

## Chapter 12

# SETTING UP CAMP

Our arrival in Davis did not go unnoticed, nor were the people unfriendly towards us. Davis is bordered on one side by a state park through which the Black Water River flows. A deep valley region within the park provides a cascading series of waterfalls that are beautiful to behold, yet this was not where we set up camp. Bordering Davis from a different direction is an abandoned strip mine, which has been restored in harmony with nature. The openness of this area enabled us to set up camp without registration through any park authority. Other campers had been known to stay for lengthy periods of time. Jeff felt the need to stay in a room at the Highlander.

About a week or two before leaving Kirtland, Debbie had been given to Greg Winship as his wife and Sharon had been given to Richard Brand. The “marriages” were not legal, but they were accepted as the will of god. The marriages were based upon Jeff’s view of all things, thereby knowing which man and woman belonged together. As a child, I recall being curious about who would be my “rib,” as portrayed in the account of Adam and Eve. This principle of finding one’s rib was taught extensively by Jeff. If the woman you were married to was not “flesh of your flesh” (Genesis 2:23), then the entire relationship was in a state of sin and adultery. And of course, in a world so populous, only a seer could actually see who went with whom.

Richard and Sharon, along with Greg and Debbie, also stayed at the Highlander. The remainder of us stayed at a separate motel. During his outings on the ATV Jeff not only found a location suitable for us to set up camp, but he also discovered another “holy hill.” He told me about it after returning to the motel one night. Knowing it was sacred ground, he knelt and prayed. Of course, he knew what words to say, having been ordained, in some way, to say them. He recounted how suddenly the clouds parted and a ray of light shone down on him. The 36th Section of the *Doctrine and Covenants* illustrates this idea. “And it came to pass that I turned and went upon the mount, and, as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory, and I saw the Lord” (D&C 36:1c). He then proceeded to explain how he had been instructed to say a prayer over the course of seven days, which would begin the process of ending this world that all things might be restored. Jeff taught that this earth was used over and over, and that we were merely entering into a new beginning.

“And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying, The heavens, they are many and they cannot be numbered unto man, but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine; and as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come...And now, Moses, my son, I will speak unto you concerning this earth upon which you stand; and you shall write the things which I shall speak.” (D&C 22:23a, 24a)

By way of customary Mormon belief, it would be taking these passages out of context to suggest that this process was speaking of a continual destruction and rebirth of this planet. Most would agree that Joseph Smith, in writing these words, was simply suggesting that the creative process is an ongoing one, and as one planet dies or the sun fades away, the others are being born, as an ever-growing procreation of God. However, though Jeff taught an ever expanding and growing universe, he also applied these passages as a life and death process illustrated within this single planet as well. This was reinforced by the example of Moses as portrayed in Section 22 (above), since he was only shown this earth.

Jeff was convinced he’d received revelation that he was to be “like unto Moses.” Therefore, Jeff taught, and we believed, that this 22<sup>nd</sup> Section spoke of Jeff as much as it spoke of Moses. Jeff had “seen all things,” but particular scrutiny of all things was revealed to him in accordance with his particular calling. Despite the position of “god of the earth” that Jeff would later claim for himself, he could never be the infinite God of all things. And to receive an intimate revelation of the infinity of all things would mean the transfiguration of a man (such as the city of Enoch). Transfigured, he (or they) could no longer remain on the earth. A few more passages from Section 22 illustrate the point.

“And God spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name, for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless? And behold, thou are my son, wherefore look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands, but not all; for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease; wherefore no man can behold all my works except he behold all my glory; and no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh, on the earth.”  
(D&C 22:2–3d)

As quoted earlier from verse 24a, Moses was only shown this earth, this one thing. “And now, behold, this one thing I will show unto thee, Moses, my son; for thou art in the world, and now I show it unto thee” (D&C 22:5).

