

CHAPTER TEN

The Dream

I drove over to Albertsons to seek out John again and ask him the 2000-year-old question.

I drove around the corner and saw the now-familiar sight of the bell ringer. I parked, got out of the car and headed toward him. "John!" I said.

The bell ringer turned. It was not the same bells, nor was it the same John.

"Where's John?" I asked.

"Who's John?" replied the man, a fairly scruffy-looking guy about twenty years younger than John.

"He's the guy who was working here before you."

"Oh, that guy. I'm not sure. He had to go out of town."

"When will he be back?"

"I don't know. People come and go at this job. Chances are he'll never be back."

"Is there anyone who would know?"

"You might check with the regional office."

I went home and made several phone calls and finally found someone who remembered John. He had basically the same story: John was out of town for an indefinite period and wasn't sure when he would be back. He said he hoped John would come back soon because he was their best fund-raiser.

This was an event I never expected. Even though I had only known John a few days it already seemed as if he was an old friend who would always be there when I needed him. It was almost as if he was a genie who belonged to me ... as if he had not yet granted my three wishes and had no right to take any time off until I had my way with him.

"Damn!" I said to Elizabeth when I returned home. "John is gone and they don't know when he will be back."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"You know, I never even thought to ask him. Who knows? Maybe he's just sitting in some

small apartment in the North End watching TV and drinking a beer." John was certainly a man of surprises.

"But didn't they say he was out of town? If he is a real apostle I don't think he would lie."

"Well, maybe he hasn't left yet. Maybe if we knew where he lived we could catch him before he left."

"Didn't he say he would give you more hints in a week? A week from your first encounter is next Thursday. If he is truly a man of his word he will be back by then."

"That's five days away. I wanted to talk to him today. I can't believe it. I feel more restless about seeing John again than I did about you when we fell in love. I never thought that could happen with another woman let alone a man." My heart ached with disappointment.

I realized I had made a statement that may have hurt Elizabeth and turned to her. "I'm sorry. You know you're the most important person in my life. It's just that I felt such spiritual love and power coming from John. It seemed so familiar and so good, and now it's gone."

"I know," Elizabeth reassured me. "I probably would be upset too, but I feel the same way. As soon as you said he was gone I also felt a void, and that extra strength that came through him is fading. I don't think I can get up again."

I didn't want to see her get weak again. I grabbed her hand, hoping she could keep her strength until she was healed. "Here. Let me pull you up. You must keep faith in yourself that you can be well."

I pulled on her, but she was unable to stand more than a few seconds. She was very shaky and unable to walk. I helped her back into her wheelchair. I noticed a tear falling down her cheek as she said, "It was good to feel well for a day, but I'm losing strength fast. I think I'll soon

be back to my normal, weak self."

"John said that this short-term miracle was to give you faith that you can be healed. Even though it is passing, maybe we should be thankful that we had the opportunity to see that miracles are still possible."

"Perhaps," she said. "But instead of faith, I feel afraid. I'm afraid that we will never see John again. I don't know why. I feel kind of a sinking feeling."

"I feel the same feeling," I agreed. "For some reason I feel a great void of energy. I hope nothing has happened to him."

"If anyone can take care of himself I'm sure a 2000-year-old man can," said Elizabeth.

"It's probably just us. We'll just have to live this next week with the belief that we will see him again no later than Thursday."

"You're right," said Elizabeth. "We will have to do everything possible to solve the first key. We need to at least show him that we have made the greatest possible effort."

"Yes, but I think I've done about all I can do at this point. The best that I can come up with is that we must be gods, like Jesus said in the scripture."

"There is one other person you can call. Why don't you call your friend Lance in California and run by him the same question as you did Wayne?"

Yes, I thought. It would be interesting to get Lance's input. We had a long history together. We were business partners for a while and shared many good times together. We had also spent

countless hours talking philosophy together. He moved to Los Angeles several years ago after he got thoroughly ingrained in the New Age movement. He has researched numerous groups and studied their philosophy. It's quite possible that he has come up with some interesting interpretations to John's first key.

