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Edited by Curtis H. C. Lundgren

ISBN 0-8423-5790-4, mass paper

Printed in the United States of America

08 07 06 05 04 03  
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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About the Authors

# Judd's Discovery

JUDD ran after Kasim, losing sight of him in the crowd. He hated leaving the Wailing Wall, but he couldn't let Kasim get away again. Judd had to convince him to abandon his assassination plot.

The streets were filled with vendors and drunken people still celebrating the witnesses' deaths. He elbowed his way through a crowd watching a television and jumped to see over the crowd. Kasim turned a corner and ran away.

A man pointed at the television and laughed. "Look at that. Three days and they're still dead."

The screaming vocals of Z-Van and The Four Horsemen drowned the crowd's laughter. Judd rounded the corner as Kasim disappeared into a group on the side of the street. A banner over a music store ahead read

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“Meet Z-Van today!” For a hundred Nicks, fans could receive a signed copy of The Four Horsemen’s latest recording.

A woman screamed and ran from a bar, both hands over her mouth. She knelt on the sidewalk. A middle-aged man followed her outside, pale and shaking. “They’re alive!”

Judd ran to the bar as people streamed out, toppling chairs and tables. Judd pushed his way to the window and saw Eli and Moishe—alive! The two witnesses struggled to their feet, their chests heaving, their faces turned toward the sky.

Judd clenched his fists. “Yes!”

The street was alive now, people rushing back and forth, not believing the news. People near the music store darted out of line and rushed toward alleys. Others seemed confused. A window smashed and several people reached through and grabbed recordings. A rumor spread through the throng that Eli and Moishe were on their way to the main stage.

“That means they’ll come straight through here!” someone said.

A few laughed, not believing the reports. “Those two have been dead three days,” a man yelled. “They’re not going anywhere.”

A voice so loud Judd thought it had come from the speakers a few feet away said, “COME UP HERE!” The sun peeked through

snow-white clouds, and the rays cast beautiful colors over the crowd.

"Look there!" a woman screeched.

Just above the buildings, Eli and Moishe rose like human hot-air balloons. People gasped and fell to their knees. The man who had laughed at the witnesses grabbed his chest and fell backward, knocking others to the ground.

Eli and Moishe were soon enveloped in white, the cloud picking up speed until it became a speck in the sky. Judd breathed a prayer of thanks.

When he opened his eyes, only a few people stood. Most lay flat, crying, moaning, begging God not to kill them. One person moved over the prostrate bodies toward the music store. It was Kasim.

Judd called to him, but as Kasim ducked inside the store, the street shattered. People flew in the air like missiles and crashed through windows. A woman was tossed into a tree and grabbed a branch. She held on a few seconds, then plunged to the ground.

"Earthquake!" people shouted as the street opened in front of them. Vendors' carts tipped, spilling contents into the great cracks. Several hundred people plunged into the chasm, screaming as they fell.

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Judd crawled toward a hydrant, but another shock wave knocked it over and water shot into the air. Judd scrambled for something to hold on to as freezing rain-drops smashed onto his head. He threw up his hands to shield his face as the sky turned black. A car sped toward him, careening out of control. It hit a gash in the earth, flipped upside down, and skidded on its top until it dropped into the newly opened hole.

Glass and metal exploded as nearby buildings collapsed. Judd watched a tall building teeter and fall. People tried to get out of the way, but they were crushed.

The violent shaking ended, and Judd marveled at how quickly things had been destroyed. Trees lay in the street. Buildings leaned or were flattened. Judd remembered how long the wrath of the Lamb earthquake had lasted and was glad this one had lasted only a few seconds.

The dark sky gave way to sunshine again, which cast an eerie, green light on the horror around him. As he carefully walked toward the building Kasim had entered, Judd heard a weak voice behind him. "Please help me."

People hurried past, pushing Judd to the ground. When he stood, he noticed someone's hand at the edge of the crevasse. He walked a few steps, then fell to his knees and

crawled. To his shock, the hand wasn't attached.

"Over here," a woman said.

A few feet away, teetering on the edge of the crater, a car lay upside down. A woman hung out of the door, her leg wedged between the seat and the car's frame.

"Don't move!" Judd said. He scooted along, careful not to jostle the earth nearby. Steam rose from the engine, and liquid dripped near the woman's head.

"Is it going to catch fire?" the woman said.

"Don't talk. Stay still."

Other than the hissing of the steam and a few people moaning and crying, the entire area had been quieted by the massive quake. There was no more celebrating or dancing. Those who could walk hurried away.

Judd looked for a chain or some rope but couldn't find any. Bits of rock and asphalt trickled into the chasm, and he knew he had to work quickly. "Raise your hands and I'll grab you!"

The woman gingerly put up an arm, and Judd reached for her hand. When she lifted the other, Judd turned away. Her left hand was gone.

The car shifted in the crumbling earth, and Judd struggled to maintain his footing.

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"I don't want to die!" the woman said.

Judd slipped and fell back, and the car tipped forward. For a moment he thought it would settle, but the door creaked and closed as the car plunged into the hole, silencing the woman's screams.

Judd rolled onto his back and put his hands over his face. How much death and suffering could the world take? Shouts from nearby brought him back to reality. He stood and rushed inside the music store to look for Kasim.



Lionel fought back tears as he ran. He had just seen Eli and Moishe rise from the dead. Their bodies had been shattered by Nicolae Carpathia and had decomposed since they were murdered, but now they were whole again. The once happy crowd was terrified.

After the witnesses had risen into a cloud, the earth shook so violently that Lionel struggled to stay on his feet. A few blocks away buildings crashed, and Lionel heard the sickening crunch of metal and glass.