Although I introduce these as additional concepts taught by Jeff, they were principles we were taught early on while in Kirtland. We had wandered three days. We had found the “Highlander” as a sign that we were at the right place. Now Jeff had found his “holy hill.” This clinched it for us, in that we were not only in the right place, but much like warriors in the battlefield, we now had communications with “headquarters,” even air strike support from

above to be called upon if needed. The Mormon doctrine all seemed to be speaking of Jeff as the choice seer. However, I now see Jeff as merely one of the false teachers that we are warned against as recorded in the Bible. Although we read from the Bible continuously, we were not only steered away from the majority of the New Testament, but had a totally obstructed view of the overall message as well. Jeff truly did manage to fulfill some passages of scripture, but not in the context that he claimed. Luke 12:45–46 is a parallel of what occurred not only earlier on within the group, but also the type of treatment that would be exploited by Jeff now that he had us locked in to his service and obeisance.

“But if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.” (Luke 12:45–46)

Our sin had continually caused the Lord to tarry, so the price for our failure continued to increase.

The day came for us to set up camp, actually, two separate campsites. One was at the top of a plateau area and the other below. The upper camp was where Jeff’s family, mine, and the Patricks set up. In the lower camp were the other three families, along with storage and a cooking tent. The lower camp was alongside the smaller Yellow River that emptied into the Black River nearby. There was a spring a few miles away from which we drew our drinking water. While Jeff was staying at the Highlander motel, they allowed him to plug into their electric supply in order to run the freezers that were stored in the rental truck. But within a week or so we moved the freezers into the horse trailer and brought them to the camp. Our campsite was about two miles into the backwoods area over a very rough road, so we didn’t take the U-Haul. Once the freezers were in place, my responsibility was to set up the generator. We endured very cold weather and even snow, so our food in the freezers was pretty safe but such weather made our first days in the wilderness a real trial. The weather was inescapable; there was no way of getting away from it. Once the generator was set up, space heaters were placed in the Johnson’s tent, mine, and Jeff’s. The Johnson’s tent was close to the generator in the lower camp, whereas mine and Jeff’s shared about 150 yards of extension cord. I was told I could not use the one in my tent because it drew power away from the current that flowed to Jeff’s. Quite an endurance. We really were now in the wilderness and all that came our way was in order to test us, to see if we would “murmur.”

“And it came to pass that Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael, did begin to murmur exceedingly, because of their sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness; and also my father began to murmur against the Lord his God; yea, and they were all exceeding sorrowful, even that they did murmur against the Lord” (1 Nephi 5:25)

The *Book of Mormon* plagiarizes the biblical account of wilderness living, in that it was a sin against God to murmur at times of trial. We too, had to endure the difficulties, and complaining was not only unacceptable, it created consequences of increased affliction. Dennis Patrick was assigned the job of fire sheriff, which was an ongoing and laborious task. The task of heating water for necessities such as bathing, laundry and washing dishes was endless. Keith was the firewood sheriff, so he provided Dennis with wood ranging from small brush to logs cut with the chainsaw. Keith had been instructed to cut only the dead trees in the area, but after a while at this campsite, as well as the others that we would move to, it would soon become impossible to find deadwood. Tonya was placed in charge of the laundry and Susie was responsible for the dishwashing. Those first few weeks were so cold that we seemed to simply hibernate in the tents as much as possible; yet even then Jeff often insisted on the need to have class (which Alice, by this time, seldom attended). There we were: a cold band of fugitives huddled around picnic tables, listening to the seer “rightly divide.” It even snowed lightly, as winter imparted its final gust of cold weather.

We would walk to the lower camp for meals, after which Susie had to take charge of the dishes. Several others would pitch in and help, myself included. But on the colder days I returned to the tent with the kids, in order to keep them warm. I was aware that it would be taken by Jeff as supposing or counseling (the Lord), if I were to stay and do the dishes myself while Susie took the kids back to the tent to keep warm. Dennis would later interfere with the job assigned to his wife, Tonya with devastating results. As Susie came back to the tent after doing the dishes, she was in tears. She was so cold and the hardships that we all were enduring were weighing heavily upon her. Confusion and deep frustration of the recent events was taking its toll. I thought that I was being a good husband and father by ensuring my family was prepared in the sight of God. Yet all I was really doing was subjecting them to continual abuse. We had been part of the greater household, or family, for sometime but had never actually been such an intimate part of the daily functioning, having moved to the farm only days before the deaths of the Averys. Due to our disconnected view of how Jeff’s more immediate household was run, I found frustrations of my own to deal with once we found ourselves continually together.