"That's a good idea," I said to Elizabeth. "It wouldn't hurt to get his opinion. I don't think there is any New Age group that he hasn't looked into."

Late that evening, I finally caught Lance in. "How's things in the big city?" I asked.

"Exciting things are happening," he said. "Too bad you aren't here. I'm giving a seminar this weekend. You ought to come down some time and check out what I'm doing."

"Maybe after Elizabeth gets better," I said.

"How's she doing?" he said.

"She's having her ups and downs," I replied.

"Give her my best," he said. "Guess what my seminar is on."

"Knowing you, it could be anything."

"I call it 'Ye are Gods: A Synthesis of the New Age and the Bible.'"

I almost dropped the phone. "What made you pick that topic?" I asked.

"Well, as you know, just about all the New Agers down here think man is some type of god who has forgotten who he is ... that we just have to remember."

"Is that what you think?" I asked hopefully.

"Yes, the idea is basically true. But what's interesting is that I have been running into these religious types lately who've been quoting the Bible at me right and left. They say the idea that man can become a god is Lucifer's first great lie. These guys really got under my skin, so I started studying the Bible again to see if it was as backward as these guys make it sound. And guess what I found?"

"I'm sure it's interesting," I quipped.

"Interesting? Listen, the Bible teaches out the ying-yang that humans are really gods."

"You mean like the Mormons teach?"

"Not really. The Mormons are in kindergarten on this and seem to be embarrassed to talk about this doctrine anymore. The Bible doesn't tell us that we are going to be gods in some far-off future, but that we are gods in the here and now -- very similar to many New Age teachings. The thing that gets me is that most New Agers think anyone who believes in the Bible or studies it is back in the Stone Age. And Bible believers think that New Agers are worshippers of the devil himself. My studies reveal a harmony between the New Age philosophies and the Bible, and no one seems to see it, so I thought I would give some lectures on the subject and see how much interest is out there."

"So if someone asked you who or what we are? Would you answer that we are gods?"

"That's what Jesus said in the Good Book. That's also what every teacher that's into the New Age or philosophy around here thinks," he said.

I reflected a moment. "What if God himself appeared to you and told you that was the wrong answer and that you were supposed to guess again. What would you say?"

"I never thought about it being the wrong answer. It makes too much sense," he replied confidently.

"But just suppose it was wrong. Is there anything else you would guess?"

"What else could it be?" he asked. "In the beginning there was only God and He created the universe out of Himself. That means you are made out of God and you are a part of God. If you are one with the God consciousness, then you are God just as much as Jesus was. After all, He even said in the Book of John that we are supposed to be one with God just as He was."

"You're right. John did say that."

"Yes. Of all the writers of the scriptures, I think John was the greatest."

"I'll tell John that the next time I see him," I quipped.

"Funny," Lance said, not suspecting the truth behind my humor. "What did you call for, anyway?"

"To ask you a question, but you already answered it."

"That's the way it happens when you're in tune with the universe, buddy," he said, sounding very pleased with himself.

We spent a few more minutes talking about family, friends and business ideas before we said our good-byes. He ended it with his favorite phrase, "Have a powerful day!" I related the conversation to Elizabeth.

"This sounds like the first insight," said Elizabeth.

"What do you mean first insight?" I asked.

"I thought you read "The Celestine Prophecy." That book talks about insights that will transform humanity. The first insight says that we are to pay attention to coincidences, that they will lead us to paths we are to follow."

"Yes, I do remember reading that now. It is a pretty fantastic coincidence that both Wayne and Lance had the same answer. It's especially interesting that Lance answered my question even before I asked it. Do you think that is some kind of sign?"

"It sounds like it could be."

"Let's suppose it is a sign then. That means we're supposed to think in the direction of us being gods. If I tell John the answer is that I am a god or God, could that be enough or are we supposed to think deeper?"

"Who knows?" Elizabeth shrugged. "The question I have is that if I am a god, why can't I snap my fingers and just make myself well?"

"Good question. But from what I've read about it in New Age books, the reason is that we are basically gods who have forgotten we are gods. Because we have all power as gods and we believe we are frail humans, this belief makes us frail humans. When we drop this false belief, then the god within us will be revealed."

