

The Man On The Right

by
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Part I: Discovery

"Eureka!" It was more of an internal cry than an audible one lest anyone upstairs should think something was wrong and come to investigate. Reverend Joe Race had, after these many years of research, finally accomplished his goal. Just to be sure, he placed a tiny blue vase inside the lead-laced glass cylinder on his workbench and then turned to a control panel that looked like something from a 1950's sci-fi movie. The panel consisted of a steel plate with multi-colored diodes blinking asymmetrically. There were two buttons crudely labeled *ON* and *OFF*. To the right of the buttons were one black plastic dial with hand-drawn tic marks outlining the circumference and a smoothly operating slide-bar that had been lifted from an ancient video control panel.

Joe jabbed the *ON* button and then waited a few seconds. A slight moaning sound emanated from the steel box behind the panel. Although the intensity of the sound increased, it never got any louder than the hum of a refrigerator. Yet, the sound gave the impression that something very powerful was operating with most of the sound at a frequency below human hearing. As Joe knew so well, this was exactly the case. One time, early in his research, the device produced sound waves near the resonant frequency of the church building directly above his workshop. Fortunately, he was able to turn off the device quickly, and no one else was in the building at the time. Later, Joe made some adjustments to one of the coils inside the metal box to avoid future calamity.

Joe slowly turned the black plastic dial a few tic marks clockwise and then began to gently move the slide-bar up. The sound from the metal box began to change, but the intensity stayed the same. As Joe moved the slide-bar, he turned his attention to the vase inside the cylinder. It quickly disappeared. Joe turned the dial back to its zero setting, pulled the slide-bar all the way down, and finally punched the *OFF* button. The moaning sound faded away. Joe raced across the room to a small curtain he had erected around a scarred wooden table. He whipped open the curtain and there was the tiny blue vase, perfectly intact.

Joe could hardly contain his excitement. He knew that he would not get much sleep the next few weeks. He would have to build a bigger cylinder and test larger, more massive items. Yet, he would also have to carry on his preaching and counseling duties as though nothing were amiss. He could not allow anyone to prematurely find out about his invention. The race was on for Reverend Race. Time was of the essence.

Part II: Discussion

"You invented *WHAT?*" Frank Marley yelled in an almost shrill voice.

"Shhhhh! Hold your voice down," whispered Joe, pressing his right index finger to his lips while pushing his left hand downward against the surrounding air. "There are people upstairs. We can't let them hear our discussion."

"Why not? It's pure fiction anyway."

"No it's not," insisted Joe. "It may sound like fiction but so did flying before the Wright brothers." Joe's face became very serious as he continued, "It's true. I have invented a time machine."

"Utter nonsense. I've read quite a few time travel stories," Frank said as he stroked his long graying beard, "and not one of them was able to adequately deal with the inherent paradoxes. I assume you are talking about traveling to the past rather than the future."

"Yes I am. In fact, that is the only direction with which I am concerned. My machine can not send anything to the future."

"Well, then, Mr. Science Fiction, where is this vehicle?" Frank chided as he rotated his head, looking about the room.

"It's not a vehicle," Joe said as he walked toward the now all-too-familiar metal box. "It's all in this box. The object to be transported is placed inside that glass cylinder." Joe pointed to a large cylinder with a height of about eight feet and a diameter of four feet. "The controls are located on this panel..."

Frank interrupted. "If there is no vehicle, how is the time traveler suppose to get back to the present? *Hmmmmmm?*"

"He can't."

"Wait a minute, I thought you had tested this thing out *personally*."

"I *have* tested it out *personally*," Joe said mockingly, "but not in the way you mean. I have tried inanimate objects as well as plant and animal life forms. It has performed flawlessly."

"Well, if the objects can't be brought back, how in the world do you know they went to the past?"

"I just send the objects across the room to a point several minutes in the past. The objects disappear from the cylinder and then reappear across the room," Joe said excitedly.

