

Chapter 11

IN HASTE AND FLIGHT

A family was now dead. But even their deaths were used against us as one more example of our sin and failure. The Averys were good people whose benevolent dreams and passions had become distorted through their belief system. Yet, I believe our heavenly Father sees through the confusion and directly into the intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). They dared express their heartfelt convictions in everyday living. They had a passion for a better world and these passions, though good, victimized them by way of desperation. This fervency dictated the need to give their all; and their *all* they did give. They became economically victimized by their relocation to a region offering less secure employment. After relocating, they relinquished the remainder of their assets to the “cause,” thereby suffering more abuse. They relocated away from family and loved ones thinking that by conforming to (Jeff’s) god’s will they would be protected. As with we who remained, their minds had become subject to a belief and doctrine that ever so slowly and unobtrusively developed contrary to their own heart’s desires. The Averys’ perception of what God’s will was for their lives victimized them further, lured by desires of a possible future fulfillment while ever more greatly eluding the completion of that fulfillment. Earthquakes may tremble, floods may destroy, and winds may utterly sweep away, but the shattering of dreams within the human heart is the most devastating of tragedies. Without them, neither repair nor rebuilding is possible. In this manner they were greatly victimized long before their deaths. Their dreams became a mere plaything within a very evil and surreptitious process that had become reconstructed by the influence of a very evil and cunning man.

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THE NIGHT WAS LONG, but the morning seemed to come quite early. I had the responsibility of caring for the rabbits, which took me into the barn that next day. Though shamed by thoughts of it at the time and then repentant of such thoughts, I could feel the presence of the Avery family as I performed chores in the barn. My conscience would provoke my memory from time to time the next few weeks, as I would find myself thinking that I had seen Dennis. I came to master the art of suppressing these thoughts in the belief that they were evil and that the thoughts were prompted by influences contrary to the will of god. Upon completion of my morning chores, I was sent to the grocery store with Debbie in order to buy more food in preparation for our departure from society. I had recently obtained a credit card for a particular store, so I

was sent to maximize the card's five hundred dollar limit. Debbie was the "food sheriff," in charge of food purchasing and preparation. Each of us was labeled as sheriff over some particular area of responsibility.

That morning, agents from the FBI gathered at a location in Kirtland. Unknown to us, it was for the purpose of raiding the farm, ironically, not because of the previous night's activities, but as a result of reports filed with the FBI by Kevin Curry. An old-time Navy friend of Jeff's, he had been living with the Lundgrens when we arrived in Ohio, but left shortly after they moved to the farm. Kevin apparently had informed the FBI of Jeff's leanings toward violence, prompting an ongoing investigation. This raid transpired while Debbie and I were at the store, but was still in process at the time we started back. Greg had been allowed to leave the premises after being questioned, in order to go on an errand. In so doing, he crossed paths with us on the road and flagged us down, telling us that we should not yet return to the farm. I remember thinking that perhaps the world was trying to destroy us before we came into the Lord's presence and received the power of our calling. I drove around for a while, then called the farm in order to see if Debbie and I should return. The phone at the farm was usually not plugged in. Even when it was, Jeff had seriously insisted that no one was to use it nor even answer it without his permission. Nonetheless, when I called, it was Jeff who answered, which was as would be expected, and responded that we could return to the farm. The atmosphere was very hectic as everyone scrambled meet us, each giving accounts of what had happened. Everyone, that is, but Jeff and Alice. With help of the others, we unloaded our stock of groceries from the car.

Jeff would later become very somber, but at that point he was at the fireplace burning his divisions from various class topics along with other papers. An uneasiness began to settle over us as we saw an indecisiveness come over Jeff. Everyone looked to him for direction, but he openly stated the need to be left alone. I had become accustomed to this type of behavior from him since it most always meant that we had done something wrong. When there was sin in the camp, Jeff informed us, it was quite burdensome to him, but blinding as well. He was the seer and, as his people, our sin closed his eyes so he was unable to receive guidance from God. It became apparent to me that whatever this failure, it would cost us. Yet even in these thoughts I was being tempted to supposing, which was sin in itself. I felt pretty useless in that I didn't know how to respond, or what I should say. The day was spent with Jeff conversing with Greg quite a lot, yet mostly with Alice.

Eventually, he began giving instructions to Greg and me how he wanted us to prepare to leave. We were going to leave for the wilderness...*now*. Much preparation had already been made, so leaving a few days early would not be that difficult. Reservations had been made for the rental of a U-Haul, which was ready to be picked up. Jeff had many times coached us of a particular story line (lie) to use, in the event that we were questioned about any of his plans, so the responses the group had given to the FBI that morning were primarily versions of that coaching. Since Debbie and I had not been there, we

never were questioned; yet the others had responded with the story about leaving on an extended camping trip. This was somewhat true, but hardly for vacation purposes.

