

Delivered from Distress

by Charles Reed

Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. O praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! — Psalm 107:6

O God, who doeth great things and unsearchable, and marvellous things without number. — Job 5:9

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Introduction

THIS book is a continuation of *Mount Zion Revisited*. All the persons mentioned herein are recipients and beneficiaries of the congregation, especially Maria Luisa and her brother. The destruction of the congregation was not a total debacle. The tree brought forth a few good fruits. This short work contains new facts about Bernardino, and others, in whom the unsearchable and incomprehensible judgments of the Lord were made manifest, in rescuing them from certain destruction. There is also a short poem or canticle about Isidra, that manifests the ineffable happiness and glory that occurs, when a soul enters into the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. May it be for the glory of God.

Chapter 1

Saved From Falling

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. — Psalm 37:23

IN A city on the Pacific coast a mother placed her four-year-old son in a play pen and left the room. A few minutes later a beautiful young Lady dressed in white appeared to the little one, and uttered a prophecy about the future. In later years he was unable to remember what she said, except the last words: “. . . but do not be afraid. In the end all manner of thing shall be well.” She then disappeared.

The child turned toward the wall, and saw an apparition of a man dressed in a trench coat. The man said nothing. He just stared. But the child perceived a fiendish atmosphere of malevolence and depravity, that came from him. The child was terror-stricken and began to cry out in pain.

His mother heard his cries and walked into the room. The child told her about the wicked man. His mother tried to comfort him by saying that he had just had a bad dream. But it was more than a dream.

Lawrence grew up. One of his hobbies was cross-desert hiking. Once in the Mojave desert he almost died. He was in the middle of the desert, without a sufficient water supply. If he did not find his way, he would die within two days. He was lost. That night a light appeared from behind him, to guide him. When he turned around in order to see the light, it vanished, but came back when he did not look. With this prodigious and unheard of help, he was guided to a house, and received water and shelter there.

Later on he married and had a well-paying job. Once he was flying in his private plane to visit an acquaintance. Suddenly a wing broke off. The plane began its deathly descent, spiraling out of control. Lawrence realized he would not survive the impending crash. While the plane was descending, he prayed intensely that he would be given more time; he was in no condition to meet God and to face the judgment.

Shortly before the plane crashed, its angle changed. The plane was wrecked completely, but Lawrence escaped without a scratch. Soon thereafter he returned to the practice of his faith.

Lawrence had nearly died two times, but something and someone was protecting him from physical and spiritual shipwreck. God had designs for his future. The prophecy of the Lady dressed in white was slowly being fulfilled.

O God, who doeth great things and unsearchable, and marvellous things without number. — Job 5:9

Chapter 2

Saved From the Abyss

PAUL Z. was born in Hungary and when a young man emigrated to the USA. He joined the U.S. Navy and became a high-ranking officer. At age 45 he married a young lady who had been born in Germany. They lived in Florida, and had three children, Tina, Lisa and Paul Jr. Mr. Z. was a non-practicing Catholic and his wife a non-practicing Lutheran. The children grew up without any religious instruction. But when Lisa was a teenager she joined a church and became an active and zealous member.

Since Paul Z. had married late, he almost seemed like a grandfather to his children. When Paul Jr. was 22, their father died of Alzheimer's disease.

At age 25, Lisa was living with her mother. She had a lung disease, and at night time she had to wear a special apparatus while she slept. One night when she went to bed, she put on the apparatus wrong and it became entangled. She fell asleep unaware that she had put it on incorrectly. As a result, she was suffocated in her sleep. In the morning her mother found her dead body in bed. The grief-stricken mother phoned Paul Junior and Tina, so they could come to attend the funeral.

At that time Paul Jr. had no interest in religion and did not believe in anything. He was driving back to his home after Lisa's funeral, from Florida to Georgia, traveling 60 miles per hour in the fast lane. It was 2 a.m.

Suddenly he heard a voice, with his physical ears, that commanded him to move over to the right lane. He obeyed.

Five seconds later, a truck came down the left lane in the opposite direction, a few seconds after there was a head-on crash in the left lane.

Paul Jr. was scared to death. He pulled over his car and stopped. If it had not been for the voice, he would have been in the head-on crash, totally annihilated, plunged into the abyss from whence there is no deliverance.

He got out of the car, in order to recover from the emotional shock. A few minutes later the police arrived in order to investigate the head-on crash. Three people had been killed.

One year later Paul had to stay in the hospital for two months for a health problem. There were no televisions in the hospital, only a radio. One Sunday morning he was bored and started listening to the radio. He heard a Sunday sermon, and thought it boring. So he changed the station and found another sermon. Then he changed the station again and found yet another sermon. Since he could not find any entertainment on the radio, he decided to read. But there were no books in his room. So he asked a nurse to please provide him with any book that might be available. She gave him a New Testament.