"Wait just one minute. If that is true, you should be able to look across the room before you transport the object and determine if the experiment was successful or not. Then, if it was successful, you could decide not to try the experiment. *PARADOX!*" Frank proudly announced.

"I had a problem with that paradox myself. In fact, that was one of the last problems I had to solve."

"Yes, I'm listening," Frank responded crossing his arms and smirking.

"Well, I don't totally understand it yet."

"Oh, *really?*" Frank droned as he tightened his crossed arms.

"Yes, *really!*" Joe retaliated. "It has something to do with quantum physics and the role of the observer on the reality of the universe." Joe began wandering around the room. "If there is any conscious being in a position to observe the appearing object, the object never leaves the present. *Only* if no conscious being is able to observe the object as it arrives in the past will the time travel take place."

Frank's curiosity was obviously piqued. "Sounds fishy to me, but assuming that's true, how about this? You send a bottle five minutes into the past and then go look at it. Then you send a pen fifteen minutes into the past and go look at it. Why was not the pen there next to the bottle at the first observation?"

Joe's index finger flew upwards as he exclaimed "I thought of that also. I used a glass and a spoon. I first sent the glass five minutes back and then went to look at it. I then attempted to send the spoon back ten minutes. No go! It's like the universe has a built-in paradox detector. It simply will not allow paradoxes to occur!"

"That's *incredible!*" Frank exclaimed, but suddenly reality hit. "Hold on here, I'm talking like I really believe this stuff, and you haven't given me one shred of evidence."

"Well then, step right this way, and prepare to have your senses boggled." Joe approached the panel on the metal box as Frank tagged behind. It looked different than

it did just a few weeks before. There were three additional dials along with three numerical displays. One was labeled *Latitude*, one *Longitude*, and the third one *Time*. Joe pointed out the different features of the panel. "Although the theory behind this machine is quite complex, its implementation is quite simple. You simply turn the machine on, adjust this dial for the amount of mass to be transported," Joe said as he pointed to the dial with the hand drawn tic marks to which numbers were now added, "dial in the latitude and longitude at which you want your object to appear, set the amount of time you want to send the object into the past, and then slide this bar. That's all there is to it," Joe proudly announced.

"Now, now, preacher. What is it the Bible says about being *proud*?" Frank laughed as he looked over the panel in detail. He rose from his perusal with a puzzled look. "Why did you use all this ancient equipment? Wouldn't it have been easier to have used a computerized system?"

"Absolutely, but you know how strict the government is with churches now. They check everything with a fine tooth comb. They want to know how every penny of the church's money is spent or else they'll do a complete investigation and possibly close it down. I couldn't afford to take the chance. I used mostly equipment from junk yards. However, there are some fairly expensive parts inside the box. It was difficult enough getting those parts without raising suspicions," Joe opined.

"Yeah, I can see your predicament." Frank stroked his beard quickly. "Well, Mr. Guru, let's see this thing work."

"Okay, Frank." Joe placed a coffee cup in the cylinder. "Just to show you how the paradox avoidance system of the universe works, let's take a look behind the curtain."

Joe and Frank walked to the scarred table, and Joe opened the curtain. "What's this thing?" Frank asked.

"Scales," replied Joe. "Notice that the date and time are displayed as well as the weight of any object sitting on them. I have rigged these scales to stop updating the date and time when an object weighing more than an 10 grams is placed on the scales. That way I can determine how accurate my transport was time-wise."

"Interesting." Frank continued to rub his beard.

"Notice that the time on the scales and my watch are exactly the same."

Joe quickly pulled the curtain to and walked to the time machine. Frank followed. Joe turned on the machine and made a few adjustments. Finally he set the time for five minutes and moved the slide-bar up.

Joe, without looking away from the cylinder, said, "Notice that nothing happened. It can't since we observed the scales *less* than five minutes ago. Just as soon as five minutes pass by, the transport will take place."