I was assigned the task of driving the U-Haul. Jeff stated that (as the seer) it was he they were most interested in, so he would leave ahead of the rest of us. He pulled me aside and said that he wanted to take Susie and our two children with him, Alice, and their four children. He convinced me that despite the fact he was the one they were likely to come back in search of, my family would be safer by leaving early with him. In my mind, the issue was not debatable. If that was what he wanted, then that was what was best.

I was deluded in many ways through my subservience to Jeff but I still perceived him as being much like myself. It would be years later, while in the Lucasville penitentiary, that I would come to learn in a biography of sorts on Jeff, how extremely repulsive he was, even in his sexual relations. The relationship that Susie and I had was not only very precious to me, but also absolutely monogamous. I was under the mistaken perception that Jeff's relationship with Alice, along with his moral preferences in general, were similar to my own. Though topics of sexuality had been a big part of Jeff's teaching, I very stupidly failed to see where such teachings were leading. It still amazes me to find out what type of activity had been going on in Jeff's sex life, even before we met him. Therefore, Jeff kept this particular aspect of his nature quite secret, while reflecting to me the illusion that we were much the same in our marital loyalties and passions.

I must confess I could more easily be induced to warfare than to sexual promiscuity. Warfare is an issue dictated by a perception of authority, yet for me, the marital relationship runs not only deeper into the heart, but from a separate view of moral conduct. I realize, however, that this is not always the case with others. I, therefore, trusted Jeff with my family, despite what had happened to the Averys the night before. Yet trust would not really be the most accurate way of expressing my compliance to Jeff's orders. It was quite possible they would be safer with Jeff, wherein staying behind with me could actually place them at risk. My death had been prophesied, yet Jeff had the promise of a security by which I was not covered. "And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; And they that seek to destroy him, shall be confounded: For this promise, of which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of thy loins, shall be fulfilled" (2 Nephi 2:25-27). If the seer spoke it, then it was the will of god. No debate on the issue was necessary.

It's clear now that Jeff didn't trust me. I didn't know at the time, of course, but he had a large number of things he was keeping secret from me. Therefore, it only stands to reason that he could not reveal his complete agenda to me, and he never did. He took Susie and our children so that he could better control me if he needed to. And to add more weight to this leverage, I was neither informed of where we were going, nor where we were to connect with Jeff, as we had done from time to time. As the "words of Christ"

were to tell us “all things” that we should do, this next part of our journey would mimic the account of a *Book of Mormon* character named Lehi.

As a prophet, Lehi set an example for going into the wilderness.

“And it came to pass that the Lord commanded my father, even in a dream, that he should take his family and depart into the wilderness. And it came to pass that he was obedient unto the word of the Lord, wherefore he did as the Lord commanded him. And it came to pass that he departed into the wilderness. And he left his house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things, and took nothing with him, save it were his family, and provisions, and tents, and he departed into the wilderness.” (1 Nephi 1:26–29)

Multitudes had done likewise, and we, as the household of the choice seer, were to draw instruction from all their accounts without repeating their mistakes. In fact, we were to be wiser than they, in that we were to be the last to finish this great task; and by the benefit of everything those before us had endured.

“Behold, I speak unto you as though I spake from the dead; for I know that ye shall have my words. Condemn me not because of mine imperfections; neither my father, because of his imperfection; neither them who have written before him, but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.” (Mormon 4:96–97)

All these things had been recorded for god’s purpose in us for His restoration in the last days. We were to raise up the same mountain which Enoch was to have raised before us.

Much as any cult doctrine, Mormonism takes a reading of the Biblical text, vague in nature, and elaborates on it as though it were revealing a mystery. I wrote of this earlier and mentioned the expansive doctrines built up about Enoch in Section 36 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Sections 77 and 101 also speak of Enoch and the people he was to have led into righteousness. It is a commonly accepted RLDS doctrine that these Sections (77 & 101) were not speaking solely of Enoch and his people, but also were dual messages from Joseph Smith, incognito, to others of the early church movement at a time when anti-Mormon residents within the area were less than cooperative as neighbors. Jeff took these teachings of Enoch, already heavily “leavened” with Joseph Smith’s teachings, and embellished them even more. The “mountain” was a central theme for Jeff and in actuality was to have been the true interpretation of topics, such as the rapture doctrine where people are lifted up to meet Christ. By way of Jeff’s teaching, the lifting up would be due to a great earthquake, which would thrust up a mountain beneath their feet, hence, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that pub-

lisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isaiah 52:7). The “publishing of peace” would be the opening up of the treasury, or library, as mentioned in *D&C* Section 101, verse 11, and “thus shall ye preserve all the avails of the sacred things in the treasury, for sacred and holy purposes; and this shall be called the sacred treasury of the Lord; and a seal shall be kept upon it, that it may be holy and consecrated unto the Lord.” Treasuries such as this were part of the Old Testament ritual, but by the blood of Jesus we are to now have a better relationship with God based upon better treasures and eternal promises.

