

A church service scene with a pastor at a podium and a large audience. The stage is lit with blue spotlights, and a large screen behind the pastor displays a glowing geometric symbol. The audience is seen from behind, filling the foreground.

THE PASTOR

OF THE LAST DAYS

THE VIRUS
ISRAEL ATTACKED!
GOD'S 12 MIRACULOUS RESPONSES

A NOVEL BY
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ISRAEL ATTACKED

THE SUNDAY - DAY ONE

A sudden loud knock on his study door startled Pastor Allen Rogers. What on earth? Joanne never bothered him while he worked on his Sunday morning message for the 10,000 worshipers at the Kingdom Today Center.

"I'm about done," he yelled.

"I turned on the TV a few minutes ago. You need to see this."

Allen wanted to brush away the intrusion into his early Sunday morning routine, sacrosanct in this household. An odd TV story didn't matter.

"Get out here now!" The edge in her voice surprised him, made him hesitate.

He stood. "Okay, okay," he said. "What's so important?"

He opened the door, his prerogative. She'd never think of opening it without asking.

"It's a breaking news alert," Joanne said. She held the clicker in her hand. "I'll fast backward so you can see it."

A solemn news reporter appeared on the screen. "A flash came in a minute ago," he said. "First reports say a major surprise attack on Israel occurred Sunday afternoon in the Middle East. Early reports from the Golan Heights

and major Israeli border cities indicate large troop movements although we cannot confirm this information. Sketchy reports refer to missiles and war planes soaring over major Israeli cities. We'll be back with more."

Allen stared at the screen, while the news went to other stories. Odd, he thought. A major surprise attack on Israel?

"Now you know why I called you in," Joanne said. "What's your message topic this morning?"

"This news doesn't change what I plan to say. It's more important that since the Virus subsided, social distancing was suspended and churches started to congregate again, people's feelings remain unsettled as never before.

"I will continue my series about the new worldwide paradigm I see emerging and about my trepidations that many personal freedoms will never come back. Many believe the world needs to unify after surviving this earth-shattering pandemic. Christians and non-Christians alike continue the search for answers to the long-term question of why the Virus happened. Some wonder if it might be part of God's plan.

"I want to share how the pandemic fits into Bible prophecy but don't feel the time is right. Prophecy troubles many people and might exacerbate already raw nerves. For 35 years I've shied away from teaching prophecy in my church because I sensed my parishioners weren't interested, that they continue to want feel-good preaching. I know prophecy well, but I need to see a more solid sign from God before I venture into prophecy in our church.

"For now, I need to continue to emphasize God's love and comfort for us in these difficult times of rebuilding,

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which fits right in with what the current day Christian church needs.”

Joanne turned off the television. “You don’t need to justify yourself. You built a wonderful church and you’ve brought thousands of people to Jesus. You have been a great comfort to our congregation since the Virus. What more could you ask? I thought you’d be interested in the news.”

“Of course, I’m interested. Honey, you know I do church this way to bring people in. They won’t get the message if they don’t come to church. We’re helping God cleanse evil from the world and prepare the Kingdom of God here on earth so Jesus can return.”

“If you truly feel that way,” Joanne said, “why do you keep running your Thursday night study group where all you talk about is your hobby, Biblical end-time prophecies. Do you ever plan to include your knowledge of God’s Biblical prognostications in your sermons?”

“I can’t get into this subject today. In the Christian church nobody’s interested, it’d kill my church and all the success I’ve built, my congregation will never stand for it. I made my decision a long time ago. I know what I’m doing. Maybe in the future I’ll find an opening. I know God will show me when the time is right. Now is not the time.”

“You came home so energized Thursday night.”