Joe and Frank continued to stare intently at the cup in the cylinder. The five minutes seemed like an hour. Then, all of a sudden, the cup disappeared. Frank was in the lead this time. He leaped toward the table and ripped the curtain back. There it was. The cup that had just been inside the cylinder. The time displayed on the scales was lagging the time on Joe's watch by five minutes.

"You see, Frank," exclaimed Joe. "The cup appeared on these scales the instant I closed the curtain earlier."

"Amazing, utterly *amazing!*" It almost appeared as if Frank's tongue was hanging out. "How is it that you, a preacher, were able to develop such technology?"

"Well, you probably didn't know it since I keep it rather hush-hush, but I have a PhD in Theoretical Physics," Joe said humbly. "It was shortly after I graduated that I decided to be a preacher."

"Will wonders never cease?"

"No, I guess they won't."

"So, how does it work?" Frank inquired.

Joe studied a moment and then responded. "It's rather complicated to explain. In simple terms, this box warps the eleventh dimension of space-time by applying a chaotically varying graviton field to the surrounding space-time packets."

"Right! Just what I suspected," said Frank with a dumbfounded look.

"Well, you *asked*."

"I know, I know. Just forget I asked. So, what are you going to do with this invention? The military could probably find some way to make great use..."

"No, no, no," Joe butted in. "Not just yet. I have a much more important use for it first."

"And what might that be?"

"Something that will make people accept Christianity in droves."

"Come now, Reverend. How can that be? You know that religion is passe in this country now. Hardly anyone believes in God nowadays let alone in Jesus Christ as the Son of God."

"Think, Frank. If you could have any proof that Jesus was the Christ, what would it be?"

"I suppose to have actually walked with him during his ministry and to have seen him perform miracles."

"*Exactly!* And that is *exactly* what I want you to do."

"Hold your horses, Joe. You want me to get inside that contraption and let you send me back over two thousand years into the past *without a way to get back*? Have you taken leave of your senses?" Frank asked, astounded that his preacher would even suggest such a thing.

"Don't blow your lid, Frank. Just think for a moment. You told me yourself just six months ago that your health was failing and your doctor didn't expect you to live much more than three or four years. You also said that you would love to do something useful with your life during that time. Well, now you have that chance. And on top of that, you could not be better qualified to attempt this task. You have a degree in Linguistics and have studied all of the ancient Mediterranean languages. With the right haircut and the right clothes, you would fit right in with the followers of Jesus. How about it?" Joe said almost pleading.

"I don't know. The thought of getting in that machine and vaporizing into nothingness is not pleasant. How will it feel? Will it hurt?" Frank was now stroking his beard vigorously.

"Not at all. None of the animals I transported even so much as whimpered."

"But what if something goes wrong? Where will I end up?"

"Nothing will go wrong. I promise. I have tried this hundreds of time, and it has not failed yet."

"I just don't know. In one way I think it would be a great adventure. In another, I'm scared to death." Shivers ran up Frank's spine. He attempted to shake them off.

"I know, I know. I did spring this on you kind of sudden. Why don't you sleep on it, and let me know what you think tomorrow. But don't tell anyone about this machine!" Joe commanded.

"Don't worry, Joe. I won't tell a soul. But before I go, what exactly is your plan? How will my going back to witness the ministry of Jesus make people become Christians in droves?" Frank was beginning to calm down.

"Well, we would send you back with a holovid containing enough memory crystals for three years worth of recording. You will then record as much of the ministry of Jesus as possible, including the crucifixion, and, one can only hope, the resurrection. Next, you will bury the holovid at a location near Jerusalem that we predetermine to have never been excavated. Along with the holovid, you will bury several items of the day such as pottery, linens, scrolls, and so forth. Most importantly, you will write a note on parchment you obtain in the past, explaining exactly what you did. The note should be written in English, Hebrew, and Greek. I, along with witnesses, will retrieve the items. Hopefully the press will be there also. I will have experts date the items to verify that they are indeed two thousand years old. The holovid will provide a visual record of what you saw. Finally, I will reveal my time machine to verify your note."