Jeff always presented himself as a very fatherly figure with the children. This included the Avery children as well as any of the others. As I’ve stated, his strict disciplinary tactics are now a repugnant and shameful memory to me, but at the time, we believed these things had a purpose and were crucial

for our survival and eternal wellbeing. Though strict, Jeff presented himself as being infinitely gentle as well. During the time they lived on the farm, Jeff would often invite children into the class area in order to talk with them, quite tenderly. As he was god's representative, it was important that the children not fear him, nor even respond shyly, lest they do likewise in the presence of Almighty God. Children are the very epitome of innocence and we are truly blessed to have such living examples to cherish and nurture. We thought that at the appearance of Christ, our children might be beckoned by Him to come forward. They were to be prepared to do so with open and trusting hearts. What a shame that people such as Jeff only seem to create the opposite in people.

This meant our children should deal with Jeff likewise, being god's representative and provided for the purpose of our preparation. As incongruous as it may sound, despite killing an entire family, Jeff appeared to us as being loving, tender and very altruistic. Death was justified by Law and Judgment, which we did not have to like, but did have to obey unwaveringly. I recall while in Kirtland, as well as during our travel, how Jeff made it appear as though he and Alice had endured the worst of conditions. For us to complain in any way was immediately marked as sin. Yet with him, it was a continual issue for the purpose of establishing guilt within us while giving the appearance that he suffered greatly with us. A bad mattress at a motel, an improperly prepared meal: no opportunity was missed to introduce guilt and shame within us. We were so busy looking behind at our failures and sin that we completely lost sight of the path ahead and the reality of what Jeff's actions were doing to us.

\* \* \*

JEFF HAD NO PREFERENCE TO ANY PARTICULAR CHILDREN. We were fathers of our own children, but Jeff was father over all. Despite the differences I noticed in the gifts his children received at Christmastime, I continued to think of him as non-preferential. Yet when we found ourselves camping together those thoughts became difficult for me to sustain. I did sustain and saw the issue, though difficult, as one that was clearly beyond any choice or discussion. I could hear laughter coming from the Lundgren tent while they would watch a videotape and I could see the tent aglow from the lamp they had. When I needed to speak with Jeff, my glasses would fog up from the warmth that would come out of the tent opening. Yet my family, my wife and my children, were huddled together for warmth with only a candle for light and a heater we could not use. I, of course, had to repent of the frustrations that these things produced; and I did. But Jeff owned us now. People like Jeff are seduced by desires to obtain for themselves, while altruistic people tend to sacrifice themselves for the common good of the whole. Jeff's shedding of material things gave the reaffirming appearance that he was not a self-serving individual, yet it's clear now that it was the power and the control over the

lives, and even deaths, of others that he hungered for all along. The death of the Avery family was not only contrary to the very fiber of everyone's passions and desires, it required continual mental reassurances as to its justification and necessity. Any justification remained crystallized within us, as murmuring or sin of any kind was directly reflected as a statement that their deaths were in vain. This was not only inexcusable, it was impossible. Therefore, whatever the imbalance I saw within the treatment Jeff showed his "naturals" [his immediate family], I had to believe it was for a reason. I had to equally accept by faith that the reason was simply beyond my ability to differentiate. Any frustration over the matter was perceived as counseling or supposing and necessitated immediate repentance.

