

# CHAPTER 10

## EDDIE'S ENLIGHTENMENT

As Sid's recovery period began, they restlessly attempted to relax between shifts, but sleep was difficult for anyone to achieve. At 3 PM, Eddie was knocking at Maggie's door. Dressed in an old quilted bathrobe that was discolored and faded, she responded to his puzzling stare by pulling the antique robe tightly around her. "My mother made it for me when I went away to school. It may be old, but it's comfortable."

"Okay," he laughed. "You don't have to explain anything to me. Did I wake ya?"

"Fat chance. C'mon in."

"This is nice, Mag. Who's your decorator?" he spoofed.

"I did it all myself."

"That wouldn't have surprised. So, what's up?" He intended the question to be rhetorical, until he noticed the pile of books and pages of notes scattered across the floor "Woe, what's all this?"

"All of this, is what I've been wanting to talk to you about."

"Oh," he exclaimed as he perused one of the books. "The Bible, Revelation. We're gonna talk religion, huh?"

"No, it's much more entailed than that. Don't worry, Eddie, I'm not going to make you pray or anything like that, but I have been doing a little research."

He picked up a book entitled 'Death and Dying' and began thumbing through it. "Hmm, on what?"

"On one aspect that everyone else has neglected to consider."

"Which is?"

"Well, for some strange reason, I started applying certain aspects of science to biblical theology. In the process, I made some rather interesting discoveries."

"Like what?"

She sat next to him on the floor, crossed her legs Indian style and reached for her bible. "I was raised on the teachings of this book. My parents got me into it. I was never into any specific organized religion, but I've read it many times over and I believe every word of it. For the most part, religions are based on interpretations of scripture, but the bible is supported by some substantial scientific principals."

"No offence, but how are you going to mathematically support a concept that is based entirely on faith. **'The substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.'** Hebrews, if I remember right. I've read a little bit of it too."

"I'm impressed."

"Don't be, that's about all I remember."

"Do you believe in it?"

"Well, I believe in what it stands for."

"Do you believe in God?"

"Do I believe in God?" he reiterated in a debatable tone. "I can't discard the possibility that some sort of 'higher power' might exist."

"Do you believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that he died on the cross, then rose from the dead?"

"Okay, that's where I start getting a little fuzzy on the whole religious perspective," he shunned. "Let's face it. God in the flesh, good and evil, heaven and hell, and all of that other malarkey...Those are some big pills to swallow. Logic and rationale has to play a role in here somewhere. At best, we could be part of some experiment being performed by an advanced alien life form or something along those lines, but even that would take some major convincing. A spiritual contest between good and evil? I'm

a scientist for Christ's sake," he declared, then humorously added, "No pun intended."

"Fair enough. Logically and rationally then and from a scientific perspective, try a few of these facts on for size. I'll ask a question and you provide a logical explanation, okay?" He was recalling his promise to talk and had every intention of accommodating, but wasn't quite prepared for this particular topic.

"Of all historical events in the history of mankind, don't you find it just a wee bit ironic that all of infinite time is measured by the birth and death of the one man, the one man who had coincidentally professed to be the Son of God?" He looked puzzled and didn't reply. "The bible says that Jesus Christ and God are one in the same, the Spirit of God in the body of a man. God himself would be the only individual worthy of that an honor. There is certain logic to that, don't you think?"

"Maybe there is and your point is well taken, it even stimulates some interest, but hardly validates any conclusion, particularly since the calendar was structured

by the Catholic Church during a period when Christ was considered a dominant figure."

"He still is," she nonchalantly informed. "But with all of the catastrophic events that took place in that era, it seems like more than an ironic coincidence that this particular person was chosen as the pendulum of measurement for infinite time." Eddie offered a faint nod to concur. "Are you familiar with an Astrophysicist by the name of Jeremiah Kane?"

"I've heard of him."

"In one article he stated that," she began to read from a page of notes. "**Our physical laws have shown their reliability in every dimension, while anything put together by man is susceptible to and usually has a number of errors.** Based on that consensus, he set out to disprove the bible mathematically. The Book of Isaiah was written some three thousand years ago, but in that book, God looks upon 'the orb of the earth'. Modern Europe wasn't even aware that earth had a globular shape until the days of Christopher Columbus."

"He also states that there are approximately 2500 biblical prophecies and that over 2000 of them have been fulfilled. The mathematical odds of 2000 predictions coming to pass without error BY CHANCE is less than one in 10 to the 2000th power. That's equivalent to about every molecule in the universe and a profound indication of probability when you consider that science concedes to the second law of thermodynamics. The chance of that law reversing itself is only one in 10 to the 80th power."