Allen thought back to Thursday’s meeting. It’s true. He enjoyed his hidden passion for Biblical prophecy, fantasized at times about giving passionate sermons on this long discarded, almost forgotten subject matter. Okay, he lived for those meetings with his small intimate group

of long-time friends who shared his love for the prophetic Bible teachings. He loved to talk on and on about the 24 major prophetic predictions his mentor Doc taught him so many years earlier and how it appears 12 have arrived and the final 12 are about to show up for mankind to literally witness soon. The message he crafted for this Sunday morning seemed like a lot of simplistic theology to offer comfort related to the world's new reality, to appeal to the modern psyche, a conundrum. Even preaching to 10,000 worshippers in his massive auditorium and to his nationwide television audience couldn't spark as much passion in him.

"I know. It's not time to spread the prophetic message yet. There's no audience for it."

"Think about what you heard on the news this morning."

"I'll start in good time," he said. "But not today. Let's eat breakfast. I need to be at Church early today."



Pastor Allen Rogers stood off to the side of the massive stage at Kingdom Today Center in Northern Illinois, dressed in his casual short-sleeve collared shirt, jeans, and loafers. From the beginning of his formal ministry he discarded the old traditional Protestant ideas of ministerial robes and processions down the center aisle of the church. In the enlightened world of contemporary Christianity, these old school rites no longer held any true meaning. Christianity evolved away from them.

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The megachurch movement changed the way people looked at the Bible. When the older teachings outgrew their time, lost their effectiveness, a new way took over. Churches only needed to address issues which helped Jesus reestablish His Kingdom on earth, saw all else as irrelevant.

Allen glanced out at the crowd entering the Center. His first thought this Sunday came out of nowhere, surprised him.

“Is this a church anymore?”

Most of the people sat too far away to recognize, most of them he'd never met, most of them he'd never meet. He felt real isolation on his stage, the bright lights that illuminated the stage for the TV cameras blinded him from seeing his audience, a necessary distraction so he could record his weekly message for airing the following week to a massive audience.

He enjoyed the jazzy music of the 10-member contemporary band that played at the side of the stage. Every megachurch these days featured a professional band, expensive but necessary to draw people, many of whom showed up for the concert, not the sermon. Again, his training told him the numbers validated the success of a ministry.

Five minutes to the nine-thirty start of the service. Band sounded great, the congregation filed in to take their seats like a sea of ants moving, shifting, sitting. With professional precision, the service always began on time and proceeded with no room for error. As always, he took pride in knowing the television recording to be aired the following week needed minimal editing.

This was success. Sure, he'd worked at it for 35 years. A group of parishioners hinted it might be time for him to retire. Nonsense. A youthful 60-year-old man, fit, with a full head of jet-black hair slightly greying at the temples, he didn't look his age. He preached with the effective fervor of a young man but with wisdom, experience, and deep Bible knowledge. He'd prove himself once again today. He'd give his parishioners what they wanted to hear, what they needed for this day, and they'd love him for it.

He designed his message for today on love, and how God provides comfort in times of trial and adversity to fit current times perfectly, a continuation of a series he shared as the world strained to rebuild after the Virus; every word of his sermon planned to the letter. Rebuilding remains a long arduous process.

He planned to include in his sermon today a widely accepted notion: God appointed Christians as His new chosen people to replace the Jews 2,000 years ago, in the time of Christ. Especially important in the times people lived in now, he needed to be among the ones to help provide comfort to the world. Oddly, this morning, Allen thought, do any of God's complete Biblical teachings indicate this replacement of the Jews concept as a possible truth? Judgments by God today don't match current day enlightenment, but didn't we just survive one? No. God is not a God of judgement but a God of compassion. No real hell, fire, and brimstone, which preachers used in the past as a cruel way to scare people into believing Jesus, existed. Many contemporary churches call the stories in the Old Testament allegorical, none of it relevant to today's

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enlightened worshippers. The Old Testament went out when the New Testament arrived, or did it?

Joanne got it wrong this morning. Allen knew for sure his people didn't want to hear about prophetic end-time predictions. Not the time, not the place. He seldom looked at the Old Testament. No, not true, he read those ancient pages for his Thursday night meetings, not for church. Teach the gospels, teach God's love and comfort in challenging times, not judgements or Old Testament prophecies.