The sections that Joseph Smith disguised as revelations of Enoch were taught by Jeff as actual revelations from Smith for the purpose of illustrating the extremely holy location of Kirtland. He taught that the revelations of Enoch were speaking of Enoch, because he and his people were from this continent before the earth was divided. “The name of one was Peleg; for in his day was the earth divided; and his brother’s name was Joktan” (Genesis 10:25, *Inspired Version*). Section 36 speaks of how Enoch built a city of righteousness, which was too holy to remain on earth. Therefore, God translated the City of Enoch up into heaven, which Jeff identified by division to be the raising up of a mountain; by his teaching, our calling in our day. “And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion: and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, ‘Zion is fled’ ” (*D&C* 36:14e). With the teachings that the treasury was literally resident within the City of Enoch, it would not be incomprehensible to tie in instruction to Joseph Smith that he should build a print shop in order to “publish” these things.

“And again, verily I say unto you, the second lot on the south shall be dedicated unto me, for the building of an house unto me, for the work of the printing of the translation of my Scriptures, and all things whatsoever I shall command you...and this house shall be wholly dedicated unto the Lord from the foundation thereof, for the work of the printing, in all things whatsoever I shall command you, to be holy, undefiled, according to the pattern, in all things, as it shall be given unto you.” (*D&C*, 91:3a,c)

Enoch, one of our forefathers, was an example to us for the building of a holy city and the establishment of a holy treasury containing a library of sacred writings so that we might publish these commands of God for the benefit of all people.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 2:2–3)

Remember that within Mormon teachings, Jerusalem is identified as Zion, which will be established on this continent (North America). The “Centerplace of Zion” is understood by RLDS members as being Independence, Missouri. Church members await the call to gather home to Zion—Independence. Jeff, however, taught that Independence was not the Centerplace, but rather that it was Kirtland, Ohio. He showed how chiasmus revealed this, and also that the church went into apostasy when it left Ohio back in the late 1830’s. We were now called and chosen to establish Zion. And as it was to be the last time, it also would be in the same location as the first time, the location of Enoch’s city. The example was used of “the first shall be last and the last shall be first,” chiastically typified by the pattern. An interesting note in summation of this principle is how it all became a tool of manipulation for Jeff because Joseph Smith, long ago, found the necessity to place revelations from “god” incognito for the purpose of protecting himself and others from the “evil persecutors” who plagued him. Deceptive means seem only to have produced deceptive ends.

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IT WAS ABOUT 7:00 P.M. ON THE 18TH when Jeff left the farm with his family and mine. We were to pick up the rental truck after dark and finish loading the remainder of items Jeff had determined as necessities for our departure. Due to the hurried nature of our exit, we were unable to take our few rabbits and cages, despite the fact that they had been chiastically identified as provisions we were to take with us. Jeff told us to free them as we prepared to leave. In the light of day we did the less conspicuous forms of packing. When the Johnsons moved from Missouri, they brought with them a sixteen-foot horse trailer. We loaded it with the generator, barrels of wheat and other staples, still leaving enough room in the back for the two horses. After nightfall, I drove the rental truck to the farm where everyone helped load it with items from the house, and then from the barn. We had two freezers full of meat and produce. There was also a cooking range and microwave oven, though we had no idea how long it might be before we would be able to use them. Our wilderness venture would clearly differ from that of our forefathers.

We were to take “flocks and herds” with us as provisions, and though the rabbits were to be a part of that, we never took all that had been planned. We were to purchase cattle, which was the purpose for the hay that had been stored in the barn. But Jeff rarely came through with completion of any specific project—except for the killing of innocent people. The truck was loaded quite hurriedly, as we supposed the FBI agents might return, or continue observing us. But with the story that we were leaving, we hoped that our activity and consequent absence might not be an issue of concern to them. The Jaredites took honeybees with them into the wilderness (Ether 1:24). Absent the bees, we took a large amount of honey. They had grain, which we also had, only in the form of wheat-filled barrels. Their livestock was on the hoof, while

ours was in the freezer, but the end result was meat. This was all collected and accepted by us as being fulfillment of, and obedience to, the will of god from His word. With the packing completed, our journey began.