Eddie interrupted in a surmising manor, "Water would get hotter with out heat." She was certain that she had at least managed to stimulate his interest as he followed up with another question. "What else have you got?"

"Did you know that Christ's crucifixion was forecast in physiological detail hundreds of years before his death?"

"No, I didn't, but I would assume that there's got to be a certain degree of potential for coincidence."

"There would be, if it weren't for the fact that the prediction was made hundreds of years before that method of

execution had even been contrived. I don't know what the mathematical odds are, but that would have to be a long shot."

"Look, Maggie, you obviously believe it and you're entitled to your beliefs. That's all that really matters. It shouldn't matter what I think."

"Maybe not, but for the sake of argument, would you allow me to express a scientific concern based on my beliefs?"

"Is that what you're asking?" She bit at her lip. "And this is a scientific matter?" She nodded.

"I've got to talk to someone, Eddie."

"Do you know something?" he began to confess. "In the ten years that we've worked together, I don't recall you asking me for much of anything. How could I possibly say no." He leaned back, extended his arms over the back of the couch and smiled to assure her. "I'm all yours, Mag." She avoided the urge to consider his bold statement from a

personal perspective and moved to sit beside him on the couch.

He could see her enthusiasm begin to intensify as she prepared to expound. Had he known where it would lead, he might not have been so willing.

"We both know that our research will most likely lead to the successful rejuvenation of a human being. And I understand that you consider every facet of your work from a scientific standpoint." She paused for a moment and then began to explain, "What about the spiritual perspective? Why hasn't anyone ever taken that into consideration?"

"Considering the odds, if 2000 prophecies have already been fulfilled, it seems relatively safe to assume that the remaining prophecies will be fulfilled as well. With that in mind, I kind of went off on a philosophical tangent and started asking some intriguing questions in hopes of finding a logical scientific solution. Since science couldn't provide the answers, I found myself referring to the bible, which only served to generate more questions and intensify my curiosity."

"According to the bible, mankind has a living soul. Obviously, that is virtually impossible to prove, but even modern science won't dispute it. Aside from rare occasions depicted in the bible when divine intervention was associated, there has never been a documented case of rejuvenation. Ours will be the first. The bible seems to indicate and most religions contend, that when a person dies their soul leaves the body. If that's the case, where does it go?" Eddie began to consider the question scientifically.

"Regardless of where it goes, if we successfully rejuvenate a human being, is the soul going to return when we wake him up? My fear is that it won't."

"It seems to me, the only way we could possibly answer that question is to do it," Eddie said with conviction, hoping to allay her fears. "That's what we do, solve mysteries. I admit that I've never given it much thought, but you can't discard the significance of a scientific achievement of that magnitude."

"Once we revive this guy," he continued, "we enter a new dimension of understanding. Biologically, we know that

he will be the same man he once was and since we don't know what the soul is or if it actually exists, we have to ask ourselves another question; 'Could man survive without one?' Would the lack of a soul yield negative results or positive? It might just turn out to be an improvement. What's the worst thing that can happen?"

"Do you really want to know?" she urged convincingly. He shrugged his shoulders. "If I'm right, a man with no soul sets the stage for a scenario that pretty much scares me to death. You've read the bible, right?"

"Some."

"Are you familiar with the biblical predictions of the Antichrist?"

"666, Mark of the Beast, Revelation and all that, yeah, a little."

"Many believe, and there's plenty of evidence to support the fact, that we are living in the 'last days'. In the scheme of prophecy, if the Antichrist actually exists, he will have to make his appearance on this planet

relatively soon. Virtually all of the necessary criteria required to prompt his arrival has already been established. The timing would be just about perfect."

"Based on the biblical description, I find it extremely difficult to envision any ordinary man with political, commercial or military influence filling that slot. The Antichrist is going to be one very extraordinary individual. Some world religions are actually going to perceive him as their Messiah and he'll have much the same impact as Jesus Christ did in his era, but in a contemporary fashion and on a worldwide scale."

"The prophecies are rather explicit too. We know that the Antichrist is definitely a man, but it portrays him as a person with phenomenal powers and the ability to perform miracles. People are actually going to worship him. Can you imagine anyone in this day and age attaining that kind of worldwide influence? I can't."

She began pacing back and forth like a prosecuting attorney stating a case. "Stick with me, Eddie. One particular aspect makes him very unique. The bible doesn't say when, where or how, but it does say that this 'man'

will die and that his fatal wound will be healed. Though it might sound odd, it seems to me that just by rejuvenating our patient, we could very well be fulfilling that peculiar feature."