Allen was never tempted to preach Biblical predictions in his church. He remembered when he was a member in his home church in Alabama, the pastor preached the whole Bible. The church never grew and eventually hundreds of parishioners drifted away. He didn't want to experience the fate of his old home church, so he searched for a new way to draw people. He studied megachurches and their simple but effective marketing, market research, contemporary bands and praise teams, radio then television ministries along with polling to find out what people wanted to hear in church. Ministry became a business.

He drifted away from Doc, his mentor thirty-five years ago. He loved Doc, enjoyed the meetings where he met John Josephs, his best friend, former Catholic seminarian, and a reluctant participant in Allen's megachurch. He respected John's views but noted even his friend reluctantly came to understand the megachurch way.

Nine-thirty on the dot the praise songs began. Allen sang them with the gusto he developed for the rest of the contemporary service. He felt the beat of the drums, the

rhythm of the guitars pound into his body, watched the praise singers dance onto the stage, sing their hearts out. The crowd rose to their feet, roared in song. You did church this way.

Exactly at the fifteen-minute mark, a junior pastor stepped onto the stage, marched to the center microphone, shouted, "Welcome to the Kingdom Today Center!!!!"

Cheers and clapping erupted from the crowd. The pastor held up his hands, waited for the noise to die down.

"We gather here to worship God and praise Jesus Christ, our Savior, to savor the grace and love of God and the sacrifice His son Jesus Christ made to give us all everlasting life in Heaven. But first, I have a few announcements."

The junior pastor ran through the announcements, mostly routine matters like parking and where to find Sunday School classes, along with a few special programs coming up in the next week. The campus bustled with many activities and programs. Keep the congregation occupied, keep them present.

The junior pastor smiled, said, "God gives us abundance and now is the time to share the abundance you possess to support God's work here at Kingdom Today. Be generous as the ushers pass among you."

Like clockwork, an army of ushers marched up the aisles to predetermined positions from which they passed the offering plates down the aisles. The praise singers sang another two songs, accompanied by the band, while the ushers took the offering.

On completion of the offering, the junior pastor returned to the front of the stage. Behind him, two men

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brought the senior pastor's portable podium to the prominent midsection of the now deserted stage. "And now, it is my honor to introduce Kingdom Today's Senior Pastor, Allen Rogers!!"

Allen took a brisk walk across the stage towards his familiar podium, arms raised, to thunderous applause. He enjoyed the limelight, part of what made his job as a megachurch pastor so wonderful. A brief fleeting thought crossed his mind. Is it a sin to enjoy the fame? No, of course not, can't be, he's doing God's work. He's here to serve his people, exactly what he'd do today.

He arrived at his simple podium, a lonely monument on the vast stage. The audience lights dimmed. His image appeared on massive screens mounted above and to the sides of the stage, positioned so everyone in the crowd could see him. The TV cameras stationed around the auditorium, synchronized to perfection, started recording.

After offering an ebullient welcome to the massive crowd and TV audience, he noticed an odd movement at the back of the auditorium and hesitated. One of the entry doors in the back opened. A brilliant light from the doorway penetrated deep into the darkened auditorium, outlined the shadowy silhouette of a man standing in the doorway. The light intruding into the auditorium caught everyone's attention. A mysterious man entered the room. The man walked down the aisle in the dimly lit auditorium, slow, deliberate steps. Allen saw the audience turn to gaze at him in the silence. Odd, this never happened. Who was this stately man? Time seemed to stand still.

Allen noticed one prominent empty seat in the front row of the center section of the auditorium, directly below his podium, odd because all the front seats vanished the moment the crowd entered. The man continued his long walk down the wide center aisle to a hushed congregation. For a moment Allen felt silly standing in silence at the podium while this strange man walked down the aisle towards him.