"So, all I have to do is drop my false belief, and I can have power to heal myself?"

"That's the basic teaching of the present-day gurus."

"It sounds too simple."

"It does," I agreed, "but simple things are often the truest."

That evening when I went to bed I felt very restless. I felt a vacuum ever since I learned that John was out of town, but as I lay on my bed that night I felt even more depleted of energy. I felt as if I was fading in and out of reality. Finally I fell asleep and had an unusual dream. Now, in my experience, some dreams are just dreams, but every now and then one comes along that seems very real, and you think there must be a reality behind it. This was one of those dreams.

I found myself in a room surrounded by these floating evil-looking entities. Their faces were contorted and snarling at me as if they wanted to do me harm. I looked for a way of escape and found a door. I ran through the door and found a saintly-looking man in a rocking chair, looking at me with a benevolent look on his face. I turned around and noticed that the evil spirits did not follow me into the room, and it seemed that the kindly man was somehow protecting me from them.

I walked toward the man and asked, "Who are you?"

He looked back at me, and I heard an authoritative voice projected toward me which said, "This is my beloved apostle -- John."

I looked at the benevolent-looking man with a start. He looked nothing like my bell-ringing friend who I thought was the apostle John. This man had long, sandy hair, a beard, and a fairly heavy build. John was fairly thin, with no beard, and black hair with touches of white. John's complexion was also darker than this man's. This person in front of me was definitely a different person than the bell ringer I knew as John.

Now this voice I was hearing, which sounded very authoritative, was telling me that this other man was John the Beloved. The voice sounded a bit like James Earl Jones when he says, "This is CNN." It was like you would imagine the voice of God to be. Because of the general situation the strong impression came to my mind that it must be the voice of the God, or of Christ himself.

I ventured forth a question. "Who is the other John -- the Bell Ringer?"

The authoritative voice answered back: "The impostor you met has been an enemy from the beginning. He is a prince of evil and deceit who will lead all who believe him into the abyss and destruction. Beware of evil that has the appearance of good. Beware of all those who teach that men are gods. I alone am God." His voice echoed until I woke up from the dream with a start and lay in my bed in contemplation.

John had indeed seemed sincere and had appeared to be a true teacher, but it never occurred to me to think he was some kind of evil incarnate. Now this voice that seemed to be the voice of God had shown me what may be the *true* John the Beloved -- and the one who I thought was the true apostle might not be an apostle at all, but some kind of evil incarnate sent to lead me to ... what? The voice had said "the abyss and destruction." That must be some type of hell, I thought.

It seemed to me that if the voice was correct, I would be destroyed. But if John-the-bell-ringer was right, I would go on to learn the Keys of Knowledge. I didn't like my choice. If John-the-bell-ringer was wrong, I might suffer some type of eternal punishment or destruction... But if the dream was wrong, I could go on to learn the keys of knowledge from John.

As this thought crossed my mind, I found it interesting that I felt fear of the voice of God in the

dream. I feared it was right, but I did not want it to be right. I remembered the feelings of love I had when John-the-bell-ringer was in my presence, especially when he sent me his memories and later taught my wife. Then I thought of how I felt when I saw the supposed John the Beloved in the dream. The evil spirits in the dream did not follow me into the room where John was, and it seemed peaceful when I entered into the presence of John in the dream. But that peace was different from the peace I felt in the presence of the bell ringer. In the bell-ringer's presence, I felt a peace that penetrated me to the core, perhaps the "peace that passeth all understanding." But in the presence of John in the dream, the peace was like the peace you have when a baby stops crying. It seems peaceful because of the lack of disturbance, not because of any inner feeling.

Next, I contemplated the voice of Jesus or God that I thought I heard. The feeling from the voice seemed to penetrate my outer body and tried to work its way into my heart, but the sound of the bells I heard from John seem to penetrate my deepest heart-center or soul and radiate outward to permeate my whole being.

As I contemplated the two Johns, I concluded the major difference between them was that one created a feeling of fear and dread in me, and the other a feeling of love and peace.