"Wait a minute, Maggie. Hold it right there. You're not trying to convince me that our patient could turn out to be this mythical Antichrist, are you?"

"Well, that's pretty much the direction I was initially headed."

"Initially?"

"What I mean is, all of the pieces seem to fit except one. The bible says the man will have died 'by the sword', which means that he was or will eventually be assassinated some where along the line. Since our subject died of natural causes, that basically nullifies that aspect of the consideration." Eddie breathed a sigh of relief. "He did die of natural causes, didn't he?" she asked for confirmation. Eddie rolled his eyes as if her statement didn't warrant a rebuttal.

"Anyway, the bible doesn't tell us who the man is, but it does elaborate as to his spiritual identity. The Antichrist is Satan, the devil himself, parading around in the body of a man. He shows up as an 'Angel of Light', a man of peace and with all the answers to all sorts of problems. This isn't some man possessed by a demon, we're talking about the very essence of all evil."

Eddie shook his head in ambivalent awe of the religious connotation and seemed flabbergasted by her ridiculous hypothesis, but at the same time, he was captivated by her presentation. "Since Satan is best described as the Master of Deception, the biggest and best liar ever, most will perceive him as, and he will convince them that he is, some sort of a god. He will appear to be so righteous that even some of the most devout bible believing Christians will be misled. That's not an easy thing to do."

"We're already a one world economy and one huge interdependent global marketplace. The League of Nations is gearing up for a world leader and with the right person at the helm, it could do wonders for world peace, but if a man

with an evil heart has that kind of power...Oh, I dread the thought!"

"The other night at dinner we talked a little about the computerized cashless system. That's an ideal mechanism for the 'Mark of the Beast' and since the true believers will refuse to adhere to the system, that little imbroglio alone could easily initiate the relentless persecution of Christians. That's also predicted."

"Can you imagine what life would be like for those who refuse to participate? You can't get paid unless you have the microchip, which means you can't work. If you don't work, you don't have an income and can't buy food for your family. If you're kids were to get hurt or sick and needed medical attention, you couldn't obtain it. You couldn't buy a car or get a license to drive one and couldn't buy gas to put in it. The rest of the world isn't going to stand by and let the Believers foul up their perfect little system, and there simply aren't enough jails to imprison that many people. You talk about T-F-P."

"Everyone will eventually be faced with an extremely difficult decision. Do I sacrifice my life according to my

faith or give in to a system that might very well rob me of eternal life. What about you, Eddie? Would you receive the mark?"

"Woe, Nelly," Eddie stated emphatically to defend his position. "I hear what you're saying and it's one hell of a theory, but I'm still not convinced that this God of yours is real and that's a tough one to prove. Even if He is, I can't believe that an omnipotent God of Love is going to sentence most of the world to burn in hell because they elected to adhere to an economical system. That just doesn't make sense. The whole 'good go to heaven and bad go to hell thing' doesn't make sense."

"Take me for example," he said proudly. "I consider myself a good honest person, but am I going to hell because I don't buy-in to the philosophy of some ancient book? Let's face it, Maggie; the will to survive is the most fundamentally compelling element of human nature, it's instinctive. I'd have to take the chip."

"Oh, Eddie, I wish we had time to delve into it all of the evidence, because it does make perfect sense. There's a very logical purpose for mankind's existence and it's

really quite simple." Eddie rolled his eyes again, but beckoned her to continue with a raised arm. "Maybe, when we have more time, I'll explain it all, but my point is this, if we rejuvenate this man and he has no soul, there will be a spiritual void. That would mean that there is a chance that we could be creating a preemptive window of opportunity for Satan to fill that void. Since nobody is expecting him to show up by means of a scientific experiment, rejuvenation provides him a socially acceptable means of achieving incarnation."

"You know what it's going to be like when the first person is rejuvenated. It will be an international media circus and the person becomes world famous over night. Of course, if there is a soul and it does return to the body OR if the soul never existed to begin with, it's no big deal. If I'm wrong, I'm just wrong. But if there IS a soul...AND it doesn't return to the body when we revive it...AND it does turn out to be Satan filling that spiritual void, the world is going to be in for one incredibly rude awakening."

Eddie was more confused than anything else and still very cynical, but listening. Just when he thought she was

finished, she tossed out a little more bait to entice him. "Everyone is going to want to know where he went after he died and if my theory is wrong, it'll be nothing more than a scientific discovery, but if I'm right, it will be Satan who is answering the question and I seriously doubt that he would be answering truthfully, but you can bet it would be convincing. Unfortunately, no one would know the difference until he showed his true colors, but by then, it will be too late."