During the next few days he read the entire New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation, and as a result of his readings, he was converted and believed.

Shortly after he was released from the hospital, he joined a church and began making friends there. Once after a church meeting he was talking with a friend and telling him about some of the past events of his life, how he had been living in unbelief since childhood. He related how he had been saved from the crash by the voice, how he had been prevented from dying in sin, how he had been delivered from the horrifying abyss of everlasting woe, “where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark 9) He also told his friend about Lisa's strong faith and her unexpected accidental death.

They were both of the opinion that Lisa's death could not be considered a misfortune, because it was probable that she died in grace, was saved, and is now in heaven, in the presence of the Lamb and his heavenly court.

(Revelation 7)

O God, who doeth great things and unsearchable, and marvellous things without number.

– Job 5:9

Chapter 3

Saved from Hell

WHEN Mark was 12 years old, his uncle came and took him to the Cherokee reservation at Red Clay, Tennessee (now a national park). An eternal flame burns there for the Cherokee nation. To the right is a natural spring. There were big wooden poles supporting a round, conical roof with a hole in the center. It was like a large tent.

When Mark walked into the structure, he felt the hair on his arms stand on end; and he felt the temperature drop. He also felt a breeze, but not a normal one, and an uplifting feeling. Uncle Andrew smiled; the atmosphere felt full of energy.

When Mark was growing up he received some Christian instruction, but did not pay much attention to it. He lived without God. At age 48 he was arrested and imprisoned for having manufactured drugs. He was sentenced and taken to a jail in Beaumont, Texas that had a reputation for being haunted. It was a high-security prison with violent inmates inside, and often there were brutal acts and even murders.

The older guards told some of the inmates that at night they heard footsteps; sometimes they even heard voices and moans coming from empty cells, and the sound of doors shutting. Some employees asked to be transferred to other prisons: they were afraid of working there; it was the abode of anomalous, fearful and stupefying events.

Mark and his cellmate knew that the prison was haunted, not only from the testimony of the guards, but from their own experience. Two or three times a week, the temperature would drop suddenly, becoming very cold (this happened in southern Texas in summer – there was no natural explanation of how it could become so cold in such a climate.) They also perceived a smell that was not natural, as of decaying flesh.

Mark's cellmate then said, "They're here; can you feel it?" and got into his top bunk, covered himself with blankets to be protected from the cold, and prayed the Lord's prayer, so that the evil spirits would go away. Mark did likewise. They could actually feel the spirits of wickedness arriving and perceive their sinister presence. Perhaps they were souls of persons who died there or who were murdered in violent deaths.

One morning at 6:30 a.m., Mark walked down a corridor, into the day room (recreational room). He looked in, and shuddered. On a metal table was a head of a fellow inmate who had just been killed by decapitation a few hours before. Upon his forehead was stapled a sign, with capital letters written in ink:

THIS IS WHAT WE DO TO SNITCHES

Just after Mark walked in, a prison official came in and called out in a loud voice “Lockdown!” All four thousand inmates of the entire prison had to return to their cells. The lockdown was a punishment for the prison murder and lasted six months. During that time they could only go out of their cells for one hour a day in order to take showers.

Mark was frightened and stunned because of the loathsome murder. He knew that his own life would be in danger, if he stayed much longer in this hell on earth. He remembered his childhood faith; there was no human help now.

At 8 p.m. that night his cellmate left to take a shower and he was alone. Mark dropped to his knees and asked the Lord to come into his life. He prayed:

“Lord, it says in the Bible, knock and it shall be opened to you. Well, I am knocking. Please get me out of here!” He also prayed the sinner's prayer. He felt the presence of God, and the presence of Jesus Christ coming into his life, and forgiving all his ugly sins. He felt like a ton of bricks had fallen off him. He cried for 30 minutes.

When his cellmate returned from the shower, he noticed a change in Mark's face.

God mercifully granted Mark's petition. Shortly thereafter, he was transferred to a prison in another state, where there was no violence. He made a resolution that when he was released, he would dedicate his life to God and work for Him, in order to help save souls.

Appendix: One Taken, One Left

Man also does not know his time; like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them. – Ecclesiastes 9:12

ONE day in January 2008, at 4:30 p.m., Mark was looking out of a window in his cell in Beaumont. He then saw a hawk rapidly kill a small bird with its claws and eat it.

Mark jumped back from the window in surprise at the startling and

fearful death of the small creature. His cellmate saw him jump back, and asked what had happened. Mark replied, “Nature speaks in strange ways. I just learned that a life can be ended very quickly.”

The next day a prison lieutenant came into the cell, asking Mark to accompany him to his office. Mark sat down there, and the officer even offered him a cup of coffee. Mark guessed that such unusual politeness from the prison staff meant that a relative had died.