I thought long and hard within myself, as I had a feeling that I was supposed to make a choice of some kind. After a period of absolute stillness I thought within myself, "If I have to choose, I will choose the John whose bells, thoughts and words touched my very soul."

Immediately, as instantly as one can imagine, I sensed a presence beside my bed. It was a presence of tremendous evil, of that I was sure. The vibration was so terrible and overwhelming that I felt like running, but somehow I knew within myself, as if I had been sent some type of revelation directly to my brain, that this powerful entity from the abyss was the one who had given me the dream and was the one who was the owner of the authoritative voice. I somehow knew that he did not know that I knew he was there. He seemed to be standing by my bedside, waiting to see if I would fall for the illusion he had created for me in the dream. I knew the truth was now revealed to me because I had chosen John-the-Bell-Ringer -- and that he was indeed John the Beloved, apostle of Jesus. My choice was true. If I had chosen the other John, I would have chosen an agent of the dark side.

I lay completely still for another few moments, holding my breath. I sensed the being was watching me, waiting for a response. I felt a fear beyond anything I had felt before. I somehow

feared this being had power to destroy me if I did not please him. I spent several more minutes quieting the fear and told myself I would put myself in the hands of the true God, Whoever and Whatever that would be. Somehow, I felt I must confront this personage who was waiting for a response. "Oh God," I prayed within myself with sincerity I had never had before, "what shall I do?"

Immediately I felt another presence. It seemed very familiar. Somehow, I knew it was the presence of the real John, the real Beloved. "Oh John, are you there?" I asked silently. "What shall I do?"

An inner voice that I knew without a doubt came from John said these words: "Laugh at him."

I almost broke my silence with astonishment at that answer. It was totally unexpected. Here was perhaps the devil himself at my bedside, the most terrifying creature one can imagine, and I am supposed to laugh at him! I had to take a few more minutes to absorb that one. Finally I asked silently again, "Are you sure I'm supposed to laugh at this thing?"

No answer.

Then I thought within myself. "Hey! What gives here? I want some reassurance. He might take me to some fire and brimstone if I laugh at him. Give me a sign that this is the correct thing to do, that I will be safe."

Nothing.

"John!" I shouted with a silent scream. "I need to know that I did not imagine I heard you. Please, give me reassurance just this one time!"

Still nothing.

For some reason, I thought I must go with what I had received. I reflected on the voice of John. It seemed very real, more real than anything I have ever felt. My mind just had a hard time accepting it. I had to go with that which was most real to my soul, I thought, and decided to obey and laugh at the intruder who I sensed was getting very impatient.

I took a moment, gathered my courage, lifted myself up in my bed and looked in the direction of the presence. I thought of Steven Wright (my favorite comic), let out a laugh as if I just heard a good new joke, and said out loud: "Great try, you son-of-a-bitch, but your little trick didn't work! I do find it very funny though." And I laughed some more.

My laughter was stopped in its tracks by a negative force more powerful than anything I have ever felt. It was like a whirlwind of negative energy that made me think of the Tasmanian Devil in the Bugs Bunny show, except I was terrified rather than entertained. I feared this thing was going to destroy my body and soul within the next two seconds.

Suddenly, with swiftness faster than light, the entire presence left the room, and a fire came down from some heavenly sphere and completely engulfed everything that was me. I was both on fire and feeling the "peace that passed understanding" all in one moment. I knew that only God could produce such a feeling. The feelings I had in the dream did not compare within a millionth of a degree to that of the fire and the peace that surrounded me at that moment.

As I was enjoying this great bliss, Elizabeth turned to me sleepily. "Did I hear you laugh?"

I laughed again with joy that I could not hold back. "Yes, my sweet, you did hear me laugh. I feel too great not to laugh."

"Well, could you laugh more quietly?" she asked, somewhat irritated, and rolled over to go back to sleep.

"OK," I smiled. "I will laugh more quietly." Then I laughed what I have since called a quiet,

heavenly laugh as I drifted into the most peaceful sleep I had ever experienced in my life.