Frank was overwhelmed. "It appears you have thought this through in detail. Now I need to do the same."

"You got it, Frank."

Frank went home and thought about Reverend Race's proposal for several days and finally concluded that he had to do it. Before he died, he wanted to do something for his Lord in a big way. This was his chance; he had to take it.

Over the next six months, Joe and Frank went over every detail of the plan. They traveled to Jerusalem and picked the spot where Frank was to bury the holovid, the note, and other collected items. They discussed alternative plans for every conceivable mishap. After much deliberation, everything was in place. It was time for Frank to go.

Part III: Transport

Frank was performing a last minute check of the holovid while Joe prepared the time machine. Everything seemed to be in tip-top shape.

"Now remember Frank," Joe said as he continued to make adjustments to the control panel, "the time machine has not been tested for a two thousand year trip. However, based on my extrapolation of the data, I should be able to put you within two years of the beginning of Jesus' ministry."

"I understand. You've told me a thousand times already," Frank responded in a semi-disgusted manner.

Joe continued as though Frank had not spoken. "And don't forget that I may have to make a few minor adjustments to the time setting in order to set you down without anybody seeing you. Remember, its an anti-paradoxical universe."

"I know, I know. You showed me, remember?"

"I'm sorry Frank. I'm just getting a bit excited about this trip."

"*You're* getting excited," Frank exclaimed as he tugged on his robe, "*I'm* the one taking the trip. You've got the easy job."

"Yeah, yeah. But I've been anticipating this moment for years," Joe said. A small bead of sweat began coalescing on his brow.

"You're right. You deserve to be excited," Frank said sympathetically. "So! Are you ready to get this show on the road or what?"

"Ready, Frank. Step right into the cylinder, and I'll send you on your way."

Frank rubbed his beard, straightened his robe, shook Joe's hand, and stepped into the cylinder. He turned around in time to see Joe waving with one hand as he moved the slide-bar upwards with the other. Suddenly, it was night. Frank could not help but jump and let out a yelp. It appeared that he had landed in an alley near some small shops. He had just begun to investigate when he heard a sound.

"Halt! Who goes there?" The voice was coming from behind him. It caught Frank by surprise since the language being spoken was Greek.

"What did you say?" Frank queried in as nice a tone as he could muster. The unidentified man continued to approach.

"I said, 'Who goes there?'" repeated the man in a booming voice that vibrated Frank's eardrums in a most irritating way.

"I am Jonas of Bethany," answered Frank in Greek with a Jewish accent.

"I am Cleatus, a soldier under the lordship of Pontius Pilate. What are you doing in this part of the city at this time of night? Don't you know that you are forbidden..." The man stopped in mid-sentence. "What is that you have there?" Cleatus asked as he reached inside Frank's robe and grabbed the holovid.

Frank was caught off guard. "Uh, well, you see, that's a box that my father gave me. Yes, that's it, a box he gave me."

"Is that so?" the soldier said in a way that let Frank know that he did not believe that answer for one minute. "It doesn't look like any box I have seen before. I believe you stole it from one of these shops. Why else would you be here this time of night?"

"I couldn't sleep, so I decided to get some fresh air." It was all Frank could come up with.

"Where do you live?"

"I do not live here. I am a visitor."

"Where are you staying?"

"At the inn down the street."

"Okay, enough of your lies. I am going to have to arrest you," Cleatus said as he started dragging Frank down the street by his arm.

"Why? Why? What have I done? What did I say?" Frank whined.

"There is no inn down the street. You are a liar *and* a thief. You must be punished."

Cleatus continued to drag Frank down the street. Frank remained quiet; he did not know what to say. After a while, Cleatus pushed Frank through an open door. Frank stumbled forward, losing his balance, and ended up sprawled on the stone floor face

down. As he pushed himself up, he noticed blood running down both arms where the edges of the uneven floor had gashed him.

Frank heard a new voice. "Who's this man, and why have you brought him here?"

