



S H A D O W E D

A N O V E L

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# SHADOWED

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T H E F I N A L J U D G M E N T

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## JERRY JENKINS

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## **AT THE CONCLUSION OF WORLD WAR III**

in the fall of 2009, it was determined by the new international government in Bern, Switzerland, that beginning January 1 of the following year, the designation A.D. (*anno Domini*, "in the year of our Lord," or after the birth of Christ) would be replaced by P.3. (post-World War III). Thus January 1, A.D. 2010, would become January 1, 1 P.3. *Shadowed* takes place thirty-seven years later in 38 P.3.

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## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

**AFTER THE THIRD WORLD WAR**, a so-called holy war that resulted in the destruction of entire nations, antireligion, antiwar factions toppled nearly every head of state, and an international government rose from the ashes and mud. Religion was outlawed around the world in an attempt to eradicate war.

The United States was redrawn into seven regions and renamed the United Seven States of America (USSA), the president deposed, and the vice president installed as regional governor, reporting to the International Government of Peace in Bern, Switzerland.

When he completed his graduate studies in religion, **Dr. Paul Stepola's** wife, **Jae**, urged him to pursue work with the National Peace Organization. Her father, retired army general **Ranold B. Decenti**, had helped build the NPO from the ashes of the FBI and the CIA.

Paul slowly works his way up in the organization. When the NPO initiates a new task force, the Zealot Underground, to expose and eliminate religious influence in the USSA, Chicago NPO bureau chief **Bob Koontz** taps Paul as a key member.

Paul becomes enmeshed in the NPO's covert operations. He is the decorated sole survivor of a raid on a house church in San Francisco where he shoots and kills the leader, a widow. In a Texas investigation of oil-well sabotage he witnesses the stoning

to death of an underground Christian. In a subsequent oil-field fire, Paul loses his sight.

While recovering, Paul meets **Stuart “Straight” Rathe**, a volunteer at the hospital and, unbeknownst to Paul, a secret believer. Paul asks his superiors for the contraband New Testament on disc so he can brush up on the beliefs of his targets, should he ever be able to see and work again. His exposure to Scripture and to Straight lead to his conversion and the dramatic restoration of his sight.

Paul cannot tell Jae, fearing she will tell her father and expose Paul to the death penalty. Straight introduces Paul to the leaders of the Christian underground, one of whom—code name Abraham—challenges Paul to become a double agent, staying in the NPO while secretly aiding the resistance.

Paul is able to appear committed to the NPO by arresting phony people of faith, but his true allegiance is put to the test in a major operation in Los Angeles. Paul is suspected and nearly found out as he secretly works with underground factions to protect them from genocide by the NPO. In the end, they pray for God to judge their enemies with a drought that affects everyone in L.A. except true believers.

Following three horrific terrorist attacks in Europe spearheaded by a man claiming to be a Christian believer, Paul is sent overseas to thwart him. There Paul secretly engages with underground believers and determines that the terrorist is not, in fact, a person of faith.

Though Paul is suspected of treason, followed, and monitored, his role in eliminating the terrorist buys him time and temporarily squelches the threat that he will be found out. Meanwhile his wife has begun listening to his New Testament discs, alternately worrying that he has become a believer and finding herself overwhelmed with the claims of Scripture on her own life.

The international government sets a deadline for all citizens to sign a pledge of loyalty that reads:

*By order of the Supreme Council of the International Government of Peace, headquartered in Bern, Switzerland, and dated this Monday, January 21, 38 P.3., it is resolved that within sixty days, or by March 22, 38 P.3., every citizen of the world community who has reached the age of eighteen years shall be required to stipulate by signing this document and having it on public record, thus:*

*“Under penalty of life imprisonment, or death in extreme cases, I hereby pledge that I personally support the global ban on the practice of religion. I am not affiliated with any group, organization, or individual who acts in opposition to the ruling of the international government on this matter, and I stipulate that if I become aware of any citizen violating this ordinance, I am under obligation to report the same, failure to do so resulting in the same punishment.”*

With input from the underground leadership of Christian believers in Europe, the USSA, and throughout the world, Paul crafts a response to be disseminated as far and wide as believers dare, including to the major news organizations in their respective countries.

It reads:

*To: The Honorable Baldwin Dengler, Chancellor of the International Government of Peace, Bern, Switzerland*

*From: The worldwide church of believers in the one true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God’s Son, Jesus the Christ*

*Re: Your decree, announced this Monday, January 21, 38 P.3., which we call the year of our Lord, A.D. 2047*

*Chancellor Dengler:*

*We aver that the current world system, which has banned for nearly four decades the practice of religion by people of faith, is an abomination in the sight of Almighty God.*

*We believe that you and your government, as well as most of your loyal citizens, are unaware of the size and potential influence of a people that has, by your actions, been pushed underground and forced to practice their faith illegally.*

*We ask that you rescind immediately the decree announced today and put a moratorium on laws prohibiting the practice of religion until you can determine how people of faith can peaceably live in this society without fear of reprisal.*

*We are beseeching our God to act in judgment, should this request not be carried out within forty hours of when the decree is announced, or midnight, Bern Time, Tuesday, January 22. We believe that He will act to deliver us from you, our oppressor, as He did in Los Angeles, California, last year.*

*We respectfully warn that you will regret ignoring this request, as we are calling upon God to specifically act as He did thousands of years ago against Pharaoh in Egypt, when Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel flee his domain.*

*We refer you to the Old Testament account of the ten plagues God unleashed against Egypt. There are those among us who are asking God to eschew the first nine plagues and to refrain from hardening your heart, and it is our heartfelt wish that you avoid the dire consequences of the tenth plague at the forty-hour mark. Short of this, we fear that God may not limit*



*this plague to the seat of the government but rather that it will affect the entire world.*