Three-year old Amy became fussy one day. Jeff told me that any further fussiness would require his personal attention—I had not instilled within her the proper discipline for better behavior. This command was put into place for all the children in the camp with the understanding that Jeff's children were properly disciplined. Shortly thereafter, Amy misbehaved again. This meant that Jeff would have to discipline her. I was sickened as I sat in my tent where I could hear her screaming. Thankfully, she had not been physically hurt as much as she was emotionally that someone other than her parents were disciplining her. She was terrified at being alone with someone other than her parents. I sometimes fear that my consent of this type of discipline may have left a permanent impression on my children, perhaps they feeling as if I had abandoned them. With the number of complications, including the current and continuing Mormon fervor in their lives, and the physical distance between us, we've had no opportunity to heal as a family should, in order to recover from so much confusion, exploitation, and abuse. Going to Jeff and Alice later in the evening, I had tears streaming down my face as I expressed my apologies for Amy's behavior, along with my fear that she might not "make it." If she had sin bound up in her little heart, she could not go before the Lord as we were to do. Tenderly, as a natural mother would, Alice expressed how certain she was that the love I had for my daughter would be sufficient for ensuring that Amy would make it. Remembering now that Alice knew all along it was a fraud, her attempts at consolation sicken me. But at the moment it had a profound affect on me. From that time forward, I ensured that there was no need for either Amy or Matthew to go to Jeff for discipline. I spanked their little bottoms far too hard and now I no longer have the opportunity to show them the tender love that I'd much rather have them remember. That's not to say that I didn't treat them tenderly as well. Chasing "tickle bugs" and games of rubbing noses was always a prized time together. But the fear that any one of my family might not make it through Redemption Day created an ongoing fear that influenced my behavior toward them greatly. Now, there's no other way but this book to explain to them how sorry I am for my utter foolishness.

Mine was not the only family affected by Jeff's stringent disciplinary measures. As noted before, Tonya was the laundry sheriff, which turned out to be an enormous task. Her hands became badly blistered due to constant expo-

sure to the bleach. When the cold weather finally broke, the rainy weather set in. Eventually, the laundry became backed up and Jeff sent Dennis and Tonya (along with their daughter Molly) into town in order to use the laundromat there. This was expensive, but there seemed to be no other choice. When they returned, all the clothing had been washed, but not all of the clothing had been dried. They had run out of money and Dennis decided they should finish all the washing that they could, leaving the remainder to dry out on the lines as weather permitted. His thinking was that at least all of the clothes would be clean. Tonya, however, thought that it would be best to have as much dry as possible, therefore, they should only wash as much as they had sufficient funds to dry. In that Dennis was the husband and that his family had just nearly been killed due to accusations from Jeff that he was not adequately in charge of his household, Dennis' decision on the matter was final. Much like the issue of Richard and the chocolate chips, I doubt that there was actually a right decision that could have been made. However, if there was, the one Dennis made was not it. Jeff charged him with counseling the Lord. Jeff, as god's servant, had placed Tonya in charge of the job of doing the laundry. The fact that Dennis was Tonya's husband had nothing to do with the fact that god through Jeff, had placed the responsibility upon Tonya. Therefore, to question her judgment on the matter was to question god. To overrule her decision on the matter was to at least attempt to overrule god. Due to the fact that god had only recently extended His tender mercies toward Dennis and his family by sparing their lives, it was clear that the lesson had not been fully learned by him. Therefore, a punishment was necessary. Dennis' wife and daughter would be taken from him.

Alice was the queen, and she had no difficulty meeting the requirements of that position until it appeared that another woman was about to share the throne. Tonya and Molly were removed from Dennis' tent and placed in Jeff's. Tonya was considered a handmaiden to the immediate Lundgren household and Molly was viewed merely as the daughter of Alice's handmaiden. Dennis stayed in his tent alone: very much alone. He was being marked for death and he knew it. The job he had been assigned to was that of the fire-pit, essential for our hot water needs and even cooking at the time. He developed quite a talent for this task, as it became the one thing that he was to offer in service and stewardship to god. All else was gone. The turmoil, pain and emotional trauma were overwhelming for him, though each member of the group could well describe his nightmare as viewed from their own experience of it. Tonya and Molly stayed in Jeff's tent about four months before being returned to Dennis. It would be much later, and only shortly before leaving the group, that Susie and I would discover that Tonya performed more than servant's chores within the Lundgren tent. She had performed wifely duties as well. That there had been a degree of sexual involvement between Jeff and Tonya was suspected. Within a week or two prior to Jeff sending her back to Dennis, he taught class on enlarging the place of his tent. "Enlarge the

place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” (Isaiah 54:2).