As mentioned, Jeff and Alice left much earlier in the day driving the blue Nissan pickup, followed by Susie, our children, and his two oldest sons in our '78 Plymouth. The remainder of us formed a caravan led by Greg in his Honda, followed by the Johnson's yellow Suburban pulling a bright red 16-foot horse trailer. I took up the rear in a 24-foot rental truck, all of which made us an observable convoy that stood out like a blasting foghorn in a sea of silence. Though we left in "haste" and by "flight," we clearly fell short in any effort to do so covertly. Richard and Sharon rode with me in the cab of the truck. Merely one day earlier, I could have very well been involved with their deaths if Jeff had spoken the word, yet we now shared the cab of a truck while traveling toward a destination, the whereabouts none of us knew. Only Greg had been given instructions where to rendezvous with Jeff, who carried the money necessary for our travel.

I'm reminded of a time when Alice spoke of holding Jeff's head in her lap one time in order to relax him because of all his stress. She said that as she was massaging his temples it dawned on her that she was holding "all things" in her hands. She described all things as everything revealed with and through Jeff's mind. They managed the illusion of having everything under control at all times. Alice would give testimony at my trial, surprisingly, that she never believed in Jeff the way the rest of us did. Perhaps at an early point, she may have suspected that he could be a prophet, "The Prophet," but by the time the rest of us came on the scene as a "family," she testified that she no longer believed it. Alice, then, was the only person in the group who knew what no one else knew—Jeff was a fraud. I have tried to convey a more succinct view of which of them was in charge and how the influence of leadership was misused. I don't believe Alice was ever in charge but she was most definitely the glue Jeff used for holding all his lies together.

Our first rendezvous with Jeff took place at about 5:00 a.m. on an overpass. Susie and the kids had already been long asleep at a nearby motel, so Jeff suggested that I go on with the others to a motel down the road and share a room with Danny. About noon I awoke to Susie knocking at the door; it was time to get up and on the road again. In the large parking lot area behind the motel we gathered for a short while to get organized and discuss any problems. Keith asked Jeff if he could speak with him at this little gathering and they walked away from the others. Keith had a confession to make: when asked by the FBI what the intentions were for the guns we possessed, he apparently made up a story about believing the Russians were coming and that we needed guns for protecting the temple. This upset Jeff, though it really did nothing toward the detriment our mission. What it might have suggested was that we were fanatically zealous (which we were) and might have prompted the FBI to watch us more closely, and that was what clearly disturbed Jeff.

Therefore, for this great sin Keith divulged to Jeff, we would not be able to raise the mountain, as planned, by the designated date that year. It was already April 19th, and we were to raise the mountain on the 3rd of May. But now there was sin in the camp because Keith had been thinking thoughts that had not been given to him to think. He used a storyline other than that which Jeff had given him to use, and this great sin would cost us. The price would be that we would have to go another year without the mountain for refuge. Of course, this was due to Jeff's great mercy and care for each one of us, because if any of us had gone before the Lord with a sin such as this among us, we would suffer immediate extinction. All would be lost. It was also apparent that this extra year of "tarrying" would be difficult for us because we had already ignited a fire by way of the covenant (the deaths of the Averys). How would we survive another year? Would we endure more losses? I asked Jeff if we could still obtain the records from the library (of Enoch), which was a treasure I seriously hoped for. He said "yes," that we would, but that we would need the sword, in order to make it through. The sword, breastplate, and Urim and Thummim were supposedly all contained within the treasury of Enoch under the watchful care of the Keeper of the library. We had only just started, and already our purpose was delayed again. We stopped at another motel the second night and I was given a map although I never really knew where we were going. I spent that night with my family, but we would continue to travel separately.

From time to time Jeff would drive ahead of us, yet at other times we would all be together. Eventually, we found ourselves in Davis, West Virginia. We couldn't have known it at the time, but this would turn out to be our home for the next seven months. Just as had been required of us as recorded in the words of Christ in the parallel story of Lehi and his family's departure, we had traveled for three days. "And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water" (1 Nephi 1:33). Davis is a small town that sits next to the Black Water River. Obviously, a mere river would not be the identifying landmark for setting up camp; we had crossed so many. But in stopping for fuel at a little grocery mart and gas station, we noticed the name of the motel and restaurant that was attached to it, unbelievably, named the Highlander. Believing it authenticated his own life and mission, now at the end of our three days of wandering and at a location directly on a river bank, like a huge X marking the spot on a map was the "sign" Jeff was looking for in his journey—The Highlander.

Whether Jeff knew it was there and had thereby charted a three-day course to it or not, to the rest of us it was more than a mere coincidence. It became to us a god-provided-beacon for the moment we would need it. It was a sign that we had found our stopping point. And because we were extremely desperate for some type of assurance that God was still mindful of us, especially in lieu of the year delay we had just acquired, it was not only believable to us, but strongly embraced. In a sense, we now knew where "home" was, at

least for the time. About three more days were spent in the luxury of motel rooms in Davis while Jeff looked for a suitable campsite. Each night we would gather for class, which added a degree of order again to an otherwise fluid instability of emotions within each of us. We were frightened wanderers and now our faith was being tested beyond any ordinary means.