The man seemed to know the seat waited for him. He walked with purpose into the bright stage lights.

A sudden shock of recognition. It's Doc, from thirty-five years ago, the man who taught him all he knew about Biblical end-times prophetic predictions. How did thirty-five years pass so fast? He didn't look a day older. Allen felt a sudden pang of pain. How could he neglect his old teacher for so many years? He couldn't remember hearing from Doc in decades. What prompted him to show up today of all days? He melted at Doc's bright smile. He loved Doc's insights and close friendship. Those bright blue eyes reminded him of the old days, when he studied in Doc's home at his round wood dining table, and at his office lined with towering shelves of reference books like a tight historical archive, where they talked and debated Biblical prophetic end-time predictions. He felt filled with joy. Doc reached the front of the auditorium, walked to the empty chair as if he knew it waited for him all along and sat down.

Allen realized the congregation fell silent during Doc's entrance. He felt like time disappeared and his last farewell to Doc happened a few minutes ago, not 35 years back. Why did he show up at this moment, of all days? The

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news story this morning? The attack on Israel? He knew the major prophetic predictions, all 24 of them, Doc taught him years ago.

He remembered the moment he said farewell to Doc, who smiled and said, "Remember the truths of Prophecy and God's plan for mankind. Remember!"

Why did Doc show up in his church today of all days after so many years? The newscast earlier in the morning haunted him. Did the Arabs finally attack Israel as prophesied in the Bible? Can't be, yet could the impossible have happened? Doc stared at him from the audience the moment he stood ready to deliver his prepared sermon. He felt the heat of Doc's eyes pierce him to the soul. He looked up at the congregation, seated in comfortable chairs, ready to receive his words.

Doc's teachings, the congregation, his prepared message, God's full Biblical 24-event Road Map¹ for the last days, the master of the universe's helper,² the Holy Spirit working on him at this moment, what's happening? Flash, flash, flash the images panned through his mind. Years of training, great fortune in creating one of the largest and most respected and viewed ministries in the region, was this all in God's plan for this moment?

The invasion. A lightning bolt of insight, the invasion, the pivotal Ezekiel³ moment in Doc's explanations of God's predictions. Why else would Doc show up now if

¹ God's End times 24-event Road map is outlined on page 237.

² John 14:16

³ Ezekiel 38:1 – 39:16 is the first of two wars listed in Ezekiel 38 and 39. One is instigated by God with a specific limited number of nations before the Tribulation. Ezekiel 39:17 -29, is a second different world war with Jesus at the end of the Tribulation including all remaining nations of the world. Two different wars.

not at the minute his explanation of God's final 12 end-time predicted events started to come true? The moment of truth arrived. The Virus terrified the world and brought mankind to their knees; a new reality set in, one where humanity would soon learn they needed God more than ever. This morning, Allen told Joanne he still wanted to see a large sign indicating the Virus might correlate with end time prophecy. God delivered this sign in today's news. The Virus recalibrated mankind's sensitivity to what was about to arrive. The world will soon discover that today's attack on Israel will make the Virus event pale by comparison. The invasion this morning was God's next major sign, the thirteenth end-time prophecy in His 24-event Road Map that will lead the world towards the day of the Lord's return. Today we witnessed the arrival of God's prophesied Ezekiel moment!

Doc continued to smile at him.

Allen knew one truth. He could no longer deliver his planned message with passion, it seemed trite and passé, like rotten leftovers hidden deep in the refrigerator. He looked at Doc, then prayed silently, *dear Holy Spirit, please give me guidance in this moment of truth.*

He felt the Holy Spirit of God well up inside him. With sudden clarity he saw the major prophecy fulfilled by God Himself this morning in Israel, stared out over the thousands of people awaiting his trite words of feel-good comfort preaching. Not today, not with Doc and God standing here with him this blessed morning. He knew what he needed to do, felt confident and empowered.

The Pastor of the last days was about to arrive!!!