\* \* \*

JEFF WOULD ACCRUE FOR HIMSELF many names throughout this time in the wilderness. Being “god of the earth” was a title that he would also later claim. At this point of the wilderness experience polygamy was not yet a reality, but later on it would be as Jeff would teach us that Tonya was to be his wife number two. But this happened much later, as we had become so intoxicated by the whole process that the minor ever-increasing changes were wholly embraced. I recall speaking with Tonya after those four months she spent in Jeff’s tent when she suspected she might be sent back to Dennis, her husband. She was very upset and brokenhearted over it, as her convictions toward who and what Jeff was thought to be overflowed into misplaced feelings of love. Tonya thought that she really loved Jeff, which is something I’m sure she finds repugnant now that she and Dennis are so distant from all that transpired those months and years under Jeff’s influence.

One day, after completing the dishes, Susie offered to help Tonya hang up some laundry. They worked together for a while until the job was finished. As it was an unusually pleasant day, Alice decided to venture to the lower camp. In doing so, she noticed that the laundry that Susie had hung was not to her satisfaction. I heard nothing about the incident until that night at class, when the issue became introduced as the class topic. As noted before, we had various names: one of mine was Israel, and another was Jeshurun. These names were never really used by us. In fact, their only purpose seemed to be as a way to identify us, individually, with various passages with which Jeff desired to associate us. Sometimes these associations were uplifting, but usually they were dealt in painful or negative ways such as the time Greg and I by use of our spiritual names were associated with the deaths of millions of people. That night, however, Susie’s name was associated with a threat of death. She had not been given a name up to this point, but tonight Jeff determined that she was Rachel. This name would not be officially given to her until sometime later, yet this night, it was a name used to refer to her by way of the context of the class. “Thus saith the Lord; a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel (or Rachel) weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not” (Jeremiah 31:15). Interpretation of this passage placed serious threat of death over our children and it was determined to be Susie’s doing. As with others, her own life had been threatened, but the threats against our children were the most disconcerting. Jeff’s charge was that she took it upon herself to help Tonya with a task, without inquiring beforehand about the matter. Perhaps Alice would have wanted her to do something else, or more to the point, Susie “supposed” that she knew how to do the job the way Alice wanted it done, without properly inquiring for instruction.

It's clear these things are outrageous and absurd, but it was all very real to us. It was, in fact, our reality. For me, it prompted continual fear of more deaths, possibly including my wife and children. This constant memory of failure toward my wife and children, as well as toward the Avery family, creates cycles of frustration and struggles that still attempt to destroy me with feelings of futility and depression. As I continue to gain understanding of the indoctrination and controlling processes that were used on us, I find a degree of comfort. But the most beneficial relief I have comes from finally seeing the message of truth as contained in the Bible and through the relationship I now have with God's amazing grace.

It was Jeff's design to find some type of shelter to buy or lease so we could make it through the year. The first month or so Greg was given large sums of money and assigned the job of finding us a more stable place to live. By moving, we would have the necessities that would allow us to hire ourselves out for cash jobs and also have a way to get out of the weather during the next winter. We had seeds and gardening tools, as outlined by the words of Christ. We could raise crops and trade for livestock with the assurance that God would provide for our needs. We had all moved to Ohio on faith, and had maintained a lifestyle of continuing to live by faith. In fact, that faith was a major factor of our existence and the very foundation of our confidence toward survival. Had Greg been able to find housing within the limitations Jeff set, I have to wonder how many of us would still be alive today. Not being blessed with a more secure place to live at that time was truly the greatest blessing the Lord could have given us. Had we been able to establish ourselves in a location with more permanency to make it through the winter, I have little reason to believe that the Avery's deaths would yet have been discovered. I feel just as strongly that the rest of us could be dead as well. Jeff had become completely intoxicated with the power he exerted over us as did we, becoming increasingly certain in our convictions that we were under god's all piercing scrutiny. We were god's chosen servants, not worthy, but set aside for his purpose, all the same. We were willing to endure any hardship or personal loss necessary in order to please him. This willingness gives view not only to what could have been, had we found a suitable dwelling, but also opened the way for the abuse that was soon to follow.