His guess was accurate. The prison had received a phone call from Mark's father, informing them of the death of Jimmy, his brother, in an accident.

The day before, Jimmy had been drinking heavily; then he got into his truck with his girlfriend, Susan, and began driving very fast, about 110 miles an hour.

A head-on accident occurred; he was killed instantly. His body was totally disfigured; they could not even recognize him. Susan, sitting next to him at the time of the accident, had been saved, and suffered only a broken arm and post traumatic stress. There is no natural explanation of how someone, sitting in the front seat, can be in a head-on crash at 110 miles per hour and survive. But she did.

Jimmy died at 4:30 p.m., the exact moment the hawk devoured the bird.

One shall be taken, and one shall be left. – Gospel

Chapter 4

Saved from Darkness

My people have perished for lack of knowledge. – Hosea

DURING the 1950s Sixto T., an Indian who lived near Toluca, Mexico, married Isidra Q. They had eight children, the first being born in 1953. It was not a happy family; Sixto was in a bad mood nearly all the time, frequently became drunk and sometimes even beat his wife and children. However, with all his defects, he was hard-working.

Sixto spoke his native language, Mazahua, but the children grew up speaking Spanish. His first son, Bernardino, was aware of the unhappy family situation; he also was mistreated by Sixto. On one occasion, when Bernardino was 18, he asked his mother, Isidra, why she simply did not leave Sixto?

But she decided to keep living in the family, even though it cost her so much suffering. After that Bernardino went through a phase where he did not communicate with any of his relatives for three years.

During this period, Isidra was often worried and upset, fearing that she had lost her eldest son forever. She prayed often, and made novenas, for his return. Three years later, when he returned and she saw him, she was so happy she burst into tears.

Bernardino also had a sorrowful trail in his pilgrimage through life. In addition to his tragic childhood of living amid domestic violence, he had to endure other afflictions. At age 16 he was enrolled in a special high school in the north of Mexico for advanced students. There he fell deeply in love with Angelica M., but had to endure the sorrow of unrequited love. Thirty years later he was still in love with her and kept hoping a relationship might develop. At that time she was single and a high school teacher in a city in the north. One of Bernardino's employers knew about the sad situation and offered to arrange for him to marry a lady of means. But he did not accept the offer, having no interest in a marriage of convenience. Angelica was the first and only romantic love of his sorrowful life. Once he confided to a friend, "If she had decided to marry someone, anyone, I would have suffered less." On one occasion he sent her an expensive, carved wooden frame as a gift. She replied with a letter of thanks, commenting, "...that we can still be friends." He clung to that letter, perhaps a last hope of a relationship that could develop. He showed the letter to an acquaintance, who remarked, that the word she used, *amigos* (friends) was a reference to a platonic relationship. Otherwise she would have written *novios* (sweethearts, fiancées). One of Bernardino's favorite books was *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoyevsky, the theme of which is a husband who felt guilty about a hidden crime and confessed it to his wife.

At age 19 he joined the army and in that area of northern Mexico the soldiers were a bad influence on him; from them he learned heavy drinking, and it nearly ruined his life. Because of his drinking, he contracted a disease, hyperthyroidism (sometimes resulting in death), and one of the symptoms,

exophthalmia (abnormal condition characterized by a marked protrusion of the eyeballs) made his handsome face become ugly. He nearly became an alcoholic, but because of a combination of fortunate circumstances, he was rescued from such a tragedy. Once in 1993 a gang attacked him and nearly killed him, but he escaped with only minor injuries. God and his holy angels were watching over him.

A Secret Kept

During Isidra's unhappy years of prolonged domestic violence, a strange event happened to her. She never told anyone about it. However, during the last two years of her life, she guessed that she had only a few years left upon earth. Therefore she decided to reveal the secret to one of her daughters. One day she arranged to be alone with Maria Luisa and told her the following.

The Secret Revealed

ONE day Sixto had beaten her severely in one of his drunken moods. She was recovering, alone, from the shock and humiliation. Then she saw a vision: a man clothed in white appeared to her, and took her in vision to a dark valley, where she heard the cries and screams of tormented souls. Then the man dressed in white transported her to a heavenly realm of profound peace and ineffable happiness. She wished she could have remained there forever. But her desire could not be granted. The man told her that it was the will of the Lord for her to return to the earth, so that she could teach the people about God. Then he left her, and she found herself again in her poor ranch. The man dressed in white was Jesus Christ himself.

It was as if God had told Isidra, "Do not be afraid of your husband or saddened about your suffering. In the end everything will turn out well, all manner of thing shall be well." In those moments Isidra learned more about the horror of being eternally separated from God, the torments of condemned souls, and the incomprehensible joy of being with Him eternally in the heavenly Jerusalem, than if she had read many books or heard sermons.