Cleatus answered, "I caught him stealing this unusual box from one of the local shops. When I asked him where he was staying, he lied to me. Lock him up."

"Gladly," said the other man, who Frank now guessed was a jailer.

"Wait!" Frank yelled desperately. "I am not a thief. I told you that my father gave me that box."

"Is that so?" the jailer mocked. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, you are a liar and a thief. You will spend time in jail."

"No, no! I can't go to jail. I have a mission to fulfill."

"Did you hear that, Cleatus? This man is on a mission. I guess he is *also* the son of God." The jailer vibrated with laughter.

"The son of God? Why did you say that?" Frank asked sternly.

"What is the matter with you? Didn't you see the big event today? That *man* who calls himself Jesus came into town riding a donkey. The people made fools of themselves, shouting 'Hosanna! Hosanna!' and waving palm branches. It made me sick. I will be glad when Pontius Pilate gives this so-called Christ what he so richly deserves."

Frank passed out.

Part IV: Punishment

Frank had been in jail for over four days. During that time, he had been chained to the cold damp stone wall of a dreary dungeon with only a few drinks of water each day for nourishment. Frank had been mulling over what the jailer had said about Jesus entering town on a donkey. It could mean only one thing. Joe's time machine was off by three years, not the two he had predicted as a worse case. Not only that, but today should be the day of the crucifixion. Frank began to weep. "I have failed in my mission," he thought. The crucifixion was going to take place, and he would be stuck here in this God-forsaken prison for who knows how long. Joe's dream of bringing people to Christ

would go unfulfilled. Suddenly the door to the jail flew open, and the jailer, along with two guards, walked over to the man that was chained to the wall opposite Frank and let him loose.

"Are you ready to be crucified next to your *King*?" the jailer asked mockingly.

"He is not *my* king. My king will come in power and overthrow all of you Romans and save his people," he said as he spit on the jailer.

The jailer slowly wiped off the spittle and proclaimed, "It is a shame that he will not be here in time to save you from *this* Roman." The jailer laughed until it felt like the walls would cave in.

One of the guards lead the prisoner out the door. The jailer and the remaining guard walked over to Frank.

"And what about you, Jonas of Bethany, are you ready to be crucified next to *your* King?" asked the jailer.

"What do you mean?" Frank inquired. "I have not yet been tried."

"Yes you have. Your trial was held yesterday," chuckled the jailer.

"But, I was not allowed to give a defense."

"It is okay. Your defense was not needed. Cleatus gave us all the information we needed to reach a verdict."

"But that is not *fair*," shouted Frank.

"Now, now. Do not get yourself excited. We Romans are not in Judah to be fair; we are here to keep the peace." The jailer turned to the guard and ordered, "Take him down!"

Frank had nowhere to turn. He looked the jailer right in the eye and stated, "If I must die at this time, then I will be proud to die next to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

A look of consternation came over the jailer's face. "So, you *do* know this Jesus. Just as I suspected, he was leading a band of thieves."

"I am not a thief. I am innocent and so is Jesus," Frank said defensively.

"So you have said. Guard, take him away!"

Frank was lead through the door of the jail and down a damp hallway to a large room where many soldiers were bustling about. In the middle of the room several soldiers were busy strapping wooden beams across the arms and backs of two men. One man was the prisoner that had just been removed from the jail. The other man was wearing a crown of thorns. It was -- yes it had to be -- it was Jesus. Frank fell down before him.

"My *Lord* and my *God!*" Frank cried out.

A soldier shouted, "Restrain that man!" Instantly, two soldiers grabbed Frank by his arms and began dragging him away.

Frank continued to watch Jesus as he receded. Jesus, with a stare that seemed to see right through Frank, said, "Frank, I'm sorry it had to be this way."

Frank was shocked! Not only had Jesus called him Frank, but he had spoken the words in *perfect English*. Without a doubt, this man *was* God!

