

Guardians of the Gospel

Chapter 6 – “Battle Ready”

By Danny Forrest

After Sarge and Boomer's meeting with Joshua and Nehemiah, they proceeded to walk through parts of the city surveying the damage so they could come up with a plan to start rebuilding.

"Hey Sarge!" announced Boomer to get his attention, "Do you ever wish you had trusted in Jesus before the Rapture, like maybe when your grandfather told you his conversion story?"

"I guess the thought has entered my mind a couple of times. Why do you ask? You been thinking about it?" responded Sarge.

"I dunno," mumbled Boomer, stumbling with his words, "I mean, uh, if we had, you know, been saved before the Rapture, we could be flying around like the resurrected saints. Wouldn't you like that?" asked Boomer.

"I guess so," answered Sarge, "but then I would have missed serving with you for these last 8 years. I would have missed all your practical jokes with explosives and listening to all the explosions, wondering if you had been blown up in the explosion."

"Yep, eight looong years and still got all my fingers," replied Boomer jokingly.

"Yeah, and what about your toes Boomer? You still got all your toes?" asked Sarge, knowing the answer.

Answering quickly and defensively, Boomer responded to the question, "Well, you know that was not my fault. It was that rookie they assigned to assist me. I was lucky that a couple of toes was all I lost."

"A couple of toes?" responded Sarge. "Your left boot is two sizes smaller than your right."

"A size and a half," Boomer quickly corrected.

They both laughed heartedly.

Sarge followed up the laughter, "All joking aside, I know I'm right when I say many more men, including me, would be without life and limb if you had not been there to clear those mines and IEDs. Everyone thought you were a little crazy. Especially when you would start singing a Jewish ballad as you were dismantling the bomb. As a matter of fact," continued Sarge, "I heard you before I first saw you. We were both young eighteen, nineteen-year-old recruits that didn't have a clue what we were doing. I was with a small platoon going house-to-house looking for Iranian soldiers hiding out, waiting to ambush us. As we were moving into position at the corner of a large building, the sound of someone singing a song from 'Fiddler on the Roof' was coming from within the building."

"That would be me," Boomer claimed proudly, as if accepting an award.

"Yep, it was you," said Sarge. "I still don't know how you got there before us. But there you were singing and dismantling a booby trap that would have possibly killed or injured the whole platoon."

"I was just a young gun slinger trying to make a name for myself. I went out in front of the platoon without orders. I got a commendation and a reprimand," explained Boomer. "As for the singing, it kept me from being nervous and touching the wrong button. I think I got that from Mrs. Johns. She would often sing Jewish and Christian hymns while she worked or baked cookies for me."

"Hey," continued Boomer, "I don't think I ever got a thank you for saving your butt that time."

"Yeah, and neither did I when I held off those mercenaries while you planted the explosives that blew up all their vehicles," countered Sarge.

"Too many times covering each other. Too busy fighting. Not nearly enough thank you's for these last eight years together. I guess, if nothing else it made us 'battle ready,'" said Boomer.

"Definitely, Battle Ready!" Responded Sarge.

Then out of nowhere Boomer directed the conversation back to his original thought. "It sure would be nice to be able to fly though. It would make the surveying quicker." After a brief pause and a few more steps, Boomer added, "I almost turned to Jesus several times while eating Mrs. Johns' chocolate chip cookies."

"Why didn't you?" asked Sarge.

"I was afraid that my family would disown me. I told my father about Mrs. Johns and her belief that Jesus was our long-awaited Messiah, and that He was coming back to remove the faithful from the earth. My father told me that I could not see her anymore and told me that

Jesus was just a good man, maybe even a prophet but not the Messiah. I just could not go against his teaching, although I did go by Mrs. Johns just after graduation and before enlisting in the IDF. She prayed for me on her front porch. That's the last time I saw her until a couple weeks ago. She was in her resurrected body and gave me a big hug, saying 'I knew my prayers would be answered.' You just have not had a hug until you get one from a resurrected saint. I felt her energy flow through my body," Boomer said as he looked away so that Sarge would not see the tears welling up in his eyes.

"Well, when did you actually trust in Jesus?" asked Sarge.

"Almost immediately after the rapture," answered Boomer. "I knew then that Mrs. Johns was right and that Jesus was our true Messiah."

"You never mentioned your faith in those early years," stated Sarge in a questioning way.

"I'm not sure why except that I was surrounded by unbelievers and felt a little intimidated. On the other hand, that's sort of why I continued with explosives. Figured if I was going to die, being close to explosives would be the quickest way to Jesus. I didn't die, and I got pretty good at it. Nerves of steel," proclaimed Boomer as he jokingly held out a trembling hand in front of Sarge.

Boomer continued, "Anyway, I wanted to talk to you about it, then I sort of lost track of you for a while when you got promoted for bravery in the war against Iran and Russia. Antichrist brokered a peace deal and got Iran and Russia to pull their troops. We had 'em beat anyway, but he got the glory. That's when the IDF began to cut back after Israel joined the peace accord with Antichrist. Everyone thought he was the best thing since peanut butter and sliced bread. 'World peace,' 'no more war.' I'm glad I stayed with IDF. I knew that snake in the grass was up to no good. Then when he stood in our temple, on our lands, and declared himself as supreme worthy of worship, that's when literally all hell broke loose. When our nation would not bow down to him, he came at us with everything he had. IDF had to be battle ready then. The next time I saw you was on the front line facing one of Antichrist's armies. Suffered heavy losses that week but we held them off. I guess it was just fate that brought us together again for that last mission going after Antichrist. But why am I telling you all this? You were there. And you trusted Jesus too not long before Jesus returned to rescue us."

"Now that's something I will thank you for," said Sarge.

"What's that?" asked Boomer.

"You and the others helping me understand who Jesus is and that he died for me," answered Sarge.

Sarge continued, "Now we are together again, gearing up for new missions, new battles in the glorious kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus brought us through the Tribulation, making us 'battle ready' for the tasks ahead of rebuilding our cities, guarding the gospel

and leading our children to trust and worship the King. We are truly blessed to be physically alive and serving in the kingdom."

"Yeah, who cares if we can't fly yet. I know one thing that we can do that the resurrected saints cannot do," proclaimed Boomer.

"What's that?" asked Sarge.

"Have children and grandchildren and great grandchildren and uh," blurted Boomer, running out of words. "You know what I mean."

"Yep, and we can do it for 1000 years. That why He made us 'battle ready.' We've got a kingdom to build," said Sarge as he and Boomer continued to survey the bombed-out ruins of the city.