The last part of the message was a puzzle, an enigma, a riddle. Isidra was illiterate, a peasant woman with no education at all.

Her religious knowledge was minimal. Being without training, she was not capable of training others. She could not possibly be considered a teacher, except in the sense that one may teach by giving a good example, and witness by the testimony of good works in silence. After this event, Isidra was seen often in the parish church, praying.

Isidra never told anyone, except Maria Luisa, about her vision. She carried her secret to the grave. Bernardino was not present when she died of cancer in 1984, but he did attend the funeral, together with his siblings Isidro, Venancio, Maria Luisa, Cristina, and Alejandra. His mother's death affected him deeply and caused a mild depression that lasted six months.

Tragedy of Maria Luisa

MARIA Luisa had a four-year old daughter named Bertha, who became ill and was placed in a children's hospital. A horrible misfortune occurred there. Maria Luisa was in a state of shock, when she found out about it, and to relieve her grief she went to a monastery at a distance of one kilometer, to see a brother, to whom she sometimes confided her worries and problems. She knocked on the monastery door. The brother opened it, and she said:

“Mi hija acaba de morir esta mañana en el hospital infantil. La violaron. -- My daughter just died this morning in the children's hospital. They violated her,” and she burst into tears.

The next day Maria Luisa learned that the heinous crime had been perpetrated by some members of the hospital staff. There was no possibility of obtaining retribution: the criminals remained unpunished.

A few years later she told a clergyman about the murder of her daughter. He commented, “Try not to be too sad about your daughter's death. You now have a little angel in heaven.”

Isidra and her children did not have much, in their pilgrimage through life, except suffering, humiliations, trials and tears. However Isidra did receive one privilege: she was taught by Jesus Christ Himself. Her life was a confirmation of the verse of Scripture: “It is written in the prophets. And they shall all be taught of God.” (John 6:45, Isaiah 54:13). “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (John 14:18) Christ made up

for her poverty, her humiliations and suffering, by visiting and teaching her in person. Now she is in the city of everlasting happiness, the heavenly Jerusalem, where all prophecies are fulfilled, all promises kept: "For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7:17) "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces: and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." (Isaiah 25:8). A few years later Sixto died. The youngest son, Venancio, inherited the ranch. It is suitable to register and record these events in writing. Tragic events sometimes demonstrate how God uses the wickedness and malice of men to effect a greater good. "But as for you, you thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good,... to save much people alive." (Gen. 50:20) "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God." (Rom. 8:28) "All things:" --even what happened to Isidra and her children.

O God, who doeth great things and unsearchable, and marvellous things without number; to set up on high those that be low; that those who mourn may be exalted to safety.
- Job 5:9-11

For his anger endures but a moment; in his favor is life: weeping may endure for a night, but **joy comes in the morning.** Psalms 30:5

The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit.
Psalms 34:17-18

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.
-- 1 Peter 4:12-13

Chapter 5

The Canticle of Isidra

A Canticle of Thanksgiving
For the Salvation, Deliverance and Rescue of Isidra
When she entered into the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem
In the presence of the congregation of the blessed

God the Father: For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

Isidra: My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

God the Son: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the the Lord thy Redeemer.

Isidra's Mother: For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

God the Holy Spirit: And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Isidra: For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

God the Father: For thy maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Isidra: And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

God the Son: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.

Isidra: He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

God the Holy Ghost: This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

Isidra: He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted the lowly.

Angels: For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the tress of the field shall clap their hands.

Isidra: He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Angels: Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Isidra: He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy.

Angels: And the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come into Sion with praise,

Isidra: As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham , and to his seed for ever.

Archangels: And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads:

Bertha: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Angels: They shall obtain joy and gladness.

Bernardino: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Archangels: And sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

Lawrence: O praise the Lord for his goodness,

Paul: And for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Mark: For he satisfies the longing soul,

Bernardino: And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

Isidra: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Bertha: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

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Notes

THE theme of this short work is: the story of four souls who were saved, rescued and delivered from falling into the abyss of eternal darkness, the hell of the damned (more than four, counting Lisa, Susan, etc.). The reader can find verses regarding metaphors of falling, abyss, etc., by referencing the words, fall, abyss and darkness in a concordance of the Scriptures. The book has few references to Scripture, the omission being made on purpose. *Mount Zion Revisited* had so many quotations it was like a concordance.

In this sequel, the physical appearance of Bernardino is different from the one in *Mount Zion Revisited*, the reason being that the character there was based on two persons, one of whom really does have a face similar to that of a little bear. Mount Zion is a condensed book; it was necessary to make known much information in a short space; hence the condensation of two persons into one character.

The complete, expanded edition of *Mount Zion Revisited* will be made known only in eternity, on the great day of the fearful and stupefying judgment.

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