*To our brothers and sisters around the globe, we remind you that you need not feel bound by the Old Testament caveat of protecting your own households by sprinkling blood on your doorposts to identify yourself. We believe the blood of Christ has already been shed on your behalf and that God knows His own.*

*In conclusion: Rescind the loyalty decree, lift the laws against the practice of religion, or proceed at your own peril.*

*For your reference, following is the text of the carrying out of the tenth plague on Egypt, which we fear God may administer upon those who turn a deaf ear to our plea:*

*So Moses announced to Pharaoh, "This is what the LORD says: About midnight I will pass through Egypt. All the firstborn sons will die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the oldest son of his lowliest slave. Even the firstborn of the animals will die. Then a loud wail will be heard throughout the land of Egypt; there has never been such wailing before, and there never will be again."*

*. . . And at midnight the LORD killed all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn son of the captive in the dungeon. Even the firstborn of their livestock were killed. Pharaoh and his officials and all the people of Egypt woke up during the night, and loud wailing was heard throughout the land of Egypt. There was not a single house where someone had not died.*

**International Chancellor Baldwin Dengler** responds that there will be no negotiating, claiming that believers are a very small number who don't really have God's ear. He reminds the

world that such beliefs caused the very world war that resulted in the outlawing of religion.

Jae travels to Europe to visit Paul and discovers on his computer that he authored the Christian Manifesto. If she exposes him as a traitor, he will be put to death. Despite her upbringing and lifetime of atheism, she feels compelled to pray for him.

When Paul finally returns safely, she tells him she knows his secret. "Paul," she says, "I don't know where I am in all this, but you must know by now that I am not going to turn on you. Whether or not we ever agree about God, I don't want to lose you."



# 1

**PAUL STOOD BEFORE THE TELEVISION**, fighting to keep from hyperventilating. He had been in life-and-death situations, had faced his share of kill-or-be-killed scenarios. He had long trusted his instincts and had proven that his prodigious intellect could sort through myriad possibilities even under pressure and keep him calm enough to make wise decisions.

But never had he been awash with so many consequences, all bad. Could anyone anywhere doubt that this global catastrophe—the sudden, inexplicable death of every firstborn male child, regardless of age, in every family that refused to acknowledge God—was anything other than what had been warned?

On one hand, Paul envisioned a mass turning to faith on the parts of terrified people around the world. On the other, the carnage was unimaginable. What percentage of the global population lay dead where they had stood, sat, lain, run, walked? And

what would this mean to the economy, to service industries, to law enforcement, to the military? For that matter, what would it mean to normal existence? How would people simply get around?

There had to be bodies everywhere, and if it was true they were supernaturally slain by God, not one would likely exhibit any examinable pathology. There would be no bleeding, no trauma, no evidence of why hundreds of millions of men and boys and even infants merely ceased to live. Perhaps rather than a massive turning to God, the opposite would be true.

Jae herself had said that a global curse like this would have to persuade her of the intervention of God into the affairs of man, but that she would also have a hard time understanding or liking Him much. And this from a woman clearly on the cusp of belief. Surely millions would use the chaos and mourning to justify their hatred toward such a seemingly vengeful and spiteful God.

It would be quite a step, Paul told himself, from atheism to begrudging acceptance that there was a supreme being. But most, he was sure, would have preferred to have been convinced there was a God who was about only love and peace and harmony, not also about justice and righteousness and judgment.

As he flipped through the channels, Paul was reminded of the amateurish TV news work he had perused in the archives during his doctoral studies years before. History had provided occasions when events overwhelmed even the most professional newsperson. The assassination of U.S. president John F. Kennedy, nearly eighty-five years prior, had caused reporters to pale and a celebrated anchor to succumb to emotion.

A U.S. space disaster in the previous century had left news journalists scrambling, airing rumors and unconfirmed reports, reading from newswires rather than teleprompters and then having to correct misinformation, often in obvious anger.

Terrorist attacks from before Paul was born showed broadcast journalists clumsily trying to sort fact from rumor and appearing to try to maintain an air of professionalism while plainly ashen with fear. Historical broadcasts during World War III showed the same, as the death tolls from the tsunami and other nuclear-caused massacres overwhelmed on-air personalities.

It was the same now. Just minutes old, the horrific news from around the world unmistakably rocked broadcasters appearing desperate to remain objective. But as the enormity of the situation hit them—several newsrooms with talent and behind-the-camera staff lying dead—those remaining seemed to realize the ramifications.

If this was what the underground zealots had predicted, had prayed for, and now claimed, everyone would be affected in some way. Rare was the person who didn't have a relative—father, brother, grandfather, uncle, son, cousin—who was a first-born male. And what about friends and acquaintances? Paul saw the truth begin to register on the faces of the reporters and anchorpeople. They had to be frantic to get off the air and onto the phone to confirm their worst fears.

And with every second, the death toll rose. Of course, it was not limited to firstborn males. The slaughter extended to innocents, to passengers in planes piloted by firstborns, or driven in cars, trucks, buses. Pedestrians had been wiped out by driverless cars; surgeons had collapsed onto patients; fathers had dropped infants; electricians had fallen into live wires; firefighters had dropped on the job, their fire hoses shooting away from blazes.

The extent of the cataclysm would not be known for days, perhaps weeks. Paul couldn't imagine the demand for funeral services. Surely there could be no keeping up with the corpses already piling up around the world. Mass graves would become

necessary, colossal funeral pyres, refrigeration for those who could afford to wait for burial space.

Atop all this, of course, would be the devastating toll of human grief. How does a family, a clan, a people, a nation, a world mourn a loss so all-encompassing? Nothing would ever be the same, Paul knew. Not for the USSA. Not for the world. And certainly not for him.

It was a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.