Eddie felt a chill race through his bones. He had certainly never considered such an outrageous hypothesis and doubted whether anyone else ever had either, but Maggie was referring to any man. Eddie, on the other hand, was beginning to consider the same potential, but with a slightly enhanced perspective.

He got up and slowly moved to an open window, wondering how Maggie would react if she knew whose body they intended to revive. With his little twist, her conjecture seemed considerably more precarious. "That's one very bizarre theory you've conjured up, Maggie. It sure does make a person think."

"It obviously has me thinking," she added. "And there's more. This particular scenario would also eliminate a provision that churches have been preaching for years. Having to have been born within a certain time frame and all of the other mortal restrictions no longer apply. Now, the Antichrist could make his entrance at his own convenience. It's an ideal situation for him, especially since people these days are so receptive to technological achievements."

"How in the world did you come up with this anyway?"

"I don't know, Eddie, I just started asking questions. The sad truth is, it really doesn't even matter if I'm right. Sooner or later, regardless of how he gets here, the Antichrist is coming. If it's by virtue of our experiment and that happens to be the Will of God, we couldn't prevent it even if we wanted to, but when we wake this guy up, I'm going to be watching him like a hawk."

Eddie remained placid. "Well?" she hesitantly beckoned. "What do you think?" She began to assume that she had gone overboard. "I hope you're not angry with me."

"Oh no, Mag, not at all. I'm actually very intrigued. I just don't know what to say."

"I don't suppose that I really expected you to. I know it must sound kind of crazy."

"Maybe, but you have got me thinking." Eddie remained silent and continued to ponder. If it hadn't been for their patient's prestigious stature, he might have been more inclined to shun the hypothesis, but his enhanced version of the concept seemed to justify further consideration, particularly since he was envisioning the devil masquerading as the illustrious Vic Dazzle.

He recalled how Dan had described the Dazzle Empire, the world leader in so many categories. He visualized Satan returning to gain control of one of the most influential organizations in the world. It was easy to see how an individual with those credentials could easily manipulate the powerful institution.

The one flaw in Maggie's theoretical scenario continued to surface in his mind, the cause of death. Dazzle certainly had plenty of powerful overzealous

adversaries who adamantly opposed his plans for VEDSOL. Suddenly, it didn't seem so inconceivable that one of them could have developed a method of prompting the condition that led to his death. As farfetched as the consideration might have been, it appeared to have at least some merit.

'The fatal wound that was healed'...'Death by the sword'. Perhaps, if he could confirm that Vic died of natural causes, he could at least put some of her fears to rest. He wondered if the cartel had ever explored the prospect of foul play.

Even if Dazzle hadn't been murdered, the potential still existed for him to fulfill the prophecy. Who is to say that he couldn't be killed after rejuvenation and revived a second time? The resources and technology would certainly be at his disposal. As ludicrous as the whole fantastic scheme seemed, he was finding it very difficult to eschew the thoughts.

"And the blasphemy thing," Maggie embarked again to break the silence. "The predictions say that the Antichrist will have the ability to blasphemy God. I think it would be very easy to do, if I were the first person to return from

the dead. A few simple lies that no one could contest, and I'm in there. How could anyone argue my perspective?"

Again, Eddie provided a faint nod in response. Whether he liked it or not, he was being forced to consider the possibility.

She sat up and leaned over the back of the couch and with tears wallowing in her eyes longing for some sort of reassurance. She asked softly, "Eddie, do you think we could we be laying the foundation for the inauguration of the Antichrist and the Last Days?"

He returned to the couch and quietly nestled into one corner of it, then instinctively reached out his arms. She moved toward him and sank into his chest clinging tightly to his shirt. With her head at the base of his neck, teardrops began trickling down her cheeks. His weary eyes wandered aimlessly upward. Maggie calmly added, "I guess there is one thing good about it."

"What's that?"

"The arrival of the Antichrist means that we are one step closer to the return of Jesus Christ."

"Yeah, I suppose," he said softly to conclude their conversation. He took an afghan that was draped over the couch and covered her, then rested his cheek on her head and softly caressed her hair.

Everything around them and between them had changed. Eddie had entered yet another unexplored dimension, one that required spiritual considerations. The realm of his work and the perplexities of his emotions had now subjugated some sort of spiritual edification. The enormous stress of an exhilarating week seemed to engulf them and by 6 PM, they were both fast asleep.