

The Moment

Shawn Jones

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Author Note

Dear Readers,

Although Simon, Barabbas and the woman with a bleeding issue are people from the Bible, the background stories of their lives in this book are fictional. Also, the geographical and chronological aspects of the tales of Jesus have been altered to incorporate the fictional characters into the Biblical stories.

The main character, Simon, is mentioned in the Bible. The following are the only facts known about him. 1. He was from Cyrene. 2. Rufus and Alexander were his sons. 3. He carried the cross for Jesus. 4. He was coming from the country when he was asked to carry the cross.

All Bible verses unless otherwise noted are from the World English Bible, a public domain book.

This book is dedicated to our granddaughters: Sophia, Diana and Emily.

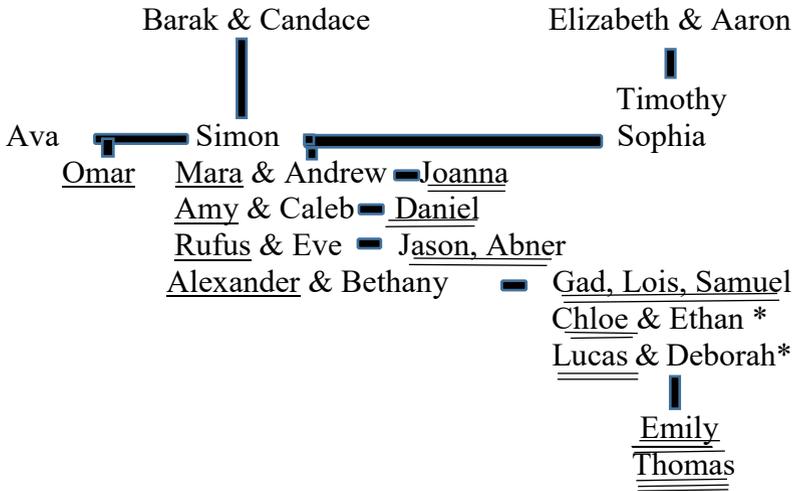
Even though my name is on the cover, the Holy Spirit provided the story and characters.

Thank you, readers.

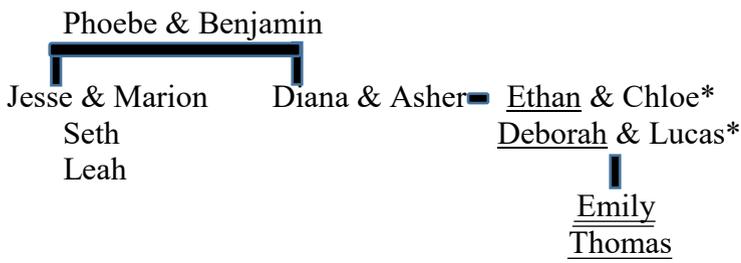
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Family Trees

Simon & Sophia's Families (Gentiles)



Diana's Family (Jews)



Children

Grandchildren

Great-Grandchildren

*Sophia's grandchildren married Diana's children.

The Beginning: Simon

The young boy scaled the rock wall, built by his father years ago. Barak's mule had dragged every boulder that could be found to fence in the pigs. The swine had easily busted the original sturdy log enclosure. Barak often had to push a rock back into place after the boar's snout would toss it effortlessly to the side.

Although he was just a child, Simon was expected to help feed, water, castrate, and slaughter the animals. Early every morning, the boy woke and filled pails with water and buckets with corn, turnips, and pumpkins, and watched as the pigs hungrily immersed themselves in their meal. Once in a while, the boar would chase him. Every time Simon dodged the boar's razor-sharp tusks, he laughed and said, "If you don't behave, you will make some delicious bacon."

The 300-pound boar was a lot less scary than the lighter weight mama sow. She was known to attack anyone that came close to her babies ferociously. Simon was terrified of her and stayed as far away as possible.

Barak said, "Simon, bring me the baby boars. It is time to castrate them. If we don't do it immediately, their meat won't be any good. Now!"

"Father, please don't make me do this. That sow is vicious. I will never be able to get the piglets out safely. I will do anything else. Please, Father."

Barak savagely cuffed his son's ear and said, "You choose, Simon. The mama pig might kill you if you take her babies, or I will kill you if you don't."

Simon started to pray, "God, please protect me. Please protect me."

Barak broke out in an evil laugh. "Simon, you are a foolish child. There is no God. You better learn to protect yourself."

Simon darted into the pen. He quickly removed four of the piglets before the mama could reach him. However, on the fifth pig, the sow charged and bit Simon's leg so severely that his bone was showing. Barak swept his son up in his arms and remarked, "I told you there was no God. If you want protection, you better learn to run faster."

Barak laid his son at his wife's feet. "Clean up his leg, woman, and he better be well enough to help with the pigs tomorrow. If not, you will pay the price."

Candace washed her son's leg and used yarrow to stop the bleeding. She yelled at her son, "What were you thinking? Now you have made your father mad. What is wrong with you?"

Simon's leg swelled and bruised. Pus oozed for weeks. Barak expected him to continue his chores regardless that he was in great pain with each step he took. Yet the boy would prefer to walk on his nearly crippled leg than to face his father's wrath. Gradually the leg would heal, but Simon's scarred limb would always be a reminder of that day.

Soon the piglets had grown large enough to bring to the market. Simon and Barak hooked the cart to the donkey and placed the pigs in the wagon.

Father and son found the perfect spot to sell their pigs. Everyone needed to walk by them as they entered the market. Business was good. There were only two more pigs to sell.

The marketplace was alive. Jewish people were preparing for their day of rest on this busy Friday. The merchants were shouting so that their goods would get noticed. The children were playing, the women were socializing and the men were making deals.

Three of the Jewish boys walked by the smelly pigs. Micah, the leader of the gang, said, "Don't touch those foul beasts. They are unclean."

"Do you mean the pigs or their filthy owners?" Laughing, the boys left holding their noses. Simon shrunk, hoping to make himself disappear.

Each time he would go to the market, a little piece of his innocence was lost. Eventually, by the time he was a young man, his innocence was replaced by hatred. Hatred for every Jew who degraded him. Hatred for a God that didn't answer prayers. Hatred for an abusive father. Hatred for a mother who did nothing to stop his father's mistreatment. His hate drove him to leave his country and go to Jerusalem.

Raging, Simon was lost in thought. Cyrene is not my home. In about a month, I will be in Jerusalem. A man can make a lot of money there. My hands will not be calloused from moving boulders. My body will be perfumed and not reeking of swine. Money will make women desire me. All the Jews and their fancy holidays and sacrifices will make me rich. I will change their coins into shekels. Of course, they will pay dearly for my service. I deserve it after all they put me through. My wife will wear silk. My sons will learn my business. Hopefully, there will be no daughters. Goodbye to this miserable life. I will be a money changer.

Simon became one of the wealthiest money changers in Jerusalem. His wealth accumulated from the Jewish rituals and customs of the people he hated. Then he would return his ill-gotten gains for the Jewish savior he came to love - all because of *The Moment*.