The soldiers began strapping a wooden beam to Frank's back, but he paid little attention. He was still staring in awe at the Jewish man who had just spoken to him in a language that had not yet been developed. Just as the Bible said, he looked no different than any other Jew of the day. But there was something in his eyes and his speech that commanded one's attention. Frank was so enamored with Jesus that it was not until they were in the city streets that Frank came to a realization of what was about to occur. He was going to be crucified next to Jesus, the man to whom he had committed himself when he was only seventeen years old.

Frank was shaken out of his thoughts by a whip cracking against his shoulder. There was a crowd of people on either side of the street, some shouting angry words, others crying. Jesus was in front of him. The crown of thorns was taking its toll. Blood was running down his face. The whips kept cracking against Frank's bare flesh. Over and over they hit until Frank fell to the ground. One of the soldiers began unstrapping the wooden beam. Frank looked into the crowd. What was that? It looked like a familiar face approaching him through the crowd. About the time the man reached Frank, the soldier handed the wooden beam to another person in the crowd and ordered him to carry it. Suddenly, Frank recognized the familiar man.

"Hank! Hank Holder! Is that you?" Frank asked, his voice cracking.

"Yes, Frank. It's me," answered the man.

"What are you doing here?"

"Reverend Race sent me. He said to tell you everything was going to be alright. He sent me after..."

Hank's voice disappeared into the crowd noise as the soldier pushed him back and began urging Frank forward. "Well," Frank thought, "Joe must have found another volunteer when he was unable to find the holovid at the designated location."

Suddenly, Jesus stumbled in front of Frank. The soldier who had removed the beam from Frank's back did the same for Jesus. Another man in the crowd was pressed into service to carry his beam. "Everything is proceeding according to history," thought Frank.

Eventually, the procession reached the gates of the city. After passing through, they headed towards the hill called Golgotha. The march was slow but at least the whipping had slowed down. Perhaps the soldiers' arms were getting tired. Frank chuckled to himself.

Finally, the procession reached the top of Golgotha. The soldiers quickly attached the three wooden beams that had been carried out from the jail to three longer beams that were laying on the ground. The three prisoners, in turn, were positioned on the beams that now were in the shape of crosses and crude blunt spikes were hammered into their wrists and feet. Although Frank cried out in agony with each hit of the hammer, it was not nearly as painful as he thought it would be. The numbness of his body from the whipping was probably the reason. After the prisoners were secured, the crosses were raised up and then lowered into pre-dug holes in the ground. This was when it really started to get rough. If Frank allowed his body to slump, he could hardly breathe. However, if he pushed up against his hands and feet to ease his breathing, the spikes tore at his flesh causing great pain. Frank found himself alternating between the two, just as Jesus and the other prisoner were doing.

At one point Frank looked down at the foot of his cross and saw some soldiers gambling for some clothing. He recognized the robe that Joe had given him to wear on his journey to the past. As he looked closer, he recognized Cleatus as being one of soldiers. And, lo and behold, he had the holovid with him. There was no way to tell if it

was running or not, but it was doubtful since Cleatus had no way of knowing what it was let alone how to turn it on.

A voice fell on Frank's ears from his left. It was Jesus. He spoke softly through his panting. Again he spoke in English. "Frank, I am sorry this happened, but my time had not yet come."

"What do you mean, Master?" asked Frank.

"You will know soon," was his only response.

The rest of the day came directly from the pages of the New Testament. Jesus talking to his mother and John, Jesus asking for a drink, the three hours of darkness, Jesus asking why God had forsaken him, and on and on. Everything happened just as it was written. Just before darkness fell on the land for three hours during the middle of the day, the man on the cross to the left of Jesus began cursing.

"If you were really the Messiah, you would come down off your cross and destroy the Romans. You would set your people free," he shouted to Jesus as loudly as the cross would allow him.

Frank, who was to the right of Jesus, could not bear to hear the words of the man and responded, "You do not know to whom you speak. This man is the *Son of God!* We are deserving of this punishment; he is not." He turned his eyes toward Jesus and said, "I am a sinner. Please remember me in your kingdom."

