quite clear. But let's learn how these children came to die so that we might be better prepared to recognize the dangers.

With the exception of Dennis, the eyes of each had been covered with tape so that they could not see the hole and the bodies of the others. To my knowledge, none of them ever knew that they were in a hole, nor that others were present. But since I did not stand by and watch, I have no way of being certain.

As Jeff and I walked the perimeter the last time, he mentioned a coming storm that we would endure. I said I hoped it would come quickly, and he said that it would definitely happen quite soon. I don't give Jeff any credit as having foreseen that the very next morning, the FBI would "storm" the farm. But that night, the task was finished: we had performed god's will. Instructions were again given on how we were to fill in the hole. Their bodies were first to be covered with lime, then with rocks that we had gathered a couple days before. Then we were to fill back in the dirt that had come from the hole. Even the issue of what Jesus said about letting the "dead bury their dead" (Matthew 8:22), was explained by Jeff that we were not the dead, by way of this burial.

Where the hole had once been, we moved a pile of discarded belongings. This made a huge pile in that corner of the room. Jeff called the Patricks and Johnsons at their common residence and told them to come to the farm for

class. It was after midnight by this time, which illustrates how completely “on call” we each were. We assembled for class and Jeff explained what had occurred and why. It was at this class that Dennis Patrick first heard Jeff say that he and his family had also been slated to die. Dennis was speechless at first, then apologized for having been a burden to Jeff and also for not being called upon to assist with the Averys. The Patricks and the Johnsons lived in Kirtland, almost directly across the street from the police station. Dennis had just been told that he and his family were to have been killed as the Avery family had been that evening, yet Dennis responded with an apology for not being able to help. The Patricks would again be slated to die while we were in the wilderness. Prior to the killings, Tonya went to Jeff privately to inquire about whether or not the three of them would die. I seriously doubt that she was given a direct answer, yet I do know she pled for mercy for Molly. She did not discuss this with Dennis, or with the police when they came to the farm the night before we left Ohio. In fact, Tonya pled only for the life of her daughter. She was still willing to die at Jeff’s judgment.

They all went back home that night, across the street from the police station, and did nothing to inform authorities. In no way do I record these things in order to demean the Patricks, or the Johnsons. I just want to illustrate how strong Jeff’s influence was. It’s my sincere prayer that the reader carefully consider the scenario I’ve described. To go to an outside authority was as unthinkable as to reject the judgment of Jeff as the seer, even if the sentence was death to one’s self.

* * *

THE TASK HAD BEEN COMPLETED: the covenant had been fulfilled. The fury of god’s wrath now awaited us in the wilderness. It was time to “be approved” by god in order to carry out the purpose he had for us. It was time to be redeemed and to receive the “endowment from on high.” But the only real truth about it all was that Jeff now owned each one of us. And he would exercise that ownership in the Wilderness.

In the same way that Chinese handcuffs tighten their grip as the victim pulls away, no matter how much evidence seemed to scream out a particular message or opinion, our ears were trained to hear only the word revealed and relayed through the seer. We were to be servants with ears trained to hear only the words of the seer, God’s spokesman (Exodus 4:16). Therefore our thoughts were to be inclined only to Him. “Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” (Isaiah 55:3). David was a warrior of the covenant and we were to be likewise; first, by training our ears to hear nothing but God’s instruction, clear of all supposition from our own thinking, then to carry out this instruction without wavering. To waver would nullify all that we had already endured. Our minds became vacuums that heard only the bits of information provided to us by God’s seer. Such mental oppression may

be difficult to imagine, but I referred earlier to the fear of thinking a thought lest it be contrary to the thoughts we had been given to think. Self-examination was continuous.