People who had danced around Moishe and Eli now fled the scene in panic. A light post fell on a woman and crushed her.



Mr. Stein quickly gathered the believers. "Many will die today. We must help those who are trapped." They split into four groups and rushed toward the area that had been most severely hit.

Sam Goldberg ran next to Lionel. "Do you think anyone saw Eli and Moishe on television?"

"Wouldn't doubt it," Lionel said. "It's the biggest story of the Gala, but I'll bet Carpathia cans the replay."

"Do you think they'll still have the closing ceremony tonight?"

"Carpathia doesn't let a little death and destruction stop his party."

As Lionel and the others neared the death zone, they met hundreds of dazed and wounded people. Some helped friends and family members, but most walked by themselves, crying.

Huge cracks split the street, and many cars had fallen inside. Someone screamed, and Lionel and Sam walked into an apartment building. A woman pounded on an elevator, yelling for her husband. "He went for our camera, and I heard a crash!" The woman broke down, and Sam tried to comfort her.

Lionel punched the elevator button, but the power was off. He found a sharp tool and

pried open the doors. The shaft was filled with dust. He found a flashlight in a first-floor office and looked down the shaft. Snapped cables lay on top of the mangled elevator car.

"Anybody hear me down there?" Lionel shouted. His voice echoed, but no one responded.

Lionel waited a few moments for the dust to clear, then climbed down a ladder built into the shaft. He held the flashlight under his arm as he pried open the top of the elevator. He pointed the flashlight into the hole and gasped. Three people lay dead, their bodies twisted in horrible positions. One man clutched a bloodstained camera.

"Do you see him?" the woman shouted.

Lionel climbed back up. "I'm sorry, ma'am. You don't want to—"

The woman grabbed the flashlight and pushed Lionel away. Lionel and Sam went outside as the woman screamed for her husband.

In the distance a Global Community public-address truck drove through the streets. "Attention, citizens! Volunteers are needed immediately to help with relief efforts. Closing ceremonies will take place tonight as planned. Religious fanatics have stolen the bodies of the preachers. Do not fall for fairy tales of their disappearing.

Repeat: Closing ceremonies will take place tonight as planned."

Lionel and Sam looked at each other and shook their heads. They walked farther toward the earthquake zone, wondering what they would find in the rubble.



Vicki and the others at the Wisconsin hide-out were fascinated by the live shot of Eli and Moishe rising into the cloud. As announcers at the scene searched for words, cameras shook and fell over. Mark rushed to the computer and composed a message to kids around the world.

*Don't be surprised. God predicted it would happen. The Bible also predicts that a tenth of those living in Jerusalem will die because of this quake. The Global Community will probably make up something to explain Eli and Moishe rising from the dead, but there is no doubt that God is greater than a thousand Carpathias. Keep watching. There may be more surprises tonight.*

As Vicki watched the news out of Jerusalem, she wondered about Judd, Lionel, and the others. After the live shot of Eli and

Moishe, the GC said nothing about their resurrection.

"Will any believers die in this quake?" Shelly said.

"I'm not sure," Vicki said. "I think these judgments are mainly to get the attention of unbelievers, but Loretta and Donny Moore and Ryan and a bunch of other believers died in the wrath of the Lamb earthquake."

Vicki noticed Darrion sitting alone. "You were talking about how you brought some friends up here, and you're still feeling guilty about it. You want to talk some more?"

Darrion shook her head. "Wait till this is over. I need time to think."

Vicki put an arm around Darrion and looked at the television. Sirens blared and emergency crews struggled to get into the ravaged area. Vicki leaned forward as someone who looked like Judd ran past a reporter. She closed her eyes and prayed.



Judd forced his way inside the nearly collapsed doorway and put a handkerchief over his mouth and nose. It took a few moments to see through the dust. Bodies lay trapped beneath tons of rubble, and Judd wondered if he should leave.

Judd yelled Kasim's name, and someone called from the back of the building. He climbed over cash registers, stacks of music recordings, chairs, and speakers that had been set up for the special event. Most people had gotten out of the building, but he saw a few who hadn't. Some had been crushed by falling glass, others under cement. "Hang on, I'm coming!"

Sirens wailed in the distance as Judd moved debris and found a hallway that led to the back. The collapsed ceiling stopped him.

"Back here," someone yelled.

"Stay where you are. I've got to find another way." Judd forced open a rest-room door and climbed onto the sink. The ceiling hadn't fallen here, so he lifted tiles and found enough space to crawl through. But what if the building shifted?

"Help!"

Judd pulled himself up and inched through the narrow passage, pushing with his feet and crawling arm over arm. Something rumbled, and Judd put his hands over his head, thinking it was an aftershock. The ceiling held, and Judd kept crawling until he made it through.

He found himself on the other side of the collapse in what looked like a small lunch-room. A refrigerator lay on its side, the door

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open and food scattered on the floor. A microwave lay next to it, along with silverware and broken dishes.

The back door had been smashed by a concrete block. Someone was trapped underneath. Judd found the person's arm and felt for a pulse. Nothing. He crawled to the other side and saw Kasim, facedown, dead.

Judd sat back and shook his head. First Nada had been killed, now Kasim. He stood to leave when something moved behind him and a man said, "Are you going to help me or not?"

Judd went inside and saw a foot sticking out from under a smashed table. He cleared chairs away and found a man wearing a leather jacket and designer jeans pinned beneath it. Sunglasses lay a few feet away, unbroken.

"Better get me out before the whole thing comes down," the man said.

"Wait. I know you."

"Yeah, yeah, I'm Z-Van. But I'll be just another dead singer if I don't get out of here. Are you going to help me?"