Jesus, although barely able to talk, said in words dripping with compassion, "Verily, verily, I say unto you 'Today, you shall be with me in Paradise.'"

Frank smiled through his pain.

The day passed slowly but as it drew to a close, soldiers appeared with rods and spears. They approached Frank first and began beating his legs until both were broken. Frank's body sagged. He felt his breath leaving and there was nothing he could do to get it back. Everything began to fade out, out, out....

Part V: Discovery

Joe Race left his lab just as soon as Frank disappeared from the cylinder and headed for the airport. He flew to Jerusalem, and, just as soon as he could, he was at the

site where Frank was to have buried the holovid and the other items. Joe spent several days digging and digging but never found anything. Perhaps the items got shifted over time. He dug to the right and to the left. He dug deeper. Finally, after two weeks, Joe gave up. The people Joe brought along as witnesses had given up days before, believing Joe to be a kook.

As Joe was walking back towards the city, he came upon an excavation site that he had passed everyday since he had been there. He walked over to the edge of a rather large hole and stared at the men and women digging inside. His mind began to wander. "What had happened to Frank?" he questioned himself. Did the time machine mess up? Did Frank arrive in the wrong place or the wrong time? Perhaps his health played out before he could get to the designated location and bury the goods. Perhaps he was being held prisoner. There were too many possibilities.

Suddenly, something one of the diggers was saying got Joe's attention. One of the men was holding a holovid in his hand. *A holovid!*

"Look what I found," the man was telling a nearby woman. "A holovid. I wish those pranksters would stop burying this sort of stuff. They ought to know that we are not going to fall for it anymore."

The man pitched the holovid out of hole, and it landed right at Joe's feet. Joe quickly picked it up. "Could it be?" he thought. Could this be the holovid that Frank took with him. Joe called down to the man in the hole, "Say, do you mind if I have this?"

The man yelled up, "What do I care? I'm sure not going to give it back to the owner."

Joe rushed off toward the hotel. He ran to his room and quickly turned on the holoscreen. He set the holovid to play mode. Almost instantly an image appeared on the holoscreen. It looked as if the video was shot from a hill. There were soldiers on one side and a walled city in the distance on the other. Joe, based on artist's renderings he had seen, recognized it as being ancient Jerusalem. This *had* to be Frank's holovid. But Frank was nowhere to be seen. What was going on? Joe continued to watch.

Soon, he noticed a commotion in the distance near one of the gates to the city. He put the holovid in zoom mode to get a closer view. It appeared that there was a crowd of people with some men walking between them. Some of the men in the middle were soldiers, but the man in the lead was almost naked and was carrying a wooden beam on his back. The man immediately behind him was walking next to another man who was also carrying a wooden beam. There was something odd about the former man's face.

Joe zoomed in some more. The man had a crown of thorns on his head, and his face was covered with blood.

"My God, it's *Jesus!*" shouted Joe. It took him a moment to realize the redundancy of his statement.

Joe concentrated intently on the video. He did not want to miss a second of this. As the men got closer to the hill, Joe was able to see another man behind Jesus. "This is the other thief," thought Joe. He looked at the man more closely. He had a long graying beard which he was rubbing intently. "Isn't that odd," thought Joe, "that thief is rubbing his beard just like Frank does."

"FRANK!" yelled Joe out loud. Could that *really be him?* His suspicions were verified as he came even closer to the holo-vid. *It was Frank!* Obviously something had gone wrong. Severely wrong! Frank was going to be crucified as a thief. What am I going to do now, thought Joe. With nothing more than the holo-vid, there was no proof that the video was anything more than an elaborate production, a hoax. However, the video did prove one thing to Joe. Frank had indeed traveled two thousand years into the past. There was only one thing left to do. Find another volunteer to travel back to the past. Joe knew just the right person. Hank Holder. It would take at least six months to prepare for the trip. There was no time to waste.

THE END